

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

CC: The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce

Dear Mr. President:

A thriving Chinook salmon fishery is crucial for California's coastal economy and culture. For a myriad of reasons, Chinook salmon populations have fallen far below historic levels, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) took the unfortunate but necessary step of closing the fishery for the 2023 season. The closure of this vital fishery will have far-reaching consequences for commercial, recreational, and charter fishers, tribes, businesses, restaurants, and families who depend upon a healthy salmon fishery for subsistence. In response to the closure, on April 6, Governor Gavin Newsom submitted a request to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo to declare a fishery disaster for the 2023 chinook salmon season. We appreciate the Governor's support and humbly ask that your Administration move swiftly to declare a federal fishery disaster.

The chinook salmon fishery has a profound economic value, impacting not only fish sales but also related businesses, including restaurants, bait and tackle shops, charter fishing guides, campgrounds, and more. Our communities will be hurting from this lack of revenue, and the subsistence users of the fishery will need assistance to feed their families. A federal fishery disaster declaration will not replace this essential cultural resource, but disaster dollars will provide some relief to affected businesses and families.

In the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill, Congress was able to secure an additional \$300 million for fishery disaster declarations, and we ask that a portion of these funds go towards affected Californians. Additionally, Congress authorized new bipartisan fishery disaster relief language based on Congressman Jared Huffman and Senator Roger Wicker's Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act. This language should streamline the process for declaring a federal fishery disaster and help to quickly provide relief to affected communities. It also extends eligibility for federal fishery disaster funds not only to commercial fisheries, but also to charter fishing businesses and impacted tribes, all of which will be sorely in need due to this salmon closure.


The closure of the California salmon fishery is a crisis. It remains unclear how long the salmon fishery will need to be closed, and we know there is much work ahead of us. The long-term solutions will include improving our drought resiliency, restoring salmon habitat, and of course, addressing the climate crisis. We look forward to continuing our work with your Administration on these goals. However, Californians who depend on the fishery will be immediately affected and have no time to wait for these long-term objectives to be achieved. A federal fishery disaster declaration will help our commercial and charter fisheries, tribes, and communities survive the difficult times ahead.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

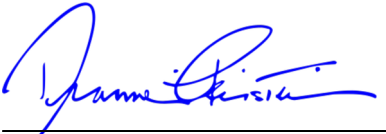
Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



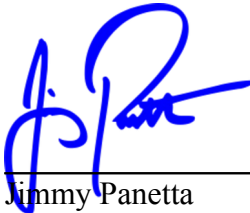
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



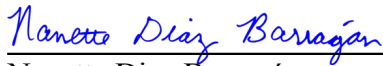
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



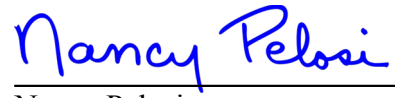
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



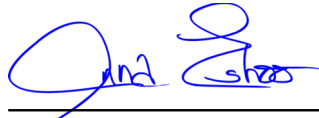
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



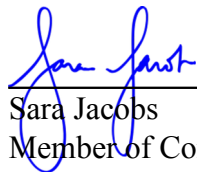
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress