



**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 98115-6349

August 25, 2014

Dear vessel operator/owner,

Thank you for your interest in participating in an Industry and NMFS cooperative research project using electronic monitoring (EM) systems. This cooperative research will address how EM technologies can best be used to complement or improve existing data collection programs to estimate bycatch in Alaskan fisheries. We are pleased to inform you that your vessel has been selected to participate in this EM project.

All Alaskan industry members were given the opportunity to participate in this EM cooperative research project and NMFS has capacity to support 10 EM systems at present. As we had more volunteers than capacity, we selected 10 boats from the 23 who volunteered.

The criteria we applied to make these selections were:

1. The vessel was a participant in previous EM projects;
2. The vessel is currently operating in the vessel selection or no-selection pool of the observer program using hook and line gear;
3. The vessel has a history of operations out of Homer or Sitka, AK.

As your vessel has been selected to participate, I want to outline our expectations of how NMFS will handle your vessel regarding observer coverage, and also what we expect from you as a volunteer in this cooperative research.

NMFS will remove the selected vessels in this cooperative research project from the observer selection pool for human observer coverage for the duration of the project. At this point, we expect this research project will continue through June of 2015. You can stop participating in this research project at any time by informing us, which would then place your vessel back in the selection pool for human observer coverage.

As a participant in this cooperative research, your vessel will carry EM systems supplied by contractors working for NMFS or the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission on every groundfish and halibut fishing trip for the duration of this research project. The exception to that are state water fisheries outside the purview of NMFS. The EM systems will be installed in either Homer or Sitka, AK and these systems will be removed at the same port of installation, once the vessel's participation has ended. As the owner/operator of a volunteer vessel, you will

be contacted by an EM system provider to coordinate the availability of your vessel for the EM system installation.

As a participant in Track I of this cooperative research, you are expected to ensure the EM system installed on your vessel is continuously operating and recording video image data during all groundfish and halibut fishing trips. Should the EM system experience a mechanical failure while deployed on your vessel, you are responsible for coordinating with the EM system provider to correct the situation. This is an important aspect of the EM work as we are assessing the reliability of these systems for future implementation.

Your vessel also has the option to carry an electronic logbook (e-log). E-logs are available to be deployed on any vessel that is interested. NOAA enforcement allows use of the e-log for the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulation requirements. A paper printout from the e-log can be provided to the port sampler in-season or sent to the IPHC after the fishing season.

Thanks again for your participation in this project. We look forward to working with you on it.

Martin Loefflad  
Director  
Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division  
Alaska Fisheries Science Center  
7600 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115