



C2 Trawl EM analysis

June 2021 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Anna Henry
- Other Presenters: Josh Keaton (NMFS)
Ruth Christiansen (United Catcher Boats), Julie Bonney (Alaska Groundfish Databank), Charlotte Levy (Aleutians East Borough)
- Action Required:
1. Review Trawl EM EFP report
 2. Review Trawl EM Committee report
 3. Review draft of alternatives, adopt purpose and need and alternative set

BACKGROUND

NMFS issued an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) on January 6, 2020 to evaluate the efficacy of electronic monitoring systems and shoreside observers for pollock catcher vessels (CVs) using pelagic trawl gear in the eastern Bering Sea (BS) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The EFP exempts participants from regulations that currently prevent full or maximized retention of all catch, and observer coverage requirements. The project combines EM systems that provide at-sea monitoring of vessels for compliance with fishery management objectives to achieve maximized retention, electronic reporting of catch and discard information, and shoreside observers to monitor salmon bycatch and collect biological information. Fishing occurred under the EFP for 2020 and is ongoing in 2021. The current timeline of the trawl EM program is to move from an EFP to implementing a regulatory program in January 2024.

Trawl EM EFP report

The Principal Investigators on the EFP, Ruth Christiansen, Julie Bonney and Charlotte Levy will present a report on EFP activities for 2020, and through April/May 2021.

Trawl EM Committee report

The Trawl EM Committee met virtually on May 21, 2021 to review progress on the current trawl EM program, and discuss a draft set of alternatives for the regulated Trawl EM program.

Draft of alternatives

A draft of the purpose and need, alternatives and list of program elements and regulatory timeline for implementation is provided as a framework for the potential structure of an analytical package for a regulated trawl EM program. This document is an early draft, recognizing that every detail of the program has not yet been finalized, but to highlight issues that will be decision points during the analytical process. This version has been updated to reflect recommendations from the May Trawl EM Committee meeting. The Council may use the draft to adopt a purpose and need and alternative set for a regulated trawl EM program.