

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH DECLARING A LOCAL EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO IMMINENT 2026 TALKEETNA FLOODING AND A REQUEST FOR STATE ASSISTANCE.

AGENDA OF: July 21, 2026

Assembly Action:

Adopted without objection 07/21/26 - EMW

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: Present to the Assembly for consideration.

Route To	Signatures
Originator M. Brown	7 / 1 / 2 0 2 6 X M i c h a e l B r o w n Signed by: M i k e B r o w n
Finance Director	 R e c o v e r a b l e S i g n a t u r e X C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l Signed by: C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l
Borough Attorney	7 / 2 / 2 0 2 6 X S h a n n o n B o d o l a y Signed by: S h a n n o n B o d o l a y
Borough Manager	 R e c o v e r a b l e S i g n a t u r e X M i c h a e l B r o w n Signed by: M i c h a e l B r o w n
Borough Clerk	7 / 6 / 2 0 2 6 X E s t e l l e M . W i e s e f o r L M Signed by: E s t e l l e W i e s e

ATTACHMENT (S): Resolution Serial No. 26-065 (2 pp)

SUMMARY STATEMENT: This resolution is sponsored by the Borough Manager to address the ongoing and elevated flood risk in Talkeetna and an imminent threat of widespread damage, injury, and potential loss of life. This long-standing issue has intensified over time due to changes in river dynamics and repeated flood events. Flooding has been gradually occurring since at least the 2012 flood, with more pronounced losses during high rainfall and flood conditions. A shift in the Susitna River channel has redirected flow toward Talkeetna, resulting in a full-frontal assault on the dike and revetment system protecting the community.

The Borough has undertaken multiple emergency repairs to the revetment system (2017, 2020, 2023, 2024, and 2025); however, these are temporary measures and do not provide long-term protection. Significant flooding events, including the fall 2023 and 2025 floods, resulted in revetment failure, loss of bank material, and damage to private property and public infrastructure.

Recent observations indicate that flood risk remains active and is worsening:

- Active high-water impacts continue along the Talkeetna Spur Road and airstrip, with documented loss of previously installed riprap in 2026.
- As of June 2026, flood-related impacts have progressed to approximately 53 feet of critical water infrastructure, creating potential service risks.
- Additional monitoring by the State indicates continued exposure to flood risk since 2025 and reinforces the need for sustained mitigation and project development.
- Private property impacts persist, including damage to businesses, cabins, and loss of usable land following high-water events.

The Borough, in coordination with state and federal partners, have pursued multiple response strategies:

- Recurring emergency repairs and riprap placement following flood events.
- Monitoring and site inspections by Public Works, State DOT&PF, and federal agencies.
- A 2023 USACE study evaluated channel migration and risks but did not advance to final design or construction funding.
- Applications to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CAP-14 and WRDA programs) for large-scale flood mitigation.
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding awarded, requiring a non-federal match.
- Ongoing coordination with Congressional delegation, state agencies, and emergency management partners.
- Award of federal grants to fund buyouts of high-risk properties through USDA NRCS programs, requiring a non-federal match.

Several factors continue to hinder effective mitigation:

- Temporary repairs are not a permanent solution, and do not address underlying flood risk.
- The local tax base is insufficient to fund a comprehensive flood protection system upgrade or replacement.
- Federal and state funding programs require significant lead time and matching funds.
- Existing efforts do not provide reliable protection during ongoing or future flood events.

Addressing the flood risk in Talkeetna is critical due to the following:

- Talkeetna Spur Road serves as the only highway connection to the community, supporting residents, tourism, and emergency response.
- Water and sewer infrastructure are increasingly at risk due to flood-related impacts.
- Continued flood exposure threatens homes, businesses, and public assets.
- Flood events can result in rapid loss of land and access, creating safety hazards and economic disruption.
- Talkeetna is a key tourism destination; damage to infrastructure and businesses directly affects the local and regional economy.

Recently, the Borough received notification of two federal opportunities requiring non-federal matches. A FFY26 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for \$2 million is available with a \$500,000 non-federal match for developing a comprehensive flood protection system. Additionally, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has authorized \$1,812,504 with a 25% local match of \$604,168 for a total of \$2,416,672 for property buyouts. The Borough has the authority to manage flooding through a special service area (SSA) in Talkeetna. The SSA generates roughly \$80,000 annually and is expected to have less than \$100,000 available.

While the Borough has taken proactive steps through emergency repairs, planning, and pursuit of external funding, these measures have not kept pace with the increasing flood risk. A coordinated, long-term flood mitigation strategy, supported by state and federal partnerships and sufficient funding, is necessary to protect critical assets and ensure the long-term viability of the Talkeetna community. The scope of work needed exceeds the capabilities of the Borough, therefore State funding is requested to match federal funding opportunities.

There is an imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, and potential loss of life or property from flooding and action needs to be taken now.

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION: Respectfully request approval.