



JEB BUSH  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

# Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

March 30, 1999

Honorable William M. Daley  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Daley:

I want to bring to your attention a serious problem in the Florida Keys and to respectfully request you exercise your authority pursuant to Section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, 15 U.S.C. 4107(d), by declaring a fisheries resource disaster for the commercial trap fishery in Monroe County, Florida.

As a result of Hurricane Georges in late September, 1998 and Hurricane Mitch in November, 1998, President Clinton and Governor Chiles declared a state of emergency throughout the south Florida area making these areas eligible for federal disaster assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The storms caused widespread damage in Monroe County for which assistance has been received from both FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Among the damage and devastation, the storm destroyed an estimated 400,000 spiny lobster traps, or nearly 75 percent of the total traps deployed in this fishery. The costs associated with replacing and repairing this uninsurable loss has placed the fishermen and their community in jeopardy. The commercial landings of both spiny lobster and stone crab are well below projected annual landings which is a result of direct and indirect effects of the disaster.

I am concerned for the stability and economic viability of the thousands of fishermen, households, and associated small businesses which are impacted in this community. Commercial fishing in Monroe County is a significant component of the traditional economic base, providing employment for approximately 3,600 residents and accounting for 32 percent of the total economic value of seafood produced in the entire State of Florida.

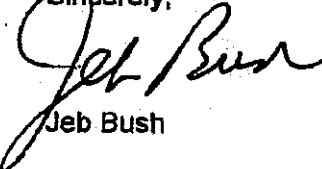
It is for these reasons that I am requesting that you declare a fishery resource disaster for the region's trap fishery.

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For further information, you may contact Edwin Conklin, Director, Division of Marine Resources, Florida Department of Environmental Protection at (850) 488-6058 or Tommy Williams in my office at (850) 488-8686.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,



Jeb Bush

JB/mtw

cc: Honorable Connie Mack  
Honorable Bob Graham  
Honorable C. W. "Bill" Young  
Honorable Dan Miller  
Honorable Peter Deutsch