

2025-2027

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

between

**STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

and

**MONTANA FEDERATION OF PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES Local # 7780**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE.....	3
ARTICLE 1. RECOGNITION.....	3
ARTICLE 2. FEDERATION RIGHTS.....	3
ARTICLE 3. FEDERATION SECURITY	4
ARTICLE 4. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS	5
ARTICLE 5. MANAGEMENT SECURITY	5
ARTICLE 6. NON-DISCRIMINATION	6
ARTICLE 7. PAY & HOURS.....	6
ARTICLE 8. OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME	7
ARTICLE 9. ON-CALL/CALL-OUT PAY.....	9
ARTICLE 10. HOLIDAYS	10
ARTICLE 11. LEAVES	11
ARTICLE 12. GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATION	13
ARTICLE 13. JOB SECURITY	15
ARTICLE 14. SENIORITY	16
ARTICLE 15. VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS	16
ARTICLE 16. RATINGS & WARNINGS	17
ARTICLE 17. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM.....	18
ARTICLE 18. NOTIFICATIONS	18
ARTICLE 19. OTHER.....	18
ARTICLE 20. SEVERABILITY.....	18
ARTICLE 21. ENTIRE AGREEMENT	19
ARTICLE 22. PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS.....	19
ARTICLE 23. TERM OF AGREEMENT	19
ARTICLE 24. NO STRIKE / NO LOCKOUT	20
ARTICLE 25. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	20
ADDENDUM A. BROADBAND PAY PROVISIONS	21

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT
between the
STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
and the
MONTANA FEDERATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

PREAMBLE

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this first day of July 2025, between the Department of Environmental Quality, State of Montana, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer", and the Montana Federation of Public Employees Local # 7780 hereinafter referred to as the "Federation."

It is the intent and purpose of this Agreement to assure sound and mutually beneficial working relationships between the Employer, its employees, and the Federation; to provide an orderly and peaceful means of resolving employee grievances; and to set forth an Agreement between the parties concerning the terms and conditions of employment for the employees covered hereunder.

ARTICLE 1.
RECOGNITION

Section 1. The Employer recognizes the Federation as the sole and exclusive representative of all employees within the bargaining unit as defined and certified by the Board of Personnel Appeals as:

All eligible employees of the Department of Environmental Quality excluding those cited under § 39-31-103(9)(b), MCA, and short-term employees, temporary employees, and part-time employees who work less than 20 hours per week.

ARTICLE 2.
FEDERATION RIGHTS

Section 1. In the event the Federation designates a member employee to act in the capacity of an official spokesperson for the Federation on any matter, such a designation shall be made in writing and shall specify the period covered by the designation.

Section 2. A written list of the accrued officers and representatives of the bargaining unit shall be furnished to the agency director immediately after their election and the agency director shall be notified of any change of said representative within seven calendar days.

Section 3. The internal business of the Federation shall be conducted by the employees during their non-duty hours. Selected and designated Federation officers or appointees shall be allowed a reasonable amount of paid time to investigate and process grievances, including arbitration matters, and attend Labor Management Committee and Professional Growth Program meetings. The Employer will not compensate the aforementioned individuals for time spent in such activities outside their normal work schedule, nor may an individual create any overtime as a direct result of such activities.

Section 4. The Federation's staff will be allowed to visit work areas during working hours provided that advance permission has been received from the Employer and that the visit shall not unduly disrupt work in progress.

Section 5. A Federation representative shall have the right to inspect an employee's personnel file with a specific authorization in writing by the employee. A Federation representative may obtain a copy of any document related to a formal grievance or the investigation of a probable grievance, provided that prior specific authorization is obtained in writing from the employee.

Section 6. The Federation may utilize a reasonable amount of space on bulletin boards currently used for employee notices, as determined by local management. No derogatory information concerning the Employer shall be posted by the Federation.

Section 7. The Federation may be allowed to use the Employer's facilities for Federation meetings contingent upon availability and management approval. The Federation shall be liable for any damages as a result of such use.

Section 8. Meeting notices may be posted in visible areas throughout the facilities including, but not limited to regular access doors, bathrooms, meeting areas, and public facilities. All postings must be taken down upon expiration.

Section 9. The chapter representatives/officers shall be allowed to add membership notices to the electronic DEQ Intranet Site in accordance with the procedures. The Federation shall have the right to utilize the State's email system for the purpose of posting and communicating electronic notices. The Federation will comply with all state policies and practices regarding the appropriate use of electronic communications. Under no conditions shall the email system be used to promote or oppose political candidates, ballot issues or referenda.

ARTICLE 3. FEDERATION SECURITY

Section 1. Upon receipt of a written authorization from an employee covered by this Agreement, the Employer shall deduct from the employee's pay the amount owed to the Federation by such employee for dues. The Employer will remit to the Federation such sums within 30 calendar days. Changes in the Federation membership dues rate will be

certified to the Employer in writing over the signature of the authorized officer or officers of the Federation and shall be done at least 30 calendar days in advance of such change.

Section 2. The Employer, within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement, shall present the Federation with a list of the names and addresses of all current employees covered by this Agreement, and shall update such list each month for all new hires.

Section 3. The Federation will indemnify, defend, and hold the Employer harmless against any claim made and against any suit instituted against the Employer, including attorney's fees and costs of defense thereof, on account of any provision of this Article.

ARTICLE 4. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Section 1. In compliance with § 39-31-303, MCA, employees and the Federation shall recognize the prerogatives of the Employer to operate and manage their affairs in such areas as, but not limited to:

1. direct employees;
2. hire, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees;
3. relieve employees from duties because of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and nonproductive;
4. maintain the efficiency of government operations;
5. determine the methods, means, job classifications, and personnel by which government operations are to be conducted;
6. take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the agency in situations of emergency;
7. establish the methods and processes by which work is performed.

Such rights are retained by the Employer unless such rights are specifically relinquished in this Agreement.

ARTICLE 5. MANAGEMENT SECURITY

Section 1. The Federation hereby accepts liability for any damage to or loss of state property that is the proximate cause of action by striking employees of this bargaining unit. Liability under this Section shall be restricted to include any alleged loss of revenue or other incidental or punitive damage sought by the Employer.

ARTICLE 6. NON-DISCRIMINATION

Section 1. No member of the Federation shall be discharged or discriminated against for upholding Federation's principles. The Employer and the Federation affirm their joint opposition to any discriminatory practices in connection with employment, promotion, or training, remembering that the public interest requires the full utilization of the employee's skills and ability without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, age, or sex.

ARTICLE 7. PAY & HOURS

Section 1. The pay schedule attached (Addendum A) shows the entry and market salary rates for each occupation in the bargaining unit.

Section 2. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as a guarantee or limitation of the number of hours to be worked per day, days per week, or for any period of time, except as may be specifically provided for herein.

Section 3. A regular workday shall consist of eight hours of continuous work, including two duty-free rest breaks. Employees shall also be granted a duty-free meal break, taken at a time mutually agreeable to the Employer and the employee.

Subsection 1. Employees working shifts greater than six hours in a day are required to take a minimum of a 30-minute meal break. Employees must notify their supervisor on days where they are/were unable to take their meal break.

Subsection 2. The duty-free rest breaks are 20 minutes each; one may be taken mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Break times are up to the approval of supervisors. Breaks may not be combined or used to make up for being late, leaving the workplace early, or extending lunch periods.

Section 4. A regular workweek shall consist of five consecutive workdays, Saturday through Friday, totaling 40 hours.

Section 5. Employees placed on a regular work schedule shall not have their work schedule changed unless given 10 working days' notice of the change, except in emergency situations.

Section 6. As per statute regarding state employee pay, this bargaining unit must ratify a completely integrated collective bargaining agreement prior to receiving a negotiated increase in pay. Any retroactivity will be negotiated.

Section 7. Whenever an employee receives a pay increase, such increase shall be granted from the first day of the pay period during which such increase becomes effective.

Section 8. The Parties have bargained provisions of the Department of Environmental Quality pay plan as authorized under § 2-18-303, MCA. Matters of pay in the Department of Environmental Quality pay plan remain subject to collective bargaining under § 39-31-305, MCA.

Section 9. Base pay ranges by working title are contained in Addendum A of this Agreement. Specific base pay rates by occupation and matrix level are on the position's corresponding matrix.

Subsection 1. A Professional Growth Matrix must clearly define the route for legitimate career growth for the particular jobs covered by the Professional Growth Matrix.

Subsection 2. Employees' base pay rates are based on a series of pre-established, progressive steps within a specific Professional Growth Matrix and working title. Each level must define the organizational requirements for achieving the pay adjustment, starting with the employee's entry into the Professional Growth Matrix.

Subsection 3. If an employee does not consistently demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities at their current level on the Professional Growth Matrix, they may be subject to performance-based discipline, including demotion to the next level down in the matrix in accordance with the DEQ Professional Growth Program policy.

ARTICLE 8. OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME

Section 1. "Non-exempt" employee means an employee subject to the overtime provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and its regulations. "Non-exempt" employees shall be paid at a rate of one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for all authorized time they work over 40 hours per week.

Section 2. Non-exempt employees will be allowed to change their elections of compensatory time in lieu of cash overtime a maximum of two times per year.

Section 3. Upon mutual agreement between the employee and Management, a "non-exempt" employee may be allowed to accrue and use non-exempt compensatory time in lieu of cash overtime compensation.

Subsection 1. Compensatory time for "non-exempt" employees will accrue at the rate of one and one-half hour for each hour of overtime worked.

Subsection 2. "Non-exempt" compensatory time may not be accrued beyond 60 hours, which represents not more than 40 hours of actual overtime worked. Employees will receive paid overtime for any authorized overtime worked beyond the accrual limit.

