

Herring Testimony from Debe K. Brincefield

My name is Debe K. Brincefield. Thank you Mr. Chair and respective Board of Fish members for hearing our testimonies. I have been a resident of Sitka for over 20 years. I have raised my son here, who is now 20 years old. I am an adopted member of the Tak Tein Tan Clan. I am also a Corps Sergeant Major with the Salvation Army.

When I first came to Sitka, I was struck by the abundance of the ocean here, moreso than anything from my Native Florida.

I stand in solidarity with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. I support proposal 98, 99, 105 and 106. I oppose proposal 94, 104, and 107 - WHICH DISCRIMINATES AGAINST NATIVE PEOPLE!

Sitka has many gifts, number 1 is the beautiful bounty of the ocean here. Our stewardship and conservation of this bounty is so important for our children and our childrens children for many economic and social reasons.

I am amazed to hear all the testimonies that have come out of this room. Not all these issues reported are true facts. In regards to Herring eggs, we want to make it perfectly clear they are not a native delicasey. They are our spirit food. We do not sell them to people for cash. That is a falsehood that should be struck from your minds. We harvest them for our families. For the past couple of years we have not had enough herring eggs to give to our families because they are so scarce.

Thank you for listening to the hearts of our people. We are all united in our passion to save the Herring.

Page 2.

Debe K. Brincefield

I have raised my son here in Sitka and we have been blessed by the bounty of the ocean here. He fishes every summer and last summer he fished on a troller. We love living off the land here. It saddens me to see what has happened to the herring in the last 20 years that I have called Sitka my home.

The Silver Bay Seafood CEO testified on Jan 16th. If the Herring Fishery collapses as it most certainly will if we don't take efforts to preserve it here and now, he will not have any more income. If they were allowed to fish in Ketchikan and Juneau which are now fished out, they could have tripled their income. The same thing goes for the Seiners. Why then, are we allowing Sitka to be fished out?

Matt Kinney, a restaurant owner here in Sitka testified that native people harvested 85,000 Herring Eggs in 2013 and then at the end of his testimony said it was maybe 2016. This is not true and it is not facts but his truth and should be struck from the record for being inaccurate.

The forage fish that usually survive from feeding on the herring are now smaller in size and other species such as the birds are not thriving because they have no food. Dr. Brown the renowned researcher from Prince William Sound has recorded that the carcasses of over 40,000 birds that were found in 2015 due to ocean conditions that are vastly changing. Also, King Salmon and Halibut are in decline and smaller and weaker due to the fact that they do not have the food they need from the Herring. She is a scientist that has proof the fish and fowl are starving.

As far as the harvesting of Herring Eggs, 100% of the area that we used to set the branches out in have lost 80% of that area. So that leaves

Page 3.

only 10% of the area left. Usually we set 80 trees. 90% of that 80 trees is gone. WE are lucky to get 10% of that back now.

You have heard my testimony coming from a family who loves the subsistence way of life. We, my son and I have been blessed to live off the land here in Sitka. I fear for his children and their children. If we don't take the right precautions to manage the Herring, there will be no Herring for future generations.

Finally, from the reports of the ADF&G, No commercial fisheries were opened in Seymour Canal, Hobart Bay Port Houghton, Hoonah Sound, Tenakee Inlet, West Behm Canal, Kah Shakes, Cat Island, or Lynn Canal. Herring harvested commercially during the 2015-2016 season totaled just over 10,700 tons, not including herring pounded for spawn-on-kelp fisheries. Facts that substantiate the truth that Sitka is the next fisherie to be fished out. Please please take these facts into consideration. Our future is counting on the BOF doing the right thing!

Thank you for hearing my testimony. May God Bless You!

Debe K. Brincefield
103 Burkhart Drive D-27
Sitka, Alaska 99835
907-738-4323