

From: [Pico Alaska](#)
To: [Sam Owen](#)
Subject: Remarks opposing draft, "portal-valve" proposal for Eklutna Hydro project
Date: Monday, February 19, 2024 3:20:58 PM

To Those It Concerns —

I am writing to comment on the draft proposal by several utilities & agencies for partial restoration of the Eklutna River.

I oppose the current draft proposal and instead support full restoration of the river, which includes removal of the dam at the lake outlet. This alternative is supported also by the Native Village of Eklutna and the Anchorage Assembly.

The citizens of Anchorage, including the village of Eklutna, have a precious opportunity to reverse the damage done to the river and the fish it supports, and we should take full advantage of it. The concept of “rewilding” — returning some segments of our physical environment, of the land we live on, to a state approximating what it was before industrialization and development — should guide our social-economic decisions whenever possible, and restoration of the Eklutna river and the salmon it once supported is a perfect example of the right project, in the right place, at the right time.

The effects of such a change can be mitigated over the next decade:

- additional support structures and/or reinforcement can be added to existing road and rail bridges over the Eklutna River;
- piping for city drinking water can be protected and/or enhanced;
- the loss of electrical power, while of concern, can be made up through continuing energy-conservation measures and additional renewable-energy projects (more wind turbines, for example) throughout the Municipality and beyond.

It is understandable that the electrical-power utilities involved in the Eklutna hydropower project wish to preserve the one-mile stretch of the river directly below the dam. I respect their views and motivations. But the spirit of the 1991 agreement goes beyond its direct call for mitigation of damages and some enhancement of the river and requires restoration in full. Let’s do it.

(Because a wrinkle in this process has been created by a secretive pact between the electric utilities and the Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility to bind the parties to the “portal valve” proposal, my comment here and those of many others may be rendered moot. It’s impossible for us to know, at least as of now. Nevertheless, I wish my view of this matter and support for the Eklutna River’s full restoration to be recognized as strongly felt opposition to the secret agreement and the draft proposal.)

Thank you.

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