

Norman Olsen: Good evening. My name is Norm Olsen. I'm from South Bend out of Pacific County. I'm here on behalf of Olsen & Son Oyster Company and we are and always have been a small family-owned business. I'm here tonight to give a brief testimony and hopefully some insight on the struggles being faced by the ecology and economy of Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor estuary as well as their respective communities. These struggles are the direct result of the over-propagation of burrowing shrimp and the current lack of a viable control method.

I would like to share with everyone here tonight that my family's presence in the oyster industry in Willapa dates back to the 1850's, when my 3rd great grandfather settled at Stony Point and claimed a portion of the bay for himself upon the realization of its vast stocks of native oysters. You're one of history's oyster prophet sons – my great great grandfather. [unintelligible] 180 acres of ground that I currently farm today and hope to some day pass on to my children if they choose to take it. In the subsequent generations from then to now, oyster harvesting in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor has seen much necessity for adaptation.

From massive unexplainable crop mortalities, to stifling [unintelligible] infestations or Spartina, our common denominator in survival has been our sheer willingness to innovate and overcome. It is important to understand that over these many years a growing need to adapt has nurtured a continually-growing understanding that our well-being is chiefly unattainable without that of our estuaries. Having now set the stage I would like to point out the magnitude of detriment these shrimp pose to our marine ecology and all those that depend on it.

Over the last 50 years these pests have given ample exhibit as to their destructive properties. When heavily colonized and interconnected burrow systems undermine the stability of healthy substrate and their appetites deplete the sediment of healthy micro-biomes – which are the very basis of the estuary food chain – the result, if unchecked, is bare and soft sediment that is incapable of even supporting growth of key photosynthetic vegetation and supplies forage habitat for all manner of environmentally supported species, including oysters, clams, fish, juvenile and adult crabs, and a whole host of birds. Because of the limitation of the chemical Carbaryl in the 1960's to address these first grossly disproportionate shrimp numbers, it was discovered how quickly [unintelligible] was able to reestablish and support a necessary level of biodiversity. In my lifetime, even, I have witnessed the reclamation of ground once healthy, but hopelessly overrun with shrimp. Within 1 to 2 years of treatment some of these ground had returned to farm-ability and by said virtue was able to provide key habitat yet again.

I work amongst many contemporary farmers whose production levels take place on these largely reclaimed grounds that were once uninhabitable. And with further inaction, we'll helplessly watch it become so again – as we are currently seeing the leading edge of what appears to be near-historic level recruitment. In the last few years, since the retraction of our permit – our last Imidacloprid permit – I know many farmers who have already begun to lose significant, at the very least tens – tens, if not more – acres per year and are continuing to do so at that rate. The point I hope to impress to those here tonight is that without a functional control, in this case Imidacloprid for lack of another [unintelligible] over the course of the last 50 years of experimentation. Mechanical alternatives is another that has fallen short of

feasibility. The viability of our marine health and the integrity of our local economy here based on the oyster industry is in great jeopardy and I wish to share that with everyone. I would like to implore you guys to consider approving this permit for us. Thank you.