Presented by: The Manager
Introduction: 08/15/2025
Drafted by: Law Department

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
Serial No. 4027

A Resolution of the City and Borough of Juneau Declaring a Local Emergency in Response to the 2025 Glacier Outburst Flood and a Request for State Assistance.

WHEREAS, the City and Borough of Juneau (the "City and Borough") is a political subdivision of the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, a side basin (Suicide Basin or K'óox Ḵaadí Basin) of the Mendenhall Glacier above Juneau, Alaska, has released outburst floods (also known as jökulhlaups) since 2011, with record flood events in August 2023, 2024, and 2025; causing repeated damage to public and private infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the August 2024 glacier outburst flood was unprecedented and required the immediate assistance of State agencies and the Army National Guard; and

WHEREAS, the August 2024 glacier outburst flood resulted in flooding of homes, including homes outside anticipated flood areas; flooding of vehicles; countless hazardous material spills causing portions of the Mendenhall River and floodwaters to smell like petroleum; 43 people sought refuge in an emergency shelter and countless others evacuated to other locations; and public utilities and infrastructure were severely damaged; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of Alaska issued a State disaster declaration on August 12, 2024, and the State received a federal disaster declaration for the designated areas of the City and Borough of Juneau on October 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City and Borough has operated under an ongoing emergency since August 2024; and

WHEREAS, benefited property owners and the Assembly have approved the creation of a local improvement district to fund the placement of HESCO barriers as well as the placement of HESCO barriers along the riverbank to protect life and property; and

WHEREAS, as of August 8, 2025, monitoring and hydrologic data confirmed that the volume of water currently impounded in Suicide Basin reached or exceeded the threshold necessary to produce a flood of historic record on the Mendenhall River, creating a severe and imminent threat to life, property, and critical infrastructure in the Mendenhall Valley; and

WHEREAS, past flood events of this scale have caused riverbank collapse, major flooding, residential evacuations, property losses, damage to public utilities and infrastructure, and hazardous material releases; and

WHEREAS, both the City Manager and Tlingit and Haida issued disaster declarations on August 8, 2025, to allow for timely protective actions, including the deployment of state resources and pre-positioning of equipment, emergency permitting, public alerts, and interagency coordination; and

WHEREAS, the Governor issued a disaster declaration on August 10, 2025, to allow for timely protective actions, including the deployment of state resources and pre-positioning of equipment, emergency permitting, public alerts, and interagency coordination; and

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2025, the 2025 glacial outburst flood occurred at a new historic rise of 16.65 feet, and damage assessment and response is ongoing;

WHEREAS, the City and Borough Manager is the chief administrative officer who reports to the Assembly (CBJ Charter 4.1 & 4.5); and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the City and Borough is the Assembly, which has legislative and policy-making powers (CBJ Charter 3.1), and the City and Borough Mayor is the presiding officer with special powers in emergencies; and

WHEREAS, CBJ Charter 3.12(c) allows for the Assembly to declare an emergency without 24-hour notice; and CBJC 03.25.040(a) and AS 26.23.140 authorize the City Manager to declare an emergency, subject to confirmation by the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, State assistance is needed to supplement local efforts to protect life and property, prepare for emergency operations, and reduce the potential severity of impacts associated with this pending disaster; and

WHEREAS, continued Federal support will be needed for short term and long term mitigation;

WHEREAS, the Assembly authorizes the Manager to implement orders necessary to protect the health and safety of the residents of the City and Borough.

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

Section 1. Local Emergency Declaration. The City and Borough Manager and Assembly of the City and Borough of Juneau declare a disaster emergency to exist within the City and Borough of Juneau per CBJ Charter 3.12(c), CBJC 03.25.040(a), and A.S. 26.23.140. A copy of this Resolution shall be filed promptly with the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Section 2. Reasonable and Necessary Emergency Orders. Consistent with CBJC 03.25.040(6), CBJC 03.25.090, and A.S. 26.23.190, the Assembly authorizes the Manager to implement any reasonable emergency orders necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the residents of the City and Borough of Juneau including emergency permitting and waivers under Title 19, Title 49, and Title 75 as it is reasonable and necessary to protect life and property, upon balancing the public health, safety, and welfare.

Section 3. Request for State Assistance. The City and Borough of Juneau requests that the Governor of the State of Alaska provide continued State public assistance and individual assistance as may be available, assistance with emergency permitting within and near Mendenhall River.

Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately after its adoption. Because of the ongoing nature of the emergency, this declaration of local emergency shall remain in effect for 180 days.

Adopted this 15 day of August, 2025.

Beth A. Weldon, Mayor

Katie Koester, City Manager

Attest:

Breckan L. Hendricks

Breckan L. Hendricks, Municipal Clerk