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Re: Support of Eklutna Salmon and a Free-Flowing Eklutna River

Dear Decision-Makers,

I am a resident of Upper Cook Inlet and an MEA ratepayer. I strongly believe that fish passage should be restored on Eklutna River all the way to Eklutna Lake and beyond. The Native Village of Eklutna, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service all have encouraged actions toward the implementation of a restored Eklutna River.

I fully support the Native Village of Eklutna's vision for Eklutna Watershed:

- The Eklutna River running freely, continuously, and naturally from its glacial headwaters through its dramatic canyon and its productive estuary to the marine waters of Cook Inlet.
- All five species of Pacific salmon (King, sockeye, silver, pink & chum) again swimming freely from Knik Arm through the entire length of the Eklutna River to their spawning grounds at Eklutna Lake.
- An abundant salmon fishery that supports the Eklutna Dena'ina and the people of Southcentral Alaska.
- Eklutna Lake, centerpiece of Chugach State Park, full to its natural lake level to support sockeye salmon shore spawning and human-powered recreation.
- An Eklutna River that rebalances the needs of fish, the Eklutna Dena'ina, drinking water for Anchorage, and low-carbon power production.

I fully support the comments and position of the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) as presented in their December 4, 2023 comments on the Chugach Electric Association, Matanuska Electric Association, and Municipality of Anchorage ("Project Owners")'s Eklutna Hydroelectric Project Draft Fish and Wildlife Program. NVE's letter clearly presents the biased inadequacies of the Draft Program. The comments by NVE, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service all point out that the Draft Program fails to meet the fundamental purpose of the 1991 Eklutna Fish and Wildlife Agreement.

Please restore fish passage to Eklutna River to support salmon and other fish and wildlife, including Cook Inlet Beluga Whales.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Winnestaffer