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July 5, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: 2015 Puget Sound Coho Fishery Disaster for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

Dear Secretary Pritzker,

This letter is a formal request for disaster relief assistance, pursuant to Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act (Act). Our tribal fishermen were adversely impacted by the extremely low 2015 Puget Sound Coho salmon run. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe urges prompt action by the Department of Commerce to provide the disaster relief funds needed for our fishers to continue their way of life.

The extremely low Coho salmon run was due to multiple factors, which included above normal high water temperatures, the highest ever recorded in Puget Sound. The high water temperatures produced unfavorable habitat conditions for salmon and the marine species they rely on. The elevated temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, known as the warm water "blob", also contributed to very poor marine survival. The increased sea surface temperatures and decreased coastal upwelling resulted in reduced prey availability, higher metabolic stress, low survival and poor growing conditions for Coho salmon returning to Puget Sound rivers. Our fishermen, as well as numerous hatcheries throughout Puget Sound, noted the returning fish were significantly smaller in size, with female fish producing smaller and fewer eggs.

The low return of Coho salmon resulted in a 90% loss of income for the Jamestown S'Klallam fishing community. It is estimated that the Jamestown S'Klallam Coho fishing fleet lost approximately \$23,000 dollars of income. The net income for the 2015 Jamestown S'Klallam Coho fisheries amounted to \$2,537 while the 2010-2014 average Coho income was \$25,913, with one year reaching \$58,191. These numbers do not reflect the additional cost for boat operations or gear purchase/maintenance during this period.

Subsistence, ceremonial and commercial fisheries are integral to the way of life for many Jamestown S'Klallam citizens. The financial impact that the fishermen have endured threatens the ability of our fishermen to harvest a quantity of fish sufficient to ensure a modest living as reserved for the S'Klallam Tribes through the Treaty of Point-No-Point.

We ask that under your authority and in cooperation with the National Oceanic and atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe to issue a Fisheries Economic Disaster Declaration as authorized under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Thank you for considering our concerns & request and please contact me (rallen@jamestowntribe.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

W. Ron Allen, Chairman/ CEO

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, US Senator
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, US Senator
The Honorable Derek Kilmer, Congressman