

# AAMDC Fall 2016 Resolutions

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Appointment of Parliamentarian
- 3) Acceptance of Order Paper
- 4) Resolution Session

- 1-16F Alberta Environment Approvals for Construction Projects** (*Red Deer County*)
- 2-16F Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy** (*Leduc County*)
- 3-16F Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment** (*MD of Taber*)
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- 26-16F Home Fire Sprinklers** (*Rocky View County*)
- 27-16F Borrowing Powers for Regional Library System Boards** (*Wheatland County*)

- 5) Acceptance of Emergent Resolutions (if needed)
- 6) Vote on Emergent Resolutions (if needed)
- 7) Closing of Resolution Session

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

Red Deer County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

The *Alberta Wetland Policy* was proclaimed in 2013 with implementation occurring in July 2015. As part of the implementation, Wetland Regulatory Requirements were established, with these regulations leading to more wetland assessments being required prior to work being done adjacent to wetlands (i.e. sloughs). This applies in many instances to road maintenance and construction projects.

It has been difficult for municipalities to meet the requirements of the Wetland Policy in a timely fashion due to the length of time it takes for Alberta Environment and Parks to issue approvals. As a result, many projects are being held up and posing safety concerns as municipalities wait for receipt of approval prior to undertaking the work.

If the work required is considered an emergency due to public safety being compromised (i.e. washed out culvert), approvals are provided in a timely fashion. However, the municipality is required to prove that an emergency exists.

In 2016, of the five small road projects being proposed by Red Deer County, only one has proceeded as the others are all awaiting approvals.

Red Deer County has been a part of a group of municipalities who have been working with Alberta Environment and Parks administration to draft a Code of Practice for municipalities to adhere to in relation to road construction and maintenance projects. If Alberta Environment and Parks approves this code of conduct, then for certain projects (such as culvert repair or replacement), the municipalities would not have to wait for Alberta Environment approval before starting the work as the work being done would be in accordance with the approved Code of Practice.

Alberta Environment and Parks' current policy for wetlands can cause major delays to road projects. For wetland approvals, a biologist must complete a field assessment and determine the class of each wetland. Seasonal (Class III), Semi-permanent (Class IV), and Permanent (Class V) wetlands can be Crown claimable (old oxbows similar to those located on Waskasoo Creek are automatically Crown claimed). An initial review is conducted on these three classes of wetlands to determine, based on the wetland's permanency, whether the land might be claimed by the crown, resulting in two possible scenarios:

If any of the wetlands appear to be permanent, and, therefore, may be claimed, a formal water boundaries determination is required, at which point the report will be submitted for review. This process currently takes 12 to 18 months.

If none of the wetlands appear permanent, the report will be kept on file and included with the *Water Act* application (but not submitted to Water Boundaries).

Should the Crown formally claim any wetlands, approval from Public Lands is required. This typically takes three months; however, a Temporary Field Authorization may be granted for work while the application is being processed, which allows the work to proceed.

For all classes of wetlands, a *Water Act* approval along with a wetland replacement proposal and offset compensation is required. Field assessments can only be done from May to September which also causes delays for projects.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy

Leduc County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

On January 1, 2017, the *Climate Leadership Act* will come into effect. The purpose of this Act is to implement a carbon levy (“tax”) on consumers of fuel throughout the fuel supply chain. This levy will be placed on nearly all forms of fuel, to most consumers, with few exceptions. As it currently stands, this will have a significant adverse financial impact on municipalities both directly through the purchase of fuels including gasoline, diesel, natural gas and propane, as well as indirectly in anticipated higher costs for goods and services purchased from vendors that are subject to pay this same levy and are required to increase their rates and fees to recover these costs.

As municipalities’ revenue streams are limited, the direct and indirect additional costs to municipalities of this levy will have to be covered through increases in taxation, charging higher user fees, or through reduction in service levels (or likely some combination of these). While the intent of the legislation, in part, may be for consumers to reduce usage of fossil fuels, there is limited opportunity for municipalities to do this as a large portion of the fuels used by municipalities is in the delivery of core services.

The carbon levy rates will “ramp-up” as the rates from 2017 will be increased by an additional 50% in 2018 and remain at this level. The rates are as follows:

Type of Fuel	January 1, 2017	January 1, 2018
Diesel	5.35 ¢/L	8.03 ¢/L
Gasoline	4.49 ¢/L	6.73 ¢/L

Natural Gas	1.011 \$/GJ	1.517 \$/GJ
Propane	3.08 ¢/L	4.62 ¢/L

Section 79(1) of the Act allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to pass regulations to exempt individuals and classes of consumers (such as municipalities) from the carbon levy. Such an exemption for municipalities is what is being sought from the Honourable Minister of Environment and Parks.

**AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 3-16F

## Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment

MD of Taber

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 1 (Foothills Little Bow)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

#### **Creation of DIP and Provincial Assessor**

*"The MMGA amendments create a new property type: "designated industrial property" and a "provincial assessor". How does removing responsibility for more than half of a municipality's assessment base demonstrate the "importance of working together with Alberta's municipalities in the spirit of partnership the newly inserted Preamble states? Current rates utilized for regulated properties do not appear to be well researched and supported. It has been stated there will be no policy changes in regard to regulated properties. If this is in fact the case how does changing the service delivery model to one that is less transparent and less accountable improve fairness and equity in the assessment process?"*

#### **Preamble:**

Currently, a municipal council is responsible to prepare assessments for all property except Linear and non-assessable property, this includes machinery & equipment, railway, other non-residential property not defined as Linear. Properties can be split into two groups: non-regulated properties - assessed on a market value standard and regulated properties – assessed using rates provided by Alberta Municipal Affairs. Assessments are required to be fair and equitable among similar properties (MGA s.293).

Non-regulated properties are based on local market data and subject to the Quality Standards outlined in the Regulation and oversight by the Province via Assessment Audit. Regulated property assessments prepared by the municipal assessor utilizing the procedures prescribed in the MGA and Regulation and are subject to oversight by the Province via Assessment Audit. Assessed persons have the right of complaint for all property types.

**MMGA Amendments:**

The Preamble the Province has added to the MMGA states: “WHEREAS Alberta’s municipalities, governed by democratically elected officials, are established by the Province, and are empowered to provide responsible and accountable local governance... ... WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of working together with Alberta’s municipalities in a spirit of partnership to co-operatively and collaboratively advance the interests of Albertans generally...”

A municipal Council may not prepare an assessment for properties defined as “Designated Industrial Property” nor does it have the ability to request information to know how a DIP assessment was prepared (or a summary of a neighboring municipalities DIP assessment) to ensure fairness and equity. Market value assessments are subject to oversight by both the municipality and the province. There are no known quality control mechanisms other than the right of complaint by an assessed person to ensure accuracy, fairness and equity for DIP properties at this time. The creation of Designated Industrial Property may have the effect of creating two standards of assessment for the same or similar property (i.e. veggie processing plants)

**Recommendations:**

To ensure transparency and accountability, it may be much more cost effective and efficient for the Ministry to dismiss the concept of “designated industrial property” and fulfill the existing mandate of supporting property assessment by providing modernizing and maintaining regulated rates/manuals, training for municipal officials, assessors, and industry representatives in conjunction with other stakeholders, and an adequate oversight and advisory component to ensure quality control. The MD of Taber supports the Alberta Assessors’ Association report and recommendation on the topic of Centralized Industrial Assessment submitted to the Stake Holder Advisory Committee earlier this year.

*Letter sent to Minister Larivee September 13, 2016*

September 13, 2016

Honourable Danielle Larivee, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Alberta Municipal Affairs Legislature Office  
Room 204, Legislature Building  
10080 – 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

via email: [minister.municipalaffairs@gov.ab.ca](mailto:minister.municipalaffairs@gov.ab.ca)

RE: Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment for the 2018 Tax Year (2017 Assessment Year)

Dear Minister Larivee,

As you are aware Bill 21 - *The Modernized Municipal Government Act* creates a Centralized Industrial Property Assessment Authority under the newly created position of Provincial Assessor. Effective for the 2018 property tax year the Provincial Assessor will be responsible for the assessment of ‘designated industrial property’ as yet to be defined in Regulation. 2018 property taxation will be based on the 2017 property assessment – the 2017 assessment year begins January 1, 2017 – in just over 100 days. The Municipal District of Taber remains opposed to this change in Provincial policy and the removal of this portion of property assessment from the responsibility of the municipal assessor for reasons previously submitted in our letter dated April 15, 2016.



However, we would be remiss in our duties to our citizens if we did not consider the effect Centralized Industrial Property Assessment will have on resourcing, staffing levels, and the subsequent changes in our budgetary planning process which is rapidly approaching (beginning in October) for 2017. To this end, we would appreciate your timely assistance in answering several of the following questions so we may be accurately informed prior to our decision making and budget processes.

- When may we expect the Regulation defining 'designated industrial properties' to be completed and available to us?
- What transitional process has Municipal Affairs developed for the transfer of responsibility for the assessment of 'designated industrial property' from our municipal assessors to the Provincial Assessor?
  - How much time will be required of our municipal assessors to complete this transition?
  - How many years can we expect the transition to take before completed?
- How many properties within our boundaries do you anticipate will be redefined as 'designated industrial property' whose assessment responsibility will be transferred to the Provincial Assessor?
- When will we be informed which properties will be redefined as 'designated industrial properties' and under the Provincial Assessor's responsibility?
- When will we be informed of the process (potentially including the regulated rates) to be used by the Provincial Assessor to prepare the assessment of 'designated industrial properties' within our boundaries so we may provide information to our citizens and property owners when we are asked?
  - When can we expect consultation to happen regarding how the assessment will be structured and what the valuation standard will represent?
- Will 'designated industrial properties' be a regulated process with regulated rates for improvements and land?
- Will the valuation standard for 'designated industrial properties' be based on market value? Current replacement cost? Current Construction cost?
  - As consultation has not yet occurred what valuation standard will be in effect for the 2017 assessment year beginning January 1, 2017?
- Given the range of properties that may be redefined as 'designated industrial property' as indicated in Bill 21 how much can we expect our assessment base to change as a result of the valuation standard changing from the current one of market value to a potentially regulated rate?
  - Currently regulated rates described in the Minister's Guidelines are not representative of current market/replacement costs (being based more than 10 years ago) nor do they include fee simple market land values.
- Bill 21, as drafted, allows municipalities to sub-class the non-residential tax rate according to a yet to be determined Regulation.
  - Will municipalities be allowed to balance potential losses resulting from a change in the valuation standard for 'designated industrial properties' through a sub-class tax rate change outside of the prescribed 5:1 ratio?
  - How many sub-classes will there be?
  - What will the sub-classes be based on?
  - Will sub-classes be mandatory or optional?
  - Will sub-classes be linked to each other? To what degree?
  - Please indicate what resources you estimate we will require to implement a split tax rate for non-residential properties (including system changes and man hours).
- If consultation determines the valuation standard to be market value as currently defined in the MGA, will our assessors be required to provide 'market data' to the Provincial assessor for the assessment of 'designated industrial property'?
  - If so, what will the timeline be for this?
  - Will this requirement take precedence over the resources required to prepare municipal assessments (Condition date for centralized industrial property proceeds the municipal

- date, however our assessors will be busy preparing municipal assessments and may not have time to assist the Provincial assessor)?
- If so, wouldn't it be more administratively efficient for the responsibility of the assessment of 'designated industrial properties' to remain with the municipal assessor? A greater level of cooperation, education, advisory and oversight with/by Municipal Affairs could be implemented to ensure consistency, accuracy, and fairness and equity.
  - Will we be charged a fee over and above the provincial levy described in Bill 21 for the preparation and defense of 'designated industrial property' assessments?
    - Can Municipal Affairs provide an estimated value as to what this cost structure will look like for our budgetary purposes?
      - For assessment preparation?
      - For assessment defence in the event of an appeal (including appeal to the Courts which will likely require retention of legal counsel)?
  - Will 'designated industrial property' assessments be audited by an entity independent of the Provincial assessor and Municipal Affairs?
    - Will we be charged a fee for the auditing of 'designated industrial property' within our boundaries?
    - Can Municipal Affairs provide an estimated value as to what this cost structure will look like for our budgetary purposes?
  - Bill 21 gives us the right to appeal 'centralized industrial property' assessments. Has a process been developed to enable us to access information in regards to 'designated industrial property' assessments?
    - As the Province is preparing these assessments on our behalf will ALL data be forwarded to us when requested?
    - Will we be required to pay a fee in exchange for this information?
  - Bill 21 states an assessment prepared by the Provincial Assessor will take primacy over an assessment prepared by the municipal assessor on the same property. How many 'lost' hours can we expect to pay for without recompense when the Province invokes their primacy right in regards to the assessment of any particular property and negates/cancels the value prepared by the municipal assessor?
  - Bill 21 does not expand the tools a municipality has to recover unpaid taxes from non-titled properties. Will we be responsible to pay for the preparation of the assessment of a 'designated industrial property' whose non-titled owner is in receivership, facing bankruptcy or the account is otherwise uncollectable? Will the school taxes also continue to be levied on these properties in perpetuity?
  - We can only assume Municipal Affairs performed shift/cost studies and/or ran this as a pilot project in a particular municipality prior to determining such a radical policy change was appropriate. When will the results of these studies/pilot project be available for municipalities to review so we may draw conclusions to better prepare ourselves for this transition and answer questions posed by those non-residential property owners who were not consulted in the process?

As you can see the significance of this policy shift creates a marked impact on the predictability and stability of our primary revenue stream as well as the annual budgeting and forecasting processes a prudent municipality must complete to carry on sustainable operations. Until the action plan Municipal Affairs intends to implement is revealed to municipalities the impact of 'designated industrial property' assessment will continue to impose difficulties and uncertainties and threaten local autonomy and accountability.

We continue to believe the issues currently surrounding property assessment, and more specifically industrial property assessment, could be better resolved by Municipal Affairs fulfilling a mandate it's had for more than 20 years to provide:

- clear, concise and responsive Legislation,
- adequate ongoing training,
- current up-to-date guidelines and manuals responsive to evolving issues and technologies, and

- expanded oversight functionality (assessment audit).

As such, it remains our opinion the creation of a centralized industrial property assessment authority under a Provincial assessor puts further strain on a department already appearing to struggle to fulfill its mandate.

In summary, we look forward to your timely response to the questions posed so we may be better informed of the Ministry's intentions and planned actions regarding 'designated industrial property' so we may prudently complete our 2017 operating budget. We continue to believe the modifications presented in Bill 21 for the purpose of centralizing industrial property assessment represent a fundamental encroachment on municipal autonomy. We further believe this policy change to be based on the fallible beliefs of a limited few individuals rather than representing the opinions of the majority as offered and reinforced over the course of the Summer Tour. There is a high potential our level of service to our citizens may be threatened by these unknowns negatively impacting our municipal operations and sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns on this matter. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with the Province where policy changes of such critical importance to our municipality are concerned.

Respectfully,

Brian Brewin  
Reeve, Municipal District of Taber

cc: Mr. Brad Pickering, Deputy Minister Municipal Affairs  
cc: Ms. Meryl Whittaker, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Assessment & Grants Division  
cc: MLA  
cc: Mr. Al Kemmere, President, AAMD&C  
cc: AUMA president@AUMA.ca  
cc: Foothills Little Bow Association  
cc: Alberta Assessors' Association lhodge@assessor.ab.ca

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 4-16F

## **Centralized Industrial Assessment**

Northern Sunrise County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 4 (Northern)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

History has shown that a centralized industrial property assessment authority is ineffective. In the past centralized assessment was part of the provincial government services to improvement districts. The current issues that are facing local assessors is unclear legislation and regulations and an out-of-date equipment manual. The creation of this centralized authority will have staffing implications for Municipal Affairs who are already unable to fulfill their mandate concerning the provision of adequate training and current guidelines to the assessment community and they will struggle to fulfill their mandate.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 5-16F

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

Parkland County & MD of Greenview

*Simple Majority Required*  
*Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River) & District 4 (Northern)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Coal is used as the source of power generation for up to 55% of Alberta's power needs. There is an abundant supply of low sulphur coal in Alberta and the technology exists to burn it with fewer emissions. Even with wind and solar developments, there must be an "on-demand" supply that will replace it when renewable sources of electricity do not produce. Wind produces 30% of the time while solar is limited to 15% of the time. Alberta's coal contains more than twice the energy of all of the province's other non-renewable energy resources, including conventional oil and pentanes, natural gas, natural gas liquids, and bitumen and synthetic crude. While natural gas is promoted as a replacement, it is subject to wild price fluctuations. This would tie the province to one source for both heating and electrical needs, which during a price spike would severely impact everyone, but most drastically, the poor and economically vulnerable who can least afford it.

Under existing federal regulations, coal fired power plants are required to meet performance standards to lower greenhouse gas emissions or retire when they reach 50 years of operations. Thermal coal is

predominantly used for electricity generation, and Alberta produced 23.3 million tonnes of coal for coal-fired electricity power plants in 2014. In Alberta, 12 coal fired generating units are expected to retire before 2030.

Coal has proven to be the most economical method of producing electricity in areas that do not have access to hydro power. Strict standards are set for facilities to become as efficient as natural gas generation. By 2030, two-thirds of Alberta's coal generating capacity will be replaced by renewable energy, with one-third replaced by natural gas. The loss of the commodity and the introduction of a carbon levy on natural gas will cause a significant spike in the cost of electricity to the end user. Countries which had previously decided to phase out coal fired generation are not opening up new sites as the cost of utilizing renewable energy is too expensive and the reliability of which does not meet the standards set by coal.

For the municipalities throughout Alberta with ties to the coal-fired generating plants and coal mines, the loss of the generating companies will have a significant effect on their communities. It will impact the viability of many smaller communities who rely on the corporate tax revenues, the financial infusion and community support through sponsorships, grants and donations to non-profit organizations and the direct and indirect employment created by the power generators and mine operators.

There will be limited local employment opportunities available for displaced workers, forcing them to move out of the region. The loss of these families will affect enrolment in schools, the volunteer base, and the business base.

Starting in 2018, coal-fired generators will pay \$30 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> on emissions based on an industry-wide performance standard. These new climate change rules will make companies unwilling to invest in Alberta power generation. Both TransCanada and AltaGas cited the change in Alberta's laws – such as the new policy that all carbon emissions be taxed at \$30 per tonne – as the reason for the cancellation of their power purchasing agreements from coal-fired power generating plants earlier this year.

Between 2010 and 2015, the Alberta Government received over \$91 million in royalties from coal companies to financially support government programs and services which enrich the lives of all Albertans. Rural municipalities struggle to survive and the decision to shut down all coal fired plants without attempting to look at ways to ensure that these plants are viable, both economically and environmentally, is very short sighted. The ultimate cost may be more than our province and citizens can afford.

There is an opportunity for Alberta to become a leader in the development of the clean burning of coal, which would allow us to meet the province's emissions goals while not negatively impacting the ability of small rural communities to remain sustainable. Alberta could be a global leader in research and development and generating new employment opportunities, as we export a technology that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions world-wide. New coal mining projects can further diversify the economy, pay billions of dollars in taxes and royalties to government and create thousands of high paying, long term jobs.

Prior to phasing out all coal fired generating plants, all options should be considered and a full analysis undertaken regarding the costs for new generating facilities and required transmission infrastructure, compensation to generating companies for stranded assets and financial impacts to businesses and residents. The final cost may be more than the province and citizens can afford.

## REFERENCES

Alberta Energy

Coal Association of Canada

*Coal Industry fighting Alberta Plans to phase out power plants*, Edmonton Journal online, March 31, 2016

HR Milner – Maxim Power Corporation

*Phase-out of coal fired emissions in Alberta*, Alberta Government, March 2016

*TransCanada becomes latest to terminate Alberta coal-power deals, citing higher costs, CBC online, March 7, 2016*

**AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 6-16F

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

County of St. Paul

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 5 (Edmonton East)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

The *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* states:

*8 (5) Subject to subsections (6) to (9), every recipient shall pay to the Crown a carbon levy on natural gas, at the rate for natural gas set out in the Table in the Schedule, at the time the recipient sells, removes or purchases natural gas from a natural gas distribution system...*

*15 (1) Subject to the regulations, a consumer is exempt from paying a carbon levy on fuel if:*

*(e) the fuel is marked fuel that is used for farming operations, or*

*(f) the fuel is not put into a fuel system that produces heat or energy, and is not flared or vented, when used*

*(i) as a raw material in an industrial process that produces another fuel,*

*(ii) as a raw material in an industrial process that produces another substance that is not a fuel,*

*(iii) as a solvent or diluent in the production or transport of crude bitumen or other substances, or*

*(iv) for any other prescribed purpose.*

On January 1st, 2017, Alberta's carbon levy will take effect and it will have profound financial implications for the agricultural industry particularly those that rely on natural gas and propane to run their operations. Agricultural producers will have no ability to pass these added costs of production on and it will present challenges to the industry's competitiveness. This is especially concerning given the current state of the Albertan economy.

The perceived challenge of a carbon levy for the agriculture sector stems from the difficulty posed by decreasing fuel use in the short-run in order to adapt to the tax. Heating greenhouses and harvesting



crops with machinery, for example, are essential to the proper functioning of many agricultural operations. An increase in the price of fuels drives up energy costs and could lead to adverse results: for example, potentially decreased profits, reduction of planted acres, a decline in net exports or even farms leaving the industry altogether.

Other jurisdictions such as British Columbia have recognized the challenges a carbon levy poses for the agricultural sector. As a result of these perceived challenges, in 2012 the government granted BC's high-tech greenhouse vegetable and horticulture growers a one-time, \$7.6 million reprieve from the carbon tax, allowing producers to remain more competitive.

This was followed in the 2013 Budget by a permanent grant program for commercial greenhouse growers (vegetable, floriculture, wholesale production and forest seedling nurseries) that is set at 80 percent of the carbon tax paid on natural gas and propane for heating and carbon dioxide production. In Budget 2014, Carbon Tax Relief for the Greenhouse Sector provides an incremental \$1 million over three years for the Greenhouse Carbon Tax Relief Grant program.

While British Columbia has implemented a series of grant programs and rebates, these would require additional government resources to administer and would take longer to be returned to the agricultural producer.

An exemption is the simplest and most effective way to ensure that agricultural producers can remain competitive when it comes to purchasing natural gas or propane for their operations.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 7-16F

## **Vegetation Management on Alberta Provincial Highways**

MD of Bonnyville & County of Stettler

*Simple Majority Required*

*Endorsed by District 2 (Central) & District 5 (Edmonton East)*

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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.**

## Member Background

Reductions to provincial funding have impacted vegetation management along provincial highways resulting in changes specifically stating that maintenance along provincial highways only receive 1 shoulder cut per year, no full width mowing, and no scheduled weed spraying. Only reactive spot spraying will occur after the Province has received a weed notice from a municipality. This has left local municipalities having to control weeds along provincial highways through the identification and issuance of notices to Alberta Transportation, diminishing time and attention to municipal roadways. In addition, adjacent landowners are frustrated with the weeds in the Provincial Right-of-Ways because the weeds are propagating onto their lands causing financial burden and the overgrowth is impacting the safety of travelling motorists and migratory wildlife along Alberta highways.

The weed issue has local, provincial, national, and possibly international impacts as hay, grain, and other commodities are transported via our highway network daily. Any vehicle that stops on the side of the highway could potentially transfer weed seeds anywhere. The impact is two-fold: an increased weed control budget (whether it's spraying, or mowing, or hand removal) and dockage to grains and forages sold into the market place. The added increased costs affect the overall net profits at the farm level.

In addition to not controlling weeds in highway ditches, the Government of Alberta has reduced its mowing program along our highway ditches. Mowing, also a method of controlling weeds, used to be conducted twice per year along our highways – along the shoulder, and every four to five years as prescribed from shoulder to fence-line. This year we were initially informed that the province did not budget for any ditch mowing in Stettler County. After raising concerns to Alberta Transportation we were informed we would get one mow this season, of only one pass along the shoulder of the highway. Not only does this impact control of the weeds along our highways, we have a grave concern for the safety of the public travelling these highways. The visibility of wildlife crossing the highways is hindered by the tall weeds and grass. We have received several letters, calls and visits from county residents who have noticed increased wildlife and bird strikes along our two and three digit highways. They are worried for their own safety as well as the safety of local wildlife impacted by motorist's inability to spot wildlife and have proper warning time in which to react to wildlife crossing. Furthermore, this has a financial impact from the aspect of automobile insurance rates and premiums.

The best control of weeds comes from prevention, not reaction. The Government of Alberta is not abiding by its own legislation intended to control the spread of noxious and prohibited noxious weeds. By not controlling the ditches, municipalities are put in the uncomfortable position of having to issue weed notice to the Province. We cannot expect landowners to control weeds on their land while the Government of Alberta ignores weeds in their right-of-ways. In the past Alberta Transportation had the option of signing Service Agreements with each municipality to do invasive plant control, but that option is no longer available in some districts (including Stettler County) as a result of the highway maintenance contracts in those areas.

### *History & Legislation*

The *Alberta Weed Control Act*, which was proclaimed in 1907 and last reviewed in 2011, aims to regulate noxious weeds, prohibited noxious weeds, and weed seeds through various control measures, such as inspection and enforcement, together with provisions for recovery of expenses in cases of non-compliance'. Additionally, it mandates the licensing of seed cleaning plants and mechanisms. Pertaining to weed control of noxious or prohibited noxious weeds definition and landowner's responsibilities are as follows:

#### **Part 1**

##### **Noxious weeds — control**

**2** A person shall control a noxious weed that is on land the person owns or occupies.

##### **Prohibited noxious weeds — destroy**

**3** A person shall destroy a prohibited noxious weed that is on land the person owns or occupies.

##### **Spread of weeds prohibited**

**4(1)** *Subject to the regulations, a person shall not use or move any thing that, if used or moved, might spread a noxious weed or prohibited noxious weed.*

As per *Alberta Weed Control Act* Part 1 Sec 2&3, weed control on our provincial highways should be set and maintained to demonstrate our commitment and compliance to the act itself.

At present it appears there is no consistent highway weed maintenance program in effect, evidence of this is driving down the Highway 2 corridor south of Edmonton. This central part of the province is our prime Agricultural district within Alberta and should be maintained with high priority. - Alberta Economic Development & Trade reported the export of crops and livestock rose 65% between 2010 and 2015. As well, Alberta has one of the world's most productive agricultural economies, with a total farm area of 50.5 million acres or 20.4 million hectares.

In 2015, farm cash receipts for Alberta totaled \$13.6 billion, representing 23 per cent of Canada's primary agricultural production. The province posted the highest cattle receipts as well as the third highest total crop receipts in the country. This alone gives us good reason to be protecting our agricultural land from the spread of noxious weeds in these prime corridors.

Landowners in the County of Stettler are spending large sums of money on weed control, but are also seeing their results diminish because of a lack of responsibility by the Province, regarding the *Alberta Weed Act*. The *Alberta Weed Act* was introduced in 1907 to ensure landowners practice good husbandry and stewardship of our lands. As fellow landowners, the Province, by not proactively controlling weeds is insinuating we should wait until a weed notice is issued (as referred to in the response by Alberta Transportation) before conducting any weed control. We have noticed the amount of time taken to respond to a weed infestation has increased - leading to larger infestations. It impacts our ratepayers/landowners and the county, as both must increase their budgets for weed control.

The most cost-effective strategy against invasive species is preventing them from establishing rather than relying on a municipality to identify an infestation and react by issuing a notice. Allowing undesirable plants to grow increases the risk to human health (poisonous plants) and public safety by reducing visibility along road shoulders where wildlife are crossing or grazing.

#### *Other Stakeholders:*

Alberta Invasive Plants Council - This group of individuals and organizations work hard to educate the public on invasive species (plants, and organisms) not only in our province, but also those that can potentially be introduced in our province. This group tries very hard to stop the spread of invasive species.

Association of Alberta Agriculture Fieldmen - This is a group of about 155 members from across the province, these men and women work hard every day to try and reduce or eradicate the invasive species in their respective Counties or MD's. They are bound by the *Alberta Weed Act* in their own jurisdiction to both keep Right of Ways clean, but also educate and enforce weed concerns to local producers.

Agricultural Services Board - There are 70 municipalities that have an Agricultural Services Board, this board and its members create and uphold strategic plans that include proactive measures to reduce invasive populations in their jurisdiction. We work hard every year to improve our stewardship on the lands around us. There have been a number of resolutions endorsed by Agricultural Services Boards since 2006 on this issue.

Alberta Transportation - Alberta Transportation has a very high invested interest as they are in control of the highways, these roads must be kept safe for all travelers. Letting unwanted vegetation stay on the shoulders of the roads, growing tall allows for very unsafe driving conditions, as wildlife can emerge with little notice, as well as, travelers when stopping on the sides of the roads can unknowingly transfer

invasive species.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry – The Alberta Weed Act is an act that has been around since 1907. This is an act that was created by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. If the expectation is to educate and enforce this act upon the public, they must abide themselves.

Stettler County Local Ratepayers adjacent to the highways - Having neighboring lands with our provincial highways, local ratepayers spend more time, and money on their fence-lines, and highway right of ways controlling weeds and unwanted vegetation.

CP and CN rail lines - The rail lines cross over provincial highways all over the province, when the two cross, there is a chance of transferring weeds further on, even out of province.

Insurance Industry - We have received several letters, calls and visits from county residents who have noticed increased wildlife and bird strikes along our two and three digit highways. They are worried for their own safety as well as the safety of local wildlife impacted by motorist's inability to spot wildlife and have proper warning time in which to react to wildlife crossing. This has a financial impact from the aspect of automobile insurance rates and premiums.

In summary, we are asking for government collaboration and positive partnership in moving forward to clean up Alberta highways for the benefit of landowners who live along these highways and the safety of all who travel them. Consistency with a province-wide invasive plant management annual budget is needed for Alberta's highways.

### **AAMDC Background**

3:15F: Legal Opinion on the Jurisdiction of the Weed Act on All Railways

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.

Resolution 8-16F

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

Lacombe County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Limiting the frequency in which similar topics are presented in the form of resolutions encourages the effect use of the resolution process. Once a resolution is passed on the convention floor it become a policy position of the AAMDC and is retained as an active policy for three years. The practice of sending identical or similar resolutions to senior levels of government consumes resources that the AAMDC and senior levels of government must allocate to provide responses that could otherwise be used address current resolutions.

In many instances the response from the senior levels of government do not change regardless as to the number of times a resolution is presented for consideration.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 9-16F

## **Gravel Pit Reclamation**

Sturgeon County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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WHEREAS the Code of Practice for Pits (made under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, RSA 2000, CE-12, as amended) only applies to a gravel pit that came into operation after August 15, 1978; and

WHEREAS the *Code of Practice for Pits* establishes operational, conservation and reclamation requirements, essential for balancing the need for aggregate development with residents' quality of life; and

WHEREAS many gravel pits across rural Alberta were established prior to August 15, 1978 and therefore, are not subject to the requirements of the *Code of Practice for Pits*, contributing to many gravel pits not being reclaimed across the rural landscape; and

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;

**THEREFORE, 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 place the same, or similar requirements on gravel pits established prior to August 15, 1978 as those established afterwards, with the intention of better enforcing the reclamation of gravel pits so as to enhance the quality of life and opportunities for rural residents.**

### **Member Background**

Sturgeon County values the benefits the aggregate industry provides to the Province of Alberta, and wishes to continue working with the industry to provide value to residents and community. Although the industry brings value to the Province and aggregate is a required resource for infrastructure and the prosperity of Alberta residents and businesses, the location and operations of gravel pits oftentimes place constraints on nearby residents' quality of life.

Most industrial partners work to ensure residents' quality of life remains intact to the fullest extent possible, but there are some circumstances, permissible through gaps within the Code of Practice for Pits where such concerns can be ignored, specifically reclamation requirements, for pits established prior to August 15, 1978.

Such operations exist in Sturgeon County and elsewhere in rural Alberta, where a municipality may wish to amend conditions on a development permit governing the operations of a gravel pit in specific regards to when a site must be reclaimed by, but cannot since the pit was established pre-1978. There is often times no incentive for the pit owner to reclaim the site, and much of the impacts on residents' quality of life is able to continue indefinitely. Through applying the same rules that pertain to post-1978 gravel pits to such sites, Sturgeon County believes these concerns can be addressed.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 10-16F

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

Sturgeon County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Sturgeon County values the benefits the aggregate industry provides to the Province of Alberta, and wishes to continue working with the industry to provide value to residents and community.

Although the industry brings value to the Province and aggregate is a required resource for infrastructure and the prosperity of Alberta residents and businesses, the location and operations of gravel pits oftentimes place constraints on nearby residents' quality of life.

Most industrial partners work to ensure residents' quality of life remains intact to the fullest extent possible, but there are some circumstances, permissible through gaps within the Code of Practice for Pits where such concerns can be ignored, specifically reclamation requirements, for pits established prior to August 15, 1978.

Such operations exist in Sturgeon County and elsewhere in rural Alberta, where a municipality may wish to amend conditions on a development permit governing the operations of a gravel pit in specific regards to when a site must be reclaimed by, but cannot since the pit was established pre-1978. There is often times no incentive for the pit owner to reclaim the site, and much of the impacts on residents' quality of life is able to continue indefinitely.

Through applying the same rules that pertain to post-1978 gravel pits to such sites, Sturgeon County believes these concerns can be addressed.

As the Provincial Government reviews the regulations associated with the Municipal Government Act later in 2016, exploring funding models within the Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation may be an opportunity to better enforce and provide funding for the reclamation of orphaned and abandoned gravel pit sites.

### **AAMDC Background**

17-15F: Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate Amendment



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 is currently in the process of reviewing the Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) though the direction of the review and whether the maximum rate will be increased is unknown. As such, this review will remain as Intent Not Met. The AAMDC will continue use this resolution to frame its input into the CAPL review and will revisit the status of this resolution upon the completion of the review and update.

Resolution 11-16F

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

Brazeau County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Many municipalities in Alberta have invested significant dollars in infrastructure to provide improved connectivity to the residents and businesses in their communities. High speed internet and improved mobility is essential for economic and community development, access to provincial services, public safety and is fast becoming an expectation for those considering moving to rural communities. The current operating agreement the Government of Alberta has with AXIA was put in place with limited outside consultation and limits both the public and private sectors in providing reliable and affordable broadband coverage. Brazeau County and its municipal partners in the Alberta Rural Communications Alliance group have experienced extreme levels of frustration in attempting to work with AXIA to facilitate better access to the broadband infrastructure to the benefit of their residents, businesses and the municipal organization.

The current operating agreement between Service Alberta and AXIA is set to expire on June 30, 2018. Repeated discussions and meetings with Service Alberta has not provided confidence that the next agreement will provide better access to rural Alberta.

According to a 2015 submission to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) by Cybera, a not-for-profit technical agency with a mandate to help Alberta advance its IT frontiers, the lack of equitable access to reliable high speed internet is creating an uneven playing field for Alberta's rural communities and the individuals, families and businesses that wish to live and work in them.

"Canada's rural communities face a serious challenge in maintaining their economic viability as residents migrate to urban centres to access better connectivity tools. Fast broadband is increasingly being considered a necessity by home buyers. Without careful consideration, the rural-urban divide will continue to grow. It is critical that rural and remote residents be given the same opportunities as urban Canadians with respect to the adoption of internet services."

In the current struggling economy, it is even more vital that rural municipalities are able to provide the opportunity for new business ventures of all sizes, from smaller home-based operations to medium and larger-scale commercial and industrial, to set up and flourish in their communities. Without the ability to support the digital, mobile and online demands of today's households and businesses, rural communities will begin to stagnate and decline as both existing and potential residents and economic opportunities choose to settle elsewhere.

It is our hope that the involvement of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee in the negotiation of the new SuperNet agreement can ensure that these disparities are addressed and access to the SuperNet can be gained for municipalities, many of which have shown their own commitment to facilitating better access for their communities through investment in infrastructure.

### **AAMDC Background**

5-15S: Review of Alberta SuperNet Agreement with Axia SuperNet Ltd.

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 is currently in the process of developing an RFP for a new SuperNet operator when Axia's contract expires in 2018. 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.

Resolution 12-16F

## **Wildland Fire Fighting Costs**

Parkland County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Increasing frequency and duration of wildland fires outside the Forest Protection Area is negatively impacting municipal budgets and fire services. These fire are beyond the scope of resources, training and financial capacity for many of Alberta's rural fire services. The typical grass or brush fires have been managed by most fire services over the years but increasingly these fires have become major events, lasting weeks. Many of these events have required extensive local resources and mutual aid assistance to effectively control and contain the fire risk. This extended wildfire occurrence is triggered from multiple factors such as drought, fuel conditions in developed areas, rapid fire growth, and limited firefighting resources.

Municipalities may have mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire services but they too are limited in capabilities and training. 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. These resource come at substantial cost and this is a major pressure to municipal budgets.

The increasing size of these wildland fires is a major risk to the municipal fire fighters who are often inadequately equipped or trained to manage such a large and protracted event. These fire services lack the ability to control and extinguish these large fires forcing departments to depend on costly external resources from Agriculture and Forestry and private contractors.

These large wildfires are major cost centres that exceed the municipality's financial resources. This forces the municipalities into a negative situation financially and places other municipal services under pressure to adjust for these events. Cost for one of these large events can be 10 times the annual budgeted amount.

Due to the costs of calling for the assistance of provincial resources, the required resources and expertise is often delayed. This delay contributes in the spread of fires that could easily be contained if the proper resources and expertise were on the scene. This delay, and the subsequent increase in the size of the fire, results in more expenses, more damages and more provincial resources being required to extinguish the fire.

The cost of utilizing these resources is a major factor in not utilizing the resources and expertise available. The Provincial Government has access to both the resources and expertise to assist in the control and extinguishment of wildland fires. These resources and expertise are paid for by Albertans and should benefit all Albertans. By charging these costs directly to municipalities outside of the Forest Protection Area, the government is putting the safety of Albertans at undue risk.

### **AAMDC Background**

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

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.

Resolution 13-16F

## **Northern Gateway Pipelines Support**

Strathcona County & Sturgeon County

*Simple Majority Required*

*Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River) & District 5 (Edmonton East)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Northern Gateway is a pipeline project led by Enbridge, which would transport crude oil from Alberta to British Columbia. Northern Gateway is the only Canadian oil pipeline project with Indigenous ownership, represented by The Aboriginal Equity Partners, which represents the 31 Indigenous communities in British Columbia and Alberta who support and have ownership in the Northern Gateway project.

As part of the approval process, the National Energy Board had placed 208 conditions on the project that the ownership group would be required to meet prior to construction. Simultaneously, the federal Court of Appeal ruled that further federal government consultation was required with Indigenous communities, and quashed the approval—referring it back to the federal government for consideration.

As municipalities through which the pipeline would run, Strathcona County and Sturgeon County are both supportive of the overall project and agree that social license from all affected parties is necessary for this project to move forward. We believe other Counties and Municipal Districts agree, based on AAMDC support for the Energy East Pipeline.

Therefore, we would ask the AAMDC share their support for the project with the Federal Government, specifically with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources. Further, that this support run collaboratively with the Government of Alberta, and that both the Provincial and the Federal governments drive towards the outcome of ensuring this project move forward, with the support of all communities involved.

#### *Albertans Support Northern Gateway*

In June 2016, communities along Northern Gateway’s route expressed their support for Northern Gateway’s extension request by sending letters to the National Energy Board including:

- 20 out of 20 Alberta communities along pipeline route
- 17 out of 18 First Nations and Métis communities
- Unanimous support from the Alberta Chamber of Commerce

#### *Putting Albertans Back to Work*

- With the current downturn in our economy, Alberta is losing our highly skilled work force. Northern Gateway will keep these people here to maintain and grow Alberta’s skilled labour base.

#### *Total construction employment opportunities in Alberta\**

<b>Grande Prairie Area</b>	<b>Whitcourt Area</b>	<b>Sturgeon County / Strathcona County Area</b>
Construction taking place over 3 Phases: <b>Phase 1 (Pipelines)</b> 1,105 people	Construction taking place over 3 Phases: <b>Phase 1 (Pipelines)</b> 517 people	Construction taking place over 2 Phases: <b>Phase 1 (Pipelines)</b> 297 people
<b>Phase 2 (Pipelines)</b> 440 people	<b>Phase 2 (Pipelines)</b> 318 people	<b>Phase 2 (Pump Station)</b> 61 people
<b>Phase 3 (Pump Station)</b> 71 people	<b>Phase 3 (Pump Station)</b> 68 people	
<b>1,616 total people working over 3 phases</b>	<b>903 total people working over 3 phases</b>	<b>358 total people working over 2 phases</b>

*\*note: employment opportunities include temporary, part time and full time jobs taken from Volume 6C of the Regulatory Application*

*What kind of skilled Alberta tradespeople/opportunities will be created by Northern Gateway?*

<b>Construction</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>Business Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boilermakers</li> <li>▪ Carpenters</li> <li>▪ Electricians</li> <li>▪ Ironworkers</li> <li>▪ Labourers including trade helpers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Control room technicians</li> <li>▪ Heavy equipment operations</li> <li>▪ Maintenance and service pump stations</li> <li>▪ Monitoring pipeline corridor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ access roads</li> <li>▪ air charters</li> <li>▪ camps and catering</li> <li>▪ clear, log and salvage</li> <li>▪ fuel supply</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Operating engineers/heavy equipment operators</li> <li>▪ Pipefitters</li> <li>▪ Truck drivers</li> <li>▪ Welders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Road maintenance</li> <li>▪ Tank farm operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ environmental monitoring and reclamation</li> <li>▪ security</li> <li>▪ surveying</li> <li>▪ trucking</li> </ul>
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#### *Long-term Jobs in Alberta*

- Northern Gateway will provide 380 long term operational jobs in Alberta
- Northern Gateway is committed to hiring local residents for all direct operational jobs.

#### *Timeline of Key Events*

- June 2014: Northern Gateway receives certificates from National Energy Board
- October 2015: Certificates is challenged in Federal Court of Appeal
- June 30, 2016: Federal Court of Appeal finds that the Joint Review Panel recommendation was acceptable and defensible on the facts and the law. **However, it concludes that the Federal Government's consultation with Indigenous peoples was insufficient** and therefore incomplete. In a two-thirds majority decision, **the Federal Court of Appeal overturned Northern Gateway's approval certificates** and puts the matter back to the Federal Government.

The Federal Government now has three choices:

1. Deny the application (effectively cancel the project)
2. Conduct new consultations with the Indigenous communities along the pipeline route and re-determine whether to approve the project.
3. Refer the matter back to the NEB.

The Federal Government stated on September 20 that it will not appeal the June 30 decision, but it has not indicated how it will proceed. It is expected to make a decision in late 2016.

#### *Why is Northern Gateway an Emergent Issue Now?*

- Prior to June 30, 2016 Northern Gateway had its approvals and was on a path to construction.
- Now that the approvals have been overturned, it is important for supportive communities to step up their efforts and advocate that:
  - the Government of Alberta work with local supportive communities and publicly support this critical infrastructure project for Albertans
  - the Federal Government complete the necessary consultation with Indigenous Peoples, as well as engaging with local communities on the importance of this project and ultimately approve the project
- This advocacy work needs to happen prior to the Federal Cabinet making a decision.

#### *Why Northern Gateway is Critical to All Albertans*

- One of Alberta's most valuable resources is crude oil, but 99% of all our oil exports go to the United States, now one of our biggest competitors, who purchases our crude oil at deeply discounted prices.
- Northern Gateway will provide significant access to other international markets and allow Albertans to get a better price for our crude oil.
- Getting a better price for our crude oil means more royalties collected by the Government of Alberta which can be invested in Alberta schools, universities, hospitals and infrastructure.
- With the serious decline in Alberta's economy due to low oil prices, there is growing momentum for increased international market access for our natural resources.
- Northern Gateway will provide significant access to new markets in the Pacific Rim to secure fair market prices for Alberta's oil.



### *Alberta Investment*

- The recent dramatic drop in oil prices coupled with the lack of pipeline infrastructure is not only affecting future production, but also jeopardizing existing Canadian oil production.
- The significant decrease in oil prices has negatively impacted levels of investment and employment.
- Northern Gateway will provide a badly needed multi-billion-dollar private infrastructure investment in Alberta's future including spending \$1.5 billion in Alberta communities.

### **AAMDC Background**

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

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.

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

Mountain View County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks, through legislation, maintains control of all pit registrations for Class 1 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*.**

### **Member Background**

A viable aggregate industry is a necessary component of a vibrant Alberta economy. As the Province grows and expands there has been an increased level of conflict between adjacent land uses and aggregate operations. This resolution is intended to require potential negative offsite impacts to be reduced and minimized at the earliest opportunity so that multiple land uses may co-exist in areas that contain significant aggregate deposits.

The Province is responsible for inspection and enforcement of Class 1 pit reclamation plans through the *Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act*. Municipal districts and counties have the authority through the *Municipal Government Act* to approve land use and the development of pits and regulate pit operations to minimize impact and conflict with surrounding land uses. In recent years most municipalities that contain significant aggregate deposits have updated statutory plan policies and land use bylaws trying to gain a balance between competing land uses.

The Code of Practice for Pits defines "pit" as follows:

- (I) "pit" means an opening or excavation in or working of the surface or subsurface for the purpose of removing any sand, gravel, clay, or marl, where the area of the pit and any associated infrastructure, including stockpiles, connected with the pit, is, or at any time was, greater than or equal to 5 hectares (12.5 acres), but does not include:
  - (i) a borrow excavation,
  - (ii) a pit on public land,
  - (iii) a pit, or a portion of a pit, where the surface or subsurface of the land has not been

disturbed by pit operations since August 15, 1978, or  
(iv) a pit, or a portion of a pit, on which a waste management facility is operating or operated pursuant to a valid approval or registration under the Act;

The Code of Practice does not require the operator of a pit to obtain municipal land use approval prior to Provincial pit registration and prior to any changes to pit registration being approved.

Alberta Environment and Parks govern environmental stewardship for all pit operations on private land through the *Environment Protection and Enhancement Act* and its associated regulations. Alberta Environment and Parks require Class I pits (5 hectares or larger) to obtain approval under the Code of Practice for Pits and through this process security is determined. The *Code of Practice for Pits* does not enable Alberta Environment and Parks to enforce Progressive Reclamation on pits with enforceable time limits.

Without a mandatory requirement for Progressive Reclamation and suitable securities to provide sufficient incentive and encourage environmental stewardship, pits are not achieving a timely return to equivalent land capabilities to minimize impacts on surrounding areas.

References:

Code of Practice for Pits: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/codes/PITS.pdf>

Conservation and Reclamation Regulation: [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/1993\\_115.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/1993_115.pdf)

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA):  
[http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=E12.cfm&leg\\_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779735495](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=E12.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779735495)

A Municipal Guide to Sand and Gravel Operations in Alberta (2007 AAMDC):  
<http://www.aamdc.com/archive/aamdc-reports/public-reports/1221-2007-municipal-guide-to-sand-gravel-operations/file>

## **AAMDC Background**

11-15F: Provincial Support for Municipal Aggregate Acquisition

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 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. This resolution is assigned a status of Intent Not Met, and the AAMDC looks forward to advocating on this issue through the upcoming regulatory review.

Resolution 15-16F

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

MD of Greenview, County of Northern Lights, Mackenzie County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 4 (Northern)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Alberta is recognized as a world leader in forest stewardship and management. Over 60% of Alberta is forested, providing many values including economic, social, and environmental.

The forest industry is a key contributor to the economy and standard of living for many Albertans, particularly families living in rural Alberta in and near forested regions. In addition to providing timber resources that support the forest products industry, the province's forests provide a range of other resources and benefits that are important to Albertans, including wildlife, biodiversity, water and recreation.

Recently, the Government of Alberta has been working to identify areas in Alberta where caribou habitat protection is a priority and to develop strategies that protect caribou populations. As various species at risk management strategies are contemplated, it becomes clear that there is potential for sustainable timber supply in the region to be impacted. Various alternative strategies reflect scenarios where reductions in annual allowable cuts (AAC) for Forest Management Units (FMUs) and Forest Management Areas (FMAs) are possible.

Wildlife habitat is a key component in the development of 200-year management plans for the forest. In the case of species at risk, such as caribou and grizzly bear, forest companies must ensure that habitat increases over the life of the plan. Range plans support a working landscape where species at risk and industrial activity co-exists, with strict regulation investment in aggressive and innovative approaches, and careful monitoring of outcomes.

Alberta has prepared a draft Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Range Plan, the first to directly address federal recovery requirements in Canada which requires each province and territory develop range plans that protect, over time, at least 65% of that habitat. These ranges include important forest and energy resources that continue to support local Alberta communities and the provincial economy.

Twenty-three percent of the overall provincial's allowable annual cut are within caribou ranges alone, in which numerous forestry operations rely on to fulfill their quotas. Although the actual percentage of wood sourced from caribou ranges may seem low, these numbers become cumulative when you consider all the other Species at Risk Recovery Plans as a whole. On top of that, forestry's work supply and land base is also affected by the new Draft Structure Retention Directive, Mountain Pine Beetle, Land Use Framework and Protected Area recommendations, the energy sector, fire, and insect and disease agents. The extent of forest resources and the challenges forest managers have in balancing these inter-related uses is evident all across Alberta.

The Alberta Newsprint Company conducted an Alberta Forest Sector Economic Impact Study in January 2016 which provides some astounding stats based on wood supply reduction scenarios. In developing these scenarios, they identified the average lumber production in Alberta and extrapolated this to the province as a whole. Using that base data, they modeled a series of reduction scenarios including Allowable Annual Cut reductions between 10% and 100%. This represented reduction in the total annual harvest volume ranging from approximately 419,000 m<sup>3</sup>/yr. to 4,200,000 m<sup>3</sup>/yr.

Forest products made in Alberta are some of the highest quality in the world and are shipped globally every day. The companies operating are highly inter-dependent, exchanging wood fibre in various forms to enable efficient operation of sawmills and pulp mills, and other facilities including biomass power generation and composite wood products.

A sustainable flow of wood supply is the basis for a healthy forest products industry. Creating an overall socio-economic impact assessment along with long-term forest management planning as a whole, including the development and ongoing review of the annual allowable cut, is necessary to ensure sustainable forest management and a reliable flow of wood fibre to processing facilities.

#### References:

Alberta's Caribou Action Plan, Government of Alberta  
Alberta Forest Products Association  
Alberta Forest Sector Economic Impact Study, Prepared by MNP LLP, January 2016  
Alberta Newsprint Company  
Draft Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Range Plan, Government of Alberta  
Setting Alberta on the Path to Caribou Recovery, Eric Denhoff, May 2016  
Weyerhaeuser Grande Prairie

### **AAMDC Background**

4-14S: Species at Risk Act

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

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

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

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. 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.

