

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001  
907-465-3500



550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1700  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-269-7450

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
STATE OF ALASKA

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Jeremy Pelter  
Acting Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Pelter:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), I am writing to request a fishery resource disaster determination for the 2024 Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fisheries.

In 2024, there was an unexpected large decrease in the harvest of pink and chum salmon in the Prince William Sound salmon fisheries. The harvest of 9.95 million pink salmon and 1.70 million chum salmon were 75 percent and 57 percent, respectively, below the recent five-year averages. The 2024 season was the lowest Prince William Sound pink salmon harvest since 1993. Preliminary data estimates the value of the 2024 Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fisheries were 78 percent to 88 percent, respectively, below the recent five-year average and estimated losses total over \$85 million. The cause of the 2024 Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fisheries disaster may be due to natural causes that have been associated with temperature changes in marine ecosystems and competition in the ocean, similar to findings for other recent pink salmon fishery resource disasters that occurred in the Gulf of Alaska in 2016 and in Prince William Sound in 2020. The decline in pink salmon run abundance may also be due to an undetermined cause.

Approximately 80 percent of the seine and drift gillnet permit holders who participate in the Prince William Sound salmon fisheries list their permanent address in Alaska and approximately three-quarters of those Alaska addresses are either in Prince William Sound or the nearby communities of Seward, Homer, and Kenai. For the fishermen who rely solely on the pink and chum salmon fisheries for their annual income, the loss of revenue due to the historically poor 2024 season is even more severe than previous fishery disaster years 2016 and 2020. Residents in Prince William Sound and nearby communities are heavily reliant on commercial salmon fisheries to provide household income and opportunities for other sources of income are limited.

Acting Secretary Jeremy Pelter  
January 28, 2025  
Page 2 of 2

Based on available information in the attached memo, the 2024 Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fisheries meet the criteria for a fishery disaster determination. I appreciate your consideration of this request and have asked the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide the National Marine Fisheries Service and your office with any additional information needed to make fishery disaster determinations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunleavy", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Dunleavy  
Governor

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate  
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate  
The Honorable Nick Begich, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

## Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8th Street  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526  
Main: 907.465.6136  
Fax: 907.465.2332

TO: Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

DATE: 12/7/2024

THROUGH: Rachel Baker  
Deputy Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

PHONE: (907) 465 - 4115  
(907) 465 - 6100

Forrest Bowers  
Acting Director  
Division of Commercial Fisheries  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

FROM: Karla Bush  
Extended Jurisdiction Program Manager  
Division of Commercial Fisheries  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

PHONE: (907) 465 - 6153

SUBJECT: 2024 Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fishery disaster  
determination request

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This memorandum provides information to assist in determining whether the State of Alaska should support a public request for a federal fishery resource disaster determination for the 2024 Prince William Sound (PWS) pink and chum salmon fisheries in response to low salmon returns. Governor Dunleavy received letters from Representative Sarah Vance, Senator Gary Stevens, and Cordova District Fishermen, and resolutions from the City Council of Homer and Cordova, requesting a federal fishery resource disaster determination from the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), attached in Appendix 1. The Secretary determined that a fishery disaster occurred for the PWS pink salmon fishery in 2016 and 2020 and for chum salmon in 2020 (Appendix 2).

Federal fishery disaster requests are evaluated under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The Secretary uses available fishery information to evaluate whether a fishery resource disaster resulted from a cause recognized by the MSA. A revenue loss threshold is used to determine if a fishery resource disaster occurred. The threshold is based on the 12-month revenue in the disaster year compared to average annual revenue in the most recent five-year period when no fishery disaster occurred. Appendix 3 provides additional information on evaluation of federal fishery disaster requests under the MSA. If the State submits a federal fishery disaster request for the 2024 PWS pink and chum salmon fisheries, the Secretary must determine whether a fishery resource disaster occurred that arose from an allowable cause.

*A department analysis of available information indicates the Secretary may make a positive fishery resource disaster determination for the 2024 PWS pink and chum salmon fisheries. The estimated 12-month revenue loss for the 2024 PWS pink salmon fishery meets the 80 percent revenue loss threshold for a fishery resource disaster determination under section 312(a) of the MSA. The estimated 12-month revenue loss for the 2024 PWS chum salmon fishery requires the Secretary to further evaluate whether economic losses were severe enough to cause a fishery resource disaster. Available information, including historically low harvests and revenue in the 2024 fisheries and the high dependence of fishery participants on revenue from this fishery, supports a finding that economic losses were severe. Low pink and chum salmon harvest in 2024 may be due to several factors including natural and/or undetermined causes, both of which are an allowable cause for a fishery resource disaster.*

**Salmon fisheries in Prince William Sound:** The PWS management area, Registration Area E, encompasses all coastal waters and inland drainages entering the north central Gulf of Alaska between Cape Suckling in the east and Cape Fairfield in the west. The communities of Chenega, Cordova, Tatitlek, Valdez, and Whittier lie within PWS. The salmon management area is divided into 11 districts that correspond to the local geography and distribution of the five species of salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*) harvested in the commercial fisheries (Figure 1). Fisheries targeting hatchery-produced and wild sockeye and chum salmon in PWS begin in June and fisheries targeting hatchery and wild pink salmon in PWS begin in July.

