



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

April 13, 2023

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: State of Oregon Federal Fishery Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

I am requesting an expedited declaration of a fishery resource disaster under section 312(a) of the Magnusson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, for the State of Oregon 2023 ocean commercial salmon fisheries.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) finalized the 2023 ocean salmon season recommendations late last week. The PFMC recommended fisheries impacting Klamath and Sacramento stocks be severely constrained or closed in 2023 to maximize adult returns. These returns are expected to be very low this year due recent droughts that resulted in poor juvenile production. As those juveniles grow to adults off the coasts of California and Oregon, they are caught in Oregon's commercial fisheries. Consequently, the National Marine Fisheries Service is expected to close all commercial ocean fisheries for Chinook Salmon from Cape Falcon (on the north Oregon coast) to the California border through August of 2023.

Although some limited commercial fishing is scheduled during September and October to allow access to healthy Oregon salmon stocks after the Sacramento and Klamath salmon have left the area, this opportunity is a small fraction of the economic portfolio that these fishers and the dependent shoreside business rely upon. The five-year average south of Cape Falcon Oregon commercial ex-vessel value (nominal, not adjusted for inflation) of Chinook and coho salmon during 2018-2022 was \$2.3 million. Based on the total closure through August 2023 and the limited fall openings, Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife currently projects the ex-vessel value for 2023 will be approximately \$420,000. This 82% reduction in the ex-vessel value from the recent five-year average is the basis for this request for a declaration of a commercial fishery failure in order to provide financial assistance to impacted communities.

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Salmon are a vital component of Oregon's natural resource-based economy. This fishery in particular provides significant commercial, recreational, economic, and aesthetic benefits to the Oregon. Salmon are also highly valued by our Native American tribes for cultural, subsistence, and economic benefits. While economic assistance will be essential to address the impacts of closures and restrictions on our salmon fisheries, it is also vitally important that federal, state, tribal and local governments continue ongoing collaborations supporting recovery and restoration of salmon populations.

Thank you for your consideration and an expeditious review. If you have any questions, please contact Curt Melcher, Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at curt.melcher@odfw.oregon.gov or (503) 947-6044 or my Senior Natural Resource Policy Advisor, Geoff Huntington at geoff.huntington@oregon.gov or (503) 689-5350.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" being more prominent than the last name "Kotek".

Governor Tina Kotek

cc: Oregon Congressional Delegation
Oregon Coastal Caucus
Curt Melcher, Director, ODFW