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October 28, 2011

Lisa Jackson, Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I write today in support of the Watershed Assessment for Bristol Bay, Alaska that the Environmental Protection Agency is currently undertaking. Bristol Bay and its productive salmon fishery are extremely important to many of my California constituents.

The EPA's Watershed Assessment will help the public and decision-makers understand how future large-scale development projects may affect water quality, wildlife, recreational areas and Bristol Bay's salmon fishery. Any work to protect the long-term sustainability of the natural resources of Bristol Bay – including its fishery – must be supported by the best available science and public input.

I have been contacted by California fishermen, business owners, and conservationists who care deeply about Bristol Bay and are concerned about protecting this vital salmon fishery and the jobs that depend upon it. Many of these constituents depend on the health of Bristol Bay for their personal income and livelihoods.

Over 150 residents of California currently hold permits to fish in the Bristol Bay watershed, the second highest number for any state after Alaska and Washington. These permit holders support hundreds more crew and other jobs relating to the salmon fishery. Californians know first-hand the devastating economic and environmental impacts associated with depressed salmon fisheries. California's salmon fishery closures in 2008 and 2009 resulted in thousands of lost jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in lost income. We must prevent a similar crisis from occurring in Bristol Bay.

Given that the Bristol Bay region is a source of jobs and natural resources not only for Alaskans, but also for the people of my home state, I will be closely following this assessment process and would appreciate timely updates on its progress.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

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