

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 27, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: California Red Sea Urchin Fishery

Dear Governor Brown,

We write to express our concerns with the California red sea urchin fishery and ask that you seek a fishery disaster declaration for California from the United States Secretary of Commerce. Currently, the California red sea urchin fishery is suffering dramatic state-wide reductions in production, due to poor ocean conditions and loss of kelp. Regions in Northern California and San Diego have experienced over an 80 percent drop in the red sea urchin population within the past five years. These are alarming numbers that should make it eligible to be classified as a fishery failure.

Warmer water temperatures and chronic acidification of our oceans, due to increasing levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, have negatively impacted California's kelp colonies. The 2015 warm water event and the 2016 El Nino further decimated these kelp populations. Kelp is the main food source for urchins, and kelp loss has contributed to the overall decline in harvestable urchins in Northern and Southern California. Impaired kelp colonies put our fishing industry at risk. Recent estimates from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife found that kelp forests have declined dramatically since 2014. Their population is now 93% smaller than previous years.

Urchins are sold for their internal gonads, which are important to seafood and sushi industry. In addition, it supports local economies and produces jobs up and down the coast of California. There are over 300 commercially licensed divers and processors in California who produce and sell over 8 million pounds of urchins both at home and abroad. In 2013 alone, the red sea urchin brought in \$3.3 million to Santa Barbara's economy, which was 32% of the state's total commercial fishing industry.

With time, we are confident that the sea urchin fishery will recover. However, without financial assistance now, the infrastructure, businesses, and people who form the backbone of this industry will be lost. We urge you to immediately ask the Secretary of Commerce to declare a commercial fishery disaster to provide federal funds and relief for this important industry in our state. If our offices can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to

contact Johanna Montiel with Representative Carbajal at Johanna.Montiel@mail.house.gov, or Denise Devotta with Representative Huffman at Denise.Devotta@mail.house.gov. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



SALUD O. CARBAJAL
Member of Congress



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



SUSAN A. DAVIS
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress



TONY CÁRDENAS
Member of Congress



J. LUIS CORREA
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



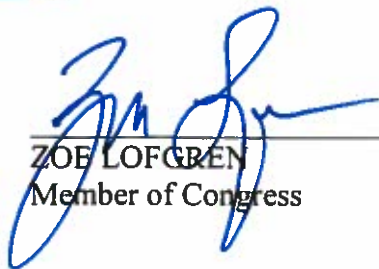
MARK DESAULNIER
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
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Mark Takano

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Mike Thompson

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