



THE SUQUAMISH TRIBE

Office of Tribal Council

Post Office Box 498
Suquamish, WA 98392-0498
Phone (360) 598-3311
Fax (360) 598-3686

January 28, 2020

Hon. Jared Huffman
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
U.S. Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Testimony for the Record of the Subcommittee's Legislative Hearing on H.R. 5548, the Fishery Failures: Urgently Needed Disaster Declarations Act

On behalf of the Suquamish Tribe, I am writing to convey our support for H.R. 5548, the Fishery Failures: Urgently Needed Disaster Declarations Act (Fishery FUNDD Act). The Tribe would like to thank you for introducing the bill, as well as our Congressman, Derek Kilmer, for cosponsoring the bill. In addition, we appreciate the Subcommittee holding a hearing on the bill, and the opportunity to provide comments on the bill for the hearing record.

Unfortunately, the Tribe is familiar with the fishery disaster declaration process that the Fishery FUNDD Act seeks to improve. In 2018, pursuant to Section 312 (a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Tribe submitted a formal request to the Commerce Secretary for fishery disaster relief assistance. This request stemmed from the 2015 fishing season when Suquamish fishermen saw a 95% reduction in the average amount of Coho landed from 2011 – 2014 seasons. While the Tribe was ultimately awarded funding from the Commerce Department to deal with the fishery disaster, we noticed that there is room for improvement with the process.

During the Subcommittee hearing on the Fishery FUNDD Act, the Tribe was glad to see the representative from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration acknowledge that “the current processes for determining whether a disaster has occurred and providing funding to the affected entities simply take too long.” Further, the Suquamish Tribe shares many of the same concerns outlined in the testimony of the Vice Chairman of the Yurok Tribe, including the extensive amount of time it takes to receive funding after declaring a disaster, the need for greater clarity in the disaster declaration process, and the need for additional funding for fisheries disaster relief.

In closing, the Suquamish Tribe strongly supports H.R. 5548, the Fishery FUNDD Act. We encourage the Natural Resources Committee to advance the bill, and the House of Representatives to approve the bill. However, while the Fishery FUNDD Act would address the aforementioned concerns with the current process, it would not address a related issue—the negative impact of China's retaliatory tariffs placed on American seafood. I outlined this issue in

a December 4, 2019 letter to you (attached). Therefore, the Tribe urges the Subcommittee to investigate the negative impacts that the Trump Administration's trade war has had on the seafood industry. H.R. 3514 would go a long way in helping the Tribe and others impacted by retaliatory tariffs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leonard Forsman".

Leonard Forsman
Chairman
The Suquamish Tribe

CC: The Honorable Derek Kilmer, United States House of Representatives