UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

SEP - 8 2015

Mr. Stanley Mack
Mayor, Aleutians East Borough
3380 C Street, Suite 205
Anchorage, AK 99504

Dear Mayor Mack:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Commerce requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster under Section 312 (a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Sections 308 (b) and (d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA) for the 2010, 2011, and 2012 Nelson Lagoon Sockeye Salmon Fishery.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Region, worked with the State of Alaska to assess whether a commercial fishery failure occurred due to a fisheries resource disaster in the commercial salmon fishery. After reviewing the information provided by the State, I have determined that the request does not meet the requirements for such a finding under either the MSA and IFA.

The first step in evaluating a fishery for disaster assistance is to determine if a fishery resource disaster has occurred. If a fishery resource disaster has not occurred, the fishery is not eligible for disaster assistance. According to the NMFS Policy Guidance for Disaster Assistance Under Magnuson-Stevens Act 312(a) and Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act 308(b) and 308(d), a fishery resource disaster means a sudden, unexpected, large decrease in fish stock biomass or other change that results in significant loss of access to the fishery resource.

The State of Alaska manages the salmon fisheries in the Nelson Lagoon Section under the Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan. While salmon run sizes in 2010 to 2012 were lower than historic averages, these declines are within natural variation and consistent with pre-season forecasts. Therefore, the information does not indicate that recent salmon returns constitute a sudden, unexpected, large decrease in fish stock biomass.

If you have further questions, please contact Dr. James W. Balsiger, NMFS Alaska Regional Administrator, at (907) 586-7221.

Sincerely,

Eileen Sobeck