



December 24, 2024

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

Re: U.S. West Coast Pacific Albacore Fishery Federal Fishery Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

In accordance with section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the States of California, Oregon and Washington request a declaration of a fishery resource disaster for the U.S. West Coast Pacific Albacore troll/hook and line commercial fishery. Performance of this fishery was very poor in 2023 leading to severe economic impacts on distressed fishing communities and reliant businesses. Declaring a fishery resource disaster will begin the process for requesting federal aid to assist these fishery-dependent communities during this difficult time.

The ex-vessel value generated by the commercial U.S. West Coast Albacore troll/hook and line fleet during the 2023 season was \$9,512,833. The previous five-year average ex-vessel value for the fishery in nominal dollars was \$ 24,623,700 which equates to an economic loss of 61 percent or 67 percent when adjusted for inflation.

The 2023 season was impacted by several variables. The precise cause of the drop in revenue cannot be determined, however the evidence suggests that unfavorable market conditions combined with environmental factors made the fish significantly less available to the fleet. While some fishing occurred, warm temperatures throughout the Pacific resulted in albacore being more spread out and difficult to target and less cost effective to pursue. Also due to environmental factors, the size grade of fish caught was mixed, with fewer large fish available than normal, making them less optimal for the market at the time.

The West Coast Pacific Albacore troll/hook and line fishery is a vital component of the West Coast economy and provides significant benefits to communities throughout the West Coast. Designation of a fishery resource disaster and subsequent economic assistance is necessary to address the impacts of climate change and market conditions on this important fishery and ensure its future viability.

Shaun Clements, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Deputy Director has been designated as the Oregon state coordinator for this request and can be reached at 541-223-8437 or

shaun.clements@odfw.oregon.gov. Dr. Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Region Manager has been designated as the California state coordinator for this request and can be reached at R7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov. Heather Hall, Director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Coastal Region will coordinate for Washington and can be reached at 360-249-4628 or heather.hall@dfw.wa.gov.

We greatly appreciate your anticipated support and leadership on this critical issue and look forward to a favorable reply.

Sincerely,



Governor Tina Kotek
State of Oregon



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington

CC: Members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation
Members of the California Congressional Delegation
Members of the Washington Congressional Delegation
Debbie Colbert, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Director
Shaun Clements, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Deputy Director
Justin Ainsworth, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Program Manager
Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary
Charlton H. Bonham, CDFW Director
Dr. Craig Shuman, CDFW Marine Region Manager
Kelly Susewind, WDFW Director
Heather Hall, WDFW Coastal Region Director
Kelly Cunningham, WDFW Fish Program Director