

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 20, 2022

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

Our fishermen have taken a pounding over the last several years. Hurricanes, floods, unfair trade practices, over-regulation, and a global pandemic have delivered a major blow to our workforce and consumer demand. And a recent economic assessment conducted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, with Louisiana State University and Louisiana Sea Grant, titled the “Infrastructure, Revenue and Resource Losses to Louisiana Fisheries from the Hurricanes of 2020 and 2021<sup>1</sup>” verifies what we have been saying about the impacts of Hurricanes Laura, Delta, Zeta, and especially Ida. Therefore, I again urge you to prioritize the review of this report and to expedite assistance by making a “Fishery Disaster Determination.”

Generations of fishing families have made Louisiana one of the top seafood producers in the country, and all of our fisheries are a critical part of our economy and jobs. Helping these fisheries recover from natural disasters means accounting for everything from boats, marinas, ice houses, processing machinery, and storage. This recovery doesn’t just happen overnight and for every additional day that the bureaucratic process drags on, our fishers and associated small businesses can’t get back on their feet to rebuild their livelihood.

This report and supporting analysis not only confirm the importance of our fishing industry but also the massive impact of these storms. The report clearly demonstrates that more than 8,500 businesses were impacted, resulting in \$305 million in damage to fisheries infrastructures such as marinas, docks, seafood processors, and dealers. Combined with an additional \$118 million in resource loss and \$155 million revenue loss, the total estimated impact is estimated at \$579 million.

Congress recognized the severity of the situation and the importance of timely assistance by providing a \$200 million down payment in September of last year. Unfortunately, none of these funds can be available for rebuilding our resources until a fisheries disaster has been determined. It is vitally important the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration accelerate its processes and provide aid to our fishers before it’s too late.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Fishing/Commercial\\_Fishing/Files/2020-2021-Hurricane-report----FINAL-01.13.22.pdf](https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Fishing/Commercial_Fishing/Files/2020-2021-Hurricane-report----FINAL-01.13.22.pdf)

Louisiana is home to some of the nation's most valuable natural resources and some of the most resilient people – these storms have jeopardized both. We strongly urge you to use your authority to help our fishing communities as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Garret Graves", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress