



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

June 2, 2010

Secretary Gary Locke
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

On behalf of the fishing industries and related businesses of Florida, I am writing to request that you make a determination of a commercial fishery failure in Florida under the provisions of Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I request this determination based on the growing impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the fishing communities throughout this state. As I write this letter, we have been fortunate to have been spared the direct impacts of oil on our beaches and in our state waters. However, as more of the Gulf of Mexico's federal waters are closed to fishing and the spill continues unabated, there are now two immediate and devastating impacts to our fishing industries and the men and women who work so hard at their livelihoods.

First, from the outset of the spill, news reports helped foster the mistaken impression that the entire Gulf of Mexico has been tainted by the oil spill. This misinformation has affected tourism and seafood consumption in Florida and resulted in severe economic impacts throughout the state. Second, with expanding fishery closures and the recent movement of oil towards the Florida Panhandle, we are now faced with the direct impact of lost fishing opportunities. Just today, in response to the movement and detection of oil, NOAA Fisheries Service expanded its federal fishery closure to include a significant portion of the commercial fishing grounds for snapper and grouper species off the west coast of peninsular Florida. This action alone will have a severe and immediate economic impact on Florida's commercial grouper fleet. Our commercial harvesters are already having trouble selling product because of the unfounded fear that seafood from the gulf is contaminated. Clearly, our commercial fishing industry is suffering a failure from the Deepwater Horizon spill.

However, the impacts go beyond what our commercial fishermen are experiencing. Mainly due to the misperceptions and misinformation about the extent and impact of the spill, Florida's charter fishing fleet, for-hire guides, and related fishery infrastructure are also suffering. The State of Florida will continue to do everything possible to promote fishing and seafood safety, but our fishermen and coastal fishing communities are already seeing serious economic damages. To address these additional impacts, I urge you to also establish a regional economic transition program under the provisions of Section 315 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

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June 2, 2010
Page Two

I will continue to hold British Petroleum fully accountable to the people of Florida for this devastating spill. However, Florida needs your help and that of Congress to ensure that every possible safety net is in place for our fishing industries and communities. Please act on this urgent request. I look forward to working with you in our mutual efforts to overcome the impacts of this devastating oil spill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Charlie Crist