

SCR

12

Written testimony by Denny Kay Weathers
From: Hawkins Island, Prince William Sound
Date: May 7, 2003
RE: SCR 12

Attn: Chairperson Wagoner;

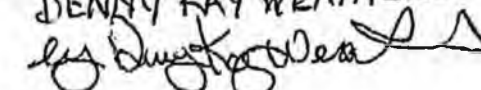
Year after year the issue of the UNORGANIZED BOROUGH comes forth. Year after year the People of Alaska testify that they are OPPOSED to mandatory government.

During the last LBC Public Hearing I testified and stated that the INFORMATION in the PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT was false and misleading concerning the section on CORDOVA and asked that the LBC correct the information before forwarding it to the Legislature. After reviewing the final document I see that the information provided to you the Legislature STILL has the same FALSE INFORMATION and no corrections were made.

Many Borough Feasibility Studies have been done over the past years and all the Studies for the PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND MODEL BOROUGH end up stating the same thing "All the borough options predict a deficit of about \$100,000 to almost \$3.6 million by year 5" and these studies were done when Cordova still had an economy base compared to now when many of the businesses are closing their doors, some even filing bankruptcy, and the fishing industry is becoming nonexistent.

In the PWS Borough Feasibility Study of June 25, 1997 Chapter 4 pg. 2 of 12 the study states: "There is no overwhelming positive financial reason to form a borough. The overall financial prospects for a borough in the Sound are tenuous but not impossible." "The prospects for tapping into new income sources for a borough in Prince William Sound are limited at this time. Most of the revenue sources and property value are located in the already existing cities."

I think the Legislature is just trying to usurp the power from We The People of Alaska. I would suggest that each and every one of you ELECTED officials (public servants) read the Alaska Statehood Act (Public Law 85-508) Sec. 3. Then go read the Declaration of Independence to see what the Alaska Statehood Act referred to. [i.e. grievance # 4., # 9., # 10., # 17., # 18., # 28., # 29. and it's summary/conclusion. End Testimony

DENNY KAY WEATHERS


THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE
PO BOX 1189
ROOM 218 JARVIS OFFICE CENTER
DELTA JCT., AK 99737

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO:	FROM:
SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS	Toni Lee <i>TL</i>
COMPANY:	DATE:
	May 7, 2003
FAX NUMBER:	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER:
465-4779	3
PHONE NUMBER:	SENDER'S REFERENCE NUMBER:
	(907) 895-4236
RE:	YOUR REFERENCE NUMBER:
SCR12	(907) 895-5017 fax



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Com-Reg Aff.
 committee on SCR 12, dated 5/7/03
 bill/subject committee name

It was recently reported in the Delta Wind, our local newspaper, that the Delta school district is anticipating an increased enrollment at school this fall. The projection is admittedly speculative and based on the following three factors:

- (1) "an increase in the number of employees at Fort Greely"
- (2) "the start of construction of the Pogo Mine project"
- (3) "an increase in the Slavic population"

The installation of the Missile Defense project at Fort Greely is creating an influx of jobs and manpower into the area. However, a large percentage of the jobs are temporary in nature and the people filling them will be living at the "Man Camp", not moving families permanently into the area.

The Pogo mine development is also temporary in nature. Plans for the all-season access road to the mine contain references for "complete reclamation following mine closure", also reported in the Delta Wind.

We are left with the increase in the Slavic population. With few exceptions the Slavic population is dependent on government assistance for survival. They themselves are not in the position to support a local government.

This means that the projected existence of a tax base in Delta is purely speculative. It is based on temporary jobs and an influx of the governmentally assisted population. The burden of an organized borough would fall on the shoulders of the existing working local population, which has actually been depleted over the last several years as a result of the downsizing of Fort Greely. Incorporating the Delta area into an organized borough is not a decision based on sound judgment.

Signed:

Charles E. Abbott
 Testifier

Representing (Optional)
H 600 Box 4225 Delta, Est.
 Address
895-2002
 Phone No.



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Com-Reg Aff.
committee on SCR 12, dated 5/7/03
bill/subject committee name

We have made the choice to live near Delta Jct., an area where we trade a lack of "conveniences" for fewer taxes. We have exchanged governmental bureaucracy and regulations for fewer options in employment, shopping, entertainment, and schools. It is our choice, at least so far.

We are being pressured to form an organized borough under the pretext that we are not "paying our fare share" in regards to education. This is not a legitimate argument for two reasons.

The first reason is that according to our state constitution it is the state's responsibility to provide schools for the state of Alaska. This is to ensure that communities that cannot support a tax base will still have schools. Much of Alaska would be without schools if the "pay your fare share" mentality were to be enforced statewide.

The second reason is that the community *does* generate money to the state by way of taxes levied against our thirty-eight miles of the pipeline. Incorporation into an organized borough would mean that some funds now going to the state would be diverted to the borough.

So the real question is whether or not there is a tax base in this area.

Much of the Delta area's population consists of farmers, Russian Immigrants and retirees. According to Alaska labor statistics, the current unemployment rate for the Delta area is 14.1%. That is more than double the rates of Fairbanks and Anchorage which are 6.6% and 5.1% respectively. Delta's 14.1% falls well below the statewide unemployment rate of 7.6% in spite of the "boom" created by Missile Defense.

The majority of the jobs being generated by the Missile Defense and Pogo Mine are going to people from outside the community. Missile Defense workers are taking up residence at Ft. Greely housing or at the Man Camp. The jobs are temporary in nature, filled by employees that have no intention of staying in the area when the work is done.

Thank you for your time, and please take our concerns into consideration in your decision making process.

Signed:

Ruth A. Abbott

Testifier

Representing (Optional)

HC160 Box 4225 Delta Junction, AK 99737

Address

(907) 895-2002

Phone No.



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Com-Reg Aff.
 committee on SCR 12, dated 5/7/03
 bill/subject committee name

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Signed:

Charles E. Abbott
 Testifier

Representing (Optional)
H160 Box 4225 Delta, Id.
 Address
895-2002
 Phone No.

ALBERT SHAW
300 HERMIT ST. #6
JUNEAU, AK 99801
586-1602

TESTIMONY in favor of SCR #12

I would like a sentence along these
lines:

"if because of this resolution and
new borough formed it appears an
area should be added to an
existing borough the Local Boundary
Commission is encouraged to do so"

GARY WILKEN

SENATOR
Fairbanks

Interim:
1851 Fox Ave.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Tel: 451-5501 (from Fbks)
Tel: (907) 465-3709 (outside Fbks)
Fax: (907) 465-4714

Alaska State Legislature

Senate

During Session:
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Tel: 451-5501 (from Fbks)
Tel: (907) 465-3709 (outside Fbks)
Fax: (907) 465-4714
Website: www.garywilken.com
E-Mail: Senator.Gary.Wilken@legis.state.ak.us

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Tom Wagoner, Chairman
Community and Regional Affairs Committee

FROM: Senator Gary Wilken

DATE: May 1, 2003

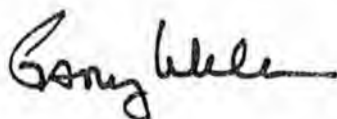
RE: SCR 12 – *Borough Incorporation: Unorganized Areas*

I respectfully request that Senate Concurrent Resolution 12, *Borough Incorporation: Unorganized Areas*, be scheduled for a hearing before the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 requests the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) to consider borough incorporation for four areas of the state: Upper Tanana Basin Model Borough, Copper River Basin Model Borough, Glacier Bay Model Borough, and Chatham Region Model Borough.

These four areas were highlighted in a recent report by the LBC, *Unorganized Areas of Alaska that Meet Borough Incorporation Standards*, as meeting the existing standards for borough incorporation. Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 requests the LBC to further study these areas and, if warranted, present a recommendation for borough incorporation to the legislature.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in scheduling a hearing.



