

**From:** [Thomas McLaughlin](#)  
**To:** [Smith, Jedediah R \(CED\)](#); [Mayor Shelley Owens](#); [Kathy Leary](#); [City Of Gustavus](#); [Commission, Boundary \(CED sponsored\)](#); [Kiehl, Jesse W \(LEG\)](#)  
**Subject:** Xunaa Borough  
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Dear Jedediah Smith,

I would like to voice my objection to the proposed Xunaa Borough by the City of Hoonah. The City of Hoonah's application to form a borough violates the first two standards of the Local Boundary Commission 1) Compatability of the urban and rural areas within the proposed borough 2) Compatability of economic lifestyles and industrial or commercial.

The City of Hoonah does not meet the requirement by the LBC that a borough be at a minimum of 1,000 people. Hoonah is not big enough to provide any services to the outlying communities and doesn't plan on providing any services, only taxation.

The people of Gustavus mostly live a subsistence lifestyle as much as possible. The City of Hoonah seems to be interested in making money for the community. Hoonah now has two cruise ship docks which bring in thousands of tourists and millions of dollars to the community. The people of Gustavus are mostly happy with living off the land, fishing, and hunting. We don't want cruise ships and industrial size tourism in our town.

I am a resident of Gustavus and have had a home here since 1974. The City of Hoonah in their petition claims to be the regional hub for the cities in and surrounded by the new borough. This is not true. Hoonah has never been the hub city for this area. People in Gustavus go to Juneau to shop, see doctors, go to restaurants, etc.. Hoonah provides no services for the people of Gustavus. Gustavus, Tenakee, and Pelican are not included in the borough but would be surrounded by it. The people of Gustavus, Tenakee, Pelican, and Elfin Cove do not use Hoonah as any kind of hub to their cities. Juneau or Sitka are more hub cities to these communities.

The proposed borough would create enclaves of the surrounded cities, Gustavus, Pelican, and Tenakee. This would prevent Gustavus from uniting with these other cities to form a borough which would be more in line with their economic and social lifestyle. The City of Gustavus would also lose federal and state revenues which the community depends on with the formation of the Xunaa Borough.

Gustavus is the Gateway to Glacier Bay. All services to Glacier Bay come from Gustavus shopping, fuel, electricity, and housing. Glacier Bay is our backyard. It is where we pick berries, dig clams, catch halibut and salmon, and recreate. People in Hoonah do have a history of using Glacier Bay but so do the people in Gustavus. Alaska Natives gave up any rights to this land when they agreed to ANSCA. The natives of Hoonah already have a privileged status in Glacier Bay. They have privileges that the white people in Gustavus do not have.

Why do they want to claim Glacier Bay as part of their borough?

Did you know that the Hoonah Indian Association secretly applied to The Nature Conservancy to gain ownership of TNC land in Gustavus? The people of Gustavus and their donors spent \$340,000,000 to purchase this land and turn it over to TNC in cooperation with the City of Gustavus. The HIA just wants to come in and take over ownership. They did this secretly behind our backs two years ago and TNC did not let the people of Gustavus know this either. We discovered this a few weeks ago. This is considered a hostile act by the HIA against the people of Gustavus. The HIA are not good neighbors to the people of Gustavus. Do you really think it's a good idea to have their borough surrounding us?

I think that the City of Gustavus Cunaa Borough Resolution says it very well, "that if a borough government is to be formed in the Icy Strait region, it should be through the initiative and will of the people in all the communities of the region working together to form a regional government that serves the best interests of those communities and the State of Alaska. Until such time, the communities in the region will continue to be served best by their existing independent local municipalities." The City of Gustavus is rightfully proud of its independence.

I hope you understand my concerns over allowing this new borough to be created. I think that the Xunaa Borough fails to meet the requirements for a Borough and that it should be denied by the LBC. It could be devastating to the people of Gustavus, Pelican, Tenakee, and Elfin Cove and to the land surrounding us that we love and cherish.

Thank you,  
Thomas S. McLaughlin, PE