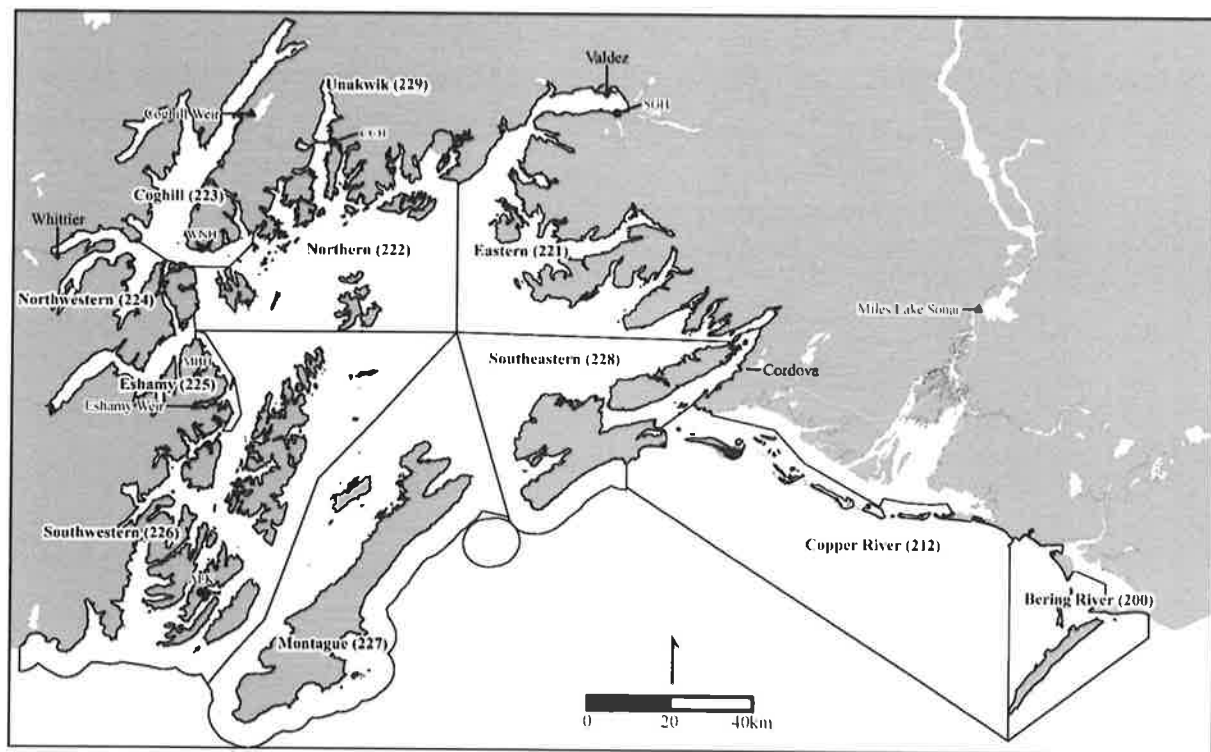


Figure 1. The Prince William Sound area and commercial fishing districts.

Four hatcheries contribute to the area's pink and chum fisheries. The Cannery Creek, Armin F. Koernig, and Wally Noerenberg hatcheries are operated by PWS Aquaculture Corporation. The Cannery Creek and Armin F. Koernig Hatchery produce pink salmon, and the Wally Noerenberg Hatchery produces pink and chum salmon. Valdez Fisheries Development Association produces pink salmon at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

Legal commercial salmon fishing gear includes purse seines, drift gillnets, and set gillnets. The purse seine fishery targets pink and chum salmon and the drift and set gillnet fisheries target sockeye and chum salmon. Chum salmon harvest by the PWS drift gillnet fleet occurs primarily in the Coghill District.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) staff conduct aerial surveys in PWS from mid-June through early September to assess salmon escapement. In 2024, inseason aerial survey escapement estimates were above objectives for pink salmon in all PWS districts, and escapement goals for pink salmon were met. Wild stock pink salmon escapement indices supported minimal openings from mid-July through late August. Chum salmon escapement goals were met in the Southeastern, Eastern, Northern, and Northwestern Districts but not in the Coghill District.

*Determination of a fishery resource disaster* – Pink salmon have a two-year life cycle which creates two “brood” lines in each stream; this means the offspring of even years return only in even years. For other salmon species, offspring from a single brood year return to spawn across multiple years. Based on the two-year cycle of pink salmon, the department compared preliminary 2024 harvest and value estimates to the five even-year average values from 2010 through 2022, excluding the 2016 and 2020 disaster years.

The 2024 season was the lowest PWS pink salmon harvest since 1993 and the second lowest since the late 1970s when PWS hatcheries were established.<sup>1</sup> Total 2024 PWS commercial pink salmon harvest in pounds and numbers of fish is estimated to be 77% and 75%, respectively, below the previous five-even year average (Table 1). Total pink salmon revenue in 2024 is estimated at \$8.5 million using a preliminary price per pound of \$0.26 and is 88% below the previous five-even year average of \$74.2 million. The total estimated revenue loss, adjusted for inflation, is \$65.7 million.

