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Sitka ♦ Craig ♦ Valdez ♦ Naknek ♦ Metlakatla

January 22, 2018

RC 410

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

January 15-23, 2018

Sitka, Alaska

RE: Sitka Herring: Support for Collaboration ~ RC 379 and RC 380
Opposition to Proposals 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 105, & 106

Dear Chairman Jensen and Board of Fisheries Members:

During this morning's committee proceedings related to Group 8 – Herring, the Board of Fisheries heard oral testimony from multiple stakeholders representing varying interests, wherein “collaboration” and “working together” were utilized to describe a vision wherein all parties are channeling their energy harmoniously, rather than contentiously. The spirit of this collaboration was formally presented through the submittal of RC 379 and RC 380, and likewise by pulling Proposal 94 & 104.

I support RC 379 and RC 380 and I furthermore encourage all the stakeholders and the Board of Fisheries to set all Sitka Sound sac roe herring proposals aside, and allow unified collaboration amongst all stakeholders to be the common goal from this day forward.

As I shared in my introductory oral testimony before the Board of Fisheries, I am the CEO of Silver Bay Seafoods and have had this *title* since the inception of Silver Bay, dating back to when the company was simply a passionate, but unrealized dream of Alaskan fishermen. Over my lifetime, I have likewise had other *titles* that have followed or been associated with my name, whether it be “P.E.” as a licensed professional engineer (civil) in the state of Alaska, or board member and in some cases the associated secondary *title* (president, etc.) for various boards I have served on over the years. While each of these past, current and even future roles and corresponding *titles* may have meaning and/or represent qualification to some, the three most important *titles* that I associate myself with proudly, now and forever, are: 1) Husband, 2) Father, and 3) Sitkan.

I have four generations in my family that have called Sitka home. I grew up in Sitka, attending K-12 public schools, and I am thankful to my past educators for the formal education I gained here in Sitka, and beyond at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. However, Sitka has given so much more to me than a formal education, and for this I will eternally be grateful to my fellow Sitkans. In fact, it is this passion for Sitka and appreciation for what Sitkans have taught me, that motivated me to want to return to Sitka to raise my family, wherein I could contribute and play my role alongside other Sitkans, in giving that same opportunity back to the next generations and the community that I felt had given so much to me.

From my fellow Sitkans I have learned life skills such as work ethic, primarily through commercial fishing. My earliest memories in life include being on a troller with my father and mother, and I witnessed their dedication and perseverance. I continued to commercial fish until I graduated from college, and while I became proficient in skills of the industry that I was involved with at the time, it is the intangible life skills I learned during this nearly 15-year tenure commercial fishing that truly had the most long-lasting significance.

Similarly, from Sitkans I learned the value of community, culture, and the subsistence lifestyle. Some of my greatest memories in life, with both my family and friends, are associated with subsistence harvest, preparation, and sharing in one form or another. It is my fellow Sitkans, most notably my father but also so many others, that taught me the fulfillment and enrichment earned from this lifestyle we share in Sitka.

As a Sitkan, and as the CEO of Silver Bay Seafoods, I likewise share the dream and vision that was expressed by others during public testimony last week, and was woven into some of the oral testimony from various stakeholders this morning during the committee proceedings associated Group 8 – Herring, wherein all parties from every user group work together proactively and collaboratively, and we channel our positive energy towards achieving the common objective. The unified objective is to protect the Sitka Sound herring resource in perpetuity for all users, all while maximizing the benefit for all users. Together we have the opportunity through collaboration, for community, culture, subsistence harvest, education, economy, and commercial harvest to all mutually, and simultaneously, achieve the maximum benefit for all stakeholders. This includes the subsistence herring egg harvesters, commercial fishermen, and the community of Sitka alike.

RC 379 and RC 380 provide the foundation for the collaborative structure to be built upon, and I invite all stakeholders to embrace it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard A. Riggs', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard A. Riggs CEO

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