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To: [Sam Owen](#)
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Subject: Comments on the Eklutna Draft Fish and Wildlife Program
Date: Sunday, February 18, 2024 4:33:01 PM

Dear Ms. Owen and Chugach Board members,

I am writing to express my support for full restoration of the Eklutna River, consistent with the desires of the Native Village of Eklutna, multiple community organizations, and the majority of my neighbors and community members who have spoken up on the draft program to date. There are multiple reasons why the owners should pursue full restoration, i.e. removing the dam and restoring fish passage.

- As a rate payer and property tax payer, I am concerned about the cost of the AWWU portal option. We get essentially nothing for \$57M. Dam removal would be cheaper and achieve full restoration of the river. As you are aware, two conservation groups have generously offered to pay for dam removal - and even graciously agreed to give you ten years to replace Eklutna hydro's energy generation, a mere 2-3% of Anchorage's energy. That's ten years on top of the 30 we've already been waiting for restoration of the river. The CEA letter shared with Anchorage Assembly members disingenuously compared this potential dam removal to the Klamath dam removal effort. Giving CEA staff and lawyers the benefit of the doubt, perhaps they are not aware that the Klamath effort entails removal of FOUR large dams on a much more complex river system spanning two states, with multiple invested parties and an adversarial history. My wife works for a Tribal organization engaging in this work. The Eklutna dam is not at all similar, and dam removal would be paid for a third party. This comparison was and is inaccurate.
- Dam removal honors Native values and historic and current uses of Dena'ina land and waters. The Native Village of Eklutna asked for evaluation of dam removal before the owners put forward their preferred alternative in the Draft; the owners didn't analyze it then, and still haven't. Refusal to do so is both disrespectful and financially reckless.
- Dam removal is better for fish and wildlife. I won't go into detail on why a natural, free flowing river is better for fish than a pipe, because that should be obvious.
- None of the parties except the utilities think the AWWU portal option is the best option. Please follow the advice of NVE, conservation groups, and the federal agencies engaged in this work.
- The 1991 Agreement envisioned that this process and the mitigation resulting from it should be as robust as would typically be required. The AWWU portal option and the process leading to it has not met this standard.

I have been interested in and watching this process for years, first as an elected official and now as a member of the community. As someone intimately familiar with public processes, I have honestly been shocked by yours. Having public meetings where the public can't speak? Not truly analyzing an option that a majority of folks, including the local Tribe, have requested? Signing a secret deal with AWWU before the public process theoretically begins? It is shameful.

I urge you to graciously admit your mistakes - it's not too late - and truly partner with NVE to move toward a program that restores the Eklutna river and the harms perpetuated for decades. If you need more time to do this, I suggest a delay to the program (which, by the way, despite

what CEA claimed in its letter, is not impossible - an agreement can be amended by the parties).

Thank you,

Austin Quinn-Davidson
Former Anchorage Acting Mayor, 2020-2021
Former Anchorage Assembly member, 2018-2023