



CITY OF WRANGELL

INCORPORATED JUNE 15, 1903

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June 28, 2006

Local Boundary Commission Staff
550 W. Seventh Ave., Suite 1770
Anchorage, AK 99501-3510

Dear LBC Staff:

The City of Wrangell supports the pending petition to form a home rule, unified municipality of the City and Borough of Wrangell. The City Council, at their meeting of June 27, 2006, unanimously voted to support the petition and submits the following points in support.

- ✓ The City believes that the proposed borough will fully and efficiently provide services to the region. The City has already been doing so in a number of instances, such as: electricity, fire, ambulance, and police response, school and library usage to residents of Wrangell West outside City limits; for outlying areas such as Thoms Place, Farm Island and Meyers Chuck/Union Bay, the Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department provides search and rescue, and the Police Department responds to public safety issues. Harbor infrastructure support is provided to residents living in the entire region.
- ✓ The area proposed for incorporation has strong historical and current social and economical interconnections, from the Stikine River to the north and south to Meyers Chuck/Union Bay, including Ernest Sound and the western drainages of the Cleveland Peninsula. Folks living in the region use the entire area for subsistence hunting and fishing and commercial fishing and recreation.
- ✓ Formation of the borough has strong support from area residents. Area residents want to define the boundaries of their own borough, not have it defined for them.
- ✓ The residents of the Wrangell area, while acknowledging the Petersburg area and their specific interests and preferences, are not hostile to Petersburg, but have agreed that they do not want to be in a borough with Petersburg. There seem to be significant differences in attitudes and culture. There would be no governmental efficiencies gained by combining the two regions, and in fact the cost of local government, if Petersburg and Wrangell were combined in a borough, would actually increase, as the Cities of Wrangell and Petersburg would remain in place. After discussion with Petersburg's Mayor and Council, it is the City of Wrangell's understanding that Petersburg intends to file its own borough formation petition sometime later this year.
- ✓ While residents of Petersburg and Wrangell don't always see eye-to-eye, the leaders of the two communities have agreed on a natural demarcation between the two regions. Rather than using the Wrangell Ranger District Boundary on the north, Wrangell and Petersburg agreed to the watershed line between the Stikine River drainage and LeConte Bay as the northern boundary. Historically and currently, access and travel on the Stikine River has been dominated by Wrangell businesses, residents or visitors. LeConte Bay and Glacier, while accessed by operators from both communities, is dominated by Petersburg business and residents.

- ✓ The residents of the proposed borough will benefit from borough formation by having a greater influence on land decisions in the region by state and federal authorities; ability to have direct control over certain development and activities in the area; municipal land selections; increased national forest receipts and PILT. Many of the prime selectable lands that would likely be selected by the new borough are potentially going to be turned over to the University of Alaska in 2009. Area residents are outraged and firmly believe that their ability to influence and control land use decisions on these lands that directly impact area residents is being stifled.
- ✓ We have stronger ties with Meyers Chuck/Union Bay area than does Ketchikan, not only because of the commerce transacted between the communities, but social and political views and needs are more closely aligned and understood. The Annexation Petition of Ketchikan Gateway Borough and the petition for the City and Borough of Wrangell both seek some of the same land area, therefore the City of Wrangell requests that DCCED and the LBC consider the petitions simultaneously.
- ✓ Wrangell Community leaders are committed to incurring the expense necessary to establish communication facilities to allow the residents of outlying areas such as Thoms Place and Meyers Chuck/Union Bay to participate in public hearings and other important public proceedings of the proposed new borough. Community leaders are also committed to working with residents of Meyers Chuck/Union Bay to explore opportunities for working together and assistance for residents compatible with their desired lifestyle.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Valery M McCandless, *serving as*
Mayor

Mayor Valery McCandless
Serving as Mayor