

March 19, 2013

TO: Council

FROM: Mayor Wythe

RE: Juneau Trip – February 26 – 28, 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the interests of the City and the Council while visiting with our House and Senate representatives in Juneau. It was a pleasure to travel with and be guided by Katie Koester and to be hosted by our lobbyist Linda Anderson. Both are very well versed in the workings of the Capital and proved to be valuable assets on my first visit as Mayor.

Linda had coordinated a bustling day and a half for our visit.

On Wednesday we were able to meet with Representative Seaton and Senator Micciche regarding the top priorities on our CIP; encouraging their continued support of the Municipal Harbors Grant funding (\$4.2 Million dollars in the Governor's budget) and the re-appropriation of the \$2 Million for the Port & Harbor Building and Sky Line Fire Station projects. In addition, we encouraged them to consider contributing towards the balance of the funding needed to make both of these projects successful, if discretionary funding becomes available. We were also introduced as visitors from the House and Senate Floors, which is always a privilege.

In a brief meeting with Speaker Chenault we took the opportunity to thank him for his efforts in supporting the gas trunk line funding and reviewed the progress on the natural gas distribution project as well. When asked about the potential of Homer being included in any State assisted distribution funding Speaker Chenault likened the possibility to an overloaded pony that can't make it through town. At any rate, if there is money to be had he will keep Homer in mind.

Also on Wednesday, we had the opportunity to meeting with Senator Meyer's staff. We shared the progress that has been made in preparation of moving forward with the Harbor Improvement Project and discussed Homer's placement on the Municipal Harbors Grant funding list. Katie was very complementary of the structure of this project and how it has helped Homer prepare properly so that when the funding is approved, our project will be ready to go. As with others, we shared an update on the gas line project as well.

Our last visit on Wednesday was to Representative Wilson in support of HB 35. She was able to share her optimism for initial funding to be provided through unused funds from other AHFC programs. We also discussed our interest in any funding that may become available for distribution systems.

Wednesday evening Linda hosted a very nice dinner with Katie, Gus and I, Representative Seaton and Senator Micciche and their families and staff. It was a relaxing evenings and pleasant opportunity to meet our representatives without talking business.

On Thursday morning we met with Chief of Staff, Mike Nizich. This provided an opportunity to thank the Governor again for placing Homer in the Governor's budget for the Municipal Harbor Grant and for coming to Homer last fall in our community's time of need. Katie provided an update on the progress of the gas line and also support for HB 35. I provided an update on Homer being selected as a Green Dot Pilot and the City's recent funding of the plan through Permanent Fund proceeds. I also provided a letter of support for Sam Cotten's reappointment as the local representative on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

**Comment [J&B1]:** Jo. Please provide the appropriate title here. Thanks,

Our last meeting was with several staff members from the Department of Transportation. This was very informative. We discussed our current Harbor Improvement Project; the Deep Water Dock project and the current placement of Lake Street and Pioneer Avenue on the STIP. We learned that funding for the Corp of Engineers is dwindling as is their presence in Alaska. We also learned that the more that we can do on our own to move our projects to a shovel ready status the better our chances of receiving funding.

One interesting proposal that was discussed was an amendment by the late Senator Inouye to set aside \$50 million dollars annually for CORPS non-contiguous states projects. Katie is going to do some research to determine if there was any traction on this concept and how, or if, it would apply to Alaska.

There is a lot of talk about ports and harbors becoming a larger part of the national transportation infrastructure and it is important that Homer keep track of these matters. They will be very important to our long range future.