

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
Finding in Support of Onboard Observer Requirement in the Prince William Sound Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery

2008-261-FB

The Alaska Board of Fisheries may adopt regulations it considers advisable for the conservation and development of fishery resources of the state, including the authority to require, in a fishery, observers on board fishing vessels. Where the board adopts a regulation requiring onboard observers it must make a written determination that an on-board observer program:

- A. is the only practical data-gathering or enforcement mechanism for that fishery,
- B. will not unduly disrupt the fishery,
- C. can be conducted at a reasonable cost, and
- D. can be coordinated with observer programs of other agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission. (see AS 16.05.251(a)(13))

The board finds that in the Prince William Sound Pollock pelagic trawl fishery, a requirement for on-board observers is warranted and reasonably necessary for the conservation and development of fishery resources.

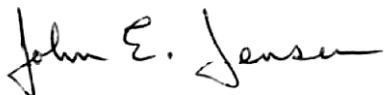
The board does not find any other practical alternatives for gathering data in this fishery that would provide all of the information needed by the Department of Fish and Game (Department).

The board received testimony from the public and based on lack of public opposition from stakeholders and participants in the fishery concludes that use of Department observers will not unduly disrupt the fishery.

The observer program can be conducted at little or no cost to fishing operations because the observers would be Department personnel.

The program can be coordinated with other agencies. There is a data sharing protocol in place with the federal fisheries programs to facilitate sound management of fishery stocks which may be found in both federal and state waters. Observer data recorded by Department observers would be subject to this data sharing agreement, and a state observer program will not duplicate or interfere with a federal program.

ADOPTED this 31st day of December, 2008



John Jensen, Chair
Alaska Board of Fisheries

Vote: 7 in favor / 0 opposed