

# CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA  
95814

January 25, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **RE: Request for Declaration of Disaster for California Crab Fishery**

Dear Governor Brown:

We are writing to encourage you to advance a disaster declaration to the United States Secretary of Commerce for the California crab fishery and allied sectors. As you know, the elevated levels of domoic acid in Dungeness and rock crab caused devastating closures during this current crab season. This record setting delay has had significant negative impacts on thousands of California residents, and their livelihoods are now at risk. The current situation is unprecedented in duration and magnitude.

We had hoped the fishery would commence in time to recover a significant portion of economic loss suffered during this record delay. Unfortunately, because the acid levels have persisted, we have now missed the peak of the season: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and Chinese New Year. These holiday celebrations have historically represented the time when the most California crab is consumed. And thousands of crab feeds that take place across the Golden State throughout the winter are now sourcing their supply from the Northwest, repurposing their events, or cancelling all together.

While we remain hopeful a limited season will commence in the next several weeks, and do not believe that disaster relief and a limited season are mutually exclusive, we are now beyond where any fishery expert thought we would be. The continued delays have created unprecedented damage to the crab market, and irreparable harm to the thousands who depend on a healthy harvest for their living. We believe it's time to declare a fishery disaster declaration.

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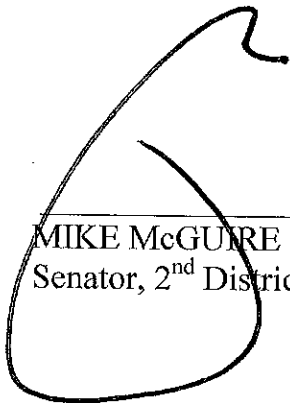
The annual crab landings in California average \$60 million with the peak season exceeding \$95 million in direct revenue in 2011. While domoic acid test results have recently started trending in a positive direction, the current season is unlikely to open until mid-February or later.

To add insult to injury, we are coming off of one of the worst salmon seasons we've had. Crabbers turn to salmon for their livelihood in the summer and fall months and having both the fall salmon season collapse, due to the state's historic drought, and now this unprecedented crab season delay taking hold, families are in crisis.

Crabbers throughout the Golden State have made large investments that cannot be recouped. This unforeseen disaster has forced individuals to sell equipment and assets, further mortgage their future and seek low wage employment to put food on the table during holiday seasons when the crab market is typically robust. Without immediate assistance, we may see thousands of hard working families with no choice but to leave the crab fishing sector causing damage to our economy for years to come.

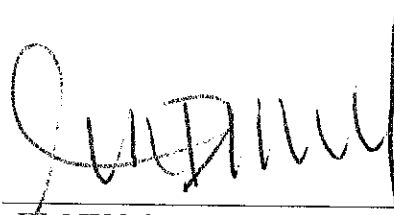
We urge you to move forward with a request to the Secretary of Commerce for a fishery disaster as soon as possible. Time is of the essence. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and for all of your support of the California Fishing and Aquaculture industries.

Warmest Regards,



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MIKE McGUIRE  
Senator, 2<sup>nd</sup> District

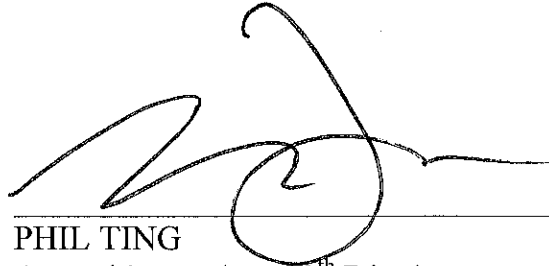


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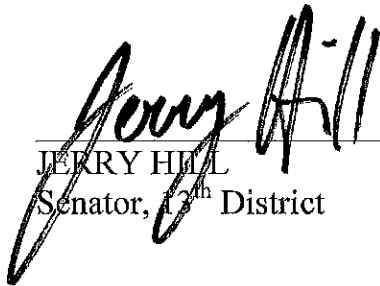
JIM WOOD  
Assemblymember, 2<sup>nd</sup> District



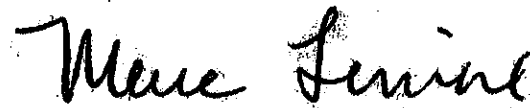
BILL MONNING  
Senator, 17<sup>th</sup> District



PHIL TING  
Assemblymember, 19<sup>th</sup> District



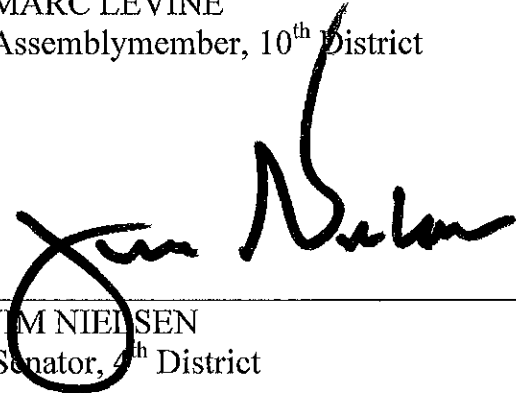
JERRY HILL  
Senator, 13<sup>th</sup> District



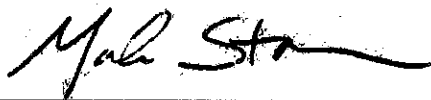
MARC LEVINE  
Assemblymember, 10<sup>th</sup> District



FRAN PAVLEY  
Senator, 27<sup>th</sup> District



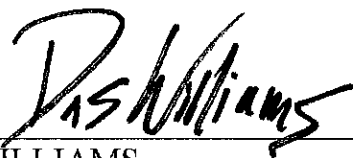
JIM NIELSEN  
Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District



MARK STONE  
Assemblymember, 29<sup>th</sup> District



KATCHO ACHADJIAN  
Assemblymember, 35<sup>th</sup> District



DAS WILLIAMS  
Assemblymember, 37<sup>th</sup> District

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PS: Please let us know if we can be of assistance and pass on our sincere thanks to Fish and Wildlife Director, Chuck Bonham, for all of his efforts during this closure.