
Environment and Climate Change

Meeting with Minister Mike Moyes

March 24, 2025



Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Summary of Municipal Priorities

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Mike Moyes and representatives of Manitoba Environment and Climate Change. The AMM encourages the provincial government 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 Minister Moyes's portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

1. Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Immediately implement the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committees recommendations to ensure the continued operation of essential water infrastructure.*

2. Aquatic Invasive Species

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Increase financial resources and enhance public awareness to effectively prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, including Zebra Mussels.*

3. Drainage Licensing and Approvals

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Continue to streamline and reduce provincial red tape to expedite drainage licensing approvals.*

4. Waste Diversion and Recycling Initiatives

Recommendations:

- ✓ *Continue to directly consult with the AMM and municipalities on the transition to full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).*
- ✓ *Review landfill engineering requirements to reduce red tape and costs for municipalities.*

Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Immediately implement the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committees recommendations to ensure the continued operation of essential water infrastructure.***

For more than 20 years, municipalities have repeatedly raised concerns about Water and Wastewater Operator Certification, yet these challenges remain unresolved. While the AMM appreciates the work of the Certification Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Department's review of its recommendations, particularly those addressing certification challenges, training requirements, and administrative processes, we remain concerned that these recommendations have yet to be implemented. Notably, this issue was raised again last year, with a commitment from the Department to work toward a resolution within the next year.

With growing demand and a staggering \$1.6 billion deficit in water and wastewater infrastructure, the need to recruit and retain certified treatment operators has never been more urgent. Without action, municipalities will face increasing challenges in delivering essential water services—jeopardizing public health, economic development, and community sustainability. Given the vital role of certified operators in ensuring the safety and sustainability of water infrastructure, we encourage the Province to take timely action.

Fortunately, the CAC report offers clear recommendations that align with municipal concerns and AMM's longstanding advocacy. Municipalities are calling for the swift implementation of these recommendations, including alternative local training opportunities, to ensure every community has access to the certified operators they need. A strong example of this approach is the Province's recent investment in a mobile fire rescue training trailer to provide year-round training for municipal fire services. A similar investment in mobile training for water and wastewater operators would not only ensure that communities have the skilled workforce necessary to maintain essential infrastructure but also reduce the costs of sending individuals to other parts of the Province.

Recognizing the fundamental importance of water and wastewater services, AMM members passed a resolution in 2023 advocating for amendments to the *Essential Services Act* to formally designate these services as essential. We urge the Province to take proactive steps to equip municipalities with the tools, workforce, and resources needed to sustain and enhance this critical infrastructure, ensuring the long-term growth and prosperity of communities across Manitoba.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Increase financial resources and enhance public awareness to effectively prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, including Zebra Mussels.***

Under Budget 2024, the AMM welcomed the allocation of \$500,000 for the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program. However, municipalities continue to highlight inadequate funding and staffing shortages as significant barriers to effectively preventing and managing AIS. To slow the spread of AIS and protect Manitoba's water bodies, greater financial investment and stronger coordination between government departments and agencies are essential.

A key step in strengthening Manitoba's AIS response is expanding decontamination and inspection sites across all regions. The AMM strongly encourages the Province to establish additional sites to provide broader coverage, ensuring municipalities have the necessary resources to safeguard local water bodies and mitigate both the economic and environmental impacts of AIS.

The AMM also appreciates the Province's collaboration in hosting the 2025 AIS Virtual Summit, which provided a valuable platform for municipalities to discuss challenges and share best practices. The high level of engagement underscores the critical importance of protecting Manitoba's water bodies and the growing need for proactive prevention measures. Given the significant interest and volume of questions raised, the AMM strongly recommends developing a dedicated AIS informational toolkit to support municipal decision-making and enhance local prevention efforts.

Moreover, public awareness and education remain key to reducing the spread of AIS. As highlighted during the Summit, limited public knowledge continues to be a challenge. To address this, the AMM urges the Province to expand public awareness campaigns, ensuring municipalities have access to educational materials—such as signage, brochures, and pamphlets—that can be distributed at campgrounds, boat launches, and other high-traffic locations.

By strengthening funding, expanding inspection capacity, and improving public awareness, we can take a more proactive approach to protecting Manitoba water bodies. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to advance these initiatives and ensure municipalities are well-equipped to combat the growing threat of AIS.

Drainage Licensing and Approvals

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Continue to streamline and reduce provincial red tape to expedite drainage licensing approvals.***

As the AMM prioritizes travelling across Manitoba and meeting one-on-one with municipalities, frustration with the provincial drainage licensing process remains a major challenge. While we appreciate the department's collaboration on the Legacy Drainage License Project, which allows municipalities to streamline approvals by bundling licensable drainage projects under a single \$500 application fee, municipalities have emphasized that further action is needed to address ongoing concerns.

To ensure timely ditch maintenance and effective drainage, AMM members passed a resolution urging the elimination of these fees, recognizing them as an unnecessary financial and administrative burden. Reducing these costs would enable municipalities to complete essential drainage work more efficiently, minimize delays, mitigate flood risks, and strengthen infrastructure resilience.

These fees, combined with skyrocketing costs of municipal drain and culvert surveys—with some municipalities reporting \$17,000 for a single culvert study—severely limit the ability of local governments to maintain critical infrastructure. Adding to these challenges, municipalities continue to express frustration with red tape associated with the Water Licensing Portal, which further delays much-needed projects.

We also recognize the critical role Manitoba Water Resource Officers play in issuing licenses and ensuring compliance with surface water control works. As a result of our advocacy efforts, we appreciate the department's decision to increase water fine amounts and introduce five new offences to modernize the *Water Rights Act* and Regulation. Additionally, we commend the Province for proactively communicating these changes to municipalities through an article in the *Municipal Leader* magazine. However, to promote consistency and reliability across the province, it is essential that inspections and enforcement of water control works are conducted in a timely and predictable manner to mitigate illegal drainage.

Waste Diversion and Recycling Initiatives

Recommendations:

- ✓ ***Continue to directly consult with the AMM and municipalities on the transition to full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).***
- ✓ ***Review landfill engineering requirements to reduce red tape and costs for municipalities.***

The AMM supports efforts to reduce and divert waste, including developing a plan to transition to full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Given that municipalities are on the front lines of waste management, strong municipal-provincial partnerships are essential to strengthening waste management systems.

As we continue our municipal tours, meeting one-on-one with local councils, some municipalities have inquired about the status of the EPR transition plan. The AMM appreciates the department's efforts in establishing a committee with MMSM and other key stakeholders to review the plan and ensure it aligns with municipal concerns and interests. We understand that a consultant's report with recommendations was submitted in June 2024 and that the Province's review was expected to take approximately six months. To ensure the transition remains transparent and responsive to municipal needs, the AMM would appreciate a status update on the forthcoming recommendations and next steps.

Next, excessive standards and interpretation of regulatory requirements related to landfills are straining many municipal budgets. The AMM appreciated the department's efforts in establishing a Working Group with our organization and Parkland municipalities, focusing on waste management facility design and the development of informative materials for improved clarity – however concerns at the municipal level persist.

As municipalities are required to balance their budgets, allocating funds for the necessary modifications to adhere to regulatory requirements or transitioning towards a centralized transfer station becomes a challenging task. With some waste management facilities nearing capacity, it is imperative for the Province to review provincial regulations related to landfill engineering requirements in order to reduce red tape and costs for municipalities. This support is crucial to ensure that waste management systems can effectively cope with the demands of growing populations.

Active AMM 2024 Resolutions

AMM Resolution #19-2024: Maintenance of Provincial Drainage Infrastructure

Sponsor(s)

Portage la Prairie, City (Central)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to improve maintenance of provincial drainage infrastructure by doing the following:

- Increase funding for the maintenance of provincial drainage infrastructure and including PR and PTH right-of-ways;
 - Provide an option of funding to municipalities for the repair of problematic areas within provincial drainage infrastructure that negatively impacts private property; and
 - Work collaboratively with municipalities and other stakeholders to identify and address issues related to provincial drainage infrastructure.
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AMM Resolution #40-2024: Drain Maintenance

Sponsor(s)

Ste. Anne, RM (Eastern)
Reynolds, RM (Eastern)
Brokenhead, RM (Eastern)
Montcalm, RM (Eastern)
St. Clements, RM (Eastern)
Alexander, RM (Eastern)
East St. Paul, RM (Eastern)
Emerson-Franklin, Municipality (Eastern)
Stuartburn, RM (Eastern)
Springfield, RM (Eastern)
La Broquerie, RM (Eastern)
Lac du Bonnet, RM (Eastern)
Beausejour, Town (Eastern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to ensure that the provincially owned drainage infrastructure systems be continuously maintained and updated in a manner that allows for the continuous and efficient flow of spring run-off and rain waters to flow from municipal drainage systems into and through provincial drainage systems.
