

Interview
With
BEVERLY PERDUE
In
New Bern,
North Carolina

Interviewed by Barbara Garrity-Blake & Mary Williford

On September 29, 2016

Transcribed by Mary Williford

For Carolina Coastal Voices

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BARBARA GARRITY-BLAKE: Alright. I'm Barbara Garrity-Blake and I am with Mary Williford, and we are here for the Coastal Voices Fisheries Reform Act project, on September 29th, 2016, and we have the honor of interviewing, today, Governor Beverly Perdue. So thank you so much, Governor, for joining us today!

BEVERLY PERDUE: I am delighted to be here and I am very eager to be part of this initiative to archive, forever, some of the important voices and some of the, of us not-so-important voices, of the fisheries effort in North Carolina. It was a major time and I'm delighted that someone still remembers.

BGB: Great. Well thank you and, before we get started, we just want to thank you for your service to this state. You have quite a distinguished career and you've really worked hard for the people of North Carolina. So: thank you!

BP: It's been an honor for me! I've loved the opportunity to serve and so I thank the people of North Carolina for trusting me, and this coastal area for electing me all those years.

BGB: Alright. Mary?

MARY WILLIFORD: Yeah, well, speaking of your service to North Carolina, I was hoping you could tell us a little bit about how you got into public office, because you've served a number of different roles in North Carolina, in public office. Can you tell us a little bit about your initial interests and your early years there, how you got involved?

BP: Mary, my mama always said--or my daddy, one, I really don't remember much now--that I couldn't keep a job. My resume read like I couldn't keep a job. I actually moved to North Carolina because my boy's dad and I decided, on the spur of the moment, that this was where we wanted to raise our family and spend our lives. My brother was stationed at [Marine Corps Air Station] Cherry Point; a lot of people end up on the coast because of the military bases, and I did.

So we moved to New Bern, I had a freshly-minted Ph.D., and I remember somebody who introduced me as ‘Doctor Perdue,’ then came to me about three weeks later and asked me if I could write them a prescription for penicillin! [LAUGHTER] And I said, ‘I’m not that kinda doctor!’ and from then on, I never used the title, and I actually never used the degree. So I found myself back in the [19]70s, it was way before you were even a dream in your mama’s eye, I found myself as one of the few women who had a real hunger to make a difference in terms of a life outside the home. It was before I had kids, and I happened to find four or five women about my age who were equally motivated, and begin to do volunteer work and public service, and I ended up working for a local government’s organization, so I was in some of the counties and I thought, ‘Where all this action’s really happening is at the county and the town level, and the school board level.’ I didn’t know a thing about politics; didn’t care about politics much. In fact, I’d never been very active myself. My parents were Republicans and my brother was head of [Senator] Jesse Helms’ campaign here in eastern North Carolina and, low and behold, the more I learned about politics, the more I became convinced that I was the breakaway kid and I was gonna be a Democrat, for a lot of reasons. And so it was fun and an area of great conversation at Thanksgiving dinner around my core family. And I worked for a while and then took off and reared my two boys for a while, and got involved with the hospital in long-term care, that’s what part of my degree was in, long-term care. And I dreamed back then of running a gerontology institute, which is an academic entity for the research and service to older people. And I, in working with the hospital, became re-involved in alternatives to the traditional medical model, where old pepe end up in institutional care. And tried to encourage North Carolina to listen to some of the progressive directions that other states were taking. And I drove to Raleigh for the first time and they thumbed their noses at me and thought, ‘Who in the world is this house frau

from eastern North Carolina up here suggestion to us blah blah blah?’ And I came back and thought about it for several weeks and I just thought, you know, am I gonna sit here in New Bern for the rest of my life and fuss and whine, or am I gonna take a risk and run for office? And a woman had never been elected, and I did it, a lot of support, a lot of friends, a lot of sacrifice from my kids and my husband at the time, and we won. And I found out an interesting truth is that, in public service, the world is really open to you, and that if you listen to people, you can make tremendous transformations. And so that’s how I got in and I stayed in, and just kept moving up and didn’t intend, necessarily, to move up, but it was just the right time and the encouragement was there and the process was there, and I continued to be part of change, and I liked being a woman who could also collaborate with men and could work in tandem with Republicans and Democrats to move North Carolina forward.

MW: Yeah, so you mentioned that you were, um, the first or one of the first women to run for some of these positions. Can you talk a little bit about that? Sort of, any experiences you had that you think were unique to you being a woman in that position?

BP: It was always fun; I was always the, one of the only or one of the very few skirts in the room. Quite frankly, even now in the twenty-first century, I find myself once in a while being the only skirt at the board table and that’s still very troublesome for me, that there still doesn’t seem to be any interest in parity for women in America. I’m hoping that will change while I’m alive; I’m not sure, but I’m very hopeful and very optimistic about that change happening. One of the funnier stories--and it’s the only one I’ll tell, the whole thing has been interesting--once, I think you learn pretty quickly that you work harder and you speak less, and when you do speak, you know what you’re talking about and you have a solution, not a problem. So you don’t complain, you solve. And that you really don’t care who gets the credit; I think that’s the

amazing thing about female leaders in any arena, whether it's in the P.T.A. room or in the school board room or in Corporate America: women really don't care about the, where the credit goes. We only want to get the job done, and we have solutions and want to collaborate, we like to get along with people, not because it makes us feel good, but because it moves us forward. And so I learned all those things.

BP: But, I was in the mountains--this is when I was running for Lieutenant Governor, so things never really change, this was in the early 2000s. I didn't wanna be in the mountains; it was a cold, rainy day, almost November. All I could think about was going home and putting on my nightgown and laying down. I mean, seriously, it was a long campaign. And I get up there and I find me the guy who was driving me around in his truck, he was so nice, he said, 'Bev, we're gonna make one last stop and then you can get on the road and go back to Raleigh and the election's gonna e over and you're gonna win!' And so I said, 'Okay.' And we go into this old country store, I'll never forget it, I won't tell you what county, and we walk in and there's this clan of men standing around in bib overalls, smoking cigars, spitting tobacco, and they were standing around an old pot-bellied stove; it was cold and rainy. And I walk around and shake their hand and tell 'em I'm running for Lieutenant Governor and ask for their vote, and this one man looked at me and said, 'Honey, I would never vote for you for Lieutenant Governor, but if you don't win, you come back up here, you could be my third wife!' [LAUGHTER] And I thought that was indicative of the whole career. It was a great story and it was just representative of the fact that, regardless of what you do or say, there's always gonna be a naysayer. The best thing that happened is the day that I was inaugurated, we opened up the mansion and we had a rope line, receiving line, of probably five or six-thousand people, and finally when it began to get really dark, the troopers asked us to shut it down, and so Bob and I--my wonderful husband, he's

been such a part of this--wouldn't not shake hands with everybody there. And we go out in the dark with the flashlight and troopers and we get to the very end of the line and there's this little girl and she's shivering, you could hear her that morning when the sun was bright telling her mama she was not wearing a coat, she was not wearing a sweater, she was so cold! And I bent down to talk to her and ask her why she was there so late, and she looked at me and she said, 'I'm here because I wanted to meet you.' And around her neck, with a Christmas ribbon and an old piece of cardboard box, there was a sign that said 'Now I can be a girl Governor, too.' And that summarized the whole capacity, that women in any position just--if I could urge one thing of women, I would urge them to take a leap and try, because it doesn't matter what you're doing, if you're out there doing it, some little child, a boy or a girl, has their eyes on you and you inspire them.

MW: Wow, that's a very powerful story!

BGB: That's really nice.

MW: Well [laughs] I'm wondering, since we are here to talk about the Fisheries Reform Act and fisheries legislation today, during some of those early years when you were becoming involved in public office and public service, sort of what was your first introduction to fisheries and fishing politics?

BP: Well, this was back in the late [19]80s, and you know, again, I'm a woman, I was from Virginia, a coal miner's daughter, I didn't know a thing about fishing other than the fact that I loved to fish and that I'd fished since I was a little girl. And so here I end up being the representative from Pamlico County, especially. I didn't represent Carteret County at that time. Craven, the New Bern area, doesn't have a lot of fishing interest other than sports fishing now, but back then I don't even think we called it that. So I met the Ag[ricultural] Extension Agent

that I adored in all three counties I represented--Craven, Lenoir, and Pamlico, initially--and I ask him if he would teach me--this was even during the campaign--if he would begin to teach me about agriculture and fisheries issues. Because I really did believe, if I was going to represent people who had that as their primary income source, that I needed to understand it and be able to talk the talk as well as walk the walk. I mean, I figure I could learn to talk the talk, but I wanted to learn what it was really like. And so I began to work it out and take part in it a little bit and listen and go to some of the meetings and I found, by the time I built some seniority up and had found a place of authority, if you will--that's probably a tacky word but, whatever the word is, I don't like to say 'power' but I continue to think it was seniority--when I could really be part of the decision-making in the Senate, I felt it was very important for me to be able to verbalize the interests of both the commercial and the recreation fishermen, and fisherwoman, although we never used those words. And I really became a friend, I think, of the community. Not a close friend, but I was someone that they often called upon. I also had the privilege of begin a good friend and a co-legislator with Marc Basnight, who was from Dare County and who was consumed by commercial fishermen, especially, long before most of North Carolina knew what the issues were.

MW: Great. So I was wondering.

BP: Excuse me. [MICROPHONE INTERFERENCE]

MW: What do you think it was about [pause] so the moratorium really got underway in 1994; what do you think it was about that time period, um, this early-to-mid [19]90s, that made fisheries such a big issue? Why then--why not earlier, why not later?

BP: I don't know why not earlier, and why not later. I think it's just the fact that there are so many issues and there's only so much time and energy in a legislative session. Because I

actually haven't heard fisheries talked about in any detail for several years now. I think, at the time, it was just a confluence of interests. You had Senator [Marc] Basnight and me, from the coast, you had very involved, articulate, passionate leaders from the recreational and the sports industry, you had a group of private sector players--Jerry Schill, some of the sports fishing industry--I won't name names. But you had associations or entities, you had the development or the introduction of the women's auxiliary in the conversation. There was beginning to occur, in America, this undercurrent that we see that's so powerful, in 2016, of combined voices working toward a common purpose and not being afraid or threatened by the power structure, the existing governmental power structure. So, we would have forums and I can remember one forum--somewhere Down East, I tried to think of it today coming home from Raleigh--and I went to the public hearing because I did that kind of thing, I was really a listener and loved the process, and I don't remember who was at the head table but somebody from government was there spouting what the rules and regulations were, and you had this whole side of the hall full of commercial fishermen who'd worked all day in their boots and their fishing clothes, you had their wives there, you had folks who understood the struggles of the industry with the lack of the catch, and on the other side was a busload of sports fishermen that'd come from all over the state, maybe from all over the southeast, to articulate, very aggressively, their positions. And so it was really quite interesting to me, at the time. And even now, in retrospect, to realize that that was the emergence of people, real people, individuals, uniting together and, through some kind of concerted mission, making a huge difference in outcomes. And that just happened. You also had a Marine Fisheries Division that, from my perspective, was totally incompetent, and a Fisheries Commission that seemed either so pro-commercial or conversely pro-sport that there was never any ability to come together around consensus. You had the lack of the fish, the first numbers

where the whole fishing catch, whatever those words are, was declining consistently. You had people like Marc [Basnight] talking about leases, and you had folks like me talking about the next generation of fishing being aquaculture. And so you had all these things, and folks felt so threatened, and the tension was so high, that the only thing that we could do was move forward with some kind of legislation, I thought, that would at least put a hiatus out there, a brief time out where we could intelligently and, perhaps, without emotion, evaluate where we were and where we wanted to go as a state.

MW: Yeah, that's interesting that you mentioned so many different people who were involved here and whose voices wanted to be heard, and who all had very strong opinions about this. I was wondering if you could speak a little bit more about whether you think, whether you feel like there were any certain groups that were fairly united and thinking that, 'Hey, we need to do something, let's work together to get something done' or did it seem--was there--I guess, could you talk a little bit more about that tension and contention?

BP: I think there were a lot of united groups; I think that was part of the tension. I mean, you had a group of sports fishermen who were hell-bent on having it their way. You had a group layered on top of the Sports Fishermen Association who wanted to stop any kind of trawling. There were just so many ideas out there because, in the early [19]90s and the mid-[19]90s, you began to see the emergence of economic data that was tied very closely to the tourism industry and water quality, and you had the evidence that sport fishermen were critical to coastal economies. And for the first time, that data began to drive some of the decision-making at the local level. You put that in conflict or in tension with commercial fishermen families, who had been making their living from this catch, this hard work, it's still--aren't, isn't it the Alaskan fishermen are the most endangered profession in the world? And so fishing, if you were doing it

commercially, was really tough and really dangerous. Every year, I would go to the Blessing of the Fleet and see the wreaths thrown in for the fishermen who'd been killed during the year.

What was her name, Barbara, was it Jane Smith? What was the Smith woman's name?

BGB: Janice.

BP: Janice Smith.

BGB: Billy Smith's wife.

BP: Yeah, I mean, they started those kind of things. So folks in the general public, who didn't know a thing about commercial fishing, began to realize that the fish they ate from the fish market came from somebody's catch. And these were people, salt-of-the-earth people, who were struggling to keep their economy alive. It was no different than a local drug store being scared of C.V.S. It was the same kind of tension. And so all of those conflicting interests, at the time, as conflicting interests in the twenty-first century in our time, make it impossible to leave the emotions at the door and come in and have an intelligent conversation that was geared toward a common solution. There were no common solutions; it was one way or the other one! Close down commercial fishing or close down sports fishing. And that's what the moratorium came from. The tensions were unbelievable. I was never afraid at the hearings. The only time I've ever been afraid of a public hearing going awry was around the industrial hog farm issues; those were really scary kind of hearings. These were full of anger, and these were full of emotion, but there was never any threat involved among the people.

MW: So, you know, the moratorium eventually led up to the passage of the Fisheries Reform Act, and you were a Senator at that time, correct?

BP: Yes.

MW: Um, did you advocate for the passage of the F.R.A. or did you have concerns about

it? What was your relationship to that piece of legislation in your role as Senator?

BP: Well, as I recall, there were tremendous concerns. What year was that, [19]97?

BGB: The passage of the Reform Act was [19]97.

BP: Yeah, I read something on the internet this morning--not in my car, before I came down! Yeah, I was very involved. I was Appropriations Chairman by then, and so it certainly would've involved money, so it came right through my hands. And I had Senator [Marc] Basnight involved with me, and so we were torn, I mean, we knew the impact that any kind of massive reform could have on both industries, and the moratorium had had some very negative, as well as positive, impacts on both industries. And so we were worried, and I can remember, I was very concerned about the idea around controlling the licenses. I have never understood how it's fair that if my daddy has it, my next-door neighbor's daddy can never get it because there's a limited number. And I never felt that was quite fair, and I can remember arguing about that. But again, the consensus legislation that was passed was something that none of us liked a whole lot, but everybody knew was better than nothing. So we all had losses, and we all had some wins, and we moved forward. And it seems to have worked a bit; it's not where it should be, from my perspective, and right now it just seems to be in a hiatus because nobody seems to care about it.

BGB: Well, I'll break in and, speaking of people who don't seem to care [LAUGHTER]!

BP: That's usually not your role, because you care deeply!

BGB: Well, no. one thing that's always struck me about you, Governor Perdue, is the level of empathy that you've exhibited toward the commercial fishing families. And you don't really see much of that anymore in, in the political arena. Not--and it was the same thing, of course, with Marc Basnight, but I just don't get a sense of that anymore? So I just wanted to ask you, do you think your empathy for these working families goes all the way back to your

background and your family background, as a coal mining family?

BP: It might've, Barbara. I would think you can't separate me from the fact that I grew up that way. But I think the big difference--and I'm not being self-serving or critical--I think the big difference now with the legislature is they are so busy. The Legislators are so busy and the issues are so complex and the squeaky wheel really does get the oil. And I wonder, if there were marches like there were around the issue today, and if there were associations that were as energized and organized around fisheries as there were when I was involved, if the passion wouldn't re-emerge. I can't ever think that it's the Legislator's fault, or the legislature's fault. You've got people who represent these areas who need--you know, I encourage my friends in Education, I'm a radical, I've always been a radical--I encourage my friends in Education to go into the Legislator's office and raise Cain. And shake it up. To take the child with the special needs, to take the technology that's from the 1930s, to really put it on the record that they're not doing their job. And so, if the fisheries community say that there's no interest, it's on them, not on the legislature. From my perspective. Of course, I'm not running for office now! Makes it easier!

BGB: No, no--.

BP: And I went! You know, I was there. And I think that there should be a hearing or two, or a convening or two, where y'all shame the Legislators from this area and make 'em go. Sports fishing as well as commercial.

BGB: M hm. So, that was such an interesting period in history, when the moratorium came about, the Fisheries Reform Act, and all those meeting and the early [19]90s was a time when you really, we all saw women step up and, you know, the women's auxiliaries as part of the North Carolina Fisheries Association. Can you speak a little bit about the role of women in

fisheries in particular, and your experience with women that you worked with?

BP: I was amazed--and not at all surprised--I don't know if you remember Twyla Nelson? But she was, became one of my dearest friends and actually worked for me in the public sector for lots of years because I saw her in action. That woman could get anything done. She would just nag you to death until you did it, and she did it with such spirit and such zest, and you had Karen [Willis Amspacher] and you and there were whole layers of women who weren't necessarily in the auxiliary, but who were so educated and so intelligent around the issue that there was such credibility. JoAnne Burkholder around water quality, 'cause she had the fish kills at the same time. And I knew enough to listen to the women's auxiliary. I can remember at one hearing, maybe it was the same Down East hearing, that one of the wives got up and spoke on behalf of the commercial fishing industry, and she told the stories as I tell them. I think people relate better to stories. She talked about what it was like to be the wife who watched her husband put on those boots and that slicker, that Mackintosh, and pack that lunch and say goodbye and know that he was going to be gone for three or four days, and it was a stormy night, because if he didn't go, and if he didn't catch, they weren't going to be able to pay their light bill. And you heard about a lifestyle that was really lived on a shoestring, but that was so at risk. And they could articulate it. You heard about the women who kept the books, who paid the bills, who made the money stretch. There were very few success stories, in terms of getting rich in the commercial industry. Very few. And you had even the upper echelons of income represented in those hearings, because without the real fishing community, even the folks who owned the big boats and the fish houses, couldn't exit, because you needed the commercial fishermen community to be in. so the women told the story, and they had the power, and they had the time. When there was a hearing in Raleigh, who do you think got in those cars or on that bus? And

they came. They would get up at two o'clock in the morning and get on that bus, and they'd come and, my heavens, were they passionate. And they didn't care to look at you and say, 'You might think you're somebody, but you are not.' And that was important to me. I liked 'em!

BGB: Yeah, that's wonderful! And I was telling Mary at lunch [laughs] about Twyla Nelson, and how--

BP: [Laughs] She's still a good friend! I email her all the time.

BGB: --I think that she was the first woman from the fishing community that was appointed to the Marine Fisheries Commission.

BP: Yes.

BGB: I think Joanne Burkholder was probably the first woman, period. I might be wrong.

BP: I don't remember the sequence, but there were few women

BGB: Yeah. But Twyla, she and I went to Raleigh for a hearing of some sort, and I was on the verge of getting on the Marine Fisheries Commission--

BP: Right.

BGB: --and so she brought me to your office, and I said something like, [CHEERFUL VOICE] 'I look forward to helping do something about the conflict between recreational and commercial fishermen!' And you leaned over and smiled, and you said to me, 'Naïve.'

[LAUGHTER] And I will never forget that, because you were right!

BP: I know I was right!

BGB: You were right!

BP: You were right, too, because you wanted to make a difference! You were try--I realize that I got above my raising, and so I'm sorry! Really, sorry!

BGB: No, no! I never forgot that, and I've thought about that often. You know, serving on

the Marine Fisheries Commission and that, just, persistent rift that, unfortunately, seems to only be getting worse.

BP: It does exist even worse today, I think, too.

BGB: It does. And, you know, these are folks that should be a natural ally, you know, really coming around water quality and abundant fisheries. But anyway.

BP: Right. But you do, there were women that made a huge difference, you being one of them. Don't ever shortchange any of these women's role, including the Smiths and other women. I mean, they were powerful, and they, very rightly, organized, and people like you became their spokespersons. But you weren't crowned to be, you just had the ability to articulate it. I think you were an incredible--you, as a group, were an incredible part of the movement forward. And I am worried about it today.

BGB: Yeah. Um, and there's major players like Janice Smith who, unfortunately, are no longer with us, and Jule Wheatly.

BP: I know, I know. That was a tragic loss. Jule and I argued as much as we agreed, but we had fun either way! It was always--and sometimes we'd do it over a beer! It was great fun, it was great fun.

BGB: Yeah, you can't say 'Jule Wheatly' without smiling. You had to know him, but he was the owner of the fish factory in Beaufort. He was a character.

