



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

January 18, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker
Governor of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster. Your request relates to the impacts to the 2016 pink salmon fisheries in seven areas in the Gulf of Alaska, including Prince William Sound, the Kodiak Management Area, the Chignik Management Area, the Lower Cook Inlet Management Area, the Yakutat Area, South Alaska Peninsula, and Southeastern Alaska. The impacts resulted from poor pink salmon returns due to a variety of factors outside the control of fishery managers to mitigate, including unfavorable ocean conditions, freshwater environmental factors, and disease.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) evaluated whether a commercial fishery failure occurred due to a fisheries resource disaster. After reviewing the information provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the NMFS evaluation, I have found that the request for a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the 2016 pink salmon fisheries meets the requirements for such a finding under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

This determination provides a basis for Congress to appropriate disaster relief funding under the MSA, Section 312(a), and then for the NMFS to provide assistance to the State of Alaska and the affected communities. If Congress appropriates disaster relief funding, NMFS Alaska Region looks forward to working with the State of Alaska to develop a spend plan that will create a more resilient fishery that can better withstand similar environmental disasters in the future. Section 312(a)(3) requires that the Federal share of the cost of any activity carried out under the authority of this subsection shall not exceed 75% of the cost of that activity.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jim Schufreider at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Pritzker".

Penny Pritzker

cc: Byron Mallott, Lieutenant Governor of Alaska