

Agency Budget Comparison

The following table compares the 2023 biennium appropriated budget and the adopted budget for the 2025 biennium by type of expenditure and source of funding.

Agency Budget Comparison					
Budget Item	Appropriated Budget 22-23	Legislative Budget 24-25	Biennium Change	Biennium % Change	
Personal Services	1,373,950	1,402,106	28,156	2.05 %	
Operating Expenses	1,935,174	1,983,660	48,486	2.51 %	
Debt Service	82,601	83,216	615	0.74 %	
Total Expenditures	\$3,391,725	\$3,468,982	\$77,257	2.28 %	
State/Other Special Rev. Funds	3,391,725	3,468,982	77,257	2.28 %	
Total Funds	\$3,391,725	\$3,468,982	\$77,257	2.28 %	
Total Ongoing	\$3,391,725	\$3,171,914	(\$219,811)	(6.48)%	
Total OTO	\$0	\$297,068	\$297,068	100.00 %	

Agency Description

The mission of the Montana Consumer Counsel is to represent the utility and transportation consuming public of the state of Montana in hearings before the Public Service Commission, or any other successor agency, and before state and federal courts and administrative agencies.

Agency Highlights

**Consumer Counsel
Major Budget Highlights**

- The legislature adopted an increase to the Consumer Counsel's 2025 biennium budget of approximately \$77,000 or 2.3% compared to the 2023 biennium budget
- Changes adopted by the legislature include:
 - Statewide present law adjustments for personal services and fixed costs
 - A reduction to the statewide present law adjustments for inflation
 - Moving the caseload contingency from the ongoing base budget to a restricted, biennial, and one-time-only appropriation
 - Adjusting the Risk Management & Tort Defense (RMTD) premium allocation to align with the approved premium holiday

Agency Actuals and Budget Comparison

The following table compares FY 2022 actual expenditures, FY 2022 and FY 2023 appropriations, and the adopted budget for FY 2024 and FY 2025 by type of expenditure and source of funding.

Agency Actuals and Budget Comparison					
Budget Item	Actuals Fiscal 2022	Approp. Fiscal 2022	Approp. Fiscal 2023	Legislative Fiscal 2024	Legislative Fiscal 2025
FTE	0.00	5.54	5.54	5.54	5.54
Personal Services	483,609	682,407	691,543	698,549	703,557
Operating Expenses	328,814	967,838	967,336	986,212	997,448
Debt Service	40,992	40,993	41,608	41,608	41,608
Total Expenditures	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,726,369	\$1,742,613
State/Other Special Rev. Funds	853,415	1,691,238	1,700,487	1,726,369	1,742,613
Total Funds	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,726,369	\$1,742,613
Total Ongoing	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,577,835	\$1,594,079
Total OTO	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$148,534	\$148,534

Summary of Legislative Action

The legislature adopted an increase to the Consumer Counsel's total biennial appropriation of approximately \$77,000 or 2.3% compared to the 2023 biennium appropriation. Changes in the budget include statewide present law adjustments for personal services, fixed costs, and inflation as well as an increase for the SABHRS rate. The increase also includes a one-time-only reduction for the RMTD premium rate, and a restricted, biennial, and one-time-only appropriation for caseload contingencies that require agency intervention.

Funding

The following table shows adopted agency funding for all sources of authority.

Total Consumer Counsel Funding by Source of Authority 2025 Biennium Budget Request - Consumer Counsel						
Funds	HB2 Ongoing	HB2 OTO	Non-Budgeted Proprietary	Statutory Appropriation	Total All Sources	% Total All Funds
General Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0.00 %
State Special Total	3,171,914	297,068	0	0	3,468,982	100.00 %
Federal Special Total	0	0	0	0	0	0.00 %
Proprietary Total	0	0	0	0	0	0.00 %
Other Total	0	0	0	0	0	0.00 %
Total All Funds	\$3,171,914	\$297,068	\$0	\$0	\$3,468,982	
Percent - Total All Sources	91.44 %	8.56 %	0.00 %	0.00 %		

The Consumer Counsel is funded by state special revenue generated by fees imposed on all regulated entities under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission. The funding formula is specified in 69-1-223, MCA. Each year, the Department of Revenue determines the total gross operating revenue generated by all regulated activities within the state for the previous year. The Department of Revenue then computes the percentage tax necessary to yield an amount equal to the current appropriation, with no excess funds. If collection of excess revenue occurs, the amount charged to the regulated utilities for the following year is reduced.

