

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
GOVERNOR

April 5, 2006

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

Thank you for responding to my concerns last year regarding the reduction in salmon harvest off the coast of Oregon. Unfortunately, once again our state is facing the likelihood of a complete season closure or, at best, a severely reduced season. With the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) likely April decision to recommend closure or severely restrict salmon fishing as a result of potential impacts to the Klamath River Fall Chinook fishery, I ask your assistance in relieving the economic burden that our coastal communities will face as a result of this action.

Oregon requests that you determine there is a commercial fishery failure for salmon fisheries in 2006 due to a fishery resource disaster in accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). In our view, the causes of poor recruitment are likely to be associated with changing ocean conditions, drought, Klamath River water quality and parasites. Therefore, the causes of the fishery resource disaster are likely beyond the control of the fisheries managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures or both. We understand that your determination is needed for fishing communities to receive economic disaster assistance under MSA.

We recognize that last year's fishery closure was found to not warrant financial assistance. However, we anticipate that this season's closure will have far greater impacts. The Council's March 2006 projections for economic impact indicate that the impacts to Oregon (should there be a complete closure) are on the order of \$8 million in commercial revenues, leading to a loss of \$12 million in personal income to Oregon fishing communities. These communities will also be affected by the closure—or almost complete closure—of recreational salmon fisheries. During 2005, recreational anglers contributed approximately \$3.5 million in personal income to Oregon fishing communities in the course of some 50,000 fishing trips. These expected salmon closures will be adding to the existing poor economic climate for these communities. Based on unemployment rates, personal income levels, poverty rates, and other factors, almost all

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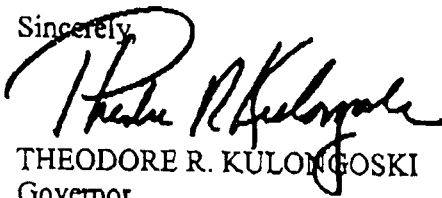
of the affected communities have been designated as "distressed" or "severely distressed" by the Oregon Employment Department.

Should it be determined that the current situation does qualify for federal economic assistance under MSA, Oregon looks forward to working with you to implement a program that both addresses the underlying causes for the fishery failure, and assists the affected fishing communities. In late March, I held an "Ocean Salmon Emergency Summit" that included my staff, representatives of the fishing industry and their communities, and Oregon Congressional staff. Should funding be made available, we will be able to implement many of the projects that were proposed during that meeting.

Finally, I want to personally invite you to visit Oregon as my guest in 2006 for the purpose of reviewing the effects of the reduction of ocean salmon fishing due to diminished Klamath River Fall Chinook. I am extending a similar invitation to Interior Secretary-Designate Kempthorne, and am hoping that your visits coincide. I think it would be of immense benefit to both of you, to your agencies, and especially to Oregon, if we could review and discuss the Klamath Basin issues important to the Department of the Interior as they relate to your agency's responsibilities for conservation of salmonids and other marine stocks.

Thank you for your consideration of my request for assistance, and for considering my invitation to visit Oregon.

Sincerely,



THEODORE R. KULON GOSKI  
Governor

TRK:MC:JH:jb

cc: William T. Hogarth, Assistant Administrator, Marine Fisheries Services  
D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, Marine Fisheries Services  
Don Hansen, Chairman, Pacific Fishery Management Council  
Oregon Congressional Delegation