

AAMDC Advocacy Report Card Spring 2015



Prepared by the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

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AAMDC Advocacy Report Card: Spring 2015

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INTRODUCTION

The Advocacy Report Card is divided into two sections.

Section 1 provides detailed information on the government response to the Fall 2014 resolutions and includes the AAMDC Board of Directors reaction to the response as well as anticipated follow up.

Section 2 updates members by reporting on all active resolutions, including any pertinent developments. The resolutions are grouped by advocacy area.

Definition of Terms

Following the adoption of resolutions at the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties' (AAMDC) conventions, the AAMDC sends the resolutions to the appropriate level of government for response. Once a response is received, the AAMDC labels the resolution with one of five indicators which determines the status of that resolution. The intention of providing a status for each resolution is to evaluate the government response. The status is not intended to reflect the AAMDC's advocacy efforts on a resolution. The AAMDC advocates on all resolutions until the government response is deemed 'accepted.'

The Spring 2015 Advocacy Report Card has added a fifth indicator, 'accepted in part,' which will be included starting with the Fall 2014 resolutions. Resolutions previous to Fall 2014 will continue to be evaluated using only four indicators. The 'accepted in part' indicator was added to recognize the fact that many resolutions contain multiple requests of government, and in many cases, some components of the resolution are met while others are not. Below are the descriptions of those indicators.

Accepted: A government response which has been '**accepted**' is one which meets the AAMDC criteria as outlined in a) the resolution and b) meets the expectations of the Board of Directors.

Unsatisfactory: A government response that is '**unsatisfactory**' is one which does not meet the expectations of the AAMDC as outlined in a resolution or does not meet the approval of the Board of Directors.

Accepted In Principle: A resolution that has been assigned the status of '**accepted in principle**' means that either the response addresses a part of a resolution or contains information which indicates further action on the part of government is being considered.

Accepted In Part: A resolution that has been assigned the status of '**accepted in part**' means that the government's response partially meets the AAMDC criteria as outlined in a) the resolution and b) meets the expectations of the Board of Directors. Resolutions that are 'accepted in part' will continue to be advocated on by the AAMDC.

NOTE: Only resolutions from Fall 2014 and later can be assigned a status of 'accepted in part.'

Incomplete Information: In deciding how to respond to the government, the AAMDC may list a resolution response as '**incomplete information**' for a decision. This means that the response does not address the request outlined in the resolution and that follow-up is required to for the AAMDC to make an informed decision on how to proceed.

SECTION 1: Government Responses to Fall 2014 Resolutions

The AAMDC recently received the Government of Alberta responses to the resolutions adopted at the Fall 2014 convention. The following table provides a quick overview of the initial assessment of the Fall 2014 resolutions following the Government of Alberta's response. The Fall 2014 resolutions and corresponding government response can be found below.

REACTIONS AT A GLANCE

| # | RESOLUTION NAME | STATUS |
|--------|--|-----------------------|
| 1-14F | Amalgamation Process Amendments | Unsatisfactory |
| 2-14F | Controlling and Enforcing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (Quagga and Zebra Mussels) | Accepted in Principle |
| 3-14F | New Building Canada Fund (Provincial – Territorial Infrastructure Component) – Guaranteed Equal Opportunity Funding for Rural & Urban Populations Under 10,000 | Unsatisfactory |
| 4-14F | Reinstatement of Funding for Water and Wastewater Systems | Unsatisfactory |
| 5-14F | Reinstatement of Funding For Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities | Unsatisfactory |
| 6-14F | Improvement of Highways in Alberta | Accepted in Principle |
| 7-14F | Regional Partnership Solution to Municipal/Community Viability | Unsatisfactory |
| 8-14F | Improvement of High-Speed Internet Services in Rural Alberta | Accepted in Principle |
| 9-14F | Fire Department Response to Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Calls | Unsatisfactory |
| 10-14F | Temporary Foreign Workers Program | Accepted in Part |
| 11-14F | Alberta Health Services – Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Review | Accepted in Part |

| | | |
|--------|--|------------------------|
| 12-14F | Amend the Waste Control Regulation 192/1996 to Address Classification of Hazardous Wastes in Landfills | Unsatisfactory |
| 14-14F | Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems | Accepted in Part |
| 15-14F | Telus Line Locates | Incomplete Information |
| 16-14F | Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Funding | Unsatisfactory |
| 17-14F | Mileage Signage Markers Along Provincial Highways | Unsatisfactory |
| 18-14F | Sustaining Schools in Rural Communities | Unsatisfactory |

Amalgamation Process Amendments

Advocacy Target: Municipal Affairs

WHEREAS the current wording of Sections 102 and 103, subsections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the *Municipal Government Act*, enables any municipality to initiate an amalgamation process by simply writing a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs; and

WHEREAS the current wording of Sections 102 and 103, subsections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the *Municipal Government Act* does not promote any motivation for municipalities to sit down and talk face to face about the prospect of amalgamation; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties has a well-researched report titled *Finding Local Solutions: The Impacts of Forced Regionalization*, which identifies that forced municipal relationships of any kind are not successful; and

WHEREAS Section 104 of the *Municipal Government Act* states that the municipal authorities with which the initiating municipal authority proposes to amalgamate must, on receipt of the notice under section 103, meet with the initiating municipal authority to discuss the proposals included in the notice and negotiate the proposals in good faith. There is no requirement for the initiating municipality to also negotiate in good faith;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend sections 102 and 103, subsections 1,2,3,4 of the *Municipal Government Act* so as to no longer enable a single municipality to initiate the process of amalgamation without prior negotiation with the municipal authority affected by the proposed amalgamation;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government to Alberta to also amend Section 104 of the *Municipal Government Act* so as to give equal responsibility to the initiating municipality to negotiate in good faith.

Government Response

Municipal Affairs:

Municipal Affairs is in the process of a comprehensive review of the *Municipal Government Act*. Extensive consultation took place on the Act throughout much of 2014. A significant variety of issues were raised through the consultation process, including suggestions for revising the amalgamation process.

Municipal Affairs is working with key stakeholders and municipal partners, including the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, to review the issues raised through the consultation process and to identify options for addressing these issues. This resolution will be considered as part of the review process.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

As identified in the government response, the AAMDC continues to be involved in the review of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and the specific issues outlined in this resolution have been brought forward by the AAMDC.

Although Alberta Municipal Affairs was not able to provide a detailed response due to the confidential nature of the ongoing MGA review process, the AAMDC is encouraged by the Government of Alberta's willingness to discuss improvements to the amalgamation process. In addition, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has voiced concern about a lack of consultation and collaboration among the initiating municipality and other impacted municipalities in recent attempted amalgamations, which is, in part, what the resolution is addressing.

Bill 20: The Municipal Government Amendment Act, which was passed in the Spring of 2015, includes new provisions to streamline the amalgamation process when there are two or more municipalities voluntarily amalgamating but it does not change section 102, 103, or 104 in the manner consistent with the resolution. There is no wording in Bill 20 that requires any prior negotiation nor changes that would require both parties involved in the amalgamation to negotiate in good faith as per the request outlined in the resolution.

Via the MGA review process, the AAMDC will continue to advocate that any amalgamation application include the requirement for prior negotiation and the requirement for both sides to negotiate in good faith. The status of this resolution is Unsatisfactory, and it will continue to be advocated on.

Resolution 2-14F

Controlling and Enforcing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (Quagga and Zebra Mussels)

County of Newell & Red Deer County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Justice and Solicitor General, Transportation

WHEREAS current provincial legislation, the *Weed Control Act* and the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act*, contain some limited provisions in relation to the enforcement for control/elimination of Aquatic Invasive Species; and

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development estimates that a dreissenid mussel (Quagga and Zebra Mussels) invasion into Alberta water bodies could have a detrimental \$75 million annual impact on the Alberta economy; and

WHEREAS the economic impact targets many aspects of the economy including but not limited to drinking water systems, water diversion intakes, water management structures and power generation; and

WHEREAS the annual cost of preventing the invasion of this species is much less than the annual cost of mitigating the damages after an invasion; and

WHEREAS these mussels are listed as prohibited species in the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* but current provincial measures are not sufficient to ensure the species does not invade provincial water bodies; and

WHEREAS as far as has been determined, Aquatic Invasive Species such as Zebra Mussels and Quagga Mussels are not present within water bodies located within the Province of Alberta but are migrating closer and have been found as close as Lake Winnipeg increasing the urgency to address this situation; and

WHEREAS due to the serious irreparable damage that can be caused to water bodies (particularly lakes and reservoirs) if Zebra Mussels or Quagga Mussels do enter the water bodies, action should be taken to adopt legislation to assist with enforcement for control/elimination of Aquatic Invasive Species;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to enact/amend legislation and/or regulations, including the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act*, to include prohibited species and encompass zero tolerance, mandatory inspections and the necessary enforcement authority for Aquatic Invasive Species, including dreissenid mussels, to ensure these species do not invade Alberta;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to take preventative measures by working with all levels of government to further develop the provincial Aquatic Invasive Species program to include:

- improved monitoring through the establishment, funding and staffing of mussel inspection stations at strategic entrances into Alberta,

- **the funding of a comprehensive awareness campaign on the risk of the species entering the province and the preventative measures boaters must take to eliminate the risk,**
- **making the necessary policy and legislative changes, and**
- **working with all levels of government for implementation in preventing the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.**

Government Response

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development:

Alberta is pursuing legislation that will amend the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* to provide a more robust aquatic invasive species prevention program. These amendments will address the concerns and suggestions in the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties resolution, including the ability to conduct mandatory inspections.

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) is leading a provincewide aquatic invasive species program that includes education and outreach, monitoring, rapid response planning, watercraft inspections, and policy and legislation. Continued funding of the provincial Aquatic Invasive Species program remains a priority in order to ensure continuation of a comprehensive prevention initiative that includes an awareness campaign and watercraft inspection.

Justice and Solicitor General:

ESRD developed and now leads delivery of the program to control the spread of aquatic invasive species. For that reason, Justice and Solicitor General defers to ESRD to provide accurate information about the ministry's program. Justice and Solicitor General's Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch and Parks Enforcement Branch will continue to assist ESRD with monitoring and enforcement efforts.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta's response to the resolution and actions to combat aquatic invasive species are encouraging and will have an important impact on the spread of aquatic invasive species. However, it is unclear whether a 'zero tolerance' approach has been adopted by the Government of Alberta as is specified in the resolution. Therefore, this resolution is deemed Accepted in Principle. The AAMDC will monitor the ongoing efforts to halt the movement of aquatic invasive species.

Resolution 3-14F

**New Building Canada Fund (Provincial – Territorial Infrastructure Component) –
Guaranteed Equal Opportunity Funding for Rural & Urban Populations Under
10,000**

Birch Hills County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Municipal Affairs, Infrastructure

WHEREAS the New Building Canada Fund provides \$848 million for medium and large scale projects and \$94 million over 10 years for Small Communities Fund which provides funding to municipalities with populations under 100,000; and

WHEREAS small communities with a population under 10,000 (Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties definition of a small community) require essential infrastructure services in addition to MSI Operating and Capital Funding; and

WHEREAS approximately 33% of the Alberta population lives in communities under 10,000 population and should have guaranteed equal access to the \$94 million available from the Small Communities Fund;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to designate a minimum of one-third of the Small Communities Fund (\$94 million) for communities under 10,000 population for essential infrastructure projects.

Government Response

Municipal Affairs:

The Small Communities Fund (SCF) is governed by an agreement between Canada and Alberta. Alberta must meet all of its obligations under the agreement, including the definition of eligible municipalities.

