

From: [John W Schoen](mailto:John.W.Schoen@mcjmjac.com)
To: owen@mcjmjac.com
Subject: New Message From Eklutna Hydro - CONTACT US
Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024 2:23:05 PM

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J Schoen comments on the draft fish and wildlife plan for the eklutna Dam

I have lived in Alaska for 47 years and have been an Anchorage resident for over 30 years. I am a wildlife ecologist and have spent much of my professional career working on wildlife conservation issues throughout the state. I do not believe that the proposed Eklutna plan adequately address the ecological requirements of salmon, the vision and needs of the Eklutna people, or the legal responsibilities to mitigate the Eklutna project's ecological impacts to fish and wildlife resources in the Eklutna Watershed.

The Eklutna River must be re-connected to Eklutna Lake to ensure fish passage and restoration of the river's coho, chinook, and sockeye salmon. The proposed plan will leave one mile of the river dry and only release 3% of historic water flows. This will not allow fish passage into the lake and its upstream habitat. Salmon populations will not recover without a reliable and consistent supply of water and access to important up-stream spawning and rearing areas. I do not believe that the Chugach Electric Association, Matanuska Electric Association, or Municipality of Anchorage can meet their mitigation obligations within their budget constraints with anything less than removal of the dam. Therefore, I strongly recommend that the Eklutna Dam be removed to restore water flows required to support the Eklutna fisheries.

I recognize and appreciate the region's current reliance on the Eklutna hydroelectric energy source. However, it seems reasonable to remove the Eklutna dam within the next decade, when replacement renewable energy is expected to be available. I also understand that community partners are willing to assist in offsetting the costs of dam removal. Thus, this cost-sharing opportunity will be a fiscally responsible decision. Electric ratepayers and many Anchorage citizens support this vision that is also shared by the Eklutna people who have depended upon this salmon fishery for millennia.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend that the Eklutna Dam be removed to restore water flows required to support and sustain the Eklutna ecosystem and its important fisheries for the benefit of current and future generations.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

John W. Schoen, Ph.D.
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