



Chatham County Board of Commissioners
124 Bull Street, Savannah, GA 31401

News Release
May 29, 2018
For Immediate Release

Chatham County Board of Commissioners Urges the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to Declare Fishery Disaster for Coastal Georgia

Chatham County, GA (May 29, 2018) – Chairman Albert J. Scott signed a letter today requesting the Secretary of Commerce, Wilber Ross, to declare the waters off the coast of Georgia a fishery disaster.

On January 24, 2018, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) closed federal waters off the coast of Georgia due to prolonged waters temperatures at or below 9 degrees Celsius. The closure was needed to protect the population of spawning shrimp. The closure has kept shrimpers from working for the past four months. The loss of income has been devastating to both the shrimpers and the local economy.

The designation of a fishery disaster begins the federal process of providing assistance to shrimpers affected by the closure of the waters.

The waters off the coast of Georgia reopened last week and shrimpers were able to return to work.

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COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY

CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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May 29, 2018



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County Manager

R. JONATHAN HART
County Attorney

JANICE E. BOCOOK
County Clerk

The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

On behalf of the citizens of Chatham County, Georgia and the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, I write to formally request a fishery disaster designation for the brown, pink, and white shrimp fishery of the coast of Georgia. Since January 15, 2018, state waters have been closed to harvesting brown, pink, or white shrimp, and on January 24, 2018, federal waters were closed to shrimping under the direction of South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin Numbered FB18-006 due to a prolonged period of water temperature at or below 9°C in the region.

Chatham County fully understands the closure of waters to shrimping was critically necessary following a period of cold water temperatures to protect the population of spawning shrimp. However, local shrimpers and others have not worked or earned any income related to the shrimp harvest since January 15, 2018, in the non-federal fishery and since January 24, 2018, in the federal fishery. Direct and indirect aid and assistance authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Inter-jurisdictional Fisheries Act is requested.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Chatham County looks forward to working with the Department of Commerce on this issue and other endeavors to jump-start the economy of southeast Georgia as well as assisting these vital businesses and their families.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Scott, Chairman

cc: See Attached Distribution List



Distribution List

Chairman and Members of the Board

**The Honorable Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, U.S. House of Representatives,
6602 Abercorn Street, #105B, 31405 (via fax: (912) 352-0105)**

**The Honorable Johnny Isakson, U. S. Senator, 131 Russell Senate Office
Building, Washington, DC, 20510**

**The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture, U. S. Department
of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., 20250**

Georgia State Senators

Georgia State House of Representatives

All Mayors

Lee Smith, County Manager

Michael A. Kaigler, Assistant County Manager

Linda B. Cramer, Assistant County Manager

R. Jonathan Hart, County Attorney