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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MONO

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Shannon Kendall, Clerk of the Board

April 1, 2020

Director Charlton H. Bonham
State of California – Natural Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
1416 Ninth Street, Room 125
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Postponement of Regular Fishing Season and CDFW Fish Stocking in Mono County

Dear Mr. Bonham,

On April 1, 2020 the Mono County Board of Supervisors discussed potential impacts of the annual Fishing Opener weekend, April 25-26, 2020 on the public health and safety of local residents, communities and visitors. Fishing Opener, known as Fishmas in Mono County, is a long-standing, traditional event that celebrates the beginning of the regular trout fishing season, and attracts thousands of anglers to the County's front country lakes and rivers.

Governor Newsom's March 19 "Stay-At-Home" Executive Order requiring all Californians to stay in their place of residence through April 30, 2020 should theoretically eliminate visitation to the Eastern Sierra. Indeed, all short-term lodging rentals and campgrounds, most restaurants, shops, amenities and attractions are closed in compliance with the State and local Public Health Officer's orders. However, in spite of the Governor's directives, and in spite of the lack of available accommodation and amenities, we are unfortunately still seeing numerous visitors who are hiking, climbing, ski touring, camping and recreating in the County.

Based on these observations, the consensus of the Board is that Fishing Opener will draw significant numbers of people from Southern California, Sacramento, Bay Area, San Diego, Reno and many other urban areas to fish in our region. This influx of anglers and potentially families/companions will promote transmission of COVID-19 and put additional strain on our already taxed health care services. Mono County is simply not equipped to handle multiple cases of COVID-19 illness. There is one small hospital in Mammoth Lakes which has limited beds and four ventilators – as of today, there are 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with more cases expected in the coming weeks. It is highly possible that by April 25th and Fishing Opener, our health care system will be overwhelmed.

The Mono County Board of Supervisors also requests that the CDFW fish stocking schedule for Opener also be postponed to further discourage recreational fishing.

In summary, for the protection of public health and safety, the Mono County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests the California Department of Fish & Wildlife delay Fishing Opener and its fish stocking plans for Mono County waters until the Governor's Stay-At-Home Order is lifted.

Please let us know if we can take any further action to expedite this request. Thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration of our situation.

Respectfully,

Stacy Corless
Mono County Chair and District 5 Supervisor

CC: California Fish and Wildlife Commission
Stafford Lehr – Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Inyo County Board of Supervisors
Governor Gavin Newsom