



GAVIN NEWSOM
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D. C. 20230

September 5, 2017

Dear Secretary Ross,

California is experiencing an economic disaster to our fishing industry and communities due to oceanic conditions that have caused the closure of the commercial fishery for Pacific Sardine.

Pacific Sardine populations are strongly influenced by ocean conditions. Oceanographic shifts such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and La Niña's cold-water influence are believed to have precipitated sharply reduced Pacific Sardine populations from Baja California to Canada, resulting in significant declines and a currently low population estimate. The Pacific Sardine fishery is managed under the federal Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan. This plan establishes a cutoff biomass of 150,000 metric tons, below which directed fishing is not allowed. Due to these declines, the fishery was closed in 2015 and 2016 and will remain closed in 2017 and likely 2018. A small allowance for Pacific Sardine bycatch and other small-scale fisheries (tribal, recreational, and live bait) continues to result in very limited landings.

Pacific Sardine is historically one of the top ten highest valued commercial fisheries in California. Statewide, the commercial Pacific Sardine closure in 2015 resulted in a total ex-vessel value of \$343,148, which is 90% less than the 2010-14 average of \$3,504,098. In 2016, the closure resulted in a total ex-vessel value of only \$95,657, which is 96% less than the 2011-15 average of \$2,711,679. These initial estimates are based on the average ex-vessel value of commercial landings and do not account for additional impacts to fish processors or to other businesses that rely on the fishery. Further, the fishery will remain closed through 2017 and may remain closed for the 2018 season as well. Therefore, these initial estimates of impact may increase.

Given the significant impacts to date, I request you declare a fishery resource disaster under section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. § 4107(d)), and a commercial fishery failure under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. § 1861a(a)). As you know, declaring a commercial failure will enable the fishing communities affected by the closure to receive essential

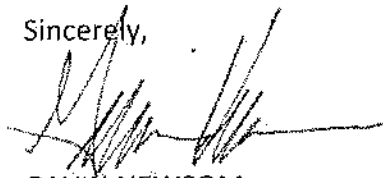


economic assistance. Pacific Sardine is a vital component of California's natural resources and provides significant aesthetic, recreational, commercial, cultural, and economic benefits to our state. Economic assistance will be critical for the well-being of our fishing industry and our state. I also ask National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries to work directly with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to expeditiously complete the required review process.

The CDFW contact is Dr. Craig Shuman (Craig.Shuman@wildlife.ca.gov), and the designated alternate is John Ugoretz (John.Ugoretz@wildlife.ca.gov).

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

GAVIN NEWSOM

Acting Governor of California

CC:

The Honorable Diane Feinstein

The Honorable Kamala Harris

The Honorable Jared Huffman

The Honorable Jackie Speier

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta

The Honorable Salud Carbajal

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo

The Honorable Mike Thompson

Senator Mike McGuire, Chair Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture

Assemblymember Jim Wood, Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture

Valerie Termini, California Fish and Game Commission

Chuck Bonham, California Department of Fish and Wildlife