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JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

November 5, 1999

The Honorable William M. Daley  
Secretary, US Department of Commerce  
14<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20230

OSDN EXHIBITING THE ORIGINAL  
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Dear Secretary Daley:

I formally request that you investigate and declare a disaster in the West Coast groundfish fishery pursuant to sections 312 and 308, respectively, of the Magnuson-Stevens and Interjurisdictional Acts. An immediate declaration is needed to begin the process of providing economic and social relief to the fishing families, fish processors and their employees, fishing communities, and dependent businesses in Oregon.

The groundfish fishery in Oregon has been the largest single component of Oregon's commercial and recreational marine fisheries. Harvest levels are now being drastically reduced. The negative consequences throughout the groundfish fishery will be even more widespread as a result of the need to rebuild weak stocks, and the interaction of those weak stocks with other fisheries. This disaster will likely require permanent changes in the structure of our West Coast fisheries.

I urge your immediate consideration of both short and long-term assistance. Short-term assistance must address those affected by reduced employment. Federal agency actions need to be coordinated, and should be adapted to the particular characteristics of the fishing industry. I would like to work with you to quickly establish an action team of federal and state agencies in Oregon to plan and deliver assistance.

The real solution to this problem must ultimately be to bring fish harvest in line with stock productivity. We need longer-term measures to reduce fleet capacity and provide transition assistance for those subject to change. I believe the kind of analysis and planning that have been provided in New England and for Alaska fisheries would help us on the West Coast.

In addition to assistance, improvements must be made in scientific resource surveys to place future management on a sound footing. West Coast surveys have been completed less frequently and have been less extensive than most other surveys of the nation's fisheries.

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I urge your immediate action, and look forward to working with you to solve this problem and provide needed assistance. Please contact Paula Burgess (503-378-3548) of my staff or Jim Greer, Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (503-872-5272) for additional information you may require.

Sincerely,



John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.

JAK/NR/sm