Table 1. Commercial pink salmon fishery harvest in pounds and numbers of fish and gross revenue for even years 2010 through 2024. The adjusted total is the total fishery value adjusted for inflation with a base year of 2024.

| <b>Year</b>            | <b>Harvest (lb)</b> | <b>Number of fish</b> | <b>Gross revenue</b> | <b>Adjusted Total</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2010                   | 256,296,188         | 71,309,575            | \$92,269,295         | \$125,004,034         |
| 2012                   | 107,093,196         | 27,232,371            | \$57,430,307         | \$73,734,896          |
| 2014                   | 149,219,802         | 44,658,299            | \$49,447,706         | \$60,576,848          |
| 2016-disaster          | 51,866,935          | 13,069,771            | \$23,557,272         | \$28,590,999          |
| 2018                   | 91,109,497          | 24,027,023            | \$45,540,980         | \$53,381,552          |
| 2020-disaster          | 82,763,467          | 23,003,246            | \$36,658,313         | \$42,854,077          |
| 2022                   | 99,939,283          | 28,438,219            | \$56,567,632         | \$58,322,086          |
| 2024 <sup>a</sup>      | 32,853,114          | 9,952,081             | \$8,541,810          | \$8,541,810           |
| 5-yr Avg. <sup>b</sup> | \$140,731,593       | \$39,133,097          | \$60,251,184         | \$74,203,883          |
| 2024 vs 5-yr           | -77%                | -75%                  | -86%                 | -88%                  |
| <b>Revenue Loss</b>    |                     |                       | <b>\$51,709,374</b>  | <b>\$65,662,074</b>   |

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary data - value is based on an average price per pound of \$0.26.

<sup>b</sup> Does not include 2016 and 2020 disaster years.

Preliminary 2024 harvest and revenue information for chum salmon was compared to the previous five-year average of 2018 through 2023, excluding the 2020 disaster year. Table 2 shows 2024

<sup>1</sup> 2024 PWS salmon season summary: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1642055378.pdf>

chum salmon harvest in pounds and number of fish is estimated to be 60% and 57%, respectively, below the previous five-year average. Total chum salmon revenue in 2024 is estimated at \$5.1 million using a preliminary price per pound of \$0.47 and is 78% below the previous five-year average of \$23.3 million. The total estimated revenue loss, adjusted for inflation, is \$18.2 million.

Table 2. Commercial chum salmon fishery harvest in pounds and numbers of fish and gross revenue for 2018 through 2024. The adjusted total is the total fishery value adjusted for inflation with a base year of 2024.

| Year                   | Harvest (lb) | Number of fish | Gross revenue       | Adjusted Total      |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2018                   | 28,974,748   | 3,468,354      | \$28,824,828        | \$33,787,461        |
| 2019                   | 33,345,215   | 5,380,950      | \$18,988,899        | \$21,953,371        |
| 2020-disaster          | 15,073,075   | 2,016,770      | \$7,563,200         | \$8,841,486         |
| 2021                   | 18,032,707   | 2,689,799      | \$15,741,436        | \$17,545,819        |
| 2022                   | 20,448,164   | 3,106,920      | \$24,522,380        | \$25,282,945        |
| 2023                   | 33,506,233   | 5,344,961      | \$17,503,989        | \$17,773,165        |
| 2024 <sup>a</sup>      | 10,829,878   | 1,702,945      | \$5,090,042         | \$5,090,042         |
| 5-yr Avg. <sup>b</sup> | 26,861,413   | 3,998,197      | \$21,116,306        | \$23,268,552        |
| 2024 vs 5-yr           | -60%         | -57%           | -76%                | -78%                |
| <b>Revenue Loss</b>    |              |                | <b>\$16,026,264</b> | <b>\$18,178,510</b> |

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary data - value is based on an average price per pound of \$0.47

<sup>b</sup> Does not include 2020 disaster year.

Wholesale loss estimates for 2024 will be available in mid-2025 when information provided in the Commercial Operators Annual Report (COAR) is finalized. Final gross revenue estimates for 2024 are dependent on final COAR data and will be available in September 2025.

Approximately 80% of the seine and drift gillnet permit holders who participate in the PWS salmon fisheries list their permanent address in Alaska and approximately three-quarters of those Alaska addresses are either in PWS or the nearby communities of Seward, Homer, and Kenai. For the fishermen who rely solely on the pink and chum salmon fisheries for their annual income, the loss of revenue due to the historically poor 2024 season is even more severe than previous fishery disaster years 2016 and 2020. This loss of income is particularly devastating given the rising costs of food, fuel, and other essentials that have already strained household budgets. Residents of PWS communities are heavily reliant on commercial salmon fisheries to provide household income and opportunities for other sources of income are limited.

***Available information indicates that the estimated 12-month revenue loss for the 2024 PWS pink salmon fishery meets the 80 percent revenue loss threshold for a fishery resource disaster determination under section 312(a) of the MSA. The estimated 12-month revenue loss for the 2024 PWS chum salmon fishery requires the Secretary to further evaluate whether economic losses were severe enough to cause a fishery resource disaster. Available information, including historically low harvests and revenue in the 2024 fisheries and the high dependence of fishery participants on revenue from this fishery, supports a finding that economic losses were severe.***

***Allowable cause*** – Despite above average escapement for pink salmon in 2022 and generally moderate to favorable overwinter environmental conditions, the lower pink salmon return in 2024 may be attributed to poor marine survival in the Gulf of Alaska during the spring and summer of 2023. Additionally, the strong odd-year pink salmon return in 2023 may have played an indirect

or direct role as even-year pink salmon returns in Alaska have displayed a strong negative correlation with previous year's odd-year returns. The Gulf of Alaska Ecosystem Status Report<sup>2</sup> for 2024 noted that 2024 returns of GOA pink salmon were unexpectedly low.