Subsection 3. A "non-exempt" employee must have the appropriate supervisor's prior approval to accrue or use compensatory time.

Subsection 4. Upon termination, unused accumulated non-exempt compensatory time will be paid to the employee at their final rate of pay.

Section 4. "Exempt" employee means an employee in a position designated as executive, administrative, or professional, which is not subject to the overtime pay provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act. "Exempt" employees shall be given compensatory time, under the following provisions.

Subsection 1. Compensatory time will be credited on an hour-for-hour basis for all authorized time worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

Subsection 2. Compensatory time will be earned, recorded and used in increments of no less than one-half hour.

Subsection 3. Compensatory time may be accumulated up to a maximum of 120 hours. Supervisors may schedule employees for compensatory time off in order to keep employees within their accrual limit.

Subsection 4. An employee must have the appropriate supervisor's prior approval to accrue or use compensatory time.

Section 5. The Employer will make a good faith effort to equalize the offer of scheduled overtime and compensatory time among employees in the same work unit and classification where training and ability are sufficient to perform the work.

Section 6. Overtime or compensatory time as provided in this Agreement shall not be pyramided under any circumstances.

Section 7. Annual leave, non-exempt compensatory time, exempt compensatory time, floating holiday, banked holiday and sick leave may not be used during a 40-hour workweek to accrue any compensatory time or overtime unless approved by management. Management may adjust an employee's work schedule in a workweek or require the employee to take time off so that the employee does not become eligible for the payment of overtime or accrual of nonexempt compensatory time while using annual leave, Non-exempt compensatory time, exempt compensatory time, floating holiday, banked holiday and sick leave in a workweek.

Section 8. Flexible work and telework schedules may be arranged by mutual agreement.

Section 9. If job related travel time is scheduled for other than the employee's regular workweek, such travel time shall be compensated in accordance with the terms of this Article.

Section 10. All employees assigned work duties in response to an incident will be non-exempt for the workweek in which the qualifying incident response work is performed and will receive overtime pay for all time in a pay status over 40 hours in the workweek. Employees will receive overtime compensation at a rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular hourly rate.

ARTICLE 9. ON-CALL/CALL-OUT PAY

Section 1. On-call status is a situation when employees are not required to remain on the Employer's premises, are free to engage in their own pursuits, and are subject only to the understanding that they either carry a cellular telephone, wear a pager, or have some other means by which they may be reached 24 hours a day. If required to conduct employer business by telephone while in on-call status, the time actually spent in making the call is time worked.

Section 2. Exempt and non-exempt employees shall accrue compensatory time for each 24 hours of on-call status provided, on the weekdays Monday through Thursday, an employee in on-call status shall be credited with one hour of compensatory time, regardless of whether or not any time was actually worked. For each 24 hours of on-call status provided on the days of Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays, employees shall be credited with two hours of compensatory time, regardless of whether or not any time was actually worked.

Subsection 1. Days of the week are defined as the 24-hour overnight period from day one to day two. For example, for the 24-hour period from 8:00 Monday morning until 8:00 Tuesday morning an employee will receive one hour of compensatory time. For the 24-hour period from 8:00 Friday morning to 8:00 Saturday, morning the employee will receive two hours of compensatory time.

Subsection 2. Call-out is an emergency situation status where employees are called to work from leisure time outside of their regularly assigned work schedule, and where the employee is required to leave their residence to perform the work. Call-out does not include time that the employee is scheduled to work either preceding or following their regularly scheduled workday.

Section 3. If a non-exempt employee reports for work duty to a call-out, they shall be compensated at the overtime rate of pay one and one-half times by cash or by compensatory time for all hours worked over 40 hours in the workweek. The minimum compensation for a call-out shall be two hours.

ARTICLE 10.
HOLIDAYS

Section 1. For pay purposes the following shall be recognized holidays for bargaining unit employees.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	3rd Monday in January
Lincoln's & Washington's Birthday	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1st Monday in September
Columbus Day	2nd Monday in October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

Each full-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year. Each part-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year that must be calculated proportionately to the floating holiday allowed to a full-time employee. An unused floating holiday leave expires at the end of each calendar year, does not accrue, and is not paid out to employees on termination of employment. Short-term workers or student interns may not receive a floating holiday.

Section 2. The holidays listed in Section 1 shall be granted at the regular rate of pay to all eligible full-time employees except as provided for in Section 3. Eligible part-time employees shall receive pay or accrual for the holiday on a pro rata basis. To be eligible for holiday pay an employee must be in pay status on the last regularly scheduled working day immediately before the holiday and on the first regularly scheduled working day immediately after the holiday.

Section 3. When a non-exempt, full-time employee is required by the Employer to work on a holiday listed above, they will be paid at the rate of two and one-half times their regular rate of pay, or at the employee's option, one and one-half times their regular rate of pay and an alternate day off, to be taken by the end of the fiscal year at a time agreeable to the employee and Employer. Full-time exempt employees who work on a holiday or an observed holiday shall receive the holiday pay and book the hours worked on the holiday as exempt compensatory time.

