



## **KIMO RESOLUTION 2/96**

### **THE MARICULT PROGRAMME**

The newly launched European research programme MARICULT is a joint scientific - industrial effort consisting of several projects. The Norwegian company Norsk Hydro has initiated and will support MARICULT which is to run for five years from 1996. Scientists from Norwegian and German research institutes are involved, the European Community is said to have provided financial assistance through it's marine research programme MASTIII.

The scientific community have described MARICULT as a basic research programme aiming at a better understanding of nutrient and plankton dynamics. Norsk Hydro have stated that the research programme will study the effects of balanced and controlled nutrient additions in small experimental systems in combination with biological methods of enhancing productivity. The industrial community and Norsk Hydro describe MARICULT, in their strategy papers, as artificial fertilisation of the sea to increase harvests of seafood to help to compensate for the expected future global Protein deficit.

For the very first time, the ultimate goal of marine scientists is to release substances in large quantities into the open marine environment. If these experiments are successful they see their experiments as a precursor to large scale ocean fertilisation.

The serious nutrient enrichment problems in certain coastal waters have been well documented and are addressed by many European Directives and International agreements. Local Authorities have and are responsible in implementing these regulations at great costs to the local taxpayer.

Should the ultimate goal of these projects become a reality and it is possible to increase fish stocks by dumping fertilisers into the sea, there are serious questions about the effects on marine bio diversity such as, the long term effects of eutrophication, changes in food-web structure, oxygen depletion, exceptional algal blooms. The well known problems of over fertilisation in modern agriculture could well be duplicated in the marine environment.

**KIMO as an organisation representing Local Authorities whose responsibility it is to implement current and future regulations on reducing the release of**

**nutrients in the marine environment has serious concerns about the proposals of the MARICULT Programme**

**KIMO urges the European Commission and others to;**

**1) conduct independent scientific research with a view to producing evidence that MARICULT will not have any detrimental effects on the marine environment and to apply the Precautionary Principle before its implementation.**

**2) agree that should such research indicate that there are no harmful effects strict monitoring of the implementation of the programme will be undertaken to ensure that the marine environment is protected.**