



Northern Montana Water Security Act

Senator Daines and Senator Sheehy

With the support of Governor Gianforte and the entire Montana Congressional Delegation, the “Northern Montana Water Security Act of 2025” would complete the final Indian Water Rights Settlement in Montana

Background: After more than a decade of negotiations, the Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) Tribal Council approved its Water Compact with the State of Montana in 2001. The Montana Legislature approved the Compact later that spring. FBIC and the Congressional Delegation have worked together for years to bring together partners to advance this critical settlement. The Compact and Settlement must now pass through Congress, be approved by a simple majority vote of FBIC members, and the Compact must be submitted to the Montana Water Court and be entered into the Montana Water Court as a final decree.

Title I: Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act

- \$1.3 billion to improve infrastructure and economic development for tribal and non-tribal water users and increase the efficiency of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Milk River Project, which furnishes water for the irrigation of about 121,000 acres of Tribal and non-Tribal land.
- Provides \$300 million in funding to complete the rehabilitation of the Milk River Project and Dodson South Canal, which will give certainty for all water users along the Milk River Basin. Funding can be used to repair the St. Mary siphons following a catastrophic failure that affected water access for 14,000 Montanans and irrigation for over 18,000 water users.
- Prevents costly litigation by settling claims against the United States government by affirming the Tribes’ senior water rights. Will improve water supplies, water storage, maintenance and administration of Tribal water rights, and irrigation on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.
- Allows for a process to restore state lands on the FBIC reservation to tribal management in exchange for similar federal lands and includes a gaming prohibition.
- No private lands or land within the Grinnell Notch will be permitted to be exchanged.
- Protection for existing leases and easements included in the 37,822 acres that are transferred or exchanged for restoring tribal management to FBIC.

Title II: Blackfoot Tribe Wastewater Facilities

- Authorizes and appropriates \$250 million toward the construction of an upstream wastewater treatment facility on the Blackfoot Reservation to replace aging infrastructure and deliver clean, safe water to the community.

Supported By

- Fort Belknap Tribal Council
- Blackfoot Tribal Business Council
- Phillips County Commission
- Blaine County Commission
- Valley County Commission
- Hill County Commission
- Governor Greg Gianforte
- Montana Stockgrowers
- Montana Farm Bureau
- Milk River Joint Board of Control
- St. Mary’s Rehabilitation Working Group
- Blaine County Conservation District