

# California State Senate

## SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



February 22, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### **RE: Request for Declaration of Disaster for California Red Sea Urchin Fishery**

Dear Governor Newsom,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As Lieutenant Governor, you graciously wrote a gubernatorial request to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross in September 2017 seeking a fishery resource disaster declaration for the California Red Sea Urchin Fishery (attached). In September 2018, Secretary Ross found the Red Sea Urchin Fishery did not meet the requirements and was unable to make a positive fishery disaster determination. Upon a follow-up call with the urchin industry, the Department of Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) it became apparent that Commerce may have erred in their decision because they were unaware of how the sea urchin fishery is managed. They believed there was no distinction between the Northern and Southern California fisheries. DFW representatives were on the call and verified that the fishery has two distinct fisheries and are managed differently with season structure, size limits and zonal boundaries. The argument was compelling. I believe the request would be affirmed now, but the representatives from the Department of Commerce stated there was no mechanism to reevaluate your initial request. They stated California would need to file a new request. DFW has reworked the request to Commerce which includes the original filing for 2016 and they have now added in 2017 since it was a disastrous year as well.

The California Sea Urchin Commission, industry divers and processors have been waiting patiently for the Department of Commerce to ratify the emergency request. It is important to move quickly since there are appropriations for fisheries disasters currently available, and additional appropriations are anticipated shortly. If the emergency request is not ratified in a timely manner, those impacted by the disaster could miss out on desperately needed funding.

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It's my understanding that the new request is prepared and ready for your consideration. On behalf of thousands of struggling Californians who work incredibly hard day-in and day-out in the urchin industry, I respectfully request you to move forward with a Red Sea Urchin Fishery disaster declaration request to Commerce Secretary Ross as soon as possible. Time is of the essence.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and for all of your support of the California Fishing and Aquaculture industries.

Warmest Regards,

MIKE MCGUIRE  
Senator

Thank you for your  
consideration of this  
urgent request.