



Alaska Longline

FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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June 3, 2020

Simon Kinneen, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
1007 West Third St, Suite 400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Re: Agenda item D1, Observer Update; NFWF projects

Dear Chairman Kinneen,

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has released a call for new proposals under their Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program (EM/ER program). These grants have been critical to the development of electronic monitoring programs in Alaska.

I wanted to inform the Council on a joint proposal from ALFA and NPFA that is being developed for consideration. The project has two components. The first is to develop machine learning algorithms that can evaluate image quality in near real time and provide immediate feedback to the vessel operators. Good image quality is critical in an EM program to provide useful data and reduce EM review costs. Most EM vessels are diligent in their efforts to maintain image quality, however, when working on deck for long period of time or under night lighting conditions, the skipper cannot always know when there is a problem. Often problems in image quality are not detected until the hard drive is reviewed several weeks later by PSMFC. Recent work in machine learning may allow for near real time evaluation of image quality and provide immediate feedback to the vessel operator so they can correct the problem while still on the water. Our proposal will develop image quality algorithms and test their ability to detect common image quality issues.

The second component of our proposal is to field test a lower cost, portable EM system for deployment in remote ports where the vessel operator can self-install it without the need for in-person technical support. The project is intended to assist both EM providers working with the fixed gear fleet in developing this capacity to improve cost efficiencies. The field work will involve side-by-side testing of portable EM devices with standard units, as well as operational deployments where the vessel operator can self-install it without the need for in-person technical support.

In past years, the Council has written letters of support for some NFWF projects if they are in alignment with Council goals and objectives for Alaska's EM programs. On behalf of ALFA and NPFA, we ask the Council consider these projects, provide any feedback desired, and consider sending in a letter of support if appropriate.

Thank you

Linda Behnken