

Presented by: Assemblymember
Wanamaker
Introduced: 05/12/2008
Drafted by: R. Wanamaker /
J.W. Hartle

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Serial No. 2444

**A Resolution Requesting State Reconsideration of its Decision
Denying a Disaster Declaration for the April 16, 2008,
Snettisham Avalanches.**

WHEREAS, the Snettisham hydroelectric facility was designed and constructed by the federal government in 1973; and

WHEREAS, portions of the transmission towers and transmission lines which conduct the power from Snettisham hydroelectric facility to the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) were repositioned by the federal government in 1976, 1986 and 1994 to reduce their risk of damage due to exposure to high winds and avalanches along the route; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 the federal government transferred the Snettisham hydroelectric facility to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority which entered into an operating agreement with Alaska Electric Light & Power; and

WHEREAS, on April 16, 2008, a series of major avalanches destroyed seven transmission towers which has resulted in the inability of Snettisham to provide hydroelectric power to the CBJ for an estimated three months; and

WHEREAS, until Snettisham hydroelectric power is restored, power will be provided by AEL&P's diesel generators, the electric utility rates for which will be nearly five times higher than the rates for Snettisham power; and

WHEREAS, there are many CBJ residents and for-profit and non-profit organizations which cannot afford the abruptly higher rates for diesel power or the rate increases which will be associated with repair of the lines if AEL&P is required to pay those costs; and

WHEREAS, the CBJ has made available \$3,000,000 from the Emergency Budget Reserve fund to non-governmental organizations to assist those CBJ residents, for-profit and non-profit organizations unable to pay the higher rates during the period that Snettisham is off line; and

WHEREAS, the citizens and organizations of the CBJ have dramatically reduced their use of electricity resulting in an approximately 40 percent reduction in the use of diesel fuel since the emergency began; and

WHEREAS, Juneau is not eligible for the power cost equalization program; and

WHEREAS, when previous "Acts of God" such as the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964, or the Fairbanks Flood of 1967 occurred, Alaskans came together as one community to provide support and relief even though the State of Alaska did not then have significant oil revenues; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2008, the State elected not to declare the Snettisham avalanches a "disaster," thereby denying CBJ residents and businesses access to state and federal funds; and

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2008, the CBJ legislative delegation requested that the State reconsider its decision; and

WHEREAS, the CBJ Assembly considers the avalanches to have been an "Act of God" which is causing economic destruction to the CBJ similar to the physical destruction that has been caused to other communities within the State which have been officially declared a "disaster" by the State; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2008, Governor Sarah Palin signed a letter requesting the Small Business Administration to declare an "Economic Injury Disaster" for Juneau due to the abruptly higher electricity costs for Juneau businesses resulting from avalanche damage.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA:

Section 1. The CBJ Assembly expresses our appreciation for the economic injury request by Governor Palin.

Section 2. The CBJ Assembly fully supports the request of the CBJ legislative delegation to the State to reconsider its denial of a disaster declaration for Juneau and urges the State to provide relief to CBJ citizens and businesses by paying a significant portion of the diesel costs incurred while Snettisham is offline and by paying for the cost of the repairs to the Snettisham transmission system.

Section 3. The CBJ Assembly further requests that the Alaska Legislature receive reports regarding the avalanche damage and consider the need for financial assistance to repair the Snettisham transmission lines, offset increased power costs and to assist the Juneau Community during the Special Session scheduled for June, 2008.

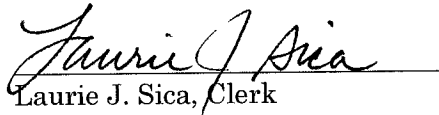
Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

Adopted this 12th day of May, 2008.



Bruce Botelho, Mayor

Attest:



Laurie J. Sica, Clerk