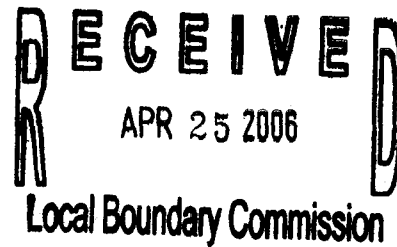


April 19, 2006

Local Boundary Commission
550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1770
Anchorage, AK 99501-3510



Dear Alaska Local Boundary Commission,

As U.S. citizens and permanent residents of Hyder, Alaska, it is our desire to enter the following comments into the official record regarding our opposition to the recent filing of an Annexation Petition by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB). Please take special note, that contrary to State law, the KGB has never provided, verbally or in writing, any of the procedural guidelines necessary for us to give proper public input in the form of Responsive Briefs or Written Comments. Neither have they provided us with any information relating to necessary timetables for such. For that reason we are hereby demanding that the following comments be put into the official record and carry the same weight even though they may not be in the correct format or meet with compliance guidelines. We also request that the KGB be held responsible for any inadequacy in form or structure this Response and Comments might have, which is due to the KGB's negligence which we feel is intentional.

Before we go on to discuss the specific issues surrounding the KGB's proposed Annexation Petition, we would like to comment briefly about pending and future Unorganized Borough annexation in general throughout the State of Alaska, past, present, and future.

Throughout our many decades living in the Rocky Mountain region of the western United States, we have watched as government officials legislated, annexed, and taxed their way into the surrounding rural areas until they literally destroyed the serene and fulfilling lifestyle of many of the people living there. We watched as well-meaning government officials imposed their new ideas, all in the name of so-called "progress". More often than not, the "progress" resulted in undisciplined government spending, mismanagement, financial deficit, desperation, debt, greed, and lack of accountability; creating a never ending and out of control spiral that meant financial ruin for those that weren't willing to make major lifestyle and occupational changes. It was a disaster for us, our families and ancestors. Our own family farms and ranches are now gone because of this, along with a lifestyle that financially supported four generations of family members and many other employed workers. We are tired of having to repeatedly uproot and move away from the encroaching "progress".

This is why we ended up in Hyder, Alaska. We thought we had finally found a place where people and government truly respect and understand our alternative and subsistence lifestyle, and would finally and forever leave us alone and quit encroaching into our lives. Yet now we can clearly see that it is only a matter of time until the special alternative lifestyle that Alaska is famous for is also destroyed. Something needs to be done about this now.

You need to block the various boroughs from gobbling up the remote regions and communities, and the wealth of land and resources around them. You need to put a stop to this madness before it is too late. You need to insist that a new borough or boroughs be created to appropriately

assimilate the Unorganized Borough, preserving the needs of those pursuing the alternative, subsistence and primitive lifestyles that Alaska is famous for. "Progress" is not for the government to choose, it is for the people and even individuals to choose. We have no interest in becoming like any of the towns or cities that are at the heart of the existing boroughs, or supporting the lifestyle and projects that such governments find appealing. We have repeatedly moved away from that. We are certain that the majority of people living in our community feel the same, otherwise they would not be living here.

Now for our comments concerning the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's Petition. Over the last year or so we have reviewed those parts of the Alaskan Administrative Code that deal with the formation and expansion of boroughs. Since that time we have recognized some real problems with the way the KGB is handling things relating to their petition. They are obviously not fully complying with the Code, and when we have pointed numerous inconsistencies out to them, they have made no effort to resolve these issues prior to submitting their Petition. It is clear that the KGB has no intention of abiding by the Code. As you look deeper you will also find that they are doing their best to try to discourage and stifle our participation in the process.

For instance, the public annexation hearing the KGB held in Ketchikan last January 21, 2006, was not in compliance with State law. Such meeting must be held at a convenient location in or near the territory proposed for annexation. They held the meeting in Ketchikan, which is NOT within the area nor even adjacent or reasonably near to it. Although on a map it may not look like much, there is an inaccessible wilderness between them and most of the area they intend to annex. There was nothing convenient about the meeting location for those whose lives would be most affected by annexation. The only thing convenient about it was that it was convenient for the KGB Assembly Members' attendance, and certainly not convenient whatsoever for those people living in the proposed territory. Ketchikan is a considerable distance from the proposed area of annexation, most of which is a vast and inaccessible wilderness, geographically and physically unreachable from Ketchikan. On the other hand, a large part of the area is immediately adjacent to Hyder, and involves the mountains, canyons, valleys, river drainage, and Portland Canal area all feeding into and flowing out from the Hyder area. We live in a part of this wilderness and rely upon it.

For us to attend the KGB's Public Hearing in person means we would have had to schedule float plane service for a roundtrip flight from Hyder to Ketchikan, at our own expense. Such travel is not always dependable, weather and space permitting, and when available can be accomplished by reserving from one to four seats on a biweekly U.S. Mail float plane that serves our community. This flight service is quite costly, approximately \$600 per couple round trip. This is the only public transportation available to Hyder residents. Flights (and the mail) are very frequently delayed for days at a time because of the always unsettled weather patterns in our region. Personal experience shows that these weather delays often require the need for extended periods of lodging in Ketchikan, which is also costly. The KGB should have held the meeting in Hyder, or otherwise should have made whatever arrangements necessary to somehow transport and accommodate those Hyder residents wishing to attend in person. Contrary to the annexation requirements that the KGB is blatantly disregarding, it is evident they have no real connection to Hyder at all. Past performance shows that they do not intend to bridge the gap. This leads us to our next point.

