



KATE BROWN
Governor

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Madame Secretary,

I request that you expedite declaration of a catastrophic regional fishery disaster under section 315 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), a fishery resource disaster under section 308 (b) and (d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986, and a commercial fishery failure under section 312a of the MSA, for the State of Oregon ocean commercial salmon fisheries for 2018, 2019, and 2020. Performance of these fisheries was very poor in 2018, 2019, and 2020, leading to severe effects on already distressed rural communities and the businesses that depend upon these fisheries. Declaring a catastrophic regional fishery disaster and commercial fishery failure will begin the process for requesting federal aid to assist these fishery-dependent communities during this difficult time.

Oregon ocean commercial salmon fisheries south of Cape Falcon (on our north coast) during these years were affected by reduced allowable catches of Klamath River and Sacramento River fall Chinook, anomalous ocean conditions, and spatial shifts in ocean distribution of these migratory species which reduced the access Oregon fishers have to this resource. While fishing occurred throughout portions of the year in all Oregon waters, commercial harvest was reduced compared to prior years, resulting in a lower economic return. The south of Cape Falcon Oregon commercial ex-vessel value (nominal, not adjusted for inflation) of Chinook during 2018, 2019, and 2020 was \$2.3 million, \$2.0 million, and \$1.4 million respectively, compared to the 2013-2017 average of \$6.3 million.

As you know, salmon are a vital component of Oregon's natural resources and provide significant commercial, recreational, economic, and aesthetic benefits to the state. Salmon are also highly valued by Native American tribes for cultural, subsistence, and economic benefits. While economic assistance will be essential to address the impacts of closures and restrictions on our salmon fisheries, it is vitally important that federal, state, tribal, and local governments

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continue to work together to recover and restore salmon populations and develop management strategies to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our salmon fisheries.

Jason Miner has been designated as the Oregon state coordinator for this request and can be reached at 503-580-2228, or via email, jason.miner@oregon.gov. Mike Harrington of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will act as alternate Oregon state coordinator and can be reached at 503 947-6206.

Climate change and drought are clearly affecting our important fisheries and I greatly appreciate your anticipated support and leadership on this critical issue. I look forward to a favorable reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Brown". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Governor Kate Brown

cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Peter DeFazio
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
The Honorable Cliff Bentz
The Honorable Kurt Schrader
The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici

KB:jm