

MONTANA JUDICIAL BRANCH
Water Court – DP 502 (OTO) – Need Biennial Approp
\$400,000

- Water Court case files dating back to 1979 are currently stored in several locations
 - Pre-July 2020 case files are solely available in paper format in Helena and Bozeman
 - Cases opened after July 27, 2020, are paperless and accessible electronically in the court case management system (Full Court Enterprise - FCE)
 - The Water Court incurs approximately \$600/month for storage and retrieval services.
- The consensus among the water law community is that all records should be consolidated into a single, easily accessible location. Transitioning to all electronic Water Court case files would provide immediate access to stakeholders, ensure their availability in a post-adjudication world, and mitigate the risk of damage to paper files.
- If this proposal is not approved, the judicial branch will need to designate a responsible party for managing Water Court case files post-adjudication.
- Approximately 750 boxes of files require scanning, with vendor fees ranging from \$200-\$400 per box or \$.07-.12 per page. This estimate excludes costs for large maps, exhibits, mixed media files, and the logistics of how digital files will be integrated into FCE. Additionally, the Water Court will hire a temporary employee to create cases and upload the scanned files into FCE.
- This digitization project is expected to take 18 to 24 months.