

February 23, 2011

To: Alaska Local Boundary Commission Staff

I have heard of Dillingham's proposal to annex the Nushagak District so they can impose a tax on the fish that are caught there in order to pay for infrastructure cost. I am strongly opposed to this action for the following reasons:

1. The majority of the fisherman, and the fish caught, in the Nushagak district store their boats in Naknek and King Salmon, where we already pay substantial property and other taxes.
2. What Dillingham wants seems unnecessary. For example, Naknek has the majority of boats in the Bay stored there, yet it does not have a public dock for boats to tie up to unless you count the barge bulkhead. Many people go into the water and stay there for the season knowing they will never come out until the end. Or even tie up. If going dry is necessary, you can run your boat onto the beach. It sounds like Dillingham wants to tax many fishermen who do not use their infrastructure to pay for a local convenience.
3. I do not, and most boats who fish in the Nushagak District do not, go to Dillingham for services. So not only do we not store our boats there, we do not even visit there. The majority of boats stay off of Clark's Point and Queen's Slough, almost 10 miles away from Dillingham.

This proposal is an attempt to pay for a local "want" by disguising it as a district "need". The fact is that the majority of Nushagak District fishermen do not store their boats in Dillingham or even go to Dillingham. The fishermen that Dillingham are targeting already pay substantial taxes in the Bristol Bay Borough. Dillingham's need for funds should be fixed directly onto those would benefit, perhaps through increased fees of Dillingham harbor users and those who haul out their boats in Dillingham.

Please do NOT support this proposal.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tom Henshaw

Bristol Bay drift permit and vessel owner since 1996