




MEMORANDUM

August 8, 2025

TO: MEMBERS, PORT COMMISSION
Hon. Gail Gilman, President
Hon. Stephen Engblom, Vice President
Hon. Willie Adams
Hon. Steven Lee
Hon. Ken McNeely

FROM: Elaine Forbes
Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Request waiver of (1) Port of San Francisco salmon vessel berth rents for a period of six months; (2) Port of San Francisco seafood processors rent for a period of three months in light of economic disruption caused by closure of the 2025 commercial salmon season.

DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Attached Resolution No. 25-52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commercial fishing is one of the Port's and City's most important maritime industries. Its origin predates the Port, and commercial fishing continues today despite both environmental and industry challenges. The industry employs a wide range of San Franciscans and Bay Area residents and has historically generated strong revenues to the Port through its chain of economics.

The local salmon season has been severely compromised in recent years due to environmental challenges such as the increased presence of whales along the Pacific Coast, the impacts of drought, and the lingering economic impacts from the 2019 coronavirus pandemic.

Port staff recommend that the Port Commission approve a reduction of salmon vessel berth rent for a period of six months and a reduction of seafood processor rent for a period of three months.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan supports the goals of the Port's Strategic Plan as follows:

Evolution:

Evolve the waterfront, and waterfront management practices to respond to changing public and Port needs by supporting legacy Port of San Francisco industries such as commercial fishing as needs change due to economic and environmental conditions.

Productivity:

Attract and retain tenants to build an economically successful and vibrant waterfront, and in doing so, preserve and enhance commercial fishing at Fisherman's Wharf and Hyde Street Harbor.

BACKGROUND

The commercial fishing industry has faced numerous challenges ranging from overfishing, commercial development, ocean pollution, non-native species, and other environmental challenges over many decades. Despite these challenges, Pier 45 and Hyde Street Harbor / Fisherman's Wharf remain one of the West Coast's major commercial fishing centers and much has been done to "keep the fish at Fisherman's Wharf." Major Port initiatives include the 1995 rebuilding of the earthquake-damaged Pier 45, the 2001 construction of the \$21 million Hyde Street Commercial Fishing Harbor, the 2012 construction of a new \$2 million Harbormaster's office, the 2016 Crab Industry Relief Program, and most recently, the 2024 Crab and Salmon Processor Relief Plan. Ongoing projects that support the commercial fishing industry include the newly installed J-9 float project and a fully-funded capital project to install a new ice machine at Pier 45. Over the past three years, San Francisco's most important seafood seasons, Dungeness crab and Chinook salmon have either been delayed in opening, shortened, or cancelled ahead of the season. For the local commercial salmon population, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has determined the fishery and salmon population to be well below historic averages, which resulted in the cancellation of the last two commercial salmon seasons.

Economic Impacts on Commercial Fishers

In 2022, CDFW reported 2 million pounds of fish with a gross value of \$10.2 million were landed at the Port of San Francisco, with only \$2.7 million, or 386,194 pounds, provided by salmon. This is a significant reduction from years past and a disturbing trend. The main legacy fishing seasons in San Francisco are salmon (April to fall), crab (November to spring), and herring (December to February). The 2022 reporting period was the last full year for the salmon season.

Following 2022, the local San Francisco commercial fishing fleet has suffered a triple hit as years of drought conditions have severely impacted the salmon run, resulting in the cancellation of the 2023, 2024, and now 2025, commercial salmon seasons.

As a result of the closed seasons, many of the Port's commercial salmon boat owners have been pushed to the brink of economic collapse. Port staff have engaged members of the San Francisco commercial fishing industry to assess the economic impacts of the closed seasons. The majority of fishing fleet and associated industries are small businesses, and the economic impacts have been dramatic. Much of the salmon fishing industry earn the majority of their annual revenue in a condensed period, depending heavily on the health and quantity of the local fishery. The proposed "Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan" will offer berth rent relief for a six-month period and seafood processor rent relief for a three-month period as described below.

