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To: [Alekk Fullerton](#)
Subject: Haines resolution 22-09-996
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Hello,

Please forward these comments to the borough assembly and mayor regarding the discussion on the Lutak dock planning (resolution 22-09-996).

As a landowner and part-time resident of Haines, I am concerned about the lack of transparency and limited public input regarding expansion of the Lutak Dock planning process. Approving a contract for initial phases of a new dock risks committing the community to a final product that has not been well presented, and has significant long-term consequences for the town.

My association with Haines began in 1976, and I have been delighted that Haines has been a robust, stable small community over these past nearly 50 years! Many communities haven't had this stability, including most towns in the Western US, where a boom and bust economy still persists, creating imbalances in rent costs, housing costs and availability of services. Haines should be proud that the town remains a delightful place to live.

Transparency in governance is critical to ensure the confidence in all community members that their voice is heard. There are many recent activities in Haines that suggest lack of transparency. The Haines highway improvement seems linked to the need to have a road to accommodate increased traffic including larger trucks. The voting on a contract for a phase of dock development seems specifically geared for the potential for an ore dock. The public deserves to know what the long-term goals are for these projects, how they were conceived, and who benefits from the efforts.

Clearly any infrastructure project provides jobs for the duration of the project—usually short-term jobs, with many involving expertise not available locally, and thus providing more jobs for non-community members than community members. These projects have longer term implications—and establishment of an ore terminal in Haines will certainly affect the stability of the community. While some will benefit from the construction involved in an ore terminal, there are serious consequences for others, including those in the fishing industry—which has been a mainstay for the Haines economy. The increased truck traffic, the potential health and environmental consequences will affect the entire community, while the benefits will likely affect a small number of community members, and be short-lived for most. The community deserves to know what is being planned for the longer-term, and to have their voices heard.

Few would deny that industry lobbyists have a strong influence on national, state and local politics, including decisions that affect communities. Alaska has struggled to find the optimal balance between preserving the wilderness and using its abundant resources. For some issues, finding this balance has resulted in impacts on wild areas that are rarely visited. For others, as in the case for Haines, the result can be destruction of the communities involved. Many community members in the fracking areas of Montana and Wyoming would argue that the jobs provided were not worth the loss of community and the marked increase in social ills that occurred in these boom/bust communities. The primary beneficiaries for an ore terminal in Haines are Japanese investors, Canadian mining executives, and a few contractors who will have short-term earnings. Is this worth the potential destruction of the fabric of the town?

Certainly all community members should be presented with a clear vision of what is expected with such an effort, and to be able to express their views on the pros and cons. Allowing outside interests and the individual views of a few individuals is certainly not the way to preserve the sense of community and love of Haines that we all have.

Please slow down the process of review for the Lutak dock and allow the community to hear from all those engaged about what to expect, what the long-term vision is, how adverse effects will be ameliorated and who will benefit. The community, when given all the information transparently, can then respond.

Thank you

Robin Houston