

Federal government pledges bottomfish money

WASHINGTON—The Federal Government has pledged \$1.45 million in the first installment of a two-year grant to develop a large, new bottomfishing industry in Alaska, Sen. Mike Gravel announced April 8.

"This is the largest grant this year for fisheries development under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act," Gravel said in making the announcement. "It will fund a substantial demon-

stration project for harvesting bottomfish, which have been left so far for Japanese and other foreign fishermen."

The money goes to the new non-profit Alaska Fisheries De-

velopment Corporation (AFDC), a group of 13 Alaskan fishermen's associations and six fish processing companies. The grant comes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion (NOAA) as part of \$6 million distributed this year for fisheries development using funds collected from duties on imported fish under the 1963 Saltonstall-Kennedy Act.

Gravel said the money will be used to charter several trawlers, including two which will be in operation during a full year.

"One of the great advantages of a bottomfish industry is that it will not be seasonal," Gravel said. "Bottomfish harvesting can go on year-round, and this could play an important part in stabilizing Alaska's economy."

The project is intended to demonstrate the profitability of bottomfishing in Alaska and to investigate the movements of bottomfish throughout the year. Trawlers will operate off Southeast Alaska, in the Gulf of Alaska and in the Aleutian and Pribilof area.

Particular attention is to be given to the potential for large offshore trawlers harvesting low-priced Alaska pollock. An estimated 3.5 billion pounds of pollock exist in Alaskan waters, according to the AFDC.

The corporation also says the project will help reduce the economic risk to processors who have invested \$7 million in new facilities, according to a resolution passed by the State Legislature last month in support of

the grant announced by Gravel.

The bottomfish project also involves the state Department of Commerce, the Department of Fish and Game and the University of Alaska.

Fishermen's associations in AFDC are Alaska Longline Fisheries Association, Alaska Trollers Association, Alaska Shrimp Trawlers, Pacific Marketing Association, United Fisheries of Alaska, North Pacific Vessel Owners Association, Halibut Producers Cooperative, Cordova Aquatic Marketing Association, Cordova Fishermen's Union, Yakutat Fishermen's Association, Aleutian Fisheries Cooperative, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association and United Fishermen's Marketing Association.

Processors in AFDC are New England Fish Company, Icicle Seafoods, Pelican Cold Storage, Pacific Pearl, Peter Pan Seafoods and Craig Fisheries