



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Jacob Mercurief
Mayor of St. Paul Island
P.O. Box 901
St. Paul Island, AK 99660

Dear Mayor Mercurief:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination of a fishery resource disaster for the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries evaluated information from the impacted fishery. Upon review, I have found that the request for a fishery resource disaster for the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery in Alaska meets the requirements under the recently enacted Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act, which amended section 312(a) the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

In order to have a positive determination, there must be a fishery resource disaster from an allowable cause. Due to several factors such as unfavorable ocean conditions and prolonged marine heatwaves in the Bering Sea, this fishery experienced an unexpected biomass decline and loss of access under the MSA. The factors mentioned caused the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery to experience a 100-percent revenue loss – compared to the previous 5-year average with no fishery resource disaster determination.

This determination now makes the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery eligible for fishery disaster assistance. In the near future, the Department of Commerce will allocate disaster assistance for these fisheries. In addition, eligible businesses and other tribal entities may be able to access other loan/funding programs through other Federal relief programs (e.g., Small Business Administration loans). Programs within the Department (e.g., Economic Development Administration grants) may also be available.

Should you have any questions, please contact Susie Feliz, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663 or SFeliz@doc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Raimondo".

Gina M. Raimondo



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Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy
Governor of Alaska
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination of a fishery resource disaster for the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery.

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