



RMA Advocacy Report Card

Summer 2021



RMA Advocacy Report Card: Summer 2021

Published by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)
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Introduction

The Advocacy Report Card is divided into three sections.

- ♦ **Section 1** provides detailed information on the government response to the spring 2021 resolutions and includes the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Board of Directors' reaction to the response as well as anticipated follow up.
- ♦ **Section 2** updates members by reporting on all active resolutions, grouped by advocacy area.

Definition of Terms

Following endorsement by RMA members, resolutions are sent to the appropriate level of government for response. Once a response is received, RMA labels the resolution with one of five indicators which determines the status of that resolution. The intention of providing a status for each resolution is to evaluate whether the government response meets the intent of the resolution. The status is not intended to reflect RMA's advocacy efforts on a resolution.

Below are the descriptions of all resolution ranking statuses.

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

Section 1: Government Responses to Spring 2021 Resolutions

RMA recently received responses to the resolutions adopted at the spring 2021 convention from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada. The following table provides an overview of the initial assessment to resolutions following the response. **RMA emphasizes that this table only reflects the initial response received from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada and that advocacy efforts on all resolutions are in progress.**

Reactions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION NAME	STATUS
1-21S	Alberta Energy Regulator Directive 006 - Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and License Transfer Process	Intent Not Met
2-21S	<i>Police Act</i> Review	Incomplete Information
3-21S	Personal Cannabis Production for Medical Use	Incomplete Information
4-21S	Agriculture Service Board Provincial Committee Funding	Intent Not Met
5-21S	Preservation of Water Quality and Access to Water	Incomplete Information
6-21S	National Flood Insurance Strategy and Community Resiliency Advocacy	Accepted in Part

Resolution 1-21S

Alberta Energy Regulator Directive 006 – Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and License Transfer Process

Woodlands County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Energy, Alberta Energy Regulator**

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta are dependent on property tax revenues to provide essential municipal services; and

WHEREAS the ability of a municipality to recover property tax arrears for non-titled land is affected by provincial acts and regulations; and

WHEREAS the current legislation has limited options without liabilities for municipalities to recover tax arrears owed from oil and gas companies; and

WHEREAS Alberta Energy has established the **Alberta Energy Regulator** (AER), whose mandate is to ensure the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of oil, oil sands, natural gas, and coal resources over their entire life cycle; and

WHEREAS the AER set out directives that contain requirements and processes that energy companies operating in Alberta must follow; and

WHEREAS Directive 006 – Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and License Transfer Process uses a formula to determine whether a company has sufficient financial resources to purchase assets from another company;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Alberta Energy Regulator to amend Directive 006 to include as a condition of transfer of all oil, oil sands, natural gas, and coal resource assets from one company to another that municipal property tax arrears be paid in full.

Government Response

Alberta Energy

The Minister of Energy provided a letter with the following response:

I recognize that unpaid municipal taxes on oil and gas properties continues to be a concern to RMA members and appreciate the information you have shared.

I am pleased to let you know that the Government of Alberta is taking the boldest and strongest action to tackle oil and gas liabilities in the province's history. The Liability Management Framework, announced in July 2020, includes a series of mechanisms and requirements to enable industry to better manage its regulatory obligations at every step of the process. The framework sets clear expectations throughout the life cycle of oil and gas projects, helping provide certainty for investors and ensuring that industry will be able to bear the costs of site obligations. For more information about the framework please visit www.alberta.ca/oil-and-gas-liabilities-management.aspx.

As part of the framework, the Licensee Capability Assessment System will replace the AER's current Licensee Liability Rating program, providing an improved method of assessing the capabilities of oil and gas operators to meet their regulatory obligations at each stage of the development lifecycle. The new

assessment system will be more comprehensive by taking into account a wider variety of assessment parameters. Furthermore, the AER's Licensee Special Action function allows the AER to work with struggling operators on a case-by-case basis on mitigations and actions that can help them manage their liabilities, maximize their assets, and maintain their operations.

As part of the implementation of the new Licensee Capability Assessment System, the AER updated Directive 067: Eligibility Requirements for Acquiring and Holding Energy Licences and Approvals, increasing the scrutiny the AER can apply to ensure that only responsible oil and gas companies are eligible to hold a licence to operate in Alberta. I understand that the AER provided RMA a response to Resolution 1-21S as well, highlighting your conversation with the regulator on the recent release of the updated Directive 067 and the fact that the AER may now consider unpaid municipal taxes and surface lease payments as risk factors when assessing licensee eligibility.

As the AER shared with you in its response, it is currently working on revising Directive 006 as part of implementation of the framework and there will be upcoming opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the proposed changes. I encourage RMA to provide feedback through the AER process.

Alberta Energy Regulator

The Alberta Energy Regulator provided a letter with the following response:

The Government of Alberta has updated their policy on [managing oil and gas liability](#) and directed the AER to revise and create new [liability programs](#). In the coming months, the AER will invite the public to provide feedback on proposed changes to Directive 006. We invite the RMA and your members to provide feedback regarding unpaid municipal taxes at that time. Our bulletins announcing the request for public feedback, as well as our recent announcements and decisions, can be found by visiting the What's New section of our website, aer.ca. You can also subscribe to receive this information in a weekly email, if that is of interest.

We've also updated [Directive 067: Eligibility Requirements for Acquiring and Holding Energy Licences and Approvals](#) to increase the scrutiny the AER can apply to ensure that only responsible oil and gas companies are eligible to hold a licence to operate in Alberta. Under Directive 067, companies are now required to provide financial information to the AER when they apply to hold a licence, annually, or at any other time when required by the regulator. With these changes, the AER is able to better assess if a company has the financial capacity to maintain their eligibility to hold a licence and if they are able to meet their regulatory responsibilities, including [closing](#) energy infrastructure.