Resolution 16-16F

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

Woodlands County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Should the ban proceed it would prevent Northern Gateway Pipelines from being built which in turn would cause the loss of the following:

- approximately 3000 constructions jobs
- \$1.5 billion spent in Alberta communities during construction
- 380 long-term operational jobs
- Impacts to local businesses and lost revenue
- Lost royalties collected by Government of Alberta
- Lost business opportunities for Indigenous companies

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 as well. This has become increasingly evident in recent months as provincial and federal economies have waivered with the declining price of oil and gas.

Such a lack of government support will further hurt the energy industry, costing Albertans jobs, and local business and lost revenue and would also inhibit getting a better price for crude oil.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 17-16F

## **Capital Region Board Mandate Expansion**

Parkland County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Elected officials attending an Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Pembina Zone meeting were made aware that the Capital Region Board is planning to expand their mandate to include various decisions that are presently made by local elected officials.

The Capital Region Board has been advised of Parkland County's concern that any expansion of their mandate beyond land use planning policy will impair a municipal councils' and elected officials' ability to effectively represent their communities.

Time is needed to assess how the mandatory Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks and Intermunicipal Development Plans proposed by the Province under the Bill 21 revisions to the *Municipal Government Act* will impact municipalities during collaboration on planning and service delivery and how these services are funded. These plans will likely address many, if not all, of the matters being considered by the Capital Region Board mandate expansion proposal.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.



Resolution 18-16F

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

Thorhild County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Section 8 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* reads as follows:

*The Minister is not obligated to reimburse a municipal district for any money spent by it in controlling or extinguishing a fire on any land but the Minister may, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, reimburse the council of a municipal district for any part of the costs and expenses in controlling or extinguishing a fire on unoccupied public land.*

The Government of Alberta may reimburse municipalities for the cost of firefighting on unoccupied lands, meaning not leased public lands and according to Section 8 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* will not reimburse municipalities for costs on occupied lands, meaning leased public lands. Thorhild County does not differentiate the designation of these lands when it undertakes the responsibility for firefighting and relevant expenses. Firefighting equipment, manpower and resources for firefighting are very costly and have a significant impact on the municipality's capital and operating budget.

Over the last few years, Thorhild County has experienced several large fires on occupied public lands and the cost and expense to suppress those fires were very substantial. The County is very concerned that future costs relating to firefighting on occupied public lands would be detrimental to its financial stability.

### **AAMDC Background**

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

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.

Resolution 19-16F

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

Brazeau County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

Brazeau County and many urban and rural municipalities in the Province of Alberta are facing significant challenges due to the decline in oil and gas prices. By adding value-added products to our inventory of industries, Alberta can mitigate the effects of the price decline, increase employment, respond to climate change and keep communities vibrant.

To ensure that innovative and realistic ideas come forward and that a wide range of voices are heard, many sectors should be involved in a task force to explore value-added diversification of the oil and gas industry. This approach was successful several years ago, when a similar task force found alternatives to solution flaring. By having all stakeholders at the table, the solutions proposed will have been run through the filter of industry, government, the public and more, thereby reducing the chance for delay of implementation.

Time is of the essence to create this task force and have its work begin. The sooner Alberta can diversify its critical oil and gas industry, the sooner the Province can start on its own path to prosperity, insulated somewhat from the boom and bust cycle of world oil and gas prices.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations

County of Barrhead

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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.**

### **Member Background**

For the past three years the inequity between how charitable organizations are treated in rural communities, both urban and rural, compared to those charitable organizations in major urban centers has been brought to the attention of the Provincial Government through the "Bear Pit" sessions at AAMDC Conventions. This approach, in combination with letter writing campaigns by individual municipalities, has met with no success. The inequities continue without change, though the Provincial Government has consistently stated that they and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission are examining the problem and how best to resolve it.

The difficulties facing charitable organizations across Alberta are made worse by the slow economy we are currently experiencing. Not only are there more needs in our communities because of high unemployment levels, it is also more difficult to raise funds through charitable donations both from individuals and from corporations. Money is difficult to find, and the inequity in casino funding makes this problem even harder to deal with. A positive change in how casino revenues and opportunities would provide extra funding to rural based charitable organizations at this critical time, and would do so without extra cost to the Provincial Government.

The inequities include the following:

- Charitable organizations outside the two major urban centers incur additional travel and accommodation costs when working at the casinos. This extra cost is either borne by the individual volunteers, which is an onerous demand on people who may even have to take time from work in order to work at the casino. Alternately, the cost may be borne by the

- organization itself, which reduces the amount of funding available for services to the communities.
- 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. The hockey clubs and public libraries across Alberta have service levels that are affected by this disparity. With increased funding there could be increased services, lower user costs, or both.
  - There is a longer waiting period for charitable organizations in rural Alberta that want to raise funding through casino work. This makes the funding disparity even worse because it takes longer to receive those reduced funds.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 21-16F

## **Resolution Process – Identification of Financial Implications**

Lacombe County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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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 the current resolution process does not require that the budget implications of a resolution be included as part of the resolution; and

WHEREAS budget implications are an essential consideration for most request being made of senior levels of government;

**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 requiring a section within the member background information to identify and address the capital and operating budget implications of any resolution request.**

### **Member Background**

Given the economic constraints that the AAMDC and all levels of government are facing it is prudent to consider the financial impact that resolutions will have on future budgets. The inclusion of a separate section addressing with financial impacts will ensure that the membership has the information available to make an informed decision on any resolution. This change will strengthen the resolution process and offer credibility to the process as senior levels of government will know that the membership has given consideration to the financial impacts when voting on the resolutions.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 22-16F

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

Sturgeon County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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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 and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police work to increase efforts to enhance the security of community and super mailboxes including siting them in open and plainly visible locations, 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.**

### **Member Background**

Generally, the number of reported mailbox break-ins to the RCMP has increased in Sturgeon County within the last three years. Canada Post also confirms anecdotal reports from residents that indicate an ongoing and increasing issue with mail theft in the County.

An official from Canada Post has stated that it is proactively working with local law enforcement agencies and reactively replacing older, less secure units with newer units with enhanced security features. The County is asking AAMDC to request that these efforts be stepped-up on a more proactive basis.

Due to their remote location and the relatively low numbers of passing traffic, some rural Community and Super Mailboxes are at an increased risk for theft. Additionally, those dependent on government subsidy and benefit cheques, such as seniors and low-income families, are at risk of having mailed cheques stolen, resulting in significant delays in payment receipt as the incidents are investigated and new cheques are issued. Finally, all residents face the risk of potential identity theft as confidential and sensitive information such as tax assessments and other financial and personal documents are subject to potential theft.

Though brought forward through Sturgeon County to the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, we believe this issue is one facing many communities across Alberta and Canada.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 23-16F

## List of Municipal Electors

Rocky View County

*Three-fifths Majority (3/5) Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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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.**

### Member Background

To date, no municipality in Alberta has used a list of electors (voter lists) for proof of elector eligibility during municipal elections despite federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions in other provinces who use a voter list for their elections.

There has been a growing interest for the use of a voter lists in conducting municipal elections in Alberta based on the distrust of the current electoral system and the desire for increased accountability by the voter. The use of a list of electors is accepted as a procedural safeguard and administrative control for elections in democracies all over the world, yet it is not a viable option for Alberta municipalities to pursue.

The current municipal electoral system also causes confusion among residents who question why voter list information is not aligned with the election information of other levels of government. There is also frustration that the current process to prove elector eligibility is dependent on each voter signing a Voter Register (Form 8's) and the inability for the forms to be reviewed by the public except by judicial order.

Although the *Local Authorities Election Act* provides the option for municipalities to create a list of electors, there are administrative and legislative obstacles as to why it has not been used by municipalities. These obstacles include:



- The mandatory requirement for municipalities to conduct a door-to-door enumeration if a list of electors is created.
- The inability to access the provincial list of electors for use in a municipal election without the municipality conducting an enumeration and creating a Permanent Electors Register.
- The lack of legislative guidance and best practices available for a municipality to create a list of electors without significant privacy and reputational risk and financial cost to a municipality.

Electoral confidence in the process is important to voters, especially those living in rural municipalities; where every vote counts when the margin of votes is small compared to urban municipalities. Therefore, we ask the Province of Alberta 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.

<b>Province and Link to Relevant Legislation</b>	<b>Legislated – Mandatory Use of Voter’s List</b>	<b>Municipal Enumeration</b>	<b>Vouching</b>	<b>Ability to use Provincial / Federal List <i>without</i> conducting an enumeration</b>
BC <u>Local Government Act</u>	Yes – s.75(2)	Optional – s.71(6)	No	Yes – s.76(1)
Alberta <u>Local Authorities Election Act</u>	No Created through bylaw – s.49(1), 50(1)	Required if voter’s list is created – s.49(1)(b), 50(1)(b), 51	Yes – only if a List of Electors exists - s.53(2)	No – can only enter into an agreement with Elections Alberta only if a <u>Permanent Electors Register</u> is created, which also required enumeration be conducted by a municipality s.49(2)
Saskatchewan <u>Local Government Election</u>	No Created through bylaw -s.54(1), 55(1), 107(1)	Optional – s.54(1)	No	Yes – s.55(1)
Manitoba <u>The Municipal Councils and School Boards Election Act</u>	Yes – s. 23(1)	Optional – s.28(1), 32(1)	No	Yes – s. 28(1)
Ontario <u>Municipal Elections Act</u>	Yes – s. 19(1)	Not an option. Enumeration is conducted by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to create a list that is handed over to the municipality.	No	Yes – list is provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Cooperation s.19(1)
Quebec <u>An Act Respecting Elections and Referendums in Municipalities</u>	Yes – s. 100	Not an option	No	Yes – s. 100
New Brunswick <u>Municipal Elections</u>	Yes – s. 11(1)	Not an option	Yes – s.36(3)(b)	Yes – s. 43(1.1)
Nova Scotia <u>Municipal Election Act</u>	Yes – s. 21	Optional – s. 30(1)	No	Yes – s.30B (4)(5)(6), 40(7)
Prince Edward Island <u>Municipalities Act</u>  Charlottetown and Summerside Difference Policy	Yes – s. 23	Not an option	No	N/A
Newfoundland <u>Municipal Elections Act</u>	Yes – s. 31(1)(a)(b)	Not an option	No	Yes – s.31(2)

**AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Alberta Registry Agents (ARAs)**

Cardston County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 1 (Foothills Little Bow)*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta caps the fee amounts for Alberta Registry Agents (ARAs) through the Registry Agent Product Catalogue for those services that comprise the largest volume of revenues, which have not been adjusted to reflect the increases to the minimal wage or cost-of-living increases in Alberta; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has not provided details on the scope of government's future involvement in providing online services; and

WHEREAS the ARAs offer essential professional and personalized online services to clients near their homes, a fact of significant importance to aging Alberta clients with distance restricted driver's licences, and/or with no ability to use the Internet for the conduct of personal government business; and

WHEREAS the elimination of the critical mass of registry transactions and associated transaction fees could threaten the viability of all ARAs; and

WHEREAS the potential closure of ARAs in small communities would have a negative impact on the local economy by diverting the spending outside of the municipality's boundaries;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that the Government of Alberta recognize the vital role and positive impact that Alberta Registry Agents (ARAs) have in Alberta communities, and request that the province partner with the ARAs and local municipalities by:**

- **Protecting local registry agent revenue streams by limiting additional future government encroachment above and beyond online fine payments; and**
- **Negotiating the fee structure within the Registry Agent Product Catalogue to recognize inflationary increases.**

### **Member Background**

Authorized registry agents such as the Association of Alberta Registry Agents (AARA) have been licensed as Service Centers for the Government of Alberta for the past 22 years. They currently offer over 200 products and services on behalf of four government departments – Service Alberta, Alberta Justice, Alberta Health, and Alberta Transportation.

