



Leaders of Pacific Coast States Call For Emergency Disaster Relief Funding for Salmon Fisheries

August 22, 2006

Washington, DC – *Following Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez's declaration earlier this month of a Commercial Fisheries Failure off the coasts of California and Oregon, the Senators and Governors from all three Western Coastal states today called for emergency funds to be provided to help the affected fishing communities.*

There are 1,042 salmon trollers and thousands of fishermen in the affected area, including fishermen from all three states.

The states leaders urged the funding assistance in a letter to Senators Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and Robert Byrd (D-W.V.), chairman and ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Senators Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), the chairman and ranking member of the Commerce, Science, Justice Subcommittee.

The following is the text of their letter:

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairman Shelby, Senator Byrd and Senator Mikulski,

Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez has declared a commercial fishery failure pursuant to section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for the salmon fishing season in the states of California and Oregon (declaration attached). This is only the second time ever that the Secretary of Commerce has declared a commercial fishery failure before the fishing season has ended, which underscores the magnitude of the disaster. We appreciate the extraordinary personal attention the Secretary and his staff have given to this severe situation on our coast. We are writing to seek your assistance in providing emergency funding to help the affected fishing communities, either through an amendment or in conference.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council closed commercial salmon fishing this season along more than 400 nautical miles of coast, stretching from Florence, Oregon to Pigeon Point, California. The Council took such a drastic step because for the third consecutive year, the number of naturally spawning Klamath River Chinook salmon is expected to fall below the conservation floor called for in the fishery management plan for salmon.

The largest fishery closure ever on the West Coast, this Federal decision is already having a devastating impact on our rural, coastal economies. According to the Secretary's declaration, the harvest of the commercial salmon fishery in California and Oregon is expected to plummet by 88% from the recent annual average, and ex-vessel revenue is expected to drop by 84%.

In our coastal communities, businesses are closing and people are missing mortgage, lease, and electricity payments. There are 1042 salmon trollers in the affected area, and thousands of fishermen whose livelihoods have been taken away from them.

The Secretary has calculated that this disaster has caused \$16 million in direct harm to the commercial salmon fishery. The Secretary has asked for the States' assistance in measuring the damage to the recreational fishery and to the industries affected downstream (businesses such as docks, warehouses, and icehouses). As soon as we get that information, we will forward it to you. We request your help in providing the necessary emergency funding to the affected communities in our states.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

**Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California**

**Ted Kulongoski
Governor of Oregon**

**Christine Gregoire
Governor of Washington**

**Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator**

**Ron Wyden
United States Senator**

**Patty Murray
United States Senator**

**Barbara Boxer
United States Senator**

**Gordon Smith
United States Senator**

**Maria Cantwell
United States Senator**

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