BP: He was, he was. And you had Walter Davis, he was trying to shut down things, and Walter has died. So there's a lack of passion, with his passing, around some of the aesthetical issues that had to do with--he just didn't like the look of the nets in front of his beach house in Dare County. I mean it was, I used to tell him it was just a pitiful reason for wanting to shut down an industry, but you had people like that, and that kind of energy around fishing--again, I

would hope that it isn't because of a lack of passion or anger or organization from the folks who are involved in the industry. But there's some reason, there's some reason it is not even near--I'm not even sure--my mother used the analogy 'it's not on the front burner, Bev.' And this is, I'm not sure it's even in the kitchen anymore, you know, it's worrisome.

BGB: Yeah. Well there is talk right now, there is some rumblings from some of the folks in, I think, from the recreational sector, in wanting to revisit the Fisheries Reform Act.

BP: M hm.

BGB: So--and I'm not sure what that will look like, or what they intend, but if you had an opportunity to talk to some of these fresh-faced Legislators who have really no experience, what would you tell them, being someone who was right there on the front lines of the passage of this very important legislation?

BP: I found, Barbara, that--and no disrespect to the past--there aren't a lot of people who understand the importance of the history. And there are very few players who are in Raleigh or in Washington[, D.C.] today who were there in the [19]80s and '90s and early 2000s. and so I would believe that the only way to sell consensus or fairness for both commercial and sport is to reorganize and to start anew, start from the starting point, which is the existent--existence of the current law. And articulate the reasons that both the commercial and the sports sides are important, and tell the story once again of those commercial families. And tell the story once again of the import of the sport fishing industry on our economy. And find some consensus. I don't think you can re-legislate the past, but I think you can re-articulate the purpose.

BGB: This is just a little bit of an aside, but what's your favorite seafood?

BP: Oh my gosh, there is no favorite seafood. My husband asked me yesterday, 'cause he knows that I was coming home. The only thing I eat anymore is basically seafood, and so

whatever it is--we got a fish market here who can get sea bass and, this time of year, I love a sea bass. Although somebody broke my bubble and said there was really no such thing as sea bass, that I'm just eating something they caught and that they're calling it sea bass!

BGB: There's black sea bass! There's black sea bass!

BP: [Laughs] I know, I know. But sometimes they'd say there's red sea bass or yellow sea bass. But I love anything; if you can give me a good scallop, grilled, a good piece of lobster? Oh my gosh, I love it all. And I'm a fisherwoman, a little bit.

BGB: Yeah?

BP: My husband and I were out west and I caught a much bigger salmon than he did! [LAUGHTER] I have that picture framed! So yeah, there's nothing better than fresh seafood from the North Carolina coast, and people sometimes don't realize what they're really missing if they don't ask for fresh North Carolina seafood.

BGB: I agree. So, the Fisheries Reform Act aside, are there any other fisheries issue that come to mind that you were involved with? What comes to my mind would be, well, I know you were, you were instrumental in creating the Clean Water Trust Fund, right?

BP: Right, oh yeah, you're talking about back then?

BGB: A larger picture.

BP: Yeah, oh yeah, the Clean Water Trust Fund, the money set aside for the acquisition of some of the property with the State Parks Fund, the Wildlife Fund. The empowerment of the Wildlife Commission to have more ramps and more facilities for putting your boats in.

BGB: The Waterfront Access Initiative.

BP: Uh huh. We, Marc [Basnight] and I both really believed in that, and I'm troubled now to see the passion around that issue declining. I have friends who are on the opposite side, who

think that there is no purpose, and I don't have a beach house, I don't have access to the beach unless there's a public access, and I think there're millions of people in North Carolina who have that same concern that I have. And I don't think the owner of the house owns the beachfront, and I've offered to testify at the hearing about it all, it makes me mad to think that people want to limit who can use our precious coast and who can use the boat ramps. So yeah, those kind of things. But in my private life now, I have had very little involvement because there's been very little way that I could get involved until this. And when you all offered me the opportunity to come, I cleared my schedule to come. This is important work you're doing, and I think it's very important for, especially the children of North Carolina from all over the state and perhaps all over the country, to understand coastal issues and to understand that a critical way of life could be very much at risk if we allow one industry to gobble up the other. There has to be room for both, and it has to be very well-articulated and planned. And you all can do that.

BGB: Yeah, and I think that there are some things now on the radar that weren't necessarily on the radar twenty years ago: climate change and sea level rise and other issues like that. Um, looking at the big picture and the health of our fisheries resources and coastal communities, what do you think the future is, going forward, for North Carolina fisheries?

