



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

May 27, 2011

Ms. Linda Snow
City Manager
P.O. Box 901
Saint Paul Island, AK 99660

Dear Ms. Snow:

Thank you for your letter requesting determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fisheries resource disaster under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I have reviewed your request that the Bering Sea snow crab fishery disaster, originally declared in 2000 and continued through 2006 due to natural and environmental factors, be continued in 2007 and 2008. I have determined, under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, that the disaster continued to exist in the snow crab fisheries in 2007 and 2008. This determination is based on the snow crab's persistently low abundance and the fact that the City of Saint Paul is struggling with the substantial loss in revenues that resulted from the low commercial harvest levels in 2007 and 2008.

This determination provides a basis for Congress to appropriate disaster relief funding under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, section 312(a) and for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to provide assistance to the State of Alaska and affected communities. If Congress appropriates disaster relief funding, the NMFS Alaska Region will work with the City of Saint Paul and the State of Alaska to develop an economic spending plan to support activities that would restore the fishery or prevent a similar failure and assist the affected fishing communities. 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 percent of the cost of that activity.

Although we have determined a continuation of the 2000 disaster in 2001 through 2008, the latest stock assessment found that the snow crab stock is rebuilding and, unless new information is produced, this will be the last continuation of the 2000 disaster determination.

If you have any questions, please contact April Boyd, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

Gary Locke

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