**Draft text for Amendment 126 to the Fishery Management Plans for Groundfish of the Bering Sea / Aleutian Islands Management Area**

1. In Section 3.9.2 add the text in bold:

3.9.2 Observer Program
The Council and NMFS must have the best available biological and socioeconomic information with which to carry out their responsibilities for conserving and managing groundfish resources. The purpose of the Observer Program is to verify catch composition and quantity, including those discarded at sea, and collect biological information on marine resources. Used in conjunction with reporting and weighing requirements, the information collected by observers or electronic monitoring systems provides the foundation for inseason management and for tracking species-specific catch and bycatch amounts. Scientists use information collected by observers or electronic monitoring systems for stock assessments and marine ecosystem research.
To address management and scientific information needs, all vessels fishing for groundfish with a Federal Fishing Permit in Federal waters or in a State of Alaska parallel fishery, and all vessels fishing halibut or sablefish IFQ in Federal or State waters, and shoreside processors that have a Federal Processor Permit or Registered Buyer Permit are included in the Observer Program. All these vessels and processors may be required to accommodate one or more NMFS-certified observers or an electronic monitoring system. Provisions of the North Pacific Observer Program are developed in consultation with the Council and established in regulations.
All groundfish and halibut vessels and processors are included in one of two coverage categories: partial and full. Generally, catcher vessels and shoreside processors, when not participating in a catch share program with a transferrable PSC limit, are in the partial coverage category. Catcher processors and motherships, and catcher vessels and processors when participating in a catch share program with a transferrable PSC limit, generally are in the full observer coverage category. Some exceptions to these classifications are detailed in regulation.
Vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are subject to an ex-vessel value based fee not to exceed 2%, as implemented and revised through regulations, and are required to carry an observer or electronic monitoring system as determined by NMFS. NMFS develops an Annual Deployment Plan and makes adjustments to the plan after scientific evaluation of data collected under the Observer Program. Vessels and processors in the full observer coverage category are required to obtain observer coverage by contracting directly with observer providers**,** **or obtain electronic monitoring systems,** to meet coverage requirements in regulation. **Tender vessels may be required to carry electronic monitoring to meet monitoring objectives aboard vessels in the full or partial coverage category.**

2. In Table ES-2, row “Observer Program”, add the text in bold:

All groundfish and halibut vessels and processors may be required to accommodate one or more NMFS-certified observers or an electronic monitoring system, in order to verify catch composition and quantity, including catch discarded at sea, and to collect biological information on marine resources. Vessels and processors are included in one of two coverage categories: partial and full. Vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are subject to an ex-vessel value-based fee not to exceed 2%, and are required to
carry an observer or electronic monitoring system as determined by NMFS through an Annual Deployment Plan. Vessels and processors in the full observer coverage category are required to obtain observer coverage by contracting directly with observer providers**, or obtain electronic monitoring systems,** to meet coverage requirements in regulation. **Tender vessels may be required to carry electronic monitoring to meet monitoring objectives aboard vessels in the full or partial coverage category.**

3. In Appendix A, add the following text:

Amendment 126, implemented on (*insert effective date of amendment*), revising Amendment 86:

Allows the use of electronic monitoring systems to meet observer coverage requirements for vessels in the full observer coverage category. **Specifies that tender vessels may be required to carry electronic monitoring to meet monitoring objectives aboard vessels in the full or partial coverage category.**