GARY WILKEN

SENATOR
Fairbanks

During:
1851 Fox Ave
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Tel: 451-5501 (from Fbks)
Tel: (907) 465-3709 (outside Fbks)
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Fax: (907) 465-4714
Website: www.garywilken.com
E-Mail: Senator.Gary.Wilken@legis.state.ak.us

SPONSOR STATEMENT

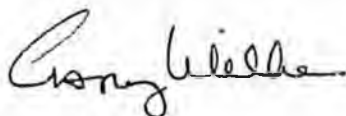
Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 Borough Incorporation: Unorganized Areas

Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 requests the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) to consider borough incorporation for four areas of the state: Upper Tanana Basin Model Borough, Copper River Basin Model Borough, Glacier Bay Model Borough, and Chatham Region Model Borough. These four areas of the state were recently identified in a February 2003 report by the LBC, *Unorganized Areas of Alaska the Meet Borough Incorporation Standards*, as meeting the existing standards for borough incorporation.

Although the aforementioned model boroughs are named in the recent Local Boundary Commission report as having the fiscal and administrative capacity to operate borough governments, the majority of the residents do not live in home rule and first class cities. As residents of the unorganized borough, these Alaskans are not required to financially support their local school system. This resolution recognizes this fact and establishes a procedure to determine if the residents of the four areas have the ability to contribute to their local school districts.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 requests the Local Boundary Commission to review these areas in depth and make a recommendation for borough incorporation for each of the model boroughs that is determined to have met the applicable borough incorporation standards. The exact details regarding the establishment of each particular recommended borough would be included in each legislative review proposal as submitted by the LBC. Each proposed borough incorporation would be adopted unless the legislature disapproved the recommendation within 45 legislative days.

I respectfully request your consideration and support for this resolution.



Written testimony by: Denny Kay Weathers
From: Hawkins Island in Prince William Sound
Date: May 9, 2003
Subject: SCR 12

Mr/Madam Chair;

Alaska has six regions, the economy in each region is varied as are the People that live in Alaska. Alaska is a diversified State with many classes of people, some choosing to be city dwellers some choosing the rural life.

Some areas of Alaska have trees some don't, some areas in Alaska have a dry climate some a wet climate, some areas of Alaska have a good economy base others have a poor economy base, some areas of Alaska are supported solely on a government income while in another area it might be supported by fishing or mining, some areas are good for agriculture while some are all rock unable to grow anything. Nothing is equal except our Declaration of rights as it was written.

The federal government allows subsistence halibut fishing in the rural areas of Alaska while denying those Alaskan's living in the urban areas... Why? Because it is a documented fact that those that live in the rural areas pay higher cost for living such as in fuel, groceries, transportation and medical needs.

For the record please note that any SCR 12 monies if passed WILL NOT go into a school or education fund as PUBLIC MONIES CAN NOT be dedicated as stated in Article IX. Sec. 7. Dedicated Funds.

SCR 12 is only designed to build the bureaucracy.

In fact as I testified before on SCR 12 the past feasibility study done in 1997 concerning a PWS borough predicts a deficit of about \$100,000 to almost \$3.6 million by year 5. Beware Senator Wilken is giving the Legislature False information and he and the LBC Board have been notified concerning said false information. End Testimony

DENNY KAY WEATHERS
Denny Kay Weathers
May 9, 2003

Sponsor and/or Committee Name			Date
SCRA- Sen. Thomas Wagoner, Chair			5-9-03
Start/End Time	Chairing site	Juneau Room	Testimony
1:30-3:30	Juneau	CAP 203	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Invitational <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Person and	Phone Number	Other sites may add?	Testimony Limit.
Mary Jackson	465-4989	yes	

Subject of meeting and/or Bills on agenda

HB 209 Muni Tax: Property
Affected BY BLSASTER
Proposedly/Id/SCR 12 BORO INCORP: UNDER AREA

Sites - LIOs	Sites - Offnets	Phone #
Anchorage		
Barrow		
Bethel		
Cordova		
Delta Junction		
Dillingham		
Fairbanks		
Glennallen		
Homer		
Juneau	X	
Kenai	X	
Ketchikan		
Kodiak		
Kotzebue		
Matsu		
Nome		
Petersburg		
Seward		
Sitka		
Tok		
Valdez		
Wrangell		

