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Department of Law

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

State Seeks to Resolve Long-Running Campbell Lake Public Access Dispute

Oct. 30, 2023 (Anchorage, AK) – The State filed a lawsuit today, asking a State Superior Court judge to confirm the existence of a public right-of-way to Campbell Lake and to declare that Campbell Lake is a public lake. The answer would resolve a decades-old dispute and allow continued public use of the lake while respecting the rights of lake shore landowners.

Last spring, two lake shore landowners filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking a declaration that the Section Line Easement that runs north-south through Campbell Lake does not exist and that their property is unencumbered. The State filed a Motion to Dismiss the lawsuit, which is currently pending before the federal court.

Public access is central to the use and enjoyment of State managed lands and waters throughout Alaska. Over the years, the lack of an agreed to route to Campbell Lake has contributed to disagreements between the public and nearby landowners.

“During recent years the status of Campbell Lake as public water and access to it have caused uncertainty among lakefront property owners and the public. The State is filing this litigation in an attempt to resolve the matter and provide certainty to all affected interests,” **said Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor**. “The objective would be to establish the existence of the easement so we can negotiate a route that minimizes adverse impacts on property owners, yet allows access to a public waterbody.”

Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources John Boyle said today’s filing will help provide answers. “Having the court confirm the validity of the easement will be a positive first step. We intend to vigorously protect Alaskans’ right to access public waters. When the two landowners filed in federal court they were, in effect, trying to overturn decades of established section line easements in Alaska, with potential implications for access to public lands and waters across the state. The

Departments of Law and Natural Resources look forward to defending our position that the section line easement at Campbell Lake is valid. We remain open to working with the plaintiffs and others, as we have tried in the past, on negotiating an alternative route for the easement to ensure Campbell Lake's recreation opportunities are available to all," Boyle said.

The State believes a court order based on the facts and laws at issue will provide much needed clarity for both the property owners adjacent to the lake and the public who seeks to use it.

Read the [Campbell Lake complaint](#) here.

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