

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins and Representative Dan Ortiz

District 35 and District 36



Honorable Bill Walker
Governor, State of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska

October 21, 2016

Dear Governor Walker:

We respectfully request that Southeast Alaska be included in Alaska's request for disaster relief funding under the Magnuson-Stevens Act for the pink salmon fishery of 2016.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has several thresholds for determining if a commercial fishery is a disaster. Total revenue from a potential disaster year is compared to a five-year average of that fishery's revenue: if revenue has fallen 80%, the fishery automatically qualifies for disaster status. If revenue has fallen between 35 - 80%, the fishery is eligible to be considered a disaster upon "further evaluation" by the executive branch.

Our offices mirrored the steps taken in the GOA Pink Salmon Fisheries Memo 2016, which the Governor's office used in determining what regions were eligible for disaster funding. We took a five-year average of the revenue of the pink salmon fishery in Southeast from 2006 - 2014, using public data from ADF&G's Alaska Commercial Salmon Harvests and Ex-vessel Values website.

We calculated a \$28.64 million dollar five-year average for revenue for the pink salmon fishery in Southeast. But the figure for five-year average revenue that appeared on the 2016 GOA Pink Salmon Fisheries Memo was only \$14.01 million dollars.

When dividing Southeast's 2016 revenue (\$13.8 million, from the 2016 GOA Pink Salmon Fisheries Memo) by the five-year average we calculated (\$28.64 million, ADF&G Alaska Commercial Salmon Harvests and Ex-vessel Values) as per NMFS commercial fishing disaster determination guidelines, it showed that Southeast pink salmon fisheries suffered a 51.1% loss of revenue in 2016.

We believe this puts the Southeast pink salmon fishery squarely in the disaster evaluation threshold of 35 - 80% in revenue losses, qualifying it for disaster funding upon "further evaluation" from the executive branch. We respectfully request that the Governor's office re-evaluate their request for disaster funding to include Southeast.

We are the legislators for thirty rural towns in Southeast Alaska: commercial fisheries are the economic backbone of our districts. With pink salmon fisheries across the state facing near historic lows, our constituents have not gone unaffected. We have fishing families that are facing huge losses, through no fault of their own.

There is no reason to bar Southeast fishermen from receiving the same support that has been requested for those in Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Lower Cook Inlet, and Chignik. We do not see a reason to deprive Southeast fishermen, who fish the same waters for the same catch as those who currently qualify for disaster relief funding, of the same level of support. We ask that the disaster relief funding request is extended to the Southeast region on their behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JKT", written in a cursive style.

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
District 35

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Ortiz", written in a cursive style.

Representative Dan Ortiz
District 36