



Patterns in Energy and Environment Program Spending: MONTANA

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Communities across the country benefited from \$230 billion in federal investments in clean energy and environmental protections in 2024, including economically distressed and rural counties, Tribes and small businesses, and red and blue Congressional districts.

Federal funding supports critical infrastructure and environmental protections, including for energy, clean drinking water, rail, food security and farming, and affordable housing in communities across the nation—collectively referred to “energy and environment protection” investment or spending in this analysis. That federal funding is delivered through grants and loans to local governments, states, Tribes, and small business. This research looks at spending patterns from 2010-2024, showing how federal spending is critical to local and state economies, and how the distribution of those funds matters.

White House Executive Orders 14008 (2021)¹ and 14096 (2023)² framed the Justice 40 Initiative, which “made it a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.” We analyzed Federal Aid (loans and grants) spending for 468 of 518 Justice 40 programs from 2010 to 2024 using the US Department of Treasury’s [USA Spending database](#)³. Our analysis looked at funds going to Tribes, rural counties⁴, “disadvantaged” areas identified by the Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice

¹ Executive Order 14008. January 27, 2021. Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. Accessed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>.

² Executive Order 14096. April 21, 2023. Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All. Accessed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/26/2023-08955/revitalizing-our-nations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all>.

³ USA Spending. 2024. Accessed at <https://www.usaspending.gov/>.

⁴ Health Resources and Services Administration, Office of Rural Health Policy. 2024. List of Rural Counties And Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties. Accessed at <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/rural-health/resources/forhp-eligible-areas.pdf>.

Screening Tool (CJEST)⁵, counties with lower incomes and/or high unemployment⁶, and highly vulnerable communities⁷.

From 2010 to 2024, \$19.46 billion was invested in Montana via federal energy and environment programs. Annual amounts increased from \$1.35 billion in 2010 to \$1.43 billion in 2024.

Of the total \$19.46 billion distributed between 2010 to 2024, \$1.38 billion (or 7.1%) was granted to Tribes (see Table 1). This amount grew from \$23.53 million in 2010 to \$210.17 million in 2024. In the same period, \$11.95 billion (or 61.4%) was granted to rural counties in Montana.

Table 1. Proportions of Total Energy and Environment Spending (2010-2024) to Tribes, Rural Counties, Distressed Counties, and Highly Vulnerable Counties in Montana.

Measure of “Disadvantage”	% to Disadvantaged Counties				
Year	2013	2017	2022	2024	Average % (2022-2025)
CJEST Distressed Counties	15.7%	33.7%	36.7%	34.3%	31.2%
Tribes	5.9%	6.9%	6.6%	14.7%	7.1%
Rural Counties	29.0%	66.1%	67.2%	64.7%	61.4%
Economically Distressed Counties	14.5%	28.0%	36.6%	38.1%	29.3%
SVI Highly Vulnerable Counties	8.0%	13.0%	18.1%	21.3%	14.6%

⁵ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. 2024. Public Environmental Data Partners. Accessed at <https://screening-tools.com/>.

⁶ Congressional Research Service. 2023. Areas of Economic Distress for EDA Activities and Programs. Accessed at <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/IF12074.pdf>

⁷ Centers for Disease Control. 2024. SVI Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Place and Health - Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program (GRASP). Accessed at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/svi-frequently-asked-questions-faqs.html>

The greatest share of energy and environment investments (\$9.63 billion, or 49.5%) came through the federal Department of Transportation, especially the Highway Planning and Construction and Transit-Oriented Development Planning (TOD) programs that fund planning, public works, transportation, construction/renewal/rehabilitation projects and fixed guideway investments such as new and expanded rail and bus rapid transit.

The Highway Planning and Construction Program is a broad umbrella that includes the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program (NEVI), improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, railroad safety, and highway widening projects. Some of these are climate-friendly projects, others are not, but the program is important to rural areas for transportation and transit access.

The Department of Agriculture (\$4.57 billion, or 23.5%) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$1.74 billion, or 0.9%) also invested significant amounts. Different programs were more important for particular recipient types based on amounts invested (see Table 2).

Table 2. Programs with the Most Energy and Environment Spending (2010-2024) to Tribes and Business.

