

C2- Trawl EM analysis
Council Motion June 2021
June 10, 2021

Analysis to implement electronic monitoring on pollock catcher vessels using pelagic trawl gear and tender vessels transporting pollock catch in the eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

The Council approves the following purpose and need statement:

To carry out their responsibilities for conserving and managing groundfish resources, the Council and NMFS must have high quality, timely, and cost-effective data to support management and scientific information needs. In part, this information is collected through a fishery monitoring program for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska. While a large component of this monitoring program relies on the use of human observers, the Council supports integrating electronic monitoring and reporting technologies into NMFS North Pacific fisheries-dependent data collection program, where applicable, to ensure that scientists, managers, policy makers, and industry are informed with fishery-dependent information that is relevant to policy priorities, of high quality, and available when needed, and obtained in a cost-effective manner.

The Council and NMFS have been on the path of integrating technology into the fisheries monitoring systems for many years, with electronic reporting systems in place, and operational EM in some fisheries. An EM program for compliance purposes on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels and tenders both delivering to shoreside processors will obtain necessary information for quality accounting for catch including bycatch and salmon PSC in a cost-effective manner, and provide reliable data for compliance monitoring of a no discard requirement for salmon PSC. This trawl EM program has the potential to advance cost efficiency and compliance monitoring, through improved salmon accounting and reduced monitoring costs.

Regulatory change is needed to modify the current retention and discard requirements to allow participating CVs to maximize retention of all species caught (i.e., minimize discards to the greatest extent practicable) for the use of EM as a compliance tool on trawl catcher vessels in both the full and partial coverage categories of the Observer Program and meet monitoring objectives on trawl catcher vessels in the Bering Sea (BS) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) pelagic pollock fisheries.

The Council approves the following alternatives:

Alternative 1: status quo--EM would not be implemented and catch monitoring would be provided by at-sea observers.

Alternative 2: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels and tenders delivering to shoreside processors in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

Alternative 3: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors and not on tenders.

Option 1 Bering Sea

Option 2 Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska