



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 16, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary, United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, District of Columbia 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

In accordance with section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), I am writing to request that you issue a declaration of a fishery resource disaster for the State of California 2025 Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) ocean and inland salmon fisheries.

On April 15, 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended a full closure of California's commercial ocean salmon fisheries and a significantly reduced recreational ocean season in response to near-historically low stock abundance forecasts for the fall Chinook runs of salmon originating from the Sacramento and Klamath rivers. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) implemented these recommendations in regulations effective on May 16, 2025. A host of factors have pushed this iconic and important fishery to the point of collapse, including prolonged and historic drought, severe wildfires, impacts to spawning and rearing habitat, harmful algal blooms, and ocean forage shifts and associated thiamine deficiency. While we have started to see recovery in the past year and will be able to provide some fishing opportunities in 2026, the economic impacts of the 2025 commercial closure and recreational restrictions were severe.

Those factors, culminating in the third year of total closure of California's commercial fisheries reliant on SRFC and KRFC and dramatically reduced recreational fishing opportunity on these stocks, will have severe and long-lasting effects on already distressed coastal communities and the businesses that depend upon these fisheries. These natural causes and associated regulatory restrictions constitute "a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster" under MSA section 312(a). Declaring a

fishery resource disaster will begin the process of requesting federal aid to assist these fishery-dependent communities during this extremely difficult time.

The closure of the 2025 California commercial salmon fishery has resulted in loss of 100% of the direct revenue generated by California's commercial salmon fishery. The Pacific Fishery Management Council estimates that over the past five years where commercial fishing was open (2018-2022), California commercial ocean salmon fisheries generated an annual average of \$30.2 million,<sup>1</sup> in coastal community and state personal income.

Recreational sectors covered by MSA were similarly affected by the significantly reduced or closed fishing seasons in 2025. For both ocean charter and in-river guide businesses, the shortened or closed recreational salmon seasons resulted in direct revenue losses.

Ocean charter boat operators targeting Chinook salmon off much of California were limited to a total of six fishing days in 2025, while the far-north was limited to two days. Between 2018 and 2022, the San Francisco management area was open for recreational ocean salmon fishing an average of 154 days, and the Eureka management area was open for an average of 72 days. The restrictions in 2025 represent a reduction of 96.1% and 97.2% from the prior non-disaster 5-year average in the central and northern parts of state, respectively.

Similarly, fishing guide businesses targeting salmon in inland waters experienced a reduction or no opportunity to target Chinook salmon in 2025 depending on location. The Klamath and Trinity rivers were completely closed to salmon fishing, and the Central Valley rivers (Sacramento, Feather, American and Mokelumne) experienced closure or a significant reduction in the number of available fishing days. Across 11 regulatory areas, the 2025 season represented a 60.1% reduction in the number of open days for Central Valley rivers compared with 2018 to 2022.

Salmon are a vital component of California's cultural and natural resources and provide significant commercial, recreational, economic, intrinsic, and cultural benefits to the state. Based on the 100% loss of direct commercial fishery revenue for a third year, and significant reductions to the covered recreational sectors, I urge your prompt consideration of a declaration of a fishery resource disaster for California's SFRC and KRFC fisheries to enable fishing communities affected by this disaster to receive essential economic assistance.


Please direct questions or requests for more information to Dr. Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Region Manager at

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<sup>1</sup> Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2025. Review of 2024 Ocean Salmon Fisheries: Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document for the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Table IV-16

r7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov or (805) 568-1246. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your ongoing support of California's fishing communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California