

From: [Michelle Beadle](#)
To: [Sam Owen](#)
Subject: Comment from Chuck Gehling
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024 3:37:53 PM

I am submitting this comment on behalf of Chuck Gehling

To the operators of the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project,

The draft Fish and Wildlife Plan you proposed for the Eklutna River does not meet the needs of salmon, the vision of the Eklutna Peoples, or your legal obligation to mitigate the project's impact to fish and wildlife. Leaving a mile of the river dry, releasing only 3% of historic flows, and not providing fish passage into the lake and upstream habitat will not restore the river's salmon runs and are unacceptable.

Instead of wasting ratepayer and taxpayer money on a mitigation plan that won't fully revive salmon runs, **I ask you to remove the Eklutna Dam to fully reconnect the river and return the water flows needed to support the river's fisheries.**

I understand the reliance on this hydroelectric energy source in the near-term, and the proposal to remove the Eklutna Lake dam within the next decade, when replacement renewable energy is expected to be available, is reasonable. I also appreciate that community partners are willing to pitch in to help offset costs of the dam removal – taking advantage of this opportunity seems like a fiscally smart decision.

The Native Village of Eklutna has clearly communicated their vision for thriving wild salmon in the Eklutna River, including Eklutna Lake and headwater tributaries. Your ratepayers and many Alaskans support this vision.

The Eklutna Hydroelectric Project deprives the Eklutna River of water and blocks salmon from migrating in and out of Eklutna Lake. Salmon populations will not recover without a reliable and consistent supply of water and access to important up-stream spawning and rearing areas. This is particularly true for sockeye salmon, if they cannot access Eklutna Lake and its tributaries. CEA, MEA and MOA cannot meet their mitigation obligations within their budget constraints with anything less than removing the dam.

Now is your one chance to make this right. **Now is your chance to invest in a river that Alaskans can be proud of and help show the world that Anchorage does not just love our salmon, we know what it takes to care for them and actively work to bring them back.**

Sincerely,

Chuck Gehling
Hood River, OR 97031