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Governors seek salmon disaster declaration

By JEFF BARNARD – 19 hours ago

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) — The governors of Oregon and California are asking the federal government to declare another West Coast salmon fishery failure — the third in four years.

Commercial salmon fishing has been closed off California and most of Oregon because of dangerously low returns of fall chinook to the Sacramento River, the second largest producer of salmon on the West Coast.

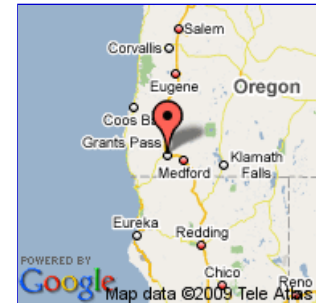
Federal scientists blame it on a combination of climatic conditions that produced very little food in the ocean, and an over-reliance on hatchery fish, which do not have the genetic diversity to cope with changes to their environment.

If approved by U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, the declaration would open the way for Congress to appropriate aid for salmon fishermen.

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