Municipal Affairs discussed the development of the SCF program guidelines with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and has considered the input from the associations.

The SCF was officially rolled out February 26, 2015. The application information can be found on Municipal Affairs web site at: <http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund.cfm>.

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure currently administers the National Infrastructure Component and Provincial Territorial Infrastructure Component – National and Regional Projects of the New Building Canada Fund.

The province's position for the New Building Fund has been to leverage existing capital plan projects in order to provide the best value for Alberta taxpayers and municipalities. This approach builds upon investments already made in the provincial capital plan.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The eligibility requirements for Alberta's allotment of the Small Communities Fund (SCF) have been finalized and the application period closed on April 2, 2015. At this point, there is no chance that the funding will be subdivided to reserve a portion for communities under 10,000 because the program is currently active. The current SCF format places all municipalities with a population below 100,000 in direct competition with one another for limited SCF funding, despite that fact that this population threshold makes every municipality in Alberta eligible for SCF funding, with the exception of Calgary and Edmonton.

As the SCF will have only one intake opportunity, which has already been completed, there will be no opportunity to revise the eligibility parameters unless the program is renewed following the completion of the New Building Canada Fund in 2024 (assuming a similar program is continued in 2024). The status of this resolution is Unsatisfactory.

Reinstatement of Funding for Water and Wastewater Systems

Clearwater County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Transportation, Treasury Board and Finance

WHEREAS municipalities are required to fund any new water or wastewater systems or new extensions to existing water or wastewater systems; and

WHEREAS water and wastewater systems in Alberta must be extended and/or built in order to ensure the health and safety of residents; and

WHEREAS the 2013 provincial budget included no funding for a number of grant programs essential to development or maintenance of infrastructure in rural municipalities; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Program – Water for Life grant funding to municipalities was insufficient and underfunded, and failed to meet the current needs of municipalities in Alberta;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate and enhance funding for the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Program – Water for Life in the 2015 provincial budget.

Government Response

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development:

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development is working with Municipal Affairs and Transportation on the Municipal Water Project, which will assess current and future options for water infrastructure funding. This includes consideration of roles and responsibilities, mechanisms for financing infrastructure development, and forecasting innovative and sustainable solutions.

Transportation:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will be in the best position to decide where funding should go based on the current fiscal restraints and the upcoming Budget 2015.

Treasury Board and Finance:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will continue to work in partnership with our government colleagues and stakeholders to determine sustainable funding solutions. Requests for additional funding, at this time, will not be approved.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

In the 2015-16 provincial budget, the Government of Alberta has decreased Water for Life capital funding significantly while operational funding was zero-funded. These budget estimates and the government's response to the resolution earn this this resolution a status of Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC will continue to advocate for greater funding for the Water for Life program.

Resolution 5-14F

Reinstatement of Funding For Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities

County of Lethbridge

Carried

Advocacy Target: Transportation, Treasury Board and Finance

WHEREAS rural municipalities are the economic drivers of Alberta with their agricultural production and natural resources; and

WHEREAS resource roads and bridges in Alberta must be maintained in order to ensure safe and efficient movement of farm commodities, natural resources, and people; and

WHEREAS the 2014 provincial budget includes no funding for a number of grant programs that are essential to maintaining transportation infrastructure in rural municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the Resource Road Program and the Local Road Bridge Program in the 2015 provincial budget.

Government Response

Transportation:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will be in the best position to decide where funding should go based on the current fiscal restraints and the upcoming Budget 2015.

Treasury Board and Finance:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will continue to work in partnership with our government colleagues and stakeholders to determine sustainable funding solutions. Requests for additional funding, at this time, will not be approved.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

In the 2015-16 provincial budget, the Government of Alberta continued to zero-fund the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP), which includes both the Local Road Bridge Program and the Resource Road Program. This is the third consecutive year that the STIP has been zero-funded, although it remains a line-item in the budget, which indicates a possible return in the future.

Based on 2014 calculations, it is estimated that it would require \$70 million per year for ten years to eliminate Alberta's bridge infrastructure gap. This number continues to grow as infrastructure ages. AAMDC members are responsible for approximately 75% of Alberta's roads and 60% of Alberta's bridges, meaning that this infrastructure gap is especially critical in rural areas of the province. The AAMDC is understanding of the current fiscal uncertainty in Alberta, but rural road and bridge funding is a necessary investment into the sustainability of Alberta's economy, and we will continue to advocate for adequate funding for Alberta's rural transportation network. The status of this resolution is Unsatisfactory.

Improvement of Highways in Alberta

Northern Sunrise County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Transportation

WHEREAS rural municipalities are the economic drivers of Alberta with their natural resources; and

WHEREAS primary resource extraction activities are putting significant stress on highway road infrastructure in the province; and

WHEREAS highways in Alberta must be improved in order to ensure the safe and efficient movement of natural resources and people;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to improve the condition of highway infrastructure in Alberta.

Government Response

Transportation:

Commercial vehicles that exceed regulated weights are required to obtain an overweight permit. Permit fees are calculated based on overweight and actual over-the-road distance traveled. These fees are, in part, used to offset maintenance costs. Commercial vehicles over six metres high and that travel on the High Load Corridor are subject to a fee used to fund enhancements to the corridor that minimize risks to highway safety. In the past, Alberta Transportation has worked with industry to cost-share improvements to the infrastructure in order to accommodate oversized loads.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

While the AAMDC appreciates Alberta Transportation's efforts to use overweight vehicle permitting fees in part to maintain Alberta's highways, this does not comprise a strategy to improve the condition of highway infrastructure in Alberta, but rather a method of requiring those most responsible for damaging it to contribute a higher proportion of maintenance costs than other Albertans.

Despite the lack of detail in the direct response to the resolution, Alberta Transportation's 2015-16 business plan states that:

the increasing number of larger and wider commercial vehicle loads brings the need to consider the associated impacts on highway network infrastructure and traffic operations. Alberta has a large highway network of more than 31,000 kilometers that is not sustainable in the current context. These challenges will be addressed by engaging in strategic approaches developed through transportation asset management processes.

The AAMDC finds this acknowledgement encouraging and will be closely monitoring Alberta Transportation's efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan for improving Alberta's highway networks. Currently, the status of this resolution is Accepted in Principle, with the potential for this to change based on the implementation of strategic approaches.

Regional Partnership Solution to Municipal/Community Viability

MD of Bonnyville

Carried

Advocacy Target: Municipal Affairs

WHEREAS Alberta is experiencing unprecedented population growth resulting in some municipalities exploring options to expand their municipal boundaries; and

WHEREAS municipalities in various areas of the province are undertaking annexation requests to address this growth and examining amalgamation or the creation of specialized municipalities to acquire a broader tax base; and

WHEREAS amalgamation usually involves a rural municipality and an urban municipality resulting in changes in governance structures, finances, service delivery and municipal identity; and

WHEREAS there is the opportunity to explore how governance structures could facilitate these municipal formation or status changes, with due consideration of how rural areas excluded from these formation changes will be impacted; and

WHEREAS Bill 28 was introduced into the legislature October 28, 2013 to formally clarify the formation and role of growth management boards in Alberta; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC), the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the cities of Calgary and Edmonton were involved in discussions regarding Bill 28 resulting in all parties supporting the *Enabling Regional Growth Boards Act*; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has undertaken a review of the *Municipal Government Act*; which currently allows for voluntary amalgamations, regardless of financial incentive; and

WHEREAS through that legislation, municipalities have the ability to make decisions that best suit their local needs to support municipal and community viability regarding land-use planning, amalgamation, inter-municipal cooperation, and cost-sharing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to retain existing components of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* that enable local decision making in pursuit of inter-municipal cooperation and changes of municipal status, including specialized municipalities and the formation of new municipalities as a result of amalgamation, in any amendments to the MGA; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta require municipalities that are pursuing amalgamation to undertake a study identifying why this is the favoured alternative to address local need or encourage municipal viability; factoring in local governance structures, financial impacts, municipal service delivery and impacts to surrounding areas as part of the amalgamation process;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta retain the *Enabling Regional Growth Boards Act* as the supporting legislation for municipalities interested in the formation of voluntary growth management boards as a means in providing for integrated and strategic planning for future regional growth.

Government Response

Municipal Affairs:

Municipal Affairs is in the process of a comprehensive review of the *Municipal Government Act*. Extensive consultation took place on the Act throughout much of 2014. A significant variety of issues were raised through the consultation process, including suggestions for intermunicipal collaboration and restructuring.

Municipal Affairs is working with key stakeholders and municipal partners, including the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, to review the issues raised through the consultation process, and to identify options for addressing these issues. This resolution will be considered as part of the review process.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The AAMDC continues to be involved in the review of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and is advocating for the position outlined by AAMDC members through this and other resolutions. The recent changes featured in *Bill 20: The Municipal Government Amendment Act*, do make reference to an amalgamation study but do not identify that such a study should focus on ‘why’ an amalgamation is the favoured alternative to address local need or municipal viability. The changes instead specify what an amalgamation report must include, all of which are items of ‘how’ an amalgamated municipality would be structured. As such the recently amended wordings of the MGA require an amalgamation report not to be a study identifying why amalgamation is the favored alternative but, instead, require the amalgamation report to be an implementation or “how to” plan on how to amalgamate if approved.

Via the MGA review process, the AAMDC will continue to advocate for any amalgamation application to require a study identifying why amalgamation is the favored alternative among options available. The revised MGA and associated regulations are expected to come into force in late 2016.

In addition to the MGA review process, the AAMDC has also completed the report *Examining Municipal Government Models from the Alberta Perspective* to inform AAMDC members of municipal government structures and how they would apply in Alberta. The report can be found online at AAMDC.com.

This resolution has a status of Unsatisfactory.

Improvement of High-Speed Internet Services in Rural Alberta

Northern Sunrise County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Service Alberta, Industry Canada

WHEREAS all Albertans should enjoy equal access to high-speed internet services regardless of their geographic location; and

WHEREAS current high-speed internet options in rural Alberta are limited and are cost prohibitive in relation to urban centres; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has made a significant investment in the SuperNet, which is intended to provide the infrastructure necessary for private sector providers to make high-speed internet services available in rural Alberta;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to make the investments necessary to improve high-speed internet services in rural Alberta.

Government Response

Service Alberta:

Currently, Service Alberta and Agriculture and Rural Development are working together, along with representatives from other key ministries, to review the opportunities to improve high-speed internet access in rural Alberta, both from a SuperNet perspective and in support of the Rural Economic Development Action Plan. These teams are working on solutions to address the unique circumstances surrounding rural internet service delivery.

We are aware that while 98 per cent access to basic levels of high-speed internet for Albertans was a beginning, it does not address the growing demands for quality, performance and price equity across the province.

The Government of Alberta will be moving forward with an open and competitive procurement process for a new SuperNet contract that will allow us to evaluate solutions that help address rural internet limitations. In the evaluation, we will include the opportunity to make telecommunications infrastructure in rural Alberta more accessible to rural communities.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada are currently in the process of administering several programs intended to improve high-speed internet service in rural Alberta. As mentioned in the government response, the Government of Alberta will be moving forward with a competitive procurement process for Alberta SuperNet, and are in the process of developing SuperNet 2.0, although the details of what this will comprise are not yet known.

Additionally, in the recently released Rural Economic Development Action Plan (REDAP), Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development has identified the following actions related to rural internet access in support of their strategy to ensure that rural businesses remain competitive. The actions are as follows:

- Identify and reduce constraints to rural Internet speed and capacity.

- Approve additional projects through the Final Mile program to further expand connectivity in rural areas.
- Negotiate a new SuperNet contract upon expiration in 2018 to ensure the appropriate broadband services continue to be available to rural businesses and communities and that the SuperNet can further enhance community broadband infrastructure, with approval from Service Alberta.

Additionally, Industry Canada is currently in the process of reviewing applications from internet service providers for their \$305 million *Connecting Canadians* program. The goal of the program is to provide 98% of Canadian households with internet speeds of at least 5 megabits per second (Mbps). At this point, it is unknown how many projects will be funded in Alberta.

Both the provincial and federal government are actively taking steps to improve rural internet service. However, all of the strategies and programs described above have yet to be completed, and their effectiveness is not yet known. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of Accepted in Principle, and will be revisited as the SuperNet 2.0, the REDAP, and *Connecting Canadians* programs progress.

Fire Department Response to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Calls

Mountain View County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Health, Alberta Health Services

WHEREAS many municipalities provide medical first and co-response in rural areas, and municipal leaders are being held accountable for gaps in service, due to the unavailability of timely Alberta Health Services response; and

WHEREAS in rural Alberta it is difficult for Alberta Health Services to provide the same level of service to all communities; and

WHEREAS a significant amount of responses for small rural fire departments tend to be related to emergency calls that fall under Alberta Health Services' responsibilities; and

WHEREAS Alberta Health Services is requesting, through 911 dispatch, that our fire departments respond to emergency medical calls; and

WHEREAS rural communities feel they have been overlooked in the implementation to centralize all services related to health, even though the current challenges to 911 and first responders still remain the responsibility of municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Health Services (AHS) provide compensation to municipalities when fire departments are dispatched to respond to emergency calls by the Emergency Medical System 911 dispatcher;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that an independent review of Alberta 911 procedures takes place to ensure the 911 system is operating efficiently between police, fire, and emergency medical services.

Government Response

Health:

The Ministry of Health has no plans to recommend a fee-for-service arrangement for medical first response (MFR), as municipalities have a public safety role to develop and maintain safe communities. However, Alberta Health Services (AHS) is implementing a provincial program for MFR that includes a registry and support for MFR agencies, such as protocols, quality assurance, patient care report development and a disposable equipment exchange program. AHS will roll out the MFR program in phases throughout 2015. Municipal involvement in this program is voluntary and a municipality is free to determine the types of calls to which its MFR agency will respond.

With regard to efficient operation of the 911 system between emergency services, the Ministry of Health will continue to support close co-operation between AHS Emergency Medical Services (EMS), municipal councils, staff and fire chiefs to discuss dispatch and communications issues such as linkages between fire, EMS and police during MFR situations, including motor vehicle accidents or other incidents that threaten public safety. Implementation of the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System is expected to bring significant improvement to communications between emergency services.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The government response provides no indication that compensation will be provided to municipalities when fire departments are dispatched to respond to emergency calls by the Emergency Medical System 911 dispatcher. Therefore, this resolution has a status of Unsatisfactory.

The AAMDC will continue to monitor the implementation of the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System (AFFRCS) to ensure it meets the needs of rural communities. The AFFRCS is expected to be fully implemented by June 2016.

Temporary Foreign Workers Program

Brazeau County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Job, Skills, Training and Labour, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada

WHEREAS economic growth and community prosperity relies on the ability of small, medium and large business to access the necessary skilled labour force; and

WHEREAS the unique needs of Alberta's strong economy means that the demand for labour in our communities requires the support of programs like the Temporary Foreign Workers Program; and

WHEREAS the Temporary Foreign Workers Program is only possible because Canada is full of opportunity and is a desirable place to build a better life for foreign workers and their families; and

WHEREAS the goal of the changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program should be to increase accountability, decrease abuse and ensure access to a workforce that Canadian businesses, be they small, medium, or large need; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has introduced changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program on June 20, 2014, that were designed to increase accountability but have also detrimentally affected the ability of employers to access the program; and

WHEREAS changes in the Temporary Foreign Workers Program must align with the goals and objectives of the overall Canadian immigration system ensuring that the investment in training and settlement of temporary foreign workers is leveraged and not lost;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Canadians should have first access to jobs in Canada and the Government of Canada and provincial governments should continue to develop a national labour mobility strategy that encourages and facilitates Canadians to fill jobs;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Province of Alberta to work with the Federal Minister of Employment and Social Development and the Federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to:

- **develop short and long term strategies in relation to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program,**
- **address the unique labour market needs of Alberta's economy, and**
- **explore such strategies including the protection of temporary foreign workers from abuse, exploitation and neglect.**

Government Response

Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour:

The Government of Alberta's priority has been, and always will be, that Canadians are hired first. Temporary foreign workers (TFWs) are not meant to replace Albertans or to fill permanent jobs. Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour is working hard, on behalf of Albertans, to find solutions that meet our permanent labour force needs, including updating the actions in our provincial labour force development strategy and ensuring that we have a coordinated approach to workforce development.

Employers are encouraged to invest in training that will equip their current and future workers with the skills they need to fill available jobs. The Canada-Alberta Job Grant program helps private and non-profit employers by providing funding for new and existing staff to access relevant training.

Interprovincial labour mobility contributes to a substantial portion of Alberta's labour supply for many occupations. Alberta is party to the Agreement on Internal Trade and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, both of which support labour mobility across Canada. The Alberta government continues to support the full implementation of the labour mobility sections of these agreements.

Immigration is part of Alberta's multi-pronged approach to address the challenges the province faces in growing a permanent labour force. The Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program remains a vital tool to help transition qualified foreign workers to Alberta's permanent labour force.

In addition, the federal Express Entry (EE) system focuses on permanent immigration with a greater emphasis on selecting international workers with the skills to complement Albertans and Canadians. The Government of Alberta is working with the federal government to ensure the EE system is responsive to provincial labour market needs.

With respect to the TFW program, the federal government has indicated there will not be any changes to the TFW program reforms announced in June 2014. The Alberta government is working with the federal government to have a program that responds to Alberta's labour market needs and ensures the integrity of the program is not compromised. Recently, Alberta reached an agreement with the Government of Canada on TFWs who are already working and contributing to our economy and have a better chance at permanently calling Alberta home.

The Alberta government's TFW Advisory Offices are available to TFWs, ensuring they are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and to help find solutions to unfair, unsafe or unhealthy working and living conditions. These offices are the first of their kind in Canada. Services are available in 170 languages and publications are available online in 14 languages. In addition, Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour provides funding to immigrant serving agencies throughout the province to deliver support services to TFWs as they adapt to living and working in Alberta.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The AAMDC recognizes the steps taken by the Government of Alberta to improve the TFW program. As the Government of Canada has indicated that there will not be additional changes to the program following June 2014, it is unclear if the strategy developed by the federal government or provincial government will meet Alberta's unique labour market as the permanent residency process can take several years to complete.

Despite this, the AAMDC is encouraged that the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada are pursuing alternative policy and program options to address the needs of Alberta's labour market. In addition the Government of Alberta's response indicates that they agree with the intent of the resolution and have been attempting to work with the federal government to ensure that the TFW program meets the needs of Alberta. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of Accepted in Part, and will continue to be advocated on.

Advocacy Target: Health, Alberta Health Services

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta, through Alberta Health Services, has taken over the responsibility for ensuring that proper provision of ground ambulance services and communication services are used in dispatching ambulances in Alberta; and

WHEREAS inter-facility patient transfers (IFPT) in rural Alberta account for a significant amount of time spent by EMS in a licensed ambulance; and

WHEREAS patients who are deemed to be clinically stable by a licensed clinical practitioner may be considered for a non-ambulance transport; and

WHEREAS the ultimate purpose is to develop a provincial Emergency Medical Service (EMS) system that is patient-centred, coordinated, and ensures the most effective use of available resources; and

WHEREAS the purpose is also to ensure effective coordination in responding to medical emergencies and providing patient transport within Alberta's health system; and

WHEREAS it is not possible to take one service (ambulance) out of a rural community without serious impact to other services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Health Services provides an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system that ensures appropriate coverage and response in all areas of the province;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Alberta Health Services considers non-ambulance transportation (NAT) for clinically stable patients and considers reserving the use of ground ambulances for emergency events.

Government Response

Health:

Alberta Health Services (AHS) currently uses 20 non-ambulance transport vehicles throughout Alberta to transfer medically stable patients between health care facilities for specialist consultations, diagnostics and procedures. When medically appropriate, the Ministry of Health supports the use of such vehicles to allow for greater availability of ambulances for emergency calls.

Interest has been expressed to AHS from the municipal level regarding the status of a pilot project on increased use of non-ambulance transport in the AHS Central Zone. The issuing of a request for expressions of interest and qualifications is pending.

AHS has developed a provincial inter-facility transfer strategy that will include measures to limit the use of Emergency Medical Services staff for non-urgent, inter-facility transfers. Implementation of the strategy, which is pending approval, is expected to allow more resources to be devoted to emergency ambulance calls.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The AAMDC is encouraged by the steps taken to fulfill the intent of this resolution. At the AAMDC spring convention, the Government of Alberta released the *Rural Health Services Review Final Report*, which provides numerous recommendations related to rural health care service delivery, including emergency services. A commitment made by Minister of Health Stephen Mandel was to ensure that ambulances that are transporting patients from a rural area to an urban centre return to their rural base as opposed to being diverted to another call in the urban centre. This, combined with the government response above, provides a satisfactory response to the second request made in the resolution.

However, the first request made in the resolution, that EMS coverage be adequate in all areas of the province, has not yet been achieved and the government response gives no indication of how this will be achieved. Many rural areas struggle with having appropriate EMS coverage in their communities, which compromises safety as well as the ability of rural municipalities to attract and retain businesses and residents.

The AAMDC will continue to monitor all aspects of emergency services in rural Alberta and the recommendations made in the *Rural Health Services Review Final Report*. Until concrete action has been taken to ensure appropriate coverage and response in all areas of the province, this resolution will have a status of Accepted in Part.

Resolution 12-14F

Amend the Waste Control Regulation 192/1996 to Address Classification of Hazardous Wastes in Landfills

County of St. Paul

Carried

Advocacy Target: Environment and Sustainable Resources Development, Municipal Affairs

WHEREAS municipalities are responsible for service provision and land-use planning decisions that consider environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS proximity to landfills across municipalities in Alberta varies considerably; and

WHEREAS many landfills are not within close proximity to deep well disposal facilities that can accept hazardous wastes and very few facilities are equipped to carry out proper disposal; and

WHEREAS the current regulation classifies leachate with toluene in excess of 0.5 mg/L and ammonia in excess of 100mg/L as a hazardous waste; and

WHEREAS many municipal/residential solid waste landfills in Alberta and the rest of Canada generate leachate with toluene and ammonia concentrations in excess of 0.5 mg/L and 100 mg/L, respectively; and

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development received the *Final Report, Updating Alberta's Hazardous Waste Regulatory Framework: A Report Prepared by the Hazardous Waste Technical Committee for the Waste Management Stakeholder Group* (hereafter, the Report) in November 2006; and

WHEREAS the Report's recommendations have not yet been implemented by revision of the *Waste Control Regulation (AR192/1996)* and Table 2 of the *User Guide for Waste Managers*; and

WHEREAS municipal solid waste landfills provide the most economical option for the disposal of non-recyclable, non-hazardous waste and serve to prevent contamination between waste and surrounding environment; and

WHEREAS this resolution would result in decreased disposal or operational costs without increasing environmental risk or liability for those municipalities that elect to be members of waste commissions that are not within close proximity to deep well disposal facilities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to revise the *Waste Control Regulation 192/1996* and *User Guide for Waste Managers* to reflect the recommendations for toluene and ammonia as outlined in the *Final Report, Updating Alberta's Hazardous Waste Regulatory Framework*.