AARA has 206 Agencies (88 large and small in urban markets and 118 in rural Alberta) located in 150 Alberta Communities (32 or 21% urban centers-118 or 79% rural jurisdictions).

Agents have also been offering online registry services to Albertans for over 10 years through their affiliation with the Association of Alberta Registry Agents. For example, AARA have been under contract with Alberta Justice since 2004 to give Albertans the option to pay their traffic fines online. This option supplements Albertan's ability to pay these fines across the counter at 206 agencies in the province. 400,000 traffic fines were paid online in 2015. 2016 fine payments are up 30% due to registry agent participation and an innovative provincial advertising campaign. Projections for 2016 will exceed 500,000 online fine payments. Consumers pay a \$6 service fee which is a 33% reduction from the over-the-counter fee. Unfortunately, AARA and AMA contract to provide this service expires on July 7, 2016 and they have received no indication that there will be an extension.

In the eventuality that Service Alberta and Alberta Justice decide to eliminate registry agents from this online channel, repatriate online fine payments to their e-Services portal, they will be perceived by AARA and AMA to go into direct competition with their authorized agents of the Government of Alberta.

Furthermore, and at this point in time, registry agents have been given no assurances that they will be able to continue to offer online vehicle renewals to Albertans (100,000 in 2015).

Traffic fines and vehicle renewals are the two largest transactions processed by the Registry Agent Network (206 independent registry agents plus the AMA). The cancellation of these online contracts will result in a \$3M loss of revenue to independent registry agents, AARA, and AMA. But more importantly, this step is the precedent that could be used to eliminate registry agents from offering future online registry services to the customers that they have been serving for 22+ years.

#### *Importance to Albertans*

Virtually every city and town has an authorized registry agent, forming a network that collectively employs close to 1500 Albertans. Registry staff needs to be qualified, trained, and certified to meet high customer expectations. Albertans demand quality service from their registry agent. Agents have continued to invest to meet new technology requirements, population growth, etc. The industry needs to continue to evolve and modernize to keep pace with market, economic, and political conditions.

AARA and AMA dedicate significant resources to improve the health of the registry agent network through education, training, agent support, online marketing, new services like e-Reminders, etc. Service Alberta would be ill-equipped to take back these responsibilities if AARA loses this important online revenue channel, and the Government of Alberta goes into competition with its authorized registry agents.

#### *Importance to Service Alberta & Alberta Justice*

The processing of the \$3M in 2016 online fine revenue will roughly be split as follows: authorized registry agents would process \$1.75M; AARA \$.75M, and AMA \$.5M. Online vehicle renewal revenue is over and above these amounts.

#### *Importance to Independent Registry Agents*

A healthy agent network is best positioned to serve the diverse needs of all Albertans. A sense of financial stability underpins the agents' ability to make solid business decisions. Registry agents, especially the rural agents, have not received a fee increase in 11 years, so they can ill afford to give up any revenue. Agents rely on AARA and the revenue it earns through contracts with Service Alberta and Alberta Justice to undertake projects that individual agents either are not well positioned to do or cannot afford to do.

#### *Importance to AARA and AMA*

As previously noted, these two not-for-profit agencies provide important member services that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Registry Agent Network and, by doing so, improves service to all Albertans. But these services are dependent on a portion of the revenue derived from online registry services.

#### *AARA Modernization Plan and Requests*

In their Modernization Plan, AARA is proposing Contract amendments to the Online Fines contract with Alberta Justice that would see the contract operate in perpetuity with a 365-day termination clause (similar to the RISE Online Vehicle Renewal contract with Service Alberta). This would give the registry industry a measure of certainty to modernize existing online technology at no cost to the government.

AARA seeks Government's approval to work with Service Alberta IT managers and staff to add a link to the myAlberta.ca portal that would then allow AARA and AMA to build the necessary infrastructure behind that link to enhance and expand services to Albertans. This would be done at no cost to the government. It would be redundant for Service Alberta to build a parallel online registry support structure when existing agents of the Crown already have that structure in operation, and are willing to modernize it at no cost to the government.

### **AAMDC Background**

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: Service Alberta has clarified, both in their response to this resolution and through a discussion between the Minister of Service Alberta and the AAMDC Board of Directors, that the privatization of the province's land title registry system is not being considered. The new provincial government has given no indication that they are considering privatizing registry services. As such, this resolution is deemed to be Accepted.

Resolution 25-16F

## **Removal Of High Tension Cable Barriers on Two-Lane Provincial Highways**

County of Barrhead, Woodlands County

*Simple Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 3 (Pembina River)*

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WHEREAS the purpose of Alberta's provincial highway system is to provide efficient and safe travel opportunities to the general driving public as well as agricultural and commercial operations; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta installs high tension cable barriers (HTCB) on four-lane provincial highways as well on two-lane provincial highways; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is installing HTCB as a preferred barrier system and a standard to replace the traditional guardrail system where feasible on four-lane provincial highways as well on two-lane provincial highways; and

WHEREAS there are many safety hazards created by having HTCB installed on two-lane highways;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to remove high tension cable barriers from all two-lane provincial highways.**

### **Member Background**

High Tension Cable Barriers (HTCB) are being installed on provincial highways in the Province of Alberta. These devices consist of metal posts fixed into the sides of the roadways, often being located very close to the driving lanes, with metal cables extending the length of the barrier. The purpose of these barriers is to keep motorists from going into the ditch where a side slope is determined to be sub-standard or where there are hazards in the clear zone. The intended purpose of the barriers is to prevent people from entering the ditch in places where it may prevent or reduce the severity of run-off-road incidents. When HTCB are installed between lanes of traffic on four-lane highways the value of these devices is clear, however when used on two-lane highways, the hazards created by HTCB are much greater than the dangers they are meant to alleviate. Two lane highways have a narrower right of way than four lane highways and also have a narrower distance between the driving lane and the edge of the road surface.

The height of HTCB makes it difficult for wide loads lower than approximately four (4) feet to travel on the highway. The types of wide loads that will be affected are farm equipment, heavy trucks, and oversize loads such as modular homes. Highways are very critical to the efficient movement of large equipment utilized in this day and age in the agricultural industry. Those in the agriculture and many other industries move low, wide equipment on the provincial highways and the HTCB will either deter them from utilizing the highways, or will force them to drive down the middle of the roadway, which could make for dangerous situations.

HTCB have the high potential of eliminating any escape route a vehicle, or other type of traffic, may have in the case where there is an oncoming vehicle which has crossed the center line of the highway.

In the case where HTCB are installed close to the travelling surface of the highway, they may not allow for effective and efficient snow removal, and in such cases the snow would remain on the travel surface of the highway and would hinder the safety of traffic as the travelling surface would become narrower. Removal of snow from the travelling surface of a roadway into the ditch area plays an important part in ensuring that the melting of snow does not create an ice hazard on a roadway when it freezes.

HTCB may hinder efficient and effective mowing of roadside grass, and there is concern with the overgrowth alongside the travelling surface of a highway having a high potential of reducing the visibility of wildlife coming onto highways.

HTCB may hinder pedestrian and bicycle traffic from travelling away from vehicles and/or escaping vehicle traffic when in a suddenly changing situation.

HTCB could have a potential of reducing safety to the travelling public in the case where a vehicle does collide with an HTCB, where the vehicle could possibly veer back into moving traffic rather than the vehicle going off into a ditch area, thus creating a more dangerous situation to any other travelers on the highway.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.



Resolution 26-16F

## Home Fire Sprinklers

Rocky View County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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WHEREAS section 3 (Municipal purposes), section 5 (Powers, duties and functions) of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c.M-26 specifies the Purpose, Powers and Capacity of Municipalities; and

WHEREAS home fire sprinklers reduce the risk of loss of life in a home fire by 80 percent; and

WHEREAS home fire sprinklers reduce the average property loss per home by 70 percent; and

WHEREAS home fire sprinklers are a strategy for municipalities to use in the delivery of fire suppression services; and

WHEREAS several municipalities in British Columbia have home fire sprinkler requirements that have reduced costs in the delivery of fire service; and

WHEREAS there is a conflict between the *Safety Codes Act* and the *Municipal Government Act* that prevents municipalities from exercising their powers at their discretion as indicated in the *Municipal Government Act*;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that the Government of Alberta amend the *Safety Codes Act* to allow municipalities the option of requiring home fire sprinklers as part of their delivery of fire services.**

### **Member Background**

The continuous growth of residential development within Rocky View County is placing strain on the current model of fire service delivery. The new revenues from additional development are not equal to the financial resources required to deliver fire protection to the new areas. These areas also lack a recognized water system for fire protection, which adds to the lack of resources available for fire protection. This impact on the new residents of Rocky View County is in the form of higher insurance premiums, and on existing residents in the form of increased property tax to provide funding to service the newly developed areas.

This pressure can be relieved by making home fire sprinklers a mandatory requirement for all new residential construction. Sprinklers will ease the impact on fire services by reducing the total time spent at each fire, reducing the average amount of property loss, and reducing the risk of fire death. These measures will also allow the County to develop Fire Services at a rate more closely related to the actual growth and revenue generation of the new development.

