



## United Cook Inlet Drift Association

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Date: September 30, 2020

Addressee: Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Re: 2020 Economic Disaster Declaration

The United Cook Inlet Drift Association (UCIDA), as per the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), brings forward Resolution 2020-010 and statement of findings declaring an economic disaster for the Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) drift gillnet salmon fishery. UCIDA also requests the Secretary of Commerce declare an economic disaster for the UCI drift gillnet salmon fishery and provide a supporting recovery plan.

In 2020, the Upper Cook Inlet drift gillnet sockeye salmon harvests of 283,772 directly resulted in an economic disaster. Sockeye salmon harvested in Cook Inlet were few in number and small in size with a run timing of up to four to six weeks later in the year. The State's management of the UCI salmon fishery limited harvest opportunities by both time and area. Historically, harvest opportunities in the Cook Inlet commercial fishery closed on December 31. However, now, under the current management regime, our fishery closes by August 15 while many salmon stocks are continuing to enter into the Cook Inlet salmon fishery area.

The salmon harvest data from 1985-2020 is attached for reference. The 2020 harvest of 283,772 sockeye was the smallest since 1960. Average weight per fish has also dropped alarmingly. In 2020, the sockeye salmon had the smallest weight at age since 1970. As a result, ex-vessel and first wholesale values dropped and the net production of meals from the fishery was reduced.

UCIDA requests directly from you, Mr. Secretary Ross, an economic disaster declaration for the 2020 Upper Cook Inlet sockeye salmon season.

UCIDA is prepared to discuss and answer questions concerning this disaster and looks forward to achieving the economic disaster declaration from your office. We will cooperate with you and your officials at the Department of Commerce, Congress and the State of Alaska to obtain adequate appropriations.

**United Cook Inlet Drift Association  
Resolution 2020-010**

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA is a duly registered, fishing community association recognized by the State of Alaska and the Federal Government; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA is a professional commercial salmon trade association; the Board of Directors are elected by participants of the fishery; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA provides for the wholesale or retail marketing, sale, delivery, distribution, or processing of drift gill net salmon and its by-products, caught in all waters of and adjacent to the Pacific Ocean north of a line extending east from Cape Douglas to the longitude of Cape Fairfield; including the negotiation of wholesale and/or retail prices, contracts, sale's agreements, distribution, processing, marketing, custom processing, agency, brokerage, and shipping agreements and contracts for its members; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA does research, obtains grants, and makes studies for the enhancement, rehabilitation and marketing of commercial drift gillnet caught salmon and makes proposals and lobbies for legislation and regulations to promote and better the commercial salmon industry; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA participates in legal actions determined by the Board of Directors to be in the best interest of the commercial fishing community; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA engages in and exercises such other powers as are now set out in the Alaska Cooperative Corporation Act, and any other lawful activities, except banking or insurance or the furnishing of electrical or telephone service; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA members own several hundred vessels that are directly used in the harvesting of salmon and other fish stocks, and members primarily reside in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA members have invested many millions of dollars in vessels, limited access fishing privileges, homes, docks, vehicles, nets, gear and equipment.

**WHEREAS,** as of September 1, 2020, the UCI commercial sockeye salmon harvest by the drift gillnet fleet was approximately 283,772 individual fish, which is the lowest harvest of commercial salmon since 1960 and approximately 81% less than the recent 10-year average of 1,510,944; and

**WHEREAS,** the 2020 individual sockeye salmon weight at age was, on average, one pound less than 10 years ago, and the 283,772 fish harvested in UCI were worth approximately 86% less than the previous 10-year average ex-vessel value; and

**WHEREAS,** sockeye salmon are the most valuable of the five species of Pacific Salmon present in UCI, and in 2020, the commercial sockeye harvest was 283,773 individual fish; these numbers are 82.7% less than the previous 10-year annual average harvest of 1,649,779, harvest in 2018 was excluded, as it was also a disaster; and

**WHEREAS,** during 2020, the majority of the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon returned during the month of August; and

**WHEREAS,** the drift gillnet fishermen were, by regulation, prevented from harvesting sockeye salmon during the historical time of year and from traditional areas as they migrate into UCI; and

**WHEREAS,** State regulators have abandoned abundance-based management practices in favor of highly prescriptive-based management practices causing insufficient fishing opportunity and resulting in economic disasters, reduced food supply and economies; and

**WHEREAS,** this extremely low harvest was below the level necessary to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the commercial drift gillnet fisher, processing and marketing businesses in the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and

**WHEREAS,** UCIDA has letters from the Cook Inlet Fisherman’s Fund, Copper River Seafoods, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, and the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District who have all urged the UCIDA and others to request the Secretary of Commerce to declare an economic disaster for the Upper Cook Inlet sockeye salmon commercial fisheries due to the failure of the 2020 season; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UCIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

**SECTION 1.** That UCIDA declares an economic disaster exists among the commercial drift gillnet fishing community as a result of the 2020 UCI sockeye salmon fishery.