Government Response

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development:

In 2004, the Hazardous Waste Technical Committee was created to review and make recommendations to improve the Waste Management Regulatory Framework in Alberta. The committee issued a report in 2006, which included recommendations about how hazardous waste is characterized. The recommendations included increasing the concentration limits for toluene

and ammonia; however, the recommendations also included parameters of concentrations that would be reduced.

Since the report was issued in 2006, some guidelines have been updated, such as the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment's drinking water standards. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) staff are working to evaluate how these new guidelines may impact the previous recommendations of the committee. No additional regulatory changes are expected for 2015.

Municipal Affairs:

Municipal Affairs has no comment on this resolution, as the *Waste Control Regulation* and the *User Guide for Waste Managers* falls under the jurisdiction of ESRD.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

As the government response does not indicate the changes to the *Waste Control Regulation 192/1996* and *User Guide for Waste Managers*, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC will monitor and follow up on this issue as part of our advocacy efforts.

Resolution 14-14F

Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems

County of Forty Mile & County of Grande Prairie

Carried

Advocacy Target: Municipal Affairs, Treasury Board and Finance

WHEREAS regional library systems exist to ensure Albertans have equitable access to library services and contribute to the well-being of the Province of Alberta; and

WHEREAS Alberta public libraries and regional library systems cooperate with and help implement the Alberta Government's Collaborative Library Policy and Alberta Public Library Network Policy; and

WHEREAS the role of regional library systems has changed due to their new responsibilities as nodes within a provincial network, allowing for more centralized delivery as well as due to the constantly evolving formats of library materials; and

WHEREAS the extra funding allocated to digital resources for public libraries is much appreciated, it does not address the other needs regarding the changing roles and responsibilities of regional library systems; and

WHEREAS public libraries play a vital role in creating strong communities and serve as a dynamic component of the education system and provide a universal and low-cost point of access to information for Albertans of all ages, in all regions of the province, who are pursuing knowledge and information needed for success in education, business and personal projects; and

WHEREAS the funding for public libraries in the provincial budget has stayed approximately \$32,500,000 for six (6) years now, while there has been a 9.47% inflation since 2009 (according to the Bank of Canada inflation calculator); and

WHEREAS funding for public libraries is on a flat provincial budget using out-of-date federal census; and

WHEREAS Alberta has a continuing and increasing influx of residents with 57.1% of Albertans using the public library network; and

WHEREAS municipalities have had to increase funding disproportionately to help libraries achieve their goals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to review its funding formula for public libraries and regional library systems and develop a consistent approach and longer term plan to allow for increased funding that reflects current census information regarding populations in Alberta and multi-year planning, to ensure consistent delivery of library services for all Albertans in all regions.

Government Response

Municipal Affairs:

A number of stakeholders have raised concerns recently about the provincial library operating grant. While the operating grants are currently based on 2010 population due to budget

limitations, Municipal Affairs has increased support to public libraries by investing \$4 million in e-content, interlibrary loan delivery, and resource-sharing each year since 2010.

The ministry will continue to work on developing the public library network to ensure that all Albertans have access to the resources they require through their public libraries.

Treasury Board and Finance:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will continue to work in partnership with our government colleagues and stakeholders to determine sustainable funding solutions. Requests for additional funding, at this time, will not be approved.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The Government response provides no indication that a review of the funding formula for libraries is forthcoming. However, the 2015-16 provincial budget allocated a \$3.5 million increase in library funding over the previous budget year, which according to the Library Association of Alberta, indicates a per capita increase of 10 cents and a funding measure based on 2014, rather than 2010 population figures. Although it is unclear if this funding increase is accompanied by a multi-year plan for the further development of Alberta's public libraries, the AAMDC is encouraged by this increase in funding, and thus deems this resolution as Accepted in Part.

The AAMDC will continue to monitor this resolution to ensure rural municipalities are adequately served by Alberta's public library network.

Advocacy Target: Service Alberta, Alberta One-Call

WHEREAS Telus Communications Inc. is a member of Alberta One-Call; and

WHEREAS as a member of Alberta One-Call certain responsibilities are required in order to notify ground disturbers of potential conflicts which may occur with a planned ground disturbance; and

WHEREAS Alberta's municipal districts and counties frequently undertake construction projects that require pipeline and underground utility location by Alberta One-Call; and

WHEREAS the construction season in Alberta is short and prompt location of underground utilities are essential to have projects started and completed safely, on time and on budget; and

WHEREAS Telus Communications Inc. has frequently not been able to locate their utility in a timely manner after a request to Alberta One-Call has been made;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta and Alberta One-Call to use all means available to ensure Telus Communications Inc. locate its underground utilities within the two day time parameters established by Alberta One-Call.

Government Response

Service Alberta:

Service Alberta is unable to provide assistance to the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties with this resolution. This infrastructure is owned by private companies and, although they are regulated, the regulation is managed by the federal government through its agency, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Further information can be found on the CRTC website at www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/home-accueil.htm, or by contacting the CRTC at 1-877-249-2782.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta's response encouraged further follow-up with the CRTC, Service Alberta, and Alberta One-Call to find a solution to the challenges identified in this resolution. As such, this resolution has been assigned a status of Incomplete Information and will require additional action by the AAMDC.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Funding

County of Grande Prairie

Carried

Advocacy Target: Human Services, Treasury Board and Finance

WHEREAS the purpose of a municipality is to provide good governance, services, facilities or other things that in the opinion of council are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality and to develop and maintain safe and viable communities; and

WHEREAS municipalities provide Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs that are of a preventive nature and enhance the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies; and

WHEREAS over 318 municipalities and Metis settlements participate in the provincial FCSS program; and

WHEREAS in 2010 the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties adopted a resolution calling on the Government of Alberta to provide greater support to FCSS; and

WHEREAS in response to that resolution the Government of Alberta acknowledged the important role that FCSS plays in identifying and addressing preventive social service needs. Saying that prevention and early intervention services are important to building and sustaining healthy families and communities, and FCSS is a key contributor in the continuum of preventive social services at a grassroots level; and

WHEREAS despite this acknowledgement funding was not increased but maintained at \$75.7 million; and

WHEREAS the FCSS Association of Alberta issued a media release dated March 20, 2014 outlining its discouragement and concern about the 2014 Alberta Human Services projected budgets for the next two years and the lack of increases for FCSS programs since 2009 which will result in FCSS funding being flat-lined for eight years; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta's Social Policy Framework identifies proactive and preventive approaches to social issues as being key to building and sustaining a system that improves outcomes for children, families and communities; and

WHEREAS increased funding for preventive, proactive social services are critical to creating a sustainable system for children, youth and families, and no increase in funding will result in reducing or eliminating these necessary services and programs; and

WHEREAS investments in proactive and preventative actions lead to less pressure on crisis management and intervention services related to justice, health care, child intervention, and family violence, which will ultimately reduce the economic and social costs to the Government of Alberta and all Albertans;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to immediately increase provincial funding to municipalities for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) commensurate to the population growth and annual inflation, thereby relieving some of the pressure on crisis intervention and prevention services and ensuring the sustainability of these essential programs;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties work with other partners including, but not limited to Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Calgary FCSS Sustainability Forum to advocate for a fully funded, sustainable provincial FCSS program.

Government Response

Human Services:

Alberta is a rapidly growing province with complex social needs that require easily accessible services and programs to support people in their communities. Through the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program, Albertans have access to a strong network of prevention supports so they can get assistance before there is a need for crisis intervention.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the role that FCSS programs play in supporting our mutual goals of building strong vibrant communities.

Municipalities and Metis Settlements know the priorities of their communities and are in the best position to determine which programs and services receive funding through the FCSS. By having local communities create their own programming, we are confident that the programs reach the people who need them most.

We understand that financial resources are being stretched and difficult decisions are being made locally. The province remains committed to working with its municipal and community partners to deliver services that keep our children healthy and safe, build strong communities and families, and provide better and more accessible services for vulnerable Albertans.

The Alberta government will continue to work together with municipalities to meet the preventive social service needs of Albertans in these challenging economic times.

Treasury Board and Finance:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will continue to work in partnership with our government colleagues and stakeholders to determine sustainable funding solutions. Requests for additional funding, at this time, will not be approved.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

As identified in the government's response, the importance of FCSS to Alberta's communities cannot be understated; however, the Government of Alberta's budget 2015-16 has frozen FCSS funding at the same level as the previous two years (\$76 million) despite rapid population growth and an increased need for the services provided. The freeze in funding shifts the burden to municipalities to ensure services are provided at an appropriate level. This resolution has a status of Unsatisfactory.

Mileage Signage Markers Along Provincial Highways

MD of Lesser Slave River

Carried as Amended

Advocacy Target: Transportation

WHEREAS travelers in emergency situations have great difficulty expressing where emergency scenes are located along provincial highways; and

WHEREAS the extra time and effort to locate accident scenes affects response and the ability to save lives or relieve suffering at an accident scene; and

WHEREAS previously, some municipalities have placed highway kilometer markers only to have them removed by Alberta Transportation, as they no longer meet Alberta Transportation's standard, leaving the public with no means to identify where they are located; and

WHEREAS the placement of signage to ensure safety of the traveling public is the responsibility of Alberta Transportation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate that the Government of Alberta be held accountable for placing highway kilometer markers at regular intervals along provincial highways that are under the Government of Alberta's management, control and responsibility, on highways that pass through vast tracts of Crown lands where there are no township road and range road signs, so that Albertans and visitors can have a means to identify where they are during emergency situations.

Government Response

Transportation:

As mentioned in the resolution, Alberta Transportation has a process in place for these markers. Municipalities can apply for a permit and install these markers at their cost. However, with the advancement in Global Positioning System and other location technologies, the usefulness of these markers has waned.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The intent of the resolution is to have Alberta Transportation be responsible for placing highway kilometer markers on provincial highways. While there is a process currently in place that allows municipalities to provide kilometer markers that meet provincial standards at their own expense, this creates an inconsistent patchwork of markers, and essentially places the responsibility for maximizing the safety of provincial highways onto municipalities.

Additionally, while the advancement of GPS and other location technologies may make these markers unnecessary in some cases, many older vehicles are not equipped with GPS systems, making the kilometer markers important, particularly in life-threatening situations.

This resolution has a status of Unsatisfactory.

Sustaining Schools in Rural Communities

Saddle Hills County

Carried

Advocacy Target: Education, Treasury Board and Finance

WHEREAS rural schools are a necessity in order to maintain and develop rural communities; and

WHEREAS rural Alberta is a strong contributor to the economic success of Alberta and requires adequate services, including schools, in place to promote rural sustainability; and

WHEREAS rural communities need services that will aid in attracting and retaining younger populations to encourage continued viability of rural communities; and

WHEREAS the closure of rural schools will have negative effects on the rural communities as well as cause significant travel time for students; and

WHEREAS the rural transportation funding formula is not adequate for rural schools to fully recover student transportation costs (SECTION 1.20 - Rural Transportation Funding Formula-Funding Formula for School Authorities); and

WHEREAS the school board transportation deficits decrease the amount of funding designated for basic education; and

WHEREAS schools should receive adequate funding in order to prevent the need for students to be placed in multi-grading (triple or quadruple) classrooms; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the severe effects triple or quadruple grading has on children's education; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta's Rural Development Strategy indicated that they strive to ensure that people in rural Alberta have access to quality public services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to amend the school funding formulas, policies, and regulations to ensure the continued equitable operation and predictable sustainable funding of Alberta's existing rural schools; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties continue to lobby the Government of Alberta in order to improve the provincial funding formulas to reflect the needs of rural schools;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that without rural schools the sustainability of rural communities is at risk.

