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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Western Canadian Municipal Associations Gather Virtually for Annual Meeting**

Leaders representing the municipal associations from Western Canada's three prairie provinces met virtually Friday to discuss common issues.

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) hosted the annual meeting, which brings together elected officials and staff from SUMA, SARM, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), Alberta Municipalities (AM), and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA).

Items discussed included preparations for a federal election coming in the next year, decorum and respect for municipal counsellors and CAOs, RCMP policing, the next generation of infrastructure funding, supply chains, and border services.

“Municipalities across Canada share similar issues,” said SUMA President, Randy Goulden, “but that’s especially true of our prairie provinces. Our common needs were emphasized by our discussion around border services this morning: our economies, and particularly our small towns and villages, depend on border crossings, and it’s essential that the Canada Border Services Agency consult with municipalities on any proposed changes.”

“Agriculture in the prairie provinces relies heavily on the stability and efficiency of global supply chains,” says Bill Huber, Acting President, SARM. “Any disruption in rail service or port operations can have a ripple effect, impacting local farmers, international trade agreements, and economic stability - having these operations designated as essential services would provide needed stability to fulfill Canada’s commitment to feeding the world.”

“Next generation federal infrastructure programming must be flexible, predictable, and attuned to the needs of all local communities,” stated AMM President Kam Blight. “Enhanced ability to move funds between funding streams to address priorities in each jurisdiction and the need for greater funds to support water and wastewater infrastructure projects is also urgently needed across western Canada.”

“As associations we are united in our goal to advance a positive culture in municipal politics, which enables productive engagement among council, administration, and the public, said AM President Tyler Gandam. “WCMA provides us the opportunity to share ideas and resources to help achieve this goal.

“The RMA appreciates the opportunity to gather with our counterparts from across the prairies and share insights on important issues impacting municipalities. There is much work to be

done, and we look forward to ongoing engagement with our sister organizations to advance prairie priorities“ said Kara Westerlund, Vice- President of the RMA

“Together, our voices are stronger, and the WCMA is a perfect example of how we can bring municipal issues to the forefront. SUMA hopes to see many changes this upcoming election, and that’s easier done alongside our sister organizations in the prairies,” said President Goulden.

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