

# Commercial Fishermen:

## Here is an explanation of Alaska's Limited Entry Law

### STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

WILLIAM A. EGAN, GOVERNOR

Dear Gear License Holder:

A bill limiting entry into all of Alaska's commercial fisheries has been passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor William A. Egan. We are sending this letter to inform you at the earliest possible date of some important facts about the limited entry program.

The limited entry law will not control who fishes during the 1973 commercial fishing seasons. The Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission will begin to issue interim-use permits and entry permits only after January 1, 1974.

In those fisheries which presently have enough or too much gear (for example the Bristol Bay drift gillnet fishery), the new law will prevent any further increase in the amount of gear, and where needed a voluntary buy-back program will be used to reduce gear to optimum levels.

In those fisheries which can stand no further increase in gear, holding a gear license and fishing for the first time during the 1973 season will not count in any way toward getting a permit for the years to come. Only fishermen who have held gear licenses and fished in these fisheries prior to 1973 will be able to apply for entry permits. Most of those who have fished seriously in the past should have no trouble qualifying.

Alaska's fisheries cannot provide a good livelihood for an unlimited number of fishermen. In addition, too much gear in some fishing areas makes good fisheries management impossible. Limited entry can correct situations where there is already too much gear, and it will keep problems from arising in fisheries that are not yet overfished.

More information will be available on the limited entry program once the Commission is established. In the meantime please remember that the success of limited entry will be measured in terms of a more stable and improved livelihood for fishermen and more effective management of Alaska's fisheries.

Sincerely,

*David S. Jackman*

David S. Jackman  
Project Director  
Governor's Limited Entry  
Study Group

#### SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT LIMITED ENTRY

- (1) Limited entry does not mean that all part-time fishermen will be excluded. In many important fishing areas of the state, nearly all fishermen must work other jobs during the off-season when they are available. The law only requires that if some people must be denied entry permits, it will be those who have participated least and are least dependent for their livelihood upon a particular fishery.
- (2) Limited entry does not mean that all non-residents of Alaska will be excluded. Past attempts at limiting entry have failed in the courts because they tried to do this. The United States Constitution simply will not permit discrimination against non-residents.
- (3) Limited entry does not mean that all future entry into Alaska's fisheries will be closed. The entry of new fishermen into the commercial fishing ranks is absolutely essential. However, if limited entry is going to work for those fisheries which must have a limit on the total amount of gear fished, this means that for every new fisherman entering the fishery, there must be another fisherman leaving it. This will happen when the new fisherman buys out someone presently in the fishery, and when entry permits are passed on from father to son. In addition there will be no immediate restrictions on the new developing fisheries in Alaska which are presently underfished.

#### HOW LIMITED ENTRY WILL WORK

- (1) Limited entry is really a number of separate programs run by the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. Each program will deal with commercial fishing fishery resource in a specific area of Alaska with a specific type of gear - for example, drift gillnet fishing for salmon in Bristol Bay.
- (2) The new law allows the commission to limit entry into all of Alaska's commercial fisheries, including salmon, shellfish, bottom fish and freshwater fish. However, the commission will have to set priorities, and will no doubt deal first with those fisheries which are most overcrowded.
- (3) The basic ground rules for limited entry are the same throughout the state, but the particular regulations for each fishery will take account of the great differences among Alaska's many fisheries.
- (4) The goal of limited entry is a stable level of fishing effort in each of Alaska's fisheries, allowing for better management of each fishery and an improved livelihood for those who participate in it.

For information Write

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