



Bering Sea and Bristol Bay Crab Fishery Closures: SBA Economic Injury Declaration Process

(Sharing from SWAMC's Executive Director Shirley Marquardt)

The State of Alaska is preparing a request to the SBA (Small Business Administration) in order to declare an Economic Injury Disaster pertaining to the Bering Sea and Bristol Bay crab fishery closures. This disaster declaration would open up the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program to affected businesses. The EIDL is a low interest loan program that would allow businesses in the affected areas to apply for a loan to help bridge any business expenses they would have otherwise been able to pay had the fishery not closed.

In order to make an economic injury declaration, at least five small businesses in a disaster area need to have suffered or expect to suffer substantial economic injury as a result of the disaster. The economic impact can be direct (in the case of commercial crabbers) or indirect (in the case of support businesses). This information is collected via an economic injury [worksheet](#) provided by the SBA. Completing this worksheet does not make a business beholden to apply for a loan; it simply provides the SBA with evidence to declare this event an economic disaster, which will open it up for any affected businesses to apply.

The first step in this process is to identify the “disaster area.” Grace Beaujean from DCRA (Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs) worked with ADF&G on initial identification of the areas of the state affected by the crab fishery closure.

These are the 3 SWAMC areas where we need to collect 1 acceptable worksheet each:

1. Pribilof Islands REAA
2. Aleutian Region REAA

3. Lake and Peninsula Borough, Aleutians East Borough, Bristol Bay Borough, Iditarod Area REAA (Regional Education Attendance Area), Kenai Peninsula Borough, Kodiak Island Borough, Kuspuk REAA, Southwest Region REAA.

The SBA and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) have requested the help of the Alaska Regional Development Organizations to help get the needed information for the declaration. Please forward or make public this request to all of your local business and fisheries organizations. I would also recommend that an announcement be provided on your local radio station, local paper or community news board.

I would suggest that any company who will realize financial losses due to the closure of the Bering Sea and/or the Bristol Bay Red King fisheries complete the Economic Injury Worksheet and submit it to laura.vaught@Alaska.gov by the end of December. Here's the link for the worksheet: <http://www.aebfish.org/eiwsba.pdf>

DCCED is not sure about the timing for the SBA application deadline, so until that is determined, please get your application in as soon as you can. The applications will only show need for the SBA to open the EIDL program to affected business and fishermen, it is not to determine who gets the loans or not. Without showing that there is a need in our region (and we are the most significantly affected region), the declaration may not be made. I assume that there will be far more than five worksheets from these three regions submitted, and that will be helpful. I have sent this out to multiple stakeholders, but there are many more who do not provide email addresses to a manager/owner or operator.

Please contact me with any questions you may have, and I will get back to you as soon as I can. This is a rare opportunity to quickly access a long-term, low interest loan to keep your business afloat in the next year. The worksheet is simple and easy to fill out.

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