



OFFICES OF THE GOVERNORS

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
CALIFORNIA

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
OREGON

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
WASHINGTON

March 14, 2008

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce
Mailstop 61
14th and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary,

State and federal resource agencies scientists have been meeting over the past several months to review preliminary data on West Coast salmon populations to predict their abundance in 2008. A report has been prepared and presented to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) outlining the findings of that scientific review. For California Central Valley Chinook salmon (CCVC), the data indicate that the number of returning adult spawners have fallen below the conservation objective for CCVC established under the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan for the first time in 15 years. Equally alarming, it appears that the number of young fish that predict the upcoming CCVC population is the lowest on record. In addition to the severe conservation issues associated with CCVC, abundance forecasts several Columbia River natural populations of chinook and coho listed under the Endangered Species Act are also predicted to be near record-low levels.

Should the Council come to these conclusions as well, it could at its meeting in April recommend to you a complete closure of, or severe restrictions on, ocean and river salmon fisheries within its jurisdiction that affect CCVC and Columbia River stocks. Those areas include coastal waters of California, Oregon and Washington, and inland areas including the Sacramento River/Bay Delta and the Columbia River. In the event that those fisheries are closed or severely restricted, we hereby request that you declare a fishery resource disaster under section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986, and a commercial fishery failure under section 312a of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (MSA).

As you know, declaring a commercial fishery failure under the MSA will enable the fishing communities affected by any closure or restrictions to receive vital economic assistance. If the fisheries described above are closed or restricted, those communities will experience economic hardship even more severe than the losses they endured after restrictions were imposed on West Coast ocean salmon fisheries in 2006 in response to the low abundance of Klamath River fall Chinook salmon. Hence, economic assistance will again be critical for the well-being of our fishing communities and states.

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
March 14, 2008
Page two

As you know, salmon are a vital component of California, Oregon, and Washington's natural resources and provide significant aesthetic, recreational, commercial and economic benefits to our states. Salmon are also highly valued by Native American tribes for reasons of culture, subsistence and economic benefit. While economic assistance will be essential to address the short-term impacts associated with any closures or restrictions on our salmon fisheries, we recognize the importance of, and will continue our efforts to recover and restore, salmon populations and develop management strategies to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our salmon fisheries.

We greatly appreciate your anticipated support and leadership on this critical issue and look forward to a favorable reply.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California



Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor of Oregon



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington