

# AAMDC Advocacy Report Card

Spring 2017



Prepared by the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

March 2017

## **AAMDC Advocacy Report Card: Spring 2017**

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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 spring 2016 resolutions and includes the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) Board of Directors' reaction to the response as well as anticipated follow up.

**Section 2** updates members by reporting on all active resolutions, grouped by advocacy area.

## Definition of Terms

Following the adoption of resolutions at AAMDC conventions, resolutions are sent 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 whether the government response meets the intent of the resolution. The status is not intended to reflect the AAMDC's advocacy efforts on a resolution.

Below are the descriptions of all resolution ranking statuses.

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Accepted	Meets the AAMDC criteria as outlined in a) the resolution and b) as per the expectations of the Board of Directors.
Accepted in Principle	The development addresses that action is being taken to meet the intent of the resolution, but further action is required.
Accepted in Part	Some resolutions include multiple 'asks' in the operative clause. This status indicates that one of the 'asks' has been met while others require further action.
Intent Not Met	The intent of the resolution has not been met as outlined in the resolution or the current developments do not meet the approval of the Board of Directors.
Incomplete Information	The AAMDC has not received enough information to assign a status. Further follow-up is required for the AAMDC to make an informed decision on how to proceed.

# SECTION 1: Government Responses to Fall 2016 Resolutions

The AAMDC recently received the Government of Alberta responses to the resolutions adopted at the fall 2016 convention. The following table provides an overview of the initial assessment to resolutions following the Government of Alberta's response. **The AAMDC emphasizes that this table only reflects the initial response received from the Government of Alberta and that advocacy efforts on all resolutions are in progress.**

## REACTIONS AT A GLANCE

#	RESOLUTION NAME	STATUS
1-16F	Alberta Environment Approvals for Construction Projects	Accepted in Principle
2-16F	Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy	Intent Not Met
3-16F	Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment	Intent Not Met
4-16F	Centralized Industrial Assessment	Intent Not Met
5-16F	Continued Operation of Coal-fired Power Generation Plants	Intent Not Met
6-16F	Carbon Levy Exemption on Natural Gas and Propane Used for Agricultural Operations	Intent Not Met
7-16F	Vegetation Management on Alberta Provincial Highways	Accepted in Part
8-16F	Resolution Process – Frequency of Similar or Duplicate Resolutions	Accepted in Principle
10-16F	Funding Model for Sand and Aggregate Pit Reclamation	Intent Not Met
11-16F	Stakeholder Participation in the Future of the Alberta SuperNet	Intent Not Met
12-16F	Wildland Fire Fighting Costs	Intent Not Met
13-16F	Northern Gateway Pipelines Support	Intent Not Met
14-16F	Conservation and Reclamation of Class 1 Gravel Pits	Accepted in Principle
15-16F	Species at Risk and the Need for an Overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment	Intent Not Met

16-16F	Support for Continuation of Crude Oil Tanker Activity Along the Northern Coast of British Columbia	Intent Not Met
17-16F	Capital Region Board Mandate Expansion	Incomplete Information
18-16F	Provincial Responsibility for Fire Costs on Occupied Public Lands	Intent Not Met
19-16F	Support for Multi-Stakeholder Task Force to Explore Value-Added Oil and Gas Opportunities	Accepted in Principle
20-16F	Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations	Accepted in Principle
22-16F	Security of Canada Post Community and Super Mailboxes	Accepted in Principle
23-16F	List of Municipal Electors	Accepted in Principle
ER1-16F	Save Vegreville's Case Processing Centre	Intent Not Met

**Alberta Environment and Parks Approvals for Construction Projects**

Red Deer County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Transportation**

WHEREAS approvals from Alberta Environment and Parks for construction projects, including road construction and road maintenance have been delayed, in some instances presenting safety concerns; and

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta have attempted to work together with Alberta Environment and Parks to draft a Code of Practice to provide municipalities the ability to operate independently while adhering to requirements to allow construction and road maintenance work within road right of ways; and

WHEREAS timely approvals are essential to the effective functioning of municipal governments and the completion of necessary work;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that consideration be given to safety concerns related to delayed environmental approval processing and supports the creation of a process for municipalities to receive timely approvals from Alberta Environment and Parks with regard to construction projects.**

**Government Response**

Environment and Parks: Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) acknowledges and appreciates challenges faced by the province's municipalities in their pursuit of road construction, expansion, and maintenance projects within a constrained construction season.

Some of the delays/additional rigor that municipalities are seeing on their regulatory applications for road construction across wetland are related to process updates implemented under the Alberta Wetland Policy. Challenges being experienced are a reflection of the learning process as applicants, wetland assessors, and regulatory approval writers are familiarizing themselves with enhanced process requirements relating to wetland assessments and standardized regulatory submissions/forms.

Given the fairly standard nature of these activities, known challenges and limitations of municipal applicants, and the broader significance of these projects to Albertans, AEP is currently working to develop an updated regulatory process for road works impacting wetlands in the province. The solution(s) ultimately put forth will respect provincial legislation and regulation, while ensuring that the spirit and intent of the Alberta Wetland Policy continues to be met.

At the same time, municipal needs and limitations will be acknowledged, such that works can proceed in an efficient, timely, and appropriately informed manner.

Alberta Transportation: Alberta Transportation has no comments beyond those provided by AEP.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response acknowledges the challenges that municipalities are facing in receiving timely approvals of works related to wetlands. The AAMDC is encouraged that Alberta Environment and Parks has identified this as a problem and is in the process of developing an updated regulatory process for road works impacting wetlands which will balance provincial and municipal needs regarding regulatory compliance and timeliness. The AAMDC assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will follow up with the Government of Alberta to monitor progress on the development of the revised regulatory process.



**Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy**

Leduc County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* (the “Act”) of Alberta received Royal Assent June 13, 2016; and

WHEREAS the purpose of the Act is to implement a carbon levy (“tax”) on consumers of fuel throughout the fuel supply chain effective January 1, 2017; and

WHEREAS most fuel consumers, including municipalities, will be required to pay the carbon levy, unless an exemption is granted under regulation; and

WHEREAS Alberta municipalities provide vital services to their communities and have limited revenue streams to provide these services; and

WHEREAS the carbon levy would significantly increase costs to Alberta municipalities both directly and indirectly which would require municipalities to increase property taxes, reduce services or increase user fees (or some combination of these); and

WHEREAS Section 79(1) of the Act allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to pass a regulation exempting a consumer or group of consumers from the carbon levy;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to exempt all municipalities in Alberta from the carbon levy.**

**Government Response**

Environment and Parks (Climate Change Office): The Government of Alberta (GOA) does not intend to provide carbon levy exemptions for municipalities.

Alberta’s carbon levy will help Alberta do its part to combat climate change, strengthen and diversify our economy, and create new, diverse, good paying jobs in our communities. Alberta is a province full of innovators and entrepreneurs and Albertans will find ways to reduce emissions and grow the economy.

Alberta’s Climate Leadership Plan sets aside over \$2 billion in green infrastructure funding over five years that will be invested in Alberta communities.

\$7 million in carbon revenues have already been made available specifically to help municipalities improve building energy efficiency and solar energy through the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre.

The GOA is also taking steps to ensure that municipalities have access to even more energy efficiency programming with the creation of Energy Efficiency Alberta. This will support the good work of many municipalities who are already taking steps to be more efficient and lower their emissions. It will also help municipalities lower their overall utility costs.

In their report released in January 2017, the energy efficiency panel recommended that government work closely with municipalities to build on existing municipal initiatives.

The GOA recognizes the vital importance of municipal services provided by members of Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, and will continue to evaluate opportunities to partner with municipalities on relevant, mutually beneficial initiatives.

#### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates that municipalities will not be provided an exemption from the carbon levy. Although the AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's willingness to collaborate with municipalities to ensure that programs provided through Energy Efficiency Alberta and other bodies provide benefits to municipalities, there is still a concern that imposing the levy on municipalities will force an increase in municipal taxes and fees to maintain levels of service. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment**

MD of Taber

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS on May 31, 2016 the Government of Alberta tabled before the Legislature of the Province of Alberta Bill 21: *Modernized Municipal Government Act*; and

WHEREAS the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* creates a Centralized Industrial Property Authority under the newly created position of Provincial Assessor; and

WHEREAS the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* indicates that the Provincial Assessor will be responsible for the assessment of ‘designated industrial property’ as yet to be defined in the regulations; and

WHEREAS the 2018 property taxation will be based on the 2017 property assessment which begins January 1, 2017 – in just 100 days; and

WHEREAS neither the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* nor any regulations pertaining to the Act have been proclaimed into law with respect to the Centralized Industrial Property Authority or the Provincial Assessor and no clear process has been established to transition the authority currently held by Alberta municipalities to the province; and

WHEREAS numerous procedural, policy and legal questions arise from the proposed legislation that remain unanswered by the Government of Alberta;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to delay or repeal the establishment of the Centralized Industrial Property Authority and the creation of the Provincial Assessor until such time as the appropriate studies, pilot projects, and consultation with all effected property owners has been completed and analyzed so the effectiveness of such a policy may be fully understood;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to consult with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Assessors Association in order to answer the numerous procedural, policy and legal questions which arise from the decision to create the Centralized Industrial Property Authority under the newly created position of Provincial Assessor.**

**Government Response**

Municipal Affairs: The *Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA)* received first reading on May 31, 2016, and was introduced to provide Albertans the opportunity to review the changes, ask questions, and provide their feedback on our proposed amendments.

To ensure that Albertans had their chance to provide feedback, Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA) held 21 engagement sessions in 20 locations across the province. Municipal and industry stakeholders have indicated the complex nature of industrial sites creates provincewide challenges in consistently applying definitions, determining who assesses which portions of the property, and identifying the appropriate appeal body. During focused consultations for the

*Municipal Government Act* in 2014, municipal and industry stakeholders agreed that assessment of property on designated industrial sites should be prepared by a central body.

Under the *MMGA*, designated industrial property (DIP) will be defined as major plants, properties regulated by provincial and federal regulators, linear property, and rail property. The assessment of all DIP will be centralized within MA, which has resulted in municipalities requesting further information about the transition of responsibility for DIP assessments. It is understood that these requests will become increasingly urgent as municipalities face important decisions for the upcoming year on their internal assessment staff resources and contracting arrangements. MA staff will share as much information as possible about this process as soon as it becomes available.

Regarding the transition of responsibility for the assessment of DIP, MA staff will collaborate with municipalities and assessors with expertise in DIP property assessment to plan this transition. More information about this process will be shared as soon as possible.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to delay or repeal the process of transitioning to centralized assessment for designated industrial property. The response indicates that the Government of Alberta received sufficient feedback in favor of the move to centralized assessment during previous MGA consultation opportunities to warrant the decisions being final. The AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's willingness to share as much information as possible with municipalities related to procedural changes, but this does not address the intent of the resolution. With this in mind, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

**Centralized Industrial Assessment**

Northern Sunrise County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS Bill 21: *Modernized Municipal Government Act* proposes the creation of a centralized industrial property assessment authority within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs; and

WHEREAS the creation of this centralized industrial property assessment authority will create a lack of government transparency, credibility, and accountability to municipal governments and provincial residents; and

WHEREAS this authority will not provide the required checks and balances required to provide fair and equitable assessment for municipalities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to leave the responsibility of industrial assessment with municipal governments and to provide local assessors with updated manuals and regulations required to perform the services they currently provide to municipalities for industrial assessment.**

**Government Response**

Municipal Affairs: Through the *Municipal Government Act* Review process, municipal and industry stakeholders indicated that designated industrial property (DIP) assessment should be prepared by a central body. Alberta Municipal Affairs acknowledges that making the assessment of DIP a provincial responsibility is a significant change. Ministry staff will, therefore share as much information as possible about this transition as soon as it becomes available.

**AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to leave the assessment of industrial property as the responsibility of municipal assessors. The AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's willingness to share as much information as possible with municipalities related to procedural changes associated with centralization, but this does not address the intent of the resolution. With this in mind, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

**Continued Operation of Coal-fired Power Generation Plants**

Parkland County & MD of Greenview

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Energy**

WHEREAS in November 2015, the Government of Alberta announced the Climate Leadership Plan and the goal for zero emissions from coal-fired electricity generation by 2030; and

WHEREAS the phasing out of all coal fired power generating plants included in Alberta's climate change strategy will have a significant impact on all municipalities, particularly rural communities adjacent to the power plants; and

WHEREAS coal mines and the power generating plants employ a significant number of people and support many local businesses – the loss of those facilities will be detrimental to the sustainability of the rural communities; and

WHEREAS coal has traditionally been Alberta's low-cost source of electricity; and

WHEREAS alternate methods of utilizing coal to produce electricity with reduced emissions are being used in other provinces and countries at this time; and

WHEREAS Alberta will need an injection of at least \$16 billion invested in new electrical generation as the province phases out coal power in the coming years; and

WHEREAS Alberta businesses and the quality of life for its citizens afforded by the production of low cost coal-fired electricity generation will be adversely impacted through higher electricity costs;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has not offered the option to the coal and power generation industries to research methods for reducing the emissions caused by these coal fired plants, and

WHEREAS over the next 20 years, global demand for thermal coal is expected to double; and

WHEREAS coal is a valuable and abundant natural resource in Alberta and the Government of Alberta should be supportive of exploring alternate uses or methods of refining this resource and supporting the implementation of enhanced technologies in the use of coal-fired power generation;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests the Government of Alberta to allow the continued operation of coal fired power generation plants while encouraging the coal industry and the electricity producers to explore alternate methods of utilizing coal for power generation and alternate uses for coal.**

**Government Response**

Environment and Parks (Climate Change Office): The Government of Alberta (GOA) is committed to phasing out emissions from coal-fired generators by 2030 to protect the environment and the health of Albertans. Coal-fired generators that can be engineered to release zero emissions through carbon capture and storage will be able to continue after 2030.

The federal government also requires all coal units in Canada to install carbon capture and storage beyond 2030.

Alberta worked with the federal government to enable coal units to convert to natural gas where it is economic to do so and operate for an additional 15 years. This would not have been allowed under previously proposed federal natural gas regulations. By compensating the companies for their investments in units that would have run beyond 2030, companies will be able to continue to reinvest in Alberta and have the option to transition existing coal plants to natural gas. This will allow these companies to keep investing in our communities and in our workers.

By legislating a 30 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, investors from around the world will have the certainty to bring long-term investments in new energy infrastructure projects in our communities. We expect this 30 per cent target to bring in over \$10 billion in private capital and create at least 7200 jobs.

Rural communities will stand to benefit from the renewable energy build. The Canadian Wind Energy Association estimates that 5000 MW of wind will bring \$1.4 billion in new property tax revenue to communities in rural Alberta. By way of example, TransAlta's Summerview wind project in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek produces 136.2 MW of electricity, provides the municipality with \$1.2 million in tax revenue, and injects \$5.8 million annually into the local economy.

The GOA appointed an Advisory Panel on Coal Communities to engage with stakeholders affected by the closing of coal-fired generation plants and associated mining operations. This includes those in and around Parkland and Leduc counties, the Village of Forestburg and the Town of Hanna. The panel is expected to report back to government early in 2017 with recommendations and options for supporting community transition. More information can be found online at [www.alberta.ca/coal-communities.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/coal-communities.aspx).

The GOA committed to assist coal communities in the transition to a cleaner economy.

Energy: On November 24, 2016, the Government of Alberta (GOA) announced that it reached agreements with Capital Power, TransAlta, and ATCO Power to end coal-fired emissions on or before December 31, 2030. In late November, the federal government also proposed regulations which will require all coal-fired generation units to meet a stringent emissions standard by 2030; it is unlikely that any coal-fired generation unit could meet this standard without installing carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology.

The coal transition payments provided under the agreements with companies provide Alberta with inexpensive emissions reductions. Cumulatively, Alberta will avoid net 175 megatonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, assuming replacement with natural gas-fired units, and avoid 95 cumulative years of continued air pollution. The coal transition payments are estimated to cost less than \$10 a tonne of GHG emissions eliminated, approximately one-tenth the cost to retrofit the units with CCS technology. The payments will be fully funded by Alberta's price on industrial carbon emissions, not by consumer electricity rates.

Again, the transition payments are far more cost-effective for reducing GHG emissions than the public subsidies necessary to deploy so-called clean coal technologies, as has been seen in other jurisdictions, as well as in Alberta. In fact, Alberta committed considerable public

resources to the development of CCS for two different proposed coal facilities, but both projects were cancelled. One, Project Pioneer, to apply CCS to Keephills 3 coal-fired power generation unit, was selected to receive \$436 million in funding from the GOA. Along with an additional \$343 million from the federal government, this \$779 million in public funding for one coal-fired unit would have covered over half of the estimated capital cost of the project at that time. Nevertheless, the project was cancelled in 2012 as uneconomic.

The GOA recognizes that coal and products produced from coal use have non-energy uses and research is underway globally on potential uses. As the government does not know what the future may hold in regards to technology and research development, the government has not precluded any potential future uses of these resources.

It is important to recognize that the existing schedule for retirement of coal units under federal regulations, the province was already slated to see electricity prices increasingly set by natural gas-fired generation. By the early 2030s, given the functioning of Alberta's electricity market, natural gas was expected to set the market price for electric energy the vast majority of the time, under existing federal policy. Moreover, because of the use of output-based allocations, the new carbon levy on electricity generation that is under development for implementation in 2018 will have lower compliance costs for high-efficiency natural gas generation than the existing *Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER)*.

Related to the cancellation of power purchase arrangements (PPAs), the resolution indicates that the increased cost of carbon caused their return to the Balancing Pool. It is important for your members to understand that the return of the PPAs to the Balancing Pool was virtually guaranteed when sustained low electricity prices rendered the PPAs uneconomic.

The Change in Law provisions of the PPAs were written so broad that any of a number of legislative or regulatory changes – including the original *SGER* instituted in 2007 or any of a number of occupational health and safety requirements that add costs to the coal plant operations – might have been attempted as the excuse for the PPA returns. The GOA is happy to report that after standing up for consumers to prevent them from shouldering the burden of these PPAs alone, we are now securing positive settlements to the PPA disputes that dramatically reduce the liabilities. We did not create this serious problem. But we have taken the necessary actions to resolve it in the best interest of Albertans.

Related to investment interest in Alberta's power generation, the GOA has heard very strong interest from investors in our newly announced capacity market design for Alberta's electricity system. The system we inherited – the energy-only market – was not working for consumers or investors, because of the price volatility and uncertainty in the market. Expert advice assembled by the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) made it clear that investors were reluctant to invest in any new generation in energy-only markets. The announced transition to a capacity market is the result of recommendations from the AESO and we have heard resounding approval for new investment in generation to meet our future supply needs.

The GOA appointed the Advisory Panel on Coal Communities to engage with communities which rely on coal-fired electricity generation and coal mining. The panel will provide recommendations on how to address the economic challenges and opportunities, including impacts to workers. Starting in early 2017, the panel will engage municipalities, First Nations, community economic development organizations, small businesses and workers in impacted communities to better understand the challenges and opportunities they are facing so that next steps are responsive to concerns and align with community priorities.



It is important to recall that federal GHG regulations on coal plants have been in place since 2012. They will begin to force coal-fired power unit closures at the end of this decade and through the next. We are working with municipalities, community economic development organizations, small businesses, workers, and First Nations to ensure that workers, communities and affected companies are supported and treated fairly during the transition from coal-fired electricity generation. Although the transition schedule was set four years ago to begin in 2020, this hard but crucial work was ignored and neglected by previous provincial and federal governments.

With our leadership on climate action, the GOA has secured a crucial concession from the federal government that will allow these plants – in these communities – to continue to operate after conversion to gas.

Combined with the transition payments summarized above to enable reinvestment in electricity generation in Alberta, this creates the potential for the coal plant owners to convert and run these facilities beyond their current federal end-of-life dates and even beyond 2030 to as late as 2045, potentially maintaining both employment and municipal tax revenue in the communities.

This would not have been possible under the existing federal regulations on coal-fired power and natural gas-fired electricity generation regulations that the federal government had been proposing.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The response from the Government of Alberta indicates that the transition away from coal fired power generation will continue forward as outlined in the Alberta Climate Leadership Plan. Though electricity generating companies are exploring the opportunity to convert existing coal fired units to natural gas, the extent to which this occurs is unclear and ultimately up to the electricity generating companies to decide. Even if this does occur, it is unclear how this will impact those communities that currently rely on coal fired electricity generation for employment and the tax base. Although the phase out of these facilities will continue over the next 12 years and impact will not be fully known until after that time, the Government of Alberta's response does not satisfy the intent of the resolution and therefore, it has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**Carbon Levy Exemption on Natural Gas and Propane Used for Agricultural Operations**

County of St. Paul

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

WHEREAS the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* states that recipients shall pay a carbon levy on natural gas and propane; and

WHEREAS when implemented elsewhere (notably in Europe), carbon taxes have often been accompanied with exemptions for certain sectors to shield them from the full impact of the tax; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has recognized the importance of the agricultural industry in the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* by providing an exemption for marked fuel used for farming operations; and

WHEREAS a significant number of agricultural producers are engaged in intensive animal husbandry, greenhouses, grain-drying and other intensive agricultural operations that require other fuels such as natural gas and propane to be used for heating purposes; and

WHEREAS increased costs posed by a carbon levy on natural gas and propane will add significant operational costs to many operators in the agricultural industry;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* to exempt farming operations from the carbon levy on natural gas and propane.**

**Government Response**

Environment and Parks (Climate Change Office): The Government of Alberta (GOA) has provided exemptions for marked gasoline and diesel used by farmers in farming operations. There are no exemptions for natural gas or propane.

In October 2016, the GOA announced a \$10 million expansion of efficiency grants to help energy-intensive farmer operations reduce their emissions and save on their energy bills. Energy Efficiency Alberta will also co-ordinate education and incentives regarding energy-efficiency and community-energy systems. A Greenhouse Growers' Rebate took effect on January 1, 2017. This allows greenhouse owners to recoup up to 80 per cent of the carbon levy, bringing them in line with similar programs in other jurisdictions such as, British Columbia.

In addition, some agricultural operations are likely to benefit from the small business tax cut, from three per cent to two per cent, effective January 1, 2017.

The GOA will continue to work with the farming community and agricultural producers as we implement the carbon price.

Agriculture and Forestry: Agriculture is the only industry in the province to be exempted from the Carbon Levy on gasoline and diesel fuel. In addition:

- Alberta has implemented a partial rebate of natural gas costs for greenhouse operations, as it recognizes that energy costs are a large proportion of operating costs for the greenhouse industry—an energy intensive/exposed sub-sector.
- Alberta is aligned with British Columbia (BC) policy that rebates marked fuel and supports greenhouses. BC has no other Carbon Tax support for agriculture; thus, no ongoing program competitiveness.
- Alberta has a small business tax reduction to ease the costs on small businesses.
- Alberta has enhanced the farm energy efficiency program under Growing Forward 2 to incent technology changes that provide permanent reductions in energy costs to farms. Exempting costs does not drive industry to make energy reductions as much as incenting practice change and technology adoption.

Energy Efficiency Alberta will be designing programs to incent practice change and technology adoption for all Albertans, available sometime in 2017.

Other provinces and the federal government have intentions to implement carbon pricing over the next few years. The federal government has agreed to review provincial policies in three years to ensure mechanisms for carbon pricing result in similar levels of emission reductions across the country.

#### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates that natural gas and propane used for agricultural purposes will not be exempted from carbon levy payments. The AAMDC appreciates the exemptions applied to marked gasoline and diesel for agricultural use, as well as other current and future tools implemented by the Government of Alberta to assist agriculture producers in balancing energy efficiency with operational viability. However, as the response does not indicate a willingness to meet the intent of the resolution, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. The AAMDC's Climate Change Advisory Committee will be continuing to explore the impacts of the carbon levy on the agriculture industry. Advocacy on this issue will continue.

Resolution 7-16F

**Vegetation Management on Alberta Provincial Highways**

MD of Bonnyville & County of Stettler

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Transportation, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance**

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is responsible for weed control in the rights of way of approximately 32,000 kilometers of provincial highway in the province as regulated under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is bound by the *Alberta Weed Control Act*; and

WHEREAS as of August 1, 2016, the Government of Alberta has undertaken no known vegetation management activity along the provincial highways in the Northeast region of Alberta, allowing noxious weeds to flower, set seed, and increase the seedbank for upcoming years, impacting neighbouring landowners as invasive plants spread into fields; and

WHEREAS local municipalities enforce land owner/occupant weed notices to control noxious weeds on private land as per the *Alberta Weed Control Act*; and

WHEREAS reductions to provincial funding for vegetation management along provincial highways has resulted in increased use of municipal resources to identify and issue weed notices to Alberta Transportation, reducing resources available for municipal roadway maintenance; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta's lack of effort in undertaking vegetation management practices to eliminate the spread of noxious weeds along provincial highways contradicts the efforts made by municipalities to prevent weed growth on private lands; and

WHEREAS the most cost-effective strategy against noxious and invasive weeds is preventing them from establishing; and

WHEREAS allowing the growth of noxious weeds may present a risk to human health because such weeds may be poisonous, or their uncontrolled growth may impact sightlines along roadways; and

WHEREAS historically, Alberta Transportation had a proactive vegetation management program via mowing, identifying and spraying of weeds in place keeping invasive weeds in check on provincial highways which prevented the spread of these roadside weeds to the areas of agriculture, forest management, nature reserves, parks and inhabited areas;

WHEREAS landowners adjacent to provincial highways (both two digit and three digit) are faced with increased costs to their vegetation control programs as a result of lack of control along the highways; and

WHEREAS historically, Alberta Transportation could sign service agreements with each municipality to undertake invasive plant control;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to restore funding for summer maintenance programs for its vegetation management (weed control and mowing) along provincial highways; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to deliver a more effective maintenance program for vegetation management (weed control and mowing) along one, two and three digit highways in the province, which includes the herbicide application and other measures to control noxious weeds, prohibited noxious weeds and any unsafe vegetation on the full right of way; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request Alberta Transportation give the option in all districts of the province to enter into service agreements with municipalities for weed control.**

### **Government Response**

Transportation: In 2013, to meet reduced budgets, mowing was limited to a single shoulder cut and proactive planned vegetation control was eliminated. We collaborated with other ministries, municipalities, provincial agricultural service boards, and field personnel to investigate ways to work together with local communities to resolve this situation in the future. In response to stakeholder concerns, Alberta Transportation (AT) will restore funding for vegetation control and mowing commencing in spring 2017.

As the landowner, AT has responsibilities under the *Weed Control Act (WCA)*. Although funding for proactive planned vegetation control was eliminated in 2013, the department continued to fund reactive vegetation control to control noxious and prohibited noxious weeds; when a weed notice was issued, AT responded to ensure it met its obligations under the *WCA*.

Minister Mason heard Albertans' concerns about the adverse impact of reduced mowing and chemical vegetation control along the provincial highway network. In response, AT expanded the amount of mowing done along highways in fall 2016. The department recognizes that while the additional mowing increased safety along provincial highways by providing better roadway sightlines for drivers, there was potential to spread mature seeds and make weed control costlier in the future.

Some municipalities have requested AT provide a budget directly to them to complete vegetation control within provincial highway rights-of-way. Municipalities doing the work would improve weed spray timing and possibly realize some cost savings; however, this needs to be reviewed, taking into consideration capacity, insurance, and ability to complete the work safely along any higher volume highways.

Treasury Board and Finance: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance has no comment on the resolution because vegetation management on Alberta provincial highways is under the authority of AT.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates a plan to resume full vegetation management practices along provincial highways in the summer of 2017. This response meets the first "ask" of the resolution, which is to restore previous vegetation management funding.

The second “ask” in the resolution calls for not only the return of funding, but an improved vegetation management program compared to that previously utilized prior to the reduction in funding. At this point the Government of Alberta response indicates only a return to previous levels, and therefore does not meet the resolutions’ second “ask.”

The third “ask” in the resolution calls for Alberta Transportation to enter service agreements with municipalities for the actual delivery of vegetation management. The government of Alberta response indicates that this option will be considered, and may move forward based on further analysis of capacity and standards. The AAMDC is encouraged by this and will follow up with Alberta Transportation in the future.

As the Government of Alberta response meets part of the resolution’s intent, the AAMDC assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and will continue advocating on it in the future.

**Resolution Process – Frequency of Similar or Duplicate Resolutions**

Lacombe County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties**

WHEREAS the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) Resolution Process Policy outlines the format and guidelines for the development of resolutions submitted for consideration by the membership; and

WHEREAS there is no process in place to limit the frequency in which similar or duplicate resolutions are presented to the convention floor;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Association of Alberta Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) Board of Directors review the AAMDC Resolution Process Policy with the objective of limiting the frequency in which resolutions that duplicate previously endorsed resolutions or deal with subject matter recently addressed through endorsed resolution are presented to the convention floor.**

**AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The AAMDC Board of Directors has instructed AAMDC staff and the AAMDC Resolutions Committee to undertake a review of the AAMDC's Resolutions Process Policy to improve the resolution process. The issue of duplicate resolutions will be included in this review. The review is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2017. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will be re-evaluated pending the outcome of the policy review.

**Funding Model for Sand and Aggregate Pit Reclamation**

Sturgeon County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS there are multiple orphaned and abandoned sites across the province of Alberta; and

WHEREAS in many instances, pits established prior to 1978 have been able to operate with development permits that have no expiry and THEREFORE, require no plan for reclamation, thereby indefinitely diminishing nearby residents' quality of life; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta collects surface material royalties on gravel and combinations of sand and gravel at a rate of \$1.20 per cubic yard;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties encourage the Government of Alberta, in reviewing the *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation*, to explore opportunities to allocate a portion of future provincial funds received from the levy towards reclamation of orphaned and abandoned sites, should the current levy amount be adjusted to reflect current conditions and should provincial legislation be revised to better enforce the reclamation of gravel pits.**

**Government Response**

Municipal Affairs: There is no established funding program to reclaim orphan pits and poorly reclaimed pits established prior to August 15, 1978. Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA) is currently reviewing the Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation as part of the overall review of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties has been an active participant in this review, and the province appreciates the association's input relative to the regulation's purpose, funding model, and related accountability requirements. This input, along with input from other stakeholders, will be taken into consideration as amendments are drafted.

Additionally, the Sand and Gravel Working Group, under Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), is working with stakeholders to examine a variety of issues relating to aggregate approvals, including the reclamation of these sites.

Environment and Parks: The Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation is empowered under the *MGA* and falls under the jurisdiction of MA, which recently held stakeholder discussions related to the program. MA will continue to review the levy throughout spring 2017, and will consider options moving forward. AEP does not administer this regulation or program.

In response to the Office of the Auditor General's recommendations, Environment and Parks established the Sand and Gravel Working Group and associated task groups in 2014 to work on key issues and develop options and recommendations for improvement of the Sand and Gravel programs.



The Sand and Gravel Working Group is committed to analyzing and implementing their top priorities, including recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General, but may also consider the option of establishing an “orphan pit program” in future phases of its work.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates that two ministries are in the process of reviewing issues associated with aggregate pits and the Community Aggregate Payment Levy. The AAMDC is pleased by the Government of Alberta’s willingness to improve management and regulations related to aggregate. However, the response does not address the possibility of increasing provincial funding to municipalities to address reclamation of abandoned pits. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on the need for funding to support reclamation of abandoned and orphaned pits.

**Stakeholder Participation in the Future of the Alberta SuperNet**

Brazeau County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Service Alberta**

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta launched the Alberta SuperNet build through an agreement with Bell Intrigna and Axia IP Services in July, 2001 and one of the tenets was the provision of accessible and competitively-priced services to rural Albertans; and

WHEREAS all Albertans require access to high speed internet for economic and community development, public safety; and

WHEREAS reliable and affordable connectivity to high speed internet should be considered an essential service; and

WHEREAS municipalities and private industry have limited access to the Alberta SuperNet due the current operating agreement; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is part of the Alberta SuperNet and in the process of looking at the future operations of the Alberta SuperNet;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to establish a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to participate in a review of the existing agreement which expires on June 30, 2018 and make recommendations for the new agreement that would be effective July 1, 2018.**

**Government Response**

Service Alberta: Service Alberta (SA) has engaged, and continues to engage, with all key stakeholders affected by the current SuperNet operating contract that expires on June 30, 2018. The valued insight shared by the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) and its municipal membership was considered as part of the recommendations and options put forward for the future of SuperNet services.

SA will continue to support open communication with our many stakeholders; however, we are not able to action resolution 11-16F at this time because the Government of Alberta (GOA) was already reviewing SuperNet at the time of the AAMDC's fall convention. The GOA also needs to take action on SuperNet early in 2017 in order to enable any potential transition and ensure service continuity for our stakeholders.

SA has committed to reaching out to both the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the AAMDC to ensure they are aware of the GOA's direction, and to offer assistance in updating their members.

**AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta's response indicates that they are not able to form a formal multi-stakeholder working group to inform the development of a new SuperNet operating agreement, mainly due to time constraints and the pace at which the process is moving. The AAMDC

appreciates the willingness with which Service Alberta has shared information related to the new operating agreement, as well as the consideration that Service Alberta has shown for the importance of improving rural broadband access. The AAMDC hopes that this recognition is reflected in the new operating agreement. Despite the positive relationship that the AAMDC has with Service Alberta related to the SuperNet, it is disappointing that a working group that more directly integrates the perspectives of individual rural municipalities cannot be formed to better inform the process. This resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**, although the AAMDC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Service Alberta on this matter.

**Wildland Fire Fighting Costs**

Parkland County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance**

WHEREAS increasing frequency and duration of wildfires outside the Forest Protection Area is negatively impacting municipal budgets and fire services; and

WHEREAS these fires are beyond the scope of resources, training and financial capacity for many of Alberta's rural fire services; and

WHEREAS through the Mutual Aid Fire Control Agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the municipality may request specialized resources such as air tankers and wildland firefighting crews, which come at substantial cost; and

WHEREAS municipalities may have mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire services that are also limited in capabilities and training; and

WHEREAS due to the costs of calling for the assistance of provincial resources, the required resources and expertise is often delayed, aiding in the spread of fires that could easily be contained if the proper resources and expertise were on the scene; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has access to both the resources and expertise to assist in the control and extinguishment of wildland fires;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to enter into mutual aid agreements with municipalities outside of the Forest Protection Area that do not involve a fee for service for provincially-controlled and paid-for wildland fire fighting resources.**

**Government Response**

Agriculture and Forestry: There are two programs available to municipalities outside the Forest Protection Area (FPA) to assist with wildfire suppression costs incurred on public and private land.

- Program 1: The Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program is administered by Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA) to provide financial support to municipalities for extraordinary wildfire suppression costs. This program may reimburse municipalities up to 75 per cent of their total wildfire suppression costs incurred on *occupied* public land and freehold/private land.
- Program 2: Through Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF), municipalities can apply to the Minister for reimbursement of 100 per cent of their wildfire suppression costs incurred on *unoccupied* public land.

Section 8(1) of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* states that the Minister may reimburse a municipality for these costs. The Minister is not obligated to reimburse a municipality.

AF has entered into Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreements with many municipalities throughout Alberta. These agreements confirm roles and responsibilities for wildfire management inside and outside the FPA, as well as outline fees for service for the agencies to support each other with wildfire suppression, on a full cost recovery basis.

It is standard practice for AF to invoice municipalities for wildfire suppression costs incurred when assisting them outside the FPA. It is standard practice for AF to pay municipalities for their costs assisting the department with wildfire suppression activities inside the FPA.

MA and AF continue to work with municipalities to support wildfire management initiatives outside the FPA.

Treasury Board and Finance: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance has no comments beyond those provided by AF.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government response highlights two important programs that municipalities have outside of the Fire Protection Area (FPA) but does indicate that the Minister is not obligated to reimburse costs to municipalities when they incur firefighting related costs from wildfires. Though Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreements may be widespread and the government response indicated that it is standard practice for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to reimburse for wildfire suppression costs outside the FPA, AAMDC staff have interpreted the intent of the resolution to guarantee that the Government of Alberta enter into mutual aid agreements with municipalities to ensure all costs are properly reimbursed. Though there are programs to support the costs associated with wildfire suppression, the government response does not meet this intent and therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**Northern Gateway Pipelines Support**

Strathcona County & Sturgeon County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada, National Energy Board, Alberta Energy, Provincial and Federal Municipal Associations**

WHEREAS the devastating impacts in the downturn of the economy have been felt by all Canadians, businesses and government; and

WHEREAS the energy sector contributes approximately \$9.5 billion (four-year average) in annual royalties, bonuses and crown land sales from the oil and gas industry; and

WHEREAS Canada's oil and natural gas sector provides 20 per cent of the Alberta government's revenue; and

WHEREAS Canada's oil and gas sector can create jobs for more than 315,000 Albertans; and

WHEREAS the Northern Gateway pipeline will create 4000 jobs during construction and 1000 long-term jobs in First Nations communities and municipalities in Alberta and British Columbia and contribute nearly \$98 billion in revenues to local, provincial and federal governments over the 30-year life of the project; and

WHEREAS rural municipalities in Alberta are home to existing pipeline infrastructure and as such, collectively understand that they are a safe and preferable means of transporting energy resources; and

WHEREAS to maximize the value of Canadian resources, market access is paramount and the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline would transport crude oil from Alberta to British Columbia and provide significant access to new markets in the Pacific Rim and fair market prices for Canadian oil; and

WHEREAS on June 30, 2016, the Federal Court of Appeal found that although the Joint Review Panel's recommendation related to the Northern Gateway project was acceptable and defensible on the facts and the law; concluded that the Federal Government's consultation with First Nations and Métis peoples was insufficient and therefore, incomplete;

WHEREAS Enbridge has stated they remain committed to listening and working with Indigenous communities as well as municipalities to ensure the success of the project;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Government of Canada in support of the Northern Gateway Project and market access; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations to request that the Government of Canada conduct new consultations with Indigenous communities along the pipeline route prior to approving or denying the Northern Gateway Project; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations emphasizing the local, provincial, and national benefits that the Northern Gateway Project would provide and encourage support for the Project to be shared publicly.**

### **Government Response**

Energy: Recent federal government approvals for the Trans Mountain Expansion Project and Line 3 Replacement Project are critically important to Alberta's economic future. We are getting a chance to break our land lock and sell our resource to new markets at better prices. These approvals have shown that we do not need to choose between the environment and building the economy.

The federal government has also directed the National Energy Board to dismiss Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline project application. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet determined that the project is not in the public interest, given that it would result in crude oil tankers transiting through the sensitive ecosystem of the Douglas Channel, which is part of the Great Bear Rainforest. The Government of Alberta (GOA) must respect the authority of the Government of Canada to make these difficult decisions.

The world will continue to rely on oil for many years to come, so it is important that energy is provided by regions like Alberta that take environmental responsibilities seriously. Energy infrastructure projects, such as pipelines, are economically important not only to Alberta, but for all of Canada. One of the surest paths to long-term prosperity for Canada is to develop energy as sustainably as possible and to ship it to international markets via the safest and most efficient method, through infrastructure like pipelines.

The GOA will continue to work collaboratively with industry, governments, First Nations, and other stakeholders to get our products to Canadian tidewater, while supporting processes that ensure any new pipelines are built in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's response to this resolution, particularly their recognition of the importance of pipelines to support market access for Alberta's oil and gas industry. Unfortunately, as the government response indicates, the Government of Canada exercised their jurisdiction and directed the National Energy Board to dismiss the Northern Gateway Pipeline project application. Although the Government of Alberta's response is appreciated and an encouraging sign for future collaborative advocacy efforts related to market access, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** due to the Government of Canada's decision.

## **Conservation and Reclamation of Class 1 Gravel Pits**

Mountain View County & Sturgeon County

*Carried as Amended*

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### **Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks, through legislation, maintains control of all pit registrations for Class I pits (5 hectares or larger); and

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks, through legislation, maintains responsibility for inspection, compliance and enforcement of gravel pit reclamation of Class 1 pits; and

WHEREAS the *Alberta Government Code of Practice for Pits* does not include an obligation for progressive reclamation; and

WHEREAS municipal districts and counties have the authority to regulate land use and development approval of all pits, regardless of size, under the *Municipal Government Act* and cannot enforce compliance with the *Code of Practice for Pits* which is enforced through the *Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act*;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta amend the *Code of Practice for Pits* to:**

- 1. include an obligation for timely progressive reclamation including obligation deadlines that are enforceable; and**
- 2. ensure securities reflect liability and provide sufficient incentive for progressive reclamation; and**
- 3. ensure municipal land use and development approvals are obtained prior to the Province issuing pit registrations or accepting changes to existing pit registrations;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta maintain inspection and enforce compliance with the *Conservation and Reclamation Regulations* and the *Code of Practice for Pits*; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend the *Code of Practice for Pits* to put into place enforceable reclamation requirements for gravel pits established prior to August 15, 1978 so as to enhance the quality of life and opportunities for rural residents.**

### **Government Response**

Environment and Parks: The availability of compliance and enforcement resources with regard to pit operations has long been a concern to all stakeholders. Alberta Environment and Parks staff is investigating current and developing opportunities for more effective oversight during the program review.

The department organized targeted stakeholder engagement sessions in Leduc (January 26 and 27, 2017) and Airdrie (February 2 and 3, 2017) to obtain feedback on proposed program improvements. Representatives of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties attended both sessions where reclamation requirements were presented and discussed. These



stakeholder engagement sessions were the first of its kind for pits program in Alberta. Currently, specific outcome from the sessions are under assessment.

The recent engagement sessions offered the first opportunity for representatives of those associations who are the most affected by program changes to meet.

These sessions illustrate the department's commitment to working collaboratively on drafting revisions that will improve Alberta's pits programs. These improvements will strive to balance environmental, economic and social factors to guide these revisions.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The AAMDC appreciates the opportunity to be involved with other stakeholders through the engagement sessions offered by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to discuss pit reclamation and compliance requirements in early 2017. Recognizing that AEP will be drafting revisions to improve Alberta's pits program to address compliance and regulatory issues, the AAMDC assigns this resolution as a status of **Accepted in Principle** pending the results of this review. This resolution will continue to support AAMDC's advocacy efforts as revisions to the Code for Practice for Pits are undertaken. This resolution status will be reviewed as additional information becomes available.

**Species at Risk and the Need for an Overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment**

MD of Greenview, County of Northern Lights, Mackenzie County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS the forest industry is key to economic success for families and communities throughout Alberta, employing 15,000 Albertans directly and creating 30,000 additional jobs through economic activity, and contributes over \$4 billion to the economy; and

WHEREAS forestry is Alberta's third largest resource industry and the lifeblood of 50 communities throughout the province, providing important jobs and wealth creation; and

WHEREAS having a strong forest industry helps the province's economy to continue employing Albertans when prices for other commodities drop; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has released several recovery plans for species at risk, as well as a structure retention plan which all have the potential to decrease wood supply, increase costs, and create job losses or mill closures; and

WHEREAS each of these recovery plans and policies are completed in isolation and independent of directly affected operators, communities, and municipal governments; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has not undertaken a complete due diligence Socio-Economic Impact Assessment prior to putting these various recovery plans into action; and

WHEREAS every part of wood fibre loss affects the entire industry and subsequently the spin off economy; and

WHEREAS the economic contributions of the forest industry in Alberta would be negatively impacted by a reduction in the annual allowable cuts and a subsequent decrease in wood fibre supply; and

WHEREAS the recommendations for the permanent protected areas for Woodland Caribou simply follow Forestry Management Unit (FMU) boundaries with no consideration for the existing and future local Oil and Gas dispositions, mineral exploration, tourism, agriculture, and interprovincial/territorial infrastructure and corridors;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties works with the Government of Alberta in a timely fashion, to complete an overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment based on all the species at risk recovery plans and retention plans currently affecting the operations of all industries in the Province of Alberta, including but not limited to oil and gas, forestry, agriculture, tourism and mineral exploration.**

**Government Response**

Environment and Parks: The *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* mandates that Alberta manage 65 per cent of its critical habitat by October 2017. At that time, the federal government can impose a plan that would stop industrial development until 65 per cent of caribou habitat is reclaimed.

This is an unacceptable outcome that would result in serious layoffs and harm to industry and communities in the region. That is why the Government of Alberta (GOA) hired a mediator and worked with stakeholders to come up with strategies to protect caribou and preserve good paying jobs.

Part of the mediator's report included a draft directive for the Little Smokey and A La Peche range. The intent of the directive is to minimize social and economic impacts to local communities and families, while meeting the federal requirement to protect caribou habitat under the SARA.

The GOA received feedback from thousands of Albertans through an online survey about the draft Little Smokey and A La Peche range plans. The GOA is working to incorporate their input, and we are continuing to work with industry on its development. We are taking the time to get it right.

Socio-economic information is considered in all species at risk recovery planning processes. Implementing provincial approaches that achieve effective protection of species at risk and critical habitat is necessary to minimize the risk of federal intervention. It is anticipated that provincially developed approaches to species recovery will enable more flexibility for the province and affected industries, along with fewer impacts to industries than if orders under the federal SARA are issued.

#### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response summarizes the work done to date to develop strategies to comply with SARA as it impacts Alberta's caribou population, and acknowledges that socio-economic impacts of habitat protection formed a component of the recovery planning process. However, the response does not indicate a willingness to conduct a broad socio-economic impact assessment on all species at risk recovery plans in the province. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will continue to advocate the need for a socio-economic impact assessment on species at risk recovery plans.

Resolution 16-16F

**Support for Continuation of Crude Oil Tanker Activity Along the Northern Coast of British Columbia**

Woodlands County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada**

WHEREAS should the ban proceed it would prevent Northern Gateway Pipelines and others from being built which would affect the economic prosperity of Western Canada and Canada in general; and

WHEREAS such a restriction would severely impede Alberta's ability to diversify markets for our products; and

WHEREAS such a restriction would also shut in Alberta's energy resources, causing lost jobs, investment dollars and economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS the oil & gas industry is vital not only to the economic wellbeing of all Alberta municipalities, regardless of size, but to our provincial economic health;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Government of Canada expressing support for continued tanker activity along the northern coast of British Columbia.**

**Government Response**

No government response received.

**AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

Shortly after the AAMDC's Fall 2016 Convention, during which this resolution was endorsed, the Government of Canada formally announced that they would introduce legislation to establish a moratorium on tanker traffic along B.C.'s north coast. According to the Government of Canada's website, "the moratorium will cover the Great Bear Rainforest/Great Bear Sea area: an area from the Alaska/B.C. border down to the point on B.C.'s mainland adjacent to the northern tip of Vancouver Island, and this includes Haida Gwaii. The new legislation will prohibit oil tankers carrying crude oil or persistent oil products as cargo from entering or leaving ports and marine installations in this area."

Due to the this announcement, the AAMDC elected not to submit formal correspondence to the Government of Canada calling for the continuation of tanker traffic in the area, as the Government of Canada made it clear that the matter was closed and a decision had been reached. Earlier in 2016, the AAMDC provided input to the Government of Canada on this issue by responding to this question that the Government of Canada posed to stakeholders:

*What do you believe are the most important issues the Government should address in its plan to formalize a crude oil tanker moratorium?*

The AAMDC's response was as follows:

*Placing a moratorium on any transportation mode or route is a drastic decision and should not be made without intensive analysis of local and national implications, projected future transportation needs and opportunities, and potential changes in*

*technology that may render the moratorium unnecessary. Based on the discussion material that Transport Canada has shared with stakeholders, it is difficult to know the extent or level of analysis that has been undertaken to his point.*

*The AAMDC understands the importance of considering and mitigating local environmental impacts of tanker traffic on BC's north coast. However, such a significant decision must consider both local issues and upstream/indirect issues that may be caused by a moratorium. While the intent of a moratorium is to protect a relatively localized ecosystem, the potential social and economic impacts may spread much farther. For example, the tanker moratorium effectively eliminates the development of Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline from Bruderheim, Alberta to Kitimat, BC. For rural Alberta, the development of a pipeline to move crude oil from Alberta to a port facility for tanker transport to foreign markets is very important for the long-term sustainability of the oil and gas industry. While the moratorium is not directly related to the sustainability of the industry, it should not be placed into effect without considering the long-term impacts it may have on the industry. The formalization of a moratorium should be accompanied by a commitment from the Government of Canada to approve and facilitate the development of an alternative pipeline corridor from Alberta to a coastal port facility.*

This input was provided prior to the submission or endorsement of resolution 16-16F, as the AAMDC Board of Directors identified the potential tanker moratorium and the associated consultations as an emerging issue worthy of AAMDC input.

Due to the moratorium, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**Capital Region Board Mandate Expansion**

Parkland County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS the Capital Region Board has facilitated positive interactions around land use planning in the Edmonton Metro Region; and

WHEREAS certain policy revisions being considered by the Capital Region Board overreach the mandate of the Board or need further clarification to quantify the expected outcome of the policy; and

WHEREAS the possible expansion of the Capital Region Board mandate was expressed at an Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Pembina Zone meeting; and

WHEREAS the Capital Region board has proposed policies relative to Economic Development, Transit Authorities, Housing and Agricultural issues that expand their mandate beyond a land use planning policy role; and

WHEREAS further expansion of the Capital Region Boards' mandate will impair the ability of local elected officials to represent their residents' wishes in an ever changing and complex world;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to direct the Capital Region Board to preserve their current mandate as any mandate expansion beyond that mandate becomes governance that interferes with the governance of local elected officials and their roles.**

**Government Response**

Municipal Affairs: In September 2015, the Government of Alberta (GOA) announced that mandatory growth management boards (GMBs) would be established in the Edmonton and Calgary metropolitan regions. This direction was subsequently included in the proposed *Modernized Municipal Government Act*, which was approved in the fall 2016 legislative session.

The GOA is committed to GMBs as a means of ensuring regional collaboration and co-ordinated decision-making towards the shared outcomes that benefit our citizens. This inherently goes beyond land-use planning, and instead these boards need to play a key role in addressing the increasing demand for services and infrastructure, pressures on the environment, and opportunities for economic prosperity.

The GOA is discussing these and other matters with municipalities in the two metropolitan regions in a collaborative approach to developing regulations to support the GMBs.

**AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates that the Edmonton region's growth management board as established under the revised *Municipal Government Act* will likely exist with a broadened scope that includes service delivery, infrastructure, environmental issues, and economic prosperity. However, the response does not address the role that a potentially

expanded GMB will have on the governance functions of individual municipalities that participate in it. For this reason, the AAMDC assigns this resolution a status of **Incomplete Information** and will clarify with the Government of Alberta when the details of GMBs began to be developed.

**Provincial Responsibility for Fire Costs on Occupied Public Lands**

Thorhild County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is responsible for the management and control of all occupied and unoccupied public lands; and

WHEREAS municipalities do not distinguish its practice and procedures on fighting a fire on occupied or unoccupied public lands; and

WHEREAS some occupied lands are not being utilized to their full potential and become a fire hazard within the municipality; and

WHEREAS municipalities are faced with substantial expenses for firefighting resources and are often challenged with limited operating and capital budgets; and

WHEREAS Section 7 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* outlines that the municipality is responsible for fighting and controlling all fires within the boundaries of the municipality; and

WHEREAS Section 8 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* stipulates that the Province is not obligated to reimburse a municipality for money spent on controlling fires on any land, however, may reimburse the municipality for any part of the costs of controlling a fire on unoccupied public lands;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend Section 8 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* by including occupied public lands to enable the reimbursement of firefighting costs on those lands.**

**Government Response**

Agriculture and Forestry: There are two programs available to municipalities outside the Forest Protection Area (FPA) to assist with wildfire suppression costs incurred on public and private land.

- Program 1: The Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program is administered by Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA) to provide financial support to municipalities for extraordinary wildfire suppression costs. This program may reimburse municipalities up to 75 per cent of their total wildfire suppression costs incurred on *occupied* public land and freehold/private land.
- Program 2: Through Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF), municipalities can apply to the Minister for reimbursement of 100 per cent of their wildfire suppression costs incurred on *unoccupied* public land.

Section 8(1) of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* states that the Minister may reimburse a municipality for these costs. The Minister is not obligated to reimburse a municipality.



AF has entered into Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreements with many municipalities throughout Alberta. These agreements confirm roles and responsibilities for wildfire management inside and outside the FPA, as well as outline fees for service for the agencies to support each other with wildfire suppression, on a full cost recovery basis.

It is standard practice for AF to invoice municipalities for wildfire suppression costs incurred when assisting them outside the FPA. It is standard practice for AF to pay municipalities for their costs assisting the department with wildfire suppression activities inside the FPA.

MA and AF continue to work with municipalities to support wildfire management initiatives outside the FPA.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates that because existing mechanisms allow municipalities to apply for partial reimbursement of wildfire suppression costs on occupied lands through the Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program. The AAMDC is concerned that this program does not guarantee municipalities reimbursement, and only reimburses up to 75% of their costs. As the resolution requests an amendment to provide municipalities with assurances that they will have these costs reimbursed, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**Support for Multi-Stakeholder Task Force to Explore Value-Added Oil and Gas Opportunities**

Brazeau County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Energy**

WHEREAS the world price of oil and the United States' increasing level of energy independence threatens Alberta's competitive edge in oil and gas exports; and

WHEREAS in order for industry, the Province of Alberta, and its communities to grow and prosper, diversification in the form of value-added industries is required; and

WHEREAS most communities in Alberta have been harmed by the fall in oil prices, a fall that is expected to be prolonged, and that the current economic climate presents a unique opportunity to explore value-add industry; and

WHEREAS the oil and gas industry has always risen to challenges it has faced in the past; and

WHEREAS a previous multi-stakeholder group successfully found alternatives to solution flaring in Alberta;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to create a multi-stakeholder task force composed of representatives from industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous communities, municipal government, the provincial government and the public no later than April 1, 2017 to make recommendations on how to grow and enhance value-added development in the oil and gas sector.**

**Government Response**

Economic Development and Trade: Adding more value to our resources while creating economic activity and jobs is more important than ever. Since its formation in the fall of 2015, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (EDT) has actively pursued energy value-add as a strategic priority for diversifying and strengthening Alberta's economy. In February 2016, the Government of Alberta (GOA) announced the Petrochemical Diversification Program (PDP) which has just awarded a combined \$500 million to two petrochemical projects. The two projects will, for the first time in Alberta, process propane extracted from natural gas resources into value-added plastic products that can be use all over the world.

Both industry and the GOA have recognized that more can be done to pursue value added opportunities in the province. The Resource Diversification Council (RDC), an industry-led group, was created in March 2016 with the mandate to expand and diversify Alberta's resource manufacturing industries. The RDC includes a diverse membership that represents stakeholders from both industry and labour organizations. EDT will continue to work closely with the RDC on ways in which the province can maximize the development of our resources and add value to the energy sector.

This past fall, the GOA also announced the creation of the Energy Diversification Advisory Committee (EDAC), to similarly explore opportunities and develop strategies to create jobs and stimulate investment through energy value-add. This multi-stakeholder panel seeks to determine what additional steps Alberta can take to build a more diversified and resilient energy economy that works with industry and communities to create jobs, moves the energy industry up the value chain, and diversifies the energy industry into new end products. The EDAC has a wide range of expertise to draw from in the areas of stakeholder engagement and consultation, energy sector expertise, labour, and investment/finance. The EDAC's engagement process will include the public, aboriginal participation, and selected stakeholder engagement with other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, academics, and industry participants that have business or financial interests closely related to, or in, the value-add sector. The focus of the EDAC's engagement will be to establish what its vision of a diversified energy sector looks like, and what role government could play in encouraging additional value-added processing in Alberta. The committee will also establish a website to request public engagement on energy diversification.

The GOA agrees with the the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties' (AAMDC's) strong emphasis given to value-add in the oil and gas sector, which is why we continue to work closely with the RDC and why we have asked the EDAC to provide recommendations to the Minister of Energy later this year. EDT continues to work closely with Alberta Energy on promoting value-add in the oil and gas sector, and we have co-ordinated this response with them.

Energy: On October 13, 2016, the GOA announced the creation of the EDAC to engage Albertans and explore opportunities to increase the value of energy resources, create jobs, and attract new investment. This includes examining such value-added opportunities such as partial upgrading, refining, petrochemicals, and chemicals manufacturing.

The committee brings together a diversity of expertise and will meet with a variety of stakeholders, and is expected to make final recommendations to the Minister of Energy in the fall of 2017. The committee will engage with stakeholders beginning in the first quarter of 2017, including representatives from industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, indigenous communities, municipal governments, and the public over the next several months. This is consistent with the multi-stakeholder approach followed by the AAMDC.

Interested parties can subscribe to the committee's website [www.energy.alberta.ca/Initiatives/4369.asp](http://www.energy.alberta.ca/Initiatives/4369.asp), to be notified when more information on engagement is available and make submissions to the committee directly.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Alberta response indicates a strong interest in prioritizing value-added opportunities associated with Alberta's energy sector. As it relates to the intent of the resolution, the formation of the Energy Diversification Advisory Committee (EDAC) appears to be an encouraging step towards embracing a multi-stakeholder approach to diversifying Alberta's oil energy industry. However, the AAMDC believes that municipalities' responsibilities for local environmental planning and economic development make them prime candidates to be core participants on the EDAC, therefore it is somewhat disappointing that they and other groups will not serve a more permanent function. For this reason, the AAMDC has assigned this resolution

a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will revisit it after determining the extent to which municipalities and other groups listed in the resolution are engaged in the EDAC's processes.

**Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations**

County of Barrhead

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Service Alberta**

WHEREAS there is a great need for charitable organizations to find ways to raise funds to maintain and expand their operations in Alberta for the good of the residents of the Province of Alberta; and

WHEREAS Alberta charitable organizations operating in small urban or rural communities are currently required to work in casinos outside of the two major urban municipalities within the province; and

WHEREAS these many charitable organizations must bear the additional costs of travel and accommodation for workers to staff the casinos in centers are further away from their home community; and

WHEREAS there is a large disparity between the funding provided to charitable organizations in major urban centers compared with charitable organizations in rural communities, with an average difference of \$60,000; and

WHEREAS there is a large disparity in the frequency of opportunities available for charitable organizations in rural communities to raise funds through working in casinos;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to change Alberta's charitable gaming model so as to provide equity to all charitable organizations in Alberta, by addressing the disparity between the funding provided, and the frequency of opportunities available to charitable organizations in major urban centers compared with those in rural communities.**

**Government Response**

Treasury Board and Finance: The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) acknowledges the ongoing challenges faced by charitable organizations in relation to the current charitable gaming model, as well as the efforts made by stakeholders to raise these concerns with government. The AGLC considers this issue a top priority among its current initiatives.

The AGLC has reviewed previous reports on charitable gaming in Alberta and recently conducted a new cross-jurisdictional assessment of charitable funding from gaming streams. Based on its research, the AGLC has confirmed that there is a need to address deficiencies in the effectiveness, integrity and sustainability of Alberta's charitable gaming model. The AGLC is presently developing strategies to address the same.

The AGLC recognizes the importance of charitable gaming funding to organizations across the province and is committed to moving forward with changes in a timely manner. At the same time, the AGLC wants to ensure that any changes to the model provide not only immediate stakeholder benefits, but also long-term sustainability.

Justice and Solicitor General: Alberta Justice and Solicitor General has no comment on the resolution because casino opportunities for charitable organizations are under the authority of Alberta Treasury Board and Finance (TBF).

Service Alberta: Service Alberta has no comment on the resolution because casino opportunities for charitable organizations are under the authority of TBF.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) response indicates an acknowledgement that the current charitable gaming model is disadvantageous to charities operating in rural Alberta. The AAMDC is pleased that the AGLC is planning to revise the current model and hopes to be a part of the process. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be re-evaluated based when the review of the current model begins.

## **Security of Canada Post Community and Super Mailboxes**

Sturgeon County

*Carried as Amended*

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### **Advocacy Target: Canada Post**

WHEREAS Canada Post has established the use of Community and Super Mailboxes for the delivery of residential mail in many communities; and

WHEREAS residents are reporting illegal accessing of Community and Super Mailboxes resulting in mail theft; and

WHEREAS residents, especially seniors and those receiving government benefit or subsidy cheques through the mail, are dependent on the safe and reliable delivery of mail through Community and Super Mailboxes; and

WHEREAS the illegal accessing of Community and Super Mailboxes can potentially lead to identity theft through the interception of confidential or sensitive financial and personal documents;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Canada Post work to increase efforts to enhance the security of community and super mailboxes including siting them in open and plainly visible locations in consultation with municipalities, increasing their ability to resist break-in attempts, and implementing a strategy to reduce illegal access and theft of mail from Community and Super Mailboxes.**

### **Government Response**

In response to this resolution, the AAMDC received a letter from the Canada Post's Vice President of Government Relations and Policy dated December 22, 2016, which indicated the following:

*Thank you for your letter to Mr. Deepak Chopra, President and Chief Executive Officer, regarding community mailboxes. We appreciate your sharing the views expressed on behalf of your membership. Canada Post takes very seriously the secure and efficient delivery of the mail, and I wish to assure you that the highest priority is given to safeguarding all items entrusted to our care.*

*As part of our ongoing efforts to continue keeping our customers' mail safe, we have established an internal cross-functional team to assess the risks of mail theft and to ensure that both short- and long-term strategies are developed and deployed to reduce incidents. Our commitment to postal security extends to our partnerships with law enforcement agencies as well. Our officials have excellent working relationships with local police in Alberta, and we continue to collaborate on both crime prevention and investigative strategies. For example, an identity and mail theft law enforcement committee was launched with a focus on intelligence sharing and coordinated enforcement between Canada Post and police agencies in the province, including Criminal Intelligence Services of Alberta (CISA). Canada Post's Postal Inspectors host monthly meetings in both northern and southern Alberta to review trends and coordinate efforts to address issues that may arise in the community.*

*With regard to our equipment, you may be interested to know that Canada Post has developed a new "hardening kit" that is presently being installed in the western regions on previous generations of the community mailboxes. This new kit increases the security of the boxes and has already proven to be extremely effective. Additionally, a number of sites have been upgraded to our latest, more robust model; some boxes have been relocated for added security as well. Moving forward in 2017, our teams will focus on upgrading equipment or installing hardening devices on close to 2,000 sites (5,000 community mailboxes), mainly in western Canada. Our delivery planning team works closely with municipalities in siting equipment and will continue to do so in the future.*

*Canada Post fully appreciates the interests of municipalities and their residents in ensuring the security of customers' mail. Our teams are committed to working with local police to fully investigate instances of theft or break-ins. Should there be any specific concerns raised by your membership, we invite municipal officials to contact Andy Paterson, Manager of Municipal Engagement, at 519-457-5247, so that we can ensure the appropriate actions are taken. Residents are also encouraged to report any suspicious activity near the boxes to Canada Post and local police.*

*Again, thank you for sharing the views on behalf of your membership. Canada Post is dedicated to doing all that we can to provide reliable and secure delivery to all communities.*

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

Canada Post's response indicates an intent to take action on relocating mailboxes, installing new, more secure mailboxes, and retrofitting existing mail boxes to increase their security and resistance to break-ins and tampering. The response also provides examples of current community engagement actions being taken by Canada Post to work with local law enforcement in Alberta.

The AAMDC is pleased with the planned activities and will follow up with Canada Post in the future to confirm that they are completed and to determine their effectiveness in preventing mail theft. At this point, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.



**List of Municipal Electors**

Rocky View County

*Carried*

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**Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS section 49 (permanent electors register), section 50 (list of electors), section 51 (enumerators' appointment and identification), section 52 (access for enumerators and campaigners) and section 53 (proof of elector eligibility) of the *Local Authorities Election Act*, RSA 2000, c.L-21 specifies the option for a municipality to create a list of electors for a person to prove their eligibility to vote; and

WHEREAS a list of electors is accepted as a procedural safeguard and administrative control for elections in democracies all over the world; and

WHEREAS federal, provincial and most municipal jurisdictions nationally use a list of electors for proof of elector eligibility during an election; and

WHEREAS to date, no municipality in Alberta has created a list of electors as an option to be used as proof of elector eligibility during a municipal election; and

WHEREAS Alberta is the only province in Canada whose municipalities are required to conduct an enumeration if a list of electors is used; and

WHEREAS Alberta is the only province in Canada whose municipalities are unable to access the provincial list of electors for use in an election unless an enumeration is conducted and a permanent electors register is created; and

WHEREAS Alberta and Saskatchewan are the only provinces in Canada where the use of a list of electors is dependent on a Council bylaw and not directly through legislation; and

WHEREAS there is lack of legislative guidance and best practices available for a municipality to create a list of electors without significant privacy risk, reputational risk and financial cost to the municipality;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend the *Local Authorities Election Act* to provide municipalities a practical and economical option to use a list of electors for proof of elector eligibility.**

**Government Response**

Municipal Affairs: The *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) currently enables municipalities, by bylaw, to prepare a list of electors and prescribe procedures and forms governing the enumeration of electors.

In addition, the LAEA allows municipalities, by bylaw, to enter into an agreement with the Chief Electoral Officer under the *Election Act* to receive information that will assist the municipalities in compiling or revising the permanent electors register, as well as to provide updated information to the Chief Electoral Officer that will assist them in preparing or revising the register of electors under the *Election Act*.

The department acknowledges the current LAEA requirement to complete an enumeration of the electors in connection with the preparation of a list of electors. This item has been noted for consideration in the next comprehensive review of the LAEA.

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

As outlined in the Government's response, municipalities have the ability to prepare a list of electors and may work with the Chief Electoral Office to prepare that list. However, the extent to which this is considered a 'practical' and 'economical' option is dependent on each individual municipality and their local capacity. Therefore, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the AAMDC will follow-up accordingly to communicate options to members.

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**Advocacy Target: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada**

WHEREAS the Federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has announced a decision to close the Case Processing Centre (CPC) in Vegreville and moving 228 employee positions to Edmonton in December of 2018;

WHEREAS this decision will impact 8% of the Town of Vegreville's workforce and have a devastating effect at a time when Alberta's economy is already struggling; and

WHEREAS the Town/County Councils are expressing very deep concern that our community is losing one of our largest employers without any prior consultations with the public or municipality on this closure; and

WHEREAS the steady employment and income that is created by this office has introduced new people to the area, increased real estate values, increased the municipality's tax base, which allows the Town to offer more programming, and is a solid foundation for attracting new business to the community; and

WHEREAS this decision is at odds with the Federal government's campaign commitment to 'strengthen our communities by investing in the things that make them good places to live';

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship reconsider their decision to close the Case Processing Centre (CPC) in Vegreville.**

**Government Response**

In response to this resolution, the AAMDC received a letter from the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship dated February 22, 2017, which indicated the following:

*Thank you for your correspondence of November 25, 2016, addressed to my predecessor, the Honourable John McCallum, concerning the relocation of the workload from the Case Processing Centre (CPC) in Vegreville to Edmonton.*

*Canadians expect their Government to make responsible decisions on spending that will address current challenges, account for future situations, and ensure tax dollars are spent on quality services to meet expectations of clients and provide program excellence. The relocation will also save money, as the new office space will be located within the Government of Canada's existing property inventory.*

*The building lease for the CPC expires in February 2019. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) submitted its business requirements to Public Services and Procurement Canada in November 2015 so that work could begin on securing leasing options. These business requirements dictate the geographical boundaries for consideration of the lease renewal strategy. Vegreville will not meet these requirements. Furthermore, there have been ongoing tenant service issues at the current CPC location including hundreds of service calls related to plumbing and sanitary issues (67 service calls since August 2013) and frequent breakdowns of the heating and cooling systems (131 service calls since August 2013) in the building.*

*In an effort to respond to increased demand in various lines of business, IRCC is relocating its CPC from Vegreville to Edmonton by December 2018.*

*IRCC intends to expand its operations in Alberta in the coming years. In negotiating a new lease, the Department has made the difficult decision to move its operations to Edmonton, the closest major city, where the proximity to universities, the availability of public transit and housing options, and career growth opportunities within the federal government will make it easier to recruit and retain both qualified and bilingual employees and to meet our growing needs. Currently, approximately 20% of the CPC staff commute from Edmonton to Vegreville.*

*All current IRCC indeterminate employees will have the opportunity to continue their employment in their current positions once the office is relocated to Edmonton. Term employees at the time of the move will be offered employment at the new office.*

*We recognize this relocation will have an impact on staff and are making every effort to minimize those impacts. The Department has held multiple workshops to explain the relocation process and will continue to do so. IRCC management will continue to work closely with staff throughout this transition period.*

*I have noted your concerns about the effect that the relocation of the CPC will have on the town residents. Approximately 42% of the current staff in Vegreville will reach retirement age in the next five years. I note that, recruiting and retaining bilingual staff is crucial to maintaining functions and service standards at the CPC in the coming years. Over the past number of years, IRCC has used a variety of recruitment strategies at the CPC in Vegreville including:*

- *student recruitment;*
- *advertised opportunities open to the public across Canada;*
- *casual employment; and,*
- *student bridging.*

*To date, recruitment efforts to replace departing staff have been unsuccessful. From October 2015 to September 2016, 17% of staff at the CPC in Vegreville have left the workforce. This has posed considerable challenges to IRCC's capacity to maintain and grow its operations.*

*While I realize that this announcement has come as a disappointment to many people, I hope that the explanation provided will be of assistance.*

### **AAMDC Reaction and Follow-up**

The Government of Canada response provides the rationale under which Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada made the decision to relocate their case processing centre from Vegreville to Edmonton. Unfortunately, the letter does not indicate whether the Government of Canada conducted a local impact analysis on Vegreville and the surrounding rural areas, or whether potential community impacts were considered as a component of their decision-making process. Most importantly, the response does not indicate a willingness to reconsider the final relocation decision. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## SECTION 2: Advocacy Report Card

The following table is a summary of the AAMDC's current resolutions excluding the resolutions adopted in spring 2016 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.

### RESOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

CATEGORY	#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
AGRICULTURE	5-16S	Agricultural Opportunity Fund for Agricultural Research and Forage Associations	Intent Not Met
	10-16S	Genetically Modified Alfalfa	Incomplete Information
	7-15F	Agriculture Plastics Recycling	Intent Not Met
	15-15F	Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases	Intent Not Met
	6-15S	Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases	Intent Not Met
COMMUNITY SERVICES	11-16S	Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems	Accepted
	21-15F	Minimum Wage Increase	Intent Not Met
	5-15S	Review of Alberta Supernet Agreement with Axia Supernet Ltd.	Accepted in Principle
	8-14F	Improvement of High-Speed Internet Services in Rural Alberta	Accepted in Principle
	10-14F	Temporary Foreign Workers Program	Accepted in Part
	14-14F	Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems	Accepted in Part
	16-14F	Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Funding	Accepted in Part
EDUCATION	12-16S	Provincial Funding for School Resource Officers	Intent Not Met

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>RESOLUTION TITLE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
	18-14F	Sustaining Schools in Rural Communities	Intent Not Met
<b>EMERGENCY SERVICES</b>	8-16S	Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance Services	Intent Not Met
	9-14F	Fire Department Response to Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Calls	Intent Not Met
	11-14F	Alberta Health Services – Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Review	Accepted in Part
<b>ENERGY</b>	ER2-16S	Support for the Energy East Pipeline Project	Accepted
	24-15F	Alternative Energy Source – Solar Power	Accepted in Principle
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	7-16S	Wildlife Damage Compensation Program	Accepted in Principle
	12-15F	Survey Requirements for Recreation Lease Renewals	Intent Not Met
	16-15F	<i>Species at Risk Act</i> (SARA)	Incomplete Information
	2-15S	Elk Quota Hunt	Accepted in Principle
	4-15S	Landowner Special License for Elk	Intent Not Met
	7-15S	Reinstatement of Commercial Fishing Quotas in Alberta	Intent Not Met
	2-14F	Controlling and Enforcing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (Quagga and Zebra Mussels)	Accepted in Principle
	12-14F	Amend the Waste Control Regulation 192/1996 to Address Classification of Hazardous Wastes in Landfills	Intent Not Met
<b>HEALTH &amp; SENIORS</b>	ER1-16S	Rural Physician Action Plan Funding	Accepted
	10-15F	Maintenance of Funding for Seniors' Lodging	Accepted in Part
<b>INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES</b>	11-15F	Provincial Support for Municipal Aggregate Acquisition	Intent Not Met

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>RESOLUTION TITLE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
	17-15F	Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate Amendment	Intent Not Met
<b>MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE</b>	1-16S	Preservation of Linear Assessment for Rural Municipalities	Accepted in Principle
	2-16S	Notice Period for Adjustments to Linear Assessment Modifiers	Accepted in Principle
	3-16S	Recovery of Linear Property, Commercial Property, and Education Requisition Tax Arrears	Accepted in Principle
	1-15F	Continued Provincial Funding Support for Municipalities	Accepted in Principle
	4-15F	AAMDC Participation in City Charters Discussion	Intent Not Met
	5-15F	Recovery of Linear Property Tax Arrears	Accepted in Principle
	13-15F	Non-Profit Housing Organizations Borrowing from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority	Intent Not Met
	22-15F	Amendments to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> Regarding Joint and Several Liability	Intent Not Met
<b>PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	6-15F	Re-introduction of Bill 204 to Address the Matter of Adverse Possession	Accepted in Principle
	9-15F	Referrals on the Sales of Public Lands	Intent Not Met
	19-15F	Amendment to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> to Provide for the Dedication of Environmental Reserves in Specific Cases	Intent Not Met
	1-14F	Amalgamation Process Amendments	Intent Not Met
	7-14F	Regional Partnership Solution to Municipal/Community Viability	Intent Not Met
	15-14F	TELUS Line Locates	Accepted in Principle
<b>SENIORS</b>	10-15F	Maintenance of Funding for Provincial Funding for Seniors' Lodging	Accepted in Part
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	6-16S	Creating a Residential Exemption to Roadside Development Permits	Intent Not Met

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>RESOLUTION TITLE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
	2-15F	Enhanced Funding for Roads, Highways and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities	Accepted
	3-15F	Local Road Bridge Opt-Outs Under <i>Navigation Protection Act</i>	Accepted
	8-15F	Land Acquisition Process for Crown Land	Intent Not Met
	20-15F	Capital Funding for Community Airports	Accepted
	23-15F	Alberta Transportation Highway Signage	Intent Not Met
	3-15S	Legal Opinion on the Jurisdiction of the Weed Control Act on All Railway	Accepted
	8-15S	Government Prioritizing Northern Alberta Highways	Intent Not Met
	3-14F	New Building Canada Fund (Provincial – Territorial Infrastructure Component) – Guaranteed Equal Opportunity Funding for Rural & Urban Populations Under 10,000	Intent Not Met
	5-14F	Reinstatement of Funding For Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities	Accepted
	6-14F	Improvement of Highways in Alberta	Accepted
	17-14F	Mileage Signage Markers Along Provincial Highways	Intent Not Met
<b>WATER</b>	4-14F	Reinstatement of Funding for Water and Wastewater Systems	Accepted in Principle
<b>OTHER</b>	4-16S	Improving Oversight of Delegate Legislation	Intent Not Met



## AGRICULTURE

### 5-16S: Agricultural Opportunity Fund for Agricultural Research and Forage Associations

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request Alberta Agriculture and Forestry reinstate the 2014 Agricultural Opportunity Fund increase that was allocated for the agricultural research and forage associations.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response is somewhat unclear as it indicates that AOF funding was rescinded to \$1.95 million in 2015/16 but was supplemented with “special funding” to provide a total of \$3.95 million. Budget 2017-18 does not include any reference to the Agricultural Opportunity Fund, nor any reference to funding provided for agricultural research and forage associations. This resolution continues to hold a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### 10-16S: Genetically Modified Alfalfa

*Status: Incomplete Information*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency work with Alberta’s agricultural service boards, marketing groups, Forage Genetics Canada and other relevant stakeholders to prevent the introduction of genetically modified/engineered alfalfa to the province of Alberta until there is a marketplace and consumer acceptance in Alberta’s export markets including China, Japan, the European Union, and the Middle East.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the Government of Alberta response defers responsibility on this issue to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada, the AAMDC has not yet received a response to this resolution from the federal government. This resolution is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**, and the AAMDC will continue to follow up with the relevant federal ministries and agencies.

### 7-15F: Agriculture Plastics Recycling

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Parks develop a recycling program to provide for the collection and recycling of agricultural plastics in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC believes that a coordinated, province-wide approach to end of life management for agriculture plastics is the most effective means of limiting the amount of agriculture plastics that end up in landfills. Currently, some rural municipalities have provided recycling options for this material, but due to its large size and limited recycling options, these programs are beyond the capacity of most municipalities. The AAMDC has been collaborating with other municipal associations to explore options used in other provinces and will continue to identify opportunities for advocacy alignment. In recent months, the AAMDC has made progress with Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry in emphasizing the need for an agriculture plastics program and anticipates that discussions will continue moving in a positive direction. Until a coordinated recycling program is developed, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. The AAMDC will continue to work with other

stakeholders and advocate for the formation of a program to enable the recycling of agriculture plastics.

#### **15-15F: Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Parks transfer the management of farm development leases and agricultural leases to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates that no consideration is being given to transferring management of farm development leases from Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF), mainly due to the fact that it would necessitate a significant shift in government structure and existing legislation.

While the AAMDC appreciates these administrative challenges, the current AEP responsibility is viewed as insufficient by AAMDC members, as the agricultural expertise is not housed in AEP. While the short-term administrative difficulties of such a shift may be significant, the AAMDC believes that the long-term benefits of the shift would be significant for agricultural producers and rural municipalities. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

#### **6-15S: Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development transfer management of farm development leases and agricultural leases to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The government response indicates no willingness to transfer management of farm development leases and agricultural leases from Alberta Environment and Parks to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Although the AAMDC appreciates that the government of Alberta takes an integrated approach to public land management that involves collaboration between Environment and Parks and Agriculture and Forestry staff, AAMDC members believe that the agriculture expertise necessary to understand how market changes impact the financial ability of producers to operate is best understood by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### **11-16S: Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems**

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta increase its funding for public libraries and regional library systems.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates an increase to library funding in the previous budget year as well as a smaller increase in the 2016/17 budget targeted to improve library services to on-reserve and on-settlement Indigenous populations at public libraries. While this contribution is appreciated, its specific nature may not address broader operating challenges faced by rural libraries and regional library systems.

The Budget 2017 Capital Plan includes \$11 million dedicated to enhance Alberta's regional library system. As a result of this funding influx, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted** and will continue to be reviewed in future provincial budgets.

### **21-15F: Minimum Wage Increase**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to reconsider its intention to increase the minimum wage in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates a willingness to consider and attempt to mitigate negative economic impacts that a minimum wage increase may have on businesses and public sector employers such as municipalities, it has recently passed the regulation that will schedule additional increases in the minimum wage that will rise to \$15/h by 2018. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC seeks to work with Alberta Labour to ensure that the increase does not negatively impact municipalities and businesses in rural Alberta.

### **5-15S: Review of Alberta Supernet Agreement with Axia Supernet Ltd.**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Service Alberta not renew the Axia SuperNet Ltd. agreement until a complete examination of how the Alberta SuperNet can be managed in such a way as to promote a cost competitive, reliable, sustainable and Alberta-based solution for fibre optic internet services which meets the increasing demand for high speed internet service within the Province of Alberta with sufficient emphasis to rural connectivity.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta has developed an RFP for a new SuperNet operator when Axia's contract expires in 2018, and is in the process of developing a new operating agreement to ensure that the SuperNet better supports both public sector connectivity and rural development. As part of this process, Service Alberta has engaged the AAMDC and other stakeholders to better understand the current weaknesses of the SuperNet in connecting public sector institutions and supporting the development of rural broadband connectivity.

Because Service Alberta has acknowledged flaws in the current SuperNet and challenges in how it is operated by Axia, and has expressed a commitment to improving SuperNet in the future, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will be reviewed when a new operating agreement is signed.

#### **8-14F: Improvement of High-Speed Internet Services in Rural Alberta**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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.

The Government of Alberta has developed an RFP to seek a new SuperNet operator when the current contract with Axia expires in 2018 and is in the process of developing a new operating agreement to ensure that the SuperNet better supports both public sector connectivity and rural development. Service Alberta has worked with the AAMDC and other stakeholders to identify weaknesses with SuperNet, and are committed to improving it through the new operating agreement.

Alberta Economic Development and Trade has developed an educational resource for municipal officials in rural and small urban municipalities that consolidates relevant regulatory, funding, and technical information to assist them in taking local steps to improve broadband access in their communities.

The Government of Canada is currently accepting applications for the \$500 million Connect to Innovate program intended to enhance middle- and final-mile infrastructure in rural Canada. The AAMDC expressed concern with some of the extent to which the program's eligibility parameters reflect the challenges faced by Alberta. The impact that the program will have in Alberta will not be known until applications are evaluated and funding is distributed later in 2017.

In late 2016, the CRTC formally declared broadband as a basic telecommunications service. This declaration will result in the connection speeds for what I considered an adequately served household being raised from 5 mbps download / 1 mbps upload to 50 mbps download / 10 mbps upload, which places Canada's expectations more in line with similar countries. Additionally, the CRTC plans to develop a \$750 million industry-supported fund to enhance rural broadband. At this point, details of the fund have not been determined, but the AAMDC plans to provide input into the fund design and parameters.

As both the provincial and federal governments are undertaking policy and funding changes in an effort to improve rural broadband, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will be re-evaluated based on the outcomes of these attempts.

## 10-14F: Temporary Foreign Workers Program

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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 have pursued 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.

The federal government reviewed the TFW program in late 2016 and released a report and recommendations that include loosening the cap on how many foreign works businesses can hire, as well as measures for speeding up and reducing hurdles in the Labour Market Impact Assessment process which determines whether businesses were unable to find locals for the jobs offered to TFW. The Government of Canada indicated that these recommendations would be acted upon but the AAMDC has not heard any indication that this is the case.

## 14-14F: Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's recent response to resolution 11-16S indicates an increase to library funding in the previous budget year as well as a smaller

increase in the 2016/17 budget targeted to improve library services to on-reserve and on-settlement Indigenous populations at public libraries. While this contribution is appreciated, its specific nature may not address broader operating challenges faced by rural libraries and regional library systems.

The Budget 2017 Capital Plan includes \$11 million dedicated to enhance Alberta's regional library system, and although it is unclear if these funding increases will be accompanied by a multi-year plan for the further development of Alberta's public libraries, the AAMDC is encouraged by this increase in funding. This resolution holds the status of as **Accepted in Part**, and the AAMDC will continue to monitor this resolution to ensure rural municipalities are adequately served by Alberta's public library network.

#### **16-14F: Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Funding**

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In budget 2015-16, the Government of Alberta increased funding for FCSS services from \$76 million to \$101 million, which is a needed increase to ensure that FCSS services continue to assist vulnerable Albertans. This funding level was maintained in the 2016-17 budget and the 2017-18 budget.

The AAMDC is currently in the process of collaborating with the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and Inter-City Forum on Social Policy to engage the Government of Alberta in a strategy to strengthen FCSS programming.

In the summer of 2016, the Minister of Alberta Human Services (now the Minister of Community and Social Services) consulted with FCSS providers, the FCSSAA, the AAMDC, and the AUMA during a process to update the FCSS Regulation to better meet the needs of communities. Community and Social Services staff recently indicated to the AAMDC that there will be no substantial changes to the FCSS Regulation, as stakeholder input did not identify any major concerns with the current structure. The Ministry of Community and Social Services' decision to maintain the current FCSS structure does not match the intent of the second request in this resolution, which calls for a more sustainable FCSS program. The AAMDC's 2016 submission to the previous Ministry of Human Services on how the FCSS Regulation could be amended includes a request to increase flexibility of how FCSS providers can use funding, empower FCSS providers to fill gaps in provincial services, and standardize reporting requirements and assist small FCSS providers in developing the capacity to meet them.

As a result of the funding increase and the ongoing efforts of the AAMDC to work with other stakeholders on improving FCSS services, this resolution is deemed **Accepted in**

**Part**, although the AAMDC is disappointed that the FCSS Regulation will likely remain unchanged except for minor “housekeeping” adjustments.

## EDUCATION

### 12-16S: Provincial Funding for School Resource Officers

*Status: Intent Not Met*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to provide dedicated funding for school resource officers in rural area schools for the benefit of families and communities.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates that providing school resource officers is a local school board decision for which existing provincial funding can be used. While the AAMDC appreciates the Government of Alberta's commitment to supporting local autonomy in relation to decisions on how provincial funding resources are allocated, rural school boards often struggle to fund core services and therefore, rely on cooperative agreements to provide school resource officers. Dedicated provincial funding would support the consistent presence of school resource officers in schools of all sizes across the province, and ultimately make for safer and more inclusive schools. As no dedicated funding was provided in Budget 2017 to support school resource officers in rural areas, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

### 18-14F: Sustaining Schools in Rural Communities

*Status: Intent Not Met*

**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.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government response provides no indication that the Small Schools By Necessity Grant formula will be revisited and the 2017-18 provincial budget did not reference the Small Schools by Necessity Grant. This resolution has a status of **Intent Not Met**.



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

### 8-16S: Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance Services

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta provide funds to local and regionally operated emergency response air ambulance services at the same ratio as Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) funding.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response and continued inequity in funding for these services fails to address the request for equitable funding ratios between STARS and other air ambulance services. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

### 9-14F: Fire Department Response to Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Calls

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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 **Intent Not Met**. The AAMDC will continue to advocate for an independent review of Alberta's 911 system.

### 11-14F: Alberta Health Services – Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Review

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC is encouraged by the steps taken to fulfill the intent of this resolution. In 2015, 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 the then Minister of Health 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.

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 Ministry of Health's 2015-18 Business Plan identified the need to "improve the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency and ambulance services" as a priority initiative. The AAMDC looks forward to the implementation of that initiative.

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**.

## ENERGY

### ER2-16S: Support for the Energy East Pipeline Project

*Status: Accepted*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties demonstrate their support for the Energy East pipeline and inform the National Energy Board of this support;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations to emphasize the local, provincial, and national benefits that the Energy East pipeline would provide.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC and the Government of Alberta stand in support of the Energy East Pipeline and through various channels, the AAMDC has brought this issue to the attention of our municipal counterparts in other provinces as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Government of Alberta's response indicates the delicate need to balance the development of Alberta's energy resources with our responsibility to be both social and environmental stewards. The Government of Alberta's support of the Energy East Pipeline makes them an important advocate of this energy project. Though the Energy East Pipeline's future remains uncertain, the AAMDC will continue to advocate for greater market access for Alberta's resources. This resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted**.

### 24-15F: Alternative Energy Source – Solar Power

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to provide initiatives in the way of subsidies or grants for solar energy technologies, and provide attractive micro generation rates to promote the transition from using fossil fuels to solar energy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The initiatives outlined in the Government of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and highlighted in the response to this resolution indicate a willingness from the province to develop policies and initiatives that will encourage municipalities to be leaders in solar power generation. Particularly encouraging is the commitment to funding allocated through the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC).

The Government of Alberta also released an updated version of the *Micro-Generation Regulation* in early 2017 which made generation from renewable technologies easier to install. Though not specific to municipalities, the province also released the Growing Forward 2 Program which funding towards solar photovoltaics on Alberta farms. This enables producers to conserve non-renewable fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions, ultimately reducing the environmental footprint of Alberta's agriculture industry.

Energy Efficiency Alberta (EEA) was launched in January 2017, and will provide programs and funding to support transition to solar energy. The EEA recently announced a residential and commercial solar program that will be available in summer 2017 and provide rebates for the installation of solar photovoltaic systems.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

## ENVIRONMENT

### **7-16S: Wildlife Damage Compensation Program**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) requests Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, and all other relevant government ministries to 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 AAMDC request the Government of Alberta to compensate producers for confirmed cases of wildlife predation when livestock are missing and wolves, bears or cougars have been observed in area.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates that Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is aware of the weaknesses of the current Wildlife Predator Compensation Program identified in the resolution and are undertaking a program review to address issues related to funding and to proving wildlife predation. The review will involve the participation of other ministries involved in administering the Program. In following up with AEP on this resolution, the AAMDC was advised that the ministry works collaboratively with Fish and Wildlife Officers in Justice and Solicitor General and the Alberta Conservation Association to deliver the Wildlife Predator Compensation Program. Compensation formulas for sheep and pigs have been adjusted to better reflect actual market values and are more responsive to market value changes. AEP noted that recent successes in reducing wolf predation of cattle on a provincial grazing reserve highlights the value of cooperation with stakeholders and that continued work with the Alberta Beef Producers, grazing reserves, the Waterton Biosphere Association will ensue. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the AAMDC will continue to monitor the issue.

### **12-15F: Survey Requirements for Recreation Lease Renewals**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to remove the requirement for municipalities to provide surveys of provincially owned land in order to renew recreational leases and to streamline the process for renewing recreational leases for municipalities.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC appreciates that that Alberta Environment and Parks will examine ways to reduce the costs of recreation lease surveys. However, the resolution requests a change to the legislation that requires the lease holder or applicant to pay for a survey. As the government has not expressed interest in reviewing this legislative requirement, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will continue to be advocated on by the AAMDC.

### **16-15F: Species at Risk Act (SARA)**

*Status: Incomplete Information*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties facilitate a round table discussion with representation from the federal Environment Minister and provincial Environment Minister to rebuild the current *Species at Risk Act* to improve it in a way that seeks a balanced and cooperative approach (economic, environmental,

and social) to species protection that focuses on ecosystem protection; limiting impact on agriculture, industry, rural development, and land use in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates a willingness to work with the AAMDC and the federal government to take a collaborative approach to aligning species at risk protection with the need to address social and economic impacts. This is encouraging and will be followed up on by the AAMDC. The AAMDC has also provided input into the draft Species at Risk Act (SARA) policies that were released in 2016, noting that a balanced approach to protect species and their habitats needs to be considered to consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of these efforts.

As a response from the Government of Canada has not yet been received, this resolution is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. The AAMDC is continuing advocacy efforts at the provincial and federal levels to move this issue forward.

#### **2-15S: Elk Quota Hunt**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development implement an Elk Quota Hunt, based upon the principles of the former Chronic Wasting Disease Quota Hunt.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC appreciates the willingness of Alberta Environment and Parks to implement elk quota hunts and extend hunting seasons in order to address elk population growth. As the resolution specifically asks for an elk quota hunt based upon the principles of the former Chronic Wasting Disease Quota Hunt, and this has not yet occurred, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

#### **4-15S: Landowner Special License for Elk**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) amend the Landowner Special License criteria to remove the requirement to enter in the draw process and that landowners of agricultural property with less than 160 acres qualify for the special license; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that ESRD permit Landowner Special Licenses to be used in any declared season within that Wildlife Management Unit.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Although the response indicates a willingness to address the issue of landowner special licenses through a new game allocation policy, at this point there has been no policy change to address the resolution request. As such, this resolution has been deemed **Intent Not Met**, and will be revisited as the collaborative process for developing a new game allocation policy takes place.

#### **7-15S: Reinstatement of Commercial Fishing Quotas in Alberta**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) to reinstate the commercial fish quotas on all lakes that were not assessed by the Colby Report, and commence an assessment of each individual Zone, with stakeholder input, to determine the

sustainability of Alberta's commercial fishing industry, to ensure that the lakes, the industry, and the food source are sustainable in the future for all Albertans; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that ESRD engages the stakeholders of Zone E, and reassesses the Commercial Fishing Industry and practices in Zone E.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The government response asserts that the closure of Alberta's commercial fishing industry will not be reconsidered or evaluated on a zone by zone basis. As stakeholders in all zones were not provided an adequate opportunity to provide input in to the decision prior to closure, the AAMDC has deemed this resolution **Intent Not Met**, and will continue to advocate for a discussion on the viability of Alberta's commercial fishing industry that includes input from stakeholders in all zones.

#### **2-14F: Controlling and Enforcing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (Quagga and Zebra Mussels)**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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.

Alberta Environment and Parks' 2015-18 Business Plan identifies the development of a framework to address invasive species in Alberta. The AAMDC looks forward to the development of this framework, and will advocate for a zero-tolerance policy for aquatic invasive species within it. Further, the AAMDC is working with municipal associations in neighbouring provinces to ensure efforts are being taken across provincial borders to address the spread of aquatic invasive species. These collaborative efforts resulted in Saskatchewan municipal associations jointly advocating to the Government of Saskatchewan to address the spread of aquatic invasive species across provincial borders

This resolution is deemed **Accepted in Principle** until a zero-tolerance approach has been adopted by the Government of Alberta. The AAMDC will monitor the ongoing efforts to halt the movement of aquatic invasive species.

**12-14F: Amend the Waste Control Regulation 192/1996 to Address Classification of Hazardous Wastes in Landfills**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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*.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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 **Intent Not Met**.

## HEALTH AND SENIORS

### **ER1-16S: Rural Physician Action Plan Funding**

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate that the Government of Alberta maintain the current provincial funding which is being provided to the Rural Physician Action Plan / Health Workforce for Alberta initiative.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that RPAP will continue to be funded by Alberta Health and will continue to serve its mandate to the benefit for rural Albertans. This message is consistent with information received by the AAMDC through other advocacy avenues and the AAMDC would like to thank the AAMDC members for their direct advocacy on this issue as well.

In addition to the continuation of RPAP, Alberta Health has indicated that, as part of the RPAP review, the mandate of RPAP may be expanded to include other health professionals to ensure the full suite of health care professionals are available in rural communities. The AAMDC welcomes this tentative step and will take all additional opportunities to engage with Alberta Health on this issue.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

### **10-15F: Maintenance of Provincial Funding for Seniors' Lodging**

*Status: Accepted in Part*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to return to review and finalize its review of the seniors lodge program, including increasing funding to the lodge program and removing or increasing its funding cap.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** This resolution has two purposes: to request the Government of Alberta to review and finalize the seniors lodge program review, and to increase funding to the seniors lodge program. As the program review has been provided to Alberta Seniors and Housing for finalization, the first request in the resolution has been met. However, the government's response gave no indication of any imminent plan to increase funding to the seniors lodge program, though funding levels for seniors housing in general saw an increase in the 2016-17 budget from \$177 million to \$324 million. This increase came largely through additional assistance to the Alberta Social Housing Corporation which provides affordable housing for both seniors and non-seniors. Budget 2017-18 budget saw a decrease of funding to the Alberta Social Housing Corporation to \$262 million for programs delivered by the Alberta Social Housing Corporation. Of this \$262 million, however, \$100 million is dedicated to seniors housing.

The AAMDC will monitor this resolution to fully determine whether the funding increases are meeting the intent of the resolution. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**.



## INDUSTRY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

### 11-15F: Provincial Support for Municipal Aggregate Acquisition

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to use its existing tools, statutes, and regulations to deal with disputes between municipalities sourcing aggregate and other Crown lessees to expedite municipal aggregate exploration.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the AAMDC appreciates the commitment made by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to review regulatory programs for sand and gravel pits based in part on weaknesses identified by the AAMDC in the current system, the Government of Alberta response does not address the resolution request to better utilize existing policy and regulatory tools to protect municipal aggregate needs.

The AAMDC participated in engagement sessions offered by AEP to discuss pit reclamation and compliance requirements in early 2017, and emphasized the need for a provincial strategy to support the allocation of aggregate resources. Until such time that tools are in place to support effective municipal aggregate exploration, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### 17-15F: Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate Amendment

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to renew the *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation* and to update the maximum levy rate to reflect inflation and the increased cost of infrastructure upgrading and maintenance.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta underwent a review of the Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) regulation alongside other regulations as part of the Municipal Government Act Review process in 2016. During this review, the AAMDC advocated for an increase in the maximum levy rate to reflect increased costs of infrastructure upgrading and maintenance. As the revised CAPL regulation has not yet been released, this resolution will hold a status of Intent Not Met.

The AAMDC will revisit the status of this resolution upon the release of the regulation.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

### 1-16S: Preservation of Linear Assessment for Rural Municipalities

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties continue to request the Government of Alberta to cease any consideration to redistribute linear taxation in any form, and allow rural municipalities the opportunity to continue to build partnerships with their urban neighbours that support services for all Alberta residents.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that the proposed *Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA)* does not include any changes to the distribution of municipal taxes. Under the proposed legislation, municipalities will continue to collect taxes on property types within their jurisdiction, including linear property. Any sharing of municipal tax revenues will take place through mandatory intermunicipal collaboration frameworks developed locally among neighbouring municipalities. As such, the AAMDC assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

### 2-16S: Notice Period for Adjustments to Linear Assessment Modifiers

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta provide municipalities with notice of any adjustments to its linear assessment modifiers well in advance of municipal budgeting processes.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates an understanding of the concern with the timing of assessment modifier adjustments and is willing to expedite notice of such changes when possible. However, the response gives no commitment to formally changing the provincial process for determining and communicating these adjustments. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the AAMDC will follow up with members to determine whether the timing of notice has actually changed in upcoming years.

### 3-16S: Recovery of Linear Property, Commercial Property, and Education Requisition Tax Arrears

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) request the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, and other provincial legislation to broaden the tax recovery power of municipalities to collect linear property taxes by granting a lien in favour of the municipality as follows:

A lien equivalent to that granted to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) by s. 103 of the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act (OGCA)* that being: "on the debtor's interest in any well, facilities, and pipelines, land or interests in land, including mines and minerals, equipment and petroleum substances" and the power to garnish funds owed to the debtor;

A lien which ranks in priority (or equivalent) to the lien granted in favour of the AER by s. 103(2) of the OGCA;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC requests the Government of Canada to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to recognize municipal linear property taxes and other municipal non-property taxes as a secured interest in priority to other unsecured interests;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC request the Government of Alberta to provide a credit reimbursement to compensate for the education property taxes that become uncollectable due to linear and commercial property bankruptcy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Alberta Municipal Affairs has convened an inter-ministry working group consisting of representatives from Municipal Affairs, Energy, Treasury Board and Finance, Education, and the AER. The purpose of this working group is to address the concerns identified in resolution 3-16S and resolution 5-15F. More specifically, the working group is exploring how the suite of tools available to municipalities to recover unpaid linear property taxes could be expanded, as well as possible legislative or regulatory solutions to relieve or exempt municipalities from paying provincial education property tax requisitions on linear properties in which the municipality has not been able to gather tax revenues from the property owner. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be revisited as the working group progresses.

#### **1-15F: Continued Provincial Funding Support for Municipalities**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate for continued financial support to municipalities through the continuation of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative or similar program beyond 2018.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates a dedication of MSI funding beyond the 2018 timeline identified in the resolution; however, there is no clear long-term MSI strategy at this point though the program is currently under review. The AAMDC will continue to work with the province as the MSI program is renewed and will advocate for municipal funding to serve the wide range of municipal needs. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

#### **4-15F: AAMDC Participation in City Charter Discussions**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta invites participation of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties in city charter discussions.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Through the review of the *Municipal Government Act*, the Government of Alberta has committed to working with Edmonton and Calgary to develop city charters that reflect their unique needs as metropolitan areas. The AAMDC has supported this process with the understanding that any additional tools or powers allotted to the two metropolitan areas would not come at the cost of the local autonomy of the neighboring rural municipalities.

The AAMDC believes that the development of city charters and the unique powers and responsibilities they will afford Edmonton and Calgary will impact surrounding municipalities in ways not anticipated by the cities and the Government of Alberta. The impacts of decision-making and planning within one municipality regularly spills across municipal boundaries, and the implementation of city charters will be no exception.

The AAMDC does not expect to be a strong decision-maker in the city charter development process, but believes that having a rural municipal presence involved in the

process will ensure that a rural lens is being applied to the spillover impacts of city charters. Applying this lens is not only democratically responsible, but will help to strengthen the working relationship among municipalities in the Edmonton and Calgary regions.

The AAMDC will continue to request to be involved in the city charter discussions, and assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

#### **5-15F: Recovery of Linear Property Tax Arrears**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) requests the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), and other provincial legislation to broaden the tax recovery power of municipalities to collect linear property taxes by granting a lien in favour of the municipality as follows:

- a) A lien equivalent to that granted to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) by s. 103 of the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act* (OGCA) that being: “on the debtor’s interest in any well, facilities, and pipelines, land or interests in land, including mines and minerals, equipment and petroleum substances” and the power to garnish funds owed to the debtor;
- b) A lien which ranks in priority (or equivalent) to the lien granted in favour of the AER by s. 103(2) of the OGCA; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC requests the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to request the Government of Canada to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to recognize municipal linear property taxes and other municipal non-property taxes as a secured interest in priority to other unsecured interests;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC request the Province of Alberta to provide a credit reimbursement to compensate for the Education Property Taxes that becomes uncollectable due to linear property bankruptcy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In the recent response to resolution 3-16S, Alberta Municipal Affairs has indicated steps moving forward to address several issues that result from the non-payment of taxes, specifically those related to linear and other industrial property. Alberta Municipal Affairs has convened an inter-ministry working group consisting of representatives from Municipal Affairs, Energy, Treasury Board and Finance, Education, and the AER. The purpose of this working group is to address the concerns identified in resolution 3-16S and resolution 5-15F. More specifically, the working group is exploring how the suite of tools available to municipalities to recover unpaid linear property taxes could be expanded, as well as possible legislative or regulatory solutions to relieve or exempt municipalities from paying provincial education property tax requisitions on linear properties in which the municipality has not been able to gather tax revenues from the property owner. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be revisited as the working group progresses.

**13-15F: Non-Profit Housing Organizations Borrowing from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to allow housing foundations and other provincial and local non-profit affordable housing organizations to directly borrow from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority without impacting a local authority's borrowing capacity.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response does not indicate any willingness to consider the possibility of allowing non-profit housing authorities to borrow directly from ACFA, which is the request made in the resolution. Under the current framework, municipalities are unnecessarily included in the borrowing process for non-profit housing authorities, causing unnecessary administrative burdens, liability risk, and impacts to municipal borrowing limits. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**22-15F: Amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* Regarding Joint and Several Liability**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to reflect one of the following regimes:

- a) a system of pure proportionate liability; or
- b) limit joint and several liability to only certain types of losses; or
- c) limit joint and several liability to defendants whose fault exceeds a specified threshold or;
- d) eliminate joint and several liability where the plaintiff is contributory negligent.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In Bill 21: Modernized Municipal Government Act, no changes were made to joint and several liability. When addressed to the province through Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Municipal Affairs indicated that this issue would be best addressed through Alberta Justice and Solicitor General but there has been no indication of further progress on this issue. This resolution will be assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### 6-15F: Re-introduction of Bill 204 to Address the Matter of Adverse Possession

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests the Government of Alberta to place legislation before the Assembly, to amend the *Land Titles Act* to prevent the acquisition of lands acquired by adverse possession.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC is encouraged by Service Alberta's response, which supports the resolution and the need to eliminate the concept of adverse possession from the *Land Titles Act*. Further encouraging is a recent government motion calling for the abolishment of adverse possession in Alberta. The motion was unanimously approved by the all-party resource stewardship committee, and recommends that the government act to eliminate adverse possession in Alberta.

However, the resolution requests the reintroduction of specific legislation that would eliminate adverse possession, which has not occurred. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the AAMDC will monitor developments such as the reintroduction of Bill 204 or similar legislation.

### 9-15F: Referrals on the Sale of Public Lands

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to ensure that municipalities receive full compensation from the Government of Alberta, which would include proceeds from the sale of said public lands, in order to provide the required infrastructure to those said lands.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response makes no reference to the issue of costs incurred by municipalities to service previous Crown land that is purchased through public auction and developed. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will continue to advocate on this issue.

### 19-15F: Amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* for the Dedication of Environmental Reserves in Specific Cases

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to amend Section 663 of the *Municipal Government Act* by the following addition:

- (e) except when, in the case of when one lot is to be created from a quarter section of land or land is to be subdivided into lots of 16.0 hectares or more and is to be used only for agricultural purposes, the land to be subdivided is adjacent to the bed and shore of a water body where the municipality has adopted by bylaw a statutory plan that identifies the future development adjacent to the bed and shore of the water body for the purpose of providing public access, in which case the subdivision authority may require environmental reserve dedication pursuant to Section 664(1)(c)(ii)."

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The revisions to the *Municipal Government Act* do not include this specific wording nor the intent of the language. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## 1-14F: Amalgamation Process Amendments

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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, and have been emphasized in the AAMDC's final submission in the summer of 2016.

Although Alberta Municipal Affairs has 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, a previous 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 this 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 sections 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.

A draft regulation on amalgamation is expected in the spring of 2017 and may address some of these concerns.

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 **Intent Not Met**.

## 7-14F: Regional Partnership Solution to Municipal/Community Viability

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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 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 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.

Through 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 2017.

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](http://AAMDC.com).

This resolution currently has a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will be reviewed as the MGA review process proceeds.

#### 15-14F: TELUS Line Locates

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Alberta Common Ground Alliance (ACGA) is currently leading advocacy efforts at the provincial level to have legislation developed requiring all owners of buried infrastructure to register their infrastructure networks with Alberta One-Call and fulfill locate requests within a legislated time frame. The ACGA has indicated that the Government of Alberta is supportive of working with them and other stakeholders, including the AAMDC in developing legislation.

Federal Bill S-229, *An Act respecting underground infrastructure safety*, was introduced in the Senate in February 2017. Bill S-229 would require the following:

- Require operators of underground infrastructure that is federally regulated or on federal land to register that infrastructure with a notification centre.



- Require people who are planning to dig to first make a “locate request” with the relevant notification centre.
- Require operators of underground infrastructure to respond to locate requests by locating or marking the ground, providing a clear description of the location of the underground infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed excavation, or providing an all clear to proceed with excavation.

While Bill S-229 only applies to federally regulated infrastructure, if it is enacted, similar provincial legislation is likely to follow in Alberta and elsewhere.

While this legislation, if developed, may cause some municipalities challenges as buried infrastructure owners, it will solve the issue of TELUS not responding to locate requests within a reasonable time frame. As such, this resolution is deemed a status of **Accepted in Principle** based on the Government of Alberta’s support and progress being made federally through Bill S-229, and will be monitored as the process proceeds.

## TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### 6-16S: Creating a Residential Exemption to Roadside Developments

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend legislation and/or regulations, including the *Highway Development Act* and the *Highway Development and Protection Regulations*, to exempt the erection of fences, primary single family residences and associated residential property upgrades such as accessory buildings, under 200 square feet, and pools in subdivisions that have already been approved by Alberta Transportation from requiring roadside development permits in residential multi parcel subdivisions that have received Alberta Transportation approval at subdivision stage.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that the need for roadside development permits on parcels of land that have already been approved at the subdivision stage is necessary to ensure Alberta Transportation is apprised of development in the proximity of roads that may otherwise not be adequately communicated due to requirements in existing legislation. While the AAMDC appreciates Alberta Transportation's willingness to attempt to streamline the permitting process, the unwillingness of the Ministry to consider an exemption results in this resolution being assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### 2-15F: Enhance Funding for Roads, Highways and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to increase and accelerate funding for rural road and highway construction and maintenance;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the maintenance and reconstruction of local bridges in the 2016 provincial budget, and sustain this funding in future budgets.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC is pleased by the Government of Alberta's commitment to restore Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) funding in the 2017-18 budget year, as well as their targeted STIP funding for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budget years. The inclusion of a Local Road Bridge Program and the Resource Road Program sub-components within the STIP meets the intent of request for increased rural road funding in this resolution.

Additionally, the Government of Alberta's 2017-18 Capital Plan identifies a steady projected increase in annual capital funding for provincial roads and bridges, from \$450 million in 2017-18, culminating at \$588 million in 2020-21. While this funding is not specifically targeted towards rural roads and highways, it is likely that rural funding will see a proportional increase as well. As such this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

### 3-15F: Local Road Bridge Opt-Outs Under *Navigation Protection Act*

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties support the Government of Alberta's request to opt all existing local road bridges built prior to April 1, 2014 out of the Navigation Protection Act;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Alberta Transportation allow ninety days from the endorsement of this resolution for municipalities not wishing to have their local road bridges opted out of the Navigation Protection Act to communicate this request to Alberta Transportation.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with the Government of Alberta in ensuring bridges managed by AAMDC members complied with the new *Navigation Protection Act*. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

The AAMDC is concerned with the federal government's review of changes made to the *Navigation Protection Act* and whether these will have impacts on municipalities. The AAMDC will be monitoring the review and providing input when possible.

### 8-15F: Land Acquisition Process for Crown Land

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to transfer care and control of all Crown lands required for construction of public roadways to the municipality at no charge and with no other consultations required.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The government response indicates that revenue gathered through the sale of public lands is not accessible to municipalities for the purposes of road-building. This is somewhat unrelated to the purpose of the resolution, which is to provide municipalities with Crown land at no charge when it is needed to acquire rights of way to build or expand municipal roads. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and the AAMDC will advocate to Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment and Parks on this issue.

### 20-15F: Capital Funding for Community Airports

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the Community Airport Program to a level that reflects the needs of municipalities to implement necessary and timely capital upgrades for community-owned public-use airports.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The return of the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) in the 2017-18 budget year has allocated a \$2 million for the Community Airport Program (CAP). During the process of redesigning STIP, the Government of Alberta consulted with both urban and rural municipalities to determine priority infrastructure types for funding. Rural municipalities that participated in the survey indicated that a relatively small proportion of overall STIP funding (approximately 10%) should be directed towards CAP. The \$2 million allocated in 2017-18 is roughly aligned with this input. While this is slightly less than the amounts suggested in the survey, it is reasonably similar, particularly considering the high level of funding needed for roads and bridges which is also addressed in other STIP components. The AAMDC is also

pleased that eligibility criteria under CAP has been expanded to include lighting. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

### **23-15F: Alberta Transportation Highway Signage**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Transportation enforce third party sign regulations within the development control zone;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Transportation provide all municipalities with the sole authority to permit and regulate electronic signs that are within the Alberta Transportation development control zone.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates that there is limited interest in addressing municipal concerns with unlicensed third-party signage within development zones. The AAMDC hopes that the Government of Alberta reviews these regulations to ensure they properly balance the interests of businesses, municipalities and road users and would look forward to participating in such a process. At a recent meeting with the AAMDC, the minister of Transportation committed to examining the issue in more detail and following up with the AAMDC on possible solutions. At this point, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### **3-15S: Legal Opinion on the Jurisdiction of the Weed Control Act on All Railways**

*Status: Accepted*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties obtain a legal opinion on the jurisdiction of the *Weed Control Act of Alberta* for all railways, and that the opinion be shared with all of its member municipalities.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The AAMDC obtained a legal opinion on the jurisdiction of the *Weed Control Act of Alberta* (WCA) for all railways. Generally speaking, the legal opinion indicates that federal railways within Alberta and provincially regulated railway lands must comply with the weed control requirements of the WCA. The legal opinion identifies that municipal inspectors have broad authority to enforce and monitor compliance under the WCA within geographical boundaries of each municipality and that activity undertaken by a federal railway company on its lands that are not integral to federal undertakings are subject to provincial legislation. Further, the legal opinion expresses that complying with the WCA will not impair the operation of any federal railways nor is there a federal law which directly conflicts with the provisions of the WCA in this regard. This resolution has been assigned the status of **Accepted**.

### **8-15S: Government Prioritizing Rural Alberta Highways**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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 rural Alberta by setting them as a highest priority level for the province.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the Government of Alberta response acknowledges that a number of technical factors are taken into consideration when prioritizing highway maintenance and improvements, the response does not address the link between heavy

industrial traffic and premature deterioration of rural highways highlighted in the resolution.

Provincial funding tools for municipally-managed rural roads such as the Well Drilling Equipment Tax and the Resource Road Program indicate that industrial activity in rural areas does rapidly strain rural roads. A similarly focused approach to addressing provincially-managed rural roads damaged by industrial traffic would strengthen the province's transportation system. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

**3-14F: New Building Canada Fund (Provincial – Territorial Infrastructure Component) – Guaranteed Equal Opportunity Funding for Rural & Urban Populations Under 10,000**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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 complete. 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 **Intent Not Met**.

Phase 2 of the Investing in Canada programs (the Government of Canada's current infrastructure funding program) includes a \$2 billion Rural and Northern Communities component. The AAMDC has advocated to the provincial and federal governments on the importance of allowing for provincial-specific definitions of "rural communities" that are negotiated among provincial/territorial governments and municipal associations. This would allow for an Alberta-specific definition of "rural community" that better reflects local conditions.

**5-14F: Reinstatement of Funding For Resource Roads and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities**

*Status: Accepted*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In the 2015-16 provincial budget, the Government of Alberta allotted \$100 million towards the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP), which includes the Resource Road Program and Local Road Bridge Program, in its five-year capital plan. \$35 million has been contributed to STIP in 2017-18, with an additional \$30 million targeted in 2018-19 and \$35 million in 2019-20. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Accepted**.

## 6-14F: Improvement of Highways in Alberta

*Status: Accepted*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's 2015-16 budget reduced highway maintenance funding from the previous year. This resulted in a reduction in preventative maintenance such as crack-sealing, which will likely decrease the overall lifespan of Alberta's highways. Alberta Transportation's 2015-16 business plan identified several priority initiatives that may lead to the long-term improvement of highway infrastructure, including the following:

- Create and implement a transparent and infrastructure plan to sustain an efficient and effective road network in Alberta.
- Enhance transportation asset management planning to support strategic decision-making, taking into account life-cycle costs, economic, environmental and social impacts.
- Implement approaches to ensure highway operations and maintenance achieve the results Albertans need.

While the 2016-17 provincial budget maintained the reduction in summer highway maintenance, this was emphasized to be a short-term measure by Alberta Transportation staff. The Minister of Transportation has indicated that previous funding levels for summer highway maintenance will be returned in the 2017 summer season, although this figure is not specifically itemized in the budget. Additionally, the 2016-17 provincial budget included an increase of \$71.5 million for provincial highway rehabilitation compared to the 2015-16 budget, with an additional \$8 million increase in the 2017-18 budget. Additionally, the 2017-18 budget estimates include a \$166 million increase in highway twinning, widening and expansion.

This resolution has been assigned a status of **Accepted**. The AAMDC is pleased by the Government of Alberta's increase in highway rehabilitation and improvement funding, as well as their commitment to restore summer highway maintenance funding in the summer of 2017.

## 17-14F: Mileage Signage Markers Along Provincial Highways

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** 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.

As Alberta Transportation has shown no willingness to take on this responsibility, this resolution has a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## WATER

### 4-14F: Reinstatement of Funding for Water and Wastewater Systems

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In the 2015-16 provincial budget, the Government of Alberta decreased capital funding for Water for Life significantly while operational funding was zero-funded. However, the 2016-17 provincial budget increased funding to both Water for Life and the AMWWP by \$75 million: from a combined \$55 million to a combined \$130 million. Budget 2017-18 funding levels for both programs decreased from last year to \$55 million for Water for Life and \$50 million for AMWWP. Though this funding has decreased, the AAMDC is pleased that funding for the AMWWP remains in place as requested in the original resolution. Due to the specific nature of this resolution requesting these increases in the 2015 budget, this resolution cannot be assigned a status of Accepted as the intent was not fully met. It is instead assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.



## OTHER

### 4-16S: Improving Oversight of Delegated Legislation

*Status: Intent Not Met*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to enact a legislative requirement that all delegated legislation including regulations, orders in council, ministerial orders and codes, that are essential to the implementation of new or amending legislation, be submitted for review to the public and the legislature before final reading of the enabling legislation takes place.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response is not supportive of expanding the review of delegated legislation to the public and legislature. The AAMDC appreciates the government's willingness to consult on the MGA review and other recent legislation, but as the resolution requests an expansion of current consultation processes, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

# CONTRIBUTORS

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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