



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

**EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR**

**22-02**

**Green Crab Infestation**

**WHEREAS**, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, tribal co-managers, shellfish growers, and other partners have identified an exponential increase in European green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) populations within the Lummi Nation's Sea Pond and outer coast areas, including Makah Bay, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, initially native to the northeastern Atlantic Ocean, the European green crab is a globally-damaging invasive species that is able to survive in a wide range of water temperatures and salinities and has become established in many temperate coastal zones in areas around the world; and

**WHEREAS**, where they have become established, European green crabs have disturbed native habitat, displaced and outcompeted resident native species, altered natural food webs, and decimated shellfish and other aquatic industries; and

**WHEREAS**, if they become permanently established in the coastal waters of Washington State, it is likely that European green crabs will become predators to shellfish and juvenile Dungeness crab, destroy critical habitat such as eelgrass beds and estuarine marshes, disrupt natural food webs, harm overall crab populations, hinder salmon and Southern Resident killer whale recovery efforts, reduce shorebird food supplies, and ultimately affect the overall health and resiliency of the Salish Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the damage caused by European green crabs, if they become permanently established, will particularly harm endangered species, impact resources that are part of the cultural identity of the tribes and native peoples, and affect small businesses and low-income communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of the threats posed by the European green crab, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) co-signed the Salish Sea Transboundary Action Plan (Plan) in early 2019 with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Puget Sound Partnership, and Washington Sea Grant which provides the initial framework for a management response; and

**WHEREAS**, due to their invasive nature and potential for harm, European green crabs are classified as a prohibited level 1 (highest risk) species that seriously threatens the environment, economy, and well-being of the state of Washington under RCW 77.135.030 and is a high priority for expedited prevention and rapid response management actions; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 23, 2021, the Lummi Indian Business Council passed a resolution declaring the European green crab invasion a disaster particularly affecting tribal cultural and economic interests and requesting state assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 17, 2021, the Makah Tribe reiterated that the European green crab infestation was a disaster particularly affecting tribal cultural and economic interests and requesting state assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, after consultation with necessary parties and co-managers, on December 14, 2021, the Director of the WDFW (1) determined under RCW 77.135.090 that the ongoing European green crab infestation poses an imminent threat to the environment, economy, and human well-being of Washington state, (2) advised my office that action and funding to counteract the threat cannot wait for the 2022 legislative session to meet before action is taken, and (3) requested \$8,905,000 in emergency funding; and

**WHEREAS**, I agree with the Director's findings, and further find that the ongoing and expanding European green crab infestation poses an imminent danger to Washington State's marine environment, marine-based economy, and the cultural well-being of both tribes and non-tribal residents, that the costs of a delay in counteracting the infestation are unacceptably high, that the Director of the WDFW should use immediately-available funding to begin implementation of a coordinated effort to prevent the European green crab from becoming permanently established in Washington's coastal waters, and that additional funding from the Legislature is needed to fully implement the necessary measures.

**NOW THEREFORE, I**, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, by virtue of the authority vested in me under RCW 43.06.010(14), as a result of the above-noted situation, and in accordance with RCW 77.135.090, do hereby order the Department of Fish and Wildlife to begin implementation of emergency measures as necessary to effect the eradication of or to prevent the permanent establishment and expansion of European green crab.

**FURTHERMORE**, I direct the Department of Ecology, and I ask the Department of Natural Resources and the State Parks and Recreation Commission to identify European green crab management as a high priority on their respective state-owned aquatic lands and to facilitate implementing the emergency measures described herein.

