

Proposal to Change the Dates and Maximum Bid Price for the Commercial Sea Cucumber and Sea Urchin License Buy-Back Program



Rich Childers; Puget Sound Shellfish Manager, Fish Program

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

June 7, 2013

Presentation Outline

- Objectives of proposed rule changes
- Overview of the sea cucumber and sea urchin dive fisheries
- History of the license buy-back program
- Proposed rule changes

Objectives of the Proposed Rule Changes

- Maximize the use of the account balance when the buyback legislation terminates
- Provide flexibility in setting the maximum bid price base on industry recommendations

Common Elements of Red Urchin, Green Urchin and Sea Cucumber Fisheries in Washington

“Hand-pick” or hand-tool-assisted harvest is done by divers from small vessels (30-45 ft. length)

Harvests occur within inland marine waters of Puget Sound under individual area (district) quotas

These fisheries are limited entry (implemented 1989)

A license “buy-back” program has been in effect since 1999 at Industry request

Most “product” is shipped to overseas markets in Asian countries



Limiting Harvest Effort and Promoting Fishery Stability Through Commercial License Buy-Back

- A license “buy-back” program was initiated in 1999
- Program funded through license renewal surcharges and landing tax (RCW 77-70-150 and 77-70-150)
- Landing tax and license surcharge legislation terminates December 31, 2013
- License holders can offer to sell their licenses to the Department up to the maximum amount in a competitive bid process, with lowest offers purchased first



Limiting Harvest Effort and Promoting Fishery Stability Through Commercial License Buy-Back

- Number of licenses in 1999: 49 cucumber, 42 urchin
- Buy back program goal: 20 cucumber, 20 urchin
- Current number of licenses: 27 cucumber, 24 urchin
- Program terminates December 31, 2013
- One bid secession remaining: August 2013
- Last license purchased: cucumber 2010, urchin 2012



History of the License Buy-Back Program

Sea Cucumber License		
Years	Max Bid Price	Licenses Purchased
1999-2002	\$5,000	2
2002-2004	\$8,000	4
2005-2006	\$12,000	2
2007-2011	\$15,000	14
2012	\$60,000	0

Sea Urchin License		
Years	Max Bid Price	Licenses Purchased
1999-2002	\$6,000	1
2002-2006	\$8,000	9
2007-2011	\$11,000	6
2012	\$20,000	2

Proposed Rule Changes for Commercial Sea Cucumber and Sea Urchin License Buy-Back Program

WAC 220-95-100, WAC 220-95-110

- Change the date that license holders can offer their license for buy-back from August 1 to December 1 and the purchase date to January 31.
- Director establishes the maximum bid price for both sea cucumber and sea urchin licenses based on industry recommendations and implement the bid price through the emergency rule process.
- Stakeholders support the proposed rule changes

Questions?

