



North Pacific Fisheries Association
P.O. Box 796 · Homer, AK · 99603

January 28, 2014

To: North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

Chairman Eric Olson

RE: Agenda Item C-12 Electronic Monitoring Update

Dear Chairman Olson,

NPFA and Saltwater Inc. are currently working together under a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to field-test EM systems on under 60' vessels fishing for Pacific Cod using fixed gear in the Gulf of Alaska. This project was proposed in early 2013 and received a letter of support from Martin Loeffland, Director, Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries. We have also received email correspondence from Liz Chilton providing some guidance on NMFS expectations of EM on Pacific Cod fixed gear vessels.

The objective of this project is to improve data collection technologies that can increase data collection efficiency, and reduce data collection costs and disruptions to commercial fishing operations. The EM technology has been shown to be capable of independently recording catch data and haul locations. It is possible that techniques could be developed to determine catch size using EM systems. The goal of this project is to trial the EM system on three volunteer fishing vessels for as many fishing days as volunteers are willing to participate.

To date the project has recorded two fishing days aboard a pot gear vessel. The images have been analyzed with positive results. Cameras were triggered to record only during fishing events. The image quality was good enough for a trained observer to identify and enumerate the catch. The EM system was able to record haul locations. These initial results also provided the opportunity to improve the system. It was discovered that the power source on the system interfered with some of the vessels electronics. Saltwater has made changes to EM system to prevent future interference. In addition some of the fishing occurred in the dark, which will require additional considerations for camera location on future deployments.

In the upcoming weeks improved EM systems will be deployed on two additional vessels fishing in the Gulf of Alaska. NPFA is working with Saltwater to begin development of EM system that can be installed remotely by the fishing crew instead of a technician.

NPFA sees the pot cod fishery as an ideal candidate for EM. We are providing this information so the Council can be better informed of industry interest and efforts towards implementing a viable EM program as soon as possible.

Thank You,

Malcolm Milne, President

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