



MAKAH TRIBAL COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 115 • NEAH BAY, WA 98357 • 360-645-2201

The Makah Tribe is an equal opportunity employer.



April 29, 2008

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
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Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

The Makah tribe requests that the United States Department of Commerce declare a Commercial Fishery Failure under section 312 (a) of the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act* and/or a Fishery Resource Disaster under section 308 (d) of the *Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act* of 1986. A disaster declaration under either of these laws could help our fishermen and our fishing community, cope economically during this period of low salmon stock abundances.

From our home on the northwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula, the Makah Tribe has always been a fishing society. Fishing is fundamental to our culture and heritage, and it remains the primary industry supporting our economy. The revenues from the Makah Tribe's fishing industry support over 50 percent of the economy of Neah Bay.

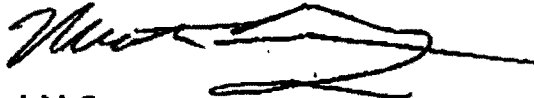
This year our salmon catch is predicted to be at its lowest level in the past 20 years. Details of this prediction are provided in Attachment A. This decline in salmon catch will have an enormous impact on our community, because salmon fisheries provide economic support, employment opportunity, and cultural balance to our community.

The reduction in salmon catches this year will worsen our already poor economic condition. Because of our remote location, our ability to develop alternative economic opportunities is very limited—we truly depend on salmon resources for our survival. The continuing decline in salmon runs has perpetuated a condition of long-term economic hardship in our community. According to the 2000 census, the median household income in Neah Bay was only about half the national average. These factors make our community especially susceptible to the economic effects of fishery declines. Disaster assistance, such as compensation, community grants, training, loans, debt refinancing, and employment on fishery related projects, could help our community survive this fishery crisis.

For these reasons, we appeal to you to declare a commercial fishery failure, to help our community through these difficult times in the west coast salmon fishery. Please use these federal programs to provide disaster relief to the people and communities that most need it in this time of severely restricted salmon fisheries.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss this issue further, I would be glad to discuss it with you.

Yours Sincerely,
MAKAH TRIBAL COUNCIL



Micah McCarty
Chairman

Cc:

- Senator Maria Cantwell
- Senator Patty Murray
- Congressman Norm Dicks
- Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS
- Steve Freese, NMFS Northwest Regional Office
- Michael Grayum, Executive Director NWIFC