Government Response

Education:

Alberta Education is committed to helping rural school boards deliver programs in their communities. The ministry's funding framework specifically recognizes that rural school boards face unique challenges beyond their control, such as declining enrolments, operating small schools and transporting students over long distances.

The Government of Alberta values the province's small and rural communities. Each child in Alberta is entitled to an education that prepares him or her to be a citizen who actively participates

in a global economy. Alberta Education is committed to helping school boards achieve this standard and recognizes the importance of equitable access to education regardless of location.

We know that keeping schools open in sparsely populated rural areas is difficult, so additional funding is provided through various grants within the funding framework. Currently, there are a number of allocations available to support rural and/or small schools. These include Small Schools by Necessity funding (\$59 million in Budget 2014), Equity of Opportunity funding (density allocation and distance allocation – \$112 million) and rural transportation funding. In 2013/2014, rural transportation funding per funded student was \$1,487, compared to \$717 per urban funded student. As well, some provincial initiatives, such as Regional Collaborative Service Delivery and SuperNet Service funding, directly support rural schools.

Rural school boards are currently in a healthy financial position, as evidenced by their overall high accumulated surplus from operations. However, there is no doubt that the trend of urbanization in Alberta is creating challenges for some of our small and rural jurisdictions. Alberta Education continues to recognize the value and importance of supporting our rural communities.

Treasury Board and Finance:

Alberta Treasury Board and Finance will continue to work in partnership with our government colleagues and stakeholders to determine sustainable funding solutions. Requests for additional funding, at this time, will not be approved.

AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up

The Government response provides no indication that the Small Schools By Necessity Grant formula will be revisited. This resolution has a status of Unsatisfactory.

The provincial budget 2015-16 sees a 10% reduction in the Small Schools By Necessity Grant from \$59 million in the 2014-15 budget to \$53 million in the 2015-16 budget. It is unclear whether this reduction is a result of changes to the formula that excluded metro students from receiving the funding in the 2013-14 budget but the AAMDC will monitor to determine whether this reduction in funding is having an adverse impact on rural students and communities.

SECTION 2: Advocacy Report Card

The following table is a summary of the AAMDC's current resolutions excluding the resolutions adopted in Fall 2014 and detailed in Section 1. Recent developments on the resolutions are detailed below in the corresponding categories, and readers are reminded that although resolution statuses may remain unchanged, work on each resolution is ongoing. Each resolution has a three year lifespan to reflect the nature of shifting government policy development and timelines associated with legislative changes and implementation.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

| CATEGORY | # | RESOLUTION TITLE | STATUS |
|--------------------|--------|---|------------------------------|
| AGRICULTURE | 3-14S | Wildlife Damage Compensation Program | Incomplete Information |
| | 1-13S | Short Term Solid Manure Storage | Unsatisfactory |
| | 3-12F | Recycling Agriculture Plastics | Unsatisfactory |
| | 5-12F | Alberta Rat Control Program | Accepted |
| COMMUNITY SERVICES | 9-13F | Summer Temporary Employment Program | Unsatisfactory |
| | 17-13F | Creation of a Provincial Combative Sport Commission | Unsatisfactory |
| EDUCATION | | <i>No Active Resolutions</i> | |
| EMERGENCY SERVICES | 25-12F | 911 Pocket Dials | Awaiting Government Response |
| ENERGY | 7-13F | Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) of Transloader Facilities (a.k.a. "Pipeline on Rails") | Unsatisfactory |
| | 9-12F | Provincial Single Energy Regulator Accountability for Quality of Air and Water | Accepted |
| | 17-12F | Alberta Transmission System Facilities Planning Process | Accepted in Principle |
| | 21-12F | Sustaining Alberta's Energy Value Chain | Incomplete Information |
| ENVIRONMENT | 4-14S | Species at Risk Act (SARA) | Unsatisfactory |

| CATEGORY | # | RESOLUTION TITLE | STATUS |
|---|----------|---|------------------------|
| | 15-13F | Provincial Funding of Locally Administered Air Shed Monitoring | Incomplete Information |
| HEALTH | 7-14S | Amend the Legislation to Provide for Placement of Automatic External Defibrillators in Public Facilities Including Schools | Unsatisfactory |
| | 7-12F | Physician Licensing & Privileges | Accepted in Principle |
| | 13-12F | Recruitment of Registered Nurses | Accepted |
| | 26-12F | Access to Health Care and Economic Development | Accepted in Principle |
| | | | |
| INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES | 8-14S | Timber Salvage on Recreational Areas | Unsatisfactory |
| | 3-13F | Got Gravel? Strategies to Secure Gravel for Rural Municipalities | Accepted |
| | 2-13S | Natural Resource Exploration | Unsatisfactory |
| | 10-12F | Community Aggregate Payment and Levy Rate | Unsatisfactory |
| | 12-12F | Insurance Coverage for Wildland Fire Fighting Costs | Unsatisfactory |
| | 15-12F | Municipal Rights to Gravel Resources Under Municipal Road Allowances | Unsatisfactory |
| MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE | 10-14S | Proposed Amendments to the Determination of Population Regulation to Provide Greater Flexibility for the Counting of Shadow Population | Unsatisfactory |
| | 4-13F | Amend the Municipal Government Act to Provide Protection from Liability for Municipal Maintenance to the Physical Edge of Provincial Highways | Unsatisfactory |
| | 13-13F | Provincial Grazing Leases Municipal Tax Recovery | Unsatisfactory |
| | ER1-13F | Suspend Bill 28 Pending Further Municipal Consultation Through the MGA Review | Accepted |

| CATEGORY | # | RESOLUTION TITLE | STATUS |
|--|----------|---|-----------------------|
| | 3-13S | Assessment of Part and Component Replacement for Linear Property | Unsatisfactory |
| | 1-12F | Maintaining Policies on Assessing Agricultural and Linear Infrastructure | Accepted in Principle |
| | 4-12F | Local Authorities Pension Plan | Unsatisfactory |
| | 6-12F | Creation of a New Property Assessment Class | Unsatisfactory |
| PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT | 1-14S | Privatization of the Alberta Land Titles Registry System | Accepted |
| | 11-12F | Sustainable Resource Development Appeals | Unsatisfactory |
| | 22-12F | Obligation to Consult | Accepted in Principle |
| | 28-12F | Non-Contiguous Additions to Reserve Lands | Unsatisfactory |
| SENIORS | 23-12F | Quality of Food Served in Rural Continuing Care Centre | Accepted in Principle |
| TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 2-14S | Increasing Railway Capacity for Grain Shipments | Accepted in Principle |
| | 1-13F | Basic Infrastructure Funding as a Result of Dissolution | Accepted in Principle |
| | 2-13F | Reinstating Funding for Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities | Unsatisfactory |
| | 8-13F | Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program | Unsatisfactory |
| | 11-13F | Marking of Meteorological and Telecommunication Towers | Unsatisfactory |
| | 4-13S | Local Road Bridge Program | Unsatisfactory |
| | 5-13S | Including Rail in Alberta's 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan | Accepted |
| | 2-12F | Advocacy in Support of a New Long-Term Federal Plan for Municipal Infrastructure Funding. | Unsatisfactory |

| CATEGORY | # | RESOLUTION TITLE | STATUS |
|-----------------|----------|---|-----------------------|
| WATER | 5-14S | Water/Wastewater Infrastructure Funding | Unsatisfactory |
| | 12-13F | Regional Governance of Municipal Water Systems | Accepted in Principle |
| | 14-13F | Use of Reclaimed Water in Private Systems | Unsatisfactory |
| | ER1-13S | Funding of Approved Water for Life Projects Based on Actual Costs | Unsatisfactory |
| | 16-12F | Wetland Restoration Program | Accepted in Principle |

AGRICULTURE

3-14S: Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that all relevant Government of Alberta ministries review the current staffing situation, program administration, budgets, and funding source of the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program to ensure its effectiveness; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal District and Counties request that all relevant Government of Alberta ministries implement a monitoring and assessment program to ensure that predators, inclusive of wolves, bears, and cougars, are dealt with proactively.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the government responses provided an explanation as to how the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program currently operates, there is no indication that the program and associated budgets and staffing levels will be reviewed in the future. The response from ESRD mentions that the program was reviewed recently, but does not provide detail as to the review's findings or if they led to changes in funding or operations of the program. The government response does not address the resolution's request for a strengthened government predator monitoring program, nor has there been increases to wildlife management in the 2015-16 provincial budget. As such, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

1-13S: Short Term Solid Manure Storage

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties bring forward to the *Agriculture Operations Practices Act (AOPA)* Policy Advisory Group the review of short term solid manure storage as it pertains to setback distances from residences as it does not include places of public gatherings or roadways.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government response indicates that Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development is uncertain if a review of the *Standards Administration Regulation* under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA)* will take place at this time. The AAMDC did raise this issue at the January 2014 AOPA Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting, but at this point it is unclear whether or not the PAG will move forward in presenting this issue as a concern to Alberta Agriculture or Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. This resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory until progress has been made addressing this issue.

3-12F: Recycling Agriculture Plastics

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Provincial Government to develop recycle programs for the agriculture industry for the recycling of agricultural plastics.

DEVELOPMENTS: The ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) and Environment and Sustainable Resource (ESRD) scoped the issue of waste management

in rural Alberta through a survey process that sampled agricultural producers and municipal waste authorities. The AAMDC met with the Minister of ARD in early 2013 who noted there is a lack in regional facilities which creates a challenge associated with high costs of hauling agriculture plastics long distances for recycling purposes.

The AAMDC and ARD engaged with CleanFARMS through their development of an Alberta Agricultural Waste Characterization Study, which was released in August 2013. While the study inventories and quantifies the plastic waste generated on Alberta farms, it does not directly address the need for or possibility of recycling programs to address this waste. Though the government is making strides to better understand the challenges associated with recycling agricultural plastics, there has not been any efforts to establish a provincial recycling program for all agricultural plastics products to date. As such, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory and will continue to be monitored.

5-12F: Alberta Rat Control Program

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Province of Alberta to continue adequate funding to ensure the effectiveness of the Provincial Rat Control Program.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has continued to maintain funding for the Provincial Rat Control Program over the past three budget cycles. In addition, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's 2015-16 Ministry Business Plan includes the creation and promotion of systems that improve compliance and better protect against the spread of diseases and pests as a priority initiative. The AAMDC has assigned this resolution a status of Accepted as the intent of this resolution has been met.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

9-13F: Summer Temporary Employment Program

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reintroduce the STEP grants or a similar wage support program for the non-profit and volunteer sector in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: Though the Government of Alberta acknowledges that the suspension of the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) has impacted the non-profit, volunteer and youth employment sectors, no funding was reinstated for this program in the 2014 or 2015 budget. As such, the AAMDC has assigned this resolution a status of Unsatisfactory and will continue to monitor budgets and advocate on this issue moving forward.

17-13F: Creation of a Provincial Combative Sport Commission

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the provincial government to create a provincial commission to sanction combative sports events throughout the Province of Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: As the provincial government response provides no indication that this resolution will be met, the resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory. This resolution was also carried at the AUMA's 2013 Convention and advocacy efforts have continued by both associations to address the intent outlined. Developments will be reported when they become available.

