

Submitted by: Assembly Member Croft and
Assembly Member Quinn-Davidson
Prepared by: Assembly Counsel
For reading: September 11, 2018

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2018-277

1 **A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING**
2 **EFFORTS TO DAYLIGHT FISH CREEK, ALSO KNOWN BY THE DENA'INA PEOPLE AS**
3 **CH'ATANALTSEGH ŁIQ'AKA BETNU, AND ENCOURAGING THE ONGOING AND**
4 **FUTURE PROJECTS TO RESTORE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE DAYLIGHTING OF**
5 **FISH CREEK.**
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8 **WHEREAS**, Fish Creek is located in traditional Dena'ina lands; and
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10 **WHEREAS**, as reported in *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet*
11 *Dena'ina*, Fish Creek is known as Ch'atanaltsegh, according to Dena'ina elder Mike Alex;
12 and
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14 **WHEREAS**, Dena'ina elder John Stump noted that the creek mouth and tidal zone were
15 called Łiq'aka Betnu; and
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17 **WHEREAS**, the mouth of Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu was the site of
18 seasonal Dena'ina fish camps; and
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20 **WHEREAS**, Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu had historic runs of salmon that
21 have all but disappeared; and
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23 **WHEREAS**, Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu once drained the wetlands of
24 midtown Anchorage, beginning in the area of what is now Laurel and East 42nd; and
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26 **WHEREAS**, Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu has been artificially altered since
27 the 1950s, resulting in the diversion of 73% of its original flow underground into pipes; and
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29 **WHEREAS**, much of its former wetlands, ponds and lakes (such as Blueberry Lake near
30 the intersection of Benson Boulevard and A Street) have been filled in the process of
31 urbanization; and
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33 **WHEREAS**, the headwaters of Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu are located at
34 approximately East 42nd and Laurel, and its watershed expands into the midtown Benson
35 Boulevard and New Seward Highway area; and
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37 **WHEREAS**, Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu is now Anchorage's most impaired
38 waterway due to high levels of fecal coliform from urban water runoff, low dissolved oxygen
39 levels due to yard waste dumping, substandard pH levels and a large amounts of litter in
40 the waterway; and
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42 **WHEREAS**, daylighting is the process of freeing creeks from their underground pipes and
43 allowing them to run a more natural course, improving the health of the waterway and
44 riparian zones, and mitigating flooding hazards; and
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46 **WHEREAS**, there is strong community support for restoring and daylighting Fish Creek /
47 Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu, including from Friends of Fish Creek, Spenard Community

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Council, Anchorage Waterways Council, and The Alaska Center; and

WHEREAS, flooding is an observed phenomenon at Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu, and climate change has the potential to increase Anchorage rain events which pose a hazard to roads, public utilities, and personal property in the watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu Corridor and Estuary provide tremendous natural resource and recreation value within the Midtown, Turnagain and Spenard Communities; and

WHEREAS, the recently completed and scheduled renovations of the existing Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu Trail demonstrate community support for the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, active planning efforts are currently underway to realize a seamless non-motorized trail connection between the Fish Creek Trail and the Coastal Trail; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Update encourages Greenway-Supported Development that incorporates natural open spaces, creek corridors, and pedestrian routes across Anchorage for infill/redevelopment projects; and

WHEREAS, daylighting streams has been shown to mitigate flooding hazards, improve the livability of the built environment, and reduce runoff pollution thus improving water quality and making it more habitable to salmon; and

WHEREAS, daylighting Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu has the potential to enhance the quality of life in Anchorage and provide remarkable recreational opportunities for residents and tourists; and

WHEREAS, while the goal of daylighting Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu has significant practical and fiscal challenges, the potential rewards are worth setting the goal and working towards its accomplishment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY supports daylighting Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu and finds daylighting is compatible with the 2040 Anchorage Area Plan goals. The Assembly encourages action by the Administration and the Anchorage community to support daylighting Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu, and further encourages the establishment of a continuous east-west non-motorized corridor that follows Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu; and calls on Municipal departments to prioritize protecting and enhancing sections of Fish Creek / Ch'atanaltsegh Łiq'aka Betnu that are currently daylighted.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2018.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk