



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Alaska Fisheries Science Center  
Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

October 13, 2015

Dear Vessel Owner,

This letter is to notify you that your vessel has been selected to participate in the 2016 electronic monitoring (EM) Cooperative Research Program. The attached EM Pre-Implementation Plan describes the specific criteria for vessel participation and other operational details to ensure effective deployment of EM systems in 2016. There are currently 57 longline vessels in the 40-57.5 ft LOA size class that have opted-in to the EM selection pool. Now that the Council has finalized the program rules for 2016 pre-implementation of EM, you are being contacted to confirm that your vessel has been placed in the 2016 EM selection pool, or to let us know if you would prefer to return your vessel to the partial coverage human observer pool.

After reviewing the program requirements detailed in the attached plan, please let us know by **November 20, 2015** if you do **NOT** wish to participate in the EM Cooperative Research Program in 2016. This is the final opt-in, opt-out date for all vessels. Please note this date differs from the advance notification of fishing activity in 2016 discussed below. Vessels participating in the EM program will be placed in the EM selection pool for the duration of the 2016 season, with no probability of carrying a human observer on any trips for the 2016 fishing season. Vessels deciding not to participate in the EM program will be placed in the human observer pool. In 2016, vessels in the human observer pool will not be granted conditional releases or temporary exemptions for limited bunk space or life raft capacity, as the EM Pre-Implementation Plan provides a monitoring alternative.

There is also room within the Council's approved EM selection pool to accommodate a small number of additional vessels that meet the Council's priority criteria. Please note that the Council will be sending out a reminder in its October newsletter for any vessels that are still interested in participating in the 2016 EM pre-implementation program to opt-in by November 20, 2015. Because your vessel is already in the 2016 EM selection pool, you do not need to contact NMFS unless you choose to opt-out for 2016.

If you plan to participate in the EM Cooperative Research Program in 2016, you must notify NMFS **at least 30 days in advance** of each of the selection periods (Jan-Feb; Mar-Jun; July-Oct; or Nov-Dec). For example, if you plan to fish in the Jan-Feb, 2016 selection period you must notify NMFS by Dec. 1 2015 of your intent to fish. If you plan to fish in Mar-June 2016

selection period you must notify NMFS by Feb 1, 2016 of your intent to fish during that period. This advance notice is critical for NMFS to randomly select a subset of vessels from the pool of available vessels to carry EM systems during each of these four selection periods. The advance notice is also important to ensure sufficient time for the EM service provider to install the necessary EM equipment. If you do not notify NMFS of your intent to fish 30 days in advance of the selection period(s), NMFS will assume that you will not be fishing during the time period. Please note that the success of EM Cooperative Research Program in 2016 is dependent upon your cooperation and active participation in this program. As such, we ask that you carefully read this letter with attachment and understand all of the obligations, requirements, and dates required to participate in this cooperative research effort.

To notify NMFS of your intent to opt-out of the 2016 EM selection pool or to register prior to one of the 2016 selection periods and for any other questions regarding participating in the EM cooperative research please contact Liz Chilton at the Observer Program at (206) 526-4197, or by email at [elizabeth.chilton@noaa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.chilton@noaa.gov).

Chris Rilling  
Director  
Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division  
Alaska Fisheries Science Center