E1 Staff Tasking – LL2 Observers
Council Motion - October 13, 2015

The Council request staff to update a discussion paper requested by Council at the June 2014 meeting, addressing considerations for regulatory changes to alleviate the ongoing shortage of LL2 observers available for deployment to the hook-and-line CP fleet in the BSAI. To initiate discussion, the paper should consider the following concepts.

- Allow deployment of a non-fixed gear LL2 observer on FLC vessels if the only alternative is that the vessel must stand down:

o Deploy any non-LL2 observer

o Deploy a trawl LL2 observer

- Allow observer experience on fixed gear vessels in other regions to count towards LL2 certification.

- Allow full-coverage providers to deploy observers on pot CVs (in the partial coverage category) to secure fixed gear LL2 certification.

- Institute an at-sea training component to the Federal observer training program, whereby the agency would pay for fixed gear LL2 certification.

As well as the following non-regulatory option:

- Encourage AIS to become a certified observer provider, and supply LL2 observers to FLC vessel.

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As well as the following updated options from June 9th 2014 D-5 Staff tasking motion for Lead Level 2 Observer Discussion Paper.

1. Identify how many fixed-gear, newly LL2 qualified observers were certified in 2013**, 2014 and 2015** working in each the full coverage and partial coverage programs.

2. How many fixed-gear, LL2 certified observers were available for deployment in 2013***, 2014 and 2015*** compared to 2012.

3. Identify alternative methods to develop a sustainable, renewable and adequate pool of fixed-gear, LL2 qualified observers. Methods could be regulatory (such as further modifications to prior experience requirements) or non-regulatory (such as additional work with an in-season advisor via ATLAS, especially during the early days of the cruise).

The discussion paper is intended to guide the Council in developing potential alternatives for a regulatory amendment package to the Observer Program.