



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of
Environmental Conservation**

DIVISION OF WATER

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November 2, 2018

Daniel Opalski, Director
Office of Water and Watersheds
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Re: Alaska's Final 2014/2016 Integrated Report

Dear Mr. ^{Dan}Opalski:

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) is pleased to submit Alaska's Final 2014/2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (Final 2014/16 Integrated Report) under Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act for your approval of Alaska's Category 5 Section 303(d) listed waterbodies. We appreciate the constructive participation and recommendations of EPA's Region 10 staff Jill Fullagar and Jayne Carlin during the development process and have incorporated applicable changes. Together EPA and the Department have dedicated time and resources over the last several years to improve the report process. It is good to see these efforts bearing fruit.

The draft Integrated Report was publically noticed in December 2017 and proposed listing 7.5 miles of the lower Kenai River as impaired for turbidity based on a comprehensive assessment of turbidity monitoring from 2008–2010 data. Public comments were received in opposition and support of the proposed turbidity listing; however opposition statements indicating that motorized boating use and conditions in the lower Kenai River have changed substantially since 2010 warranted further investigation.

In response, the Department delayed submittal of the 2014–16 Integrated Report and contracted to conduct limited turbidity monitoring in July 2018 (previous data indicated the impairment occurs only in July). The 2018 turbidity data showed a reduction in overall turbidity levels and in differences between the upstream background site (river mile 23) and the downstream suspected impairment site (river mile 11.5). The data was both unable to confirm the previous impairment and not sufficient to confirm attainment of the turbidity criteria in the lower Kenai River. Therefore, the Final 2014/16 Integrated Report leaves the lower 7.5 miles of the Kenai River in its existing classification for turbidity (Category 3, insufficient information) until further information becomes available to reassess conditions of the river. The Department will continue to work with local stakeholders on a watershed plan to prioritize emerging water quality issues on the Kenai River. The forthcoming 2018 Integrated Report has identified concerns over zinc and copper levels in the lower Kenai River and bacteria levels on beaches at the mouth of the Kenai River.

As part of the Final 2014/16 Integrated Report you will find the total maximum daily load schedule for Alaska's Section 303(d) listed waters and a public participation summary. Additional supporting documents are enclosed. Should you have questions or comments, please contact myself or Nancy

Sonafrank, Program Manager, Water Quality Standards, Assessment & Restoration at (907) 451-2726.

Sincerely,



Andrew Sayers-Fay
Director

Enclosures:

2014/16 Integrated Report

2014/16 Responsiveness Summary

2018 Kenai River Turbidity Monitoring Report

cc: Jill Fullagar, EPA/Region 10, Watershed Unit, Seattle