

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

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7 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
8 MONTANA URGING CONGRESS, THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE BUREAU OF
9 RECLAMATION TO REPAIR THE FUNDING ALLOCATION AND AUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR THE
10 REPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF THE ST. MARY RIVER DIVERSION AND MILK RIVER
11 PROJECT.

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13 WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Reclamation authorized the Milk River Project in 1903 to
14 provide water for irrigation by means of the St. Mary River dam and diversion, 29 miles of canals, 2 sets of
15 siphon tubes, 5 hydraulic drop structures, Lake Sherburne, Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge, and the Fresno
16 and Nelson reservoirs; and

17 WHEREAS, since its completion, the Milk River Project provides drinking water to more than 19,000
18 people along the Hi-Line from Havre to the confluence with the Missouri River near Nashua; and

19 WHEREAS, water from Lake Sherburne and the Fresno and Nelson reservoirs supplies more than 700
20 farms that feed 1,000,000 people annually, provides water compact requirements for the Blackfoot Tribe and
21 the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, and creates recreation
22 opportunities and critical habitat for fish and wildlife; and

23 WHEREAS, 6 out of every 10 years the Milk River in the United States would be dry without the St.
24 Mary River diversion; and

25 WHEREAS, for more than 20 years the Milk River Project has been the focus of past and present
26 congressional members to provide funding for the repair and replacement of the 106-year-old system; and

27 WHEREAS, after the Drop 5 structure failed on May 17, 2020, Milk River Project beneficiaries paid
28 48% of the \$8 million cost to replace the Drop 2 and Drop 5 structures and to improve the Drop 1 structure, and