Notes

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senator Tom Wagoner, Chair

Official Business

Senator Robin Taylor, Vice-Chair
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Georgianna Lincoln
Senator Gary Stevens

State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4989
Fax: (907) 465-4779

DATE: May 7, 03

TC: Senate Secretary

FROM: Senator Tom Wagoner, Chair *Tom Wagoner*
Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee

RE: Meeting Schedule: May 9, 2003

May 9: 1:30 – 3:30pm: Fahrenkamp, Room #203

+ HB 209 MUNI.TAX: PROPERTY AFFECTED BY DISASTER

Bills Previously Heard

+ SCR 12 BOROUGH INCORPORATION: UNORG AREAS

- * First Hearing
- + Teleconferenced
- ++ Testimony by invitation only

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SCR 12
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: DCED
 Title Borough Incorporation: Unorganized Areas BRU Comm Assist & Econ. Dev. (405)
 Component Community & Business
 Sponsor Senator Wilken Development
 Requester Senate Community & Regional Affairs Component No. 2486

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

10.2 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0
 Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Please see Analysis Continuation.

Prepared by: Gene Kane, Director Phone 907-269-4578
 Division Community & Economic Development Date/Time 5/6/03 5:18 PM
 Approved by: Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner Date 5/6/2003
 Agency Department of Community & Economic Development

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SCR 12

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 12 asks the Local Boundary Commission to consider borough incorporation in four specific areas; Upper Tanana Basin, Copper River Basin, Glacier Bay region and the Chatham region.

Those four areas were identified as meeting the standards for borough incorporation in the Local Boundary Commission's February 19, 2003 report entitled "Unorganized Areas of Alaska that Meet Borough Incorporation Standards."

If, after further study and public hearings, the Commission affirms the determination expressed in its February 19, 2003 report that those four areas meet the standards for borough incorporation, the resolution asks the Commission to present recommendations to the legislature under Article X, Section 12 of the constitution for incorporation of those areas as boroughs.

Any recommendations from the Commission for borough incorporation would be subject to review by the legislature under Article X, Section 12 of the constitution.

The division will perform this work within existing resources, therefore, new funds are not required.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

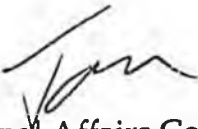


SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE Senator Tom Wagoner, Chair

Official Business

Senator Robin Taylor, Vice-Chair
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Georgianna Lincoln
Senator Gary Stevens

State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4989
Fax: (907) 465-4779

DATE: May 2, 2003
TO: Senate Secretary
FROM: Senator Tom Wagoner, Chair 
Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee
RE: Meeting Schedule: May 7, 2003

May 7: 1:30 – 3:30pm: Fahrenkamp, Room #203

* + SCR 12++ BOROUGH INCORPORATION: UNORG AREAS

* First Hearing
+ Teleconferenced
++ Testimony by invitation only

FRANCINE WILLIS + 2, ANGOON

CHITNA + 5

G. Cane \approx D. BOCKHORST, DCED

~~CARL CROSSMAN, KENNY LAKE~~

~~ROBERT LEWIS + 2, TENAKEE, ^{1.3} Terry Kennedy (11)~~

ELSIE SANFORD, TANACROSS

JOE HICKS, ~~TANACROSS~~

CHRISTOCHINA No Testimony

ROBIN MCCORMICK + 2

GLEN ALLEN GARY

ANGON -

CHITWA - DANIEL BOONE

- ALLEN MINISH

-

~~Francine Willis + 2, ANGOON~~

~~— Peter Jack~~

~~— FLOYD Jim~~

STANLEY

G. CANE & D. BOCKHURST, DCED
QUESTIONS

KEITH BETTRIDGE IS ON
HOONAH



Welcome, alur
Home > Future Meeting

Sign Out | Help



Meeting Information

Meeting ID 7272
Phone Number 907-465-4648

Date MAY 7, 2003
Time 1:30PM (America/Anchorage)
Scheduled End Time 3:30 PM
Length 180 (minutes)
of Callers 4

