



PORT GAMBLE S'KLALLAM TRIBE
31912 Little Boston Rd. NE – Kingston, WA 98346

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OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

July 1, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

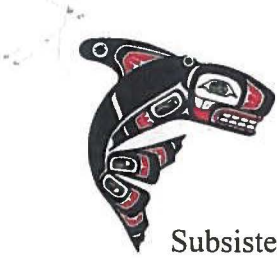
SUBJECT: 2018 Port Gamble Bay Coho Fishery Disaster for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

Dear Secretary Ross,

I formally request that the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe be included in the economic fishery disaster, pursuant to Section 3 12(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act (Act), so disaster relief assistance can be provided to tribal fishermen who were adversely impacted by the extremely low 2018 Puget Sound Coho Salmon returns to Port Gamble Bay. The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe would appreciate your declaration of this situation as a fishery disaster. Prompt action by the Department of Commerce will be critical in helping the fishermen get the disaster relief funds and assistance they are entitled to in a timely manner.

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe operates a Coho sea pen program within Port Gamble Bay. This resident program provides commercial and subsistence opportunities to our community members. In 2017, our Coho smolts had to be released to a large *Chaetoceros* bloom that can be fatal to salmon. This resulted in our earliest release on record and negatively impacted the survival of these smolts resulting in extremely low returns in 2018. This impact was compounded by the lower than normal Puget Sound wide returns which were the progeny of the 2015 Puget Sound Coho disaster.

The 2018 Port Gamble Bay Coho fishery resulted in a 98% loss of income for the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal fishing community. It is estimated that the Port Gamble S'Klallam fishing fleet lost just over \$134,000 dollars as a result of the low Coho returns. The net income for 2018 S'Klallam tribal Coho fishery was just under \$4k while the 2016-2017 average was \$139k. These numbers do not reflect the additional cost for boat operations or gear purchase/maintenance during this period. There was also a substantial loss of subsistence fish available to our community. The non-existent Port Gamble S'Klallam harvest in Port Gamble Bay in 2018 had negative impacts to our traditional way of life and our cultural and spiritual ties to Coho Salmon. These negative impacts to our culture are irreversible. The financial impact that the fishermen have endured has been equally important, and it threatens the ability of fishermen to harvest a quantity of fish sufficient to ensure a modest living as reserved for the S'Klallam Tribes through the Treaty of Point-No-Point.



PORT GAMBLE S'KLALLAM TRIBE
NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
31912 Little Boston Rd. NE – Kingston, WA 98346

Subsistence, ceremonial and commercial fisheries are integral to the way of life for Port Gamble S'Klallam members. The 1974 federal court decision in *United States v. Washington* affirmed the Stevens Treaty tribes the treaty right to half of the harvestable salmon in Washington State and established these tribes as co-managers of Washington State fisheries. As a sovereign nation and federally-recognized tribe, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe has the right to request and receive disaster assistance as administrated under your office, and Congress may appropriate these funds. With no Coho Salmon to harvest, no Coho Salmon for families and no income for fishing families, the Port Gamble S'Klallam fishing community is in despair and in need of expedited financial assistance and relief.

If you have any questions, please contact: Jeromy Sullivan, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Chairman 360-297-6342 or jeromys@pgst.nsn.us

Sincerely,

Jeromy Sullivan, Chairman
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, US Senator
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, US Senator
The Honorable Derek Kilmer, Congressman