**MOVING FORWARD: Kootznoowoo, Inc. makes advancements on long-awaited hydropower project**

The Kootznoowoo, Incorporated (Kootznoowoo) Board of Directors has recently announced that the Corporation has entered into an amended grant agreement with the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) to complete the design of their long-proposed Thayer Creek Hydropower Development Transmission Project.

The rights to develop this project were given to Kootznoowoo during Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) land usage negotiations, and the project has been in development for over thirty years. The project area is in the lower 8,500 feet of Thayer Creek and the City of Angoon, spanning a total area of about 6 miles on federal property. Kootznoowoo has received support from related federal agencies, including the U.S. National Forest Service, and is working in tandem with them on the project’s final design and implementation.

Funding has been the main hurdle in implementing the project, but Kootznoowoo is celebrating success in accessing increased AEA grant funding. Board Chairwoman Melissa Kookesh and AEA Executive Director Curtis Thayer recently signed an amendment to the grant funding award by $1 million, totaling the award funding to approximately $5.7 million. This award is currently supplemented by a $100,000 contribution from the Inside Passage Electric Cooperative.

“With this grant, we are moving closer to bringing hydropower to Angoon,” said Board Chairwoman Melissa Kookesh. This will not only provide more efficient and eco-friendly energy, but it will improve the affordability of the Angoon-area residents through reduced energy costs and provide greater opportunities for commercial development in the community.”

According to current project design, the project is expected to provide Angoon with 850 kilowatt hours of electric power daily. Coupled with planned road construction to begin in 2020, it is expected to be a step forward for economic development and energy independence for the people of Angoon.

“This grant is a significant and positive step forward for Thayer Creek and the community of Angoon,” said Kookesh. “One of the biggest challenges when working to secure construction funding is the unknown costs of the project. This funding will allow the project to move from 35% to 100% completion of the design phase so the final project costs can be better defined.”

An additional $14 million is forecasted to be needed to complete the full project once the project moves to its implementation phase.