

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Portland, Oregon 97201

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lawrence D. Six

JRMAN
Jerry Mallet

April 8, 1998

Governor John Kitzhaber
254 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

RE: Support for Changing Oregon Forest Practices

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was created by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA) in 1976 with the primary role of developing, monitoring, and revising management plans for fisheries conducted within federal waters off Washington, Oregon, and California. Subsequent congressional amendments to the FCMA in 1986, 1990, and 1996 (now referred to as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act) added emphasis to the Council's role in fishery habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement.

With spawning population estimates for Oregon coastal natural coho at an all time low of 15,400, as well as the closure of ocean coho fisheries south of Cape Falcon (again) in 1998, we felt it appropriate to express support for the direction brought forward in the February 17 National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) document suggesting changes to Oregon's forest practice regulations. We feel that these recommendations should be considered in Oregon's current process of revising forest practices.

The success of the Oregon Coastal Salmon Restoration Initiative (OCSRI) will depend on the improvement of our watershed management strategies (including forestry, agriculture, and other land uses), modification of hatchery practices, and carefully regulating harvest impacts.

We believe that the fishing industry has shouldered its part of the recovery burden through the numerous closures and shortened seasons that have typified the Council ocean fishery management in the last five years. This has come at great expense to the region's fishing industry as well as the coastal communities that depend on fishing revenues. However, all pieces of the recovery puzzle, whether it be on state, federal, private, or tribal land must be put in place if we, as a region, are serious about restoring salmon to harvestable surpluses. It is, therefore, critical that the State of Oregon manage its public and private forests with a purpose of providing strong aquatic protection standards for salmonids.

Therefore, the Council endorses the direction brought forward in the Draft Proposal Concerning Oregon Forest Practices dated February 17, 1998, and sees these types of changes as necessary steps intended to conserve salmon populations by establishing and sustaining properly functioning habitat conditions throughout their range over the long term. Keep in mind that the riparian reserves on federal lands managed by the Northwest Forest Plan, which were developed using best available science, are significantly larger than those proposed by NMFS document of February 17.

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We realize that implementing needed changes to Oregon's forest practice regulations, especially the expansion of riparian protection zones, will clearly impact the timber industry, especially small nonindustrial woodland owners. Therefore, efforts to compensate small landowners for foregone timber harvest opportunities (utilizing incentive measures) will be critical to successful stream restoration efforts and the ultimate success of the OCSRI.

Because Oregon coastal coho salmon are in such a dire situation, we also believe that these new conservation regulations should be developed and implemented in a timely manner utilizing a process that involves all stakeholders.

We look forward to working with you in this process. Please feel free to contact the staff of the Pacific Fishery Management Council at (503) 326-6352 if we may be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Mallet".

Jerry Mallet, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council

SHP:klr