

# Fish farm panel says risks can be minimized

**JUNEAU** — The disease and genetic risks of finfish farming can be minimized by strict adherence to existing state policy, including the prohibition against importing finfish, according to a draft report of the Alaska Finfish Farming Task Force.

The task force has delivered its interim report to the Alaska Legislature, including a draft of its final report. The draft, containing the task force's findings and recommendations to date, considers finfish farming broodstock, siting, regulation, costs, benefits, marketing and protecting the health of Alaska's existing fisheries.

Also included in the task force's findings and recommendations:

- Siting of finfish farms is the most important element in minimizing the transference of disease, genetic interference, degradation of water quality and aesthetics and predation, and in avoiding conflicts with existing users and designated upland uses.

- Finfish farms must be compatible with zoning and designated uses of the uplands such as state and federal parks, monuments and wilderness areas.

- Alaska farmed finfish would have to compete in already crowded world markets.

The five-member task force was created by the Legislature and appointed by Gov. Steve Cowper in July to consider the biological, environmental and socio-economic impacts of finfish farming in marine pens, marine upland tanks and fresh water in Alaska. There is currently a statutory moratorium on finfish farming in Alaska that expires July 1, 1990.

The task force will accept written comment on the draft through Wednesday and will meet Sunday and Dec. 18 in Juneau to finalize its report.

The final report will be submitted to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 1990.

Copies of the draft are available for public inspection at the Legislative Information Offices.

Those who would like additional information may contact Jon Sherwood, project coordinator, Alaska Finfish Farming Task Force, Box AM, Juneau 99811; phone, 465-3568.