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13-068338

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

A Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Organized Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 476
* 11404 Moorage Way * La Conner, Washington 98257 *

October 31, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

2019 NOV 12 AM 10:09
U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

SUBJECT: 2019 Commercial Fishery Disaster for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Dear Secretary Ross,

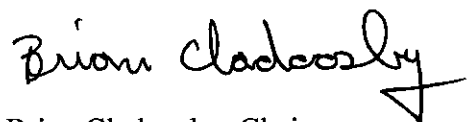
The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is formally requesting that an economic fishery disaster be declared under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act. This will allow fishers who were negatively affected by the complete failures of several 2019 fisheries that are relied upon by our community to be provided disaster relief. The fisheries affected were the Catch Reporting Area 7/7A sockeye, pink, and chum salmon fisheries targeting primarily Fraser River and lower inside British Columbia stocks, as well as the Skagit terminal area Skagit River pink salmon fishery (Catch Reporting Areas 8/78C/78O). The abundance of fish returning for these stocks in 2019 was so low that the 7/7A sockeye, 7/7A chum, and Skagit terminal area pink fisheries did not open at all, while the 7/7A pink fishery was extremely limited. The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community urges a prompt response, which will allow our fishers to quickly obtain the disaster relief funds and support they are entitled to.

These fisheries are very important to Swinomish fishers, and the severe reduction in harvest affects the entire tribe. Harvest in these fisheries not only contributes significantly to annual fisher income, but also provides a ceremonial and subsistence food source for use by community members throughout the winter months. The Swinomish Tribe is a fishing tribe as a way of life, and every member and family relies upon the benefits provided by these fisheries. With few or no fish available to harvest because of low abundance, the entire community suffers.

As a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation, we have the right to request and receive disaster assistance under the Department of Commerce and Congressional appropriation. We ask that under your authority and in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, you coordinate with all parties to issue a Fisheries Economic Disaster Declaration as authorized under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Cladoosby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Brian Cladoosby, Chairman
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, US Senator
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, US Senator
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Congressman