



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

605 W. 4th Ave. Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-2809
Fax (907) 271-2817

Action Memo

File Number:Cons 15-038

Agenda Date6/1/2015

Agenda Number:C7

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Observer Coverage on BSAI Trawl CVs - Discuss Alternatives

ACTION REQUIRED:

Develop problem statement and alternatives.

BACKGROUND:

In the BSAI, catcher vessels (CVs) that use trawl gear to fish for Pacific cod and in other limited access fisheries were placed in the partial coverage category when the restructured Observer Program was implemented in 2013. At that time, NMFS did not recommend that full coverage was necessary to provide the data needed to manage those fisheries. While management data needs have not changed, the Council has received public comment noting that the status quo requires some CVs to pay a daily observer rate in addition to the ex-vessel-based partial coverage observer fee if they voluntarily elect to operate under full coverage for the purpose of more closely managing their AFA cooperative's halibut PSC allocation. Allowing vessel owners to move into the full coverage category would relieve them of the need to pay two separate observer costs.

The Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) met on May 29, 2015 to discuss potential alternatives for this action, in the context of other Council actions that might affect vessels' observer coverage categories. The OAC's recommendations will be provided at this Council meeting. While discussing the need for action and a range of alternatives, the OAC will have discussed how various alternatives might affect NMFS's management costs and the monitoring/enforcement burden of tracking and ensuring that vessels are meeting their observer coverage requirements at any given point throughout the fishing year.

At this meeting, the Council will develop a problem statement and a range of alternatives for the consideration of moving trawl catcher vessels (CV) that fish in the BSAI area into the full observer coverage category.