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**NOAA's Fisheries Service Releases an Additional \$70 Million in
Disaster Aid to West Coast Salmon Fishing Industry**

NOAA's Fisheries Service announced today it is making an additional \$70 million in disaster-relief aid available to West Coast salmon fishermen, completing a financial-assistance package announced in September, when the agency released \$100 million in disaster assistance.

The agency will provide the money to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. The commission is distributing the money to fishermen and related businesses affected by this year's closure of the ocean salmon fishing season off California, Oregon, and Washington based on agreements with the three West Coast states.

To date, the commission has disbursed more than \$73.6 million from the initial \$100 million grant to eligible fishermen and businesses affected by the closure. That number is expected to rise to close to \$100 million by the end of November.

The unprecedented collapse of Sacramento River Fall Chinook, combined with the exceptionally poor status of Coho salmon from Oregon and Washington, led officials to close all commercial and sport Chinook ocean fishing off California and most of Oregon last spring. Only a small hatchery-origin recreational Coho fishery off central and southern Oregon remained open, which also affected Washington fishermen.

The governors of all three West Coast states requested a federal disaster declaration as a result of the closures. The declaration, issued by the Secretary of Commerce, last May, paved the way for Congress to appropriate a \$170 million disaster-relief package in July. The first funds were dispersed by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in early October.

The grant, developed by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in consultation with representatives of the West Coast governors, provides relief to affected commercial fishermen, wholesalers, processors, charter boat owners and recreational guides and businesses dependent on fishing.

So far, officials have sent aid to over 2,000 commercial fishermen with fishing permits. An additional 1,400 checks have been sent to businesses and others affected by the salmon closure. Businesses affected by the salmon closure can download application forms from the commission's Web site at <http://www.psmfc.org>. Applicants must be licensed state permit holders or have purchased a state business license or permit in 2007.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.