February 10, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Raimando:

Under the provisions of Section 312 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, I respectfully request that you declare a commercial fishery failure in Washington State. This request is based upon several failures in salmon runs in 2019 including Willapa Bay, Columbia River, and Puget Sound.

Salmon returns were well below the already low expected returns for many Washington watersheds in 2019. Various issues contributed to these low returns, including escapement in parent years, poor rearing and spawning conditions in freshwater systems, and unfavorable ocean conditions. These poor salmon returns resulted in ex-vessel values for Washington’s statewide salmon fisheries of 37 percent compared to the recent five-year average.

In certain areas, the impacts were especially harsh; the Columbia River, Willapa Bay, and the Puget Sound all seeing reductions of over 65 percent of the five-year average.

- The commercial catch of salmon in the Columbia River saw significant reductions compared to the five-year average; with 45,000 less fish caught and ex-vessel values down 80 percent.

- The commercial catch of salmon in Willapa Bay saw significant reductions compared to the five-year average; with 20,000 less fish caught and ex-vessel values down 67 percent.

- The commercial catch of salmon in Puget Sound also saw significant reductions compared to the five-year average; with 4,444,000 less fish caught and ex-vessel values down 74 percent.

Based on the catch and economic value data listed above, I am requesting that a commercial fishery failure declaration for the 2019 Willapa Bay, Columbia River, and Puget Sound salmon non-treaty salmon fisheries be declared.
For more information or questions on Washington’s 2019 fisheries, please contact Ron Warren with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at (360) 902-2799 or JT Austin with the Governor’s Office at (360) 628-7440.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor