

# Kenai Peninsula Borough

## Seward-Bear Creek Flood Service Area

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Assembly President  
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

**THRU:** Charlie Pierce, Mayor *CPB*  
Dan Nelson, OEM Senior Manager *DN*

**FROM:** Stephanie Presley, SBCFSA Program Lead *SP*

**cc :** Mark Ganser, SBCFSA Board Chair  
Members, SBCFSA Board

**DATE:** October 7, 2019

**RE:** Resolution 2019-055, Requesting Governor Mike Dunleavy to Support State Funding to Address Seward Area Watershed Issues (Mayor)

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This resolution requests that Governor Dunleavy support funding to provide for long-term planning for watershed issues in Seward, Bear Creek, and Lowell Point. This includes support for projects identified in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the establishment of a state-wide grant program for sediment management plans, and action to waive material fees when performed for flood mitigation.

In 2010, the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB), on behalf of the Seward-Bear Creek Flood Service Area (SBCFSA), entered into a federal cost share agreement with the USACE to assist in the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources, including flood plain and flood risk management, sediment management plans, streambank and coastal erosion protection. The USACE report, completed in 2011, provided recommendations to the SBCFSA for standard flood mitigation measures and measures specific to alluvial fan topographies in eight of the Seward Area watersheds.

Since the completion of the study, the KPB, through the SBCFSA, and the City of Seward have implemented many of the mitigation measures recommended and have continued to partner with the USACE and other entities for additional studies and flood control projects.

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The USACE detailed additional regional and watershed specific analyses that would be needed to develop conceptual designs for mitigation measures in the 2011 report. Each specific analyses would cost \$350,000 - \$800,000 and implementation of small flood control projects up to \$10 million would require a 25 – 50% match from the local sponsor.

The USACE Alaska District have completed the initial studies necessary and have implemented successful flood control projects within the service area. Their expertise is necessary to address the many challenges faced by the community of Seward, Bear Creek and Lowell Point. Long term plans and solutions to protect neighborhoods and critical infrastructure such as the Seward Airport and Seward Highway can be developed in partnership with the USACE, state and local stakeholders if funding is made available.

Additional assistance from the state could be provided by approval of a service areawide sediment management plan and a specific mitigation fund for the removal of streambed materials from up- and downstream of critical infrastructure.

Alaska statute 38.05.872 allows for the disposition of state land and resources for flood control projects at reduced or no cost, consistent with a site-specific flood mitigation plan approved by the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) commissioner and determined to be in the best interests of the public. Currently, DNR is reviewing the SBCFSA sediment management plan for Sawmill Creek, upstream of state owned and maintained Nash Road. Approval of this plan and mitigation plans on other watersheds within the service area will save the state, borough and local government the expense of emergency response and protect critical infrastructure from future damages.

The USACE Continuing Authorities Programs and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs, administered by the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, do not provide funding for the removal of streambed materials for flood control purposes. A state-wide grant program for sediment management plans, as approved under statute 38.05.872, would allow local governments to remove streambed materials threatening these communities and critical state, borough and local infrastructure, prior to major flood events, reducing the costs of emergency response and restoration efforts.