Recent marine heatwave events in the Gulf of Alaska from 2014 to 2016 and again from 2018 to 2019 created unfavorable ocean conditions. Prolonged increased temperatures increase the metabolic demands of salmon and their fish predators. Unfavorable ocean conditions and other factors beyond the control of fishery managers led the Secretary to determine a fishery resource disaster had occurred in 2016 for the Gulf of Alaska pink salmon fisheries and in 2020 for the Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon fisheries.

***Based on available information, if the Secretary determines that a fishery resource disaster occurred, the cause is likely due to a combination of natural and undetermined causes, both of which are an allowable cause for a fishery resource disaster.***

#### **Points for consideration**

- If the State of Alaska chooses to request a disaster determination, staff will coordinate with the Governor's office to submit a letter to the Secretary requesting a disaster determination.
- If the State of Alaska requests a disaster determination, staff will coordinate with the NMFS Alaska Region to compile additional fishery landings and revenue data for the analysis that will be submitted to the Secretary.
- The Secretary requires final revenue data for a fishery to make a disaster determination. The public request for this fishery resource disaster was received before final revenue data were available to evaluate the request. In Alaska, final gross revenue data are provided by the Commercial Fishery Entry Commission in September for the previous calendar year, and ADF&G completed this evaluation before final revenue data were available for the 2024 Prince William Sound salmon fisheries.
- If the Secretary determines that a fishery disaster occurred and Congress appropriates funds to the disaster, the State will develop a spend plan and take the lead on providing policy and technical guidance for administration of the spend plan. The State is eligible to receive a portion of the disaster funds to cover administrative costs however, these costs are limited to the time period when the federal grant for the disaster funds is awarded, which does not include staff time spent compiling information to evaluate fishery disaster requests and developing spend plans.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/SAFE/2024/GOAecosys.pdf>





## *Alaska State Legislature*

**Representative Sarah Vance**

House District 6 ~ Chair House Fisheries ~ Chair House Judiciary

**September 13, 2024**

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
120 4th Street, 3rd Floor  
Juneau, AK 99801

Chief of Staff Tyson Gallagher  
TRANSMIT VIA E-MAIL: [tyson.gallagher@alaska.gov](mailto:tyson.gallagher@alaska.gov)

**Re: Request a Disaster Emergency Resulting from the Low Return of Pink Salmon in 2024 for the Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Upper Cook Inlet, Lower Cook Inlet, South Peninsula and Chignik Salmon Fisheries**

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

I am writing on behalf of my constituents to urgently request that you seek a disaster emergency for the 2024 salmon fisheries in Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Upper Cook Inlet, Lower Cook Inlet, South Peninsula and Chignik. The unprecedented low return of pink salmon has left many fishermen without income, while others are burdened with significant debt from this disastrous season. For those whose livelihoods depend on the salmon harvest, this is an economic crisis with profound and far-reaching impacts.

The sharp decline in salmon returns means that countless fishermen, who rely solely on this season's harvest, are unable to pay their bills or meet basic living expenses. The economic ripple effect in our coastal communities is severe, as local businesses that depend on a robust fishing season also suffer. The 50/50 fish tax shared between the state and municipalities—a critical revenue source for local governments—will be dramatically reduced, further compounding the financial challenges these communities face.

The loss of income is particularly devastating in a year where rising costs of food, fuel, and other essentials have already strained household budgets. Immediate assistance is needed to prevent further hardship and stabilize these communities. I greatly appreciate the research efforts of your office and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to understand the causes of these low returns, but a request for a disaster declaration from your office is urgently required to expedite a federal disaster determination. This will allow financial relief to reach the affected fishermen, families, and communities more quickly.

The commercial season for pink salmon in Prince William Sound ended with a harvest of just over 5 million fish—less than a quarter of the nearly 20.5 million forecasted. Statewide, the all-species catch stands at 95.3 million, and it is unlikely to exceed 100 million—numbers not seen



since 1987. This harvest failure has left entire communities facing one of the worst salmon seasons in recent memory.

In light of these devastating circumstances and the critical importance of the salmon industry to Alaska's coastal economies, I strongly urge you to declare a disaster emergency for the Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Upper Cook Inlet, Lower Cook Inlet, South Peninsula and Chignik salmon fisheries. Swift action is needed to help these communities recover from the financial strain and to mitigate the longer-term effects of this disaster.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter and for your continued support of the fishermen and families across Alaska.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Vance', with a stylized, cursive script.

Representative Sarah Vance

**cc:**

Legislative Director Laura Stidolph (laura.stidolph@alaska.gov)  
Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang (doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov)  
Joseph Felkl (joseph.felkl@alaska.gov)



CORDOVA DISTRICT  
**FISHERMEN**  
— UNITED —

**Board of Directors**

**Ezekiel Brown**  
President  
*F/V Lucid Dream*

**Dennis Zadra**  
Vice-President  
*F/V Raging Bull*

**Michael Hand**  
Vice-President  
*F/V Bounty*

**Hayley Hoover**  
Treasurer  
*F/V Nellie Juan*

**Jeff Bailey**  
*F/V Odyssey*

**Ron Blake**  
*F/V Ace*

**Marc Carrel**  
*F/V Silver Moon*

**Darin Gilman**  
*F/V Redline*

**Forest Jenkins**  
*Eshamy Setnet*

**Makena O'Toole**  
*F/V Freyja Dawn*

**Phyllis Shirron**  
*F/V Cape Fear*

**Steven Swartzbart**  
*F/V Alpine*

**Executive Director**

**Jess Rude**

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

cc: ADFG Commissioner Doug Vincent Lang  
[doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov](mailto:doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov)

October 3, 2024

Re: 2024 Fishery Disaster Declaration Request

Honorable Governor Mike Dunleavy,

The 2024 season for Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon presented historically low stock and commercial catch, bringing devastating economic impacts that ripple through the fleet, industry and community.

We urge you to take prompt action on resolution 10-24-31 adopted by the City of Cordova October 2, 2024, and to officially declare a 2024 fishery disaster for Prince William Sound pink and chum salmon.

While the full scope of the disaster needs further analysis by Alaska Department of Fish and Game and NOAA, information at hand points to a broad scope fishery disaster. On behalf of fishermen in Prince William Sound, we have prepared and gathered initial relevant information to assist in the process and to provide background for evaluation.

Area E salmon fisheries are managed by the State of Alaska. There were 827 permits issued in 2024, and 832 in 2023. The consistency of annual participants gives a clear context to the expected impact of economic losses for the region: 80% of the fishermen's permits have permanent Alaska addresses registered with CFEC.

The primary target species of the Area E seine fleet is pink salmon. All five species of Alaskan salmon may be harvested in Prince



William Sound, however the significant portion of seine harvests consists of pink salmon and chum salmon. Commercial seine fishing season typically lasts from late June to September.

This was the worst year for PWS pink salmon stocks since 1993. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Biologists are not yet sure why PWS pink stocks declined in 2024, but it appears consistent throughout the North Pacific. Pink salmon have an odd/even year lifecycle. In 2022, local wild stock escapement goals were met and all PWS hatcheries achieved their egg-take goals: all markers that would usually ensure strong pink stocks. Fortunately, pink salmon stocks are known to rebound from poor years.

What we do know is that any way you look at PWS pink and chum salmon trends, 2024 is a staggering year for stocks. With NOAA's specification thresholds for fishery resource disasters and evaluation criteria in mind, we considered current salmon data compared to a 5-year average that excludes previous years with federal disaster determinations (years 2022, 2018, 2014, 2012, and 2010 for pink salmon; years 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, and 2018 for chum salmon). However, any way we constructed previous annual averages pointed to devastating revenue losses greater than 80%.

The total common property harvest of 5,066,411 pink salmon in 2024 is well below the average annual commercial catch. Seine fishermen harvested 85% less pink salmon in 2024 than the average of 34.8 million fish. The total common property harvest of 1,160,586 chum salmon is also well below average: 57% less chum salmon were harvested in 2024 than the average of 2,708,416.

Of course fewer fish harvested equates to less revenues. The average ex-vessel value of the common property fishery for PWS pink salmon is \$44,841,922, with 2024 bringing less than 90% of that with just \$4,290,586. Financial impacts of these specific 2024 pink and chum fishery resource disasters have meant extreme and immediate financial hardship to those involved within the fishery and in regional communities. The fishery operating at just a fraction of expectations compounds vast economic challenges of recent years. Beginning in 2020, seafood market conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis led to a significant reduction in ex-vessel prices paid to fishermen. And since then, global market instability and disruptions stemming from Russia's war on US seafoods have resulted in fish prices being at an all-time low.

We want to thank you for responsiveness on previous disaster declaration requests, and for your commitment to Alaska and its sustainable commercial fishing industry. As a formal



CORDOVA DISTRICT  
**FISHERMEN**  
— UNITED —

request process continues, CDFU will continue to advocate for research dollars that help understand the conditions or underlying causes for fishery failures and how to prevent them, as well as for urgent and timely payouts of disaster relief to fishermen. We are here to assist this endeavor in any capacity, so please do not hesitate to reach out for further support.

Sincerely,

**Ezekiel Brown**  
Board President

**Jess Rude**  
Executive Director  
[director@cdfu.org](mailto:director@cdfu.org)

**CITY OF CORDOVA, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION 10-24-31**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORDOVA, ALASKA,  
ENCOURAGING THE STATE OF ALASKA AND THE US SECRETARY OF COMMERCE  
TO DECLARE FISHERIES DISASTER AS FOLLOWS: 2024 PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND  
PINK AND CHUM SALMON; AND TO ENCOURAGE THE SAME TO DECLARE A  
CONDITION OF ECONOMIC DISASTER IN CORDOVA AS A RESULT**