Section 4. Employees who are required to perform work on a holiday for incidents covered under this policy will be paid out the holiday time. Hours worked on a holiday may result in more than 40 hours in a pay status during the workweek. An employee may not receive both one-and-one-half-time pay, and overtime pay for the hours worked on a holiday. The holiday benefit pay will be paid at the regular rate.

ARTICLE 11. LEAVES

Section 1. Annual Leave. Each permanent full-time employee shall earn annual vacation leave credits from the first day of employment. Vacation leave credits earned shall be credited at the end of each pay period. However, employees are not entitled to any vacation leave with pay until they have been continuously employed for a period of six calendar months.

Subsection 1. Permanent part-time employees are entitled to prorated annual vacation benefits if they have worked the qualifying period.

Subsection 2. An employee may not accrue annual vacation leave credits while in a leave-without-pay status.

Subsection 3. Temporary employees do not earn vacation leave credits, except temporary employees who are subsequently hired into a permanent position within the same jurisdiction without a break in service, and temporary employees who are employed continuously longer than six months may count as earned leave credits for the immediate term of temporary employment.

Subsection 4. Absence from employment by reason of illness shall not be chargeable against unused vacation leave credits unless approved by the employee.

Subsection 5. Vacation leave taken over a holiday may not be charged to an employee's vacation leave for that day.

Subsection 6. Vacation leave credits will not accrue for those hours exceeding 40 hours in a workweek.

Section 2. Sick Leave. Each permanent full-time employee shall earn sick leave credits from the first day of employment. For calculating sick leave credits, 2080 hours (52 weeks x 40 hours) shall equal one year. Sick leave credits shall be credited at the end of each pay period.

Subsection 1. Sick leave credits shall be earned at the rate of 12 working days for each year of service without restrictions as to the number of working days that may be accumulated. Employees are not entitled to be paid sick leave until they have been continuously employed 90 days.

Subsection 2. Sick leave is defined in § 2-18-601, MCA. An employee may not accrue sick leave credits while in a leave without pay status.

Subsection 3. Permanent part-time employees are entitled to prorated leave benefits if they have worked the qualifying period.

Subsection 4. Full-time temporary and seasonal employees are entitled to sick leave benefits provided they work the qualifying period.

Subsection 5. An employee who terminates employment with the Employer is entitled to a lump-sum payment equal to one-fourth of the pay attributed to the accumulated sick leave. The pay attributed to the accumulated sick leave shall be computed on the basis of the employee's salary or wage at the time the employee terminates employment with the State.

Subsection 6. An employee who receives a lump-sum payment pursuant to this Section and who is again employed by the state agency shall not be credited with any sick leave for which the employee has previously been compensated.

Subsection 7. Absence from employment for reason of illness shall not be chargeable against unused vacation leave credits unless approved by the employee.

Subsection 8. If an employee on annual leave becomes ill, the employee shall be afforded the right to change their annual leave status to sick leave status.

Subsection 9. The Employer may not require a doctor's certificate to substantiate sick leave usage from an employee in the bargaining unit unless the employee has been away from work in excess of three days on sick leave or unless the Employer has good reason to suspect sick leave abuse.

Subsection 10. In accordance with rules promulgated by the sick leave fund policy, employees who exhaust their accrued sick leave, annual leave, other accrued paid leave, and compensatory time may apply for a direct sick leave grant or apply for additional leave credits from the state sick leave bank in accordance with rules promulgated by the bank.

Section 3. Jury and Witness Duty. Employees summoned to serve as jurors or witnesses, unrelated to job duties, shall be granted leave in accordance with § 2-18-619, MCA.

Section 4. Military Leave. Military Leave shall be granted in accordance with § 10-1-604, MCA.

Section 5. Leave Without Pay. A leave of absence without pay may be granted to employees, subject to Employer approval. An employee requesting leave without pay shall, in advance of the starting date, submit a leave request form stating the reason for the request, and the beginning and ending date of the absence. The Employer shall approve or disapprove the request. The Employer shall provide the leave without pay form.

ARTICLE 12. GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATION

Section 1. Having a desire to create and maintain harmonious labor relations, the parties hereto agree that they will promptly attempt to adjust all disputes arising between them involving questions or interpretation or application of the terms and provisions of this Agreement.

Section 2. Grievance Procedure. Informal/formal discussions between the employee and the immediate supervisor are encouraged to resolve problems or issues.

Step 1

A grievance involving the interpretation or application of the written provision(s) of this Agreement shall be submitted by the employee or union representative to the employee's immediate supervisor or management designee within 14 calendar days of the alleged grievance. The grievance must be submitted in writing to the immediate supervisor and clearly outline the nature of the grievance, the rights allegedly violated and the requested remedy. The immediate supervisor or management designee shall have 14 calendar days to respond. All grievances must be discussed with the immediate supervisor prior to the filing of a formal grievance and no formal grievance may be filed until the immediate supervisor has been given an opportunity to attempt resolution.

Step 2

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, the grievance may be presented formally in writing, within 14 calendar days from the receipt of the immediate supervisor's response to Step 1, to the Division Administrator or their designee. The Administrator or their designee shall have 14 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

Step 3

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, it may be presented to the Department Director or designee within 14 calendar days from receipt of the Step 2 response. The Director, or designee, shall have 21 calendar days to respond to the grievance in writing.

Step 4

The parties may, by mutual agreement, request mediation prior to Step 5. Such agreement will be reduced to writing and a joint request submitted to the mediator within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Step 3 response. If mediation is unsuccessful, the grievance may be moved to arbitration in accordance with Section 5 of this Article within 14 calendar days of the date of the mediation.

Step 5

Should the employee and the Federation consider the decision of the Director to be unsatisfactory, the Federation may, within fifteen 21 calendar days of the receipt of the Director's decision, notify the Director and the Chief of the State Office of Labor Relations of its decision to take the grievance to final and binding arbitration.

Section 3. Rules of Grievance Processing.

Subsection 1. Time limits of any stage of the grievance procedure may be extended by written mutual agreement of the parties of that Step.

Subsection 2. A grievance not filed or advanced by the grievant within the time limits provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn as having been settled on the basis of the decision most recently received. Failure on the part of the Employer to answer within the time limit set forth in any Step will entitle the grievant to proceed to the next Step.

Subsection 3. The appointing authority may replace any titled position in the grievance procedure, provided that such appointee has full authority to act in the capacity of the person being replaced.

Subsection 4. When the grievance is presented in writing there shall be set forth all of the following.

1. A complete statement of the grievance and facts upon which it is based.
2. The rights of the individual claimed to have been violated and the remedy or correction requested.
3. Certification that the grievance is being supported and brought by the Union.

Subsection 5. Those employees desiring to use alternative grievance procedures may not pursue the same complaint under the provisions of this contractual procedure. Similarly, an employee pursuing a grievance under the provisions of this contract may not pursue the same grievance under another procedure.

Subsection 6. In the event of a classification related grievance, the statutory classification appeal route shall be followed wherein the grievance may be submitted to the Board of Personnel Appeals for final resolution. Where a question arises as to whether the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Board or could possibly be arbitrated, the matter may be referred to the Board for a decision.

Subsection 7. All documents relevant to the grievance requested by the Federation staff will be provided in accordance with state policy. Concerns regarding an individual's right to privacy will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Section 4. Rules of Arbitration.

Subsection 1. Within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Federation's notice of its intent to arbitrate a grievance, the parties shall call upon the Board of Personnel Appeals for a list of seven potential arbitrators.

Subsection 2. Each party shall be entitled to strike names from the list in alternate order and the name remaining shall be the arbitrator. A coin toss shall determine which party will strike the first name.

Subsection 3. The arbitrator shall render a decision, and that decision shall be final and binding. By mutual agreement, the parties may request a bench decision from the arbitrator.

Subsection 4. Each party shall share equally the cost of the arbitrator. In the event one of the parties wants transcripts from the proceedings of the arbitration, the party requesting the transcripts shall pay all costs. If each party requests a transcript, they shall equally share the costs.

Subsection 5. The arbitrator may not add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of this Agreement.

Subsection 6. In the event the arbitrator charges a fee(s) for canceling an arbitration hearing, the party requesting the cancellation is responsible for payment.

ARTICLE 13. JOB SECURITY

Section 1. A probationary period shall be utilized for the most effective adjustment of a new employee and for the elimination of any employee whose performance does not, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, meet the required standard of performance.

Subsection 1. The probationary period shall last for 12 months. If the Employer determines at any time during the probationary period that the services of the probationary employee are unsatisfactory, the employee may be separated upon written notice from the Employer without recourse to the grievance procedure.

Subsection 2. Extension of Probationary Period. The Federation agrees that a probationary period may be extended for six months. A probationary period may be extended for the following circumstances:

1. Additional training is required of the employee.
2. An emergency situation has required the employee to be absent from the position.
3. Evaluation of duties not covered in the first 12 months.

Subsection 3. The Employer will notify the Federation of extensions as they occur.

Section 2. The Employer may discharge any employee with permanent status only for just cause. The Employer shall furnish an employee subject to discharge or suspension with a written statement of the grounds and specific reason(s) for such actions and will notify the Federation of the removal of an employee for cause. An employee with permanent status may appeal their dismissal or suspension through the grievance procedure. This in no way limits the Employer's prerogative to lay off employees.

ARTICLE 14. SENIORITY

Section 1. Seniority means the length of continuous state service if hired by this agency prior to November 1, 1996. If hired after November 1, 1996, by this agency, seniority begins with the agency hire date.

Section 2. Seniority shall cease to accrue during a period of layoff or leave without pay that exceeds 60 working days or after a permanent transfer out of the bargaining unit. However, previously credited service will not be lost and an employee who is recalled or transfers back into the bargaining unit will retain all prior seniority. Qualifications, seniority and capabilities shall be the controlling factors in selection of employees for layoff among positions of the same grade and class by geographic location. The Employer shall give permanent employees subject to layoffs a minimum of 21 calendar days' advance notice and shall deliver a copy of such notice to the Federation, which shall have an opportunity to comment.

Section 3. No permanent employee shall be laid off while temporary, short-term, or probationary employees in the same skill are retained.

ARTICLE 15. VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS

Section 1. The following procedures will be followed in the posting and filling of vacant or newly created permanent positions within the bargaining unit. The purpose of this system is to inform employees of vacancies and newly created positions and to afford employees, who are interested and who feel that they qualify an equal opportunity to apply for the vacant or newly created position. It is understood that probationary employees and employees on a leave of absence for any reason may not have the same period of notice as other employees concerning position vacancies.

Subsection 1. When a vacant or newly created permanent position is to be filled, the Employer shall prepare a job posting notice and post it on the State Careers website for job postings.

Subsection 2. All positions in the bargaining unit shall be posted per the provisions of this Article for 14 calendar days.

Subsection 3. When filling a vacant or newly created position in the bargaining unit where qualifications are substantially equal, seniority will be used as a tiebreaker. "Qualifications" means knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform a job and the education and experience leading to them.

Subsection 4. Where the Employer has an interest to transfer an employee into a newly vacated or created position, the Employer may do so, after consultation with the Federation.

Subsection 5. In situations where the Employer considers issues such as an ADA or disciplinary transfer, the Employer shall consult with the Federation. Under these specific conditions the Employer is not required to follow Section 1, Subsections 1-3 of this Article.

ARTICLE 16. RATINGS & WARNINGS

Section 1. The statewide performance evaluation system or another system approved by the Personnel Division may be utilized by the Employer in the evaluation of employees covered by this Agreement.

Section 2. No information reflecting critically upon an employee shall be placed in the personnel file of the employee that does not bear either the signature or initials of the employee indicating that he/she has been shown the material or a statement by a supervisor that the employee has been shown the material and refused to sign it. A copy of any such material shall be furnished to the employee upon request.

Section 3. Material placed in the personnel files of an employee without conformity with the provisions of this Section will not be used by the Employer in any subsequent evaluation or disciplinary proceeding involving the employee.

Section 4. Letters of caution, consultation, warning, admonishment and reprimand shall be considered temporary contents of the personnel file of an employee and shall be destroyed no later than 15 months after they have been placed in the file unless such items can be used in support of possible disciplinary action arising from more recent employee action or behavior patterns or is applicable to pending legal or quasi-legal proceedings. In order for letters to be removed, the employee must request in writing to Human Resources, to have the letter removed.

Section 5. An employee desiring that material which they feel is incorrect and should be removed from the personnel file of the employee, shall have the right to appeal it through the grievance procedure.

ARTICLE 17. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Section 1. This existing program shall continue in full force and effect in accordance with §§ 19-3-101 to 19-3-2143 MCA.

ARTICLE 18. NOTIFICATIONS

Section 1. The Employer shall ensure reasonable access to the Federation and each employee, an up-to-date policy of its rules, regulations, and policies on employment related matters. The Federation shall be notified of any proposed changes or additions to personnel rules, regulations, and policies issued by the Employer sufficiently in advance to allow discussion and comment by the Federation. The Employer shall provide the Federation with monthly reconciliations for purposes of identifying changes in employment.

ARTICLE 19. OTHER

Section 1. If an employee is required to wear protective clothing, the Employer shall furnish a list of said items and replacement schedule for each of those items so that each employee may receive those materials.

Section 2. The Employer and Federation are committed to a safe and clean work environment.

Section 3. The Employer will show each new employee upon hire where to find a copy of this Agreement on the DEQ Internal website.

Section 4. The Employer and Federation agree to the establishment of a Labor-Management Relations Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to discuss any item of mutual concern as defined in the bylaws and to improve communications between the Employer and the members of the bargaining unit. The Committee will not take the place of the grievance procedure or the collective bargaining process.

ARTICLE 20. SEVERABILITY

Section 1. In the event that any provision of this Agreement shall be declared invalid at any time or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction or through regulations or decree, such decisions shall not invalidate the entire Agreement. It is the expressed intention of the parties hereto that all other provisions not declared invalid or unenforceable, shall remain in full force and effect.

ARTICLE 21. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

Section 1. The parties acknowledge that during negotiations which resulted in this Agreement, each had the unlimited right and opportunity to make demands and proposals with respect to any subject or matter not removed by law from the area of collective bargaining, and that the understanding and agreements arrived at by the parties after the exercise of that right and opportunity are set forth in this Agreement.

