

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2021

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

We write to you today in support of multiple fishery disaster declaration requests that have been forwarded to you by the State of Alaska for 2020. Unfortunately, multiple fisheries and regions were identified that meet the eligibility criteria considered for federal fisheries disaster relief funding, including:

- 2020 Norton Sound, Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, Chignik, Upper Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries;
- 2018 and 2020 Copper River salmon fisheries;
- 2018 Upper Cook Inlet East Side Setnet salmon fishery;
- 2020 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod fishery;
- 2019 and 2020 Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery

As you are aware, the Secretary of Commerce is authorized to declare federal fisheries disasters under Section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act and Section 315 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. These designations allow Congress to appropriate federal relief funds to alleviate the harm caused by natural disasters to fisheries and the fishing industry. The disaster assistance funds can be used to repair or restore fishing equipment and infrastructure, compensate for losses, restore fisheries habitat, support workforce education, provide low-interest loans, and conduct monitoring and cooperative research focused on improving stock assessments.

Several fisheries in Alaska have experienced declines in harvest and revenue that likely resulted from unprecedented conditions in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea in recent years. Across this group of fisheries, sudden and unexpected decreases in fishery stock biomass resulted in fishery closures and severely restricted fisheries. This has negatively impacted fishing permit holders, crew, processors, and communities from Norton Sound to Southeast Alaska.

The Alaska Delegation believes that commercial fishery failures across multiple species and regions of Alaska meet the criteria for fishery disaster determinations under the MSA and IFA. Thank you for the opportunity to bring this issue to your attention and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator



Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator



Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska