

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY**

February 8, 2024

10:16 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative George Rauscher, Chair  
Representative Tom McKay  
Representative Thomas Baker  
Representative Stanley Wright  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Calvin Schrage  
Representative Jennie Armstrong

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION(S): EKLUTNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT AND FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SAMANTHA OWEN, Senior Regulatory Consultant  
McMillen, Inc.  
Seattle, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation.

JULIE HASQUET, Sr. Manager  
Corporate Communications  
Chugach Electric Association  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Responded to questions and provided additional information during the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation.

TONY ZELLERS, Chief Operating Officer

Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in support of the selected project alternative.

ANDREW LAUGHLIN, Chief Operating Officer  
Chugach Electric Association  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in support of the selected project alternative.

EMILY COHEN, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in support of the dam removal project alternative.

BRENDA HEWITT, Tribal Administrator  
Native Village of Eklutna  
Eklutna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in opposition to the selected project alternative and spoke on the 1991 agreement.

JULIAN RAMIREZ, Salmon and Clean Water Organizer  
The Alaska Center  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in support of the full restoration of the Eklutna River.

CHENNERY FIFE, Southcentral Alaska Engagement Manager  
Trout unlimited  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation, testified in support of the dam removal project alternative.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:16:40 AM](#)

**CHAIR RAUSCHER** called the House Special Committee on Energy meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. Representatives McKay, Baker,

Prax, Schrage, Armstrong, and Rauscher were present at the call to order. Representative Wright arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**PRESENTATION(s): Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program**

[10:18:00 AM](#)

CHAIR RAUSCHER announced that the only order of business would be a presentation on the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program.

[10:18:52 AM](#)

SAMANTHA OWEN, Senior Regulatory Consultant, McMillen, Inc., began a PowerPoint presentation on the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program [hard copy included in the committee packet], with slide 1, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

-The **Eklutna Watershed** provides a variety of benefits to the community:

- Eklutna Lake provides 90% of Anchorage's Public water supply. [image of people drinking from an AWWU portable water station.]
- Eklutna Lake functions as a battery, storing spring and summer runoff to provide power during winter. [image of Eklutna Lake dam at head of river]
- Eklutna Lake, located within Chugach State Park, is a popular spot for a variety of recreational opportunities. (image of person riding a bike alongside Eklutna Lake.)

MS. OWEN moved forward to slide 2, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Eklutna Hydroelectric Project**

- Owned and operated by Chugach Electric, Matanuska Electric, and the Municipality of Anchorage.
- Provides 24% of Chugach's renewable energy, and 45% of MEA's renewable energy.
- Maximized during a cold spell or potential gas supply emergency.
- Offsets approximately 86,000 tons of carbon each year.
- Lowest-cost energy in Southcentral Alaska.

- Could be used to regulate other future renewables like wind and solar.

MS. OWEN explained what percent of energy generation the current dam contributes to Chugach Electric, Matanuska Electric, and the Municipality of Anchorage, noting that it mainly serves as an emergency relief system in the case of a gas shortage. She moved to slide 3, which showed a map of the Eklutna River and surrounding area and how it relates to the project. In the lower left corner, a larger map of the Cook Inlet Region of Southcentral Alaska is displayed to show exactly where the project is located. In the upper right corner, a map key is displayed. She explained the key, highlighting important places, parts of the river, infrastructure, and the history of the Eklutna River dam, from the initial dam's construction to a lower dam's removal.

[10:24:11 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved to slide 4, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Reservoir Operations**

- Relatively consistent power generation year- round.
- In the spring and summer, the glacier is melting, and inflows exceed outflows, so the lake level increases.
- In the fall and winter, the glacier stops melting, and outflows exceed inflows, so the lake level decreases.
- The intake is at El. 793 feet.
- The minimum regulated lake level is El. 814 feet.
- The spillway crest is at El. 871

MS. OWEN said the slide's graph showed how water levels rise and fall each year, with different colored lines to display different years. She explained how the water level is influenced by yearly snow/glacial melt and rainfall, as well as the minimum lake level needed to run the current dam.

[10:26:00 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Low Lake Levels**

- The outlet of Eklutna Lake is at El.860 feet.

- The lake is below this elevation for approximately 9 months every year (winter, spring, summer).
- During that time, the lake is hydraulically disconnected from the dam, and a pond forms between the dam and the lake.

MS. OWEN said the slide contained an image of an aerial photo of the headwaters of the Eklutna River in late spring, demonstrating the lowest water levels of the year, with arrows to point out specific areas of the image, such Eklutna Lake, the pond above the dam, and Eklutna Dam itself. She described the image and explained how one of the biggest challenges of the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project was the low water levels.

[10:27:33 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 6, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Development in the Eklutna Watershed**

- 1914-U.S. Congress authorized construction of the Alaska Railroad
- 1929-Private Company constructed first hydroelectric project on the Eklutna River
- 1935-Palmer Highway constructed
- 1955-Federal Government finished constructing the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project
- 1961-U.S. Army started construction of a road Eklutna Lake (now the lakeside trail)
- 1965-Eklutna Dam replaced after earthquake
- 1970-Chucagh State Park established and Railroad begins gravel mining
- 1975-New Glenn Highway Constructed
- 1988-Eklutna Water Project constructed
- 1989-Purchase Agreement signed
- 1991-Fish and Wildlife Agreement signed
- 1995-U.S. Congress authorized sale of the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project
- 1997-Finalized sale of the Project to the three local utilities (Transaction date)
- 1998-ADFG started stocking Eklutna Tailrace
- 2016-Old Glenn Highway bridge was replaced
- 2018-Lower dam removed by The Conservation Fund, Eklutna, Inc, and the Native Village of Eklutna

MS. OWEN Walked through the history of the Eklutna Watershed's development, particularly how each event relates to one another and how it affects the project today.

[10:31:14 AM](#)

MS. OWEN discussed the "1991 Fish and Wildlife Agreement," on slide 7, the details of which are on slide 8, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Study Program must:**

1. Examine and quantify, if possible, the impacts of fish and wildlife from the federal Eklutna project.
2. Examine and develop proposals for the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife affected by the project.
3. Consider the impact of fish and wildlife measures on electric rate payers, municipal water utilities, recreational users, and adjacent land use...
4. As well as available means to mitigate these impacts

MS. OWEN explained a 4-step process outlined by the 1991 Fish and Wildlife agreement to determine the impacts to fish and wildlife. She moved to slide 9, which explained the governor's obligations/considerations, and which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Governor must give equal consideration to:**

1. Purposes of efficient and economical power production
2. Energy conservation
3. Protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of fish and wildlife
4. Protection of recreation opportunities
5. Municipal water supplies
6. Preservation of other aspects of environmental quality
7. Other beneficial public uses
8. Requirements of State law

MS. OWEN moved to slide 10, titled "Study Results," which displayed a series of images that explain the salmon study - its process and results. She explained the methodology, timeline, and stakeholders that were involved in the 5-year long salmon study. She said that McMillen, Inc. studied "everything they could think of," including fish counts and habitat, sediment and spawning grounds, wetlands and wildlife, a recreation survey, a

simulated operations module, and finally a lot of engineering to outline all of the potential designs.

MS. OWEN mentioned slide 11, titled "Alternatives Analysis," and moved on to slide 12, titled "Stakeholder Engagement," which displayed the logos, emblems, and seals of various public and private entities involved in the Eklutna Hydro Project. She moved to slide 13, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**-Alternatives Analysis**

- Series of 5 meetings
- April through August 2023
- Iterative Process
  - Participants submitted comprehensive alternatives
  - Each alternative was evaluated using models developed
  - Participants has multiple opportunities to revise alternatives based on modeling results
  - Revised alternatives were reevaluated

MS. OWEN, responding to questions from Chair Rauscher, noted that there are a couple of different species in Eklutna Lake, but most commonly kokanee, which are unique to other kokanee. The lake is currently not stocked, but there were a couple instances in the '80s and '90s where some fish were stocked in the lake by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). The lake is glacially fed from Eklutna Glacier and has extremely high sediment levels and turbidity, which she cited as one of the reasons for the lack of primary production in the lake.