EDUCATION

No Active Resolutions

EMERGENCY SERVICES

25-12F: 911 Pocket Dials

Status: Awaiting Government Response

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal District and Counties request that Industry Canada and the Canadian Radio-Telecommunications Commission immediately address the sale of all mobile handsets that support single button access to 9-1-1 emergency services and that a requirement for future handsets sold in Canada include a minimum two button push with a call confirmation or acknowledgement for access to 9-1-1 emergency services.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC is awaiting a response from the federal government regarding this resolution.

ENERGY

7-13F: Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) of Transloader Facilities (a.k.a. “Pipeline on Rails”)

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to consult on a priority basis with industry and municipalities to establish an appropriate set of regulatory requirements for “Pipeline on Rails” and that the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) be designated as the appropriate body to implement these regulations..

DEVELOPMENTS: While the AAMDC appreciates that Alberta Transportation, Alberta Energy, the Alberta Energy Regulator, and Transport Canada are collaborating to better define regulatory responsibility for transloader facilities, the fact that such facilities will continue to be regulated by multiple organizations and by both federal and provincial authorities causes concern that regulation and enforcement provisions may be applied inconsistently both across and within facilities. Although the Alberta Energy Regulator has been willing to provide information to municipalities about how transloader facilities are regulated, there has been little progress on clarifying the regulatory process and filling regulatory gaps. As such, the government response to this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory until a clearer, streamlined regulatory process is implemented based on consultation with municipalities.

9-12F: Provincial Single Energy Regulator Accountability for Quality of Air and Water

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Province of Alberta to clearly define who is the responsible agency for monitoring and enforcing the quality of air and water when creating the Provincial Single Energy Regulator.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government’s response explains the establishment of the new Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) with the *Responsible Energy Development Act* receiving royal assent. The AER works with air and water quality standards set by the Government of Alberta and monitors energy resource activity, and enforces compliance with applicable legislation such as the *Environment Protection And Enhancement Act*, the *Water Act* and the *Public Lands Act*. In clarifying the role of the new regulator, the request of this resolution has been met and as such, the AAMDC has assigned this resolutions the status of Accepted.

Despite the status of this resolution, the AAMDC is concerned about the confusion surrounding the regulation of transloader facilities and will be monitoring the work of the provincial and federal government to clarify regulatory responsibility of those sites.

17-12F: Alberta Transmission System Facilities Planning Process

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties work with the provincial government to direct the Alberta Utilities Commission in conjunction with the Alberta Electric System Operator to seek a formal municipal response to ensure that municipal plans are taken into account early in the planning process.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC is encouraged to see the government conduct a review of the transmission development process. As the process will examine all points of contact with municipalities, the AAMDC deems this resolution to be Accepted in Principle. While there is no mention of a formal response from municipalities, the review intends to involve municipalities earlier in the planning and siting of transmission lines. The AAMDC will be re-contacting Alberta Energy about the progress being made in reviewing the transmission development process to ensure that it is improving the process for municipal participation.

21-12F: Sustaining Alberta's Energy Value Chain

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Alberta government to re-affirm its commitment to expand the energy value chain consistent with the Alberta Energy Strategy, Launching Alberta's Energy Future; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta government advocate for the concept of value creation from natural resources in Canada into any proposed Canadian energy policy framework; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta government work with industry to address the potential constraint of labour shortages and cost competitiveness that might inhibit major value added projects and economic prosperity for its citizens.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government response explains the important impact of various value-added ventures that are present within Alberta. While these are significant, it does not fully address the resolution. The first point is well addressed in the response and the government's commitment to the Energy Strategy and expanding the energy value chain is apparent. However there was no commitment expressed that the Government of Alberta would advocate for 'value creation' to be a part of any Canadian energy policy framework, nor was there any comment on how the government intends to address potential labour shortages. As such, the AAMDC gives this resolution the status of Incomplete Information and will follow up with the Ministry for clarification.

ENVIRONMENT

4-14S: Species at Risk Act

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Government of Alberta lobby the federal government to repeal the current Species at Risk Act and rebuild it in a way that better respects the socio-economic reality, seeking a balanced approach (economic, environmental, social).

DEVELOPMENTS: The response received from Environment Canada outlined the Ministry's recovery strategy and supporting action planning process for endangered and threatened species under SARA. The action planning stage includes evaluating the social and economic costs and benefits of actions and the integration of provincial management plans. Though this process works towards the request of this resolution, a recovery strategy is not a regulatory document and as such, it lacks enforcement. Based on this information, the AAMDC assigns this resolution a status of Unsatisfactory and will continue to assess Environment Canada's process to seek a balanced approach to enforcement and implementation related to the *Species at Risk Act*.

15-13F: Provincial Funding of Locally Administered Air Shed Monitoring

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to:

- Continue to financially support the locally autonomous and self-directed air shed monitoring organizations that already exist in Alberta.
- Acknowledge and affirm that the current system of local stakeholders providing air quality monitoring is working well and does not require major change.
- Commit to providing additional funding going forward to cover 100% of any incremental costs that the Province may attempt to download upon these local groups should the Province mandate additional air quality testing, reporting, or procedural or reporting changes in the future.

DEVELOPMENTS: The intent of this resolution is to maintain local autonomy in air shed monitoring across the province. While the Joint Canada-Alberta Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring has provided funding to some local organizations for continued air shed monitoring, the government response and 2015-16 budget does not provide any further indication to the direction of future funding and governance of air shed monitoring. The AAMDC deems this resolution Incomplete Information because further information and clarity is required to determine whether local autonomy will be preserved in air shed monitoring. The AAMDC will continue to be a representative on the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) Board of Directors and be involved in related initiatives. The association will continue to advocate on the intent outlined in this resolution.

HEALTH

7-14S: Amend Provincial Legislation to Provide for Placement of Automated External Defibrillators in Public Facilities Including Schools

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend the Alberta Safety Code to recommend the installation of Automated External Defibrillators in public facilities and schools.

DEVELOPMENTS: Although the Government of Alberta supports the voluntary use of AEDs in workplaces, the response indicates that there is no willingness to require the mandatory installation of AEDs in public facilities or schools, either through the Alberta Safety Code or other regulatory or legislative means. As such, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

7-12F: Physician Licensing & Privileges

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the provincial government to increase its efforts in recruiting physicians to rural Alberta, especially Canadian trained physicians; work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta to shorten the assessment period; and/or allow assessments to occur in the recruiting community; and ensure that Alberta Health Services review and streamline its assessment process for granting privileges.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC Accepts in Principle the government's response. However, the Association has failed to receive a response from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and has followed up with the College.

The Rural Health Services Review Final Report outlines several recommendations related to doctor recruitment and retention that align with the intent of this resolution. The AAMDC will follow up and monitor the recommendations from the report.

13-12F: Recruitment of Registered Nurses

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the provincial government to work with the College Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta to accept satisfactory document reviews completed by other provinces and to license foreign trained nurses when they successfully complete the Canadian Registered Nurse Examination.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the AAMDC currently waits for a response from the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta on this issue, the response from the government leads the AAMDC to deem this resolution as Accepted. The government's response shows that this resolution flagged a potential issue in that these practices may be considered a contravention to the Agreement on Internal Trade. The AAMDC will follow up with the province to determine what results from the work of Alberta Health and Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education to resolve this issue.

The Rural Health Services Review Final Report outlines several recommendations related to the health professional recruitment and retention that align with the intent of this resolution. The AAMDC will follow up and monitor the recommendations from the report.

26-12F: Access to Health Care and Economic Development

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to acknowledge that a lack of accessibility in rural Alberta to many basic health services has enormous negative financial implications above and beyond the human and health costs and that enormous financial hardships caused by this lack of health care services be considered when establishing appropriate medical services for rural communities.

DEVELOPMENTS: The *Rural Health Services Review Final Report* released in the Spring of 2015 acknowledges the economic impact of healthcare in rural communities and has two specific recommendations for the government:

- Acknowledge that health care services and facilities have a vital impact on rural communities and that cost analysis of rural health care delivery must include value to the region and not be restricted to cost-per patient.
- Mandate that all decisions made to significantly alter services or facilities undergo a comprehensive community consultation process. This process is to include full assessment of the economic and social impact on the community as well as an estimate of expenses borne by residents forced to travel elsewhere to access services.

The AAMDC will monitor the recommendations of the Rural Health Services Review Final Report for implementation and has assigned this resolution a status of Accepted in Principle.

INDUSTRY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

8-14S: Timber Salvage Fees on Recreational Areas

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to change its policy by waiving the timber damage assessment fees on the expansion or new construction of public recreational areas if development is designed to limit the impact on the natural landscape.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government response does not indicate a willingness to waive timber damage assessment fees (TDA) for the expansion or construction of municipal campgrounds or recreational areas under any circumstances. According to the Government of Alberta, TDAs serve to prevent municipalities from over-damaging forested areas in the process of expanding or constructing campgrounds or recreational areas. The assumption that municipalities would have no incentives to design these expansions in an environmentally-friendly way without TDAs is problematic, and does not reflect the stewardship role that many municipalities play in protecting and conserving their local natural environments. As such, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

3-13F: Got Gravel? Strategies to Secure Gravel for Rural Municipalities

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that members of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties endorse the recommendations outlined in the paper entitled *Got Gravel? Strategies to Secure Gravel for Rural Municipalities* and the supporting Technical Report.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC membership endorsed the recommendations outlined in *Got Gravel?*, which met the intent of this resolution. As such, it has been assigned a status of Accepted and the AAMDC has incorporated the recommendations outlined in the report into current advocacy efforts. The AAMDC has been involved, along with other stakeholders, in a review of the existing sand and gravel program to identify what could be clarified to streamline the process from application to reclamation. Recommendations from *Got Gravel?* will continue to be advocated on in future meetings with the Government of Alberta.

2-13S: Natural Resources Exploration

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Province of Alberta to:

1. Take all necessary steps to ensure natural resource exploration does not pose a threat to our environment; and
2. Require industry report, prior to the commencement of natural resource exploration an evaluation of the geologic conditions and pre and post monitoring for seismic activity; and
3. Require the mapping of all aquifers prior to any natural resource exploration; and
4. Protect surface and groundwater supply by imposing a minimum wellbore casing depth below aquifer zones.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government's response summarizes a number of policies already in place to support clauses 1 and 4 of the resolution. The response also notes the work being done related to mapping of groundwater (clause 3); however, this long-term project is still underway as the province currently focuses on high development areas.

In February 2015, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) released new seismic and monitoring requirements for hydraulic fracturing operators in Fox Creek which mandates that operators must monitor for seismic activity within five kilometers of their wells if hydraulic fracturing operations are being conducted. In addition, operators must have a response plan in place to address potential events and must follow a process with staged action thresholds.

The AER monitors seismic activity across Alberta using the Regional Alberta Observatory for Earthquakes Studies Network and networks operated by Natural Resources Canada, the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology and the University of Western Ontario. Data collected from these stations are also used to document natural and induced earthquakes which are compiled into a comprehensive earthquake catalogue, or seismic database for Alberta. The Alberta Geological Survey (AGS) website offers general seismic activity and the Alberta Earthquake Studies Project. The Government of Alberta, through the AER and AGS, is working with various public and private sector research organizations towards furthering understanding of the linkages between resource development and induced seismicity.

Overall, the AAMDC deems this resolution to be Unsatisfactory. While the government has initiated the Alberta Earthquake Studies Project, it still serves as an educational study, not a mandatory function of industry.

10-12F: Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Province of Alberta to review the maximum levy under a community aggregate payment levy bylaw of sand and gravel; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Province of Alberta to institute a regular 5-year review and revision of the maximum community aggregate payment levy provision under Alberta Regulation 263/2005.

DEVELOPMENTS: To aid municipalities with rising costs for infrastructure maintenance, this resolution calls for the regular review of the aggregate payment levy rate under the Alberta Regulation 263/2005. The Government of Alberta requested input into the review of the *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Amendment Regulation* in early 2015 prior to its expiration later this year. To inform the AAMDC's formal submission, all related resolutions were reviewed and members were provided an opportunity to provide input. The AAMDC submitted a response to this consultation identifying the request in this resolution and will monitor developments resulting from the consultation. Until formal announcements are made indicating the intent to regularly review the community aggregate payment levy, this resolution holds a status of Unsatisfactory.

12-12F: Insurance Coverage for Wildland Fire Fighting Costs

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Finance Minister, Government of Alberta to change the regulations to address the following matters:

- a) Setting provincial standards for minimal coverage for fire loss policies including expenses and fees for fire fighting,
- b) Expanding the Forest & Prairie Protection Endorsement definition to cover all expenses incurred, per occurrence, regardless of which authority level attends the fire, and
- c) Removing the limitation of coverage with the term “negligent” being used within the liability section of policies in relation to the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act*.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC understands that this change in regulations would entail significant stakeholder engagement as is expressed in the response from the Government of Alberta. Though the government’s response identifies parties that would be involved in this engagement process, no intent to proceed with that engagement is indicated. This resolution has been assigned the status of Unsatisfactory and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue through future meetings with the Ministers of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and Treasury Board and Finance.

15-12F: Municipal Rights to Gravel Resources Under Municipal Road Allowances

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend Section 58 of the *Law of Property Act* to allow municipalities the first right at no cost to gravel resources on or under municipal road allowances for the purpose of municipal road maintenance and construction even though the land ownership of all public roads and road right of ways is vested in the Crown in the Right of Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: Multiple ministries express understanding of the challenges municipalities face in obtaining sand and gravel resources in the response from Government. However, the Ministries of Transportation and Service Alberta both indicate amending the *Law of Property Act* is not a course of action they are willing to recommend. Though the AAMDC is pleased that Alberta Transportation indicated interest in revising policy procedures to consult with municipalities when a private gravel company requests aggregate resource under a municipal road allowance, it does not address the issue identified in this resolution.

To gain a better understanding of the aggregate allocation process in Alberta, the AAMDC released its report, *Got Gravel? Strategies to Secure Gravel for Rural Municipalities* in November 2013. The report and supporting technical report encourages greater involvement of municipalities in the allocation process and an analysis of the aggregate resources in the province. The report has been shared with AAMDC members and members of the public at large.

As there is no current indication that the *Law of Property Act* will be amended, the status of this resolution will remain Unsatisfactory.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

10-14S: Proposed Amendments to the Determination of Population Regulation to Provide Greater Flexibility for the Counting of Shadow Population

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that the Government of Alberta amend the Determination of Population Regulation to allow municipalities to use a shadow population count date outside of the current restriction of April 1 to June 30; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend the Determination of Population Regulation to allow municipalities to count all shadow population residents living within their municipality that otherwise qualify, regardless of whether or not they work within that municipality.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government response does not support expanding the municipal census window beyond the current April 1 to June 30 window except by special permission of the Minister. It also does not discuss the possibility of allowing for individuals that live in one municipality and work in another to be counted towards the shadow population of the municipality in which they reside. This restriction results in an inability for the municipality that provides this resident with services to conduct an accurate population measure, which may negatively impact their ability to access population-based grants. As such, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

4-13F: Amend the Municipal Government Act to Provide Protection from Liability for Municipal Maintenance to the Physical Edge of Provincial Highways Assessment of Part and Component Replacement for Linear Property

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Province of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act*, immediately, to provide protection to rural municipalities from any and all liability associated with road maintenance, carried out by municipalities, within the provincial right of way leading up to the physical edge of provincial highways.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the option of entering into a Highway Maintenance Agreement with Alberta Transportation may be a short-term solution for some municipalities, a legislative solution that automatically protects municipalities from liability related to maintenance in provincial highway rights-of-way is necessary. As such, the government response to this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC continues to advocate on this issue through our engagement in the MGA Review Process.

10-13F: Provincial Grazing Leases Municipal Tax Recovery

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Province of Alberta create or improve existing policy for Provincial Grazing Leases to ensure unpaid municipal taxes are paid in full by the Province to the municipality in which they are owed if left unpaid by the lessee.

DEVELOPMENTS: The provincial government response highlights the difficulty faced by municipalities in tax collection on public lands leased from the province by grazing leaseholders when such taxes are not paid in full. As there is no expressed intent by the Government of Alberta to create or improve policy as requested in this resolution, the AAMDC has assigned this resolution an Unsatisfactory status and will continue to advocate throughout the MGA review process and other future opportunities.

ER1-13F: Suspend Bill 28 Pending Further Municipal Consultation Through the MGA Review

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta suspend any further legislative actions regarding Bill 28 (Growth Management Boards) until there is further consultation on the Growth Management Board concept

DEVELOPMENTS: Following the advocacy efforts of the AAMDC, the provincial government opened Bill 28 to further consultation and a revised Bill 28 was released in November 2013. The revisions include wording explicitly stating that the establishment of Growth Management Boards would be voluntary. The AAMDC prides itself on having an effective working relationship with the government and we appreciate the Minister's willingness to hear our concerns and come to a satisfactory resolution. As such, this resolution is deemed Accepted. The AAMDC will continue to monitor and engage on this and other issues concerning municipal autonomy.

3-13S: Assessment of Part and Component Replacement for Linear Property

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties hereby formally requests that the Government of Alberta amends Section 292 of the *Municipal Government Act* to add "part and component replacements of linear property during the life of the linear assessment constitutes a change in specifications and characteristics; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Construction Cost Reporting Guide for linear assessment be amended by the Province of Alberta to indicate that the Guide applies not just to construction when linear property is first built, but it also applies to construction projects during the life of the facility.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the Government of Alberta has noted this issue will be part of the MGA review, there is no indication of its favorability toward making the amendment suggested. Therefore, the AAMDC finds this response Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC continues to advocate on this issue through our engagement in the MGA Review Process.

1-12F: Maintaining Policies on Assessing Agricultural and Linear Infrastructure

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties encourage the Provincial Government to maintain policies on assessing Agricultural Lands and collecting and distributing Linear Infrastructure be maintained; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advises both the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Province regarding the importance of maintaining the current approaches.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government's response notes its commitment to consideration of all stakeholders when it reviews the *Municipal Government Act*. The AAMDC will monitor the outcomes of the MGA review to ensure this resolution is met. In the meantime, the AAMDC deems this response to be Accepted in Principle.

4-12F: Local Authorities Pension Plan

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to acknowledge that a substantial portion of the LAPP's unfunded liability is a direct consequence of the Government of Alberta actions; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urges the Government of Alberta to provide financial assistance to LAPP equivalently generous to that which was given to the Alberta Teachers Pension Plan in 2008;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should in the future the Government of Alberta choose to increase the health care sector wages, an appropriate sum should also be allocated to LAPP to prevent the cost of health care worker pension costs being transferred to Alberta municipalities.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government's response provides no indication of support for immediate action to address the current unfunded liability of LAPP. The government notes that responsibility lies with the LAPP Board of Trustees and that the government will work with the Board and other stakeholders to find a long term solution.

In the winter of 2015, the Government of Alberta detailed plans to reform LAPP including a plan to shift the governance structure and remove the LAPP from statute. The AAMDC is expected to participate in upcoming discussions on the future of LAPP in the spring and summer of 2015 and will report to members when appropriate.

6-12F: Creation of a New Property Assessment Class

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the provincial government to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to:

- authorize municipalities to assign a new assessment class to be levied on rural small business properties; or
- expedite the creation of a regulation which would enable municipalities to create sub-classes within the rural non-residential tax category; or
- create a special category to deal specifically with small businesses; or
- create additional/unique urban service areas around hamlets within municipalities or any other legislation that would allow a different property assessment class or sub-class for small businesses in the rural areas of a municipality.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government's response indicates that the introduction of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative would have addressed revenue issues for municipalities;

however, this does not address the resolution's intent of diversifying tax equity to different business classes. As such, the AAMDC deems this response to be Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC continues to advocate on this issue through our engagement in the MGA Review Process.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1-14S: Privatization of the Alberta Land Titles Registry System

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to retain the Alberta Land Titles Registry System status quo or as a public system as a statutory non-profit corporation.

DEVELOPMENTS: Service Alberta has clarified, both in their response to this resolution and through a discussion between the Minister of Service Alberta and the AAMDC Board of Directors, that the privatization of the province's land title registry system is not being considered.

The Premier of Alberta's mandate letter to the Minister of Service Alberta included direction to "modernize and improve the delivery of land titles and registry services with an emphasis on improving Albertans' access and the range and quality of service they receive at an affordable cost, including a governance and financial model that sustains a dynamic network of registry agents in Alberta." In discussions with the AAMDC, the Minister emphasized that this mandate would not be achieved through privatization or by closing small rural registry offices, but rather through investigating ways to make rural registries more effective and sustainable. As such, this resolution is deemed to be Accepted.

11-12F: Sustainable Resource Development Appeals

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta to establish a swift, easily accessed, citizen friendly and low cost appeals and modification mechanism that allows for impartial 3rd party adjudication, review and modification of Sustainable Resource Development directives, and that Alberta municipalities be granted input into and ultimately representation upon, these newly established adjudicating tribunals.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government's response highlights the existing appeal boards related to Environment and Sustainable Resource Development that are currently established to address appeals related to the environment, public land and surface rights. The establishment of the Property Rights Advocate is a positive effort made by the Government of Alberta to provide information and assist in property rights issues; however, this resolution calls for the establishment of a new appeals system that is inclusive of municipal representation. As such, this resolution has been assigned a status of Unsatisfactory and the AAMDC will continue to follow-up on this issue.

22-12F: Obligation to Consult

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties calls upon the Government of Alberta and/or Government of Canada to establish a legislative framework to define this "Obligation to Consult" and that this legislative framework must address the following matters:

- Establishes terms and conditions respecting who must be consulted with, and under what circumstances, and to provide for a mechanism for the swift disposal of unsubstantiated, frivolous and nuisance claims;
- Provides cost and time certainty to the process;
- Ensures a process that provides equal and fair access to employment and project tendering for all Albertans; and
- Provides for speedy and swift binding arbitration if the parties cannot agree upon the outcome of these “consultations”.

DEVELOPMENTS: In July 2014, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs released *The Government of Alberta’s Guidelines on Consultation with First Nations on Land and Natural Resource Management*. The *Guidelines* outline the process for consultation and include consultation triggers, the various stages of consultation and processing timelines. The development of this policy initiated the creation of the Aboriginal Consultation Office (ACO) which opened in November 2013. The goal of the ACO is to centralize and standardize consultation to the benefit of all parties including industry, governments and First Nations. Funding for the ACO decreased slightly in the 2015-16 budget but remains a priority for the Government of Alberta in providing a coordinated approach to consultation. The AAMDC deems the resolution to be Accepted in Principle due to the advances the government has made to provide tools regarding the obligation to consult and will monitor the implementation.

28-12F: Non-Contiguous Additions to Reserve Lands

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Province of Alberta to not allow parcels of land which are not contiguous with existing First Nations reserve lands to become reserve lands.

