

Know the FACTS:

CSKT Water Compact

- With the Hellgate Treaty of 1855, the Salish and Kootenai Tribes reserved water rights on and off of the Flathead Reservation in exchange for over 20 million acres of land to the United States government.
- These treaty rights are legally binding, and without a water compact, the Salish and Kootenai Tribes, local landowners, and the federal government will enter into lengthy litigation that could cost taxpayers significantly more money than the total price of the CSKT Water Compact.
- The CSKT Water Compact protects water rights for existing water rights holders.
- The CSKT Water Compact includes a state approved process that streamlines resolution of water disputes on the reservation.
- The CSKT Water Compact DOES NOT restrict any future off-reservation water lawsuits in northwest Montana.
- The CSKT Water Compact solves five critical problems:
 1. Avoids costly litigation for taxpayers and the Tribes.
 2. Ratifies the Salish and Kootenai Tribes' water compact with the State of Montana.
 3. Protects the water claims of existing water rights holders.
 4. Resolves the Tribes' water-related claims against the federal government.
 5. Provides the necessary resources for the Tribes to invest in critical water infrastructure that will benefit tribal and non-tribal members in Flathead and Lake Counties.
- The cost of the CSKT Water Compact is \$2.3 billion—including \$55 million from the State of Montana.
- The Tribes waived a majority of their water rights claims under the Hellgate Treaty in order to strike a compromise, and failure to ratify the CSKT Water Compact could cost taxpayers up to 14 times more than the current cost of the compact to fully fulfil the federal government's treaty obligations.
- The bill invests millions of dollars in agriculture development, including rehabilitation of farm and ranch lands, noxious weed control, livestock fencing, and irrigation ditch and canal screens
- The bill also invests millions of dollars in economic development and water infrastructure upgrades for drinking and wastewater facilities.
- The on-reservation water rights include water from Flathead River and Flathead Lake, which will be used to meet the water needs of the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project and serves tribal and non-tribal irrigators.
 - The Flathead Indian Irrigation Project consists of 1,300 miles of canals, 10,000 minor structures for water diversion and control, and sources water from as many as 60 streams.
- The off-reservation water rights secure the instream flow for the Kootenai, Swan, and Lower Clark Fork Rivers to maintain a fish habitat for recreationists.
- The Tribes will be allocated approximately 90,000 acre-feet per year from the Hungry Horse Reservoir, contingent on the water storage levels, ground water levels, and previous year allocation.
- The CSKT Water Compact establishes a five person board to administer water rights on the Flathead Reservation. The Governor will appoint two members, the Tribes' will appoint two members, and those four members will choose a fifth member.
- The CSKT Water Compact has absolutely no impact on the Blackfeet Water Compact, which is waiting on the Senate Floor for a final vote.

