

Marilyn Sheldon: Hi. I'm Marilyn Sheldon. I live in Pacific County, Washington. First, thank you very much for holding this public hearing here this evening. I know it's your job but I also know it's a night out of your life and I appreciate it as for everyone else who came here this evening. I'm here to testify in support of option 3 of the SEIS. I believe that the findings of the draft SEIS support the issuance of a draft permit as discussed in option 3. I feel the SEIS also needs to incorporate a little more what the devastating ecological and economic impact would be of the "no action" of option 1 – because I can not stress enough the devastating impacts of not moving forward with a draft permit to both the ecology and the economy of Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.

Bottom culture oyster beds provide invaluable 3-dimensional habitat for juvenile Dungeness crab and many other species. As you heard last Saturday at the public hearing, the Columbia River Crab Fishermen's Association acknowledged that valuable habitat. They understand the science of this permit and the use of Imidacloprid and they understand the overall net benefit. And they also support the issuance of the draft permit, as they testified to last Saturday. Bottom culture oyster beds also facilitate the growth and sustainability of native eelgrass, which is essential fish habitat. It must be recognized that burrowing shrimp, if left unchecked, will destroy this valuable habitat. Burrowing shrimp are eco-engineered and they create a monoculture -- which only serves themselves.

In Pacific County the shellfish industry is the largest private employer. It's responsible for nearly 2,000 family-wage jobs in our rural, coastal economy. Pacific County has also been recognized as the 4th most fish-dependent community in the United States. That means that the shellfish industry and the habitat we provide for other valuable fisheries in our area are the cornerstone of our economy. As of today, our company alone has lost over 29% of our most valuable oyster ground and 43% of our clam ground. That's for a total loss of over 300 acres to our farm alone, to date. As a result, we've had to reduce the volume of product that we're able to ship. We've had to let go of long-time customers. And we've had to reduce our workforce by over 4 full-time positions. Again, I believe the findings of the draft SEIS support the issuance of a draft permit as described in option 3 and I urge you to move ahead with the issuance of this draft permit in a timely manner. Thank you very much.