

My name is Denise Rankin, and I am the Council President for the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska.

The City of Unalaska became a first class City in 1941; however the Aleutians have been inhabited by the Unangax people for at least 8,000 years.

Over the years the Unangan people have witnessed many changes in Unalaska.

1741 brought first contact with a foreign culture when Russian traders arrived in the Aleutians. This contact brought fur trading, the Russian American Company, and the Russian Orthodox faith. In 1824 the first Church of the Holy Ascension of Christ was built. Portions of the Current Holy Ascension Cathedral date back to 1825.

In 1778 while searching for the fabled Northwest Passage English Captain James Cook enters Unalaska Bay to repair his ship the H.M.S. Resolution and to take on water. Captain Cook almost hit the rocks of Unalaska Island while traveling in thick fog on this first stop. He again returned to Unalaska in October 1778 after exploring the coast of Alaska before heading to the Hawaiian Islands where he was killed on February 14, 1779.

In 1867 Russia sold Alaska to the United States and this brought more changes to Unalaska and the Unangax people. The Alaska Commercial Company took over the trading store in 1868 (they remained in operation in Unalaska until just a few years ago).

Steamships, mail boats and whaling boats started to arrive in Unalaska for needed repairs or to pick up coal. In 1887 the Methodist church constructed the Jesse Lee home, which housed

many orphaned children from around rural Alaska. Prospectors heading for the goldfields in the Klondike and Nome would also stop in Unalaska to refuel and resupply their ships; sometimes their stay would be longer than they wished because of the sea ice.

The Bering Sea Patrol brought Revenue Cutters to Unalaska, the crews of these cutters were the law of the area and they brought much needed doctors to the islands. Three years after the Bering Sea Patrol was established Unalaska became its headquarters. In 1915 the Revenue Cutter Service became the United States Coast Guard.

In June 1942 war came to Unalaska when the Japanese bombed the military bases on Amaknak Island, also known as Dutch Harbor. During the bombing the Bureau of Indian Affairs 24-bed hospital was hit with a bomb and was destroyed (this was located near where Alyeska Seafoods is now). July 1942 the American Government relocated the Unangan people from the villages on Unalaska Island to an abandoned cannery in Southeast Alaska and they would not be allowed to return to Unalaska until April 1945. However, the American Government would not allow the residents of the Villages of Kashega, Makushin or Biorka (which were all located on Unalaska Island) to return to their homes and they had to instead move to the City of Unalaska.

In the early 1960's commercial fishing started to come to Unalaska. In 1963 Pan Alaska became the first major shore-based processor in Unalaska. And in the late 1970's there were record king crab harvests. However, 1981 brought a crash in the king crab stocks and the commercial crab fishery ended until the opelio stocks started to rebound in the early 1990's. In 1989 Unalaska became

the base for Alaska's factory trawlers. Since 1992 the Port of Dutch Harbor has been recognized as the number one fishing port in the nation in terms of seafood volume and value. This brought a "construction boom" to Unalaska with the construction of many new buildings including the Grand Aleutian Hotel, the Safeway store, the Dutch Harbor Post office, a new City Hall building, the Museum of the Aleutians, a new public library, a new clinic building, and an elementary school. A stable economy and new infrastructure has made Unalaska a place where people want to bring their families to live and in recent years our population has remained steady at around 4,000.

Through all of these changes in Unalaska one thing has remained constant with the Unangax people, and that is the desire to keep our environment safe and our culture alive for generations to come.

Our ancestors lived in villages along the coast so that they could hunt for birds, seals, sea lions and even whales, they fished, gathered clams, mussels, sea urchins, bird eggs, plants and driftwood. They were extremely knowledgeable about the sea. They would travel by sea in boats made of skin, navigating by the stars, moon, wind and even the flight of birds to trade amongst themselves and with other communities at Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet, Copper River, and Southeast Alaska.

Because of their reliance on the health of the environment, I imagine our ancestors would share our concerns with Arctic development.

Some of these concerns are:

Vessel traffic through the Northern Pacific Great Circle Route has always been a concern in the Aleutian Islands because the vessels pass through the islands in 2 locations. And now there will be increased vessel traffic with the Northern Shipping Route opening up for longer periods of time. What types of response equipment will be staged in the Aleutians so we don't have vessel grounding?

With the climate changing and an increase in vessel traffic what types of studies or preventative measures are being taken regarding the possibilities of invasive species with ballast water transfers?

Will there be funding available to conduct studies of harbors, shorelines, marine mammals and sea birds in the region?

Because of the high price of heating fuel we ask that the State continue to look at developing renewable energy sources in the region, please see the attached paper provided by the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association which discusses some alternative energy ideas.

And finally, the Unangax people are few yet we wish to continue to participate in planning and research. How do we ensure our voices are heard?

In closing I would like to thank the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission for holding this meeting in Unalaska. I know that you will take these presentations and public testimonies to heart when making your policy decisions. I also hope you will have time to explore the beautiful sites of Unalaska.