



# NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## Action Memo

**File Number:**Cons 17-014

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**Agenda Date**10/2/2017

**Agenda Number:**C6

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**Dan Hull, Chairman**  
**David Witherell, Executive Director**

**SUBJECT:**

2018 Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan - Review; OAC and EMWG reports

**STAFF CONTACT:** Diana Evans

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

- Review draft 2018 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP).
- Review Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) and Electronic Monitoring Workgroup Reports and take action as necessary.

**BACKGROUND:**

Draft 2018 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council is scheduled to review the draft 2018 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP), and provide recommendations to NMFS for the final 2018 ADP. The ADP evaluates deploying observers by gear type, with separate strata for vessels delivering to tenders, and integrates electronic monitoring (EM) implementation with a separate fixed gear EM stratum. Deployment in 2018 is funded both through the industry-assessed observer fee, as well as through additional funds obtained from NMFS. NMFS' recommendation is to deploy into 6 human observer strata in 2018, by gear type, and with separate strata for vessels delivering to tenders. Based on a minimum 15% selection rate in all strata, with an optimal allocation of remaining observer days among the strata based on discarded groundfish and halibut and Chinook PSC, the preliminary selection rates would be:

- Trawl: 19% for trawl vessels, and 15% for trawl vessels delivering to tenders
- Hook-and-line: 16%, and 15% for hook-and-line vessels delivering to tenders
- Pot: 15% for pot vessels, and 15% for pot vessels delivering to tenders

Despite regulatory integration, the EM component of the program is funded from independent funding sources in 2018, and will not be funded through the observer fee until mid-2019. Based on available funding, the ADP proposes an EM selection pool of up to 110 vessels in 2018, and the EM selection pool deployment rate is proposed at 30%.

The OAC met on September 19 and 20 in Seattle to discuss the 2018 ADP, and other issues. The OAC disagrees with the NMFS recommendations both for strata and allocation scheme. The OAC recommends against separating out tender strata for hook-and-line and pot gear, although the Committee is supportive of retaining the stratum for trawl vessels delivering to a tender vessel. The OAC also prefers the status quo allocation scheme used in 2017, which would optimize allocation among strata based on discarded groundfish and halibut PSC, and would result in a significantly lower selection rate for pot vessels and slightly higher selection rates for trawl and hook-and-line.

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The recommended deployment strata were also brought to the joint BSAI and GOA groundfish plan teams during their September 12-15 meeting in Seattle. The discussion can be found in the plan team minutes under agenda item C4.

Both the OAC and the EM Workgroup responded to a statement in the draft ADP that identifies that in the 2019 ADP, it is the agency's intent to require 100% recording of all trips for vessels in the EM selection pool, with a post-trip selection of which trips will be reviewed. The OAC and the EM Workgroup felt strongly that this should be a decision that is vetted within the Council process, as it has implications on cost to the vessel and the program. Their recommendation to the Council is that more information should be gathered in 2018 to understand the implications of such a change for the 2019 ADP.

Other OAC and EMWG report items

The EMWG and the OAC both reviewed the draft Statement of Work for the EM and observer service provider contracts for partial coverage, on which the NMFS Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) is currently soliciting input, and provided feedback. The OAC and the EM Workgroup recommend that the Council submit comments to the AGO on the statements of work.

Additionally, the OAC reviewed the status of regulatory amendments and other analytical projects affecting the Observer Program. The status report on all such projects that is included in the staff tasking agenda item E, and also **attached** here, has been updated as a result of the OAC discussion. The OAC report also includes a discussion of the various projects that have been proposed to extend the use of electronic monitoring beyond the fixed gear fleets, and suggests that the Council may wish to provide guidance on their relative priority.