

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 3, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

We write to express our concerns about the recent closure and restriction of Chinook salmon fisheries in northern and central California, and to request your assistance with this urgent matter. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) has closed the entire Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) and has restricted commercial salmon fishing seasons in other regions to the south¹. The related economic consequences of these restrictions to recreational, commercial, and tribal salmon fishing communities in our districts will be severe. We urge you to ask the Secretary of Commerce to declare a Chinook salmon fishery disaster for California for the 2017 season.

Salmon returns to northern and central California have been declining for decades. However, this year's returns to the Klamath are the lowest on record. Salmon runs in any one year depend on water flows in previous years, and the recent five-year California drought was a major contributor to this year's low salmon abundance. In addition to drought, declining ocean survival, poor water quality, excessive water diversions, and diseases have further diminished salmon populations, thereby threatening the economic viability of fishing businesses and coastal communities.

As you know, the Klamath River fall run Chinook allocation is 0, down from 1,000 fish last year², greater than 500% percent decline. As a result, the California Fish and Game Commission has even shut down the catch and release fishery in the Klamath River, decimating the recreational fishing industry. The Yurok Tribe's allocation of fall-run Chinook salmon has led the tribe to close its commercial fishery altogether. Likewise, the Karuk and Hoopa Valley Tribes have opted to close their salmon fisheries.

The current closure of the KMZ, and drastic restrictions elsewhere on the coast are devastating for fishing communities, which have already been impacted by the Dungeness crab and Klamath

¹ Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2017. Draft Adopted Salmon Management Measures for May 2017-April 30 2018 Ocean Salmon Fisheries (Tables); Including Press release. Accessed 4/18/2017. URL: <http://www.pcouncil.org/2017/04/47516/draft-council-adopted-salmon-management-measures-for-may-2017-april-30-2018-ocean-salmon-fisheries-tables-including-press-release/>

² Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2016. West Coast Salmon Season Dates Set. Accessed 4/18/2017. URL: <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/PFMC-April-2016-salmon-press-release-FINAL.pdf>

salmon fishery disasters from last year. We urge you to immediately ask the Secretary of Commerce to declare a commercial fishery disaster or commercial fishery failure, so that federal relief can be quickly mobilized. If our offices can be of any assistance or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Denise Devotta with Rep. Huffman at denise.devotta@mail.house.gov or Miriam Goldstein with Rep. Speier at miriam.goldstein@mail.house.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



JIMMY PANETTA
Member of Congress



SALUD CARBAJAL
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress