

October 21, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: State of Alaska Federal Fishery Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Section 308(b) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA), I am writing to request you declare a fishery disaster determination for the 2022/23 Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries. I also request that you expedite a disaster determination for the 2021/22 Bristol Bay red king crab fishery.

The Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries constitute the primary crab fisheries of the Bering Sea. Results of the 2021 and 2022 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Bering Sea bottom trawl survey showed continued low abundance of Bristol Bay red king crab and sudden and unexpected declines in Bering Sea snow crab abundance across all sizes of crab. Available information indicates the reductions in abundance for both crab stocks resulted from natural causes linked to warming ocean temperatures. The 2021/22 season of the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery was closed for the first time in 25 years and is closed again for the 2022/23 season due to continued low abundance of mature female red king crab. Estimated exvessel losses from the back-to-back closures of the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery is nearly \$85 million dollars. The collapse of the Bering Sea snow crab stock was first reported in 2021 and a rebuilding plan is currently under development. Bering Sea snow crab harvest was significantly reduced for the 2021/22 season and the 2022/23 Bering Sea snow crab fishery season is closed for the first time ever due to further reductions in estimated snow crab abundance. Exvessel losses from the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Bering Sea snow crab seasons are estimated to be \$202.7 million dollars. In sum, the losses in exvessel value across the Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons is estimated to be \$287.7 million dollars. Total losses for crab dependent harvesters, processors, communities, and support businesses likely far exceed this loss in exvessel value.

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Based on available information in the attached memo, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Bristol Bay red king crab and 2022/23 Bering Sea snow crab fisheries meet the criteria for a fishery disaster determination. Due to the complete closure of these fisheries, I am requesting an expedited disaster determination because total exvessel losses are 100 percent below the previous five-year average and these losses directly affect all participants engaged in the fishery.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and have asked the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide the NMFS and your office with any additional information needed to make the requested fishery disaster determinations.

Sincerely,

Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
The Honorable Mary Peltola, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game