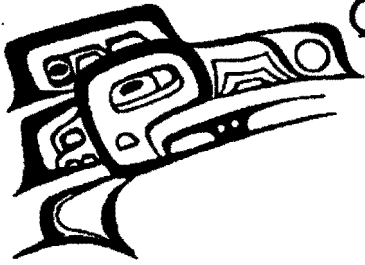
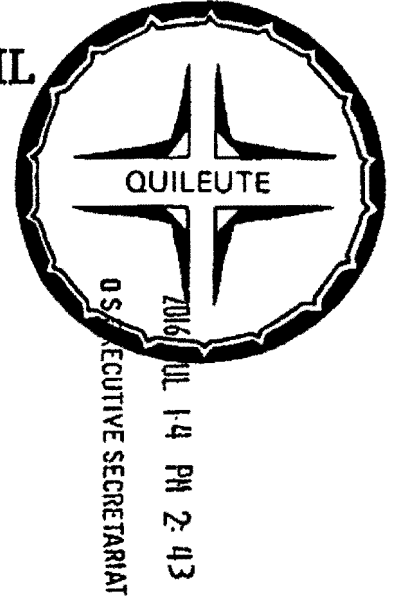


A-priority 16-050780



QUILEUTE TRIBAL COUNCIL

POST OFFICE BOX 279
LA PUSH, WASHINGTON 98350-0279
TELEPHONE (360) 374-6163
FAX (360) 374-6311



June 23, 2016

SF → 19

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

Recently the Quileute Tribe has and continues to experience an economic disaster within our treaty fishing community due in both to public health concerns that caused the closure of the tribally managed Dungeness crab fishery and dwindling available catch that may be connected to ocean conditions such as ocean acidification.

Last year a massive, persistent Harmful Alga Bloom (HAB) caused by phytoplankton and ocean conditions caused Dungeness crab and other shellfish resources in our Usual and Accustomed Fishing Area (U & A) to accumulate the neurotoxin domoic acid at levels considered unsuitable for human consumption. This neurotoxin causes nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and at high levels even death.

Quileute Tribe's Shellfish Monitoring Program in coordination with the Washington State Departments' of Health (DOH) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Quinault Nation monitor shellfish and seawater for the presence of HAB producing phytoplankton and the availability of the toxin Domoic Acid to shellfish. In May of 2015 of this coordinated effort, sampling revealed a story of increasing toxin levels that quickly became alarming from the perspective of human consumption. In August of 2015 both the Quileute Tribe and Washington State closed their respective Dungeness fisheries (see Attachment 1 &, 2: closure notices). Subsequently the Quileute Tribe did not re-open its fishery until late in November of 2015.

Unlike state (non-treaty) fishers, the Quileute fisherman are limited by their treaty as to the geographic range where they may fish. Under the treaty our fisherman cannot leave their treaty area to fish. A map of our fishing grounds for crab is attached (Attachment 3). If changes of climate or ecological changes hit that particular area, even if not another, we are adversely impacted and cannot fish elsewhere. While we cannot be certain of the marine conditions that created the inability to harvest a greater number, some natural factor had to be involved, to explain the empty crab pots our fisherman experienced over and over.

SF we just need an acknowledgement - kath N.

Dungeness crab is one of the highest valued commercial fisheries in the Quileute Tribes' Treaty Fishery. Annual harvest rate averages (previous 10 years) at 432,345 pounds of crab, however in the 2013/2014 season we only harvested 65,165 pounds of crab (15% of average) and then in the 2015/2016 season only 62,335 pounds of crab have been harvested to this date. At these levels, Quileute fishers are harvesting less than 20% of their usual harvest rate. The direct economic impact from these conditions is estimated to be at least \$3 million. This estimate is based on an ex-vessel value of commercial landings over the previous 5 years and does not account for other commercial impacts or those of the fishing industry beyond commercial fisheries.

The Quileute Tribe considers these estimates of impact to date as significant and we request that you declare a fishery resource disaster under section 308 (d) of the interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. § 4107 (d)), and a commercial fishery failure under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. §1861 a (a)).

Your finding that a disaster should be declared will greatly assist our ability to recover from this event. We are seeking compensation for the lost fishery revenue as well as funding to protect the resource and prevent some of these losses in the future. We will appreciate your earliest possible formal action on our request.

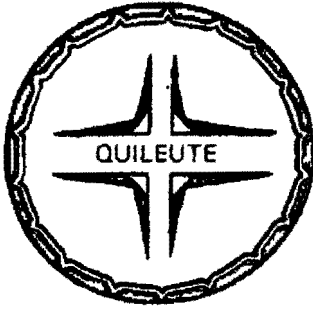
If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at (360) 374-6163 or chas.woodruff@quileutenation.org or have a member of your staff contact our Natural Resources Director, Mel Moon, at (360) 374-3133, mel.moon@quileutenation.org.

Sincerely,


Charles Woodruff, Chairman
Quileute Tribal Council

Attachment(s): (1) Closure Quileute Crab
 (2) Closure Washington State
 (3) Map Fishing Area

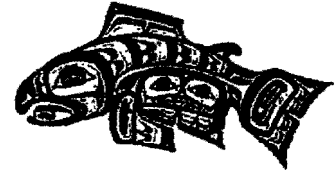
cc: The Honorable Patty Murray, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Derek Kilmer, U.S. Congressman



**Quileute Natural Resources
QUILEUTE INDIAN TRIBE**

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**QUILEUTE INDIAN TRIBE
DUNGENESS CRAB REGULATIONS 2014/2015
August 5, 2015**

Emergency Closure Notice

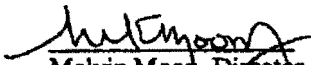
Due to high levels of biotoxin in crab recently detected off the coast of Washington north to Queets River, the Quileute Tribe is closing the Commercial and Ceremonial and Subsistence crab fishery for the remainder of the season, effective August 6th at 12:00 am through October 16th 11:59 pm. All pots must be pulled by August 10th. Any pots remaining in the water beyond August 10th will be declared derelict gear and subject to removal.

FISHERY: COMMERCIAL and C&S

SPECIES: Dungeness Crab (Cancer magister)

AREA: From 48°07'36 North Latitude (Sand Point) south to 47°31'42" North Latitude (Queets River) west to 125° 44'00" west Longitude.

This regulation supersedes any previous regulation of the Quileute Tribe for all Harvest of Dungeness Crab.


Melvin Moon, Director
Quileute Natural Resources


Policy Representative
Quileute Natural Resources Committee

Quileute Ocean U&A