Therefore, the Employer and the Federation, for the duration of this Agreement, each voluntarily and unqualifiedly waives the right, and each agrees that the other shall not be obligated to bargain collectively with respect to any subject or matter specifically referred to or covered by this Agreement. This Article shall not be construed to in any way restrict parties from commencing negotiations under Article 1, or under applicable law on any succeeding agreement to take effect upon termination of this Agreement.

Section 2. The parties recognize the right, obligations and duty of the Department of Administration and its duly designated officials to promulgate rules, regulations, directives, and orders from time-to-time as deemed necessary insofar as such rules, regulations, directives, and orders that effect the members of this bargaining unit covered by this Agreement are not inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement or the laws of the State of Montana and federal laws.

ARTICLE 22. PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Section 1. In addition to the monthly dues deductions authorized in Article 3 of this Agreement, bargaining unit members shall be allowed to authorize the Employer to deduct from their pay checks such amounts that they desire in order to participate in programs that have the prior approval of the Employer, the Federation, and the Auditor's Office.

ARTICLE 23. TERM OF AGREEMENT

Section 1. This Agreement shall be effective as of the first day of July 2025 and shall remain in full force and effect through the 30th day of June 2027. If one of the parties' desires to modify this Agreement, it shall give the other written notice of its intent to do so. In such case, the parties agree to give written notice not sooner than 120 days and not less than 90 days prior to the expiration date and agree to meet not later than 90 days prior to the expiration date in order to renegotiate this Agreement. It is also agreed that the Employer and the Federation will meet to reopen negotiations in sufficient time to permit adequate negotiations on economic matters. The Federation shall have the right to engage in concerted activity after December 31, 2026, for matters pertaining to wages and economic benefits in the 2027-2029 biennium.

ARTICLE 24. NO STRIKE / NO LOCKOUT

Section 1. During the term of this Agreement, neither the Federation nor its agents or representatives will cause, sanction, or take part in any strike or any other interference with the operation of the Employer's business, except as provided in Article 23.

Section 2. During the term of this Agreement, there shall be no lockouts by the Employer.

ARTICLE 25. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Section 1. A well-informed and educated workforce is an important aspect of excellent public service.

Section 2. At the agency's discretion, employee requests for cost sharing, leave approval, flexible work hours, or use of state computers associated with professional development will be considered in relation to program needs and budget resources.

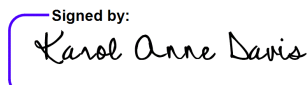
Section 3. An employee may request assistance by sending a memorandum to their supervisor providing the following information:

1. Name of school or professional organization.
2. Costs incurred.
3. Duration of membership or class schedule.
4. Advantage to the Employer.

Section 4. The parties agree that no complaints, disputes, or disagreements about the application or interpretation of this provision (Article 25) shall be subject to the Agreement's grievance and arbitration provision.

THIS AGREEMENT is signed and dated this 4/29/2025.

THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Signed by:

382B3999E2BE40B...
Karol Anne Davis, Chief Negotiator
State Office of Labor Relations


Signed by:

4D8021C8FB08406...
James Fehr, Deputy Director, DEQ

THE FEDERATION:

Signed by:

3B16E082DB3E472...
Justin Hawkaluk, Field Representative
MFPE

DocuSigned by:

239E2C9A1DF5452...
Lisa Tucker, Chapter President, DEQ

ADDENDUM A. BROADBAND PAY PROVISIONS

Montana Department of Environmental Quality – MFPE

All definitions under § 2-18-101, MCA, and the Broadband Pay Policy, apply to this Agreement unless otherwise defined below

Section 1. Pay ranges. Addendum A (attached) contains the pay ranges for all positions covered under this agreement. These pay ranges will remain in effect for the life of this Agreement. No employee's pay shall be reduced due to the adoption of these pay ranges. Addendum A will not include job code, band, or classification title.

Section 2. Pay Raises. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2025, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2026, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater.

Further, in accordance with § 2-18-303(4)(a)(i), MCA, these adjustments will not be provided to employees until the State receives written notice that the employee's collective bargaining unit has ratified the agreement. If that notice is received after the effective date of the pay adjustment, the adjustment will be paid retroactively.

DEQ 2025-2027 Pay Matrix					
July 1, 2025	Matrix Name	Entry Hourly	Max Hourly	Entry Annualized	Max Annualized
	Fiscal Support	\$19.846635	\$24.420673	\$41,281	\$50,795
	Records & Infor Request Specialist	\$20.449038	\$24.295192	\$42,534	\$50,534
	Program Support Specialist	\$21.327404	\$23.420673	\$44,361	\$48,715
	Data Control Specialist	\$21.725481	\$29.506250	\$45,189	\$61,373
	Accounting Technician	\$23.638462	\$26.668269	\$49,168	\$55,470
	Fund Cost Specialist/Program Specialist	\$23.990000	\$34.180000	\$49,899	\$71,094
	Water Quality Monitoring Specialist - 5	\$25.250000	\$28.000000	\$52,520	\$58,240
	Program Financial Specialist	\$26.700000	\$31.020673	\$55,536	\$64,523
	Accountant	\$27.699519	\$33.237019	\$57,615	\$69,133

