

CDQs hang in balance as Magnuson bill stalls

by Jeff Richardson
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Momentum to revise and federal fisheries policy may have stalled for the current Congressional session, according to Henry Mitchell, executive director of the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association.

CDQs on the line

If lawmakers don't re-authorize the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act this year, it will not only hold up new rules to conserve fisheries and their habitat, but also the effort to make permanent the highly successful Community Development Quota program.

That program allocates 7.5 percent of the total allowable catch of Bering Sea pollock, halibut and sablefish for harvest by eligible Western Alaska villages. Fifty-six communities have formed six re-

gional development groups, each of which in turn partners with an established seafood processing company to harvest, process and market the fish, with some of the revenues being returned to the region. In each region, the program provides jobs, job training, scholarships, loans to local fishermen and other seed money to stimulate and diversify local economies.

Giving hope to village youth

"It's probably the most exciting thing that's happened in Alaska since (the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971)," said Mitchell. Speaking to a breakfast meeting of the Resource Development Council last week, Mitchell said the CDQ program promises "remarkable" results.

Established in 1992, the program was approved in June for a three-year extension by the North

Page 20, please