



## CITY OF FORTBRAGG

*Incorporated August 5, 1889*  
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Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)  
7700 NE Ambassador Pl. #101  
Portland, OR 97220  
RE: Restoring the California Salmon Season for 2025

February 1, 2025  
(Via USPS)

Dear Council members, Salmon Technical Team and Salmon Advisory Subpanel,

The City of Fort Bragg works closely with the Noyo Harbor District, and the harbor is an indispensable part of our local community. Salmon, and salmon fishing have been a part of our identity and culture for as long as people have inhabited our coast. The purpose of this letter is to support our local harbor, our commercial and recreational fishing fleet, the businesses, residents and visitors to the Mendocino Coast and the City of Fort Bragg.

The Noyo Harbor District (Fort Bragg, CA), and their facilities stand as the first line of support services to the local commercial and recreational fishing fleets. As a designated fishing village, our harbor is the hub of fishing activity, support services and area of safe refuge for mariners between Eureka and Bodega Bay.

After the extreme regulatory changes that occurred to our California Salmon and Near-shore Rockfish fisheries in 2023, and a consecutive year of full closure to the Ocean Salmon season in 2024, the impacts placed on our harbor, our commercial and recreational fishing fleets, and our local economy have become grave in nature.

The City of Fort Bragg and coastal Mendocino County rely on tourism and fishing to sustain our local economy. Two consecutive years with no Salmon season presented additional stress to our already fragile local economy and resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs. The severe, negative impacts to our commercial salmon fleet, as well as to our Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel fleet, has seen many of our operators losing between 70% and 100% of their business.

While Disaster Relief funds going back to 2023 have been authorized and promised, no payments have been made to the commercial fleet and eligible support businesses as of the writing of this letter.

As a community whose economy relies on tourism and fishing, the continued closure of our commercial and recreational Salmon fishery is devastating. Here in the harbor, we experienced significant declines in revenues from our permanent and seasonal slip occupancy, as well as launch ramp fees. The businesses in adjacent

communities, as well as those within our harbor experienced the cancellation of reservations for hotels, vacation rentals, and campsites. Fishing and marine equipment stores experienced reduced sales, as well as area restaurants.

We want sustainable fisheries not only for our commercial and recreational fleets, but also for the health of our ocean and rivers. With the Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) being our primary constraining stocks, news reports have already given us an idea of the 2024 escapement numbers.

We have learned that a record number of fish returned to the Mokelumne River, and with very strong returns to the Feather and American Rivers, so much so that 8.5 million eggs were donated to the struggling Coleman hatchery on the Sacramento River to meet their production goal. The issues surrounding the returns to Coleman are not new. For over 5 decades, low flows and high temperatures have plagued the Sacramento River system. Some due to natural fluctuations like drought, but more often than not, poor water management, competing interests and politics have been the blame.

The Klamath River is already seeing tremendous improvement since the removal of the dams, with returning fish located in areas where they have not been seen in 100 years.

We understand that the setting of seasons is a multi-step process with many agencies involved. We, along with many other coastal communities, rely on you and the other agencies to establish seasons using the best available science. As you move closer to deciding on options for the 2025 salmon seasons, please consider the following:

- The California ocean Salmon fisheries constitute valuable and renewable natural resources. These fishery resources contribute to the food supply, economy, and health of the Nation and provide recreational opportunities.
- The collection of reliable data is essential to the effective conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the fishery resources of the United States. It is impossible to accurately determine actual ocean abundance, however reports of incidental salmon encounters by commercial and recreational anglers targeting other species is higher than it has ever been.
- Escapement goals were reached and exceeded in 2023 for SRFC and KRFC and alternatives that would have allowed ocean salmon fishing in 2024 were presented.
- That egg collections for the 2024 SRFC have met their production goals.
- That another year without ocean salmon fishing further erodes the cultural and economic significance that salmon, and salmon fishing have to California, the west coast, and its people.

The Noyo Harbor District supports a return to California ocean salmon fishing in 2025, and so does the City of Fort Bragg. We ask that the PFMC, NOAA Fisheries, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife work together to achieve that goal, return our fleets to salmon fishing, and prevent exacerbating the negative impacts to our coastal communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor and City Council of the City of Fort Bragg CA

CC: CDFW Director, California Fish and Game Commission  
US Congressman Jared Huffman  
CA Assemblyman Chris Rogers