

JAN - 4 2012



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Nelson N. Angapak, Sr.
Senior Vice President
Alaska Federation of Natives
1577 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Angapak:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination that the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik Chinook salmon fisheries experienced a commercial fishery failure due to a fisheries resource disaster under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Region, worked with the State of Alaska to assess whether a commercial fishery failure occurred due to a fisheries resource disaster in the commercial salmon fisheries in Norton Sound and Port Clarence Districts and in the commercial Chinook salmon fishery in the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet sub-districts of Norton Sound. After reviewing the information provided by the State, the Secretary has determined that the request does not meet the requirements for such a finding under Section 312(a) of the MSA.

The threshold for making a determination of a commercial fishery failure is based on the loss of 12-month revenue compared to the average annual revenue in the most recent five-year period. The economic information provided by the State shows that revenue for the Norton Sound commercial salmon fishery was higher in 2009 than the 5-year average and more than double the 10-year average. Revenue in 2010 was the highest on record and more than double the 5-year average. This is due to both higher returns of chum and coho salmon and record ex-vessel value paid to the fishermen. The Shaktoolik and Unalakleet sub-districts support the largest commercial salmon fisheries in Norton Sound. For these sub-districts, the revenue from the salmon fishery was higher in 2009 and 2010 than the recent 5-year average. Looking at Chinook salmon only, since the directed commercial fishery was closed during the recent 5-year period, there is no loss of revenue for salmon fishermen from the low returns of Chinook salmon compared to the most recent 5-year period.

If you have further questions, please contact Dr. James W. Balsiger, NMFS Alaska Regional Administrator, at (907) 586-7221.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric C. Schwaab".

Eric C. Schwaab

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



Printed on Recycled Paper

