

Introduced by:

Mayor

Date:

01/06/26

Action:

Vote:

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2026-003**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF
ALASKA TO DESIGNATE BY PROCLAMATION THE AREA OF THE
UPPER COOK INLET EAST SIDE SET NET FISHERY AS AN AREA
IMPACTED BY AN ECONOMIC DISASTER IN 2025 AND SUPPORTING
A RECOVERY PLAN**

WHEREAS, the loss of the opportunity to harvest in the Upper Cook Inlet East Side Set Net (ESSN) fishery threatens the livelihood of the individuals, families, and businesses participating in the fishery, and jeopardizes the continued viability of the commercial fishing industry in the Upper Cook Inlet Region; and

WHEREAS, the Upper Cook Inlet ESSN is a unique Alaska fishery, in that 86% of the participants are Alaskan residents, 80% of which are Kenai Peninsula Borough residents; and

WHEREAS, AS 44.33.285 authorizes the governor, upon recommendation of the commissioner of commerce, community, and economic development, to designate by proclamation an area as an area impacted by an economic disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough is a political subdivision of the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the ESSN fishery was limited to two restricted eight-hours openings with harvest significantly below historical levels; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the ex-vessel value for the ESSN was 82% below historical levels; and

WHEREAS, an economic disaster declaration by the governor would allow the legislature to appropriate funds for assistance grants and the governor may recommend in the governor's budget that capital projects planned for the area be accelerated and other steps may be taken as provided in AS 44.33.285 - .310 to accelerate the recovery from this disaster; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Kenai Peninsula Borough to request that Governor Mike Dunleavy, upon a recommendation of the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, proclaim an Economic Disaster in the Upper Cook Inlet Fisheries Region, and support a recovery plan that directly assists fisheries participants and benefits all users of this important natural resource;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor and Assembly respectfully request that Commissioner Julie Sande, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, recommend to Governor Dunleavy to designate, by proclamation, the areas of the Kenai Peninsula Borough affected by the 2025 Upper Cook Inlet ESSN Fishery closure as area impacted by an economic disaster.

SECTION 2. That the Kenai Peninsula Borough respectfully requests that Governor Dunleavy designate by proclamation, as described in AS 44.33.285, the area of the Upper Cook Inlet ESSN Fishery as an area impacted by an economic disaster and that the State of Alaska implement a recovery plan that provides private assistance and takes other actions that benefit commercial fisheries participants and others that rely on this important fishery resource.

SECTION 3. That the Mayor and Assembly also respectfully request that the State of Alaska urge the United States Department of Commerce and all other applicable federal agencies to render private and public assistance to all affected persons and entities.

SECTION 4. That a copy of this resolution will be provided to Governor Michael J. Dunleavy; Commissioner Julie Sande, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; State Senator Gary Stevens; State Senator Jesse Bjorkman; State Representative Louise Stutes; State Representative Bill Elam; State Representative Justin Ruffridge; and State Representative Sarah Vance.

SECTION 5. That this resolution is effective immediately.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 6TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2026.

Ryan Tunseth, Assembly President

ATTEST:

Michele Turner, CMC, Borough Clerk

Yes:

No:

Absent: