



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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David W. Ortmann, Chairman Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

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The Honorable Gary Locke, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

The Pacific Fishery Management Council wishes to comment on one of the greatest challenges facing both of our agencies: the protection and restoration of Pacific salmon. As you know from your tenure as Washington's Governor and now as Commerce secretary, salmon play a crucial role in both the ecology and the economy of the West Coast. Their recovery is of enormous importance to the three coastal states, the inland empire of Idaho, and the fishing communities that depend on recreational, commercial and tribal fisheries served by the Council.

Salmon declines have had severe impacts on coastal and rural economies throughout the Pacific states. With thousands of jobs and billions of dollars already lost and more at stake, reversing these declines and returning salmon to abundance must be a shared goal. The management of the Columbia-Snake River Basin represents an opportunity to alter the trajectory of both salmon and the communities that depend upon them. As NOAA Fisheries engages in the latest, and most likely final, remand of the 2008 Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System, the Pacific Council urges the Department of Commerce to ensure that the remand results in a robust, legal salmon plan that is based on the best available science and incorporates the most recent information on climate change, consistent with District Court advice.

A lawful, science-driven plan must be part of a longer-term commitment to restore the Columbia Basin's wild salmonid runs. To that end, we also ask that the Department of Commerce convene a "solutions table" where stakeholders from throughout the Basin can work with state and federal agencies and Northwest Tribes to craft a long-term blueprint for meaningful salmon recovery. Recreational, commercial, and tribal fishing communities must be an integral part of this process from the beginning.

Finally, we urge the Department of Commerce to commit to the goal of salmon abundance, and to the return of harvestable, self-sustaining runs of wild salmon and steelhead – to rebuild struggling fishing communities, keep fishermen on the water, end the now-annual cycle of salmon collapses and subsequent disaster relief, and ensure that wild salmon remain an integral part of the West Coast's ecosystem and culture. This larger objective should guide our collective efforts to protect, restore, and manage our salmon resources.

Thank you for your time.

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