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Commission, Boundary (CED sponsored)

From: Ken Howard [khowardak@aol.com] **Sent:** Sun 10/23/2011 10:54 AM
To: Commission, Boundary (CED sponsored); Williams, Brent R (CED)
Cc:
Subject: Comments on Proposed Petersburg Borough Petition
Attachments:  [LBC.doc\(58KB\)](#)

Thank you for considering my comments. I mailed a hard copy Saturday 10/22/11. Please let me know that you received this email with (4 pages) attached comments. Laura

R E C E I V E D
OCT 23 2011
Local Boundary Commission

Local Boundary Commission
Alaska Dept. of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
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Anchorage, Ak. 99501-3510
brent.williams@alaska.gov

Comment with regards to the Proposed Petersburg Borough by the City of Petersburg

Laura J. Howard
PO Box 2067
Petersburg, Ak. 99833

Residence: Lot 32 block 2 ASLS 81-8

To the Board,

Please consider my comments with regards to the Proposed Petersburg Borough Petition.

I live on Kupreanof Island along Wrangell Narrows approximately 15 miles south of the City of Petersburg. My home is currently considered remote property and part of the Unincorporated Borough. I abide by the State laws and respect this form of government.

The communications media and land, water , and air transportation facilities throughout the proposed borough allow for the level of communications and exchange necessary to develop an integrated borough government as required by AS 29.05.31 (a)(4) and 3 AAC 110.045(c) and also 3 AAC 100.045 (d)

In our area some people have cell phone service but at best have service intermittently. Even with additional antennas, boosters, etc. often folks have to roam the beach or waterway to find service which may be interrupted at any time. Some have incorporated internet service but weather interferes with that also. We use VHF but it also has range restrictions. A personal visit is the only sure fire communication in our area.

There is no scheduled public transportation service for our area. Our transportation is via personal skiff or in some cases a covered boat in order to access the road system (like that on Mitkof Island) where some of us have vehicles. The use of this transportation is dictated by light, tide and, weather.

Participation in borough government would be difficult and expensive and at times of inclement weather, impossible for remote areas such as ours. To participate would mean to stay in town at least overnight, eat out and hope to make it back home.

There is a charter float service based in Petersburg's service area 1. This service would also be restricted by weather, light, tide and, cost, (very expensive). At best it would require booking of two round trips (PSG to our area and next day reverse trip, weather permitting) to participate in borough government.

The social, cultural, and economic characteristics and activities of the people in the proposed borough are interrelated and integrated as required by AS 29.05.31 (a)(l) and 3 AAC 110.045 (a)

In my area we are predominately retired folks. We live on fixed incomes supplemented by savings. Some of our neighbors rely primarily on their PFD for income. Most fish, hunt, garden, process and can, and rely on foods supplied by the land.

Our “rural character” means we respond to emergencies close by, engage in work parties, assist in elderly and infirmed needs, share our help, knowledge and, services we have to offer. We skiff / car pool, shop for neighbors who cannot for themselves, share our homes for community meetings.

Like many in our area my husband and I freighted (and still do) all of our building materials, fuel, food with our own boat. We built our shop / apartment, greenhouse and covered garden, dock, ramp, float, solar power system, hydro power system, back up generator system, water catchment and potable water system with additional water storage for fire protection because we chose our independent life style. We obtained needed permits, and satisfied all requirements from the State, DNR, Army Corp of Engineers, Dept of Fish and Game, DEC, US Coast Guard, FERC and many more. Living primarily off the land within our own means distances us from those who have chosen city life.

Petersburg, the proposed service area 1, has their road system (some of which is lighted), land line as well as cell communications, police, fire and medical response, taxi service, charitable organizations to assist those in need, low income housing. They provide some residents with water, power, emergency power backup, sewer, garbage and recycle pickup. Regularly scheduled transportation by air and sea is readily available, there are port services, processing services as well as stores that provide hardware, fishing supplies, foods. Urban life includes immediate access to most of their needs be it financial, economic, cultural, social, and media communicatons, The city has a pool, library (newly voted new library in the works), schools, a medical center, hospital, old folks home and more.

Employment in service area 1 is great. It consists of fishing fleet, seafood processors, the City of Petersburg, and the State of Alaska, the Port, Coast Guard, the School District, Hospital, Police Dept, and Federal Jobs. as well as privately owned businesses. Many of these employment opportunities and incomes include retirement and health plans.