Salmon Vessel Berth Rent

Port staff recommends a six-month waiver of berth rent for permanent San Francisco salmon fishing vessels who hold a valid State Fish and Wildlife license to participate in the commercial fishery. Port staff estimates this rental relief would be available to approximately 36 Port of San Francisco fishers and the six-month revenue loss to the Port would be approximately \$41,392.26. To qualify for the "Commercial Salmon Vessel Relief Plan," the applicant must provide the Port evidence of the following:

- The berthholder is a permanent tenant at the Port of San Francisco; and
- The berthholder holds a 2025 commercial salmon license from the CDFW; and
- The berthholder is in good standing.

Salmon Receiver/Processor Lease Rent

Port staff recommends a three-month reduction of lease rent for permanent San Francisco salmon receivers who hold valid State Fish and Wildlife landings, either directly or through an agent, of salmon from salmon boats at their Port of San Francisco facility. Port staff estimates this rental relief would be available to approximately 17 Port of San Francisco receivers and the three-month revenue loss to the Port would be approximately \$554,935.00. To qualify for the "Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan," the applicant must provide the Port evidence of the following:

- The tenant is a permanent tenant at the Port of San Francisco; and
- The tenant holds a 2025 commercial salmon receiver's license from the CDFW; and
- The tenant is in good standing.

Revenue Impact to the Port

The Port's proposed Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan will result in a revenue impact of approximately \$596,327.26 to the Port as follows:

Commercial Salmon Vessel Berth rent fees (six-months)	\$41,392.26
Port of San Francisco Seafood Processors (three-months)	\$554,935.00
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Total Waiver	\$596,392.26

The proposed Commercial Salmon Vessel Relief Plan would throw a critical lifeline to the many small-business, fishing-industry men and women during a period of unprecedented financial impacts, provide tangible relief to help sustain this vital historic industry in San Francisco, and demonstrate the Port's ongoing commitment to our commercial fishing community.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Port Commission support the Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan, approve the attached Resolution, and authorize the Executive Director to provide waiver of rents as described above.

Prepared by:	Dominic Moreno Assistant Deputy Director, Maritime
For:	Andre Coleman Deputy Director, Maritime

**PORT COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

RESOLUTION NO. 25-52

- WHEREAS, Section B3.581 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco empowers the Port Commission with the power and duty to use, conduct, operate, maintain, manage, regulate and control Port area of the City and County of San Francisco; and
- WHEREAS, The commercial fishing Industry predates the origins of the Port and is one of San Francisco's most important maritime industries; and
- WHEREAS, Salmon is synonymous with San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf and provides a large share of annual revenue to the local commercial industry; and
- WHEREAS, The local commercial fishing industry has suffered as years of drought conditions have severely impacted the salmon run along with the cancellation of both the 2023, 2024, and 2025 commercial salmon seasons; and
- WHEREAS, As a result of the closures, local commercial salmon fishers, have suffered a devastating economic blow that threatens the viability of the local salmon industry in San Francisco; and
- WHEREAS, Port staff, working with the local commercial fishing community stakeholders have created a Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan that offers six months' waived berth rent for qualified Port of San Francisco salmon vessel owners; and
- WHEREAS, Port staff, working with the local commercial fishing community stakeholders, have created a Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan that offers three months' rent relief for qualified Port of San Francisco seafood processors; now, therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Port Commission hereby authorizes the Executive Director of the Port, or her designee, to waive up to the equivalent of six months of berth rent for salmon vessel owners and up to the equivalent of three months of rent for San Francisco seafood processors that meet the qualifications described in the Staff Report prepared for the Commercial Salmon Vessel Relief Plan, all on terms substantially consistent with those described in said Staff Report; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Port Commission authorizes the Executive Director to modify the Commercial Salmon Vessel Relief Plan in a manner that the Executive Director, in consultation with the City Attorney, determines is in the best interest of the Port to implement the Commercial Salmon Vessel and Processor Relief Plan, and does not materially increase the obligations or liabilities of the Port.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Port Commission at its meeting of August 12, 2025.

Secretary