

ELECTRONIC MONITORING REGULATORY PROCESS FINAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES AND NEXT STEPS

The Council adopted a range of alternatives and options for an electronic monitoring (EM) program in November 2013, and at the April and June 2014 Council meetings the Council provided guidance on further refinement of the alternatives and options. Council Staff incorporated these changes into a draft analytical document including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) alternatives, “Draft Analysis of an Electronic Monitoring Program for the Pacific Coast Limited Entry Trawl Groundfish Fishery Catch Shares Program” (Agenda Item J.3.a, Attachment 1). This document will serve as the Council’s analysis and decision document for Magnuson-Stevens Act purposes, and provides a purpose and need statement, background on the development of the EM program, descriptions of alternatives and options, and analysis of impacts and costs. Please note that Attachment 1 is truncated for printing and only includes the Executive Summary and tables of alternatives and options for specific fishery sectors. The full document can be downloaded from the Council’s website. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provided the Council with an updated version of the “Net Revenue Analysis for Electronic Monitoring on the West Coast” (Agenda Item J.3.b NMFS Report) and is only available on the Council’s website. The Council received this initial document at the June 2014 meeting; the updated version narrows the focus of the analysis and responds to some comments at the June meeting.

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to take final action on alternatives for electronic monitoring regulations in groundfish fishery sectors where possible. The Council may make final decisions on an individual fishery sector or for all sectors simultaneously. Leading into the September Council meeting, there has been discussion that decision-making necessities for the whiting sector may be more advanced for final action than the other sectors. An important step at this Council meeting is for the Council to make decisions and provide direction for the next steps for any sector for which final action is not achieved. As the Council works its way through the spectrum of highest level policy decisions down to lower level regulatory detail, there is a level where the Council should consider deferring to NMFS judgment on implementation for program elements such as EM Application and Approval Process, EM Equipment Type-Approval, and others.

A description of the midwater trawl whiting fishery sector alternatives and options for catcher vessels in the shoreside and mothership whiting fisheries can be found in Table 2-9 of Attachment 1; analyses of impacts and costs are in the Executive Summary and Chapter 4. Table 2-9 provides a listing of the decisions needed to get to finality on a regulatory program for the whiting fishery sector. The NMFS tested EM in the shoreside whiting sector through exempted fishing permits (EFPs) for the years 2004-2010, ([June 2014 Council Agenda Item F.2.c](#)). PSMFC also conducted EM field studies in 2012 and 2013 to test the viability of EM as a source of data to document individual accountability of catch and bycatch in the trawl catch shares program ([June 2014 Council Agenda Item F.2.b](#)). In 2012, six whiting catcher vessels out of Newport and Astoria, Oregon participated in the PSMFC studies and four participated in 2013. The studies by NMFS and PSMFC concluded that EM may be an appropriate tool to monitor

catcher vessels in the midwater trawl whiting fishery sector for compliance with the catch shares program.

A description of the fixed gear sector alternatives and options can be found in Table 2-10 of Attachment 1, and analyses of impacts and costs are in the Executive Summary and Chapter 4. The fixed gear sector was the subject of PSMFC EM field studies in 2012 and 2013. Five vessels participated each year; two vessels fished both pot and longline gear while the remainder fished solely pot gear. Three general patterns emerged in the results of the fixed gear studies. The first is that video reviewers had higher species identification success in 2013 than they did in 2012. The second is that in 2013, the relationship between weight estimates made by the observer aboard the vessel versus the video reviewer showed more variability than the relationship between counts of fish because observers weight fish. Finally, discarded catch had lower speciation and weight estimation success than the retained catch and fish could generally be identified to the species group level (flatfish or rockfish) successfully but this is not sufficient for catch share accounting purposes. Therefore, fish handling protocols for crew members would need to be developed to increase accuracy of speciation and weight estimations made by video reviewers. No EM EFPs have been conducted by NMFS for this fishery; however, EM EFPs have been recommended to start in 2015 as the first in-season attempt gather specific fixed gear EM information.

A description of the bottom trawl and the non-whiting midwater trawl sector alternatives and options can be found in Table 2-11 of Attachment 1, with analysis of impacts and costs to be found Executive Summary and Chapter 4. The PSMFC EM field studies included some EM work for the bottom trawl sector. In 2013 only six bottom trawl vessels (Morro Bay, CA, Coos Bay, OR and Newport, OR) participated in the study (none in 2012) so there is a limited amount of information to examine the viability of EM for these fishery sectors. The bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries are high volume mixed species fisheries, catch is sorted onboard, and there can be large amounts of selective discarding at sea. This means that larger changes in handling discards are required to accurately speciate and quantify allowable discards. No EM EFPs have been conducted by NMFS for the bottom trawl or the non-whiting midwater trawl fishery; however, EM EFPs have been recommended to start in 2015 to gather specific EM information for both fisheries.

The Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee will meet at the September 2014 Council meeting to discuss Attachment 1 and provide recommendations for implementation of an EM program. It is also expected that other Council advisory bodies and the public will advise the Council on final action, as well as to next steps in the process for further consideration of EM for groundfish sectors that do not advance to a state of final Council action at the September Council meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider Taking Final Action on Alternatives and Options for Electronic Monitoring Regulations in the Groundfish Whiting Fishery Sector.**
- 2. Consider Taking Final Action on Alternatives and Options for Electronic Monitoring Regulations in the Applicable Groundfish Fixed Gear Sector.**
- 3. Consider Taking Final Action on Alternatives and Options for Electronic Monitoring Regulations in the Groundfish Bottom Trawl and Non-whiting Midwater Trawl Sector.**

4. Provide Direction on Next Steps for Groundfish Sectors where Final Action is Not Taken.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.3.a, Attachment 1: Analysis of an Electronic Monitoring Program for the Pacific Coast Limited Entry Trawl Groundfish Fishery Catch Shares Program (***Full Version Electronic Only***).
2. Agenda Item J.3.b NMFS Report: Net Revenue Analysis for Electronic Monitoring on the West Coast (***Electronic Only***)

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Brett Wiedoff
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Take Final Action on Alternatives for Electronic Monitoring Regulations in Groundfish Fishery Sectors Where Possible and Provide Direction on Next Steps for Other Sectors and Issues

PFMC
08/21/14