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Governor Bill Walker
STATE OF ALASKA

March 8, 2018

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

Re: Federal Fishery Disaster

Dear Honorable Secretary Ross:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), we are writing to request that you declare a fishery disaster for the 2018 Pacific Cod Fishery in the Gulf of Alaska. The MSA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to determine if a commercial fishery failure has occurred, and we ask your soonest possible review of this matter due to the importance of these fisheries to local, regional, state, and national economies.

Harvest opportunities are significantly limited because the 2018 Pacific Cod total allowable catch for the Gulf of Alaska was reduced by 80% compared to 2017. Due to the severely reduced catch limits, several directed Pacific Cod Fisheries were preemptively closed. Remaining Pacific Cod Fisheries throughout the Gulf of Alaska have performed poorly resulting in drastically reduced value. Due to poor fishery performance and low catch limits, value of the 2018 Pacific Cod harvest is expected to be \$7.0 to \$8.0 million, or an 81% to 83% decline in revenues from the most recent five-year average.

Throughout the Gulf of Alaska, direct impacts will be felt by vessel owners and operators, crew, and fish processors, as well support industries that sell fuel, supplies, and groceries. Local governments will feel the impact to their economic base and the State of Alaska will see a decline in fishery-related tax revenue. We believe these impacts are severe enough to warrant this request for fishery disaster declaration for this area, and have directed the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide National Marine Fisheries Service and your office with any additional information needed to make a determination.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bill Walker in blue ink.

Bill Walker
Governor

Handwritten signature of Byron Mallott in blue ink.

Byron Mallott
Lieutenant Governor

cc: The Honorable Lisa J. Murkowski, United States Senate
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
The Honorable Don Young, United States House of Representatives