



D1 Observer Availability

October 2024 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Anna Henry

Action Required:

1. Review discussion paper
2. Review FMAC report related to this item (other portions of report covered under C4)
3. Recommend next steps, if desired

BACKGROUND

In June 2023, the Council tasked staff to prepare a discussion paper on observer availability and opportunities for gaining experience on vessels. Specifically, the discussion paper should include the following information:

- The number of observers of each training endorsement level needed across fishing seasons compared with the existing number of unique qualified observers and newly qualified observers (including consideration of pending management programs such as pelagic trawl electronic monitoring; moving all Bering Sea Pacific cod trawl vessels into 100% coverage under the new catch share program; and changes to monitoring requirements in the Bering Sea pot cod CP sector).
- A description of observer provider challenges in providing observer coverage in both partial and full coverage fisheries.
- A summary of any solutions NMFS or observer providers are considering to improve observer availability.

Once the Council has reviewed the discussion paper, the next steps could be no further action; request further information from staff in the form of another discussion paper; or initiate an analysis, which requires identifying a purpose and need statement and alternatives.