

Rick Mezich  
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May 25, 2021

Re: Agenda Item C2 Trawl EM Analysis

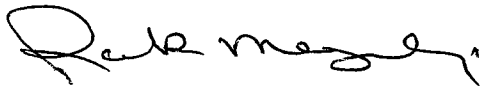
Dear Mr. Kinneen and members of the Council,

My name is Rick Mezich, F/V Starfish LLC, Starfish, and I have participated as a volunteer vessel in the *Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Pelagic Electronic Monitoring Exempted Fishing Permit* since 2021. I am writing today to encourage the Council to initiate an analysis, including the development of a Purpose and Need Statement and draft set of Alternatives, for development of an electronic monitoring program for compliance monitoring in both Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska pollock fisheries.

As a volunteer vessel under the EFP, we have found the use of electronic monitoring in place of at-sea observers to be extremely beneficial and an operational improvement over human observers for compliance monitoring. I prefer EM such because it is more cost effective and is a huge savings to the vessel company compared to human observers. It also allows greater flexibility in fishing plans under changing circumstances such as Covid-19 quarantine and other associated restrictions and reduces safety at-sea concerns. There is no potential for negative interactions with observer and requirements of EFP have generally been easy to comply with.

The Starfish will continue to participate in the EFP as it progresses, and we look forward to its development into a regulated monitoring program. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Mezich", written in a cursive style.

Rick Mezich