

Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council

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June 30, 2023

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate - Montana
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate - Montana
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510


Dear Senator Tester and Senator Daines,

We are writing to inform you that the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council is giving its full-throated endorsement to the Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement. This formal Letter of Support affirms our sacred commitment to the Fort Belknap Community's protection of the Milk River Watershed, as well as the settlement's guarantees that our native brothers and sisters will have access with certainty.

We urge the U.S. Senate to quickly ratify the Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 2023 to allow investment in and maintenance of this crucial water supply, assuring us that this critical lifeline is maintained well into the future. The Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement will create an ongoing economic boom for the region once infrastructure projects funded by the Act commence on waterways, irrigation and drinking water systems in the Milk River Watershed.

The Ft. Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement marks the far too long-awaited achievement of ensuring every federally recognized tribe in Montana is protected by a formal water rights agreement. It stands as an example of what can be accomplished when hope and history rhyme and the first people of this land finally have negotiating partners, who informed by history, seek to heal the scars of this nations and our state's soul.

Sincerely,



Gerald Gray, Chairman
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council

