

Submitted by: Assembly Vice Chair
Constant
Prepared by: Legislative Services
For reading: September 13, 2022

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR NO. 2022-262**

1
2 **A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN SUPPORT**
3 **OF EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE EKLUTNA RIVER.**
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the Native Village of Eklutna is the oldest and largest Dena'ina
6 settlement in the Municipality of Anchorage; and
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8 **WHEREAS**, the Native Village of Eklutna is a Federally recognized Tribe with all of
9 the attached responsibilities, powers, and obligations of a Sovereign, also being
10 recognized by the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage, and having a
11 government to government relationship with both the Federal government and the
12 government of the Municipality of Anchorage; and
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14 **WHEREAS**, the Eklutna River historically was a major subsistence and cultural
15 resource for the Native Village of Eklutna; and
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17 **WHEREAS**, the Eklutna River watershed has been in a badly degraded condition
18 since 1929 due to hydropower dams and water diversions; and
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20 **WHEREAS**, a principal impact from hydropower development in the Eklutna
21 watershed is the loss of the Eklutna River's salmon runs; and
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23 **WHEREAS**, the Eklutna River still supports five species of salmon, including Cook
24 Inlet king salmon and sockeye salmon, though in greatly diminished numbers from
25 historical levels; and
26

27 **WHEREAS**, Eklutna Incorporated, the village corporation for Eklutna, is the largest
28 landowner in the Municipality of Anchorage and owns most of the land along the
29 Eklutna River and around Eklutna Lake; and
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31 **WHEREAS**, the Native Village of Eklutna and Eklutna Inc. have made substantial
32 contributions to the development of the Municipality of Anchorage providing land for
33 school sites, highways, railroads, powerlines and rights-of-way; and
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35 **WHEREAS**, The Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc., and The Conservation Fund
36 collaborated on a \$7.5 million project to dismantle the Lower Eklutna River dam;
37 and
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39 **WHEREAS**, sediments accumulated behind the Lower Eklutna River Dam remain
40 in the river channel due to low water flow conditions; and
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1 **WHEREAS**, little to no water flows out of Eklutna Lake into the Eklutna River
2 because of water diversions for the Eklutna Power Project; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, restored instream flow is necessary to flush the accumulated sediments
5 downstream and allow for the recovery of salmon habitat; and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, stabilized lake levels and fish passage for upstream and downstream
8 migrating salmon to and from Eklutna Lake would restore important spawning and
9 rearing habitat for salmon; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, the Municipality of Anchorage retains a majority interest (52%) in the
12 Eklutna Power Project; and

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14 **WHEREAS**, the Municipality of Anchorage, along with Chugach Electric Association
15 (CEA), and Matanuska Electric Association (MEA), are legally obligated to mitigate
16 for the impacts of the Eklutna Power Project to fish and wildlife; and

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18 **WHEREAS**, the Municipality of Anchorage, along with Chugach Electric Association
19 and Matanuska Electric Association (collectively, “the Eklutna Power Purchasers”),
20 have begun the required mitigation process, including studies of hydrology and
21 fisheries of the Eklutna River; and

22
23 **WHEREAS**, the restoration of instream flow to the Eklutna River and restored fish
24 passage to and from Eklutna Lake are the most desirable forms of mitigation for
25 impacts caused by the Eklutna Power Project; and

26
27 **WHEREAS**, an experimental three-week period of flushing flows in September 2021
28 allowed for some sediment transport and re-establishment of the river channel,
29 allowing for more meaningful study results and better mitigation design; and

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31 **WHEREAS**, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries
32 Service, Trout Unlimited, the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc. and The
33 Conservation Fund requested another period of restored instream flow in 2022; and

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35 **WHEREAS**, the request for restored instream flow in 2022 was denied by the
36 Eklutna Power Purchasers; and

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38 **WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Assembly supported restoration of the Eklutna River
39 with the passage of AR 2017-324 titled “A Resolution in Support of Efforts to Restore
40 the Eklutna River”; and

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42 **WHEREAS**, the Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission of the
43 Municipality of Anchorage supported restoration of the Eklutna River with the
44 passage of Resolution WNRC 2019-03 titled “A Resolution Regarding Restoration
45 of the Eklutna River”; and

46
47 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) supported restoration of the
48 Eklutna River with passage of Resolution 20-17 “to restore traditional rivers and

1 streams for fish and wildlife habitat...in particular, the efforts of tribes like the Native
2 Village of Eklutna”; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, the Traditional Tribal Council of the Native Village of Eklutna supported
5 restoration of Eklutna River and Eklutna Lake with the passage of Resolution 2022-
6 04 for “1) continuous flow in the river below the lake sufficient to support thriving
7 salmon populations, with intermittent higher, habitat maintenance and re-creation
8 flows, 2) salmon passage between Eklutna River and Lake, and 3) moderation of
9 Eklutna Lake level variability, at levels sufficient to facilitate sockeye spawning”;
10 now, therefore

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12 **THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:**

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14 **Section 1.** The Assembly recognizes that restoration of the Eklutna River,
15 including allowing salmon passage the length of the Eklutna River, to and from
16 Eklutna Lake, and into headwater tributaries, will benefit the Native Village of
17 Eklutna and residents of the Municipality of Anchorage and is a priority of the
18 Municipality.

19
20 **Section 2.** The Assembly Municipality of Anchorage commits to the restoration of
21 the Eklutna watershed, including providing instream flow and fish passage the
22 length of the Eklutna River and into Eklutna Lake and requests that, Chugach
23 Electric Association, and Matanuska Electric Association commit as well.

24
25 **Section 3.** The Assembly directs the Municipality of Anchorage to work
26 collaboratively with the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc., the Eklutna Power
27 Purchasers, and state and federal resource agencies to restore the Eklutna River
28 as soon as possible.

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30 **Section 4.** This resolution shall be effective upon passage and approval.

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32 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of
33 _____, 2022.

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36 _____
37 Chair

38 **ATTEST:**

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40
41 _____
42 Municipal Clerk
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