

DRAFT

<month/day>, 2014

<operator name>  
<address line 1>  
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Dear <operator name>

The North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program is seeking volunteers to participate in a cooperative research project using electronic monitoring (EM) technology to collect data on board commercial fishing vessels. The goal of the research is to determine whether EM technologies can be used to complement or improve existing data collection programs and whether this can be achieved in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. The Observer Program is looking for approximately 10 volunteer vessels to participate in the program.

**Vessels participating in this cooperative research by volunteering for EM systems in 2014 will be removed from the Observer Program's vessel selection pool process for the duration of the vessel's participation in the cooperative research.**

Priority will be given to vessels that meet the following criteria:

- Are currently in the vessel selection coverage category of the observer program;
- Were previously released from coverage in 2013 or 2014;
- Are 40-57.5 feet in length fishing IFQ quota.

Please note that while these are our priorities, we will consider any fixed gear vessel whose owner expresses an interest in helping us on this EM development project.

EM systems will be installed in Homer, Kodiak, Petersburg, or Sitka, AK. Once the vessel's participation has ended, these systems will be removed at one of these ports. Vessels that are selected will have the option to carry an electronic logbook (e-log). E-logs are available to be deployed on any longline or pot vessels that are 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. It is also anticipated that a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released later in the year for approximately 5-10 vessels to participate in a second phase of cooperative research in which vessels will be paid to carry both an EM system and an observer. We are offering financial compensation for this aspect of the cooperative research as it will likely require more effort on the part of the participating vessels. This phase of the research will be open to all vessels in partial coverage using fixed gear. We are in the planning phase of this RFP process and more details will follow.

If you would like to participate in this EM cooperative research in Alaska, please contact Elizabeth Chilton at 206 526-4197 or via e-mail at [elizabeth.chilton@noaa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.chilton@noaa.gov) by May

30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. We look forward to working with you in this cooperative research endeavor as it will likely influence the future of fisheries monitoring in Alaska.

Martin Loefflad  
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