

12/11/2015

To: Haines Borough Assembly Members

Re: Hiring a Lobbyist for 2016

Dear Haines Borough Assembly Members,

We recognize the Borough's need to secure additional funding to move closer to completion on several important projects, however, we do not believe hiring a lobbyist will generate the funding results desired given Alaska's current political and fiscal realities. We strongly urge you to postpone filling the lobbying position included in the 2015 budget for the following reasons:

1. The price of oil is now down to ~\$40/barrel and is not expected to rise significantly for several years. Alaska is facing a multi-billion dollar budget shortfall and the Legislature will be cutting rather than expanding funding for projects and communities statewide.
2. The Anchorage/Mat-Su legislators controlling the majority caucuses in the Legislature have a very negative attitude towards Southeast Alaska communities, as demonstrated by their lack of support for basic infrastructure needs such as the Alaska Marine Highway.
3. Representative Kito and Senator Egan will be aware of the opportunities for influencing the Legislative and Gubernatorial budgets and will let us know when we need to send a local contingent to Juneau. A small, well-prepared, politically diverse group of citizens will be far more likely to sway key Legislators and the Governor, who are often far more receptive to an approach from the "real people" of a community as opposed to a "hired gun."

For the past several years, many people in Haines have been concerned about the repeated, significant expenditure of tax dollars on projects and studies that have provided limited if any benefit to the community. Spending \$45,000 on a lobbyist in this political and fiscal climate will be remembered as yet another costly, unproductive expense.

Sincerely,



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