**WHEREAS**, the average total common property harvest of Prince William Sound Pink Salmon for even-years without federal disaster determinations between 2010-2022, hereafter defined as "5-year average", is 34.75 million Pink Salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, NOAA Fisheries examines 12-month revenue loss experienced the year of a fishery resource disaster compared to the previous 5-year average in which no disaster occurred, and considers positive determinations at a revenue loss threshold of greater than 80 percent; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Pink Salmon total common property harvest of 5,066,411 fish was 85.4% less than the recent 5-year average total common property harvest of Pink Salmon, and the lowest harvest in the last 30 years; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Purse Seine fishery harvest of 4,896,007 Pink Salmon was 85.3% less than the prior 5-year average harvest of 33.26 million fish; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Drift Gillnet fishery harvest of 151,917 Pink Salmon was 89.6% less than the prior 5-year average harvest of 1,461,281 fish; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Set Gillnet fishery harvest of 18,487 Pink Salmon was 43.6% less than the prior 5-year average harvest of 32,807 fish; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Chum Salmon harvest of 1,160,586 fish was 57.1% less than the recent 5-year average harvest of 2.7 million Chum Salmon, and the lowest harvest in the last 5 years; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Pink and Chum Salmon runs are among the lowest on record; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2024 Prince William Sound Pink Salmon fisheries total ex-vessel value of \$4,290,856 across fisheries compared to the 5-year average ex-vessel value of \$44,841,922 represents a loss of 90.4% of average revenues, or more than \$40 million dollars; and


**WHEREAS**, multiple years of lower ex-vessel prices across Copper River and Prince William Sound fisheries, and lasting financial impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic compound and continue to impact the fishing community significantly, further compounding economic hardship within the community.


**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska encourages the State of Alaska and the United States Secretary of Commerce to declare fisheries disasters based on the considerably low returns and harvests as follows: 2024 Prince William Sound Pink and Chum Salmon.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2024.**



ATTEST:

  
David Allison, Mayor

  
Susan Bourgeois, CMC, City Clerk



# Alaska State Legislature

## Office of the Senate President

INTERIM ADDRESS:  
305 Center Ave., Ste. 1  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615  
Phone: (907) 486-4925  
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SESSION ADDRESS:  
120 4<sup>th</sup> St. – State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Phone: (907) 465-4925  
Toll Free: 800-821-4925

*Senate President Gary Stevens, Ph.D*

Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

October 23, 2024

Honorable Governor Michael Dunleavy  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

\*Letter delivered electronically to all addressees

Governor Dunleavy,

I am writing to share my support for the request made by my constituents to declare a fishing disaster for the 2024 Pink Salmon Fishery for Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and Lower Cook Inlet. I also support my constituents' request for the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) to waive permit fees for the upcoming 2025 seasons for all impacted salmon permit owners.

Pink salmon are a critical source of revenue for many Alaskan fishermen and processors and are often over half of the salmon annually harvested in our state. This year, statewide, pink salmon harvests were down 63% compared to 2022. In Prince William Sound, the pink salmon harvest was 85% less than the prior 5-year average harvest. In Kodiak, the harvest was down 72% from two years ago. Coupled with the drastically low harvests are low dock prices which have barely increased due to last year's global market crisis. These losses are felt on many levels for fishing industry families, processors, and communities which benefit from fishery taxes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important issue affecting Alaskans and our state economy. I respectfully request your support in declaring a fishing disaster for the 2024 Pink Salmon Fishery for Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and Lower Cook Inlet and support for the waiving of 2025 permit fees for impacted salmon permit owners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Stevens".

Sen/Gary Stevens  
District C

Attachment: City of Homer Resolution 24-108

cc:  
Tyson Gallagher, Office of the Governor, Chief of Staff  
Laura Stidolph, Office of the Governor, Legislative Director  
Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish & Game Commissioner  
Joe Felkl, Alaska Department of Fish & Game Liaison  
Glenn Haight, CFEC Chair

**CITY OF HOMER  
HOMER, ALASKA**

Lord/Venuti/Erickson

**RESOLUTION 24-108**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA,  
REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
DESIGNATE BY PROCLAMATION THE AREA OF PRINCE WILLIAM  
SOUND PINK SALMON FISHERY AND ANY OTHER APPLICABLE  
SALMON FISHERIES AS AN AREA IMPACTED BY AN ECONOMIC  
DISASTER IN 2024 AND SUPPORTING A RECOVERY PLAN FOR  
AFFECTED FISHERMEN

WHEREAS, The commercial salmon fishing season in 2024 saw historically low returns  
of salmon from Area M to Southeast Alaska, including Chignik, Kodiak, Lower Cook Inlet, and  
Prince William Sound; and

WHEREAS, According to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the Prince William  
Sound pink salmon harvest was 4.896 million fish which was 85.3% less than the prior 5-year  
average harvest of 33.26 million fish and 15% of a 2024 total run forecast of 32.18 million fish;  
and

WHEREAS, The Kodiak Management Area pink salmon forecast from ADF&G for 2024  
was estimated as weak, at 8.8 million fish and the estimated harvest through September 5 was  
7.1 million fish; and

WHEREAS, The Area M pink salmon forecast from ADF&G for 2024 was 5.3 million, with  
1.6 million harvested; and

WHEREAS, Lower Cook Inlet Area pink salmon forecast from ADF&G for 2024 was  
582,000, with 14,374 harvested; and

WHEREAS, Commercial fishing is a backbone of Alaska's economy and culture and is an  
expensive endeavor with costs including boat payments, insurance, crew, moorage, groceries,  
fuel, maintenance, supplies, and permit fees; and

