



Association of Manitoba Municipalities

**ENVIRONMENT AND
CLIMATE CHANGE**

FEBRUARY 8

2024

SUMMARY OF MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Tracy Schmidt and representatives of Manitoba Environment and Climate Change. 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 Change portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.



Water Management

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

Drainage Licensing and Approvals

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



Waste Diversion and Recycling Initiatives

- **Engage in ongoing consultations with AMM and municipalities to ensure a smooth transition to full Extended Producer Responsibility and review landfill engineering requirements to reduce red tape and costs for municipalities**



Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

- **Support municipalities with localized, modernized training opportunities and expedite updates on Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee recommendations.**



Water Management

RECOMMENDATIONS



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

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.

Given the importance of water management and quality to municipalities, the AMM welcomed the Manitoba government's introduction of the Water Management Strategy. This strategy will help support innovative solutions and best practices to help address the shared water needs of Manitobans.

With municipalities in Manitoba identifying a substantial need for over **\$976 million** to upgrade or construct water and wastewater treatment facilities, it is essential that the Water Strategy Action Plan aligns with local demands for water-related infrastructure. In fact, many Manitoba communities continue to experience rapid levels of residential growth, but public infrastructure is having a hard time keeping up. This infrastructure deficit poses a critical threat to economic development and job growth in Manitoba. Moreover, numerous municipalities, grappling with water capacity constraints, are forced to reject potential developments and investments due to insufficient water resources. This limitation not only hinders economic growth but also discourages businesses from making long-term investments, particularly as extended drought risks put added pressure on existing infrastructure.

Adding to the complexity of the situation is the persistence of boil water advisories in various municipalities, with some lasting for **over four decades**. This not only raises considerations about public health but also affects the overall attractiveness for long-term economic activity. Thus, investments in water and wastewater infrastructure are crucial to ensuring all Manitobans have access to modern reliable systems. Moving forward, the AMM encourages the Department to provide an update on the forthcoming steps of the Water Strategy.

Additionally, the AMM wishes to thank the Province for investing an additional **\$1.47 million** in new funding for the water strategy implementation, **including \$600,000** for the Watershed Districts Program. 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.

Drainage Licensing and Approvals

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

As municipal frustrations with the provincial drainage licensing process are well-documented, the AMM wishes to thank the department for working together on a Legacy Drainage Licensing project to help municipalities take a coordinated approach to drainage licensing processes. The AMM welcomes the ability to bundle licensable drainage projects on a **singular \$500 application fee** with supporting documentation.

Further, we have acknowledged the Province's commendable initiative in launching the Water Licensing Portal to help expedite routine projects and reduce drainage application backlogs, however, municipalities continue to express concerns with the increased costs, administrative burdens, and associated red tape linked to the portal. Moving forward, we continue to encourage the department to consult with the AMM to streamline processes and reduce provincial red tape.

Additionally, Manitoba Water Resource Officers hold the critical responsibility of issuing licenses and ensuring compliance with all surface water-related control works. Municipalities, however, express frustration over the lack of specified timelines for inspecting of complaints by Water Resource Officers. Thus, in order to promote consistency across the province, it is vital that Water Resource Officers are enforcing water control works in a reliable and timely manner.

Waste Diversion and Recycling Initiatives

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The AMM supports efforts to reduce and divert waste as well as welcomes expanded recycling initiatives in Manitoba that may include transition to full EPR. Since municipalities have their boots on the ground, municipal-provincial partnerships are critical to explore opportunities for strengthening waste management systems.

The AMM appreciates meeting with Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM) in response to municipal 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 and has advised that a ministerial committee consisting of MMSM, and other stakeholders impacted by the transition to full EPR will be established. The AMM wishes to thank the department for committing to establish this committee and we look forward to reviewing the forthcoming recommendations and next steps to ensure the EPR transition plan is reflective of municipal needs.

Next, excessive standards and unclear 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.

Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ ***Support municipalities with localized, modernized training opportunities and expedite updates on the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendations.***

In response to the increasing demand for water and wastewater treatment initiatives throughout Manitoba, it is imperative that municipalities are well-equipped to construct and enhance the essential infrastructure, contributing to the overall growth of the province. In fact, AMM members have recently passed a resolution advocating for amendments to *The Essential Services Act*. The proposed changes aim to officially recognize municipal water and wastewater services as essential services, reflecting the crucial role they play in local communities.

However, municipalities have continued to raise concerns regarding Water and Wastewater Operator Certification for **over two decades**. Present requirements for certification and recertification of water treatment plant operators pose a hardship on small communities. Further, as demand for water and wastewater infrastructure continue to increase, the need to retain and recruit certified treatment operators will also continue to intensify. Municipalities want to see immediate solutions to help recruit and retain facility operators.

The AMM acknowledges the ongoing efforts of the CAC, tasked with reviewing certification issues, training requirements, and administrative processes. The AMM also understands that a comprehensive report with recommended solutions was anticipated by the Fall of 2023. While the AMM appreciated the opportunity to present concerns and potential solutions to the CAC, municipal frustration persists with the perceived lack of progress on water and wastewater operator certification.

Therefore, the AMM kindly requests an update on the CAC's recommendations and next steps. This information is vital to empower municipalities in their ongoing efforts to attract and retain skilled water and wastewater facility operators. Moreover, 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.

Active AMM 2023 ECC Resolutions

AMM Resolution #34-2023: Drainage Requirement Changes – Culverts

Sponsor(s)

Elton, RM (Western)
Riverdale, Municipality (Western)
Oakland-Wawanesa, Municipality (Western)
Cornwallis, RM (Western)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend *The Water Rights Act* to allow municipalities the ability to replace 12-16" (300-400 mm) culverts in rural municipal roads and approaches with 18" (450 mm) culverts through a Registration Application License vs. the current Water Control Works License.

AMM Resolution #35-2023: Drainage Requirement Changes

Sponsor(s)

Elton, RM (Western)
Riverdale, Municipality (Western)
Oakland-Wawanesa, Municipality (Western)
Whitehead, RM (Western)
Cornwallis, RM (Western)
North Cypress-Langford, Municipality (Western)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend The Water Rights Act to allow municipalities the ability to remove recent sediment from municipal ditches within their boundaries without a Water Control Works License.

AMM Resolution #36-2023: Drainage Fees

Sponsor(s)

Riding Mountain West, RM (Midwestern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to remove the associated fees from the Drainage and Water Control Works Application for municipalities.

AMM Resolution #37-2023: Provincial Water Management Strategy

Sponsor(s)

Lac du Bonnet, RM (Eastern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to improve provincial roads and drainage that impact municipalities as part of the Manitoba Provincial Water Strategy by doing the following:

- Develop and implement a plan to improve provincial roads and drainage infrastructure that negatively impact municipalities, including prioritizing infrastructure repairs and maintenance; and
- Provide an option of funding to municipalities for them to repair the problem areas with provincial drainage infrastructure that negatively impact their communities; and
- Work collaboratively with municipalities and other stakeholders to identify and address issues related to provincial roads and drainage infrastructure.

Active AMM 2023 ECC Resolutions

AMM Resolution #38-2023: Water Resources Branch Accountability and Timelines

Sponsor(s)

Riding Mountain West, RM (Midwestern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to put timelines on inspections of reports of illegal or unlicensed drainage and communications to complainants about mitigation or remediation.

AMM Resolution #39-2023: Petroleum Tank Removal Compliance

Sponsor(s)

Yellowhead, RM (Midwestern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to enforce their legislation on the owners of properties with abandoned petroleum tanks; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the owner who last operated the petroleum tank system be held responsible for the costs of tank removal and remediation regardless of the current property ownership, eliminating the administrative and financial burden on municipalities.

AMM Resolution #40-2023: Climate Action Incentive Payment (CAIP) Rebate

Sponsor(s)

Riding Mountain West, RM (Midwestern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to offer the CAIP rebate to municipalities.

**** For further information on any resolution, please contact the AMM office.**