

**From:** [Jeff & Miriam Rasco](#)  
**To:** [Commission, Boundary \(CED sponsored\)](#)  
**Cc:** [cityclerk@dillinghamak.us](mailto:cityclerk@dillinghamak.us)  
**Subject:** City of Dillingham Petition for Annexation  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 5:42:16 PM

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February 24, 2016

Local Boundary Commission  
550 W Seventh Avenue, Suite 1640  
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I am a lifelong fisherman in the Ekuk statistical area of the Nusagak district of Bristol Bay. The summer of 2015 was my 35<sup>th</sup> season fishing my setnet site at Ekuk and my 50<sup>th</sup> summer on the beach.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Annexation of the Nushagak Commercial Salmon District waters and Wood River Sockeye Special Harvest area waters, together consisting of approximately 396 square miles of water and 3 square miles of land (small islands) to the City of Dillingham. The purpose of the annexation is to impose a tax on fish taken from the waters of the Nushagak district. The city states that “The reason for the proposed boundary change is to more fairly distribute the costs for providing, operating, and maintaining the public facilities and services supporting commercial fishing in the Nushagak Bay.” As a fisherman on the Ekuk Beach I, along with other Ekuk fishers, do not benefit from the facilities and services outlined in the proposal and we should not be required to pay a tax for services that we do not receive.

Ekuk is located 15 miles South West of Dillingham. There are no roads connecting Dillingham to Ekuk. Every fish that I catch on the Ekuk beach is sold to Ekuk Fisheries, a fish processing plant located in Ekuk. Ekuk is a unique fishery in that we do not use boats or skiffs to harvest the fish. We use trucks to move our nets in and out of the water and deliver our fish to Ekuk Fisheries.

The City states that “Commercial fishermen use the City-maintained harbor, docks, boat ramps, parking areas, restrooms, bathhouse, and benefit from trash-hauling, street maintenance, etc. Fishermen harvesting in the Nushagak district use the Dillingham harbor to moor vessels, between openings, haul their vessels in and out for servicing and repair, and to get fresh water or ice.” Ekuk fishers do not use boats to harvest fish. I do not own a boat, nor

have I ever owned a boat and I do not have access to these facilities.

Under the heading of Public Safety (police, fire, EMS), the City states that “Ten percent of 2009’s total calls for service (Dillingham city dispatch) are from the fishery-related areas including the boat harbor, Wood River boat launch, city dock or processing plants.” Since I am fishing in Ekuk, I am not in Dillingham adding to the cost for these services.

The City states that “The Dillingham Police Department was part of a mutual response with Alaska State Troopers on 37 occasions between May 2012 and April 2013 in the annexed waterways or the areas bordering the waterways (Ekuk, Clark’s Point, Igushik, Wood River lands).” I have spoken to several other Ekuk fishers and neither they nor myself can ever recall seeing a Dillingham Police Officer as part of a mutual response with the Alaska State Troopers, or otherwise, in Ekuk.

The City states that “The City provides drinking water and public sewer service to the Peter Pan processing plant.” While I can understand that this requires having infrastructure that is sized to accommodate the seasonal influx of residents, I fish in Ekuk and deliver fish to Ekuk Fisheries. Ekuk Fisheries does not rely on the City to provide water or sewer.

The City states that “Other municipalities in this part of Alaska, which are likewise fiscally dependent on fisheries revenue also include adjacent commercial fishing district waters within their corporate boundaries.” The City gives examples of the City of Egigik, the City of Pilot Point, the City of St. Paul and the City of Togiak. These Cities do not include unique and separate fishing villages, with their own processing facilities, in their corporate boundaries. Ekuk is unique to Dillingham because we do not rely on Dillingham like the Dillingham boat fishers do.

The City could make the argument that Dillingham is a benefit to Ekuk fishers because we can order groceries or the occasional truck part and we utilize the airport. That would be like saying that Dillingham residents should pay a tax to Anchorage because Anchorage merchants and transportation services are a benefit to Dillingham. I point out that Togiak fishermen utilize Dillingham in much the same way that Ekuk fishermen do, using the airport, purchasing groceries and parts, and the City is not seeking to annex the Togiak fishing district. Ekuk is a unique and separate area from Dillingham with a local fish processing facility. Ekuk and Dillingham happen to be located along the shore of the same fishing district, however, we do not rely on the services the City has described in their proposal. We do not use boats to harvest fish and therefore do not utilize the Dillingham boat harbor and the other services the city provides. Ekuk fishers should not be required to pay a tax for services we do not receive and I ask that you deny this Petition as it is written.

Respectfully,

Jeff Rasco