WHEREAS, The price per pound for the fisherman has not increased relative to  
operational expenses, and

WHEREAS, According to data from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC)  
and the Homer Harbor, Homer has 140 residents that have seine permits in either Prince  
William Sound, Lower Cook Inlet, Kodiak, or Area M; and

WHEREAS, AS 44.33.285 authorizes the Governor, upon recommendation of the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, to designate by proclamation an area and other areas impacted by an economic disaster; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer Is a political subdivision of the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, An economic disaster declaration by the Governor would allow the legislature to appropriate funds for assistance grants and the governor may recommend in the Governor's budget that steps may be taken as provided ins AS 44.33.285-.310 to accelerate the recovery from this disaster.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of Homer, Alaska, respectfully requests that:

Section 1. Commissioner Julie Sande, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, recommend to Governor Dunleavy to designate, by proclamation, the area of Prince William Sound and any other applicable area's pink salmon commercial fishery as an area impacted by an economic disaster.

Section 2. Governor Dunleavy designate by proclamation, as described in AS 44.33.285, the area of Prince William Sound pink salmon and any other area that is applicable commercial fishery as an area impacted by an economic disaster and that the State of Alaska implement a recovery plan that provides private assistance and takes other actions that benefit commercial fisheries participants and others that rely on this Important fishery resource.

Section 3. The Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) waive permit fees for the upcoming 2025 season for all impacted salmon permit owners.

Section 4. The Council also respectfully requests that the State of Alaska urge the Federal Department of Commerce and all other applicable federal agencies to render private and public assistance to all affected persons and entities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

Section 5. A copy of this resolution will be provided to Commissioner Julie Sande, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, and to the Office of Governor Mike Dunleavy.

Section 6. A copy of this resolution will be provided to State Senator Gary Stevens, State Representative Ben Carpenter, State Representative Justin Ruffridge, State Representative Louise Stutes, and State Representative Sarah Vance.

Section 7. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Homer City Council this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2024.

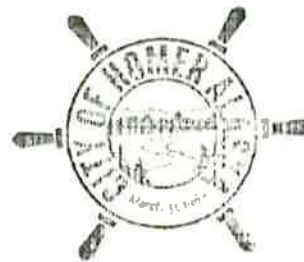
CITY OF HOMER

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RACHEL LORD, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, CITY CLERK

Fiscal note: N/A



Appendix 2. Secretary of Commerce determination letter for 2016 (pink salmon) and 2020 (pink and chum salmon).



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

January 18, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker  
Governor of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster. Your request relates to the impacts to the 2016 pink salmon fisheries in seven areas in the Gulf of Alaska, including Prince William Sound, the Kodiak Management Area, the Chignik Management Area, the Lower Cook Inlet Management Area, the Yakutat Area, South Alaska Peninsula, and Southeastern Alaska. The impacts resulted from poor pink salmon returns due to a variety of factors outside the control of fishery managers to mitigate, including unfavorable ocean conditions, freshwater environmental factors, and disease.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) evaluated whether a commercial fishery failure occurred due to a fisheries resource disaster. After reviewing the information provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the NMFS evaluation, I have found that the request for a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the 2016 pink salmon fisheries meets the requirements for such a finding under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

This determination provides a basis for Congress to appropriate disaster relief funding under the MSA, Section 312(a), and then for the NMFS to provide assistance to the State of Alaska and the affected communities. If Congress appropriates disaster relief funding, NMFS Alaska Region looks forward to working with the State of Alaska to develop a spend plan that will create a more resilient fishery that can better withstand similar environmental disasters in the future. Section 312(a)(3) requires that the Federal share of the cost of any activity carried out under the authority of this subsection shall not exceed 75% of the cost of that activity.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jim Schufreider at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Pritzker".

Penny Pritzker

cc: Byron Mallott, Lieutenant Governor of Alaska





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

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
Governor of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

Thank you for your March 2021 and September 2021 letters requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the following fisheries:

- 2018 Upper Cook Inlet East Side Set Net and 2020 Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries;
- 2018 Copper River Chinook and sockeye salmon fisheries, 2020 Prince William Sound salmon fisheries, and 2020 Copper River Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon fisheries;
- 2019/2020 Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab;
- 2020 Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska;
- 2020 Alaska Norton Sound, Yukon River, Chignik, Kuskokwim River, and Southeast Alaska Salmon Fisheries; and
- 2021 Yukon River salmon fishery.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service evaluated information for the impacted fisheries and provided a recommendation. After reviewing the information and associated recommendation, I have found that your request for a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the fisheries listed above meets the requirements under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and section 308(b) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act.

This positive determination now makes these fisheries eligible for fishery disaster assistance. Using funds that Congress has already appropriated for fishery disasters, the Department of Commerce will allocate disaster assistance for these fisheries in the near future.

Should you have further questions, please contact J.D. Grom, Senior Advisor for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 322-7494 or JDGrom@doc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gina Raimondo", is positioned above the printed name.

