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**Press Release** | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

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WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Representatives Peter DeFazio, Darlene Hooley and David Wu introduced a bill today to provide emergency disaster assistance to salmon fishers devastated by unprecedented fishing closures along the West Coast.

The bill would provide \$81 million in direct economic disaster relief to help fishers and others whose livelihoods have been impacted by the closures. It would also provide \$45 million for restoration and mitigation in the Klamath River system to help alleviate some of the underlying problems plaguing the river.

“It’s clear that such a vast restriction of the salmon season will have devastating impacts on fishers, their families, and coastal communities,” Congressman DeFazio said. “The Bush administration needs to help us pass this relief package by declaring the fishery a disaster and supporting the legislation. Short-term assistance is critical so that folks can make boat payments, insurance payments, pay mortgages and keep food on the table. But we also need to find long-term solutions to improve the health of the Klamath and maintain the fishing way of life.”

“The situation we face today illustrates this administration’s hostility to science and our way of life in Oregon,” Congressman Wu said. “No approach, other than a policy based on better up-river water management and habitat restoration, will ever restore the Klamath fall Chinook run. But we can’t just sit and wait for a day that may never come. It is imperative we get assistance to our fishing communities. Each day boats are docked and not out on the water, fishermen, their families, entire communities and Oregon’s economy suffer.”

“The partial closure of the commercial fishing season has created a true emergency for our coastal communities,” Congresswoman Hooley said. “Just as a drought affects farmers and the economy, these restrictions threaten the life of this industry and the health of the coastal economy. This legislation is critical to providing needed aid to fishermen in a relatively timely manner and in starting to address problems in the Klamath.”