Recipient Type	Programs with the most spending to the recipient type
Tribes	Bureau of Indian Affairs Facilities Operations and Maintenance (Department of the Interior) - \$467.33 million Highway Planning and Construction (Department of Transportation) - \$228.44 million Forestry on Indian Land (Department of the Interior) - \$140.92 million Indian Housing Block Grants (Department of Housing and Urban Development) - \$64.93 million Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) (Department of Health and Human Services) - \$63.53 million
Business	Conservation Stewardship Program (Department of Agriculture) - \$664.41 million Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program (Department of Housing and Urban Development) - \$320.25 million Conservation Reserve Program (Department of Agriculture) - \$246 million

	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Department of Agriculture) - \$142.35 million Rural Rental Assistance Payments (Department of Agriculture) - \$81.72 million

Funding to Counties

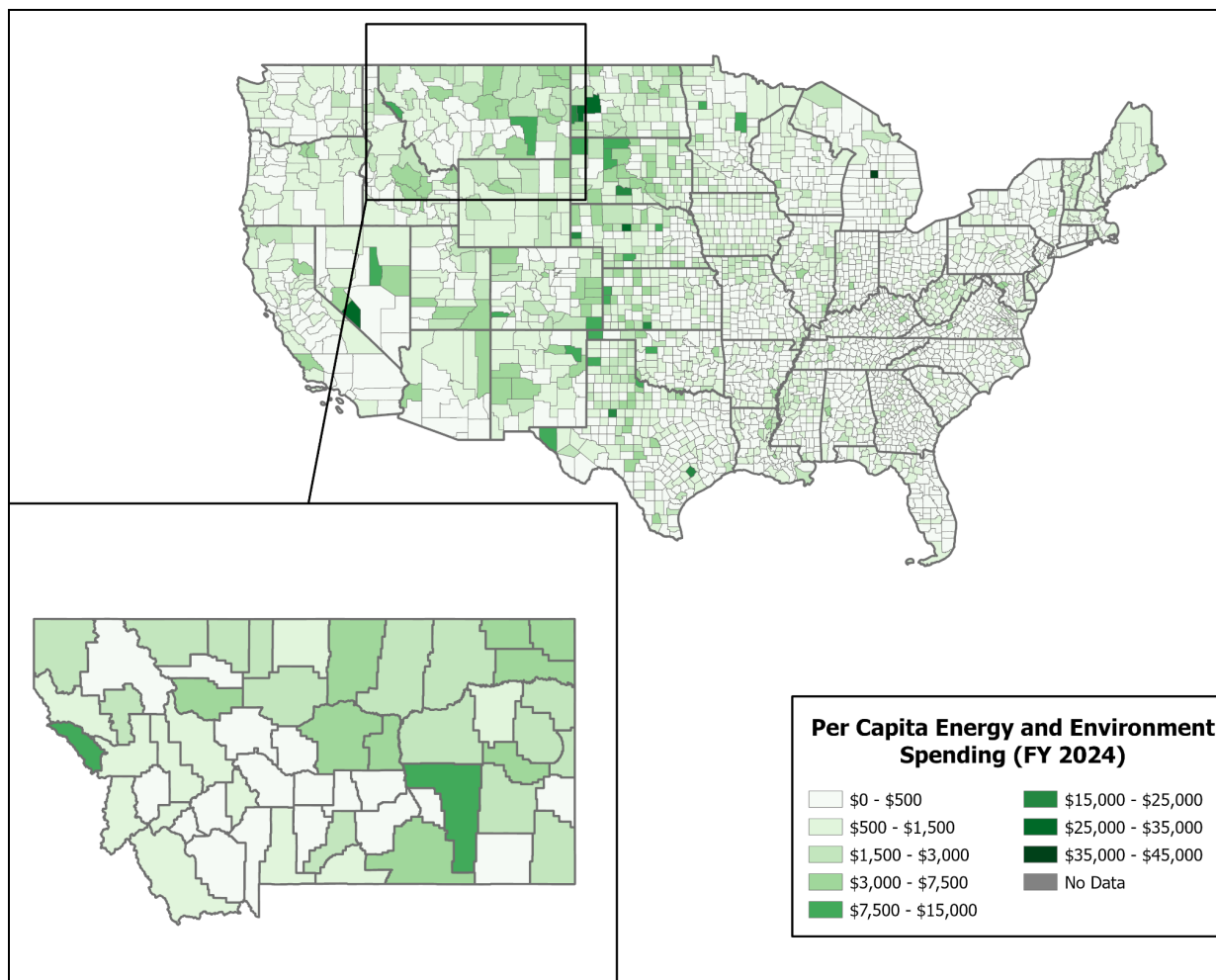
Statewide, Montana’s per capita investment over the 2010-2024 period grew from \$1,253.49 per capita in 2010, to a high of \$1,623.84 per capita in 2020, and back down to \$1,314.11 per capita in 2024. The per capita spending rank in 2024 was 7 out of 50 states.

