Media Contact: Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: March 27, 1979
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Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus today asked Commerce Secretary Juanita Kreps to seek further needed restrictions in the 1979 Pacific Salmon Plan.

Andrus expressed disappointment and concern about the recent action of the Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council which he said earlier this month voted restrictions for ocean fisheries which will be insufficient to provide for conservation and the allocation between ocean and inside fishermen.

Referring to Interior data analyzing the impact of the proposed ocean fishing regulations, Andrus told Secretary Kreps:

"In February, prior to the Council's action to adopt this year's salmon plan, I wrote the Council and recommended significant reductions in the offshore harvest to provide:

1)a greater escapement for conservation purposes, 2) protection of the diminishing wild stocks, 3) a more equitable allocation of fish between the inside and outside fisheries, and 4) a realistic fishery for treaty Indians.

"While the Council took an important step toward meeting these goals, their action falls short to such a degree that in some river systems and parts of Puget Sound, not only will there not be an inside fishery, but wild runs will be threatened and escapement for conservation will not be met.

"Further reductions in the ocean catch will be required this year. I respectfully request that you seek the necessary changes in the salmon plan to protect the fishery and the rights of the inside fishermen."

Interior Department analysis of the proposed ocean fishing regulations was also provided to Secretary Kreps. Fish and wildlife director Lynn Greenwalt concluded from that analysis that "spawning escapement goals will not be met in many areas along the California, Oregon and Washington coast, and that these problems will require inequitable curtailment or closure of inside fisheries in most areas.

Commerce Secretary Kreps must now decide whether to approve the recommendations of the Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council or to modify those recommendations to provide the further restrictions being sought by Secretary Andrus. The Pacific salmon fishing season is set to begin in May.