

## S 3113

Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 2019

**Congress:** 116 (2019–2021, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Native Americans

**Introduced:** Dec 19, 2019

**Current Status:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

**Latest Action:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs. (Dec 19, 2019)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3113>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Tester, Jon [D-MT]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** MT • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors

No cosponsors are listed for this bill.

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Indian Affairs Committee	Senate	Referred To	Dec 19, 2019

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Native Americans

### Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
116 HR 5673	Related bill	Jan 27, 2020: Referred to the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States.

## **Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 2019**

This bill modifies and ratifies a specified water rights settlement agreement entered into by the United States, Montana, and the Fort Belknap Indian Community (i.e., the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Reservation of Montana).

The bill requires the community's water rights to be held in trust for the benefit of the community and its allottees. The community must enact a tribal water code to regulate its water rights.

Among other things, the Department of the Interior must

- negotiate with Montana for the transfer of specified parcels of state land located on and off the reservation,
- hold transferred land in trust for the benefit of the community,
- allocate 20,000 acre-feet per year of stored water from Lake Elwell,
- establish a settlement trust fund, and
- request Montana to pay a specified amount to contribute to the design and construction of the Peoples Creek Dam and Reservoir to support mitigation activities.

The bill requires the Bureau of Reclamation to modify the operating procedures of the Milk River Project to ensure that the Fresno Reservoir is operated in accordance with the agreement.

The bill also outlines certain waivers, releases, and retention of claims under the settlement agreement.

### **Actions Timeline**

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- **Dec 19, 2019:** Introduced in Senate
- **Dec 19, 2019:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.