



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

December 6, 2014

To: North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

Re: Agenda Item C8 Electronic Monitoring

To Chairman Dan Hull,

The North Pacific Fishing Association (NPFA) supports the efforts of North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Electronic Monitoring Workgroup to develop EM as a functional supplement to the NMFS Observer Program for Alaska's commercial fishing fleet. NPFA is actively participating in EMWG meetings and has pro-actively partnered with Saltwater Inc. to field-trial a new electronic monitoring system on fixed gear boats for Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska supported by grant funds from National Fish and Wildlife Foundations.

As NMFS and the NPFMC continue to explore the use of EM to obtain independent fishery data on board vessels where space is limited and/or safety of human observers is a concern. Fishermen have requested that the Council include the pot cod fishery as a priority fishery since the gear type, catch and handling operations, and reportedly low bycatch make it a good candidate for EM.

NPFA, on behalf of the fishermen we represent, respectfully requests the NPFMC consider allocating resources for the implementation of EM in the pot cod fishery. The visibility and concentration of fishing operations on the vessel deck and the catch dominance of target species make the Pacific cod pot fishery an ideal candidate for observation by EM.

Our project findings support NPFA's view that the Pacific cod pot fishery is an ideal fishery to monitor using EM. From the sampled hauls analyzed to date, over 99% of the catch items, including Pacific cod, octopus, sunstar, crab, flatfish, and sculpin, were able to be enumerated and speciated. Currently the project is testing the integration of radio-frequency identification (RFID) scanner and tags to uniquely monitor the set, retrieval, and location of individual pots, in addition to some cost analysis.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to sharing the final results from our ongoing pot cod EM field trial with the Council.

Thank you,

Malcolm Milne, President
North Pacific Fisheries Association