

May 9, 2000

Dr. Dan Ito, Task Leader
Groundfish Observer Program
7600 Sand Point Way, NE
Seattle, WA 98115

Dear Dr. Ito:

It's come to my attention that prior observers in good standing who have allowed their certification to lapse and who require retraining are being denied entry into training because they worked as an observer before the statistics course requirement was in place. On behalf of these observers and the APO, I would like to request a policy change that may assist in alleviating potential observer shortages in the future. The change could include one or both of the following elements:

- Treat prior observers in good standing different than new trainees. If an observer has proven him/herself, they should be grandfathered into the program.
- Allow courses that include statistics but aren't actually titled "statistics". Observers could submit course descriptions and/or letter from professor stating that a working knowledge of statistics was required to pass the particular course.

I'd appreciate a response in writing or via email. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Dietrich
Association for Professional Observers
P.O. Box 30167
Seattle, WA 98103

cc: Steve Pennoyer, NMFS AK Region
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