




MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
MAYOR DAVE BRONSON

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Date: April 3, 2024
To: Anchorage Assembly
From: Mayor Dave Bronson 
Subject: Veto of Ordinance No. AO 2024-28 (As Amended)

Today, in accordance with Section 2.30.100 of the Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) and Section 5.02 of the Municipal Charter, I am issuing a veto for AO 2024-28 (As Amended), which was approved during the Assembly's special meeting of March 27, 2024.

History is instructive here. Seven years ago, the Assembly passed a resolution supporting the restoration of the hydrology and fisheries of the Eklutna River "subject to all provisions of the Fish and Wildlife agreement of August 7, 1991." (AR 2017-324(S)). While the Assembly at that time appropriately urged support from the utilities to restore hydrology and fisheries of the Eklutna River, the Assembly never presumed the power to second guess the operational decisions of the utilities themselves. (Anchorage Assembly, Regular Meeting of October 24, 2017 (51:30 - 58:38)).

Under Charter Section 16.01, municipal utilities are required to be operated as utilities, not as political tools. Municipal utilities combine subject-matter expertise and decision-making that is in the best interest of the Municipality and its citizens. In the past six months, however, the Assembly has shifted its stance to one of imposing operational control over the proposed Eklutna Fish and Wildlife Program to achieve a political purpose. This shift has resulted in legislation that pits politicians against subject matter experts, both inside and outside of the of the Municipality (AR 2024-75 (as amended)). This imposition by the Assembly has created tension between the utilities, affected departments, and executive staff charged with making operational decisions in the best interests of the Municipality. The ordinance I am vetoing today, AO 2024-28 (as amended), removes the policymaking power of the mayor as it was historically established in code for utilities – AWWU and the Anchorage Hydropower Utility.

There is no need to change Title 3 of the Anchorage Municipal Code to shift policymaking from one government branch to the other. As was stated at the March 27, 2024 meeting (32:05 – 32:30), and has been repeated numerous times before, serious concerns arise when powers are shifted between branches. Previous mayors signed documents on behalf of the Municipality relating to Eklutna Lake. Those actions were valid and binding upon the Municipality as a whole. The Municipality of Anchorage Charter grants executive and administrative power to the mayor. Assembly action that purports to strip executive and

administrative power from the mayor or municipal manager and grant that same power to itself raises the question of a charter violation.

The executive branch has held the power to make policy and execute agreements when the original agreements were signed in 1984 and 1991 and continues to hold this power today. Should the Assembly wish to disapprove executive branch actions, there are ways to accomplish its goals without dismantling the structure of our home rule municipal government as defined by the Anchorage Municipal Charter.

For the above reasons, I hereby veto AO 2024-28 (As Amended).