

10-012418



LUMMI INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

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December 14, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
2009 FEB -1 PM 3:20

SUBJECT: Continuing Fisheries Disaster for the Lummi Nation

Dear Secretary Locke:

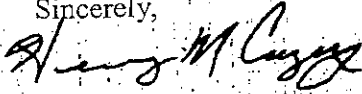
On November 13, 2008, Commerce Secretary Gutierrez determined pursuant to Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that a continuing fisheries disaster had occurred since 2002 in Washington State. I formally request you declare the continuing fisheries resource failure to include 2009. I make this request so disaster assistance can be provided to the adversely impacted commercial and subsistence fishermen, communities, small business owners, and their employees on the Lummi Indian Reservation in the northwest corner of Washington State. I am hopeful you will be able to act quickly to mitigate this situation.

As described in the enclosures, the 2009 sockeye salmon returns in the disaster region are significantly less than the 20-year average and are among the lowest on record. The pre-season sockeye run strength was estimated to be 10,488,000. However, the pre-season estimate dropped in-season as less fish began returning to the Fraser River system. The newer estimate dropped to 1,370,000 and, because of this dramatic reduction, no tribal commercial harvest of Sockeye occurred. On October 7, 2009 the Lummi Indian Business Council (the governing body of the Lummi Nation) declared a fisheries economic disaster throughout the Reservation due to the catastrophic collapse of the salmon returns. The impact of these run failures to the tribe's commercial, ceremonial, and subsistence fisheries over the past few years have been devastating.

There are more than 600 families in the disaster area who are dependent on salmon for economic and social survival. Further, nearly all of the 4,500 members of the Lummi Nation rely on subsistence fishing as a major aspect of their Native lifestyle and to supplement their limited cash economy. The Lummi Nation is already engaged in a comprehensive effort to assess the situation and find desperately needed assistance and services to its affected membership. A continuing disaster declaration under Section 312(a) is needed to make federal resources available for individual and family assistance

We will be grateful for your earliest possible formal action on our request for a Section 312(a) fishery failure declaration. If I may be of further assistance, please call me at (360) 384-2140 or have a member of your staff contact Mr. Jerald Folsom, Policy Liaison for Fisheries Disaster in my office at the same number.

Sincerely,



Henry Cagey, Chairman
Lummi Nation

Enclosures:
2009 Fisheries Disaster Declaration

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