

**CITY OF GUSTAVUS, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION CY24-05**

**A RESOLUTION DISPUTING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PETITION SUBMITTED  
BY THE CITY OF HOONAH FOR INCORPORATION OF THE XUNAA BOROUGH**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Hoonah has petitioned the Local Boundary Commission to form the Xunaa Borough across a 10,400 square-mile area comprising much of Chichagof Island, Icy Strait, Glacier Bay National Park, and the Gulf of Alaska, which encompasses but excludes the cities of Gustavus, Pelican and Tenakee Springs; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Local Boundary Commission is reviewing the petition and accepting comment with regard to whether the petition meets the standards for incorporation of a borough and is in the best interests of the State; and,

**WHEREAS**, establishment of a new borough is in the best interests of the State only if the proposed borough is a true regional government that bridges multiple communities in the region with shared interests, that will serve the needs of the people living and working in the region now and for the foreseeable future, and that is formed and desired by the people in the region; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Xunaa Borough is designed arguably to encompass lands that were traditional homeland to, and used by, Huna Tlingit people in past centuries, regardless of the distribution of populations and land uses during the 20th and 21st centuries; and,

**WHEREAS**, while the long history of Huna Tlingit presence in the region is acknowledged and rightfully celebrated by all the region's people, the boundaries of historical tribal lands and influences are not relevant to, nor for the purpose of, the formation of a regional borough government; and,

**WHEREAS**, the three excluded cities have a combined population nearing that of the City of Hoonah but do not believe that a regional borough government or its services are needed; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Xunaa Borough expressly neither foresees nor plans to provide services beyond the City of Hoonah with the exception of taxation of activities and sales across the un-served region; and,

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Xunaa Borough is not a true regional government, and would be a de facto annexation of vast geographical and unpopulated areas for the exclusive benefit of the City of Hoonah/Hoonah Townsite Service Area, and to the detriment of the cities and communities within the proposed borough region; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed boundaries would confine the cities of Gustavus, Pelican, and Tenakee Springs in constricted and non-contiguous enclaves within the broader region, without apparent consideration of relevant constitutional, statutory, and regulatory standards; and inhibiting actual collaboration, if not actually preventing them from ever uniting in their own regional borough if desired; and,

**WHEREAS**, on the short term, the proposed borough boundaries directly threaten the viability of the excluded communities through potential loss of federal and state revenues that support their communities and are vital to their success; and on the longer term, impair and constrain the potential for forming a new borough, or merging with a compatible adjoining borough, as a means of enhancing future economic growth and development in service of their residents and businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Gustavus provides in an attachment a detailed review of the petition, refuting among other things Hoonah’s claims to be a regional hub upon which the regional communities are dependent.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of Gustavus finds that the Xunaa Borough petition fails to qualify the proposed area for incorporation as a borough, and therefore that its formation is not in the best interests of the State of Alaska, nor of the people living or working in Gustavus, Pelican, Tenakee Springs, Elfin Cove, or throughout the occupied or unoccupied areas proposed for incorporation outside of Hoonah.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Council of Gustavus urges the Local Boundary Commission to find that the Xunaa Borough petition fails to meet the standards for incorporation, and rejects it for failure to meet the best interests of the State, its political subdivisions, and the 49 people residing in the communities proposed for annexation.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** 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.

**PASSED and APPROVED** by the Gustavus City Council this XX<sup>th</sup> day of XX 2024, and effective upon adoption.

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Shelley K. Owens, Mayor

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Attest: Liesl M. Barker, City Clerk