Billing Code SCRA
Meeting Room CAP 203
Contact Person & Phone # Mary/4989
Testify (Y/N) /Time/Invitation Y/ 2 minutes
Record Meeting Yes
Subject SCRA
Meeting Description *jnu,cor, fbx, djt,gln, tok,vts (12), Off(1) 1:30-3:30 Senate Comm. & Regional Affairs SCR 12 other sites may add 5/5 added glennallen 5/6 added vts's, added fbx, cor 5/6 Slana, Hyder, Pelican, Angoon, Kake, Gustavus, Hoonah, Tenakee, and Darrell Hargraves may also join 5/7 added VTS

Options

Attachments/Recordings (1)

Invitees

HOME

Sponsor and/or Committee Name			Date
SCRA- Sen. Thomas Wagoner, Chair			MAY 7 2003
Start/End Time	Chairing site	Juneau Room	Testimony
1:30-3:30	Juneau	CAP 203	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Invitational <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Person and	Phone Number	Other sites may add?	Testimony Limit
Mary Jackson	465-4989	Yes	-2 MINUTES-
Subject of meeting and/or Bills on agenda			

SCR 12 - BOK - INC. & UNOR6. AREAS


NOTE: I EXPECT SEVERAL OFFNET SITES & WILL GET THEM TO YOU ASAP. / MW

Sites - LIOs	Sites - Offnets	Phone #
Anchorage		
Barrow		
Bethel		
Cordova		
Delta Junction	✓	
Dillingham		
Fairbanks		
Glennallen		
Homer		
Juneau	✓	
Kenai		
Ketchikan		
Kodiak		
Kotzebue		
Matsu		
Nome		
Petersburg		
Seward		
Sitka		
Tok	✓	
Valdez		
Wrangell		

Notes

$$\begin{array}{r} 60 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline 2 \sqrt{120} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 20 \\ \hline 3 \overline{)60} \end{array}$$

2:41 PM = 
JIM EASON

RDC
ALLIANCE
KEVIN T.
UNOCAL

OPINION

Delta, Tok need to carry weight

I read with great interest the March 30 Fairbanks Daily News-Miner article titled, "Delta grapples with school funding issues." This article highlighted the problems the Delta/Greely School District is having funding its local schools, and I share their concern. And to their credit, Delta/Greely school officials have certainly done their homework in locating expanded revenue sources to assist them in their current plight. However, I found it very disappointing that not one of their suggested methods to help fund their local public schools involved the financial participation of the residents of Delta and the surrounding area.

The Delta/Greely School District is a Regional Educational Attendance Area: a school district that exists within the unorganized borough. It is a political entity found only in Alaska. An REAA receives 100 percent state funding for its schools, including all K-12 costs associated with the school's operation, maintenance and capital needs, without any requirement of local support. In short, the same educational costs that taxpayers in organized Alaska (as in our Fairbanks North Star Borough) provide are funded totally by the state of Alaska in the REAAs.

As directed by state law, organized Alaska this year is required to contribute \$162 million to help operate its schools across Alaska. Only after that contribution do these school districts receive state of Alaska education funding support. In 2003, the property-tax payers of the Fairbanks North Star Borough are required to pay \$19.5 million, and will voluntarily pay an additional \$14 million, to help support our local schools. At this same time, \$121 million is sent directly to the 19 REAAs in order to provide 100 percent fund-

Community Perspective

By Sen.
Gary Wilken



ing for their schools—with no local contribution required. Specifically, Delta/Greely received \$6.5 million for 1,004 students or \$6,500 per student with no financial support from the residents of the area.

Well, one might ask, why don't REAAs contribute to their education like the rest of Alaska? To be up front, there are some areas of the state that simply don't have the ability to help—yet. However, there are other areas where the necessary wealth does exist, but unfortunately some residents conveniently hide behind the refrain, "We can't wait any government." But at the same time they seek millions in general funds (your money), federal grants and other assistance from "any government." Regrettably, the search for additional funding is done without looking inward and asking whether they can help themselves as do the Alaskans in organized Alaska.

