

LL2 Observer

The Council recognizes that there is a shortage of Lead Level 2 (LL2) observers for deployment on CP hook-and-line vessels. In order to provide and maintain a viable observer pool, there is a need to ensure that there is a sufficient training opportunity for new LL2 observers as well as consideration of incentives to retain existing trained LL2 observers.

Resolution of this issue may require non-regulatory actions in the near term. There may be a need for a future discussion paper to analyze options that would require regulatory amendment.

Successful resolution of this issue in the near term will require a cooperative effort from NMFS, the Freezer Longline Coalition, and the observer providers. The Council strongly encourages the FLC and observer providers to meet and collectively work together to resolve this issue. The Council requests that a representative from the NMFS Observer Program should be in attendance at the work session in order to assist the parties in arriving at solutions. The work group should consider (but are not limited to) the following recommendations:

- 1.) The owners of the FLC vessels send letters to their vessels reaffirming the vessel responsibilities to the observer and company policy on treatment of observers. The FLC vessels will continue to voluntarily take a second observer for training purposes as space and scheduling allows.
- 2.) The observer providers consider incentives that would facilitate retention of trained LL2 observers including (but not limited to): increased pay; variation in deployment scheduling between trawl and fixed gear vessels; contract length; as well suggestions on encouraging a work place environment to which the observers would be more likely to return.

In addition to the work group considerations, the Council recommends that NMFS investigate training and deployment requirements and non-regulatory changes that may assist in increasing the pool of available LL2 qualified observers. NMFS should also determine what changes are required to be able to deploy trawl LL2 observers on fixed gear vessels in the event a longline trained LL2 observer is not available.