February 28, 2024

To: State of Alaska
Local Boundary Commision

Re: Xunaa Borough Petition

On behalf of my family and I, we strongly oppose the Xunaa Borough Petition. More specifically we oppose the inclusion of Elfin Cove, Cross sound, Port Althorp, Lisianski Inlet and the outer coast.

I have fished commercially out of Elfin Cove since 1989 and had a residence there since 1994. From my experience I can state there are numerous inaccuracies in the Xunaa Borough Petition.

Elfin Cove has a form of self-government that works quite well for its residents. It is reflected in the fact that the Community of Elfin Cove Non-Profit Corporation entity operates an electric utility, water utility, fuel dock, community building and gym, which also has a museum and United States Post Office. To state that Elfin Cove residents would be better governed by the town of Hoonah 33 miles away is a stretch. In addition, Elfin Cove's form of government has been adequate for the state to recognize the community and offer grants and loans since the community was incorporated in 1981.

Hoonah has never been a hub for commercial fishermen from Elfin Cove, Pelican, and fishermen fishing Cross Sound and the northern outside coast. Hoonah has never had a buying station in Elfin Cove. In the 80's and 90's Pelican Seafood and Excursion Inlet Packing had buying stations in Elfin Cove. After that, Alaska Glacier Seafoods out of Juneau set up a buying station in Elfin Cove. Today fishermen with catches of Halibut and Sablefish from Cross Sound, Fairweather Grounds, and the outer gulf coast, make most of their deliveries in Juneau or Sitka.

Hoonah and Elfin Cove are not socially, culturally, and economically aligned. Elfin Cove is more similar to Pelican, Gustavus, and Tenakee Springs. Elfin Cove should be left out of the proposed borough formation just as Pelican, Gustavus and Tenakee Springs have been left out. The lands around these communities would be better managed by the residents of the respective communities than residents in Hoonah.

If this petition passes, the Community of Elfin Cove will not have a voice in the new government. The Petitioners never asked the Community of Elfin Cove if they wanted to be included in the proposed borough. Why would they start now?

Sincerely,

Jim Benton
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Sarah Benton
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