

*Mandates:*

*FY23 Omnibus: Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishing Effort- Within funds for Fisheries Data Collections, Surveys, and Assessments, the agreement provides \$850,000 for NMFS, in consultation with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and shrimp industry stakeholders, to continue the development and implementation of the newly approved Electronic Logbook program (ELB) that archives vessel position and automatically transmits scientific shrimp fishing effort data via cellular service to NMFS.*

[2020 Shrimp Biological Opinion](#). “RPM 1: Monitoring F/SER2 must ensure that future fisheries effort monitoring is conducted at equivalent (or greater) levels as conducted over the past 10 years”

[Amendment 18](#) *Modifying the Shrimp Effort Threshold. Final Shrimp Amendment 18 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Waters*

**Proposal:**

Request the Agency use congressionally allocated funds to implement a three-part approach to achieve a modernized electronic location recording program to monitor trawling effort in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery by 2025. The early adopter approach would have three initiatives:

1. **Phase-out 3G cELB system (2023-2024):** Provide additional SD cards, antennae and other 3G cELB hardware necessary to support the manual retrieval of SD cards from vessels originally selected for 3G units for **two** more years until which time the 3G program will be phased out by 2025. Industry will provide in-kind support in the form of personnel to facilitate collection of data from vessels and to support the existing chip mail-in requirement. This is simply an interim, temporary action to ensure the integrity of the historical data set while transitioning to the subsequent steps in order to comply with the directive to continue the development and implementation of a new program.
2. **Testing (2023):** Implement side-by-side testing of type-approved cVMS units and cELB currently in use to inform rulemaking regarding “*NMFS will perform at-sea trials...*” that includes hardware and software requirements to inform the Framework Amendment. This will only be possible through active industry participation to identify volunteer vessels and support outfitting shrimp vessels. Testing would need to be completed by the end of 2023, after which the Council would proceed with finalizing the framework action based on the best information available at that time. At the end of testing, the volunteer vessels would become the initial early adopters keeping the installed devices at no cost. NMFS would pay for installation of cVMS devices and monthly fees during the testing period.
3. **Install (2023-2024):** Following testing, purchase, install and deploy units that accurately collected position data for generating shrimp trawling effort estimates on approximately 100-200 vessels, depending on funds availability, prior to rulemaking. Units deployed on shrimp vessels would support either alternatives 2 or 3 in the Council’s Framework Action, while also meeting the terms of the Shrimp BiOP RPM#1 to achieve equal or greater effort monitoring. NMFS would pay for installation of the cVMS devices and monthly fees up until 2025 or until funding runs out, whichever is earlier.

*Details:*

The three-pronged approach would support either Framework Amendment alternatives 2 (VMS) or 3 (alternative effort collection process) in Action 1. The major difference between alternatives

2 and 3 is in how the data are transmitted to the Science Center: either through the existing VMS administration or directly through a separate process. The details and cost-benefits of either approach will need to be considered with further work on the Framework Amendment, with the decision on a preferred alternative to be made by the Council before submission to NOAA Fisheries.

During the **Testing** and **Install** phases the effort data would be sent directly from the VMS providers to the SEFSC and not routed through the existing NOAA Office of Law Enforcement process. The Science Center could absorb the costs of obtaining and housing a limited amount of data for the Testing and Install phases.

*Timeline:*

2023: Begin phase-out of 3G units, Test cVMS and other non-type approved cellular devices, Install units successfully passing testing (during and after testing) on ~100-200 vessels (at agency cost)

2024: Rulemaking and final action on Framework Amendment, Install on more vessels (possible OLE reimbursement or fleet covers costs)

2025: Amendment goes into effect and implementation of new program, 3G system phased out. Install on remaining vessels (possible OLE reimbursement or fleet covers costs)