[10:38:08 AM](#)

MS. OWEN continued her presentation on slide 14, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Alternatives Analysis 14

- Series of 5 Meetings
- April through August 2023
- Iterative Process
  - •Participants submitted comprehensive alternatives
  - •Each alternative was evaluated using the models developed
  - •Participants had multiple opportunities to revise alternatives based on modeling results
  - •Revised alternatives were reevaluated

MS. OWEN explained how each project alternative was studied, how models were developed, and how the models of the project alternatives were revised throughout the analysis.

[10:39:26 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved to slide 15, which showed a graph of a cost-benefit analysis on the project. She discussed project alternatives, who is associated with each alternative, and three categories of cost-breakdown shown on the graph. She said that less water for generation means more money spent on gas generation, as well as explained the 1991 Fish and Wildlife Agreement's requirements as they relate to cost.

[10:42:57 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved to slide 16, which showed a table explaining the benefits of the preferred alternatives in terms of acres of habitat gained. She then skipped to slide 18, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

What's Included in the Draft Program?

- Year-Round Base Flows
- Periodic Channel Maintenance Flows
- New AWWU Bridges
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan

MS. OWEN explained that the document had studies of year-round base flows, periodic channel maintenance flows, new Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility bridges, and a monitoring and adaptive management plan for the yearly water flow and salmon runs.

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 19, which explained the proposals and how the project owners will be utilizing existing AWWU infrastructure to provide habitat in certain areas of the tunnel. She then showed slide 20, which explained how much water would need to be released (in cubic feet per second) into the river in order for the salmon to maintain their maximum salmon habitat, while not decreasing salmon habitat or taking too much water away from the lake.

[10:50:36 AM](#)

MS. OWEN, in response to Representative Schrage, said that there is no real quantification or study of the salmon species that historically spawned in the Eklutna River, other than a study on



sediment deposits. Along with that, she said, there is traditional knowledge from the Native Village of Eklutna.

[10:54:08 AM](#)

MS. OWEN continued on slide 21, which showed a winter flow analysis graph. She said the idea is to promote favorable ice conditions for salmon to have proper rearing habitat in the winter. She explained what types of ice are beneficial and harmful to salmon and how they could influence the formation of ice with controlled water releases. She continued to slide 22, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Periodic Channel Maintenance Flows will Maintains  
Spawning Habitat over Time

- Automate the existing drainage outlet gate
- 220 cfs in 3 out of 10 years
- Will occur in the fall when the lake is high
- Shaped to prevent any fish stranding during downramping

The slide also displayed a graph of how periodic releases of water would work for the benefit of salmon. She explained that releases of water would occur during the fall, that releases would clean the gravel, and that it would come from the existing gate at the top of the river.

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 23, "Allows for Adaptive Management to Improve Habitat Over Time," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Committee includes Parties to the 1991 Agreement and NVE
- Water Budgets
- Instream Flows - 24,280 AF ± Banked Water
- Channel Maintenance Flows - 2,913 AF for each 10-Year Period
- Monitoring
- Flow Meters
- Funding Commitment for Other Monitoring Efforts
- Conduct Adult Salmon Surveys
- Record Winter Water Temperatures in Rearing Reaches
- Measure Sediment Grain Size in Spawning Reaches
- Assess Straying Rate from the Tailrace to the River
- Adaptive Management
- Based on Monitoring Results

- Committee can Request Alternative Flows within Water Budgets

MS. OWEN explained adaptive habitat management and proposals to begin a committee to oversee the management and maintenance of the salmon habitat in the Eklutna River.

[11:00:52 AM](#)

MS. OWEN continued to slide 24, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Includes Engineering Measures to Protect the Public Water Supply

- Close coordination with AWWU during design
- Will not impact AWWU's water rights
- Construction of 8 new bridges
- New Isolation Valve Structure
- Replacement of Outdated Communication System
- New Redundant Flow Meters
- These improvements total \$7.3M

MS. OWEN described engineering measures to be taken to protect the public water supply, including the construction of eight new bridges, use of isolation valves, and the replacement of an outdated communications structure, among other things. Ms. Owen mentioned that "a bunch of engineering measures were included in our design to make sure we are addressing any and all of their [AWWU's] concerns."

MS. OWEN, in response to a series of questions, answered that the cost is included in the project owner's program; the project owners would be paying the \$7.3 million, not AWWU. She noted that the Municipality of Anchorage is one of the project owners, that they are in one of various cost-sharing agreements for this project. She advised that the Anchorage Assembly itself isn't an owner but will pay for some of the costs, likely through an appropriation of funds.

[11:05:03 AM](#)

JULIE HASQUET, Sr. Manager, Corporate Communications, Chugach Electric Association, confirmed there is a taxpayer impact and the Municipality of Anchorage will pay a portion of the bill.

MS. OWENS continued her presentation on slide 25, which showed a table of types of costs and their associated value. It also

discussed who is paying for what and how much the total expenditure of the project would be after each cost type was taken into account.

MS. OWENS moved on to slide 26, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

What's Not Included in the Draft Program?

- Higher Year-Round Flow Releases from the AWWU Portal Valve (at river mile 11)
- Incremental gains in habitat are minor when compared to increased costs
- Year-Round Flow Releases from the AWWU Pipeline (at river mile 5.5)
- Significantly reduced habitat gains for almost the same cost as the AWWU Portal Valve alternative
- Year-Round Flow Releases from a New Bypass Tunnel (at river mile 11.5)
- Significantly increased costs for almost the same habitat gains as the AWWU Portal Valve alternative
- Year-Round Flow Releases from Eklutna Dam (at river mile 12)
- Requires the power plant to be shut down through the winter to keep the reservoir high
- Replacement Dam (at river mile 12)
- Cost prohibitive and decreases reservoir storage capacity by 40%
- Fish Passage
- Concerns regarding viability, effectiveness of downstream passage, presence of IHN, and potential impacts to water quality

MS. OWEN explained what was not included in the draft program and why. She touched on why there weren't higher flow releases at different parts of the watershed, why a replacement dam wouldn't be viable, and why there aren't more proposed options for fish passages.

[11:13:38 AM](#)

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 27, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Summary

- Benefits all 4 species of salmon currently spawning in the Eklutna River
- Provides habitat in 11 out of 12 miles of the river

- Achieves 96.5% of max spawning habitat for Chinook below the AWWU Portal Valve (99.6% for coho)
- Allows for adaptive management to improve habitat over time
- Maintains Eklutna hydro as a year-round resource (especially during cold spells)
- Protects the public water supply
- Indirectly benefits wildlife
- Avoids impacts to recreation
- Minimizes costs to rate payers and taxpayers
- Minimizes increases in carbon emissions
- Achieves an equitable balance of costs, benefits, and impacts

MS. OWEN summarized the proposed project draft that was chosen along with its benefits and compromises. She explained that the chosen project draft provides the most benefits to fish, wildlife, and recreation, while providing the most amount of generation and the smallest burden on rate payers and taxpayers.

MS. OWEN moved on to slide 28, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

#### Comments on the Draft Program

- The Project Owners submitted the Draft Program to the Signatories to the 1991 Agreement and the Native Village of Eklutna on October 27, 2023 for review and comment
- All comment letters are available on the Project website ([www.eklutnahydro.com](http://www.eklutnahydro.com))
- The Project Owners met with the Signatories to the 1991 Agreement and the Native Village of Eklutna in December 2023 to attempt to resolve differences
- Discussions centered around..
  - Flow Release Location
  - Flow Regime and Water Budget
  - Water Banking
  - Physical Habitat Manipulation
  - Fixed Wheel Gate
  - Fish Passage
  - Climate Change
  - Lakeside Trail Repairs
  - Monitoring Efforts
  - Success Criteria
  - Adaptive Management Committee
  - Dam Removal

MS. OWEN explained slide 28, which touched on comments sent in about the draft program proposal. She emphasized that the project managers met with the Native Village of Eklutna and the signatories in December 2023, and those discussions centered around fish passage and flow release management.

MS. OWEN discussed slide 29, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

#### Dam Removal

The Native Village of Eklutna has proposed to remove the dam/project in 10 years after replacing it with another renewable energy source

- Wind, solar, and run-of-river hydro are NOT firm energy sources
- Storage hydro is a firm energy source, however... identifying, studying, licensing, designing, and constructing new hydro project(s) of the equivalent size will likely...
- Take more than 10 years
- Have new environmental impacts
- Be very expensive
- This would also set back the long-term timeline for reaching the utilities overall renewable energy goals

MS. OWEN highlighted that at first, the Native Village of Eklutna's preferred alternative at the end of the alternative analysis study was the replacement dam option, but that has since changed to the dam removal option, as of a letter received in November, and replacing it with a new renewable project in 10 years. She explained the implications of dam removal.

[11:18:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE observed that "we" have known this has been an issue since 1991 and, thus, have had more than 30 years to plan for an alternative.

MS. OWEN, in response to several questions from Representative Schrage, explained that the original intent of the 1991 agreement was to mitigate the existing project, and that she does not believe that the project owner's intent of the agreement was to remove the project or build a new one. She said that sockeye salmon are mentioned specifically in the divestiture summer report that went to Congress in 1992, but the 1991 agreement itself does not specify a specific outcome,

although many different options were evaluated that would achieve the same goal of mitigating impact to sockeye salmon.

CHAIR RAUSCHER handed the gavel to Representative McKay.

[11:23:02 AM](#)

MS. OWEN continued the presentation on slide 30, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Dam Removal (cont.)

- Without the dam or hydro project, flows in the Eklutna River would be...
- 1200 cfs every July/August
- 2000 cfs every few years
- 4000 cfs every 10 years
- AWWU's pipeline is buried for 6 miles under/adjacent to the riverbed
- Significant scour impacts to the water supply pipeline would be likely
- Hydro project owners legally cannot negatively impact the public water supply
- Significant impacts to the downstream railroad and highway bridges would also be likely
- The Project Owners are conducting a more detailed assessment of dam removal which will be included in the Proposed Final Program

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MS. OWEN elaborated on the dam removal and its impacts. She illustrated the differences in the river's flow regime, as well as emphasized that whatever generation is lost would have to be made up for by a different sector of energy.

[11:25:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY handed the gavel back to Chair Rauscher.

MS. OWENS continued on slide 31, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

January 2024 Cold Snap

- Majority of generation in southcentral Alaska is natural gas.
- However, during a cold snap, natural gas is needed for heating.

- During the recent cold snap, Enstar requested that the utilities maximize hydro to reduce gas consumption...
- So the utilities ran Eklutna (and other hydro) at max capacity
- On December 30th - started at 13% hydro for CEA/MEA
- By January 1st - increased to 23% hydro for CEA/MEA

[11:25:45 AM](#)

TONY ZELLERS, Chief Operating Officer, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc., spoke on how cold snaps affect energy infrastructure, specifically hydro infrastructure. He mentioned the recent cold snap in January 2024, and how valuable hydroelectric power generation is during cold snaps.