Gina M. Raimondo



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

May 9, 2023

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
Governor of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

Thank you for your letters requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the following fisheries:

- 2021/2022 Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries;
- 2021 Kuskokwim River salmon and Norton Sound chum and coho salmon fisheries;
- 2021 Chignik salmon fisheries;
- 2020 Copper River/Prince William Sound coho and pink salmon fisheries;
- 2020/2021 Norton Sound red king crab fisheries; and
- 2022/2023 Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has evaluated information from the impacted fisheries. After reviewing the information, I have found that the requests for a commercial fishery failure for the listed fisheries meet the requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act.

This determination makes these fisheries eligible for fishery disaster assistance. In the near future, using funds Congress has already appropriated for fishery disasters, the Department of Commerce will allocate disaster assistance for these fisheries. In addition, with this determination, eligible businesses and other entities in Alaska may be able to access other loan/funding programs through other Federal relief programs (e.g., Small Business Administration loans). Programs within the Department of Commerce (e.g., Economic Development Administration grants) may also be available.

NMFS also reviewed revenue data provided by the State of Alaska for the 2021/2022 Bering Sea tanner crab fishery and determined that the fishery did not experience a revenue loss. Because there is a 35% revenue loss minimum mandated by the NMFS Policy Guidance, without a revenue loss in this fishery, we cannot justify a determination of commercial fishery failure, serious disruption, or harm. Thus, the 2021/2022 Bering Sea tanner crab fishery will not be considered in any future fishery disaster assistance.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gina Raimondo", is positioned above the printed name.

Gina M. Raimondo

### Appendix 3. Evaluation of federal fisheries disaster requests under the MSA.

#### **Magnuson-Stevens Act Disaster Determination**

On December 29, 2022, Congress enacted the Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act, which amended the MSA at Section 312(a), repealed Section 315, and repealed the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act. Under Section 312(a) the Secretary has the authority to determine the existence, extent, and beginning and end dates of a fishery resource disaster.

MSA Section 312(a) states that after the Secretary determines that a fishery resource disaster has occurred, the Secretary is authorized to make sums available, from funds appropriated for such purposes, to be used by the affected State, Indian Tribe, or interstate marine fisheries commission. Funds allocated for fishery resource disasters shall be used to restore the fishery affected by such a disaster, prevent a similar disaster in the future, and/or assist the affected fishing community.

**Fishery disaster determinations under the MSA provide a mechanism to disburse funds to entities affected by a fishery disaster.**

Two requirements must be met for the Secretary to make a positive fishery disaster determination:

1. There must be a **fishery resource disaster** based on revenue loss or other thresholds under the MSA; and
2. The cause for the fishery resource disaster must be an **allowable cause** under the MSA.

#### **Fishery Resource Disaster**

A fishery resource disaster under the MSA is defined as an unexpected large decrease in fish stock biomass or other change that results in significant loss of access to the fishery resource, which could include loss of fishing vessels and gear for a substantial period of time and results in significant revenue loss or negative subsistence impact due to an allowable cause. It does not include reasonably predictable, foreseeable, and recurrent fishery cyclical variations in species distribution or stock abundance; or reductions in fishing opportunities resulting from conservation and management measures taken pursuant to the MSA.

In determining whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred, the Secretary shall apply the following 12-month revenue loss thresholds:

- I) Losses greater than 80 percent may result in a positive determination that a fishery resource disaster has occurred.
- II) Losses between 35 percent and 80 percent shall be evaluated to determine whether economic impacts are severe enough to determine that a fishery resource disaster has occurred.
- III) Losses less than 35 percent shall not be eligible for a determination that a fishery resource disaster has occurred.

The term 12-month revenue loss means the percentage reduction, as applicable, in commercial, charter, headboat, or processor revenue for the affected fishery for the 12 months during which the fishery resource disaster occurred, when compared to average annual revenue in the most recent five years when no fishery resource disaster occurred or equivalent for stocks with cyclical life histories.

In making a determination of whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred for a Charter fishery, the Secretary shall consider the economic impacts to the charter fishing industry to ensure financial coverage for charter fishing businesses. In considering subsistence impacts, the Secretary

shall evaluate the severity of negative impacts to the fishing community instead of applying the revenue loss thresholds described above. A fishery subject to overfishing in any of the three years preceding the date of a determination is not eligible for a determination of whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred unless the Secretary determines that overfishing was not a contributing factor to the fishery resource disaster.

A request for a fishery disaster determination can be made by the Governor of an affected State, an official resolution of an Indian Tribe, or any other comparable elected or politically appointed representative as determined by the Secretary. The Secretary may also initiate a review at his or her discretion. The Secretary determines whether the circumstances are consistent with relevant statutes and warrant a fishery disaster determination. If the Secretary determines that a fishery disaster has occurred, Congress may appropriate funds for disaster assistance, which are administered by the Secretary.

#### **Allowable Cause**

Under MSA 312(a), the allowable causes for a fishery resource disaster are natural causes, discrete anthropogenic causes, or undetermined causes, including those that occurred not more than five years prior to the date of a request for a fishery resource disaster determination that affected an applicable fishery. Natural causes include weather, climatic, hazard, or biology-related events and do not include a normal or cyclical variation in a species distribution or stock abundance.

Anthropogenic causes mean an anthropogenic event, such as an oil spill or spillway opening that could not have been addressed or prevented by fishery management measures and are beyond the control of fishery managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures, including regulatory restrictions imposed as a result of judicial action or to prevent human health or marine animals, plants, or habitats.