DEVELOPMENTS: Although the resolution specifically addresses the provincial government, the creation of reserves falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. The provincial government does not have the legal authority to satisfy this resolution.

Federal policy recommends that consultation take place with the province and affected municipalities. However, while there is some indication that the federal government is reluctant to proceed with reserve creation in the absence of an agreement, the federal government continues to have the legal authority to create reserve lands without municipal or provincial consent. Consequently, the AAMDC assigns an Unsatisfactory status to this resolution and will continue to advocate on this issue with both the federal and provincial governments.

SENIORS

23-12F: Quality of Food Served in Rural Continuing Care Centre

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Province of Alberta to allow for the return to previous food services and practices in rural continuing care homes through the provision of in-house prepared meals for our senior residents.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC Accepts in Principle the government's response to this resolution. While the government did not implement changes that revert back to previous food services, they have instituted the Closer to Home Action Plan that takes food quality, on-site preparation and resident satisfaction into account. With the community approach in developing these changes, the government has made significant improvements toward the intent of this resolution and it is assigned the status of Accepted in Principle.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2-14S: Increasing Rail Capacity for Grain Shipments

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to enact a short-term and long-term strategy to increase railway capacity for grain shipments

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta's response reflects a commitment to working with the federal government to improve the capacity and reliability of rail service for the agricultural sector. As mentioned, the federal government's *Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act* presented an effective short-term solution to the 2013 grain backlog, mainly by imposing temporary grain hauling quotas and penalties for non-compliance upon Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways. The AAMDC also appreciates the Government of Alberta's willingness to work with industry and other western provinces to address supply chain issues.

Although the AAMDC did not receive a direct response from the Government of Canada to this point, the outcome of the review of the *Canada Transportation Act* will have a significant impact on the development of a long-term federal strategy for the efficient movement of grain by rail. In the discussion paper used to guide stakeholder input into the *Canada Transportation Act* review, the movement of grain by rail is identified as a major issue that the review and revised Act will address. Based on the willingness of the Government of Canada to rapidly implement a short-term strategy to address the 2013 backlog in grain movement, as well as both the provincial and federal government's willingness to develop a long-term strategy, the AAMDC deems this resolution to be Accepted in Principle, pending the outcomes of the *Canada Transportation Act* review.

In March 2015, the Government of Canada announced that they would not renew minimum grain quotas for the 2015 harvesting season because grain is now moving adequately through the supply chain and the new grain crop is of average size. As quotas were a short-term solution, the AAMDC is hopeful that the federal government will more directly address this supply chain challenge in the revised *Canada Transportation Act*.

1-13F: Basic Infrastructure Funding as a Result of Dissolution

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge Alberta Municipal Affairs to include and cover the costs of a Final Audited Financial Statement and also an Engineering Study to determine the status of water and wastewater infrastructure, which is basic necessity of life, as part of the new Viability Study under the Dissolution Process and in order that a budget be formulated for the receiving municipality; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that any effective date for a dissolution of an urban municipality into a receiving municipality be January 1 of the coming year following the Order in Council; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties initiate dialogue with Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development to ensure that a funding model is implemented to cover the repair or replacement of water and wastewater infrastructure, which is a basic necessity of

life, as identified in the Engineering Study, for receiving municipalities as a result of the dissolution process.

DEVELOPMENTS: Announced in the Budget 2014 was the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) program which replaced the Regional Collaboration Program (RCP), and is designed to improve the long-term viability of municipalities by providing support for regional collaboration. Included in the ACP is additional funding for Viability Review Support which includes funding towards an infrastructure audit for a municipality undergoing a viability review, a transitional stream to address immediate resource needs resulting from restructuring, and an infrastructure stream for the receiving municipality or amalgamated municipality, after infrastructure and debt servicing needs are known and prioritized following restructuring. The new ACP meets the intent of the resolution and receives a status of Accepted in Principle. The AAMDC will continue to monitor the implementation of the ACP, with a specific focus on its impact on water and wastewater infrastructure.

The AAMDC will monitor funding amounts provided under the ACP to ensure that the needs of absorbing municipalities are being met.

2-13F: Reinstating Funding for Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the Resource Road Program and the Local Road Bridge Program in the 2014 provincial budget.

DEVELOPMENTS: As the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP), which includes the Local Road Bridge Program and the Resource Road Program, was again zero-funded in the 2015-16 budget, the government response to this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC continuously advocates for the return of this funding in all meetings with provincial MLAs, and will continue advocating until it is returned.

8-13F: Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to restore funding to the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program in the 2014 budget.

DEVELOPMENTS: As the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP), which includes the Local Road Bridge Program and the Resource Road Program, was again zero-funded in the 2015-16 budget, the government response to this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory. The AAMDC continuously advocates for the return of this funding in all meetings with provincial MLAs, and will continue advocating until it is returned.

11-13F: Marking Of Meteorological And Telecommunication Towers

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties consult with the Government of Alberta to request the Minister of Industry Canada to amend

the *Telecommunications Act* to require the marking of radio communication and telecommunications towers with marking lights, aeronautical paint and balls on the guyed wires in rural areas.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC is still awaiting a response on this issue from Industry Canada. The AAMDC plans to follow up with industry Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and Alberta Transportation on this issue in the near future.

4-13S: Local Road Bridge Program

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to ensure a second round of consultation is held after hearing data from the Committee by going to the region for a vote.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC deems the government response to be Unsatisfactory. Since this resolution was passed in spring 2013, the Local Road Bridge Program became zero-funded in the 2013-14 provincial budget and continued to be zero-funded in the 2015-16 budget. This directly shifts the entire financial burden of bridge maintenance and replacement to municipalities. Support through government funding and reduced bureaucratic process while maintaining needed safety is critical. The AAMDC was pleased to have collaborated with Alberta Transportation on a committee that has produced local road bridge design guidelines and standard design drawings for local road bridges. These guidelines and drawings will assist rural municipalities in constructing low-cost bridges. The AAMDC will monitor the entire bridge issue holistically going forward.

5-13S: Including Rail in Alberta's 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties work with the Government of Alberta to include rail infrastructure in its 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan for the province and that the Government of Alberta seek opportunities for private-public partnerships (P3s) for additional rail infrastructure in the province.

DEVELOPMENTS: The AAMDC accepts this response from the Government of Alberta noting that railways fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government and private industry. The AAMDC is involved in a number of rail-based initiatives through FCM including proximity and crossing issues as well as safety. Rail will also form a key aspect of the Government of Alberta's 50-Year Transportation Strategy.

2-12F: Advocacy in Support of a New Long-Term Federal Plan for Municipal Infrastructure Funding

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC endorses the FCM campaign and urges the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to work with FCM to ensure the new long-term infrastructure plan meets the core infrastructure needs of municipalities and is fully in place when existing programs expire in 2014.

DEVELOPMENTS: In the 2013 federal budget, the government announced plans for new infrastructure funding such as permanently implementing the Gas Tax Fund with the

introduction of a 2% annual indexation. The AAMDC understands that the federal government did consult with FCM on its new long-term infrastructure plan but the government has not supported all of FCM's requests.

Additionally, in February 2014, the Government of Canada released some information on the new Building Canada Fund (BCF). It included \$10 billion over 10 years in a Provincial/Territorial Component, \$1 billion of which forms the Small Communities Fund reserved for municipalities with populations of less than 100,000.

The Government of Canada proclaimed the new BCF to be "open for business" on March 28, 2014 and directed Alberta municipalities to contact Alberta Infrastructure for application details. Alberta Infrastructure indicated that they were surprised by this announcement, as no progress had been made with the federal government in setting eligibility criteria or application processes. Further, Alberta Infrastructure indicated that it would be unlikely that the Provincial/Territorial Component of the new BCF would be ready in time for the 2014 construction season.

The Gas Tax Fund was made available to municipalities in early 2015, while the Small Communities Fund portion of the BCF, which is administered by Alberta Municipal Affairs, began accepting applications in March 2015, significantly later than hoped. As the resolution requests that the new plan be fully in place in 2014, this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

WATER

5-14S: Water/Wastewater Infrastructure Funding

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to provide funding for municipal water/wastewater infrastructure projects through the department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development so that the agency responsible for regulating water/wastewater codes and practices also administers funding for water/wastewater infrastructure.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's preference to separate funding and regulatory functions across ministries, this system creates administrative challenges for municipalities, as municipal officials responsible for water/wastewater infrastructure must work with officials from two completely different ministries on various water/wastewater-related issues. Additionally, the need to separate funding and regulation responsibilities does not apply to other types of infrastructure such as municipal roads and bridges, in which Alberta Transportation is responsible for both funding, monitoring, and regulatory functions. As such, the response to this resolution is deemed Unsatisfactory.

12-13F: Regional Governance of Municipal Water Systems

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties oppose any forced regionalization of management control over municipally owned water utilities.

DEVELOPMENTS: Stemming from the *Water Conversations* held in 2013, the Government of Alberta released *Our Water, Our Future: A Plan for Action* in fall 2014. An item identified in the Action Plan includes the Government of Alberta working with municipalities to identify opportunities for enhancing the sustainability of municipal water systems, which includes helping municipalities identify and implement possible solutions to address regional challenges. As this is not intended to be a mandated move to forced regionalization for management control over municipally owned utilities, the AAMDC deems this resolution to be Accepted in Principle and will continue to monitor developments.

14-13F: Use of Reclaimed Water in Private Systems

Status: Unsatisfactory

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Province of Alberta to further develop legislation to accept the use of reclaimed water through the Alberta Building and Plumbing Codes for private systems, and that processes be developed that maintenance, monitoring, reporting and operation responsibilities flow from the owner of such a private system directly to the Province.

DEVELOPMENTS: In fall 2014, the Government of Alberta released *Our Water, Our Future: A Plan for Action*, which identified action items resulting from the *Water Conversations* engagement in 2013. This includes supporting research and geographically distinct case studies in Alberta that will identify opportunities for flexibility

in regulations to accommodate water re-use to meet regional needs. Although the AAMDC is encouraged that the Government of Alberta is moving forward on exploring this possibility, there is no indication that legislative changes will be made to address the request outlined in this resolution focusing on private systems. As such, the AAMDC deems this resolution Unsatisfactory and will continue to monitor this issue.

16-12F: Wetland Restoration Program

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Provincial Government to amend the Wetland Restoration Program to enable municipalities through qualified professionals to undertake Wetland Restoration projects; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Provincial Government to amend the Wetland Restoration Program requirements to allow the funding to be utilized for wetland restoration or other municipally acceptable uses, within the municipality from which the funding is collected.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta released the *Alberta Wetlands Policy* in September 2013 which intends to facilitate an informed approach to wetland management. The policy also addresses wetland mitigation and identifies a three stage approach towards the achievement of wetland management goals. The government will be taking a phased approach to policy implementation in the coming years.

In April 2013, the County of Vermillion River entered a five year agreement with Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development for the county to become a Wetland Restoration Agency. This gave the municipality the ability to collect compensation funds for restoration work. The municipality must use those funds to replace lost wetlands within its borders. It is unclear what, if any, amendments to the Wetland Restoration Program were required but this agreement appears to address the resolution.

The AAMDC finds this resolution to be Accepted in Principle. The AAMDC will continue to monitor the implementation of the new *Alberta Wetland Policy* as it aligns to this resolution, and assess the future possibilities of wetland restoration agreements with Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and the AAMDC membership.

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The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties wishes to thank the Board of Directors members who provided content, input, and advice to this report card:

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