



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number: Cons 16-011

Agenda Date 10/3/2016

Agenda Number: C3

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Electronic Monitoring Integration (Initial Review); 2017 EM Pre-implementation Plan

STAFF CONTACT: Diana Evans

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review Electronic Monitoring Integration Analysis, Initial Review Draft
- Review 2017 EM Pre-Implementation Plan

BACKGROUND:

EM Integration Analysis

The Council is considering a proposed management change to establish electronic monitoring (EM) as a part of the North Pacific Observer Program. The Observer Program collects data necessary for the conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska. This document analyzes alternatives that would allow an EM system, which consists of a control center to manage the data collection, connected to an array of peripheral components including digital cameras, gear sensors, and a global positioning system (GPS) receiver, onboard vessels to monitor the harvest and discard of fish and other incidental catch at sea, as a supplement to existing human observer coverage. The analysis was developed with input from the Council's Fixed Gear Electronic Monitoring Workgroup.

As part of initial review in October 2016, the EM Workgroup encourages the Council to formally identify a preliminary preferred alternative. To date, at the Council's direction, EM program development in Alaska has focused primarily on an EM program as captured in Alternative 2, where EM data will be used for catch estimation. At this meeting, the Council is also reviewing the Draft 2017 EM Pre-Implementation Plan, for EM deployment in 2017, which has been developed based on the Alternative 2 model. While the pre-implementation work to date is applicable to either of the alternatives under consideration, the 2017 pre-implementation plan should be adapted to additionally test a catch logbook program, if the Council changes direction in favor of Alternative 3.

The EM Workgroup also recommends that the Council add an additional option to the analysis, to allow vessel operators fishing IFQ in multiple areas to retain harvest in excess of the amount of quota available in a single area, if they have onboard either an observer or EM. This inclusion is responsive to a concern that has previously been raised before the Council, and is an appropriate use of EM technology.

2017 EM Pre-Implementation Plan

The Draft 2017 Electronic Monitoring Pre-Implementation Plan extends eligibility to opt-in to the EM pool to all pot and longline vessels greater than 40' length overall in partial coverage. A significant difference this year is the testing of the trip selection model for EM deployment, whereby vessels would be pre-installed with EM equipment, and would then have a 30% chance of being selected to turn on the EM equipment on each trip.

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As endorsed by the Council in February 2016, the EM Workgroup has proposed a maximum of 90 longline and 30 pot vessels in the EM pool in 2017. Vessels participating in the EM pool will be placed in the “No Selection Pool” for human observer coverage in 2017.

As described in the Pre-Implementation Plan, the EM Workgroup also recommends continuing with other EM research and development in 2017, within the confines of the budget. Research projects include developing other EM technologies including stereo cameras, EM lite (sensors but no video), and transmission of EM status data real-time, and expanding EM to hook and line vessels under 40’ length overall. Approximately 6 additional vessels may volunteer to test stereo cameras in 2017, and would be placed into the “No Selection Pool” for human observer coverage, in addition to the 120 pre-implementation vessels.

At the time of the EM Workgroup’s meetings over the summer, the extent of the budget for pot cod work in 2017 was still not clear. Since then, NFWF has announced an approximately \$600,000 grant to support pre-implementation for EM in the pot cod fishery in 2017 and 2018, which couples with agency funds for 2017 of \$537,000. The NMFS funds are granted to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, which also manages the longline pre-implementation program in Alaska, and a request for proposals for an EM service provider for this work has been issued. Once the process is complete, the EM Workgroup will meet in November 2016 to finalize the pot fleet EM program for 2017.