

NEWS RELEASE

Western Canadian Municipal Associations meet in Winnipeg

August 27, 2020 – With the aid of video conferencing technology and in accordance with social distancing practices, the leaders of municipal associations from western Canada's four provinces met in Winnipeg today to discuss areas of common concern.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities ([AMM](#)) hosted the annual meeting comprised of elected officials and staff from the Rural Municipalities of Alberta ([RMA](#)), Alberta Urban Municipalities Association ([AUMA](#)), Municipalities of Saskatchewan ([MuniSask](#)), and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities ([SARM](#)). Leaders from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities ([UBCM](#)) also participated in the meeting for the first time.

Priority discussion items issues included economic impacts of COVID-19 on municipalities and need to expedite provincial-federal stimulus funding as well as the importance of Councils having the necessary tools and resources to lead Canada's economy recovery since they have remained on the front lines of the pandemic delivering essential services and protecting local communities.

"Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people and the impact that COVID-19 has had on communities across provinces is significant. Engaging with municipal leaders from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba has helped in understanding the importance of working collaboratively with municipal, provincial and federal partners to expedite economic recovery as we continue to navigate the changing impacts of the pandemic," stated Al Kemmere, RMA President.

"AUMA has been clear that a full economic recovery cannot happen without supports for municipalities," added Barry Morishita, AUMA President. "In conjunction with municipal leaders across Canada, AUMA has worked hard to help our governments understand the needs of our municipalities. Today's WCMA meeting has allowed us the opportunity to share ideas and practices that can contribute to helping our communities thrive."

All associations agreed that expediting shovel-worthy projects under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) should be a top priority for all orders of government as pandemic-related restrictions are gradually being lifted across the country. "Municipalities are uniquely positioned to lead our nation's economic recovery given our boots on the ground. Local Councils have submitted their ICIP applications and are ready to continue growing our provincial economies," noted AMM President Ralph Groening.

In addition, the associations discussed various issues related to community policing and public safety. "Policing is an ongoing concern for our members," MuniSask President Gordon Barnhart emphasized. "The social stress of COVID-19 has made it more important than ever that our policing agencies be working hand-in-hand with other agencies, such as health and social services, to ensure that people get the help that they need."

Discussion amongst WCMA leaders is essential to understand issues being experienced across our country, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic. "The AMM greatly values this opportunity to connect with our colleagues and have frank discussions about issues impacting municipalities across western Canada," said Ralph Groening, AMM President. "We share many common challenges and we are stronger when we work together on behalf of our members."

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