

**Peter Bradley Testimony to Board of Fish – January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018*****Preface to 1997 BoF Audio Collages presented by Alaire Hughey, Lee House, and Tiffany Justice***

My name is Peter Bradley. I'm joined here by Lee House, Alaire Hughey, and Tiffany Justice. We'd like to jointly provide testimony which demands a bit of a preamble.

This year, for the first time, several entities are unified in their concern for the health of the herring who spawn in Sitka Sound. The City of Sitka, your Local Sitka Advisory Committee, and ADF&G have all offered reports, motions, or resolutions which demonstrate that concern. Those groups join the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the many individuals who have been warning us of the decline of herring for decades.

Western history, anthropology, and science now make it clear that we are managing the fishery in a depleted status that leaves us ecologically, culturally, and economically vulnerable. This is demonstrated by the research coming out of British Columbia, by some of ADF&G's findings, and by Tom Thornton's herring synthesis. These findings are beginning to back up what traditional ecological knowledge has been indicating for quite some time - something is off with the way that we're managing this fishery.

We have prepared a trio of audio collages from the testimonies delivered to the board of fish back in 1997. Many of the people who spoke then are no longer with us, but it seems appropriate to share their words. These testimonies were delivered with future generations in mind, and, I believe, in the shared interest of everybody living in Southeast Alaska.

These old testimonies are a reminder that fishing economies are rooted in healthy ecologies - not the other way around. Though not listed as such in Alaska, herring look and act and die a whole lot like a forage fish; managing them as a single species misses the point.

Herring may not recover quickly, but if we allow them to recover *towards* historic levels in Sitka Sound and the rest of Southeast Alaska, then it stands to reason that everybody in this room will benefit. I ask you to remember the historic herring levels, and not lose sight of some simple math: 10% of 125,000 tons is better than 20% of 55,000 tons. That's what we want to see with proposals 98 and 99: more herring.

These old testimonies are also a reminder that the availability of herring for subsistence use is not what it used to be - it takes more time, requires greater distance travelled, requires greater expense and access to technology/transportation, and has a higher likelihood of failure. In 1997, subsistence users were beginning to give up on their old favored places, and this last year featured exceptional effort by many users who were skunked in what seems to be considered a disastrous year for subsistence herring egg harvest. That's why I support proposals 105 and 106 - which I believe will lead to greater economic, cultural, and environmental health in the long term - and to reject proposals 94 and 104, which will reduce the availability of a subsistence lifestyle.

Finally, it all reminds me that at the end of the day, we have more questions than answers about the oceans. Especially with ocean conditions changing rapidly due to warming, acidification, predation patterns, etc., we need to admit, recognize, and compensate for these gaps of knowledge through conservative management of cultural keystone species.

Finally, I want to mention that we have taken pains to ensure that the words you will hear are not taken out of context from their original purpose - we intend only to convey the spirit of what was said 20 years ago, and regret and apologize for any offense we may cause by using the old testimonies in this manner.