



OFFICES OF THE GOVERNORS

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
CALIFORNIA

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
OREGON

April 21, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to request that you declare a fishery resource disaster under section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986, and a commercial fishery failure under section 312a of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (MSA).

State and federal scientists have been meeting over the past several months to both assess west coast salmon populations utilizing the most up-to-date biological and fishery data available and to finalize predicted returns for 2009. A report has been prepared and presented to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) outlining the findings of that scientific review.

For Sacramento River Fall Chinook Salmon (SRFC), the data indicate that the number of returning adult spawners in 2008 did not meet the conservation objective under the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan for the second consecutive year. Equally alarming, the projected number of SRFC adult spawners returning in 2009 will barely meet the conservation objective. If that objective is not met next year, an "overfishing alert" will automatically be triggered and the Council will be required to take actions to protect and rebuild the stock.

Based on this information, the Council at its April meeting recommended a complete closure of commercial Chinook salmon fisheries from Cape Falcon, Oregon to the US/Mexico border off California, and severely curtailed or closed other recreational ocean Chinook salmon fisheries within its jurisdiction that impact SRFC. As a result, we urge you to declare a commercial fishery failure which, under the MSA, will enable the fishing communities affected by any closure or restrictions to receive vital economic assistance. Some of the communities supporting these fisheries will experience economic hardship even more severe than the losses they endured after restrictions were imposed in 2006 on west coast ocean salmon fisheries because of the low abundance of Klamath River fall Chinook salmon, and again in 2008 in response to critically low abundance of SRFC.

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Salmon are a vital component of California and Oregon's natural resources and provide significant aesthetic, recreational, commercial, and economic benefits to our states. Salmon are also highly valued for cultural, subsistence, and economic reasons by Native American tribes. Hence, economic assistance will again be critical for the well-being of our fishing communities and states. And while such assistance will be essential to address the short-term economic impacts associated with closures or restrictions on our salmon fisheries, we recognize the importance of, and will continue our efforts to recover and restore salmon populations and develop management strategies to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our salmon fisheries.

We greatly appreciate your anticipated support and leadership on this critical issue and look forward to a favorable reply.

Sincerely,



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor of California



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor of Oregon

c: Oregon Congressional Delegation
California Congressional Delegation