

C1 Observer 2027 Annual Deployment Plan

AP Motion

The AP acknowledges the receipt of the 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) and the PCFMAC Report, noting appreciation for staff's work on these items, particularly the successful CIE Review and long-awaited cost saving measures in Fixed Gear EM.

The AP supports and encourages the Council to adopt all of the recommendations from the PCFMAC.

Motion passes 18-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *The AP expressed appreciation to the Observer Program for their successful CIE review, noting that this is a big deal. Our Observer Program designed the most statistically robust sample design to collect fishery-dependent data that we can for the given budget. The only thing that could further improve our monitoring in the ADP is more money to increase rates.*
- *The AP thought it was especially important to note the PCFMAC's recommendation to have the Observer Program present to the IPHC about the CIE review and an overview of monitoring coverage in the directed halibut fishery and fisheries that incidentally encounter halibut to ensure the IPHC has accurate information regarding monitoring.*
- *While the AP supported NMFS and PCFMAC's recommendations to implement the respective strategies for 2027 and 2028 to reduce the number of inactive vessels in the Fixed Gear EM pool, they reiterated PCFMAC concern for the following:*
 - *If a vessel is removed from the EM pool and moved to the observer stratum due to low participation in EM, but is selected to carry an observer for a trip, there should be a process to evaluate whether they actually have space to carry an observer with some ability for a waiver or exemption. The AP noted they specifically should not have to carry one less crew member to take an observer since that makes the trip significantly less efficient to fish.*
 - *If someone buys a vessel that is new to them, but the vessel had been previously removed from the Fixed Gear EM pool, there should be a process for reviewing the individual person's EM participation history or quota holdings to prove they are a good application for the Fixed Gear EM pool. The AP noted that the Observer Program and NMFS Restricted Access Management (RAM) division, who tracks permits and quota, should be able to communicate; new owners shouldn't be penalized for a past owner's history.*
- *The AP noted that although moving vessels into the no selection pool did not show any cost savings, they supported the PCFMAC's recommendation to review whether vessels with high amounts of effort could be moved into the Fixed Gear EM pool and provide overall cost*

effectiveness by improving the amount of monitored catch in the stratum. They noted that while most vessels in the no-selection pool have very little fishing effort, the analysis showed there are a number of vessels with very high-level of fishing effort in that pool.