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Governor Mike Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: State of Alaska Federal Fishery Disaster Requests

Dear Ms. Raimondo:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), and Section 308(b) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA), I am writing to request you declare a fishery disaster for each of the following fisheries: the 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, and the 2019/2020 Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery.

These fisheries have experienced drastic declines resulting from unprecedented conditions in recent years.

The 2014-2016 marine heatwave was substantially long lasting and intense. The Secretary of Commerce determined that the 2018 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod and 2018 Chignik sockeye salmon commercial fishery failures resulted from "unfavorable ocean conditions, among other factors, beyond the control of fishery managers that reduced biomass and access to the fishery."

In 2018 and 2019, a subsequent marine heatwave occurred in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, extending throughout the entire water column. These marine heatwaves likely contributed to continued low abundance and poor marine survival of salmon and Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska and northern Bering Sea. Environmental impacts likely play a role in the distribution, growth rate, and natural mortality of Tanner crab as well.

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The sudden and unexpected decreases in commercial fishery stock biomass have resulted in several fishery closures and severely restricted fisheries. This has negatively affected permit holders, fishing crew, processors, and communities from Norton Sound to Southeast Alaska. Based on available information, to be provided, the commercial fishery failures across multiple species and regions of Alaska included in this request resulted from fishery resource disasters arising from natural or undetermined causes; therefore, they meet the criteria for fishery disaster determinations under the MSA and IFA.

I appreciate your consideration of these requests, and have asked the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide the National Marine Fisheries Service and your office with any additional information needed to make fishery disaster determinations.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
The Honorable Don Young, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Kip Knudson, Director of State/Federal Relations, Office of the Governor
John Moller, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor