Digital Observer, Inc.

Project Proposal:	Fix short taglines; market chilling to the fleet. Two programs can run with same staff.
Strategic Objectives:	Promote handling practices that are effective and practical; strengthen communications between the Association and its members, build desire of the fishery to chill product during harvest.
Cost:	Depends on processor participation. May be $100,000 total with ~$40,000 from the RSDA.
Project Duration:	April–December, 2014.

Problem Statement 1: Based on previous research conducted by Digital Observer Inc., I believe that roughly five percent of all taglines in Bristol Bay are too short. Some are extremely short. Short taglines stress the salmon inside the brailers, causing fish to bend and bruise. Additionally, short taglines can also affect fish quality in adjacent brailers (see photos attached to this document). It can be difficult for fishermen to notice short taglines while their brailers are empty, but short lines are very noticeable when brailers are being offloaded to tenders.

Problem Statement 2: The drive to chill 100% of the Bristol Bay catch needs a little push; we need to convince more "dry boat" fishermen to make the switch to chilling. Direct outreach to those fishermen might help motivate some to make the change, particularly if the outreach contains information about discounts and price incentives. One method of direct outreach is to talk to "dry" fishermen while they are on the water.

Digital Observer's Proposal: A good solution to the short tagline problem is to alert fishermen to the problem while their boats are unloading at the tender. In 2014 Leader Creek, Trident, and AGS will hire their own tender-based QC staffs. If the RSDA concurs, Digital Observer will train and equip those companies' QC crews. We will ask the crews to be on the lookout for "bad" taglines. The QC staff will then give short lengths of "free" line (paid for by the RSDA) to fishermen with problem brailers. The fishermen will then fix the problem themselves. Ocean Beauty will participate, but wants to split the cost of the program with the RSDA. Other companies may be persuaded either to pay all or some costs, too. Failing that, they may allow QC personnel funded by the RSDA to implement this project aboard company-chartered tenders.

Regarding chilling, Digital Observer will train and monitor the shipboard QC staffs, directing them to notice which boats are delivering un-chilled salmon. The various staffs will learn to approach the "dry" boat captains, providing those fishermen with information and subtle pressure about the benefits of chilling. This program will obviously be unnecessary for fleets like Leader Creek's, where everyone chills. But for mostly-dry fleets, such as those that deliver to AGS, this program might help move the needle a little faster.

It costs approximately $5,500, excluding administrative costs, to put one shipboard QC staffer in the field for 21 days. Some companies will pick up all the $5,500 while others will want to share some (or none) of the cost with the RSDA. Asking already-busy QC staff, such as those at Trident, to do more work may cost the RSDA ~$25 per person per day. I have not been specific about the costs of implementing these proposals because of space limitations and because of uncertainties regarding whether and to what extent other processors (i.e. Peter Pan, Icicle, Silver Bay, North Pacific, Red Salmon, and E&E) will participate. Cost of lines and associated hardware will probably not exceed $5,000. If the RSDA invites a full proposal, I will address the uncertainties and submit a more detailed budget and project narrative.

Mark K Buckley, President, Digital Observer Inc. I certify I have BB-RSDA Strategic Plan and Bylaws.

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Attachment

Fig. 1. Tight tagline stresses and bends fish inside the brailer, causing gaping and bruising.

Fig. 2. Short Tagline stresses fish in brailer at left while shifting weight onto brailer at right.