

Statement
Regarding
Tlingit and Haida Appeal to the Petersburg Borough Board Of Equalization
by
Rebecca Knight
August 17, 2026

Hello Petersburg Borough Board of Equalization (BOE),

My statement pertains to the Petersburg Planning and Zoning Commission (P and Z) **informed** decision NOT to convert Borough property from public use to a minor subdivision at 1200 Haugen Dr. Petersburg, Alaska for the purposes of cell tower construction, fuel storage, driveway construction, etc.. I request that you take NO ACTION to overturn the Commission's **informed** decision. I agree wholeheartedly with one respondent's overall opinion included in the packet, that it "sets a poor precedent to use public land to solve a private industry problem."

I have attended and/or listened to various P and Z meetings when the issue of tower siting—and more was considered. Deliberation of the issue by them was rigorous and their decisions were **informed**. In fact, their deliberations were far more in depth than what has been apparent during Assembly meetings regarding the topic. P and Z's decision should be upheld and respected.

I have also had impromptu discussions with certain P and Z Commissioners who feel totally disheartened when their hard work and decisions are overruled by the Assembly. They have either chosen not to run again for a Commissioner seat or altogether quit. Such loss of confidence and turnover due to cynicism is regrettable, given not only for the loss of expertise that they have contributed in their position but that they also do not arrive at their objective decisions lightly. To overturn knowledgeable decision-making does not inspire confidence in local government. How does the Assembly expect to retain an effective P and Z Commission when Commissioner votes are disregarded?

In fact, during various Assembly meetings, at least one Assembly member repeatedly expressed that the "appropriate" place for deliberation of tower specifics should be under the purview of P and Z—not the Assembly. He agreed with me on that issue, but for "different reasons." No one on the Assembly disagreed with his statement.

Moreover, according to the FCC Broadband Coverage Map (available at https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/area-summary/fixed?version=dec2025&geoid=02&type=state&zoom=9.74&vlon=-132.946990&vlat=56.737658&br=r&speed=100_20&tech=1_2_3_6_7) Petersburg Alaska already has nearly 100% Broadband Coverage at 250/25 Mbps. This is in *direct contradiction* to claims of

coverage gaps made by Tlingit and Haida Central Council unanimous vote, Tidal Network, and GCI. So which entities are we to trust? Do we trust the maps of the FCC, as a regulatory agency charged with the responsibility to create these maps, or deregulated, for-profit corporations with vested economic interests? This discrepancy directly relates to the appeal.

The full NEPA recourse was entirely ignored by the Borough Assembly. The entire purpose of a NEPA “hard look” is to choose the best alternative between a choice of alternatives in the public’s best interest. However, at a minimum, it is incumbent upon the Board of Equalization to engage an independent, expertly conducted analysis regarding the contradictions between broadened gap coverage claims of for-profit enterprises versus the FCC’s conclusions.

Please remember, that there was NO community outcry regarding broadband access capabilities prior to the arrival of Tidal Network almost a year ago in pursuit of a \$50 million grant of taxpayer funds. I firmly believe this is a profit driven manufactured crisis. Accountability matters—of both the application of the Assembly’s due diligence’s and the accountability of industry claims. Clearly, there is a difference in how these maps were generated and the “word” of a profit making company must be closely examined. Due diligence on behalf of the taxpaying residents of Petersburg must be applied.

The Alaska Constitutional basis of Article 1 Section 22 also applies to this matter. This issue involves understanding that claims of being “underserved” can be interpreted as being “under-surveilled.” This is a crucial aspect of 5G and 6G technology identified by technical descriptions and intent. Who decided this for us?

All the below considerations have already been brought forward by the public and were considered by P and Z which found no resolution or work-around:

1. A cell tower above a 200 gallon fuel tank directly adjacent to our ONLY firehall/emergency facility and well used bike path; ANY storage of flammable substances next to such a facility is potentially catastrophic;
2. Community aesthetics along a beautiful corridor, to the airport and Sandy Beach;
3. Diminishment of housing value and quality of life;
4. Precedent-setting nature of replacing public use lands to solve a private for-profit problem;
5. Co-location alternatives were disclaimed by Tidal Network with no credibility;
6. State and federal Constitutions guaranteed Rights to Privacy provisions will be violated by buildout of 5G and 6G technology;
7. Economic losses especially regarding childcare centers will result.

In conclusion, I ask that the BOE support and protect the Alaska Constitution, consistent with your oaths of office. Specifically, I request the Borough to conform to the spirit of

Governor Dunleavy's Administrative Order 325 **Article III, Sections 1, 16, and 24**, of Alaska's Constitution. Order No. 325 directed state agencies to take actions to protect the sovereign authority of the State of Alaska and guard the Constitutional rights of the individual Alaskans from federal overreach.

Article 1 Section 22 of Alaska's Constitution guarantees, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses and other property, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated."

The BOE authorized re-designation of local public use lands for the purpose of siting of the Haugen cell tower explicitly violates the BOE member's oaths of office to support and protect Alaska's Constitution. It deprives Petersburg Borough residents their Constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Knight