The installation of home fire sprinklers is governed under regulations adopted by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and is enforced through the *Safety Codes Act* (SCA). Currently, municipalities may not regulate a matter that is regulated by the *Safety Codes Act*, however, the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) permits municipalities to determine what services it will provide and how it will deliver those services through existing enactments, or those imposed on itself through a matter of policy. This creates a conflict for the municipality between the two acts and unfairly limits the municipality's purpose under the MGA in determining what services to deliver, and how they should be delivered. The requested amendments to the *Safety Codes Act* will allow municipalities to choose whether or not they wish to apply this provision.

### **AAMDC Background**

The AAMDC has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Borrowing Powers for Regional Library System Boards**

Wheatland County

*Three-fifths Majority Required  
Endorsed by District 2 (Central)*

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WHEREAS provincial operating grants for library systems do not provide sufficient funding capacity for sizeable capital projects such as the repair, expansion or replacement of headquarters facilities; and

WHEREAS legislation for Alberta libraries does not allow library systems to borrow money to acquire real property for the purposes of a building to be used as a headquarters of a library systems or for erecting, repairing, furnishing and equipping a building to be used as the headquarters of a library systems; and

WHEREAS library systems need adequately sized and safe, well-maintained facilities to effectively perform the functions that are defined in the *Alberta Libraries Act*, including resource sharing and supporting bibliographic and IT network and infrastructure in public libraries; and

WHEREAS library systems exist to ensure Albertans have equitable and seamless access to library resources through a robust public library network supported by the Government of Alberta and comprised of a provincial policy framework and technological infrastructure; and

WHEREAS library systems exist to support quality services and resources in public libraries for all Albertans and to contribute to sustainable communities in Alberta, especially in rural and remote communities; and

WHEREAS library systems are exemplary bridges to collaboration among municipalities and among other Library Systems to ensure that resources are shared and value is augmented; and

WHEREAS public libraries provide a universal and low-cost point of access to information for Albertans of all ages, in all regions of the province, who are pursuing knowledge and information needed for success in education, business, career development, job security and personal projects; and

WHEREAS public libraries and the Public Library Network provide resources to develop a full range of literacy skills for Albertans of all ages, in all regions of the province;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta develop the necessary legislation, policy and procedures to enable Alberta's library systems to acquire capital funding to repair, expand or replace their headquarters facilities.**

### **Member Background**

The *Alberta Libraries Act* provides the legal framework for public library service in Alberta. Library systems, which deliver services and support on a regional level, are also created under the *Alberta Libraries Act*.

It must be clear that the purpose of this resolution is specifically to enable borrowing powers for the seven Regional Library Systems in Alberta, representing 310 municipalities and 1,433,722 Albertans.

Library systems were established by the Alberta Government, with the first coming into existence over 50 years ago. With the exception of four or five municipalities, all municipalities in Alberta are members of a library system as designated in the *Alberta Libraries Act*.

Municipal Affairs strongly encourages municipalities to belong to library system to pool resources, to maximize efficiency and purchasing power, and to participate in the Public Library Network. The Public Library Network is a provincial policy framework and a technological infrastructure that facilitates cooperation in efficient, effective and seamless delivery of library resources and services to all Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by Alberta Municipal Affairs through the Public Library Services Branch. In turn, library systems are the gateway to providing public library series defined in this

official Public Library Network policy through support to municipal libraries and provision of service directly to residents.

Regional library systems are not-for-profit public library service providers serving multiple municipalities. Municipalities and school authorities can join library systems in compliance with the Act. There are over 300 municipalities that are members of library systems and whose residents are direct recipients of public library services that are purchased and managed by the seven regional library systems. Every member municipality appoints a trustee who has a seat and a vote on one of the seven library system boards. These seven library systems provide service and support to over 270 public libraries in Alberta.

It is highly unlikely that municipalities would ever withdraw from their library system because that would mean that their residents would no longer have access to the majority of public library services that are delivered through a computer system or via the internet. No municipality has withdrawn from any library system within the last 10 years. Every municipality that has joined a library system signs a library system agreement and then gets official permission to join the library system from the Minister.

Library systems are funded by a combination of municipal levies and provincial library grants. Overall, the funding from provincial grants and municipal levies has not been sufficient and has not kept pace with inflationary trends to provide adequate reserves for substantial repairs, expansion or replacement of headquarters' facilities. Library systems do not have access to grant funding in the same way that a municipal library has because library systems do not have a relationship with only one municipality. It would take considerable effort and good fortune to get all the municipalities that are members of a library system (which would be required) to agree to support a major grant application. A major grant ask may mean that a local library or organization might have to do without.

As it stands, the *Alberta Libraries Act* specifies that library systems cannot directly borrow for capital projects, as stated as follows in Section 24 of the Act:

*(24) A municipality or a school authority that is a party to an agreement described in section 13 may, with the approval of the Minister, borrow money to acquire real property for the purposes of a building to be used as the headquarters of a library system or for erecting, repairing, furnishing and equipping a building to be used as the headquarters of a library system, and section 10(2) and (3) apply to the borrowing of the money.*

The *Libraries Regulation* within the *Alberta Libraries Act* does not include language about borrowing money or capital funding. It does state, however, that the library systems must be able to deliver services and resources to its members and have a "provision for expansion of the Library System to all jurisdictions with the prescribed boundaries" (Section 25(1)(k)). The ability of public libraries to provide current relevant library service could be negatively impacted if the regional system headquarters facility has continued restricted access to capital funding.

There is language in the *Alberta Libraries Act* that refers to municipal libraries (Section 10(1)), and not to library systems. Section 10 under Municipal Libraries states that "When money is required for the purpose of acquiring real property for the purposes of a building to be used as a municipal library or for erecting, repairing, furnishing and equipping a building to be used as a municipal library, the council may, at the request of the municipal board, take all necessary steps to furnish the money requested or the portion of it that the council considers expedient. (2) Money approved by the council under subsection (1) may be borrowed by the council under the authority of a bylaw and on the RSA 2000 Section 10.1 Chapter L-11 LIBRARIES ACT 7.

Any given municipal council may be unable to, or unwilling to, borrow money on behalf of a Library System if the municipality does not have borrowing capacity, or there are other priorities and local needs.

Before borrowing, a library system such as Marigold would ensure that a special per capita levy of a modest amount would be accepted by its members over a set number of years. This added revenue would be used to pay back the loan.

Other options for funding have been investigated and found to be unsuitable, including Alberta Capital Management Agency loans. AGCL has indicated that library systems do not qualify for casinos even if they have a Friends Organization. Grants typically need matching funds. It is unlikely that library systems would have the ability to save sufficient funds to match a grant, if it were available, in amounts

exceeding one million dollars. For example, Marigold Library System has saved \$1.6 million dollars over ten years in a capital reserve that is intended for a major expansion or replacement of its 60-year-old building. This facility, once an armory, is undersized and has aging and inadequate facility infrastructure. Marigold is now serving a population that has increased 2 ½ times in 10 years, making it the third largest library system in Alberta after Calgary and Edmonton (based on resident population). Library system services such as on-site technology training and IT network support are compromised by the limited size of the present facility.

With populations that have fluctuated throughout Alberta's municipalities, (some populations growing rapidly while others are declining), and provincial funding that has not kept up with population growth or service diversification on a regular basis, it is difficult to engage in any long term financial planning. Not only does this threaten the sustainability of library systems and endanger the provision of and access to valuable programs and services available to all Albertans, it makes it virtually impossible to build capital assets and capacity to meet the service delivery expectations of the province or of Albertans who use these services.

Leaders of the Library Systems have appealed to the provincial government for capital funding in writing and in person for more than five years. Library System Chairs have also requested a list of ways to raise capital funds. A spokesperson representing the Chairs of the seven Library Systems made a request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs on January 13, 2016 for the Province to provide capital funding for headquarter repair, expansion or relocation so that library systems can continue to serve and support the robust Public Library Network throughout the province of Alberta.

It was requested that the Minister report back on how and from whom the seven Library Systems can acquire sufficient capital funding through eligible grants and by borrowing money. Also requested was that the *Alberta Libraries Act* be reviewed and that more immediate funding solutions be provided before urgent infrastructure deficits faced by several library systems becomes an impediment to delivering the expected service outcomes of the Province and the respective Agreements with member municipalities.

At the January 13, 2016 meeting, the Minister of Municipal Affairs acknowledged that library system operating grants are not sufficient for library systems to save funds for capital projects. Minister Larivee recommended submitting the capital requests to Alberta Infrastructure. The Public Library Services Branch has been doing this for five years. Regional library systems are listed as Unfunded Capital Projects as of April 14, 2016, in Alberta's Fiscal Plan: Capital Plan; however, there are many provincial projects that are deemed more urgent and fund-worthy. The indeterminate timeline for funding could be years away.

Public libraries in Alberta are thriving. Cardholder numbers and library use is increasing in both traditional and emerging library service areas. Access to public libraries is increasingly being seen by Albertans as an essential service. This is particularly evident during any economic decline when Albertans depend on public libraries for access to technology, affordable information and recreation, literacy training, job searching and career development resources, exam invigilation, social interaction and much more.

Public libraries in every community are valued by residents as the gathering place for their community. In small, rural and remote communities, the public library is an important symbol of that community's viability and sustainability. Library systems consolidate services and resources to ensure that all public libraries in large and small communities have the best value and the best opportunities to thrive. Library systems provide the means to ensure that the Public Library Network remains strong and that public libraries throughout Alberta are providing relevant, vital and cost effective public library services to Albertans.

## **AAMDC Background**

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

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 that is 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. However, the AAMDC is pleased that Municipal Affairs has formed a working group with key stakeholders to address challenges faced by rural libraries and regional library networks.

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, and thus deems this resolution as Accepted in Part. The AAMDC will continue to monitor this resolution to ensure rural municipalities are adequately served by Alberta's public library network.

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

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 that is 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. However, the AAMDC is pleased that Municipal Affairs has formed a working group with key stakeholders to address challenges faced by rural libraries and regional library networks.

Due to recent and future funding increases that partly address the concerns outlined in the resolution, as well as Municipal Affairs' commitment to collaborating to improve rural library service, this resolution is assigned a status of Accepted in Principle, and will be reviewed based on the outcome of the working group and next year's provincial budget.