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Subject: Eklutna Draft Fish and Wildlife Program Comment
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After reading and listening to the proposed solutions for Eklutna Lake it appears that we are missing an obvious solution.

As it is now, there are two sides in this debate. The side that wants to open up the entire Eklutna drainage to salmon, and the side that wants to keep the existing hydro project operational.

Except for its effect on salmon migration, the Eklutna Hydroelectric project is a gem. Producing enough greenhouse gas free renewable energy to power 25,000 homes. Of equal importance, the lake reservoir stores electrical power, it is essentially a massive battery, that can be used to quickly meet daily power demand fluctuations. This is exactly what is needed to integrate other renewables such as wind and solar energy into our electrical grid.

Restoring salmon to the Eklutna River is a laudable goal, but at a time when we are facing an existential climate crisis, we must do all we can to reduce use of fossil fuel. The Eklutna Hydroelectric Project has a critical role to play in our low carbon future and should not be removed until we have turned around our climate.

Apparently, there is a 1991 document that says something must be done. So, an alternative is proposed to spend \$57M to put in a valve to release some flow into the river. This alternative satisfies no one. It does not significantly restore salmon, it stresses our critical water supply infrastructure, and it is a waste of ratepayer money.

The obvious solution is to rewrite the agreement. Do nothing now. Put a subsidy on each kilowatt hour of Eklutna generated power that will go into a dedicated fund to remove the project in the future. And designate this time in the future to be when there is either a surplus of renewable energy or the project reaches its usable life. The \$57M would be much better spent as the seed money for this fund.

An agreement is only as binding as the parties involved agree to. Let's go back to the table and come up with a solution that works for all. Things are different now than when that original document was written. Climate change was an unknown. We need to acknowledge this. The salmon will wait.