

From: [Mig Miles](#)
To: [Commission, Boundary \(CED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Xunaa Borough Petition response
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:00:51 PM

You don't often get email from migsymiles@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Land & Boundary Commission

State of Alaska

February 27, 2024

Commission Members:

Pelican, Alaska is my hometown. I was born in Juneau, in the Territory of Alaska in 1948 and came to Pelican just days old. My father was a fisherman and moved his family from Wrangell in the mid 40's. I lived and went to school there until 8th grade. At that time further education was done by either moving to a bigger location or taking correspondence studies. My parents chose to move. The oil revenues of the 70's changed the student demographics of education and there were schools for higher education built in many small towns and Pelican was one; Pelican got a high school and their own administration and became a first class city.

Pelican began as a thriving fishing community as the Pelican Cold Storage was built 'Closest to the Fish' complete with hydro electric power to service the town. The cold storage and cannery were built to can fish and to store fish; freezers could hold 3 million lbs of frozen fish until it was shipped out by barge to buyers. Pelican Cold Storage and Pelican Packing Company, combined was the major business in the area for many years surpassing Hoonah in volume. Hoonah's cannery closed in 1953 and Pelican provided canning of their product until Excursion Inlet(XIP) came into the picture. Pelican closed the cannery and sold all the cannery equipment to XIP in 1961. Pelican Cold Storage built a crab plant in the cannery building and continued to thrive. In 2009, it began its struggle after the cold storage closed. In recent years, a local family has built Yakobi Fisheries; a successful business handling commercially caught seafood along with a mariculture venture for handling seaweed and kelp. Pelican is beginning to thrive again. Successful sport fishing charter operators have changed the complexion somewhat but also contribute greatly to the continuation of its viability. Pelican is located in a major mining area and its potential for further development is great,

as was its past in gold mining activity in Lisianski Inlet, Lisianski Straits, Klag Bay, Kimsham Cove and Slocum Arm on West Chichagof Island.

As a remote property owner with two houses 3-1/2 miles south of Pelican, there is absolutely no benefit to me to come under Hoonah's(Xunaa) jurisdiction now or in the future. Two things important to me are fire protection and accessibility to health service. I do not believe that either could be provided. In all my life in Pelican, Hoonah has provided virtually no services benefiting Pelican population with exception of the few years of operating the locally owned Ewe Ledge fish buying scow. Pelican has always dealt with Juneau as a hub for medical, mail, groceries, freight, airlines and fuel is provided thru independent fuel barges. It has its own health centre, hydro electric power, grocery store, ice, bait and fishing supplies for the fisherman and Alaska State ferry service. Under the proposed Xunaa borough, seasonal taxes could be changed by a vote of Hoonah's residents as it has a much larger population base than Pelican. Further to this, the seasonal sales tax of 1% would negatively affect both the commercial, sport fisherman and charter businesses in the area.

Over the years, there has been little to no hunting and fishing from Hoonah people(that I know of) except those fishing outside in Cross Sound or beyond, on the ocean. As I understand it, they(Hoonah)are claiming the area to be historically used for fishing and hunting. I have not seen this. Pelican residents stay within Lisianski Inlet, Lisianski Straits, Yakobi Island, Cross Sound and outer Chichagof Island. Hoonah people have not typically come into this area. Prior to 1970, fisheries management allowed seining for pink salmon in the Inian Islands(The laundry) where the fish would travel through from Cross Sound on the ocean to get inside to the terminal streams. Many Hoonah, Sitka and Juneau seiners fished this area. Pink salmon catches in the late 1960's were at an all time low in southeast. Alaska Fish and Game changed their fishery management to a 'terminal fishery' allowing escapement to the terminal streams, the Inian Islands seining area was closed to fishing and remains closed. Within the proposed boundary lines on the petition under a Xunaa borough, local hunting and fishing would be seriously impacted. Their proposed boundary line would be a strangle hold and unfairly surround Pelican and traditional areas Pelicanites have hunted, fished and mined for many decades including the inside and outside waters in Cross Sound and land of Yakobi Island, Lisianski Inlet, Stag Bay, Lisianski Straits and Esther Island south to Klag Bay.

The proposed diagonal boundary line runs down Lisianski Inlet and would unfairly exclude Pelican from any future mining development of Apex El Nido mine and Mork Mine in Lisianski Inlet and Chichagof Mine on the outer Chichagof coast. Past Pelican residents worked in those mines.

Pelican already has a vested interest in the Bohemia Basin dock on Yakobi Island.

Hoonah has recently developed a very high level tourship based industry. Pelican does not have the infrastructure nor the desire to be impacted or to be overrun by tourists including tour vessels reconnoitring the local commercial and sport

fisheries areas.

I am strongly opposed to the petition for annexation by Hoonah(Xunaa) with its expansive boundary lines covering the area with only a small enclosed Pelican boundary excluded and view it as an unfair land grab to increase its tax base and control the area. It provides no benefit and it will be punitive to the City of Pelican and its residents who want to remain autonomous as it and has been since its inception beginning in 1938.

Yours truly,
Miriam I Mig Miles
Box 202
Pelican, Alaska 99832

Sent from Mig's iPad