

## RESOLUTION 20-26

### A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA, SUPPORTING THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESILIENCE AND SECURITY COMMISSION

**WHEREAS**, annual air temperatures in the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) have risen by 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit since 1969 and July 2019 was the warmest month on record in Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, over the past half-century, annual available water on the western Kenai Peninsula has declined 62%, according to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and in 2019 Kenai Peninsula communities experienced severe drought and the Kenai Peninsula Borough declared an emergency disaster on behalf of Seldovia and Nanwalek due to severe water shortages; and

**WHEREAS**, significant warming trends in Alaska rivers and ocean are beginning to harm tourism, subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries, water temperatures in non-glacial Cook Inlet streams routinely exceed physiological thresholds for salmon during the month of July, according to Cook Inletkeeper, and in 2019 warm water conditions exceeded temperatures forecasted for 2069, causing high rates of pre-spawn mortality of salmon across the state. NOAA has determined that a recent series of collapses in Pacific Cod fisheries are linked to warming ocean conditions, and these same warming ocean conditions appear to be harming salmon survival. Warming of nearshore waters is increasing the rate of harmful algal blooms, such as PSP, hurting the mariculture industry. Ocean acidification will continue to damage vital nurseries for many fish stocks in Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet, according to the National Estuarine Research Reserve; and

**WHEREAS**; according to USDA, Forest Service, current winter trends indicate that the southern Kenai Peninsula will lose 10-20% of its snowpack by 2030-2059, which threatens winter tourism, recreation, as well as fish and wildlife that are at the center of our culture and economies. As winters warm, private property values are threatened by increased instances of flash flooding, which results in erosion and bluff instability, according to new research by the University of Alberta. According to the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, erosion rates on the eastern shores of Cook Inlet are 1 foot per year, and 2.3 feet per year in the western Homer area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alaska Division of Forestry changed the official start date of the statewide fire season from May 1 to April 1 in response to the Tracy Avenue Fire that threatened Homer in 2005, the first spring grassland fire on the peninsula. There is a projected 66% increase in the estimated value of human structures (e.g. homes, businesses) that are at risk of fire in the next half century on the Kenai Peninsula, according to the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for the Chugach National Forest and the Kenai Peninsula. According to the Anchorage Daily News, the 2019 Swan Lake Fire on the Kenai Peninsula was far and away the most expensive fire in the country at an estimated cost to fight of \$46 million; this estimate does not include heavy losses to tourism revenue, losses to private property, or significant losses associated with repair of roads or power lines. A

study in Climatic Change estimates that costs due to increased wildfires across Alaska are \$1.1 to \$2.1 billion annually from 2006 through the end of the century; and

**WHEREAS**, the Caribou Hills was the epicenter of an unprecedented spruce bark beetle outbreak that eventually culled about 1 million acres of Sitka, White and Lutz Spruce on the southern and central Kenai Peninsula from the mid-1980s through the 1990s, sustained by consecutive summers of above-average temperatures, according to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The northern peninsula and the Mat-Su Borough have been hard hit by spruce bark beetle in the past couple years, and spruce bark beetle's range is expanding as the state warms and the scale of outbreaks is increasing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has determined that the effects of the changing climate are "beginning to impact Alaska's natural systems and the uses they sustain"; and

**WHEREAS**, a Resilience and Security Commission would help guide and support the Borough's responses to these challenges and to implement comprehensive strategic planning to mitigate known hazards, adapt to significant changes, and modernize and diversify the energy sector; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2019 Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan, Focus Area: Land Use, Objective G, Strategy 1 states, "Form a Kenai Peninsula Borough Commission on Sustainability"; and Strategy 2 states "Develop a climate change action plan..."; and

**WHEREAS**, the KPB Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for renewable energy: Focus Area: Energy & Utilities, Objective C states, "Support residential, community and region-wide renewable energy initiatives and projects...Charge the commission with developing a renewable energy strategy to investigate and make recommendations for feasible renewable energies for Kenai Peninsula"; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2019 Kenai Peninsula Comprehensive Plan, Focus Area: Agriculture & Mariculture, Objective A states, "Support a more sustainable and resilient Kenai Peninsula by increasing production and distribution of quality, healthy agricultural products for local, state and export markets"; Objective B states "Sustain and create new agriculture-related jobs and businesses", and Objective C states "Encourage greater local and regional self-sufficiency"; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2019 Kenai Peninsula Comprehensive Plan, Focus Area: Solid Waste Services, Objective C states, "Increase awareness of and opportunities for waste reduction and landfill diversion, including Reduce, Recycle, Reuse"; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Councils of Seldovia, Homer and Soldotna all passed resolutions in support of the establishment of a commission to develop strategic responses to warming trends in our environment for the protection of public safety and welfare; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Homer has a climate action plan and the City of Seward is working on a climate action plan; and

**WHEREAS**, a Resilience and Security Commission would support the ongoing work within the KPB to improve energy and climate security through such projects as Bradley and Grant Lake hydroelectric, the Soldotna landfill gas energy project; the Kenai Peninsula Agriculture Initiative;

the installation of electric vehicle charging stations; the banning of single-use plastic bags in Soldotna, Kenai, Seward and Homer; the development of regional building efficiency standards by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; the development of the borough All-Hazard Mitigation Plan; the creation of climate action plans by the cities of Homer and Seward; as well as the ongoing monitoring of climate changes on the peninsula by such institutions as the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and the University of Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has over 148 facilities and investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy for these facilities represent enormous potential savings on electricity and maintenance costs over the mid- and long-term; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Land Management Division is developing an agricultural initiative and pilot project with the strategy of managing borough land designated as agricultural land for long-term agricultural production and the initiative needs a commission to provide guidance and oversight; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in KPB's interest to implement policies that mitigate against known hazards, invest in local agriculture, improve the efficiency of buildings and transportation, reduce solid waste, protect habitats of fish and wildlife, and invest in modern, clean, local sources of energy; and

**WHEREAS**, these policies will have additional benefits for residents, including cost savings, job creation, bolstering self-reliance, increased economic stability through market diversification, greater protection of public natural resources, and better public health outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, investments in hazard mitigation, energy efficiency, grid diversification, food security, and waste reduction generally pay for themselves and create long-term jobs and,

**WHEREAS**, financial and technical support for the Commission is available through numerous public and private institutions who support community resilience and security; and

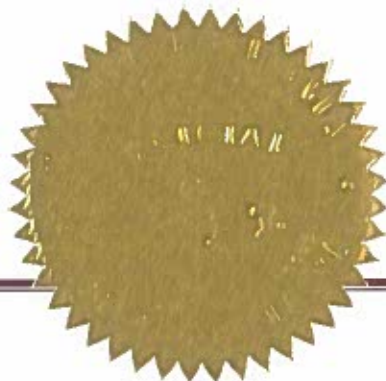
**WHEREAS**, for these reasons, in accordance with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan, the City Council of the City of Seldovia supports the establishment of a RESILIENCE AND SECURITY COMMISSION that will develop and recommend sustainability solutions for the borough;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Seldovia supports Kenai Peninsula Borough' establishment of a RESILIENCE AND SECURITY COMMISSION.

**PASSED AND APPROVED** by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council of the City of Seldovia, Alaska, on this 27 day of May, 2020.

ATTEST:

  
Heidi Geagel, City Clerk



APPROVED:

  
Dean Lent, Mayor