



# MONTANA WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

“THE MONTANA WATERLINE”

## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) – IRRIGATION PROJECT GRANTS AVAILABLE

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2021 in response to the Covid 19 impacts on the United States economy. One aspect of ARPA included funding for water and sewer project infrastructure. During the 67<sup>th</sup> legislative session, the legislature passed HB 632. HB 632 included a delineation of ARPA allocations and a program to administer the use of funds made available for sewer and water infrastructure and other sectors of the economy. The legislation provided for the establishment of an Infrastructure Advisory Commission to specifically oversee the administration of the sewer and water sections of the Act. While it was the intent of the legislature to include irrigated agriculture and related projects within the water and sewer category, the guidelines and ranking criteria made it almost impossible for irrigation projects to compete against the cities and counties for funding and no irrigation projects were successful in the first round of funding.

**MWRA REQUESTS SET ASIDE FOR IRRIGATION GRANTS** - Based upon the inability of irrigation projects to compete for funding within the ARPA program criteria and ranking, MWRA initiated a discussion with the Infrastructure Commission to explore the possibility of setting aside a specific amount of funding for irrigated agriculture. After discussions and consideration by the full Commission, ten million dollars were set aside for irrigated agriculture and specific guidelines were established. Maximum grant amount under the set aside is \$500 thousand dollars. Specific project activities and other guidelines can be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources or by visiting the ARPA web site at [ARPA.mt.gov](http://ARPA.mt.gov). **Applications are due by January 14, 2022.** Currently, projects must demonstrate water quality benefits and projects pertaining exclusively to dams or reservoirs are excluded. A request has been presented to the Department of Treasury to allow use of the funds for dam and reservoir projects but, no confirmation has been received. Irrigation Districts and Associations can apply directly for funding under ARPA guidelines. However, private ditch companies will have to apply through a Conservation District or County in which the project is located.

**RENEWABLE RESOURCE GRANT AND LOAN PROGRAM** – DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL) is now accepting planning grant applications. Planning grants are available to government entities for planning activities which lead to an RRGL program project application to conserve, manage, develop, or protect a renewable resource in Montana. For more information visit the DNRC website or contact staff at 444-9766.

**2022 MWRA  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**  
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### FEATURED INFO:

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**MONTANA WATER RESOURCES  
ASSOCIATION**

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**EXEC'S COMMENTS**  
(Reiterated from Legislative Addition)

**DEAR WATER USERS:**

The importance of our water storage and delivery systems becomes more apparent every day. Water issues continue to increase and as our population expands and interests change it will be increasingly important for Agriculture to maintain a strong voice on behalf of irrigation and the critical function of our related infrastructure. While legislators and other policy makers recognize the economic and environmental importance of agriculture and our irrigation infrastructure, competing interests would direct priority in directions that may not be in our best interest. Direct citizen involvement in agriculture is far less than in past generations, but concern for the Agricultural Industry continues to be fairly strong. That said, strong representation by Montana Water Resources Association and other Agricultural organizations in actions such as the ARPA grant funding program and the Infrastructure Commission is more important than ever.

As I noted in my last Exec. Comments, the bills that passed the 2021 Session resulted in fair and balanced legislation. Legislation such as HB632 that was passed in order to address ARPA funding, passed with reasonable attention to agriculture, but as the process developed, it became almost impossible for Agriculture to compete for funding. Through MWRA participation our concerns were heard, resulting in changes that made it possible for Irrigated Agriculture to compete in the funding process.

It is an honor to represent Montana Water Resources Association and our membership. Our collective efforts result in very positive results.

Sincerely,



Michael E. Murphy  
Executive Director



**MONTANA  
WATER RESOURCES  
ASSOCIATION**

Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA) works to protect water and other private property rights at both state and national levels. Protecting these rights is increasingly difficult as the connection to making a living on the land and concern for private property rights continue to diminish.

MWRA combines experience with reason and balance in managing Montana's water resources. As a strong participant in legislative and administrative policy development MWRA strives for responsible use and management of our water to protect the resource, while protecting rights of hard working Montanans. Support for protection of our water and other private property rights, is crucial. Your membership, participation, and encouragement to others for their support and participation will help MWRA continue as it has for over 70 years as "**Montana's Voice for Montana's Water**".

**MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE/APPLICATION**

<u>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</u>	<u>ANNUAL DUES</u>	<u>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</u>	<u>ANNUAL DUES</u>
Business/Firm		Irrigation Dist./Assoc./Private Ditch	
Under 10 Employees .....	\$370	Minimum Base .....	\$370
10 -100 Employees .....	\$840	plus, First 5,000 Acres	
Over 100 Employees ...	\$1,175	at .....	\$.074/Acre
Individual		plus, Remaining Acres Over	
Voting .....	\$80	5,000 Acres at .....	\$.052/Acre
REAs and RTAs .....	\$400	Sustaining Memberships	
Municipalities		Silver .....	\$1,500
City, Town, or County		Gold .....	\$2,000
.....	\$.10 per capita	Platinum .....	\$3,000
Other Political Sub.....	\$370	Associate Member .....	\$ _____

For more information, please call: (406) 235-4555 or visit the web site at [mtwra.org](http://mtwra.org). You may use this form to activate your membership. Please include a check made payable to MWRA, P.O. Box 4927, Helena, MT 59604.

Name: Individual/ Entity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street or Box Address: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Please tear off the above information insert and send it with your own new membership or your encouragement as a current member, to an irrigation project, individual, business, or other entity that you feel should be a member of MWRA. Your support and that of others for MWRA is crucial to maintaining a strong advocacy position for water and other private property rights. **Thank You!**



**MONTANA  
WATER  
RESOURCES  
ASSOCIATION**

**P.O. BOX 4927  
HELENA, MONTANA 59604**