



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 Northeast
Seattle, Washington 98115-0070

November 05, 2012

Owner Name
Send to Address Line 1
Send to City
Send to State - Zip

Dear Send to Name

We have identified your vessel as one that will be impacted by the new North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program). In January 2013, NMFS plans to change observer coverage requirements for vessels and processing plants operating in North Pacific groundfish and halibut fisheries. This letter and the enclosures contain information that will help you comply with the requirements of the new Observer Program.

The new Observer Program will place all vessels and processors in the groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska into one of two observer coverage categories: (1) a full observer coverage category, and (2) a partial observer coverage category.

The information in this letter applies to vessels in the partial coverage category only. Vessels in the partial coverage category will see substantial changes in how observers are deployed and paid for. For the partial coverage category, NMFS will place vessels into three pools with differing requirements. These pools and requirements are described in the program summary included with this letter.

We have identified the following vessel/s under your ownership as being in the **Vessel Selection** pool of the partial coverage category:

My Vessel Name, My Vessel Name

As a participant in the Vessel Selection pool, you will be required to comply with observer requirements if your vessel is selected for observer coverage. The majority of the vessels in the Vessel Selection pool will not be selected for coverage in the first year of the program. However, there is a chance that any vessel greater than 40 feet length overall could be selected. If your vessel is selected for coverage, NMFS will send you a second letter, at least 30 days in advance, informing you of the selection, the time period it applies to, the observer provider's (AIS, Inc.) contact information, and a mechanism for you to provide NMFS information if you believe your vessel cannot accommodate an observer. If your vessel is selected, you will be required to carry an observer for every groundfish and halibut trip during a 2-month time period. AIS, Inc. is the company that will be providing observers, and they will contact you to coordinate on your fishing plan for the 2-month time period and get an observer to your vessel for each groundfish and halibut trip. If you are not selected for coverage, you do not need to take any action.



During the first year of the new Observer Program, carrying an electronic monitoring (EM) system instead of a human observer will not be an option. However, NMFS is working to develop Electronic Monitoring (EM) capacity in Alaska, and we are looking for volunteers from the fleet willing to assist in our efforts. We have included a description of the EM project and a self-addressed, stamped postcard to return if you would like to volunteer. We believe that we can only make EM possible in Alaska with the help of the commercial industry. Please see the enclosure for more information.

As the 2013 fishing year approaches, NMFS will be conducting outreach to explain the new Observer Program requirements. We will announce our outreach activities and provide answers to frequently asked questions on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/>. NMFS will also post the final regulations on this website once they are published.

The new Observer Program will help ensure we provide the best available scientific data to NMFS and the North Pacific Management Council so that we can work together to successfully manage our Alaskan fishery resources. I look forward to your help and cooperation as we implement these changes to the Observer Program in 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Loefflad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Martin Loefflad

Director
Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 99802

Enclosures:

- 1) Program summary
- 2) EM project description
- 3) Self-addressed, stamped postcard