



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES POLICY BRIEF – April 11, 2023

| Minister of Environment and Climate | Kevin Klein |

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Kevin Klein and representatives of Manitoba Environment and Climate. The AMM encourages the Province to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process. This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to the Environment and Climate portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

TOP POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- As water management and water quality are among the top priorities for municipalities, the AMM welcomes the Manitoba government unveiling a new Water Management Strategy that will help support innovative solutions and best practices to help address the shared water needs of Manitobans.
- Moreover, the AMM thanks the Department for facilitating two upcoming webinar engagement sessions with municipalities on the Water Management Strategy. Engagement sessions such as these are essential to ensuring the forthcoming Action Plan is reflective of municipal needs.
- The AMM has long called for a comprehensive Water Management Strategy as well as increased core operating funding to Watershed Districts (WDs).
- The AMM supports expanding water resources and addressing water infrastructure challenges and opportunities. Thus, it is critical that every attempt is made to maximize resources as there is significant financial and environmental value in all the work completed by WDs, yet many WDs struggle to fulfill their current mandates and deliver programs with current funding.
- As municipalities look for solutions to mitigate future flooding and increase drought resilience, investments in water storage structures and irrigation will be critical to manage water sustainability and help build stronger communities.
- It is vital that municipalities are financially supported to respond to residential growth and seize other economic growth opportunities.



MUNICIPAL PRIORITY

1. WATER MANAGEMENT

Municipalities are front line stewards of the environment that have invested considerably in flood mitigation infrastructure and share the vision of investing in safety and climate resiliency projects to not only save money in avoided flood damages but building resiliency for future floods.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ **Ensure the Manitoba Water Strategy's Action Plan supports local demand for water and wastewater infrastructure.**

TOP POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- As municipal frustrations with the provincial drainage licensing process are well-documented, reducing red tape for low-risk, low impact drainage projects is long overdue.
- While we commend the Province for launching the Water Licensing Portal to help expedite routine projects and reduce drainage application backlogs, the portal continues to increase costs, administrative time and red tape for municipalities.
- Moving forward, we encourage the department to continue consulting with the AMM to streamline processes by reducing application fees for lower-risk licensable projects and routine clean outs while expediting drainage approvals overall.
- Further, to promote consistency across the province, it is vital that Water Resource Officers are enforcing water control works in a reliable and timely manner.
- As the AMM is committed to advancing practical solutions to address challenges in waste diversion and recycling, we welcome the provincial commitment to comprehensively review recycling and waste management in Manitoba.
- Since municipalities have their boots on the ground, municipal-provincial partnerships are critical to explore opportunities for strengthening waste management systems.
- The AMM remains concerned with the final report for the Manitoba Waste Diversion and Recycling Framework supporting more restrictions for the allocation of landfill levy revenue for municipalities and landfill bans.
- Moreover, in July 2022, Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM) released the draft Transition Plan to full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The AMM voiced concerns with the lack of information and details regarding impacts on municipal operations, finances, and administration within the proposed EPR transition plan.
- The AMM understands that the Manitoba Government has reviewed the proposed EPR Transition Plan. As a next step, the AMM looks forward to reviewing the forthcoming revisions to the EPR transition plan.

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

2. DRAINAGE LICENSING AND APPROVALS

3. WASTE DIVERSION AND RECYCLING INITIATIVES

The AMM appreciates the Department including a strategic objective that focuses on enhancing and streamlining the delivery of client-centred services for water in the new Water Management Strategy to help address long-standing municipal concerns.

The AMM thanks the department for establishing a Working Group with our organization and Parkland municipalities focused on waste management facility design as well as developing informational materials to help enhance clarity.

It is imperative that the recycling system is reflective of municipal needs and does not download costs onto municipalities. Enhanced communication and clarity are required as municipalities look to modernize their recycling collection processes.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Streamline and reduce provincial red tape to expedite drainage licensing approvals; and*
- ❖ *Continue to directly consult with the AMM and municipalities on the provincial review of recycling and waste management and the transition to full Extended Producer Responsibility.*

TOP POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- As there is a huge demand for water and wastewater treatment projects across Manitoba, it is vital that municipalities are equipped to build and expand water and wastewater infrastructure to help grow Manitoba.
- While the AMM appreciated the opportunity to present to the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee (CAC) on barriers and opportunities for possible solutions to address municipal concerns, it is clear that municipalities want to see immediate solutions to help recruit and retain water and wastewater facility operators.
- As demand for water and wastewater infrastructure continues to increase, the need to retain and recruit certified treatment operators will also continue to increase.
- This is problematic given that municipalities have continued to raise similar concerns regarding Water and Wastewater Operator Certification for more than 20 years.
- Present requirements for certification and recertification of water treatment plant operators pose a hardship on small communities.
- It is vital that the Province of Manitoba explore alternative local training opportunities so that all municipalities can benefit from training water and wastewater operators.

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

4. WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

The AMM recently participated in a Working Group led by Apprenticeship Manitoba to continue dialogue on water and wastewater facility operators with a focus on developing and administering a survey to further identify the scope of the problem. Survey findings reaffirmed municipal concerns expressed over the last 20 years.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Support municipalities by providing modernized training opportunities closer to local communities.*

ACTIVE AMM ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE RESOLUTIONS

AMM Resolution #10-2022: Aquatic Emergency Plan

WHEREAS the raw water quality of Lake Winnipeg has deteriorated significantly over the past several decades and continues to deteriorate at an exponential rate that will inevitably result in the “Death of the Lake” with dire consequences for all stakeholders unless there is timely intervention from all three levels of government; and

WHEREAS the high levels of phosphorus in the Lake are a significant contributing factor to the increased frequency and severity of algae blooms developing along many beaches during the summer season; and

WHEREAS The City of Winnipeg has a plan in place, as approved by Manitoba Conservation and Climate in November 2019, to proceed with a major infrastructure upgrade program, called the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Master Plan, to manage the effects of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) on our waterways; and

WHEREAS The City of Winnipeg continues to discharge sewage that contains high levels of phosphorus that do not meet its provincial operating licence increasing the nutrient load and further exacerbating the deterioration of the raw Lake Winnipeg water quality; and

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg’s decision to reject the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and International Institute for Sustainable Development’s proposal to use ferric chloride to reduce the substantial amount of phosphorus being dumped into Lake Winnipeg by up to 70% will result in the continued discharge of high levels of phosphorus by the City into Lake Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS Lake Winnipeg is of vital importance to all stakeholders including indigenous peoples, fishers, cottagers, residents, as well as communities that use the lake as a source of economic growth or stability, and many other user groups who are presently negatively impacted by the unacceptable and unsustainable condition of the Lake;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the provincial and federal governments to devise a plan of action to immediately mitigate the discharge of high phosphorus levels contributing to the deteriorating condition of Lake Winnipeg and ensure compliance with its operating license issued pursuant to *The Environment Act*.

AMM Resolution #11-2022: Waste Disposal Financial Assistance

WHEREAS numerous municipalities are in discussions with the Province of Manitoba, Department of Environment, Climate and Parks regarding the meeting of standards of the new landfill regulations; and

WHEREAS some municipalities have been partaking in numerous discussions with the Environment, Climate and Parks Staff both virtually and in person at the Spring AMM Convention in Brandon in April 2022; and

WHEREAS the costs to have current or future locations engineered to meet the regulations and/or to set up waste transfer depots as an alternative option are very substantial and unpredictable;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba for financial assistance to assist with the costs of landfill engineering.

AMM Resolution #13-2022: Water Resource Officer and Fines

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba encourages the good stewardship of water and land; and

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba hires Water Resource Officers to regulate the natural flows of water; and

WHEREAS the provision of warning, remediation requirements and fines are used to promote the stewardships of water courses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to increase the fines by 500% for rerouting water courses or affecting natural drainage and the importance of timely and reliable enforcement.

AMM Resolution #08-2021: Provincial Water Strategy

AMM Resolution #18-2021: Public Registry Advertising

AMM Resolution #19-2021: Waste Disposal Grounds

AMM Resolution #12-2020: Municipal Cottaging Initiative

AMM Resolution #13-2020: Mattress Disposal

AMM Resolution #16-2020: Subsidize Waste Management Facilities

AMM Resolution #22-2020: Solar Incentive Program

AMM Resolution #23-2020: Level 3 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

AMM Resolution #29-2019: Composting

AMM Resolution #27-2019: Drainage Licensing

AMM Resolution #21-2018: Commercial Recycling

AMM Resolution #46-2017: Water Rights Act Compliance - SP

AMM Resolution #48-2017: Municipal Drainage - SP

AMM Resolution #24-2017: Certification of Water Treatment Plant Operators

AMM Resolution #46-2016: Noxious Weeds - SP

AMM Resolution #41-2013: Increase Funding to Conservation Districts

AMM Resolution #17-2012: Drainage on Crown Lands