

**Testimony to the Board of Fish**

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16 January 2018

**Herring proposals:** Supporting #99, 105 & 106. Opposing #94 & 104

Honorable board members, I am here to testify concerning proposals that affect Sitka Sound's herring population.

For the following reasons, I support the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Proposals #99, 105 and 106. And I oppose Proposals #94 and 104, offered by others.

I moved to Sitka 41 years ago, in the fall of 1976. The next spring, as herring spawning time approached, I learned of the already long-standing controversy over the sac roe fishery. Ever since, my concern *and fears* have been deep about the future abundance of herring in Sitka Sound and the persistence of this herring population. In fact, in successive years *my concern has deepened more and more*.

There is plenty of testimony today about this population's degradation and the natural and commercial perils it faces, and about the even worse plight of the other herring populations throughout Southeast. I need not reiterate details.

I do ask you, though, to consider this opinion. I bristle when I hear the herring population referred to as "*a resource*."

This is *not* "a resource", it is *life!* And more so, it is the *life* upon which much of the rest of the *marine life* in Sitka Sound depends. That includes predatory fish, scavenger fish, marine mammals, and many kinds of birds. Also, from thousands of years ago to the present, herring have been and – still are – fundamental to the *life* of the traditional culture in Sitka and to the sustenance of Sitka's people. Here, herring is food both for the body and the soul.

Surely, on the other hand, the sac roe fishery contributes to livelihoods, including of those fellow Sitkans for whom early-season processing-plant work is important.

So I understand that this fisheries board, like prior ones, faces an uncomfortable judgment. But the management regime in place so far, has failed. It is time for change.

I URGE YOU TO DETERMINE that **it is long past time** for the board to break from its consistent favoritism for the *short-term* benefit of the sac roe fishery.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION TO REBUILD THE SITKA SOUND HERRING POPULATION. Doing so is in the *best long-term interests* of the Sound's marine life, Sitka's culture and people, and *all* commercial fisheries – even the sac roe fishery itself. Although I find the principle of the sac roe fishery to be wasteful and morally troubling, I urge you to adopt the Sitka Tribe's best judgments and offer of compromise, as expressed in its proposals.

By this request what I mean is, pls vote: **Yes** on 99, 105 & 106; **No** on 94 & 104.

THANKS FOR LISTENING.