Table 3. Counties with the most and least per capita federal investment in energy and environmental protections in 2024

Most Per Capita Spending	Spending (FY 24)	Least Per Capita Spending*	Spending (FY 24)
Rosebud County, MT	\$10,665.84	Treasure County, MT ⁸	\$(1851.33)
Mineral County, MT	\$8,469.73	Granite County, MT	\$(603.72)
Daniels County, MT	\$7,171.55	Madison County, MT	\$132.78
Prairie County, MT	\$6,934.81	Powder River County, MT	\$145.47
Sheridan County, MT	\$6,551.18	Judith Basin County, MT	\$152.72

Figure 1. Per capita federal investment in energy and environmental protections by county in 2024

⁸ Spending in both Treasure and Granite counties was higher in FY 2022 and FY 2023.



Spending by Congressional District (2024)

Table 4. Congressional districts with the most and least total federal investment in 2024

Congressional District	Total Spending (FY24) ⁹
MT-01	\$373.52 million (80.7% rural, 14.6% Tribal)
MT-02	\$673.27 million (88.8% rural, 12.7% Tribal)

⁹ About \$1 billion of the total \$1.43 billion granted to Montana in 2024 was not assigned to a particular congressional district, and this accounted for some of the higher percentages to rural in Montana district 1 and district 2.

