



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Administration

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Date: June 1, 2016

To: Honorable Mike Navarre, Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor
And the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

From: Katie Koester, City Manager

Re: 2017 KPB Budget and Landfill Management Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on potential changes proposed for the Kenai Peninsula Borough Landfill Management Plan. Specifically, I am addressing the proposal to close landfills one day a week and on holidays. Landfill closure, especially in the summer, poses public health, environmental safety and economic concern.

The City of Homer's Port and Harbor manages the only non-official borough transfer site on the Kenai Peninsula. At 49 acres, Homer's Port and Harbor provides moorage for 920 vessels in reserved slips, with an additional 6,000 feet of transient moorage for ships up to 150'. A barge basin and haul out facility supports additional large vessels. The City provides as many as twenty five-yard dumpsters in eleven different locations throughout the Harbor and Spit area specifically for marine vessel trash, providing a convenient, safe disposal alternative to dumping trash in coastal waters. The harbor contracts for this refuse collection and disposal service, which costs approximately \$50,000 annually.

While harbor dumpsters are posted for vessel trash only, in reality many of the residents from both inside and outside city limits bring their garbage to the Spit because of a lack in transfer stations out East End Road and within Homer City limits. This makes the harbor dumpsters a quasi-refuse transfer site that collects additional garbage from area residents. Residents of the south-side of Kachemak Bay utilize the harbor dumpsters for disposal as well, rather than transporting it to the transfer site facility located on Baycrest Hill.

The landfill closures under consideration will only make the Spit a more convenient site for residents looking to dispose of their waste, especially after weekend and long holiday weekend household cleanup activities. To compound the problem, these closures coincide with the peak tourism on the Homer Spit. Normal collection services during these periods of high volume waste generation will be inadequate. Increasing the frequency of disposal at these times will not be an option as the transfer site will be closed causing dumpster overflow and creating litter-strewn mini dump sites appealing only to scavenger birds and subject to further dispersal by coastal winds.

Uncontained trash poses public safety risks, is a threat to the marine ecosystem and compromises Homer's reputation as a first-class tourism destination. The health of marine resources and visitor facilities are critically important to Homer's economy which relies heavily on fishing and tourism.

For these reasons, the City of Homer supports keeping the Baycrest Hill Transfer Facility open on its current schedule. If closures are considered, we respectfully ask that you avoid any closures during the busy summer months and avoid a weekday/holiday closure schedule which causes the Transfer Facility to be closed two consecutive days.

Thank you for your service to the residents and communities of the Kenai Peninsula.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Koester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Koester
City Manager