

**MIKE THOMPSON**  
1ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE:  
WAYS AND MEANS



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 9, 2006

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Dr. Donald McIsaac  
Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Dr. McIsaac:

I am writing to urge the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to preserve a salmon fishing season for California and Oregon while maintaining the biological integrity of the Klamath River stocks.

As you know, the Klamath River will not meet the 35,000 natural spawner floor for fall-run chinook this year. The reported result could be a complete closure of the commercial, in-river, tribal and recreational fisheries for 2006. It is estimated that a closure of the fishing season would have an economic impact of \$150 million or more on the coastal communities in California and Oregon. The impacts on the California economy from last year's season alone, which was cut by 60-percent due to poor Klamath River returns, ranged from \$40 to \$60 million. The affects from the 2005 season, combined to a potential closure to this year's season, would be catastrophic and could very likely have permanent affects on the salmon fishing industry and related businesses in both states.

The declining salmon populations in the Klamath River basin are not due to over fishing by tribes or the commercial salmon fishing industry. They are due to federal mismanagement of the Klamath River system which hurt both farmers and fishermen. This mismanagement led to the horrific fish kill in 2002 when up to 78,000 adult salmon died on the Klamath River<sup>1</sup>. It also led to the outbreak of *Ceratomyxa Shasta* (C. Shasta) which has reportedly infected 80-percent of juvenile salmonids. Mortality from C. Shasta is 100-percent.

Every effort should be made to preserve a fishing season and to protect the declining Klamath fishery. I urge the council to analyze the biological data and consider a season which would target the more robust Sacramento River and Colombia River stocks, to avoid further impact on the Klamath River salmon. In your report to NOAA Fisheries, I suggest you also include recommendations to immediately help restore and protect the

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Fish and Game: September 2002 Klamath River Fish Kill: Final Analysis of Contributing Factors and Impacts. July 2004, p. 158.

Dr. McIsaac  
March 9, 2006  
Page 2

Klamath River basin's salmon stocks, specifically one that encourages federal managers to send higher flows of cool, clean water down the Klamath River and one that addresses the impacts of the dams on the Klamath River system.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress