



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 6, 2023

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

Re: State of California Federal Fishery Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

In accordance with section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as Acting Governor of the State of California, I am requesting on behalf of Governor Gavin Newsom that you expedite declaration of a fishery resource disaster for the State of California 2023 Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) ocean and inland salmon fisheries.

Earlier today, the Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended a full closure of California's commercial and recreational 2023 ocean salmon fisheries in response to near-historically low stock abundance forecasts for the fall Chinook runs of salmon originating from the Sacramento and Klamath rivers. The National Marine Fisheries Service is expected to implement this closure in May. A host of factors have pushed these iconic and important fisheries to the point of collapse, including prolonged and historic drought, severe wildfires, impacts to spawning and rearing habitat, harmful algal blooms, and ocean forage shifts and associated thiamine deficiency. Extreme climate disruption is compounding these factors and is now testing the resiliency of our salmon. In addition, the life cycle of salmon makes them extremely susceptible to environmental impacts as the salmon that are returning to California's waters now were impacted by drought conditions three years ago on their initial journey out to the ocean.

Those factors, culminating in the anticipated closure of SRFC and KRFC commercial and recreational fisheries, will have severe and long-lasting effects on already distressed coastal communities and the businesses that depend upon these fisheries. These natural causes, and the regulatory restrictions that now appear certain to result from them, constitute "a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster"

under section 312(a). Declaring a fishery resource disaster will begin the process for requesting federal aid to assist these fishery-dependent communities during this extremely difficult time.

The expected closure of the 2023 California commercial salmon fishery will result in loss of 100 percent of the 5-year average annual ex-vessel value of \$15,033,200. The ex-vessel value of commercial salmon landings does not take into account other economic losses resulting from the reduced commercial harvest, nor does it include related economic effects of harvest reductions on charter boats, guides, and other components of the recreational fishery. The Pacific Fishery Management Council estimates that over the past five years (2018-2022) California commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries generated an annual average of \$28.5 million and \$17.2 million<sup>1</sup>, respectively, in coastal community and state personal income. As such, California projects a loss for the 2023 season of over \$45 million from a closure of the SRFC and KRFC commercial and recreational ocean fisheries. This estimate does not account for the full impact to California's communities as it does not include economic impacts to inland salmon fisheries.

As you know, salmon are a vital component of California's cultural and natural resources and provide significant commercial, recreational, economic, intrinsic, and cultural benefits to the state. Based on the projected 100 percent loss of ex-vessel value, I am requesting an expedited declaration of a fishery resource disaster for California's SFRC and KRFC fisheries to enable fishing communities affected by this disaster to receive essential economic assistance.

Please direct questions or requests for more information to Dr. Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Region Manager at [r7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:r7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov) or (805) 568-1246.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your ongoing support of California's fishing communities.

Sincerely,



Eleni Kounalakis  
Acting Governor of California

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<sup>1</sup> Review of 2022 Ocean Salmon Fisheries – Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document for the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Table IV-16.

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate

The Honorable Alex Padilla  
United States Senate

Members of the California Congressional Delegation

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins  
Senate President pro Tempore  
California State Senate

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Assembly Speaker  
California State Assembly

The Honorable Mike McGuire, Chair  
Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture  
California State Senate

The Honorable Mark Stone, Vice Chair  
Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture  
California State Assembly

The Honorable Dave Min, Chair  
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
California State Senate

The Honorable Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Chair  
Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
California State Assembly

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary  
California Natural Resources Agency

Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director  
California Fish and Game Commission