

To: Alaska Local Boundary Commission
550W. 7th Ave. Suite 1650
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3501

February 21, 2024

From: Robynn Glasmann / Gustavus, AK

Re: Xunaa Borough Petition

Dear Alaska Local Boundary Commission,

I am writing this letter to you from my perspective as a small B&B operator in the City of Gustavus with regard to the proposed Xunaa Borough by the City of Hoonah.

I have been coming to Gustavus for twenty seven years, and I have only been to Hoonah three times. I am in strong disagreement that Hoonah is the “hub” of SE Alaska. As humans, we often have the belief that the world revolves around us, and the same can be said for communities. It is possible to believe that what is good for “my community” is good for all. I don’t think that is the case with regard to the area and towns in question. Hoonah appears to have ambitions to grow its economy at the expense of its neighbors. It appears self-serving for Hoonah to claim to be the hub of such a large, spread out, and diverse area, which includes a National Park (Glacier Bay).

If enveloped in a borough wherein Hoonah is in control, Gustavus and other small towns will have less opportunity to grow independently, and their resources and money will be used for the purposes of Hoonah’s agenda. Hoonah has a population of approximately 950. I have watched Gustavus grow steadily from a population of 250 in the late 90s to its current 650 +. As the gateway to the Glacier Bay National Park, Gustavus has a huge summer tourism trade. And, it continues to grow in other positive and attractive ways. It has added a beautiful community center, it is home to the Tide Institute, it has small businesses and individual entrepreneurs that are constantly starting up as well as regular community businesses and services. It is a thriving small town. Retaining its autonomy makes it unique and interesting. Keeping its monetary resources local helps it to grow and develop independently.

When guests visit the small towns and villages in SE AK, Gustavus among them, they look for and thrill at the interesting and different characteristics of each one, what sets them apart, what is the charm and attraction of the community as well as the beauty of its natural resources and setting. Each small town offers its own distinct experience. I feel it is vital that these small communities be allowed to make and spend their money in their own towns for their benefit, to use their resources towards their goals, growth and achievement, that they not be controlled by or have to give money to a town that they have relatively nothing to do with, and which will be advancing itself from their labors.

It is especially unsettling to think of Glacier Bay National Park being included in the boundaries of this proposed borough. As a National Park, it belongs to ALL Americans and is under the

direction of the Department of the Interior and the NPS. It does not seem appropriate that it should be under the control of any single community or that any community should benefit exclusively from the concessions that exist within the Park. My B&B guests don't always visit Glacier Bay National Park when they stay with me in Gustavus, but when they do, they are aware that they are visiting a National Park just as they would any other Park in the USA. Gustavus and the Park are separate entities just as are all of the other communities in the proposed borough area.

It may be preferable at this juncture to table the proposed Petition and continue a conversation that will lead to amendments and changes that are acceptable and beneficial to all of the communities in the area.

I thank you most gratefully for your consideration of my thoughts and comments.

Sincerely,

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