

**Memo**

**To:** Haines Borough Energy & Sustainability Commissioners

**From:** Stephanie Scott, Energy & Sustainability Coordinator

**Date:** November 20, 2008

**Re:** Background and rationale for the Alaska Transit Fund Resolution (**Agenda Item 8(g)** for the November 25 meeting)

Debra Schnabel drafted the Haines Borough Coordinated Transportation Plan<sup>1</sup>, adopted in September by the Haines Borough Assembly (Resolution 08-08-138). The Plan addressed the underutilization of school district pupil transportation services (page 8). Pupil transportation resources could be better utilized to provide needed public transportation.

November 8 the Kodiak Island Borough took steps to urge the state legislature to fund coordinated transit operations ( with the creation of an Alaska Transit Fund) and change pupil transportation funding requirements so that public and pupil transportation services can be blended to achieve economies of scale. (See included **Kodiak Island Borough Resolution**).

I asked Debra to answer some questions I considered key to garnering support for a similar resolution to present to the Haines Borough Assembly December 4. (See **Resolution (DRAFT)** at the end of this document.) My questions are in bold. Debra's responses are italicized. I thank Debra for her thoughtful response and for drafting the **Resolution** for your consideration.

**Why should I support this?**

*Support of this resolution underlines the desire to contribute to a national program to reduce energy consumption. It should result in lower operating costs of the student transportation system.*

*Haines Borough Resolution 08-06-123 resolves to reduce energy consumption for all borough facilities and activities. The Borough currently funds the activity of pupil transportation*

*(a portion), which consumes energy. The resolve to support a blending of public and school transportation systems will (theoretically) reduce the costs of operating the student transportation system.*

**What is the local evidence of need?**

*We could argue whether Haines needs a public transportation system. We are too "wealthy," in that even \$5/gallon gas and gas guzzling SUVs*

<sup>1</sup> Please email me ([sscott@aptalaska.net](mailto:sscott@aptalaska.net)) or the Borough Clerk ([jcozzi@haines.ak.us](mailto:jcozzi@haines.ak.us)) for a copy of the plan.

*didn't get enough of us to make the decision to stop driving.*

*An important physical attribute of the Haines community is the widespread distance of neighborhoods. We are like an octopus - tiny head and long tentacles: eight miles to Mud Bay community, five+ miles to Lutak community, and communities at 23 and 27 mile. Each day, many vehicles are driven hundreds of miles between home and work or the center of commerce, often with only one person in the car. Some parents put their children on a school bus and follow the bus all the way to town in their own car. A public transit system would provide many people the opportunity to cut back on energy consumption by leaving their vehicle at home and riding a bus to and from home. This reduces wear on the highways also.*

*If a full-blown transit system or a student/public transit system were determined unfeasible, the Alaska Transit Fund could contribute to a Coordinated Transit system. That is a system utilizing car pooling/ride shares, scheduling of community-based vehicles to minimize energy consumption.*

**What will it mean to me?**

*As an Assembly member, it means walking the walk.*

**Will it cost the borough anything?**

*I don't see how it can cost anything to support the resolution. If a public transit system were deemed feasible, the Borough would participate financially in its start-up and maintenance, with support from the Transit Fund.*

**In what way will it save \$ locally or serve the borough?**

*Except as noted with the blending of the student transportation and public transportation, supporting the resolution doesn't save the borough money. But it does serve the borough politically, by demonstrating a conscious decision to do the right thing by the planet. When leaders convince their constituents to behave responsibly, they are demonstrating leadership. This serves everyone individually and collectively.*

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**RESOLUTION (DRAFT)**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN ALASKA TRANSIT TRUST FUND TO SUSTAIN COMMUNITY-BASED PUBLIC AND COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS; AND CHANGES TO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING REQUIREMENTS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIES OF SCALE IN COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.**

WHEREAS, the Haines Borough Energy and Sustainability Commission has recommended adoption of this resolution for submission to Governor Palin and the Alaska Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Alaska State Legislature is scheduled to address the effects of high energy costs in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Governor Palin has proposed using \$1.2 billion in state revenue to ameliorate the effects of high energy costs on Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Assembly recognizes that encouraging and enhancing public and coordinated transit systems can reduce the use and cost of energy; and

WHEREAS, there are unmet capital and operating needs in Alaska's public and coordinated transit network;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HAINES BOROUGH ASSEMBLY that:

Section 1: the Borough Assembly recommends and encourages the Legislature to appropriate \$200 million to establish a transit trust fund, the proceeds of which would sustain public and coordinated transit operations throughout Alaska.

Section 2: the Borough Assembly recommends and encourages the Legislature to explore changes to the pupil transportation funding requirements that would allow blending of public and pupil transit systems in Alaska's communities to achieve economies of scale.

Section 3. copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor and the Legislature immediately upon passage and approval.

ADOPTED BY THE HAINES BOROUGH ASSEMBLY DECEMBER 4, 2008

Introduced by: Manager Gifford  
Requested by: Assembly member Branson  
Drafted by: Legislative Committee  
Introduced on: 11/06/2008  
Adopted on: 11/06/2008

**KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH  
RESOLUTION NO. FY 2009-10**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH  
SUPPORTING GOVERNOR PALIN'S PROPOSAL TO AMELIORATE THE EFFECTS OF HIGH  
ENERGY COSTS ON ALASKANS AND RECOMMENDING AND ENCOURAGING SUPPORT  
FOR LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS FROM THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE BY  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Alaska State Legislature will soon hold a special session to address the effects of high energy costs; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Palin has proposed using \$1.2 billion in surplus revenue to ameliorate the effects of high energy costs on Alaskans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Assembly recognizes that encouraging and enhancing public and coordinated transit can reduce the amount of energy used for transportation, thus reducing costs to residents; and

**WHEREAS**, there are unmet capital and operating needs in Alaska's public and coordinated transit network;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH** that:


**Section 1:** That the Borough Assembly recommends and encourages the Legislature to appropriate \$200 million to establish a transit trust fund, the proceeds of which would provide ongoing operating dollars to public and coordinated transit operations throughout Alaska.

**Section 2:** That the Borough Assembly recommends and encourages the Legislature to explore changes to the pupil transportation funding requirements that would allow blending of public and pupil transit systems to achieve economies of scale.


**Section 3:** That copies of this resolution be forward to the Governor and the Legislature immediately upon passage and approval.

**ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH  
THIS SIXTH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2008**

KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH

  
Jerome M. Selby, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Nova M. Javier, CMC, Borough Clerk