At a KGB Annexation fact finding meeting held in Hyder last year at our Community Center, several KGB officials attended. This included Assembly Members and the KGB Manager, who made it very clear that they had no intention of providing the community of Hyder with any real services. They clearly stated so during the meeting. The meeting was recorded and there is a transcript available. They told us that if we wanted any real services, they would have to tax us accordingly to pay for such services. In other words, they couldn't provide us with anything we don't already provide for ourselves. But even more, they would control and take away all of our existing sources of revenue.

At that fact finding meeting the KGB's understanding and discussion of our real needs was often laughable. For instance, they brought the Ketchikan Animal Control Officer with them. When asked why, they said they would offer his services on a very limited basis to us, and that he could come over once or twice per year if needed. They said that this was about the best they could do. We explained that numerous black bears and grizzly bears (and wolves occasionally), roam freely through our community on a daily basis. And that the only animal control we need here is provided by the local domestic dog population, which often runs at large throughout the community, helping to announce the bears coming through. And if the dogs don't work to keep the bears at bay, then the local residents are armed and willing to take stronger measures if needed. We mentioned that they couldn't possibly have the money or manpower to really control the wild animals in our area, nor would we need for them to control the local dogs. We believe that in reality they brought their Animal Control Officer with them for personal protection, that if need be, he would protect them from the residents of Hyder. We know that Hyder has a history and reputation of being a real Alaskan wild frontier town. We have absolutely nothing in common with Ketchikan or the KGB.

At last year's Annexation fact finding meeting the KGB clearly stated that their only real reason for annexation was to obtain revenues from the U.S. Forest Service timber receipts. They agreed that their purpose was strictly for financial reasons. Our reading of the Code shows us clearly that annexation is not acceptable for such a purpose alone. That's exactly what they admittedly are trying to do. The transcript from that meeting proves it.

We explained that those timber receipts are helping to fund the education of our community's children attending the Hyder school, which money is also used by other schools in the Unorganized Borough, particularly Prince Of Wales Island. Hyder and the Unorganized Borough need and have the right to those revenues, not the KGB.

The public record shows that the KGB has a long history of financial problems. It is evident that their need for the current annexation is a desperate attempt to put a band-aid on an already ailing condition. And now they want to drag the community of Hyder into that mess. Beside the KGB's ongoing financial problems, it is common knowledge that residents currently living in the KGB can't tolerate any more property tax increases. However, the KGB would like to tax the community of Hyder, which for the most part consists of people living a subsistence lifestyle in an abandoned ghost town, most with little if any income, little money, no jobs, no work, and no desire to change to a different lifestyle. Taxing the Hyder community would destroy it and the alternative lifestyle here. Ketchikan-style property taxes would convert Hyder to a typical

seasonal summer home and vacation tourist haven for wealthy outsiders, increasing the property tax rolls, exactly what Ketchikan would like to see. In our view, this is what Ketchikan has already done to their own community, and now they want to do it to Hyder.

It's understandable why the KGB didn't want to provide a way for us to attend their January Public Hearing in person, or to hold it in Hyder. During their earlier fact finding meeting they learned that we aren't all a bunch of stupid uneducated illiterates. They learned that we are a force to be reckoned with. We have exposed legal problems with their Petition, and we confront them with too many other valid and uncomfortable issues. We are a thorn in their side which they know might prevent them from vastly expanding their territory and taking over the Forest Service receipts.

Furthermore, concerning the KGB's idea of Temporary Exclusion of the Hyder area, a careful reading of their Petition shows that it is vague and carefully worded. This is clearly a ploy to appease or deceive Hyder residents into believing we've somehow been left out, and to placate you since it shows that we've technically been included. We've not been left out at all, it is clear from reading the Petition that we have been included. Do these Temporary Exclusion tactics then give them license to ignore our in-person participation in the Public Hearing process? We hope you will have the wisdom to see through this. And again, if you think they just made a mistake, then why didn't they correct their Petition after these things were brought to their attention prior to the Public Hearing?

We could go on and on pointing out ways that the KGB's Petition is ignoring and circumventing the State Code. There are many potentially costly legal issues involved. Hopefully the information we have provided is enough to alert you to the terrible mistake this KGB Annexation would be. Why not do the right thing and push hard to preserve and protect the real and original Alaskan frontier way of life? In closing we would like to address one more issue that we think is important. This involves what we believe to be a serious conflict of interest relating to one of the members of the Alaska Local Boundary Commission.

It has come to our attention that Georgianna Zimmerle has previously served as the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Manager, has been actively involved in past annexation processes and attempts before the Local Boundary Commission, and has been a strong advocate in the past for annexation of our region. It is obvious that her position on the Local Boundary Commission is clearly a conflict of interest. We are asking that she step aside and not be involved or participate in any way in the LBC review and decision making process.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,



Brent Stucki



Debra Stucki

Indian Avenue, PO Box 12, Hyder, Alaska 99923