Figure 2. Total federal investment by congressional district in 2024

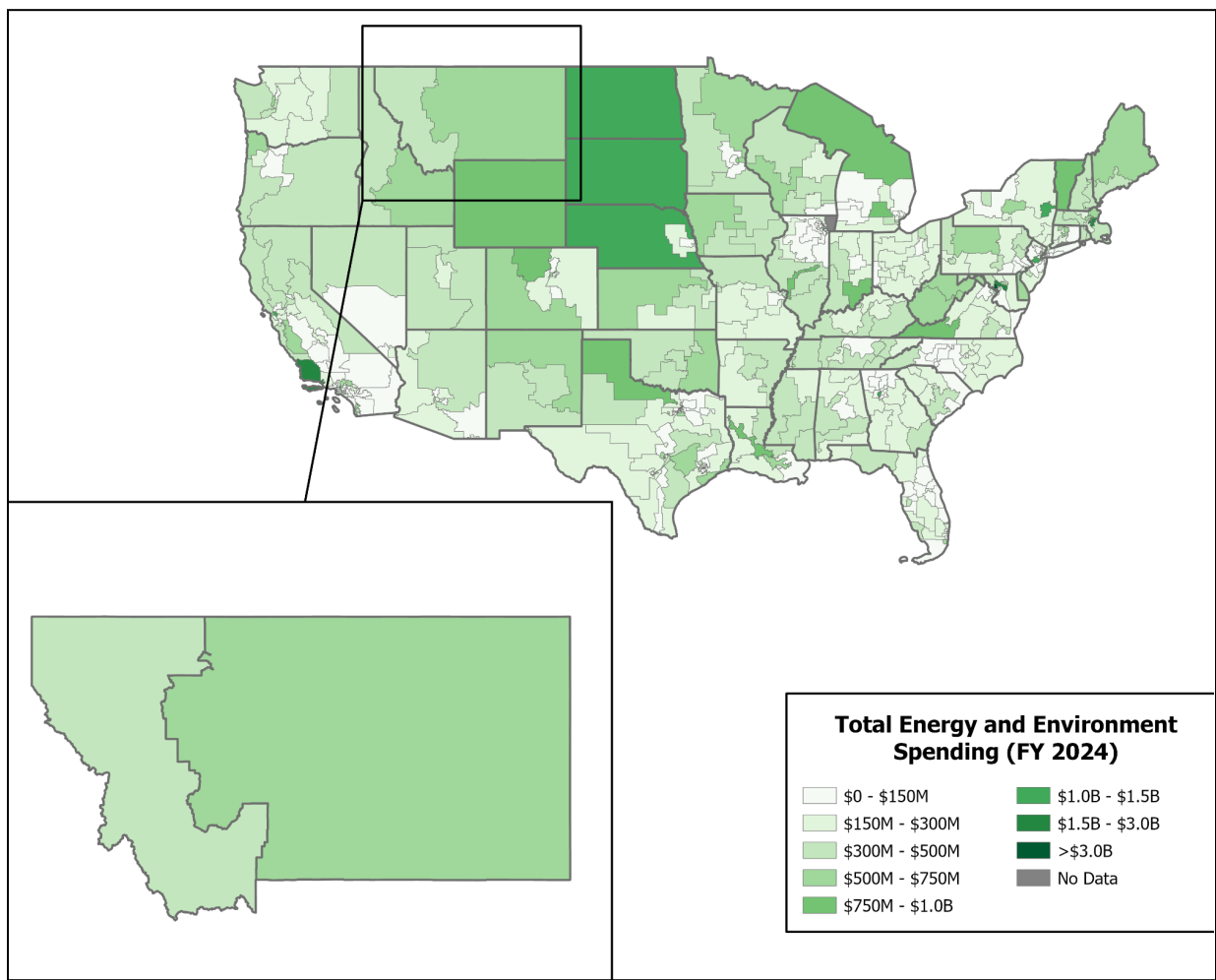
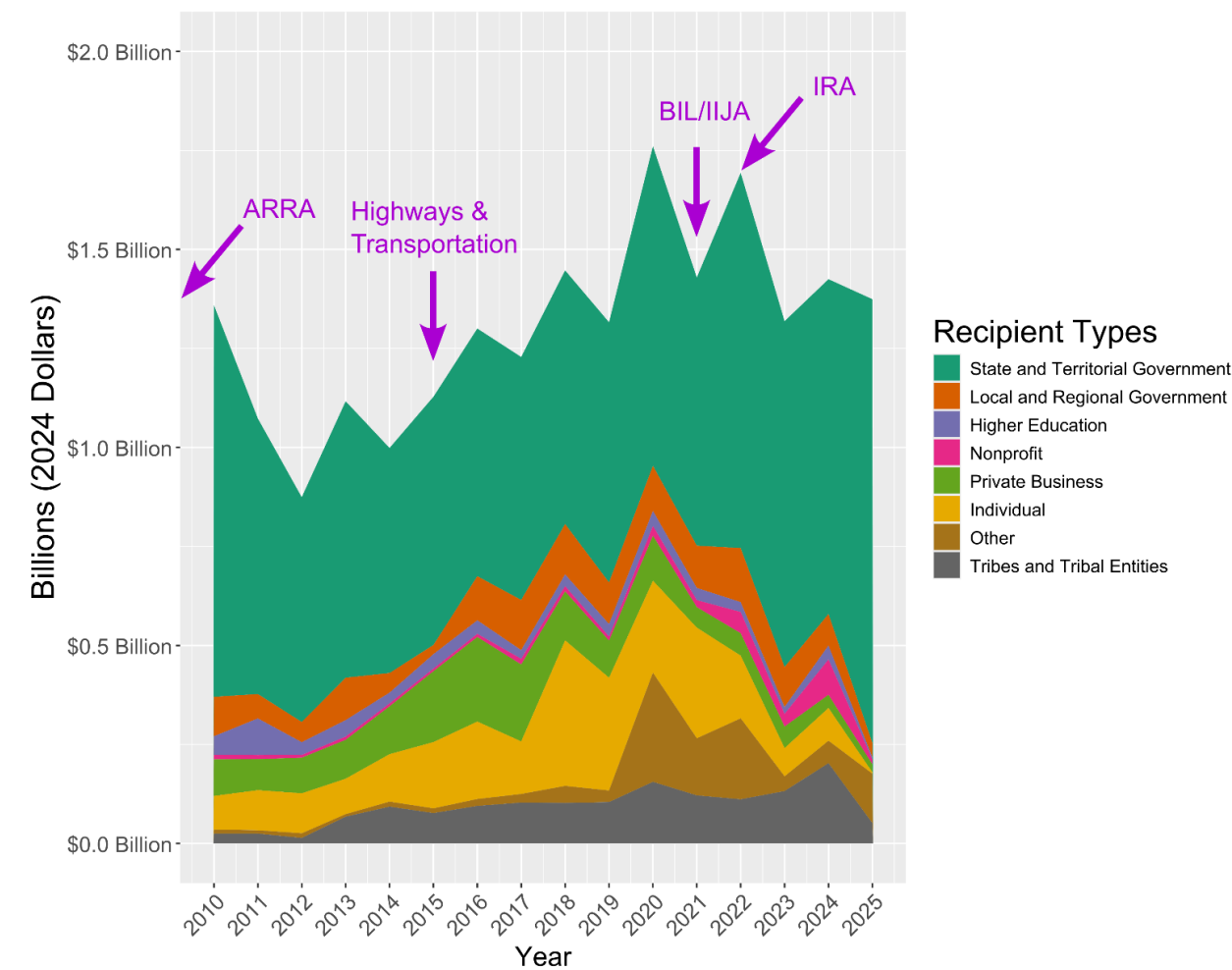


Figure 3. Federal Energy and Environment Spending 2010-2025



Note: FY2025 is partial year data for 6 months (October 2024 to April 2025)