



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number: Cons 17-013

Agenda Date 10/2/2017

Agenda Number: C5

Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Observer Tendering Issue; low sampling rates - OAC report

STAFF CONTACT: Diana Evans

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review scoping paper on observer data issues related to vessels delivering to tenders, and OAC recommendations.
- Review OAC discussion paper on options to address low selection rates in partial coverage.

BACKGROUND:

Scoping of solutions to observer data concerns related to vessels delivering to tenders

In June 2017, the Council tasked staff with preparing a discussion paper identifying the specific data concerns with respect to vessels engaged in tendering, and to work with industry groups to develop both short-term and long-term solutions, including potential regulatory changes. The short staff background paper, **attached**, was intended to help distinguish the different data concerns that have been raised with respect to vessels delivering to tenders, to identify different solutions that have been implemented, evaluated, or suggested, and to initiate a collaborative discussion among industry members about how best to address these data concerns.

The OAC discussed this issue at the September 19-20, 2017 OAC meeting, and made recommendations about the solutions that should be pursued for each distinct data concern. To address the issue of salmon sampling in the GOA pollock fishery, the agency has addressed this in the short term by adapting the dockside monitoring goal for salmon sampling in the draft 2018 ADP. In the long-term, the OAC recommends that the Council continue to make progress towards a regulatory change that would require full retention in the pollock fishery, with compliance through electronic monitoring, and dockside monitoring of salmon. For the data concern related to observer bias, the OAC recommends that the Council reinstate the analysis (currently on hold) to evaluate deploying observers directly from tender vessels.

Report on options to address low selection rates

In April 2017, the Council directed the OAC to consider options for increasing partial coverage selection rates. To address this, the OAC created a subgroup to work over the summer of 2017, to assess whether there are viable options that could increase selection rates and be an alternative to simply raising the observer fee. The subgroup's task was to consider whether there are short-term options that can be addressed through changes to the ADP or the Catch Accounting System, and longer-term solutions that may involve regulatory change. The report was presented to the OAC in September, and adopted with minor changes. The revised report is **attached**.

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In the short term (2018 through mid-2019), Federal funding has been secured which will increase selection rates for the next two years. Planning for the longer term, however, the OAC recommends that next steps focus first on refining the reference points by which to judge what level of sampling is sufficient, and second on the optimization work that can be done through the Annual Deployment Plan, to revise the criteria for the zero selection pool, and optimize the balance of vessels using EM versus those in the human observer pools. Once more is known about whether these revisions are likely to increase cost efficiency, the Council can consider whether a regulatory analysis should be initiated, either to increase the observer fee, or to evaluate a different structure, such as a voucher program.