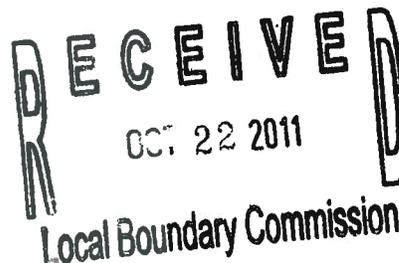


**Commission, Boundary (CED sponsored)**

**From:** Thea [greenvik@aptalaska.net]  
**To:** Commission, Boundary (CED sponsored)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Public Comment  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Sat 10/22/2011 6:05 PM



To the LBC Regarding Petersburg Borough Formation

Hello.

I am a 30+ year resident of Green Rocks, Kupreanof Island. I think it's fair to say that I have been "living the dream" many people have had over the years: that of being an independent, relatively self-sufficient homeowner on a piece of wild Alaska. My husband and I chose to not live in town because we desired freedom from crowding together and the rules and regulations that support that lifestyle. We provide our own essential services, don't ask permission to make improvements, and no one else has a claim on our piece of the dream.

We are not on a road system or an electric grid. Because we commute by small boat we are ruled by tide, weather, and darkness. We're part of a roadless community of people who get along, help each other, socialize together, and oppose the creation of this borough.

I submit that the petition does not meet the standards necessary for borough formation.

The population is not integrated and does not share common interests. Roadless and town folks have few social and cultural ties, and town folks have very little understanding of our day-to-day realities. Our interests and philosophies are very different, as evidenced in the recent informational meetings conducted by Brent Williams of LBC staff. Compare the two meetings -- can you find any similarities?? Not many. We do contribute a lot to the Petersburg economy in sales tax, but they want more from us. They wish to control us and hold our land hostage. This is unacceptable to me.

Our economic principles are miles apart. Most roadless citizens are retired or commercial fishermen; most depend on subsistence and barter; most aren't in debt up to their ears, but pay as they go. The City of Petersburg is cash-driven and has an out-of-control spending habit. They are hoping that the increased tax base and municipal entitlement lands will bail them out of their financial troubles. "Free money" has always interested Petersburg officials; little thought is expended on how their extravagant projects will be maintained.

The transition budget in the petition reads like a fairy-tale -- there aren't many realistic estimates of the costs involved in forming a borough. Mapping, assessment of property values, even determining who owns what and where to send the tax bill is woefully underfunded. Surely it will take many more man-hours and perhaps more employees to get the job done. And nothing is budgeted for a boat to access the areas off the road system. You can bet they'll need a nice one with all the newest bells and whistles. And what about the wages for the boat's operator? Another new employee? Where's maintenance for the boat in the budget? They'll probably need to budget a lot more for legal council, too.

The standard of geographical boundaries is not met. The proposed boundaries are arbitrary and seem to be driven by an inflated notion of manifest destiny. Kupreanof Island is divided roughly in half, excluding the City of Kake. I believe this was done because borough proponents knew they would never get the required signatures on the petition if Kake was included. Kake doesn't want this borough and neither does the rest of Kupreanof Island. A more logical boundary would exclude Kupreanof altogether by running down the middle of Wrangell Narrows. Even better? No organized borough at all.

The northern boundary is a blatant land-grab. I'm sure the City and Borough of Juneau will fill you in on that...

The transportation standard is not met. There is no possible way at this time to have an integrated government. Due to weather, distance, and darkness the roadless citizens would not be able to participate in the many meetings and hearings involved in government. We would not have meaningful representation. Communications are not good enough to even connect some of us to town, much less tele-conference. If we're not represented, we should not be taxed. If we can't participate, leave us alone.

In my opinion, the law's intent is for boroughs to provide essential services in a cost-effective way to all its citizens. The petition states there is no intention of providing any services to outlying areas except taxation, planning and zoning, and education. What a deal! I'm not sure how the education will be provided to outlying areas -- school-boat to Hobart Bay? Duncan Canal?

In closing, I would like to speak of shady practices involved in the process of gaining signatures to move the petition forward, and also in influencing public opinion.

To convince people to sign the petition, lies were told over and over. One of the biggest lies: all of the 4 mils the outlying areas would pay in borough taxes will go directly to the schools. A self-appointed cheerleader went door to door telling this untruth and people believed him and signed the petition. The city included an "information" sheet in the utility bills that contained this misinformation. Several public "education" pieces in the Pilot reinforced this message. And people believe it. No one wants to be seen as being against the schools.

Do these town fathers know they're not telling the truth? They should read their own charter which clearly states that the 4 mils will go into the operating budget (along with everyone else's taxes) and of THAT money 4% will be allocated to the schools. Quite a significant difference, I would say. The 4 mils all to the schools myth was published several times in the Petersburg Pilot as fact, most recently on Oct. 20, 2011. They're either lying or ignorant -- neither of which inspires confidence in their leadership.

I heard a first-hand account of how a (then) city council member used alcohol to bribe a citizen to sign the petition. I have had a belly-full of epithets like "free-loader", "just want a free ride", and "pull your own weight". I have heard of thinly-veiled threats against individuals who oppose the borough, especially those with city jobs. I have read too many articles and editorials in the Pilot that portray us as shirkers, ingrates, and thugs. The editor even said in print that if we didn't like borough formation, we should pull up stakes and leave. Is it any wonder that I wish to be excluded from their sphere of influence?

I'm too old to pull up stakes and start over. I'll stand and fight.

I urge you to deny the Petersburg Borough petition. Thank you for considering my view.

Respectfully,

Althea M. Dybvik  
Green Rocks  
Kupreanof Is., AK 99833-1673