

Sponsored by: Mayor DeVilbiss
Amended: 09/06/11
Adopted: 09/06/11

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 11-112**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING USIBELLI COAL MINE, INC. RENEWAL PERMITS FOR THE WISHBONE HILL PROJECT.

WHEREAS, Buffalo Mine Road, Sutton, Chickaloon, and Puritan Creek areas of the Matanuska Valley contain some of the most premium low sulfur, high BTU bituminous coal in the world; and

WHEREAS, leases over a century old held by entities as prestigious as the United States Navy have held these reserves poised for the world market; and

WHEREAS, global concerns about fossil fuel emissions has elevated the value of the Matanuska Valley low sulfur coal; and

WHEREAS, Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc., (UCM) is an Alaskan family owned and operated coal mining company; and

WHEREAS, UCM has provided Alaskan jobs since 1943 at its Healy facility; and

WHEREAS, UCM has demonstrated responsible, sustainable exploration and mining practices at Wishbone Hill that have passed State and Federal regulations; and

WHEREAS, UCM has in place reclamation acreage that is more beautiful and functional than the original landscape; and

WHEREAS, the Wishbone Hill mine has been completely permitted since 1992 following extensive exploration that began in 1983 and the mining permit has been renewed every five years subsequent; and

WHEREAS, UCM has shown good will to the community by not utilizing the Buffalo Mine Road for extraction plans in response to community concerns, but has rather invested in a new dedicated road to get to the Glenn Highway; and

WHEREAS, Wishbone Hill would be a zero discharge mine; and

WHEREAS, UCM estimates 500,000 tons of coal will be mined each year; and

WHEREAS, UCM will bring 75-100 new job opportunities to the Sutton area; and

WHEREAS, UCM has already shown its commitment to local hire by employing local contractors during its exploration program and driveway construction; and

WHEREAS, the Wishbone Hill project will diversify the economy and resurrect the development of a God given resource that has long influenced the history and development of the Matanuska Valley; and

WHEREAS, coal mined from the Matanuska Coal Field is encouraged to pass through the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's port, Port MacKenzie, thus diversifying revenue for the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the existing 3,100 page permit for Wishbone Hill provides rigorous oversight of mining practices and the Alaska State Department of Natural Resource's regulations effectively protect the environment; and

WHEREAS, Moose habitat and recreation will be enhanced as part of the permit's reclamation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Glenn Highway and Wishbone Hill area view sheds are a significant visitor industry corridor and part of the National Scenic Highway and has historically been a popular scenic drive and recreational area for South Central Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the livelihood for dozens of accommodations, day tours, overnight guided trips and hospitality services provide long standing, significant economic development for the Mat-Su Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Glenn Highway Corridor Partnership Plan, in 2002, and the Glenn Highway Interpretive Plan, in 2006, both identify the scenic value of the highway and a balance between development and the visitor experience; and

WHEREAS, coal mining and recreation and tourism must be equally considered as an important source of job creation; and

WHEREAS, the Sutton Community Council has voted to support the renewal of the state permit.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough respectfully requests the state of Alaska, consider and preserve the exceptional value of tourism and recreation of the Glenn highway Corridor in relationship to the area of the Wishbone Hill project.


BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska Susitna Borough Assembly respectfully requests the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water to renew Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. mining permits for the Wishbone Hill project otherwise known as #01-89-796 and 02-89-796.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough respectfully requests that the state of Alaska monitor the permit and to enforce the provisions of zero discharge into water and the transfer of coal dust off the permit boundaries to meet permitting standards and high air quality standards.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 6 day of September, 2011.


LARRY DEVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk
(SEAL)

YES: Woods, Arvin, Ewing, Bettine and Halter
NO: Keogh