

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON REGULATIONS FOR  
VESSEL MOVEMENT MONITORING

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) has some concerns about the proposed changes in vessel monitoring system (VMS) technology and policy that could be untenable to the relatively smaller salmon troll vessels which also participate in the open access, fixed gear sablefish fishery.

The proposal to increase the “ping rate”, or frequency of transmissions would require the installation of newer units on vessels which already have VMS transmitters. Higher monthly rates for more frequent transmissions would financially strain a fishery already limited by small quotas and trip limits. Many salmon trollers only participate in the open access sablefish fishery a few months a year, but are required to maintain VMS operation year-round.

Smaller trollers with less battery capacity have already had problems with dead batteries caused by VMS units with high voltage draw while in harbor or at anchor and the increase frequency of transmissions by the newer VMS units would amplify this problem. This creates serious safety concerns for boats at anchor in heavy weather if the engine won't start due to a drained battery.

The SAS supports status quo for salmon troll vessels. The current rate of one ping per hour is appropriate for salmon trolling because the allowable groundfish take is low and the fishery is not restricted by substantial closed areas. Many trollers not engaged in groundfish fisheries do not have VMS because of costs and they do not want rockfish on their gear. Rockfish prices are low relative to salmon which can be worth \$100 per fish.

PFMC  
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