



KENAITZE
INDIAN
TRIBE

Samantha Owen
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McMillen Inc.
2607 Western Ave, Unit 360
Seattle, WA 98121

Re: Eklutna Hydroelectric Project Draft Fish and Wildlife Program

I write today on behalf of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, a federally recognized Tribal government with operations within view of the mouth of the Kenai River, in Old Town Kenai, Alaska, one of the most productive salmon producing rivers in the state. We call ourselves the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina – the Kenai River people – to recognize the source of the salmon that have nourished our bodies, minds and souls since time immemorial. Today, the Tribe has more than 2,000 members and provides services to about 8,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people. Our traditional lands are bordered by those of the Niniilchik Village Tribe to the south and the Native Village of Eklutna to the north.

It is with the traditional Dena'ina Value of Nagh'utdalts'ina – “respect for our neighbors and others” – that the Kenaitze Indian Tribe supports the removal of the Eklutna dam and restoration of the Eklutna River. Our Tribe specifically supports the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) Eklutna River Restoration goals, as stated in NVE Resolution 2022 – 4; “Łiq'a nagh qinqtudeł - We are hopeful the salmon will return to us.” These goals include “1) continuous flow in the river below the lake sufficient to support thriving salmon populations, with intermittent higher, habitat maintenance and re-creation flows, 2) salmon passage between Eklutna River and Lake, and 3) moderation of Eklutna Lake level variability, at levels sufficient to facilitate sockeye spawning.” The Kenaitze Indian Tribe also supports the earlier comments submitted by NVE, the National Tribal Water Coalition, and other Alaska Native Tribes.

Our Tribe is fortunate to live near a huge flowing river that the salmon return to each summer, as they have for multitudes of generations. As a result, our members can use traditional methods to harvest fish, to stock their freezers with subsistence foods, and to share their cultural way with the next generation. Unfortunately, our sisters at NVE do not have that same ability, and the plan put forward by the electric utilities will not change that. Instead, the utilities' preferred option would leave a mostly dry river for nearly a mile between the Anchorage water supply pipe and Eklutna Lake. This alternative is insufficient to restore historic salmon habitat, including the main channel, side channels, and off channel habitat, which studies have shown still provide abundant potential sockeye spawning habitat if only there was water flowing through them. Moreover, fish could still not pass to sockeye habitat in Eklutna Lake and chinook and coho habitat in the Lake tributaries. This

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alternative would not restore historic wrongs and it ignores the advice, options, and requests of NVE and other groups.

We ask that you adopt NVE's proposed alternative to remove the dam and restore the Eklutna River flow for the entire length of the river. This alternative would still allow water to be used for the City of Anchorage and for some power generation, but also allow the Tribal community to return to its traditional ways on its traditional lands.

Duk'idli, respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chelsea Hendriks".

Chelsea Hendriks
Interim Executive Director
Kenaitze Indian Tribe