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Governor Mike Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

September 28, 2023

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

OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
 2023 OCT 12 PM 3:43

Re: State of Alaska Federal Fishery Resource Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), I am writing to request two fishery resource disaster determinations: the 2021 and 2022 Upper Cook Inlet East Side Setnet salmon fisheries and the 2022 Nelson Lagoon salmon fishery.

Based on available information in the attached memos, salmon harvesting opportunities in the East Side Setnet fishery continued to be restricted in 2021 and 2022 for sockeye salmon due to conservation concerns for Kenai River Chinook salmon. This request is similar to those approved for the 2018 East Side Setnet fishery and the 2020 Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. The final gross revenue value of the East Side Setnet salmon fishery in 2021 was \$3.77 million, 60 percent below the average value of \$9.49 million during the most recent five-year period when no fishery disaster occurred. The final value of the 2022 fishery was \$0.96 million, 90 percent below the five-year average. These revenue losses compared to recent years can be attributed to a combination of late run timing and implementation of additional fishery management measures to constrain harvest of weak Kenai River late-run Chinook salmon.

In 2021 and 2022, 82 percent of the 344 East Side Setnet commercial salmon permit holders who made landings were Alaska residents and 77 percent lived on the Kenai Peninsula. Low levels of salmon harvest in 2021 and 2022 from the East Side Setnet commercial salmon fishery had severe adverse impacts for permit holders, crew, processing companies, and communities that participate in the fishery.

In 2022, the Nelson Lagoon sockeye salmon harvest was the lowest since 1977 and the gross revenue value of the fishery was \$484,000, which is 60 percent below the recent five-year average value of \$1.18 million. Low 2022 sockeye salmon returns to the Nelson River may have

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been the result of high levels of escapement that led to poor returns in following years or other unknown natural causes. Twenty-one of 30 Nelson Lagoon salmon permit holders live in the region and the fishery provides a critically important economic and cultural base for families and villages in the area.

I appreciate your consideration of these requests and have asked the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide the National Marine Fisheries Service and your office with any additional information needed to make the fishery disaster determinations.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
The Honorable Mary Peltola, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game