

I am in favor of the incorporation of the city of Nikiski. To be heard, to have a voice, that is the heart of the matter.

Many of us have had the unpleasant experience in our personal lives of having those over us in a position of power or authority render us voiceless. Our testimony, opinions, perspective, views or desires are of no consequence and are ignored. I and those very close to me have experienced this, the repercussions of which have been life-altering. History is replete with examples, both near and distant: our founding fathers under the tyranny of Great Britain, the innocent in courts of law, those under oppressive communistic or totalitarian regimes or even the take-from-the-rich-and-give-to-the-poor socialism.

As it stands now, Nikiski has little voice. We are not a legal entity and have minimal say in the issues that impact our future. One out of nine on the Borough Assembly is not true representation for the people of our community. We are different from other communities on the Peninsula and from the Borough at large. We have differing needs that are best understood and addressed by the people who live here.

One of the factors that makes Nikiski unique is the major presence of the petroleum industry. No other community is as significantly impacted as is Nikiski by this. This industry daily impacts our lives in numerous tangible and intangible ways: the air we breathe, water we drink and soil in which we grow our gardens; the land on which we live, work and play and the homes in which we live; our health and safety; our roads and traffic; resources, both natural and fiscal. Most everywhere we drive in the state is a panorama of grandiose beauty. Not so the drive out the North Road of Nikiski. Except for Redoubt and Spur rising above the scape and glimpses of Cook Inlet, the drive is an aesthetic eyesore. Warehouse after warehouse and their yards of equipment line the road along with abandoned, dilapidated buildings from the 1960-70's industrial boom. The smell of off-gassing through the refinery area is sickening. Helicopters beat the air with their disruptive noise. The continual hauling of heavy equipment wears and damages our roads. Drill rigs are regularly parked and stored right in the middle of Nikiski without a blink from our community, while Homer was anxious to get rid of the Endeavor rig from their deep water dock after just three weeks. Yet, this is the industry that we embrace because it is vital to our economy, providing incomes for our families. We thrill at the prospect of increased industry; it is job security for the current and future generations to continue to live in the Alaska we love so much. Since the industry resides in Nikiski and we are impacted by it so extensively, we must have a legal voice in matters regarding it.

The impact of the state LNG project on our community would be immense. The Municipal Gas Project Review Board was formed to evaluate the effects and issues that will arise from the development of the state's natural gas. The closest Nikiski got to being represented was the appointment of the KPB mayor or his designee. Has Nikiski been invited to participate at any level? Also, as individual citizens, my husband and I had some concerns and ideas regarding the treatment of the land and homes by the LNG during the acquisition process. Although we expressed some of these thoughts to the LNG public relations department, it was a fruitless effort, which would have had greater import represented by a city entity. The LNG plant may be in our back yard one day, yet Nikiski is not an entity with a recognized or legal voice.

Historically, Nikiski's voice was disregarded also. In the 1970's, Nikiski repeatedly requested a swimming pool. Although pools were built in Seldovia and Homer with peninsula-wide tax payer funds, Nikiski's

requests were ignored. So, we voted to tax ourselves and build our own pool, all the while paying for other pools of the peninsula with borough levied taxes.

In 1991, the KPB enacted ordinance 91-18, which repealed the 1982 voter approved ordinance 81-63 that established four road service areas and consolidated them into one KPB area-wide road service with a mayor appointed board. Although this was enacted without voter approval, Nikiski did not desire the consolidation. It removed road service from local control by a locally elected board. Legal action was brought against KPB by a Nikiski citizen. However, the court determined that no voter approval is necessary for the consolidation or to alter the administration of an existing service area. This decision presents a great concern that the KPB will continue in this direction toward the centralization of our other service areas (fire, rec, senior), grabbing with them our assets which were paid for by our local taxes. Incorporating as the city of Nikiski according to the petition, will resolve this clear and present danger.

While more examples could be cited, these are just a few that demonstrate the need for Nikiski to have its own voice through incorporation. I am a proponent of small, low-taxing, local government wherein the voices of the people matter. The Alaska State Constitution states that the purpose of Article X is "...to provide for maximum local self-government..." Incorporating as a home rule city, utilizing the proven Public/Private Partnership (PPP) model of Sandy Springs, Georgia, accords us this ability. Other KPB communities have incorporated to ensure maximum local self-government and voice. It is time for Nikiski to do the same.

Thank you, LBC, for the opportunity to be heard through the public comment period of the incorporation process.

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