

Agency Legislative Budget								
Budget Item	Base Budget Fiscal 2000	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2002	New Proposals Fiscal 2002	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 2002	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2003	New Proposals Fiscal 2003	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 2003	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 02-03
FTE	5.04	0.00	0.00	5.04	0.00	0.00	5.04	5.04
Personal Services	343,423	22,939	0	366,362	25,199	0	368,622	734,984
Operating Expenses	524,093	215,556	100,000	839,649	215,353	100,000	839,446	1,679,095
Total Costs	\$867,516	\$238,495	\$100,000	\$1,206,011	\$240,552	\$100,000	\$1,208,068	\$2,414,079
State/Other Special	867,516	238,495	100,000	1,206,011	240,552	100,000	1,208,068	2,414,079
Total Funds	\$867,516	\$238,495	\$100,000	\$1,206,011	\$240,552	\$100,000	\$1,208,068	\$2,414,079

Agency Description

The Consumer Counsel exists under Article XIII, Section 2 of the 1972 Montana Constitution. It is governed by Title 5, Chapter 15, and Title 69, Chapter 1 and 2, MCA. The office represents consumer interests in hearings before the Public Service Commission and like agencies. The counsel initiates, intervenes, or participates in appropriate proceedings in the court systems and administrative agencies on behalf of the public of Montana.

Summary of Legislative Action

The legislature approved the budget as presented including two present law adjustments. Statewide present law adjustments were applied, and the counsel received a \$200,000 annual contingency fund for future costs associated with an anticipated caseload increase based on current electricity and natural gas cost fluctuations, and travel and contract services of \$113,000 per year.

Agency Budget Comparison								
Budget Item	Base Budget Fiscal 2000	Executive Budget Fiscal 2002	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2002	Leg – Exec. Difference Fiscal 2002	Executive Budget Fiscal 2003	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2003	Leg – Exec. Difference Fiscal 2003	Biennium Difference Fiscal 02-03
FTE	5.04	5.04	5.04	0.00	5.04	5.04	0.00	
Personal Services	343,423	366,362	366,362	0	368,622	368,622	0	0
Operating Expenses	524,093	739,714	839,649	99,935	739,511	839,446	99,935	199,870
Total Costs	\$867,516	\$1,106,076	\$1,206,011	\$99,935	\$1,108,133	\$1,208,068	\$99,935	\$199,870
State/Other Special	867,516	1,106,076	1,206,011	99,935	1,108,133	1,208,068	99,935	199,870
Total Funds	\$867,516	\$1,106,076	\$1,206,011	\$99,935	\$1,108,133	\$1,208,068	\$99,935	\$199,870

Executive Budget Comparison

With the exception of global adjustments applied to all agencies, the legislature adopted the proposed budget.

Funding

The Consumer Counsel is funded by a constitutionally earmarked tax levied on all regulated entities under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission. The tax rate can be revised to adjust for previous fiscal year carryover to avoid accumulation of a significant cash balance.

	-----Fiscal 2002-----					-----Fiscal 2003-----				
	FTE	General	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds	FTE	General	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds
Present Law Adjustments										
Personal Services					22,939					25,199
Vacancy Savings					0					0
Inflation/Deflation					273					718
Fixed Costs					1,658					1,562
Total Statewide Present Law Adjustments					\$24,870					\$27,479
DP 1 - Present Law Base Adjustments	0.00	0	213,690	0	213,690	0.00	0	213,138	0	213,138
DP 696 - Data Network Fixed Cost Reduction	0.00	0	(65)	0	(65)	0.00	0	(65)	0	(65)
Total Other Present Law Adjustments	0.00	\$0	\$213,625	\$0	\$213,625	0.00	\$0	\$213,073	\$0	\$213,073
Grand Total All Present Law Adjustments					\$238,495					\$240,552

Present Law Adjustments

The "Present Law Adjustments" table shows the primary changes to the adjusted base budget made by the legislature. "Statewide Present Law" adjustments are standard categories of adjustments made to all agencies. Legislative decisions on these items were applied globally to all agencies. The other numbered adjustments in the table correspond to the narrative descriptions.

DP 1 - Present Law Base Adjustments - The legislature approved a present law adjustment including an annual \$100,000 contingency appropriation for predictable caseload increases with unpredictable costs. This present law adjustment restores the contingency fund and includes \$27,913 in travel, \$2,442 in temporary services, \$954 in printing, \$1,218 in reference materials, and funding for multiple other small expenditures.

DP 696 - Data Network Fixed Cost Reduction - The legislature approved fees and charges for data network support provided by the Information Services Division of the Department of Administration at a level lower than that proposed by the executive and used to develop the associated fixed cost budget requests. This adjustment removes the corresponding fixed costs from agency budgets.

New Proposals	-----Fiscal 2002-----					-----Fiscal 2003-----					
	Prgm	FTE	General	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds	FTE	General	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds
DP 500 - Caseload Contingency Fund											
01	0.00	0	100,000	0	100,000	0.00	0	100,000	0	100,000	
Total	0.00	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	0.00	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	

New Proposals

DP 500 - Caseload Contingency Fund - The legislature approved an additional \$100,000 state special revenue in fiscal 2000 and fiscal 2003 as a restricted appropriation. These funds are provided in anticipation of additional workload and additional legal costs related to energy cost issues currently anticipated by the Public Service Commission as they manage issues related to utility supply, and supply and market conditions in the utilities industries.