[11:27:57 AM](#)

ANDREW LAUGHLIN, Chief Operating Officer, Chugach Electric Association, spoke on how much energy Chugach Electric receives from hydroelectric generation, about 15 percent of its generation annually. He made a point that during peak times, hydroelectric generation can make up to 25 percent of Chugach Electric Association's generation.

[11:29:43 AM](#)

TONY ZELLERS, in response to committee questions, related that how long infrastructure lasts during an extended cold snap depends on how much water is in storage. He said there is no data showing how many thousand cubic feet (Mcf) would've been saved had people reduced their thermostats during the cold snap.

[11:32:11 AM](#)

MS. HASQUET added that Chugach Electric follows the lead with Enstar and stays in communication.

[11:33:45 AM](#)

MS. OWENS continued to the final slide, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Next Steps

- February 19, 2024 - Public comment deadline
- April 2024 - Submit Proposed Final Fish and Wildlife Program to the Governor

- 60 days for Parties to review and submit comments to the Governor (May/June)

- 

30 days for Project Owners to submit responses to the Governor (July)

- Additional 2 months for Governor to consider (Aug/Sep)

- October 2, 2024 - Deadline for Governor to issue Final Fish and Wildlife Program

32

MS. OWEN explained the public comment deadline, the proposed fish and wildlife plan submission date, and the deadline for the governor's decision.

[11:35:08 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 11:35 a.m.

[11:35:55 AM](#)

CHAIR RAUSCHER opened public testimony on the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and Fish and Wildlife Program presentation.

[11:36:20 AM](#)

EMILY COHEN, representing self, testified that the project alternative proposed by the project owners is insufficient to restore a thriving salmon population in all parts of the Eklutna River, as well as the habitat above the dam in the lake. She said it would be meaningful to have a thriving salmon run so close to Anchorage.

[11:38:12 AM](#)

BRENDA HEWITT, Tribal Administrator, Native Village of Eklutna, testified that the 1991 Fish and Wildlife Agreement was kind of a promise by the project owners that 30 years from its inception they would look at ways to mitigate the impact of the dam. She said that all of this work and research has been done behind closed doors, that there has not been enough transparency, and that they haven't listened to the Native Village of Eklutna through their numerous discussions.

[11:42:18 AM](#)



JULIAN RAMIREZ, Salmon and Clean Water Organizer, The Alaska Center, testified that the entire process done by the project owners has failed to include public opinion and also failed to acknowledge the benefits of introducing another salmon run in Alaska. He said that it would have great benefits to the commercial fishing industry, considering the dwindling salmon returns across Alaska. In response to Representative Prax, he confirmed that he was challenging the statistics about salmon numbers and flow rates presented today. He offered his understanding that the numbers are estimated by a co-author of a study that was previously cited, the marine nitrogen study for potential based on lake size, turnover, and historical records of fish. He said he would share the data.

[11:47:57 AM](#)

BRENDA HEWITT, in response to Representative Schrage, explained that in 1929, no one knew of the impacts that the dam would have on the fish in the river. She cited "traditional ecological knowledge," saying that was the most valuable resource in understanding the wild salmon runs that once populated the Eklutna River.

[11:50:23 AM](#)

CHENNERY FIFE, Southcentral Alaska Engagement Manager, Trout Unlimited, testified that she thinks the proposed project plan does not meet the requirements of the 1991 agreement. She said that it ignores public comment, the Native Village of Eklutna, community leaders, and the late Don Young. She said there are better options for hydroelectric generation that don't affect a salmon run.

[11:52:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX indicated he would like the testifiers' remarks in writing.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE asked whether there is any legislative involvement in this issue or it is ultimately up to the governor.

CHAIR RAUSCHER remarked that the legislature has no involvement unless it wants to get involved.

[11:54:38 AM](#)

MS. OWEN clarified that the governor has the final say on the final Fish and Wildlife Program.

[11:55:11 AM](#)

Chair Rauscher closed public testimony.

[11:55:33 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Energy meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.