We are not interrelated and integrated as required by AS 29.05.31 (a)(l) and 3 AAC 100.045 (a).

Alaska Marine Highway, Alaska Airlines are currently located within the proposed service area 1 and Alaska Marine Lines isn't far away. We do use and pay for their services. We do receive medical and dental services within this area and we pay for these. We shop, repair, process, and pay for these services. We pay sales tax on these purchases. We recycle at our own expense and pay for services provided when we use the city dump. We use the library but do not pay for their service. We would happily pay an "out of area" user fee for their service.

NOTE1. In the Proposed Petersburg Borough Petition it states, "Contemporary and Historical Economic Connections / Commercial Fishing"

The fishing information in this section does not explain that the proposed area is also fished by commercial fleets with home ports in Washington State and other Alaska ports. Fishermen (no matter where their home port) fish where ever they're permitted. Fishing grounds can encompass waters bordering Canada to the Aleutians. Boats are often repaired or serviced in Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka etc. where ever their need. Product is often sold to the port nearest their fishing grounds or to the port that pays a higher price. Goods and supplies are purchased similarly.

To base a borough boundary on historical fishing grounds (and for that matter on hunting or touring, recreating, etc) seems a stretch financially for the borough when it is unnecessary. Use of these areas for these activities will not change incorporated or not, however incorporation these areas carries with it responsibilities for services.

NOTE2. In the Proposed Petersburg Borough Petition, page 67, it states "Existing Reliance on Petersburg's Infrastructure and Services"

In an effort to substantiate this statement the City provided documentation for emergency services requested and responded to beyond the current city limits. What is not documented is those services are often in response to non-resident, vacationing, transients, fishing vessels, pleasure craft often from within and out of State. Documentation of these calls is irrelevant and not representative of local demand.

It does document the need for these services and should initiate a plan for monetary compensation by the recipient of that service not the property owner in the vicinity i.e. proposed borough lands.

I believe the current petition information in Notes 1 and 2 do not meet the criteria for compliance with AS 29.05.31 (a)(l) and 3 AAC 110.045 (a).

The proposed borough will have the ability to extend services to the area proposed for incorporation in a practical and effective manner as required by 3AAC 100.900.

The services that extend to areas outside of service area one are education, taxation of property and sales, regulation, planning and zoning. They are defined as mandatory under area wide home rule.

It seems to me that by incorporating an area with low population, several veterans and elderly may at best provide limited economic contribution. Incorporation of such a large volume of remote area may compromise extended services.

How can area wide education be provided? Does the current Petersburg School district aid support for home schooled children? There is no transportation for children outside of the road system. To my knowledge there is no system in place to incorporate educational needs outside of the area serviced by the road system. Provisions beyond the current area served need to be addressed, initiated and resolved prior to any borough consideration.

In conclusion I believe the current proposed petition is flawed. As proposed this petition fails to meet the standards put forth in Article 1 Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska, **“The proposed incorporation promotes equal rights, opportunities, protection and, obligations among all Alaskans in accordance with Article I, sec. 1 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska**

The proposed petition fails to meet AS 29.05.31 (a) (4), 3 AAC 110.045 (d), 3 AAC 110.045 (c), AS 29.05.31 (a) (1), 3 AAC 110.045 (a) and 3AAC 100.900.

I believe taxation for nothing is wrong, taxation on services that I have provided myself is wrong, taxation for infrastructure that I do not need or use is wrong.

I do believe in supporting education for our young people, they are our future. My husband and I have in the past, and are willing to in the future, contribute financially. I would request that funds be in the form of contributions, not taxation and deposited directly to the school, not lumped into the city’s general fund.

It troubles me that the City of Petersburg spends beyond their means, charges full mill rates on some folks in their area service 1, who do not receive full services even basic service like sewer and water for example. A city that governs incorporating those ethics should not be expanded upon.

I believe the financial and economic stability of the City of Petersburg should be stabilized prior to any additional incorporation be it through a borough or other means.

I respectfully request the Local Boundary Commission deny the current proposed Petersburg petition for Borough formation. I also request to remain in the Unincorporated Borough.

Thank you,

Laura Howard
10/21/2011 mailed priority and emailed