Environmental Scientist <i>Monitoring GWUDISW Rule Specialist/Field Inspector Surface Water Field Inspector Environmental Field Inspector Tribal and Cultural Resource Officer Enforcement Specialist Water Quality Monitoring Specialist – 6 Drinking Water Scientist</i>	\$28.25000 0	\$32.50000 0	\$58,760	\$67,600
WMRD Environmental Scientist <i>Environmental Project Officer Underground Storage Tank Specialist Waste Management Specialist Hazardous Materials Specialist</i>	\$28.25000 0	\$37.50000 0	\$58,760	\$78,000
Records & Information Manager Records & Information Requests Coordinator	\$28.78653 8	\$34.59519 2	\$59,876	\$71,958
GIS Analyst	\$28.80192 3	\$37.08750 0	\$59,908	\$77,142
Grants Contract Coordinator	\$28.94230 8	\$34.59807 7	\$60,200	\$71,964
Solid Waste Engineer	\$29.43894 2	\$35.41153 8	\$61,233	\$73,656
Compliance Specialist	\$29.73990 4	\$33.55000 0	\$61,859	\$69,784
Network Administrator	\$31.34615 4	\$35.19230 8	\$65,200	\$73,200
Database Analyst	\$32.56730 8	\$36.42740 4	\$67,740	\$75,769
GIS Developer	\$30.25192 3	\$42.45611 5	\$62,924	\$88,309
New Media Specialist	\$30.44230 8	\$33.25000 0	\$63,320	\$69,160

	Senior Environmental Scientist <i>Monitoring QA</i> <i>WQ Environmental Compliance</i> <i>Inspector & Wastewater Training & Technical Assistance</i> <i>MEPA-MFSA Coordinator</i> <i>Complaint Coordinator</i> <i>Opencut Scientist</i> <i>Hydrologist</i> <i>Permit Coordinator</i> <i>Ecologist</i> <i>Environmental Science Field Inspector</i> <i>Exploration & Small Miner Worker Reclamation Specialist</i> <i>Vegetation & Soils Scientist</i> <i>Geochemist</i> <i>AQ Scientist</i> <i>Capacity Development Specialist - Field Inspector (PWS)</i> <i>Capacity Development Coordinator (PWS)</i> <i>Planner</i> <i>Rule Expert & Coordinator</i> <i>Small Business Ombudsperson</i> <i>Rule Technical Coordinator</i> <i>Quality Assurance Officer</i> <i>WQ Permit Writer and Specialist</i> <i>WQ Science Specialist</i> <i>WQ Modeler</i>	\$30.75000 0	\$37.50000 0	\$63,960	\$78,000
	Energy Resource Professional Grid Analyst	\$30.75000 0	\$39.44550 0	\$63,960	\$82,047
	Computer Systems Analyst Project Manager	\$33.90048 1	\$39.80000 0	\$70,513	\$82,784
	AQ Engineer (Engineering Scientist)	\$31.09182 7	\$41.23421 3	\$64,671	\$85,767
	Subdivision Reviewer Sanitarian	\$31.09182 7	\$37.81826 9	\$64,671	\$78,662
	Public Information Officers	\$31.95240 4	\$35.37112 8	\$66,461	\$73,572
	Budget Analyst 2	\$33.02884 6	\$38.65096 2	\$68,700	\$80,394
	Accountant 3	\$33.75000 0	\$39.50000 0	\$70,200	\$82,160

	AQ Modeler Meteorologist Engineer (unlicensed)	\$37.11826 9	\$41.23421 3	\$77,206	\$85,767
--	--	-----------------	-----------------	----------	----------

Section 3. Health Insurance. The monthly Employer contribution for group benefits will increase to \$1080 for the 2026 plan year and \$1107 for the 2027 plan year.

The monthly State of Montana employee contributions will increase for 2026 and 2027 plan years. The tables below break out the monthly increase both before and after the wellness incentive which increased to \$60 per month for the 2026 and 2027 plan years.

The cost of employee-only coverage will be covered by the Employer contribution, after the wellness incentive is applied.

Employee Monthly Contributions Before Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contributions	2027 Plan Year Contributions
Employee Only	\$60	\$60
Employee and Spouse	\$318	\$326
Employee and Children	\$134	\$138
Employee and Family	\$397	\$407

Employee Monthly Contributions After Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contributions	2027 Plan Year Contributions
Employee Only	\$0	\$0
Employee and Spouse	\$198	\$206
Employee and Children	\$74	\$78
Employee and Family	\$277	\$287

The monthly Tobacco Surcharge will increase to \$60 for the 2026 and 2027 plan year.

The State has the discretion to manage all aspects of the State Health Plan, to include, but not be limited to, deductibles, coinsurance levels, and maximum out-of-pocket levels. Member contributions will only increase beyond the rates established above if the Risk-Based Capital (RBC) level is at or below 300%.