

**Proposal for Electronic Monitoring Exempted Fishing Permit to Test The
Effectiveness of Electronic Monitoring Without the Effect of On-Board Observers**

Date: October 21, 2013

Applicants:

- F/V San Giovanni: Giuseppe Pennisi, owner
- P.O. Box 1347
- Monterey, Ca 93940
- (831)372-5807
-
- Jiri Nozicka, operator
- 698 Prescott Ave
- Monterey, Ca 93940
- (831)393-4945

THE REASONS, PURPOSES AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR EFP

- The current EM program studies have been criticized for not testing The Observer Effect, where the vessel crew might behave differently with and without the physical observers aboard simultaneously with the camera equipment. There seems to be a great need to prove or disapprove this criticism. This EM EFP will allow PFMC, NMFS to advance in its development of the current Electronic Monitoring program for the Groundfish fishery by allowing the current system to follow real, at sea data from limited number of vessel(s).
- Some vessels and communities in smaller ports needs to be able to access the allocations granted to them through the IFQ Catch Share Groundfish Fishery Plan adopted by the PFMC in 2010 and current observer “shortages” make it very difficult to operate under current situation.

The Electronic Monitoring EFP will allow PFMC and NMFS to assist these vessels, operations and communities in their adjustment to the IFQ Catch Shares program, which in its current status quo does not provide enough flexibility to utilize its allocations of the fishery resources. The EM EFP will enable some vessels to operate even though the observer availability is becoming harder to secure for some of these smaller fishing communities.

- According to the National Standard 8 the FMP shall take into account the importance of fishery resource to fishing communities in order to (1) Provide for the sustained participation of such communities and (2) To the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impact on such communities:

The EM EFP will provide data needed for the PFMC and the NMFS to develop alternative solutions to the 100% monitoring requirement, which is not effective in some smaller communities along, mostly California Coast.

PROBLEM:

- The F/V San Giovanni #244706 is a bottom trawl vessel registered in the port of Monterey. Until May 9th the vessel has been operating with a Federal Groundfish permit #0707 under the West Coast Shorebased IFQ Program. Because of the unavailability of the observer in the port of Monterey by any of the existing observer providers the vessel has been forced out of the program entirely.

: The F/V San Giovanni has been the only trawl groundfish vessel operating in the port of Monterey in the last decade and the only participating vessel in the Catch Share Program. The F/V San Giovanni has been the only vessel delivering fish for the Royal Seafood Co., the only First receiver site for the Catch Share program in Monterey. The Royal Seafood Co. is being affected by its only vessel being inactive to the extent of closing its operation after 40 years. Another processing facility North Coast Fisheries out of Santa Rosa is also being affected by the vessels inactivity. The F/V San Giovanni has been fishing for the North Coast Fisheries since 2007. Since May 9th 2013 the port of Monterey has seen no landing of groundfish coming across its docks. As we understand the North Coast Fisheries has been also affected by the observer coverage shortage in the port of Fort Bragg, which severely affected the operation of fishing vessels delivering catch for their company in the years 2012-13

under the IFQ program. We believe that these impacts are sufficient to justify needed changes to the current FMP to accommodate the Electronic Monitoring EFP to allow fishing communities access to their allocation of the groundfish in their historic fishing grounds. We understand that the EM EFP will not provide long term solution for this problem, but it will provide a “buffer” for these affected communities and also for the council to bring forth changes to accommodate needed improvements to the current FMP to ensure long term success of the fishery and survival of communities which depend on it.

EFP IN USE- VESSEL PROCEDURES

The vessel (San Giovanni) if granted the EFP will operate with the vessels valid Limited Entry GF permit (GF#0707) with its assigned allocation of groundfish.

- The vessel will abide by the rules and regulations applicable to other Groundfish vessels within the IFQ sector.
- The vessel will maximize the retention of its catches.
- All discards will be discarded in an allocated space, where the camera is focused (every vessel operating with and EM EFP will work at its best camera positioning, discard and weight spaces with the equipment provider and monitoring crew)
- The vessel will coordinate with the monitoring personnel on improving the visibility and reliability of the sorting process on the vessel.
- All discards can be sorted and weighed, or estimated by weight (baskets)
- All restricted species will be retained and weighed at the dock.

Note; this EFP WILL NOT require the council to allocate any additional fish, open any closed areas, or grant any special treatment other than the trust to the vessel crew and the Electronic equipment aboard.

LOCATIONS:

- Every vessel operating with the EM EFP will have to provide a designated area of its operation.
- for example North of 40 degree Lat, South of 36 degree
- the operation of the F/V San Giovanni will be in the area between 36 N and 40 N(area 550)

DATA COLLECTING AND ANALYZING:

We would like to ask for additional time between the date of this application and the next PFMC meeting in November 2013 in Costa Mesa, California to provide for more detailed options.

- All data collected by the electronic equipment should be analyzed by the NMFS and its office analyzing the current Electronic Monitoring program or monitoring provider contracted by NMFS.

DURATION OF THE EFP

Because of the critical situation, we are asking you to consider the season of 2014 for the initial year for the EM EFP. At the same time we are also applying for this EFP for the period 2015-16.

Once approved, we are anticipating operating through the entire seasons. The F/V San Giovanni is a full time year-round trawler.

WHY THE SAN GIOVANNI?

During last several years we have adjusted our fishing gear and methodology to maximize our catches for our markets while minimizing our discards and utilizing our own portfolio of allocations.

It is critical for us to remain in our part of the coast to truly maximize the knowledge of our fishing grounds and to be able to stay in contact with our past fish buyers to also maximize the retention of our catches.

Our vessel is 60 ft X 18ft. Our deck space is over 20ft long with plenty of space for extra equipment.

About 80-90% of our fishing time is spent targeting the DTS complex in depths ranging mostly between 300-400 fathoms. During the last couple of years our discards during these tows were very minimal. The rest of our fishing effort is being done predominately in flat sandy areas of our coast targeting mostly Sand dabs and Petrale sole. These tows are usually made during the last (return) parts of our trips. When we are successful in catching a decent amount of sand- dabs, we are using short sorting tables to sort out our catch and slide the discarded fish directly from the slides to the sorting or discard baskets. In the past we have even sorted most of the discards by species. We can do the same in the case of the EM setup. During this process the different flatfishes can be put in separate discard baskets and either weighed or estimated by weight prior to discarding. I would like to stress out that even though we are trying to avoid catches of unmarketable fishes, it sometimes does not mean that we are always successful at it.

In this letter I am including our last and this years catch and discard data. As you can see in these prints we have been considerably successful in fulfilling the goals of the CS program. But also, as I have mentioned above, during our trip on March 2nd 2013 our discards were much higher than usual. Trips like that do not happen often as you can see, but they will occur from time to time and will affect the vessel and its operations success at minimizing its discard rate.

WILL THERE BE ANOTHER BOATS PARTICIPATING IN THE EM EFP?

At this point in time we are not sure of how many vessels would want to participate in this EFP, but as we understand there is a great interest in other alternatives to the current system among many fishermen, especially in smaller ports and smaller vessel operators along the California coast.

We would like to ask for extra time between this date and the next PFMC meeting in November 2013 in Costa Mesa, Ca. to contact some of these smaller communities and provide at least approximate number of potentially interested vessels.

CRITERIA FOR THE VESSELS FOR THE EM EFP:

- All participating vessels will have to operate with a West Coast Limited Entry Trawl Permit
- Special consideration should be given to the vessels in Central and Northern California ports.

PFMC
10/22/13