



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, with the total cost for replacement and rehabilitation being estimated at more than \$200

million, the current project funding allocation that requires project beneficiaries to pay for 74% of this estimated cost is not sustainable for those who rely on the Milk River.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the State of Montana support funding for the repair and replacement of the St. Mary River diversion and Milk River Project immediately and ask for appropriation funding to complete the much-needed repairs and replacement of the diversion and project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Congress be urged to fix the United States Bureau of Reclamation's funding allocation required of project beneficiaries to make it reasonable and affordable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the Montana Congressional Delegation, the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HJ 7, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

INTRODUCED BY C. KNUDSEN, M. BLASDEL, S. FITZPATRICK, S. HINEBAUCH, M. LANG, R.
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