I respectfully ask the leaders and the residents of the Delta/Greely and Tok/Gateway areas to look to themselves before looking for help from local Alaskans who are already paying their fair share for education. I challenge the residents of the Delta/Greely/Tok school districts to have a discussion about helping themselves, just as do the people I represent. I ask: 1. Have the courage to look at a property tax using the pipeline value to provide support if you tax yourselves at the same tax rate. 2. Consider a sales tax to enable the thousands of tourists and hundreds of tempo-

rary workers who transit your area each summer to help fund your schools. 3. Maybe a gas tax, perhaps seasonal, to get the visitors' big RVs to help. 4. Have a discussion with the owners of the proposed Pogo gold mine (expected to be more valuable than our local Fort Knox mine) about helping fund the government services the mine workers will require. 5. How about an income tax on all the workers within your area (the Federal Employment Security Division report shows that, in 2002, 713 workers in the Delta/Greely area earned \$24.9 million in wages)? 6. Understand that additional PL 874 federal impact dollars are available to you if you make a local contribution. All these options, and perhaps more, are open for consideration by the people of the Delta/Greely/Tok area and will enable local residents to begin supporting their neighborhood schools.

The communities of Delta Junction and Tok have been blessed with great opportunity. The potential for growth and prosperity in this region of the state is the envy of many. However, with these opportunities come educational challenges, like building a new school. The local residents, parents and children who are the most affected by these challenges are those that will best solve these problems. It's time to step up and use your area's potential resources to help fund your schools, as does 87 percent of the population of Alaska. I am confident your local communities and school districts will be better off because of your financial support. Your local contribution will speak loudly; you'll say, "We care and are willing to pay our fair share" and organized Alaska will hear you.

Sen. Gary Wilken is a Republican from Fairbanks and is co-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

FAIRBANKS

Daily News - Miner

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Publisher

KELLY BOSTIAN
Managing Editor

DERMOT COLE
Columnist

ROD BOYCE
Assistant Managing Editor

More rural areas need to pay

With Alaska facing a serious budget crisis, it is time for the unorganized areas of the state to help out by taking on some of the cost of education.

Although it is unclear just how much these rural areas can provide toward solving the state's budget problems, having them pay is also a matter of principle. Residents of all boroughs and some cities contribute, usually through property taxes, toward the cost of educating their children. The state still provides most of the money, however.

But outside those local boundaries the state pays the full cost—only because residents have not decided to form a local government to tax themselves.

Changing this arrangement will take some cajoling.

The state Local Boundary Commission, in meetings with lawmakers this week, presented its case that Alaska has seven unorganized regions with potential to form borough governments.

Four of the seven regions, including the region of Delta Junction and Fort Greely, pay nothing toward education, which consumes a good portion of the state budget. The other three contain organized cities in unorganized areas. Those cities do pay toward education.

If the Delta area, for example, were to become a borough, it could take a share of the property tax paid by the owners of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. The area, home to the national missile defense and Pogo Mine projects, might see an influx of new homeowners—all who could pay a property tax, if that were the chosen taxation method. Some Delta residents, to their credit, recognize that the time has come to contribute to education costs and have formed the Delta Regional Government Options Study Committee, which met this week.

While Delta is wise to move ahead, the Legislature may nevertheless find itself applying pressure.

Delta and the three other regions that pay nothing are the subject of a resolution by Sen. Gary Wilken that urges the Local Boundary Commission to either coax those areas to organize or to force organization upon them. The commission is generally supportive of creating new boroughs, continuing a belief it held under Gov. Tony Knowles.

Opponents argue that many rural communities have economies too weak to support local taxation. Some suggest that residents of one community, more populous than another in a proposed borough, will not want to share property tax revenue with a smaller community in that same new borough.

Others say, too, that the unorganized area already contributes to the state by not organizing, therefore giving up a sizable portion of federal money that comes to Alaska school districts as payment for having within their borders federal land that cannot be subjected to a local property tax.

Those reasons do not outweigh the fact that the time truly has come, evidenced by the state's budget problems, for the unorganized areas to help fund education. Leaders in Delta Junction should be commended for recognizing that reality. We hope leaders in other regions follow suit.