December 30, 1953

TO: J.C.C.E.

FROM: Stan Karson

RE: Saltonstall-Kennedy proposed bill on fishery funds.

At the outset I would say that this bill is relatively non-controversial. What Saltonstall and Kennedy propose to do is to require the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer to the Secretary of the Interior each year funds derived from the duties on fishery products. Under a 1935 statute, the Agriculture Secretary has received 30% of gross receipts from customs duties for subsidizing the export of agricultural commodities, making support purchases, and making production payments to farmers.

By a 1939 law he was authorized not more than $1 million per year to purchase surplus fishery products for distribution through relief channels. This authority has never been used, however. Saltonstall and Kennedy, concerned about the decline of the domestic fish industry, would put this '39 Act into operation. What this really amounts to is a fairly substantial subsidy of the fishing industry.

As of a couple of days ago, Mrs. Smith, Butler of Maryland, Robertson, and Ives had joined Kennedy and Saltonstall on this bill, with others probably coming along. Inasmuch as my colleague from New York has seen fit to go on it, and there seems to be no great controversy raging about the bill at this time, I would recommend co-sponsorship of it.

If this recommendation is concurred in, please let me know and I will draft a letter informing Saltonstall and Kennedy.

cc: J.C.C.E.