

Local Boundary Commission

February 12, 2024, 2024

Comments of City of Hoonah Petition for Home Rule Borough;

Submitted by Karen Polley and Michael Murphy

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Juneau, Alaska 99801

The Petition by the City of Hoonah for Incorporation of the Xunna Borough as a Home Rule Borough should be modified or rejected in accordance to the standards set forth in Alaska Statute 29 and the associated 3AAC 110.

1. The population is less than 1,000 residents. The proposal specifically excludes the City of Gustavus with a population of nearly 700. At the same time it seeks to include the potential revenue source for funding for the City of Gustavus which has as its basic economic base tourism and Glacier Bay National Park.
2. The taxation proposal infringes on the ability of the surrounding communities to support their local schools. The Xunna Borough petition requests a seasonal areawide sales tax. It has not clearly stated why a local property tax is not supporting their schools or what the need is. The State of Alaska is the major revenue source for school funding and local contribution if limited by the State. The surrounding communities have property and sales taxes to help support their schools. Xunna would be taxing the economic activity of the region and taking ownership of ocean and land generated resources which belong to the State of Alaska.
3. The boundaries proposed by the petition greatly exceed the necessary territory to support their economic enterprises, tourism, fishing, and timber. No viable services are proposed. A more likely boundary to the Northwest would be Adolphus to Pleasant Island, the Ridge of the mountains to the West and Freshwater Bay to the Southeast. Lisianski Inlet supports Pelican and Glacier Bay Supports Gustavus, Cross Sound and Icy Straits should remain in the public domain of State Inland Waters as all of the communities use this region for transportation, fishing, tourism and recreation.
4. All of the residents of the Icy Straits corridor, Cross Sound and Lisianski Inlet, Yakobi Island and the outer coast are dependent on subsistence lifestyle because of limited transportation and commercial food services. Recreation is fishing, hunting, food gathering, hiking, boating, and wildlife viewing. Tourism, visitors to our area come to participate in that lifestyle and study our historical communities.

We encourage the boundary commission to reject or require modifications that limits the boundaries to a more reasonable, acceptable range of territory that does not infringe on the ability of the surrounding communities to support their schools and growth and development. Local taxation for Hoonah includes private sector timber industry, local property and large-scale tourism. In addition, they have the advantage of a private Native Corporation to support their local community development and public services.

Note:

Our Pelican Address is;

P.O. 103

Pelican, Alaska