

AP motion: C1 Observer Annual Report

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The AP supports the OAC recommendations on the 2016 Observer Annual Report. For the 2018 ADP process, we wish to highlight the following:

- Previous AP statements have expressed that the tendering provisions relative to observer coverage are creating a data bias. We recommend the Council task staff to work with industry groups over the summer to develop both short-term and long-term solutions, including potential regulatory changes.
- When evaluating the “hurdle” thresholds identified by the OAC, consideration should be given by gear type (especially for pot cod). The AP is supportive of identifying minimum coverage targets by gear type, but also recognizes the importance of prioritizing observer coverage in PSC-limited fisheries.
- The importance of a review of the methodology to integrate/optimize EM as part of the ADP by the EM workgroup or a sub-set of the OAC during this initial transition period.

For the 2017 Observer report, we request the following:

- An evaluation of the multi-year trend in lower at-sea monitoring of bottom trawl trips vs. pelagic trawl trips for potential observer effects.
- Inclusion of variance estimates for PSC and other key species.

Motion passed 18/0.

Rationale:

- The first bullets will largely be addressed over the summer by a potential subgroup. The OAC group doesn't meet again until this fall.
- Further progress is needed on the tendering issue for both Pollock and Pacific cod deliveries in the Western Gulf with respect to: understanding the extent of data needs; the feasibility of maintaining separate tender strata in 2018; and long-term solutions to the ongoing source of potential bias with tender deliveries.
- The OAC recognizes the value of a floor level of coverage, but that it may be appropriate to evaluate gear types and their targeted species at different rates because of their variability and potential susceptibilities to biases.
- Because PSC has the ability to shut down other fisheries, accurate data is important.
- There is one year before the fees for EM and the observer program are shared. A first look and dry run would be useful in making sure we are working with industry and identifying efficiencies and how well the programs will work with one another.

- The annual report identifies that the achievement of target rates of coverage between pelagic and nonpelagic trawl are distinct. The data needs to be evaluated separately to evaluate whether the two gears possess potential observer effects/bias.
- Understanding the level of variability in coverage rates by species will allow for a better indication of achievement for the output of the program and aid in future decision making regarding changes in species' target.

