

Agenda Item I.1.c  
Supplemental Public Comment 2  
April 2015

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From: **McCorkle Fishing Enterprises** <[mccorkle@cox.net](mailto:mccorkle@cox.net)>

Date: Sat, Mar 21, 2015 at 4:04 PM

Subject: vms -non ground fish trawl

To: [pfmt.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:pfmt.comments@noaa.gov)

I am the president of Southern Ca. Trawlers Assn. We fish in a category called ""non ground fish trawl""  
Myself and other members don't land any ground fish and fish at least 8 months a year in state waters. I've been told that we have to have VMS because of the word "Trawl" in the category we fish in and that the VMS must be on at all times whether we are fishing or not in the Non ground fish trawl category.

Other non ground fish boats are being allowed to turn off the VMS when not fishing in the Non ground fish fishery.

Why am I told I have to have my VMS on all the time?

Some of our boats catch a very small amount of flat fish which they are allowed by law, you could put this catch in a couple of 5 gal. buckets.

We fish for Ca. Halibut, Sea Cucumbers and Ridge back shrimp not ground fish.

As far as 4 pings an hour we are 100% against that as our boats are small and battery life is limited and some members are on moorings anchored out in the bay, they have installed solar panels and it takes one in some cases bigger than the cabin top just to keep up with one ping an hour, battery life has been cut in half with one ping, 4 would be devastating and could cause serious problems, even loss of vessel and life.

I plan to attend the April Meeting and look forward to some answers that make some sense Mike McCorkle.

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Mr. Brett Wiedoff  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place  
Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

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PFMC

Dear Mr. Wiedoff:

I note with interest that PFMC will consider Electric Monitoring as part of its agenda in its upcoming April 2015 meeting. I am a small rockcod fisherman working off the Channel Islands in Southern California currently struggling with the costs of complying with existing quotas and regulations. At present I must pay \$573.00 annually for the VMS to participate in the open access nearshore fishery. I must make my payments every month even though the season is closed March and April. If I opt out for those two months, the fee to re- enter exceeds the two payments I would avoid. Paying annually for a ten month season seems grossly unfair. Any increase in costs to this program should contemplate the impact it will have on the overall fishery and these components are easily overlooked. I ask that you take in consideration some of these before advocating any cost increases for VMS.

The nearshore rockfish quota I participate in is limited to 1000 to 1500 lbs. every two months. It exists because I can sell my fish to the public at a weekly fish market at retail prices. Margins are so thin wholesale prices would not support the effort. To comply with California F&G regulations, every fish must be identified, weighed individually and the price and amount of each sale recorded. Despite this detail and the marginal catches, I still have observers. The copper rockfish that once accounted for 40% of my catch can no longer be taken and ling cod are closed during varying periods. I cannot fish deeper than 60 fathoms, limiting my access to higher vermilion populations. The greatest areas for rockfish in Southern California off Pt. Conception and San Miguel are now closed. The diminished fleet that now scratches out its quotas have to bear the costs of new Coast Guard regulations, safety certifications and dockside examinations. The annual fee to have my life raft inspected is \$800. Insurance, fuel, haulouts, vessel registration, licensing fees, slip fees are all increasing.

In Ventura County I can count on one hand the number of rockfish boats still in operation from a fleet that once was a hundred. The point is that what is left of this skeleton group is fragile. Intentionally or unintentionally, it is dying and virtually any additional "oversight" or increased costs will become the proverbial last straw. If there is any genuine desire to save this fishery then a substantial increase in quota is essential. Any increase in costs from VMS or any other limiting regulation will drive the remaining fishermen out to join the growing group of open fisheries that cannot afford to be fished.

It is my hope that these issues will be taken into consideration before the costs of VMS or any other program are implemented. I cannot emphasize enough how overburdened this small fishery has become and how little it will take for it to be overwhelmed. Please balance the advance of any technical monitoring improvement against the ultimate cost of pushing this remaining few over the edge. Thank you

Respectfully Submitted

  
John Farrell, Capt.  
Vessel Scorpio