Budget Summary by Category

The following table summarizes the total budget by base, present law adjustments, and new proposals. For a description of these categories, please see the glossary.

Budget Item	-----General Fund-----				-----Total Funds-----			
	Budget Fiscal 2024	Budget Fiscal 2025	Biennium Fiscal 24-25	Percent of Budget	Budget Fiscal 2024	Budget Fiscal 2025	Biennium Fiscal 24-25	Percent of Budget
2023 Base Budget	0	0	0	0.00 %	1,700,487	1,700,487	3,400,974	98.04 %
SWPL Adjustments	0	0	0	0.00 %	38,787	59,116	97,903	2.82 %
PL Adjustments	0	0	0	0.00 %	30	24	54	0.00 %
New Proposals	0	0	0	0.00 %	(12,935)	(17,014)	(29,949)	(0.86)%
Total Budget	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$1,726,369	\$1,742,613	\$3,468,982	

Executive Budget Comparison

The following table compares the legislative budget for the biennium to the budget requested by the Governor by type of expenditure and source of funding.

Budget Item	Approp. Fiscal 2023	Executive Budget Fiscal 2024	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2024	Leg — Exec. Difference Fiscal 2024	Executive Budget Fiscal 2025	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2025	Leg — Exec. Difference Fiscal 2025	Biennium Difference Fiscal 24-25
FTE	5.54	5.54	5.54	0.00	5.54	5.54	0.00	0.00
Personal Services	691,543	698,549	698,549	0	703,557	703,557	0	0
Operating Expenses	967,336	999,117	986,212	(12,905)	1,014,438	997,448	(16,990)	(29,895)
Equipment & Intangible Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt Service	41,608	42,232	41,608	(624)	42,865	41,608	(1,257)	(1,881)
Total Costs	\$1,700,487	\$1,739,898	\$1,726,369	(\$13,529)	\$1,760,860	\$1,742,613	(\$18,247)	(\$31,776)
State/other Special Rev. Funds	1,700,487	1,739,898	1,726,369	(13,529)	1,760,860	1,742,613	(18,247)	(31,776)
Total Funds	\$1,700,487	\$1,739,898	\$1,726,369	(\$13,529)	\$1,760,860	\$1,742,613	(\$18,247)	(\$31,776)
Total Ongoing	\$1,700,487	\$1,739,898	\$1,577,835	(\$162,063)	\$1,760,860	\$1,594,079	(\$166,781)	(\$328,844)
Total OTO	\$0	\$0	\$148,534	\$148,534	\$0	\$148,534	\$148,534	\$297,068

The legislature adopted appropriations that are approximately \$32,000 lower than the proposed appropriations for the 2025 biennium. Significant differences in the legislative budget compared to the proposed budget include:

- The legislature adopted a reduction to the statewide present law adjustment for inflation
- Reestablishing a restricted, biennial, one-time-only appropriation of \$300,000 for caseload contingencies. This funding was designated as ongoing in the proposed executive budget, and the net effect of this change on the budget amount is zero
- Reestablishing the RMTD insurance premium into agency budgets and establishing a one-time-only reduction for the RMTD premium rate due to the adopted premium holiday. The net effect of this change on the overall budget amount is zero

Language and Statutory Authority

The legislature adopted the following language in HB 2:

"The Administration Program includes a one-time-only reduction in FY 2024 and FY 2025 for a suspension of insurance premium payments to the Risk Management and Tort Defense Division's proprietary fund."

Program Actuals and Budget Comparison

The following table compares FY 2022 actual expenditures, FY 2022 and FY 2023 appropriations, and the adopted budget for FY 2024 and FY 2025 by type of expenditure and source of funding.

