



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 2026

Wrangell Assembly Declares Local Disaster for Southeast Alaska Dungeness Crab Fishery

Wrangell, Alaska – The City and Borough of Wrangell Assembly has declared a local disaster emergency in response to the significant decline of the Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab fishery and its impacts on local fishermen, families and businesses.

Resolution No. 08-26-2071, adopted August 25, calls attention to reduced harvests and shortened fishing seasons affecting commercial fishermen throughout Southeast Alaska. Wrangell is home to more than 60 commercial Dungeness crab permit holders, making the fishery an important part of the community's economy. The impacts extend beyond individual vessels to crew members, processors, marine businesses, fuel suppliers, harbor operations and other businesses supported by commercial fishing.

The resolution also identifies the continued expansion of sea otter populations and predation on shellfish resources as a significant concern and contributing factor that warrants further state and federal evaluation.

Through the resolution, the Borough is asking Governor Mike Dunleavy to support a federal Fishery Resource Disaster Determination for the 2026–2027 Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery. Such a determination would establish eligibility for federal fishery disaster assistance, subject to federal appropriations and an approved spending plan.

Wrangell is also encouraging other affected Southeast Alaska communities to take similar action. A coordinated regional response can help document the scale of the impacts and strengthen advocacy with the State of Alaska, Alaska's Congressional Delegation and federal agencies.

The local disaster declaration is an immediate step, but the Borough is also looking at longer-term efforts. This includes helping connect commercial fishermen with resources to better understand options for organizing a regional fishermen's association. An organized industry group could provide fishermen with a stronger platform to pursue fishery-specific issues directly with NOAA Fisheries and other federal agencies, while local governments continue to advocate for legislative and policy changes.

The Borough will continue coordinating with fishermen, Southeast Alaska communities, industry representatives, the State of Alaska and Alaska's Congressional Delegation as these efforts move forward.

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