**SECTION 2.** That the UCIDA Board of Directors respectfully request the State of Alaska declares an economic disaster for the 2020 UCI commercial drift gillnet sockeye salmon fishery.

**SECTION 3.** UCIDA respectfully requests the Secretary of Commerce declares an economic disaster, as provided for in MSA and the IFA, and implement a recovery plan that provides private and public assistance and takes other actions to benefit the commercial drift gillnet fishery participants and others that rely on this important fishery resource.

**SECTION 4.** UCIDA requests that copies of each economic disaster resolution be provided to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly and Mayor, the Governor of Alaska as well as other affected parties.

**SECTION 5.** That this resolution becomes effective immediately upon its adoption.

**ADOPTED BY THE UCIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS THIS 29TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2020.**

Sincerely,

*Original Signed Document*

David Martin, President  
United Cook Inlet Drift Association

cc: State Director USDA Rural Development Jerry Ward  
Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor Charlie Pierce  
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly  
Kenai City Mayor Brian Gabriel  
Homer City Mayor Ken Castner  
Soldotna City Mayor Peter Sprague  
Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District  
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association  
Cook Inlet Processors:  
Pacific Star Seafoods  
Copper River Seafoods  
OBI Seafoods, Inc.

## Harvest Numbers

Number of salmon harvested by the Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Drift Gillnet Fishery 1985-2020						
Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Grand Total
1985	2,048	2,032,957	357,388	34,228	700,848	<b>3,127,469</b>
1986	1,834	2,837,857	506,818	615,522	1,012,669	<b>4,974,700</b>
1987	4,552	5,638,916	202,506	38,714	211,745	<b>6,096,433</b>
1988	2,237	4,139,358	278,828	227,885	582,699	<b>5,231,007</b>
1989		5	856	2	72	<b>935</b>
1990	621	2,305,742	247,453	323,955	289,521	<b>3,167,292</b>
1991	246	1,118,138	176,245	5,791	215,476	<b>1,515,896</b>
1992	615	6,069,495	267,300	423,738	232,955	<b>6,994,103</b>
1993	765	2,558,732	121,829	46,463	88,826	<b>2,816,615</b>
1994	464	1,901,475	310,114	256,248	249,748	<b>2,718,049</b>
1995	594	1,773,873	241,473	64,632	468,224	<b>2,548,796</b>
1996	389	2,205,067	171,434	122,728	140,987	<b>2,640,605</b>
1997	627	2,197,961	78,666	29,920	92,163	<b>2,399,337</b>
1998	335	599,396	83,338	200,382	88,080	<b>971,531</b>
1999	575	1,413,995	64,814	3,552	166,612	<b>1,649,548</b>
2000	270	656,427	131,478	90,508	118,074	<b>996,757</b>
2001	619	846,275	39,418	31,219	75,599	<b>993,130</b>
2002	415	1,367,251	125,831	224,229	224,587	<b>1,942,313</b>
2003	1,240	1,593,638	52,432	30,376	106,468	<b>1,784,154</b>
2004	1,104	2,529,642	199,587	235,524	137,041	<b>3,102,898</b>
2005	1,958	2,520,327	144,753	31,230	65,671	<b>2,763,939</b>
2006	2,782	784,771	98,473	212,808	59,965	<b>1,158,799</b>
2007	912	1,823,481	108,703	67,398	74,836	<b>2,075,330</b>
2008	653	983,303	89,428	103,867	46,010	<b>1,223,261</b>
2009	859	968,075	82,096	139,676	77,073	<b>1,267,779</b>
2010	538	1,587,657	110,275	164,005	216,977	<b>2,079,452</b>
2011	593	3,201,035	40,858	15,333	111,082	<b>3,368,901</b>
2012	218	2,924,144	74,678	303,216	264,513	<b>3,566,769</b>
2013	493	1,662,561	184,771	30,605	132,172	<b>2,010,602</b>
2014	382	1,501,678	76,932	417,344	108,345	<b>2,104,681</b>
2015	556	1,012,684	130,720	21,653	252,331	<b>1,417,944</b>
2016	606	1,266,746	90,242	268,908	113,258	<b>1,739,760</b>
2017	264	880,279	191,490	89,963	232,501	<b>1,394,497</b>
2018	503	400,269	108,906	83,535	108,216	<b>701,429</b>
2019	178	749,101	88,618	27,607	112,518	<b>978,022</b>
2020	126	<b>283,772</b>	24,419	293,122	24,696	<b>626,135</b>
2010-2019 Avg	421	1,510,944	109,691	139,796	159,437	1,920,289
2010-2019 (excludes 2018)	411	<b>1,649,779</b>	109,789	146,829	165,840	2,072,647
Average ALL	913	<b>1,887,209</b>	150,821	142,365	205,082	2,386,364

