

Letters for Southwest Data Collection

A.2.1 Advance Letter for Fishing Vessel Survey

<DATE>

Phish Erman

<Vessel Name>

Address

City, state, zip

Dear Mr. Erman:

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) of NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service) is conducting a confidential, voluntary survey to learn more about commercial fisheries in Southwest Alaska (SW Alaska). With your help, we can better describe the important role commercial fishing activities play in the regional economies of SW Alaska and elsewhere. Your responses to this survey will enable us to provide more accurate information to industry stakeholders, fishery managers and the general public on the valuable economic contributions made by SW Alaska fisheries. Your confidential responses will be used only by project economists for the purpose of estimating the economic contribution of SW Alaska fisheries to the local region and the rest of the U.S.

Your vessel was selected from those that landed fish at SW Alaska ports during 2014. Vessels were classified based on the type of fishery that accounted for the majority of SW Alaska ex-vessel revenues in 2014. For example a vessel with 2014 revenues from SW Alaska landings derived 35% from longline gear, 10% from pot gear and 55% from trawl gear would be classified as a "Trawl" vessel for purposes of administering this survey. However in responding to the survey questions, please include expenditures associated with your entire portfolio of SW Alaska fisheries activities during the year.

Only a small sample of fishermen was chosen for this study, so your help is critical to its success. This study has been endorsed by XXX, YYY, and ZZZ in recognition of the importance of this information to their memberships, the fishing industry and the communities that depend on SW Alaska fisheries.

In the next few days, you will receive a personalized questionnaire in the mail from AFSC. Please fill out the survey form and return it in the included pre-addressed and stamped envelope. You will also have the option to fill out the survey questionnaire on-line using a form hosted on a secure internet website. You will be provided a unique, confidential password along with the mailed questionnaire which will allow you to access the on-line form if so desired. The survey asks about employment and earnings of crew and skippers who worked on your vessel. It also asks about the distribution of expenditures you made in SW Alaska communities and elsewhere that were necessary to own and operate your vessel.

Your response is voluntary, but important. The confidential information you provide will *not* be seen by enforcement or used for any other purposes specific to you or to any individual

businesses. We are requesting this information solely to help us understand the economic contribution your industry makes in order to make better estimates of the economic impacts of policies, management actions and other factors that affect the fishery. However this requires that a representative number of fish harvesting businesses, like yours, fully complete the survey. To ensure that we have the best possible and most representative information about your industry, we need to hear from you.

All responses you provide to this survey are considered confidential. Only personnel authorized by NOAA and who are required by law to maintain confidentiality of your information will have access. Only summarized, aggregated results from the survey will be released publicly.

Again, you are one of only a small number of fishermen who were selected to help. To keep costs low and make sure that the information obtained correctly represents SW Alaska fisheries activity, we need to hear from you.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Blue Sky
Survey Director
Good Survey Company

A.2.2 Cover Letter for Fishing Vessel Survey

<Date>

Mr. Phish Erman

<Vessel Name>

Address

City, state, zip

Dear Mr. Erman:

As you know, commercial fishing plays a significant role in the Southwest Alaska (SW Alaska) economy. One way commercial fishing contributes to the region's economy is through employment on fishing vessels and the income that is spent in the region. Commercial fishing vessels also contribute to a region's economy through other types of spending necessary to own and operate the vessel. Information about the economic contribution of the commercial fishing industry is needed in order to help inform better decisions by industry stakeholders, fishery managers, state and local policy makers, local businesses owners, and others whose decisions affect industries and people involved in SW Alaska fisheries.

To help us improve our understanding of commercial fishing's role in the SW Alaska economy, we ask that you complete the enclosed voluntary survey. The survey is being conducted by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) and collects employment and income information related to landings made by your vessel, <Vessel name>. The information you provide will help inform better decisions and thereby increase the long-run economic benefits to fishery participants. If you choose to fill out your questionnaire using the optional on-line form hosted on a secure internet website, the url is:XXXXXXXX. Your personal password for accessing the secure online form is included with the attached, personalized questionnaire.

Your vessel was selected at random from those that landed fish at SW Alaska ports during 2014. Vessels were classified based on the type of fishery that accounted for the majority of SW Alaska ex-vessel revenues in 2014. For example a vessel with 2014 revenues from SW Alaska landings that were derived 35% from longline gear, 10% from groundfish pot gear and 55% from trawl gear would be classified as a "Trawl" vessel for purposes of administering the survey. However in responding to the survey questions, please include expenditures associated with your entire portfolio of SW Alaska fisheries activities during the year.

This study has been endorsed by XXX, YYY, and ZZZ in recognition of the importance of this information to their memberships, the fishing industry, and the communities that depend on the fishery.

Your responses to this survey are considered confidential under section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100. Only summarized, aggregated results from the survey will be released publicly. Your personal information will not be disclosed. Only personnel authorized by NOAA and who are required by law to maintain confidentiality of your information will have access to your responses. All

authorized personnel have signed non-disclosure agreements specifying penalties for unauthorized use and disclosure of confidential fisheries data.

Your response is voluntary, but important. The confidential information you provide will *not* be used for enforcement or any other purposes specific to you or to any individual businesses. We are asking for this information solely to help us understand the economic contribution that your industry makes in order to make better estimates of the economic impacts of policies, management actions and other factors affecting the fishery. However this requires that a representative number of fish harvesting businesses, like yours, fully complete the survey. To ensure that the best possible and most representative information is obtained about your industry, we need to hear from you.

Most of the information needed to complete the survey is available on your 2014 federal business tax return and your crew settlement sheets. With these materials in hand, the survey should take about 45 minutes to complete and return in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope, or submit using the optional on-line form.

You are one of only a few vessel owners being asked to participate in this study. You were randomly selected from all vessel owners who landed fish in Southwest Alaska region ports. To ensure the results of the study truly represent the industry, including vessels like yours, it is very important that you complete and return the survey.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this study. Please call me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxx@xxx.xxx. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Blue Sky
Survey Director
Good Survey Company

A.2.3 Postcard Reminder for Fishing Vessel Survey

Dear Mr. Erman:

Recently a questionnaire was mailed to you seeking information about your vessel's commercial fishing activity in Southwest Alaska.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not completed and returned the paper survey or submitted the on-line version, we ask that you please do so today.

It is very important that we hear from you. You are one of only a small number of fishermen selected to participate in this study. Your responses will help us improve understanding of commercial fishing's role in the Southwest Alaska economy. However, a high rate of survey response is required to make sure we have a sufficient number and adequate representation of fishery participants.

If you need another copy of the survey or access to your secure, on-line form, please call me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email to xxx@xxxnet and the information will be provided to you.

Thank you for your help.

Blue Sky
Survey Director
Good Survey Company

A.2.4 Second Reminder Letter

<Date>

Mr. Phish Erman

<Vessel Name>

Address

City, state, zip

Dear Mr. Erman:

About a month ago, we mailed a survey to you seeking information about your industry's contribution to the Southwest Alaska economy. The survey is intended to fill critical data gaps that have limited the ability to assess the economic impacts of fisheries policies, management actions and other factors on the economies of the regions and communities that depend on your industry. **In recognition of the importance to your industry and communities that benefit from your industry, this study has been endorsed by XXX, YYY, and ZZZ.**

Your response is voluntary, but important. However, as of today, we have not received a sufficient number of completed surveys for us to get an accurate picture of your industry and its contributions to the economies of local regions and the state as a whole. Only about xx% of surveys have been returned to date, which is too few for us to provide accurate information needed for analysis. If you have already completed and returned the paper survey, or completed the online survey form, please accept our sincere thanks.

If you have not already completed the survey, we ask that you please do so as soon as possible. Due to some delivery problems, the survey may not have reached you as intended, so we are including another copy of the survey in case you didn't receive or possibly misplaced the original copy we sent. If at all possible, please return your completed survey by xx/xx/xx.

Your responses to the survey are considered confidential under section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100. Your personal information will not be disclosed and can only be used by authorized personnel responsible for management and research of fisheries under the authority of NOAA. All authorized personnel have signed non-disclosure agreements specifying penalties for misuse of confidential fisheries data. Only summarized, aggregated results from the survey will be released publicly.

We appreciate that you may have reservations about participating in this survey because of the personal nature of the information being collected and concerns about how it may be used. We also know the information requested is private, sensitive and detailed, so we have done our best to request only information that is not available from other sources. Again please be assured the information you provide in the survey is strictly confidential. It will be used only in aggregate along with responses from the other survey respondents. This information *will not* be used to monitor or check on any individual vessel's performance or compliance with any regulations.

This survey takes most people about 45 minutes to complete. For some questions, you may need to consult your records. Please do your best to provide complete information. We have included instructions for accessing a secure on-line version of the survey, which requires the unique login ID and password that we have enclosed. The on-line survey is designed to minimize the time required to complete and return the survey, but we have also included a paper copy. Both versions of the survey ask identical questions, and we ask that you use whichever version is most convenient for you. If you choose to use the printed survey, please return it in the enclosed self-addressed, postage-paid envelope.

If you have any questions about this study or about any of the questions in the survey, please contact xxx toll free at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Blue Sky
Survey Director
Good Survey Company