

No support for Chugiak borough

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As of late Tuesday, the state's Department of Community and Regional Affairs had not received one letter supporting a petition for the re-establishment of a separate Eagle River-Chugiak borough.

The Local Boundary Commission is holding a public hearing on the petition at 7:30 p.m. today at the Chugiak High School gymnasium. Representatives of the Anchorage Municipality will testify at the meeting, as well as Lee Jordan, former mayor of the defunct Eagle River-Chugiak borough. The area established a separate borough in 1974, but it was disbanded following a Supreme Court decision last April.

DAVID JENSEN, local government specialist for the department, said Tuesday that as the hearing date grew near he was getting numerous telephone calls offering testimony in support of the petition. But Jensen said he was refusing to accept testimony over the phone.

"For whatever reason, they're

getting pretty indignant," Jensen said when asked about reaction to his refusal. He said he was getting more calls than he could count, but was telling persons they were welcome to submit signed statements or testify at tonight's hearing. Anchorage municipal officials say they are not actively opposing the area's attempt to secede from the new unified government. But the briefs and written testimony so far sent to the commission by the Anchorage government all claim it may be a mistake for the Eagle River-Chugiak area to be given independent status.

THE ESSENCE of the government's statements is that detachment of the Eagle River-Chugiak area would not conform to either the Alaska Constitution or the statutory standards for incorporation of an area as an organized borough. The Eagle River-Chugiak area is seeking establishment of a second class borough.

Statutory standards for incorporation of a borough include:

- that the population be interrelated and integrated as to its social, cultural, and economic activities and is large and stable enough to support organized borough government;

- the boundaries conform generally to natural geography and include all areas necessary for full development of local services;

- that the economy of the area include human and financial resources capable of providing local services (evaluation of the economy includes land use, property valuations, total economic base, total personal income, resource and commercial development, and anticipated functions, expenses, and income of the proposed borough);

- and that land, water, and air transportation facilities allow the communication and exchange necessary for the development of integrated local government.

A BRIEF SENT TO the commission by the municipal legal office challenges whether a new Eagle River-Chugiak borough could meet any of these standards. "Commercial and industrial activities normally associated with an integrated economy are simply absent; any assertion that the proposed borough has an integrated economy can only be described as groundless," the brief states.

The brief also asserts that "an examination of the Chugiak-Eagle River area reveals that there is an almost total lack of social and cultural activities."

In its brief the municipal government also contends the Eagle River-Chugiak area may not be large enough to support an organized borough government. The brief states mill rates would increase between 5 and 6 mills to a total of 17 or 18 mills for the same services residents there currently receive.

"TAX RATES proposed . . . may be based upon some unreasonable assumptions," the brief states. The brief challenges an assertion in the petition submitted by Eagle River-Chugiak residents that the proposed borough could provide the same services the municipal government is providing at a savings of \$300,000.

"It is submitted that estimate of a \$300,000 savings can only be the result of over-optimism on the part of inexperienced governmental officials," the brief reads.