

15-041956



MAKAH TRIBAL COUNCIL

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The Makah Tribe is an equal opportunity employer.



January 20, 2015

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

2015 FEB 18 PM 2:53
U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

SUBJECT: 2014 Fraser River Sockeye Fishery Disaster for the Makah Indian Tribal Community

Dear Ms. Secretary Pritzker,

I am formally requesting that an economic fishery disaster be declared under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act. This will allow fishers who were negatively affected by the migration route of 2014 Fraser River sockeye to be provided disaster relief. Although the overall Fraser River sockeye run size was large, an abnormally high migration diversion rate through Canadian waters resulted in a severe reduction in commercial Fraser sockeye harvest for Makah fishers. Approximately 96% of Fraser sockeye returned to the river by migrating through Johnstone Strait (Canadian waters) rather than the Strait of Juan de Fuca (U.S. waters). The Makah tribe was able to open a fishery, but because only a tiny fraction of the Fraser sockeye return passed through U.S. waters, harvest was exceedingly low. The Makah Indian Tribal Community urges a prompt response, which will allow our fishers to quickly obtain the disaster relief funds and support they are entitled to.

The Fraser sockeye fishery is extremely important to Makah fishers, and the severe reduction in harvest affects the entire tribe. Commercial Fraser sockeye harvest not only contributes significantly to annual fisher income, but also provides a ceremonial and subsistence food source for use by community members throughout the winter months. The Makah Tribe is a fishing tribe as a way of life, and every member and family relies on the benefits provided by the Fraser sockeye fishery. With few Fraser sockeye available to harvest because of the migration route, the entire community suffers and needs financial relief to endure this challenging time.

As a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation, we have the right to request and receive disaster assistance under the Department of Commerce and Congressional appropriation. We ask that under your authority and in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries, and the Makah Indian Tribal Community, you coordinate with all parties to issue a Fisheries Economic Disaster Declaration as authorized under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

MAKAH TRIBAL COUNCIL


Timothy J. Greene Sr.,
Chairman

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, US Senator
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, US Senator
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Congressman