

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2005

Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez
Office of the Secretary
Room 5516
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th & Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Disaster Declaration for 2005 California and Oregon Salmon Fisheries

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

This year salmon fishermen from California and Oregon will experience unprecedented restrictions on their salmon fishing season due to very poor adult salmonid returns to the Klamath River. The low returns result from a combination of a multi-year drought, poor in-river water conditions, and other factors that are not yet understood by the scientific community. We understand that NOAA Fisheries is currently preparing the analysis necessary for you to make a disaster declaration. The situation is so extreme that we are writing to urge you to direct NOAA Fisheries to expedite this process. We intend for NOAA Fisheries to have this process completed by May 31, 2005, and for you to declare a disaster at that time as provided for under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Act to provide financial relief for the affected individuals, businesses and communities.

On April 8th 2005, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) recommended severe restrictions on the offshore ocean salmon fisheries of California and Oregon. As a result, in California, the Fish & Game Commission has imposed a drastically reduced salmon fishing season for commercial ocean and in-river fishermen and for the subsistence fishery relied on by the Yurok, Hoopa and Karuk Tribes. This will result in catastrophic economic losses for fishing families and for fishing dependent communities. The estimated loss to the West Coast commercial fishing fleet could, by conservative estimates, be tens of millions of dollars. The situation for others, including processors, port and tribal communities, related on-shore businesses, sports fishing guides and related businesses could be just as devastating. Similar steps have been taken in Oregon with similar impacts on the local fishing industry and communities.

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At least twice before, NOAA Fisheries declared the salmon fisheries of the West coast a disaster, once following the seven-year drought of the late 1980's and early 1990's and an earlier one following the El Niño of 1982-83. Declaration of a fishery disaster is the first step needed to allow the affected individuals and businesses to access federal disaster relief programs called for under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

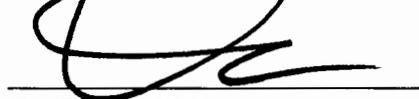
We urge you to instruct NOAA Fisheries to expedite the preparation of a disaster analysis and upon completion, we ask for your immediate disaster declaration. If you have any questions regarding this request or need additional information concerning the financial impact of the restrictions please do not hesitate to contact us.

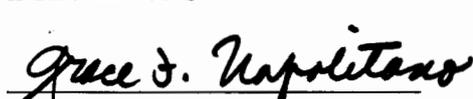
Sincerely,


MIKE THOMPSON


NANCY PELOSI


EARL BLUMENAUER

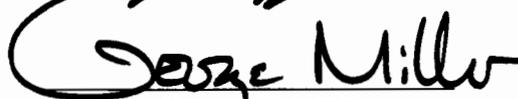

DAVID WU

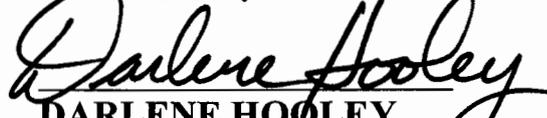

GRACE NAPOKITANO

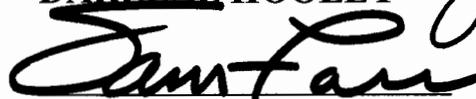

LYNN WOOLSEY

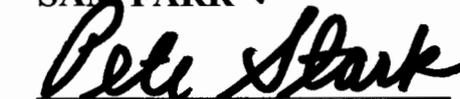

DORIS MATSUI


PETER DeFAZIO


GEORGE MILLER


DARLENE HOOLEY


SAM FARR


PETE STARK


LOIS CAPPS


ZOE LOFGREN



JIM COSTA



HILDA SOLIS



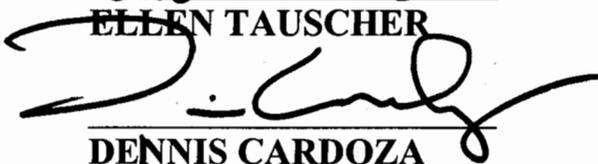
LINDA SANCHEZ



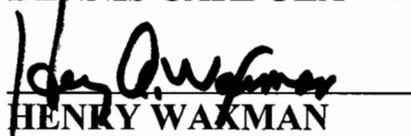
MICHAEL HONDA



ELLEN TAUSCHER



DENNIS CARDOZA



HENRY WAKMAN



JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD



MAXINE WATERS



LORETTA SANCHEZ



BOB FILNER



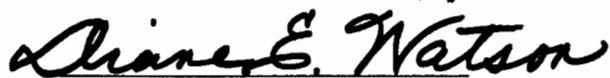
HOWARD BERMAN



SUSAN DAVIS



ADAM SCHIFF



DIANE WATSON



TOM LANTOS



BARBARA LEE



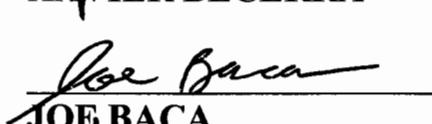
ANNA ESHOO



BRAD SHERMAN



XAVIER BECERRA



JOE BACA



JANE HARMAN



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Cc: Dr. William Hogarth, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor Ted Kulongoski
U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senator Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator Gordon Smith
The Honorable Wally Herger
The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable John Doolittle
The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
The Honorable Richard Pombo
The Honorable Nick Rahall
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Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
Modoc County Board of Supervisors
Trinity County Board of Supervisors
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
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Klamath County Commissioners
Curry County Commissioners
Coos County Commissioners
Douglas County Commissioners
Lincoln County Commissioners
Tillamook County Commissioners
Clatsop County Commissioners
Klamath Water Users Association
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Yurok Tribe
Hoopa Tribe
Karuk Tribe