

Steve,

As you are aware I have been a commercial salmon troll fisherman on this coast for the last 25 years. When DFO and stocks allow I utilize my two commercial troll licenses to fish from the southern US boarder at Washington state to the northern US boarder at Alaska state. I am very concerned with the Federal Government potentially de-manning the few key remaining light stations. My safety and livelihood, and that of my fellow fishermen and coast travelers, hinge on accurate weather observations and broadcasts. I plan my fishing activity and travel to and from the fishing grounds around these observations and broadcasts. In the north, accurate and timely forecasts have become particularly critical as DFO has reduced the areas we are allowed to fish in. In 2009 this left us with no areas that lie within the inside semi-protected waters forcing our small boat fleet to fish off shore in open waters.

Many of the light stations that have been de-manned to date have been replaced with automatic measuring and reporting installations. This year during much of the fishing season on each weather broadcast the reports from 30 to 50% of the automated stations were describe as 'Not Available' either in part or in total. Unless these 'not available' station reports were from light stations that have both human and automated reporting systems I couldn't get an accurate report of local conditions. This often left large gaps in my knowledge of what is taking place weather wise making it difficult at best and dangerous at worst around planning moves. As you are likely aware also forecasts are not always accurate in timing and/or end results. Local observations are key in filling in the pieces of information necessary. De-manning stations before consistently reliable information is made available through the automated technology is foolhardy and dangerous to all of the Canadian citizens that play and work on our coast.

Regards,  
John Hughes  
Area H and Area F active license holder  
Advisor to DFO in H and F areas