

July 27, 1979

Remarks by Congressman LES AuCOIN
to Fishermen's Wives meeting
(telegraphed to Brookings, Ore.)

I want to extend greetings to my friends in Fishermen's Wives at a critical time for the Pacific fishing industry. In recent weeks, court decisions have dealt the commercial salmon industry two body blows. The trollers, in particular, are reeling. They wonder, with good reason, how much more they can take.

Representing the interests of thousands of Oregonians whose livelihoods depend on fishing, I'm deeply troubled by the decisions the courts have handed down.

Congress took care with the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act to create a new approach to fisheries management. It gave that role to a management council representing many diverse interests. That's where the decision-making belongs -- in the council, not the courts.

Last week's decision by a U.S. District Court judge not only undercuts the council's effort but, in terms of management of the 200-mile fisheries zone, introduces an element Congress did not imagine.

I'm determined that fisheries management not be preempted by the courts. I'm exploring what steps can be taken legislatively. You can help in this effort by sharing your ideas with me. I'm developing my own ideas, of course, but here are some questions I'd like your views on:

How can the Columbia River be better managed to produce more salmon, especially with respect to the dams?

What sort of protections are needed in the U.S.-Canadian salmon agreement?

Would greater or lesser ocean releases of coho and chinook from private aquaculture hatcheries be beneficial to the fishery?

Is limited entry needed? If so, in what form?

If ocean closures are needed, should recreational and charterboat fishermen be treated differently than commercial trollers?

I will value your responses to these questions as well as any other suggestions you may have on legislative and management issues.

Fishermen's wives is the most effective fisheries organization I know. I want to express to you my best wishes for a productive meeting. I look forward to hearing your ideas.