

OPINION

OUR VIEW

A good opportunity

It's good news any time we get the ear of one of the senators representing us in Washington D.C.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar met with area leaders Tuesday to bring to their attention a provision allowing public-private partnerships to construct new land-based port of entries.

The fact the International Falls port needs work is nothing new to any of us who have crossed the border. Constructed in 1993, this facility does not meet the needs of the public or U.S. Customs and Border Protection staff that work there. The federal government knows well the existing facility is inadequate. In 2009, General Services Administration, the federal agency that handles government property and facilities, issued a draft feasibility study examining the conditions of the existing port and the existing and future needs of the CBP and other inspection agencies. GSA officials have said the existing facilities are undersized and obsolete, and consequently incapable of allowing the federal agencies assigned to it to fulfill their respective missions.

But, there's no federal money for reconstruction of ports and federal officials representing border areas have supported the provision allowing the public-

private partnerships to do the work.

While the port issue brought Klobuchar to town, it was a part of her “competitive agenda” tour that included Bemidji and Staples in an effort to promote long-term economic growth.

The stop in Borderland offered area leaders a chance to tell Klobuchar about the need to diversify the local economy and efforts to do just that after the loss of jobs at the local paper mill and elsewhere in the community. Koochiching County Board Chairman Rob Ecklund told Klobuchar just about every community in the county has experienced recent and significant job loss that must be stemmed.

Klobuchar is a good friend for Borderland, as she serves as Senate chair of the Joint Economic Committee and has introduced the Innovate America Act, which aims to boost science, technology, engineering and math education, increase exports, and cut red tape.

Clearly, any time we can bring to the attention of a federal lawmaker to our challenges and needs we must do just that. Tuesday's session, while brief, was informative and we hope memorable as Klobuchar heads back to the nation's Capitol to do our bidding.

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES

President Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500
202-456-1111
Website:
www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail:
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
202-225-6211
Website: www.nolan.house.gov
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
11 East Superior Street
Suite 125
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-464-5095
Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
Brainerd City Hall
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Democrat
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
1200 Washington Avenue

South, Suite 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-727-5220
Website:
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
Democrat
Senate Hart Building 320
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5641
Website:
www.alfranken.com
E-Mail:
info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES

Gov. Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN, 55155
800-657-3717
E-mail:
Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
571 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn
Assistant: Joan Harrison

Sen. Tom Bakk
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Capitol Office phone:
(651) 296-8881
Email:
www.senate.mn/
senatorbakkemail



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Arrowhead 135 showcases hospitality

Editor's note: The following is a letter received by International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson. It is being published as an open letter to the community.

Dear Mayor Anderson,
As a recent competitor (runner) in the Arrowhead 135 Ultramarathon (Jan 27-29), I was overwhelmed at the hospitality shown to me during my visit in International Falls.
From the hotel owners (Jerald & Sandy Netland at the Voyageur), to restaurant and store clerks, everyone

I encountered seemed truly thankful for my patronage. Their smiles and gracious manner made my visit extra special.

The hospitality began before I could even land at the airport, where a fellow traveler offered me a ride to my hotel in her personal vehicle--a gesture virtually unheard of in other parts of the country!

I'm sure my experience is not unique. Other Arrowhead athletes echoed my sentiments regarding the friendly folks of International Falls.

Mr. Mayor, the Arrowhead 135 demanded the very most from our bodies, especially considering the brutal weather conditions. But the logistics of staying in International Falls were painless, giving me hope in the human spirit, as evidenced by the good old-fashioned Midwestern kindness shown to me in your town.

With heartfelt gratitude, warmest regards, and thanks for your support during our "crazy little race,"

Greg Pressler
Portland, Oregon

GUEST COLUMN

House: Risk-reward calculation dictates amnesty inaction

BY JOE GUZZARDI

On some of America's most contentious issues, civil discourse takes a back seat to ugly outcry. Last week, masked protesters carrying torches and threatening organized violence demonstrated on the front lawn of the Enbridge Energy Management Company's president. Environmentalists made a late night visit to Mark Maki's home and promised "solidarity means attack," and pledged that their goal is to shut down pipeline development. Enbridge transports natural gas throughout North America.

Last year, megaphone-carrying dissenters gathered on Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach's lawn to demand that he stop testifying against amnesty in Congress and instead support legalizing illegal immigrants. In both Maki and Kobach's cases, the demonstrators who represent extreme factions violated personal property rights.

Now pro-immigration organizations threaten more of the same. Since John Boehner announced, more or less officially, that the House will not take up reform this year, activists have threatened an even-more confrontational strategy. A spokesman for one advocacy group promised that it would "switch tactics" from "persuasion to punishment" while another warned that the personal attacks would be "relentless and constant," and would escalate daily for at least the next two months. Kevin Appleby, the U.S. Conference

of Catholic Bishops' migration policy director pledged that his group would "redouble" its efforts and "focus like a laser" on key House Catholics.

Journalists have summarized that the immigration lobby's angry style is a new game plan when, to the contrary, it's been around for years. In March, April and May, 2006 hundreds of thousands gathered nationwide to protest H.R. 4437, an enforcement-first immigration bill.

During 2013, Illegal immigrants blocked congressional offices, protested en masse in major U.S. cities, and chained themselves to the White House fence. In one of the most egregious examples of harassment, last summer two teenage activists interrupted House Speaker John Boehner during breakfast at his favorite Capitol Hill diner to press him on behalf of their cause. But despite a ten-year history of militant amnesty lobbying, the pro-immigration faction has nothing to show for it.

I'll offer two reasons why amnesty hasn't advanced. First, although legislation hasn't passed, the status quo has remained intact. That is, illegal immigrants can today as they have done in the past come to the U.S., get jobs, put their children in K-12 schools and give birth to citizen children. In at least 10 states, aliens can get drivers licenses or permits; 15 states offer subsidized university tuition to illegal immigrant students. California offers the entire package: licenses, subsidies, and even

the opportunity to be admitted to the bar and practice law. These benefits come with little threat of deportation. ICE Acting Director John Sandweg recently admitted that in 2013, his agency deported only 134,000 illegal aliens from the interior out of a population of estimated at 11.5 million.

Second, House representatives recognize that no matter how cautiously they hedge their language, amnesty is unpopular back home where voters express their opinions every two years. Many of the more enlightened and less agenda-driven legislators know that giving legal status to illegal immigrants also allows aliens to compete for scarce jobs in a market where 92 million Americans are out of the labor force. In short, legislators know that non-action doesn't harm illegal immigrants especially when the citizenship carrot could be five or more years down the line. On the other hand, they also know that passing amnesty would put Americans at a further disadvantage in the labor market and could cost them their jobs.

Consequently in the House, at least for today, the amnesty risk-reward ratio dictates that inaction is the wisest course.

Guzzardi is a Californians for Population Stabilization Senior Writing Fellow whose columns have been syndicated since 1987. Contact him at joeguzzardi@capsweb.org. This column is distributed by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author's city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifalls-journal.com.