



VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

November 23, 2021

Mr. Barry Thom
Regional Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
West Coast Regional Office
1201 Northeast Lloyd
Portland, OR 97232

Mr. Ernest Conant
Director
Mid-Pacific Region
US Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mr. Paul Souza
Regional Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mr. Wade Crowfoot
Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Mr. Chuck Bonham
Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Ms. Karla Nemeth
Director
California Department of Water Resources
715 P Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Honorable Mike McGuire
Senator, District 02
Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
State Capitol, Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Mark Stone
Assemblymember, District 29
Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
State Capitol, Room 3146
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Regional Administrator Thom, Regional Director Conant, Regional Director Souza, Secretary Crowfoot, Director Bonham, Director Nemeth, Senator McGuire, and Assemblyman Stone,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, whose commercial livelihoods are all dependent on a strong and successful salmon fishery in California, we write to you with a sense of urgency regarding the current

state of our fisheries and to more directly open a line of dialogue between our collective organizations and your agencies.

As we are approaching the 15th anniversary of the first closure of salmon fishing across the California coast & inland waters, the condition of California's salmon fishery has only gotten more troubled and concerning. Absent actions, we are likely heading back towards another complete closure if ongoing drought and other challenging water management decisions persist. Realistically we are just one major disaster (continued drought conditions in 2022, severe disease outbreak at a hatchery) from complete collapse, which will lead to more species listings, further water restrictions, and lawsuits.

This coalition, which is comprised the three primary sectors commercially dependent on a healthy fishery, includes commercial fleet operators, commercial passenger charter boats, and inland river recreational fishing guides. The unifying element behind our collective mobilization is one fundamental fact – without a thriving salmon fishery (on the Sacramento and Klamath systems) all of us cease to exist. Our industries have already been dwindled to the lowest all-time numbers of commercial permits, commercial passenger permits, and inland recreational fisheries enthusiasm. The next stop is complete extinction.

Our coalition has formed for one important purpose: we must work with our state and federal partners to immediately increase hatchery production and output in the short term, and implement systemic management and cultural change, including updating our federal and state hatcheries, in the face of inevitable climate change in the long term. These principles apply to both Sacramento River and Klamath River systems.

Climate change and drought have had profound impacts on naturally spawning salmon breeding success and populations via impacts to habitat and in-river water conditions. It is painfully obvious that these conditions are the new normal and are here to stay. Further, hatchery management practices (including production goals and release schedules) are contributing to fisheries declines, not helping them. In combination, these impacts have caused significant harm to a culturally, socially and economically important industry in both the ocean and inland rivers

In the short term we must at the minimum move to increase our hatchery production to mitigate and supplement fisheries loss from impacts such as climate change, drought curtailed water supplies, increasing competition for scarce water supplies, and lethal in-river temperatures which promise to all but wipe out our last remaining natural spawners. We propose to work with federal and state staff to develop a detailed report on the production capacity/capability of the various hatcheries compared to the current levels of production at those hatcheries. Our goal is to double hatchery production, either by more efficiently utilizing hatchery facilities, introducing fry/smolt release programs, or through adding capacity to existing facilities (or some combination of all of the above). We need these short-term actions to ensure the health and success of all hatchery fish towards ocean contribution and in-river contribution and escapement.

In the long term, our system is in dire need of hatchery improvements to deteriorating and outdated infrastructure. We also need new policies for management of our fisheries and hatcheries. We should start with a review of current hatchery management plans. Certainly, conditions today are vastly different than they were when the current plans were adopted and implemented. Management strategies and practices need to be re-evaluated in light of climate projections which forecast extreme drought becoming the norm. We also need to be nimbler in response to in-river and ocean conditions when trying to ensure the highest possible survivability of hatchery fish - whether that be better timed in-river releases and continuing to rely on some level of trucking of hatchery fish. Upgrades must be made to hatchery facilities and science needs to be updated for new monitoring and tracking methods including Parentage

Based Tagging. We need to re-evaluate release strategies when we have the best conditions mimicking natural fish (such as moving back to January / February releases with a fry/smolt program). Finally, we may need to explore the possibility of a new production hatchery, located on the main stem of the Sacramento River.

Our coalition is requesting a meeting with senior leadership at the state and federal level to discuss immediate hatchery production increases starting in 2022 statewide, and loosening constraints such as HGMP's and practices through HSRG which have done nothing but lower hatchery production and constraint our current hatchery practices.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We urgently request your reply and assurance that our communities will be engaged, listened to, and supported at this critical time.

Sincerely,

James Stone
Executive Director and President
Northern California Guides and Sportsmen's Association

Mike Conroy
Executive Director
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

George Bradshaw
President
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Rick Powers
President
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association

Cc: Maria Rea, Senior Policy Advisor, NOAA
Robert Clarke, Fisheries Program Supervisor, USBR
Jay Rowan, Fisheries Branch Manager, CDFW
Noah Oppenheim, Chief Consultant, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture