



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 6, 2018

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Governor of North Carolina
Raleigh, NC 27699

Dear Governor Cooper:

Thank you for your letter requesting a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster caused by Hurricane Florence. Based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) initial understanding of impacts due to Hurricane Florence on North Carolina fisheries under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Section 308(b) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA), I have determined that a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster has occurred.

We will work with you and your communities to further estimate and assess Hurricane Florence's impacts on your state's fisheries and associated processing infrastructure. We will use these assessments to evaluate the need for fishery disaster assistance that cannot be met through other existing Federal relief programs.

This determination provides the basis for Congress to appropriate disaster relief funding under both the IFA and MSA. Should Congress appropriate funds for disaster assistance, NMFS will work with your state to develop a spend plan to assist with the recovery of North Carolina's fishing industry and fishing communities. Additionally, eligible businesses and other entities in North Carolina may be able to access other loan/funding programs within the Department of Commerce (e.g., Economic Development Administration grants) or through other Federal relief programs (e.g., Small Business Administration loans).

If you have any further questions, please contact Michael Platt, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilbur Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wilbur Ross