

**From:** lana parker [blacktaildeer@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 15, 2011 3:32 PM  
**To:** Commission, Boundary (CED sponsored)  
**Subject:** Petersburg Borough Petition- comments

**To those who serve at the Alaska Local Boundary Commission,**

I am writing to express my objections to the proposed Petersburg Borough Petition as they apply to your guidelines for formation. Accordingly I have briefly addressed each item under the appropriate heading.

**Relationship of interests:** Residents inside the city limits of Petersburg and those living outside the city limits have fairly strong differences in interests. Petersburg has an ongoing debt problem with a number of bonds outstanding and several new bonds soon to be considered (Library, Scow Bay Property purchase, Public Works building repair/replacement). Notwithstanding isolating preexisting bonds to service area 1, Petersburg shows an appetite for debt that does not reflect the shared values of those living outside the city limits. Petersburg City puts a high priority on over-developing a declining municipality. Residents outside tend to live within their means. Only one real association exists (that being Kupreanof city) outside city boundaries and others prosper or fail on their own merits.

Petersburg has expressed within their borough petition an objection to providing any services to outside areas near or far (police and fire activities were specifically mentioned in the petition stating In areas outside the current City of Petersburg services will continue to be as currently provided and will only be extended or expanded by development of new service areas., and The Petersburg Borough Volunteer Fire and EMS Departments will not be able to mount an emergency response in a timely manner on an area wide basis.pg. 51) This notwithstanding specific transitional funding provided for the purposes.

In short, residents within the boundaries of the proposed borough, residing outside current Petersburg city limits, are far better served by the Unorganized Borough of Alaska with whom they share a commonality of economic reality, population, logistical travel and communication difficulties, culture, and social similarities.

**Population:** Petersburg city is already scarcely large enough to sustain itself (as illustrated by mounting debts). Adding more area and more scope to their authority will only make the situation worse. This area is very sparsely populated and is best represented by the existing Unorganized Borough of Alaska.

**Resources:** The proposed borough charter anticipates little functionality outside the existing city boundaries besides a property tax base and land selection to draw from. The taxable property outside current city boundaries is largely unsalable now (as evidenced by the UALand sales at Crystal Mountain View, Mountain Point, 13 mile on the Narrows, and other long-time ongoing property listings etc).

Many who live outside Petersburg city limits live a much different subsistence lifestyle than city residents and are not prepared to support the functions of borough government; further they have little interest in doing so as evidenced by the previous failure of the petition and timeframe necessary to get the scanty signatures needed to move the petition forward. Which petition process is inherently flawed and does not reflect our nations model of government which both represents all equitably and yet protects fairly, the minority from the majority. The states process requires only a token representation (15% of last elections voters) to enable the larger population to assert its will on the minority. Were this model followed nationally Alaska would suffer horribly in the national legislature and certainly not receive all of the federal funding that is ongoing.

**Boundaries:** The proposed borough boundaries encroach upon neighboring communities traditional areas of recreation and economic interest such as Hobart Bay to the North (as recently contested by Juneau representatives and as owned by Juneaus Goldbelt ) and many areas of Kupreanof Island to the West (as

recently contested by Kake tribal). The boundary does not conform to natural geography on a regional scale but arbitrarily cuts off Kake for fear of petition failure, in including a community that shares far more commonality with Petersburg than the scattered isolated residents outside of the existing city boundaries (notwithstanding proposed ties for power and road building to Kake).

A borough which included Kake would far better reflect the optimum boundary, regardless of the state model, but even that would be inferior to (and less desirable from a state perspective), one that encompassed the current Wrangell borough as well as Petersburg and Kake; that boundary (and very likely only that boundary) would be able to sustain the additional layer of government proposed by borough petition.

**Best interests of state:** Given the propensity of Petersburg city to pass bond proposals and the full slate of anticipated bond issuance, the state should be wary of extending the scope of authority granted to the governing body which will in all likelihood remain very much the same as its current constitution.

**Conclusions:** The enmity displayed throughout the borough formation process well illustrates the firm differences between those who reside within the city limits of Petersburg and those outside (including Kupreanof city). There needs to be a moderating influence only achieved by a greater population, more diverse than that proposed. Petersburg mayor Al Dwyer upon the formation of the borough formation committee stated the people who are going to be on this committee are people who are for formation of the borough, because they're going to be explaining or giving answers to criticisms and concerns of the people who are, who have a, who are against the borough. (Audio held by KFSK and myself) This is a clear violation of the open meetings act as well as clear evidence that the city was only willing to consider one option in borough formation. Other opinions were not sought nor allowed to be heard. Consequently the borough proposal is an ill conceived attempt by a declining municipality to remain relevant in an area where the natural resources are becoming ever less likely to be profitably harvested. The era of mass harvests of fish, timber, and gold are over here and tourism is never going to be the panacea some have hoped. The manifest destiny medicine show is over here; we should be taking the big tent down, and leaving only what's sustainable. Unlike Field of Dreams, if we build it, they will not come begging to foot the bill. I implore you to utilize the means at your disposal to stop this petition from going forward on the basis of its inherent flaws (mentioned above) if not on the basis of sound American governance.

What this region needs is far less bickering and far more cooperation between municipalities and independent residents. This would best be facilitated by enlarging the Wrangell Borough to include Petersburg and Kake. Small independent populations don't benefit themselves nor the state by forming a borough, they become a city by another name, but when larger cohesive regions form a borough, their combined voice loses the shrill whiny quality too often heard from soloists as these remote regions assume the dignity and stature only found in the accumulation of voices that have so much in common as to resemble familial harmony.

Sincerely,

Jeremy L Parker and Family

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