BP: If I had my way--and again, it's so much less [pause] dangerous, if you use the word correctly, to speak very directly when you're not in public service. But even back then, I would very likely say the same thing because I'm passionate about it. I think that the coast itself is under attack. If you can remember my history around coastal development, I was always one to say it had to be planned, it had to be thoughtful, and it had to consider the future for our children. I think the, the opportunities that there are for overbuilding and overdevelopment are dangerous for the future of our coast. I think the climate change issue is upon us and we have leaders in this

state who ignore the realities and, in this country, who act like it's something parroted down from Mars and that it doesn't exist. And those things are very troublesome. This stuff can't be put into the box, back into the box, quietly. And the world's at risk and food and water--my grandfather, who was a coal miner as well, probably fifty, sixty years ago, before he died, told our whole family that the third World War would be fought around water rights. He was talking about simple drinking water rights! And that becomes more and more a reality, the older I get. Maybe I'm just an old woman, Barbara, parroting what my grandmother said: 'Well it's not the way it was back in my day!'

BGB: I don't think so.

BP: Maybe I'm that way. But I am concerned that, still, in North Carolina, we have a real reluctance--perhaps the right word is 'resistance'--to local planning and to zoning and to making land use decisions that empower the next generation.

BGB: Absolutely.

BP: So we're done.

[LAUGHTER]

BGB: My admiration for you just always deepens every time I encounter you or talk to you.

BP: Thank you, you're very nice.

BGB: Really appreciate your taking the time. Do you have any more questions that came to mind, Mary?

MW: Um, no--well, a little bit. I have one comment that I wrote down. You mentioned that you attended some of the hearings, the public hearings, and you said that you never once were afraid or felt threatened at the hearings, which is interesting because that's not what I've

heard from many other people that I've spoken with about this! So I was wondering if maybe you had a story or just a little bit more to say about how those public hearings went.

BP: I'm a coal miner's daughter; I grew up in a rough-and-tumble kind of community, and a good fistfight never sets me back. When somebody pulls out a gun, sometimes I would get nervous! But I never saw any threats, any physical, violent threats. I saw some people who would have fought, had there not been perhaps authority, whether it was local authorities or a policeman there. The public hearings that the state held were fairly well-controlled. I know there were different kinds of results at some of the [Marine Fisheries] Commission meetings; I have heard stories--Bob Lucas is still a great friend of mine, and I've heard stories about some of those hearings. And obviously, the Commission members, when I was Governor, tell some stories about very heated hearings. But I wasn't there, so I don't know how the realities were portrayed by my friends who were telling them [chuckles] but again, in my time, in the several that I attended on the coast, both as a Legislator and, I think, as Lieutenant Governor, I was never physically afraid. Where I was physically afraid, one day in the Senate offices, I was there late, there were angry people, there were tractors and pig wagons moving all around the Legislature, and I was really concerned that, because I had been such a part of the opposition, I was concerned that somebody would hit me or attack me. Not enough to call the police, I was never that much of a coward [laughs] I could always fight my own! I'm a bad girl!

BGB: Yeah, Pricey Harrison has really made some inroads with the hog farm issue, hasn't she?

BP: She's done--really, she's done really well on articulating the whole concept of global warming and environmental urgency. There is an urgency. And that urgency then reflects deeply on the outcome of the fishing industry. I congratulate y'all on this project; I'm delighted about

the grant. And whoever the grantee is, you should up the money!

[LAUGHTER]

BGB: That will be our leading quote!

MW: Yeah, we'll just put that on a loop!

BP: Thank you, ladies!

BGB: Thank you, Governor Perdue. And I neglected to say on tape that we are in New Bern at the North Carolina History Center that you were instrumental in having, you know, this beautiful place actually become a reality. And they're been wonderful and helpful, so we appreciate that, as well.

BP: That's good news. This belongs to the people of North Carolina, not to the people of New Bern! So we love the fact that you are here today using it. Thank you all for coming and thank you for the work you're doing and tell all of my friends in both industries 'Hello!' Some of my enemies, too! I got a slew of enemies, too!

[LAUGHTER]

BGB: We will do that!

[MICROPHONE INTERFERENCE]

BP: Thank you ladies, have a great day.

BGB: Thank you.

BP: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]