

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
October 1-3, 2024 - Anchorage, AK

D1 Observer Availability

The AP acknowledges the receipt of the Observer Availability discussion paper and appreciates the significant work that Council and Agency Staff put into this multi-faceted and nuanced issue. The AP would like to note that while observer availability is an ongoing issue, no further action is recommended at this time.

Motion passed unanimously: 20/0

Rationale in Favor of Motion:

- *The paper does a good job of teasing out some of the challenges with attracting and retaining observers.*
- *Staff and AP members noted that it is difficult to address this issue comprehensively. However, the AP did want to reiterate that observer availability is an ongoing issue.*
- *An AP member did note that there are ways that the observer program can continue to improve observer training and morale, including doing more to explain to observers the value of their data and role in the Council process. It was also mentioned that while observing in itself may not have specific room to grow within the field, observer experience is very important in this process, and that many Agency, Industry, AP and Council members began their careers as observers, so fostering observer development is important.*
- *The AP also noted the FMAC's two recommendations:*
 - *Maintaining the current high standards and requirements for observers is of primary importance. While looking at ways to increase flexibility, the principal objective is to maintain data quality, which requires observers with proper knowledge and understanding of sampling methods and design.*
 - *The committee also expressed concern regarding the loss of diversity of deployment opportunities on vessels and highlighted the importance of maintaining a variety of deployments to keep the job interesting and less routine and to sustain a vibrant observer program.*
- *Finally, the AP supports any efforts for continuing to consider solutions at the committee level.*