Program Actuals and Budget Comparison					
Budget Item	Actuals Fiscal 2022	Approp. Fiscal 2022	Approp. Fiscal 2023	Legislative Fiscal 2024	Legislative Fiscal 2025
FTE	0.00	5.54	5.54	5.54	5.54
Personal Services	483,609	682,407	691,543	698,549	703,557
Operating Expenses	328,814	967,838	967,336	986,212	997,448
Debt Service	40,992	40,993	41,608	41,608	41,608
Total Expenditures	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,726,369	\$1,742,613
State/Other Special Rev. Funds	853,415	1,691,238	1,700,487	1,726,369	1,742,613
Total Funds	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,726,369	\$1,742,613
Total Ongoing	\$853,415	\$1,691,238	\$1,700,487	\$1,577,835	\$1,594,079
Total OTO	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$148,534	\$148,534

Present Law Adjustments

The "Present Law" Adjustments table shows the changes from the base appropriation to the adopted budget. "Statewide Present Law" adjustments (DP 1, DP 2, DP 3) are standard categories of adjustments made to all agencies. Decisions on these items were applied globally to all agencies.

Present Law Adjustments	-----Fiscal 2024-----					-----Fiscal 2025-----				
	FTE	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds	FTE	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds
DP 1 - Personal Services	0.00	0	7,006	0	7,006	0.00	0	12,014	0	12,014
DP 2 - Fixed Costs	0.00	0	(16,129)	0	(16,129)	0.00	0	(15,977)	0	(15,977)
DP 3 - Inflation Deflation	0.00	0	47,910	0	47,910	0.00	0	63,079	0	63,079
DP 5 - Caseload Contingency	0.00	0	(150,000)	0	(150,000)	0.00	0	(150,000)	0	(150,000)
DP 6 - Caseload Contingency (RST/BIEN/OTO)	0.00	0	150,000	0	150,000	0.00	0	150,000	0	150,000
DP 20 - SABHRS Rate Adjustment	0.00	0	30	0	30	0.00	0	24	0	24
DP 222 - RMTD Adjustment	0.00	0	1,466	0	1,466	0.00	0	1,466	0	1,466
DP 223 - RMTD Adjustment (OTO)	0.00	0	(1,466)	0	(1,466)	0.00	0	(1,466)	0	(1,466)
Grand Total All Present Law Adjustments	0.00	\$0	\$38,817	\$0	\$38,817	0.00	\$0	\$59,140	\$0	\$59,140

*"Total Funds" amount includes funding from sources other than General Fund, State Special, or Federal Special (i.e. Proprietary).

DP 1 - Personal Services -

The legislature adopted adjustments to the present law personal services budget for expected changes, management decisions, and budget modifications.

DP 2 - Fixed Costs -

The legislature adopted the adjustment for the funding required in the proposed budget for fixed costs assessed by other agencies within state government for the services they provide. Examples include: warrant writer, motor pool, information technology services, etc. The rates charged for these services are approved in the section of the budget that provides the services.

DP 3 - Inflation Deflation -

The legislature adopted the adjustment for the budgetary changes generated from the application of inflation and deflation factors to specific expenditure accounts. Affected accounts include: other services, supplies and materials, communications, in-state motor pool and motor pool leased vehicles, and repair and maintenance.

DP 5 - Caseload Contingency -

The legislature adopted a reduction of the caseload contingency appropriation from the ongoing base budget.

DP 6 - Caseload Contingency (RST/BIEN/OTO) -

The legislature adopted to designate the caseload contingency appropriation biennial, restricted, and one-time-only.

DP 20 - SABHRS Rate Adjustment -

The legislature adopted an increase to proposed SABHRS rates.

DP 222 - RMTD Adjustment -

The legislature adopted an adjustment to the insurance premiums paid to the Risk Management and Tort Defense Division proprietary fund. This decision package eliminates the reduction included in DP 2. This change is necessary to designate the reduction as one-time-only in the budgeting system.

DP 223 - RMTD Adjustment (OTO) -

The legislature adopted an adjustment to the insurance premiums paid to the Risk Management and Tort Defense Division proprietary fund. This decision package designates the reduction as one-time-only.

New Proposals

The “New Proposals” table shows new changes to spending.

New Proposals	-----Fiscal 2024-----					-----Fiscal 2025-----				
	FTE	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds	FTE	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Total Funds
DP 333 - Adjustment to Inflation	0.00	0	(12,935)	0	(12,935)	0.00	0	(17,014)	0	(17,014)
Total	0.00	\$0	(\$12,935)	\$0	(\$12,935)	0.00	\$0	(\$17,014)	\$0	(\$17,014)

*“Total Funds” amount includes funding from sources other than General Fund, State Special, or Federal Special (i.e. Proprietary).

DP 333 - Adjustment to Inflation -

The legislature adopted an adjustment to inflation included in DP 3.