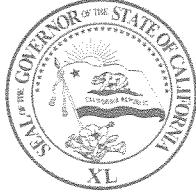


13-067253



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 28, 2019

2019 JUL 18 AM 10:40
0 S EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

California is experiencing an economic disaster to our fishing industry and communities due to oceanic conditions that have caused the closure of the commercial fishery for Pacific Sardine (sardine). This resulted in a federal fishery disaster declaration for 2015 and 2016. Continuing poor conditions and fishery closure merit a disaster declaration for 2017, 2018, and 2019 under the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 (IFA, 16 U.S.C. § 4107(d)), and a commercial fishery failure under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (Magnuson Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1861a(a)).

Sardine populations are strongly influenced by ocean conditions. Oceanographic shifts such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and La Niña's cold-water influence are believed to have precipitated sharply reduced sardine recruitment in the northern subpopulation ranging from Canada to Baja California, resulting in significant declines in the population. Sardine fishing is managed under the federal Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan. This plan establishes a cutoff biomass of 150,000 metric tons, below which directed fishing is not allowed. Due to these declines, the directed fishery was closed in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and remains closed in 2019. A small allowance for Sardine bycatch and other small-scale fisheries (minor directed, tribal, recreational, and live bait) continues to result in very limited landings.

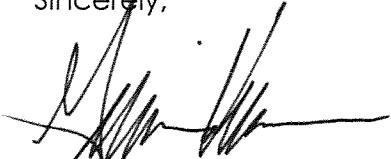
Sardine is historically one of the top ten highest valued commercial fisheries in California. Statewide, the commercial sardine closure in 2017 resulted in a total ex-vessel value of \$61,453, which is 96 percent less than the 2012-2016 average of \$1,652,800. In 2018 the closure resulted in a total ex-vessel value of only \$77,458,

which is 90 percent less than the 2013-2017 average of \$800,857. Preliminary Pacific Sardine landings information from 2019 currently shows a total ex-vessel value of \$62,292, which is 82 percent less than the 2014-2018 average of \$346,691. These initial estimates are based on the average ex-vessel value of commercial landings and do not account for additional impacts to fish processors or to the fishing industry and coastal community. Further, the fishery will remain closed through 2019 and may remain closed for the 2020 season as well. Therefore, the economic impact is likely to increase.

Given the significant economic impacts for 2017, 2018, and 2019, I request you declare a fishery resource disaster under section 308(d) of the IFA, and a commercial fishery failure under section 312(a) of the Magnuson Act. As you know, declaring a commercial failure will enable the fishing communities affected by the closure to receive essential economic assistance. Pacific Sardine is a vital component of California's natural resources and provides significant aesthetic, recreational, commercial, cultural, and economic benefits to our state. Economic assistance will be critical for the well-being of our fishing industry and our state. I also ask National Marine Fisheries Service to work directly with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to expeditiously complete the required review process. The CDFW contact is Dr. Craig Shuman (Craig.Shuman@wildlife.ca.gov), and the designated alternate is John Ugoretz (John.Ugoretz@wildlife.ca.gov).

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom
Governor of California