



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

January 28, 2020

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

SUBJECT: 2019 Fraser River Sockeye and 2019 Puget Sound Coho and Chum Fishery
Disasters 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). Inclusion in the disaster relief will provide assistance to Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal fishermen who were adversely impacted by the extremely low 2019 Puget Sound Coho and Chum returns as well as the closure of the 2019 Fraser River Sockeye fishery. 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.

The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe was especially affected by the 2019 Coho and Chum fisheries and the closure of the 2019 Fraser sockeye fishery. The impacts of the Coho and Chum fisheries are more substantial as these fisheries are focused on commercial harvest and have a reliable season length from mid-August through the end of November. On average, there are approximately 65 vessels who participate in this fishery. Sockeye fisheries have a much smaller fishing window and are managed in-season. Due to this variability, there are fewer participants (approximately 3 vessels) and the use of the fish harvested varies as it is often the first salmon of the season so many are used for subsistence and ceremonial purposes while some are sold commercially. The differences in the value of these fisheries are reflected in the estimated impacts to the PGST community for both 2019 Coho and chum fisheries and the 2019 closure of the Fraser River Sockeye fishery.

2019 Coho Fishery Disaster

The 2019 Puget Sound Coho fishery resulted in a 93% loss of income for the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal fishing community. It is estimated that the Port Gamble S'Klallam fishing



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NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

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fleet lost just over \$156,000 as a result of the low Coho returns. The net income for 2019 S'Klallam tribal Coho fishery was just under \$13,000 while the 2014-2018 average was \$169,000 (excluding 2015¹). These numbers do not reflect the additional cost for boat operations or gear purchase/maintenance during this period. The almost non-existent Port Gamble S'Klallam harvest in Puget Sound and Port Gamble Bay 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.

2019 Chum Fishery Disaster

The 2019 Puget Sound Chum fishery resulted in a 33% 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 \$66,000 as a result of the low chum returns. The net income for 2019 S'Klallam tribal chum fishery was just over \$133,000 while the 2014-2018 average was \$200,000. These numbers do not reflect the additional cost for boat operations or gear purchase/maintenance during this period. The loss of this fishery has been a negative impact to our traditional way of life as chum are an important source of subsistence fish that is utilized all winter long. These negative impacts to our culture are irreparable.

2019 Fraser River Sockeye Fishery Disaster

The closure of the 2019 Fraser River Sockeye fishery resulted in a 100% loss of income for the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal fishing community. Since the Sockeye fisheries has limited openers, we fewer participants. It is estimated that the Port Gamble S'Klallam fishing fleet lost \$25,700 as a result of the closed fishery. The net income for 2018 S'Klallam tribal Sockeye fishery was just under \$50,000. We participated in the fishery in 2014 and 2018 with the average income between the two years averaging \$26,000. These numbers do not reflect the additional cost for boat operations or gear purchase/maintenance during this period or the loss of subsistence fish.

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 salmon to harvest, no salmon for families to subside on over the winter 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.

¹ 2015 was declared a fishing disaster and has not been included in the analysis. Data is available upon request.



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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 Suzan DelBenne, Congresswoman



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

September 15, 2020

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

SUBJECT: 2014 Fraser River Sockeye Fishery Disaster for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

Dear Secretary Ross,

I, formally request 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 fishermen who were adversely impacted by the migration route of the 2014 Fraser River sockeye run. The Port Gamble S'Klallam tribe appreciates your declaration of this situation. Prompt efforts by your Department are critical in helping the fishermen get the disaster relief funds and assistance they are entitled to in a timely manner.

The 2014 Fraser River sockeye run was very large, but the high diversion rate meant that 96% of the sockeye returning to the river by migrated through Johnstone Strait (Canada) rather than through the Strait of Juan de Fuca (U.S). It is assumed that warm ocean conditions caused the highest diversion rate on record dating back to 1953. During a typical sockeye run, about 50 percent will swim around Vancouver Island through the Strait of Juan de Fuca putting them in U. S waters. This resulted in limited fisheries that left Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe fishers with a 96% loss of income.

It is estimated that the Port Gamble S'Klallam fishing fleet of 4 fishers harvested just over 39,000 pounds of sockeye and an income of just under \$72,000 between 2010 and 2013. In 2014, only 873 pounds were harvested with an income of \$1,595. This results in a 96% loss of income when compared to the previous four years. 2009 is excluded from the data set as the fishery was not opened.

The non-existent Port Gamble S'Klallam harvest for Fraser River sockeye has had negative impacts to the way of life, cultural, spiritual and traditional ties to the sockeye, these negative impacts are irreversible. The financial impact the fishermen have endured is as equally important during the non-existent sockeye fishery and threatens the fishermen to harvest a quantity of fish sufficient to ensure a modest living.

The importance of subsistence, ceremonial and commercial fisheries is an integral part of 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



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salmon 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 sockeye salmon to harvest, no sockeye fish 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

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