While the AER is not involved with the collection of unpaid municipal taxes and does not have jurisdiction to enforce payment of these taxes, under the updated directive, we may now consider unpaid municipal taxes and surface lease payments as risk factors when assessing licensee eligibility. In addition, when requested by the AER, an applicant, licensee, or approval holder must disclose if they have any unpaid municipal taxes and the amount they owe. These changes are a result of the feedback we received during the public comment period on the draft directive held earlier this year.

Last, Alberta's municipalities can share their concerns regarding unpaid municipal taxes with us by submitting a [statement of concern](#) related to a transfer application under Directive 006 or an application to acquire and hold a licence or approval under Directive 067. The AER posts all applications received on the [public notice of application page](#) on aer.ca.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta has announced a new Liability Management Framework which includes a series of mechanisms and requirements to improve and expedite reclamation efforts and set clear industry expectations throughout the life cycle of oil and gas projects. Under this new framework, the Government of Alberta directed the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) to develop new liability management programs to implement this framework. Since the Alberta Energy response, the AER has developed Directive XXX: Licensee Life-Cycle Management, which will replace Directive 006: Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and Licensee Transfer Process. In the summer of 2021, the AER reached out to stakeholders to provide feedback on Directive XXX. Most of RMA's feedback focused on the limited inclusion of unpaid taxes as a factor in assessing a company's "capabilities and performance." The directive only includes unpaid taxes as a consideration on public lands during the license transfer process. RMA recommended that it should not matter whether a development is on public or private land in terms of whether the AER considers unpaid taxes as a factor in a company's lifecycle management performance, and this should not be the focus specifically on license transfers. The AER is in the process of reviewing the feedback and has stated that the directive will be finalized in fall 2021.

The Alberta Energy response also indicates that the new Licensee Capability Assessment System will be implemented at some point to replace the Licensee Liability Rating program, and that changes made to Directive 067 to allow the AER to consider unpaid municipal taxes as a factor in assessing licensee risk may be integrated into the new system. RMA considers this a positive step in better addressing unpaid municipal taxes from the oil and gas industry and looks forward to better understanding how the new system will consider unpaid taxes.

Due to the lack of direct reference in Directive XXX regarding municipal taxes as a condition of a transfer, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will update the status once Directive XXX is finalized.

Resolution 2-21S

Police Act Review

Lethbridge County

Carried

► ***Advocacy Target: Alberta Justice and Solicitor General***

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta approved a new police funding model which requires urban municipalities with populations less than 5,000 and all rural municipalities to pay a portion of provincial policing costs; and

WHEREAS under the new police funding model, affected municipalities will contribute 10% of policing costs in 2020, 15% in 2021, 20% in 2022, 30% in 2023 and 30% in 2024; and

WHEREAS provincial policing costs represent a significant portion of the affected municipalities' annual operating budgets; and

WHEREAS for municipalities that have not borne provincial policing funding model costs in the past, these additional costs will be a significant budget line item in 2021 and beyond; and

WHEREAS like any municipal contracted service, municipalities require accurate and detailed information from the service provider to ensure that their taxpayer dollars are being used in the most cost-effective manner; and

WHEREAS the increased costs of police funding, combined with other challenges currently facing municipalities, could have serious implications across the province and potentially threaten the viability of some municipalities; and

WHEREAS in 2020, the Government of Alberta undertook a review of the *Police Act* that involved little direct consultation with municipalities; and

WHEREAS changes to the *Police Act* could have further financial and service level impacts on municipalities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to undertake further and direct consultation with rural municipalities on the proposed *Police Act* changes and the future of policing in Alberta.

Government Response

N/A

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

As RMA has not yet received a response to this resolution, it is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**, and will be re-visited when a government response is received.

Resolution 3-21S

Personal Cannabis Production for Medical Use

Wheatland County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Health Canada**

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is responsible for setting strict requirements for producers who cultivate and process cannabis, and for setting industry-wide rules and standards; and

WHEREAS provinces and territories are responsible for developing, implementing, maintaining, and enforcing systems to oversee the distribution and sale of cannabis; and

WHEREAS under the provincial *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act*, Alberta municipalities are empowered to make rules that are directly linked to their jurisdictions including establishing land use bylaw regulations on where cannabis can be commercially grown, produced, and sold, as well as where cannabis can be consumed; and

WHEREAS the regulation of personal cannabis production for recreation and medical use is currently ill-defined; and

WHEREAS municipalities recognize that there are reasonable medical reasons for cultivation and consumption of cannabis; and

WHEREAS established municipal policies and land use regulations related to cannabis are directed towards commercial cannabis production and sales and are not applicable to personal cannabis production; and

WHEREAS under a license approved by Health Canada, one can cultivate up to 485 cannabis plants at home to treat their medical needs without the requirement to notify local authorities; and

WHEREAS the federal Cannabis Regulations permit a registered person to register a designated producer to produce medical cannabis on their behalf; and

WHEREAS four registered producers may operate in the same location, potentially resulting in 1940 plants grown in one location; and

WHEREAS the application and approval process related to producing cannabis for medical purposes does not require confirmation that all municipal requirements have been met; and

WHEREAS there is significant municipal concern with ensuring compliance with municipal bylaws, regulations, and safety code requirements as personal cannabis production increases on residential properties; and

WHEREAS the health and environmental risks associated with indoor cultivation and processing of cannabis cannot be addressed or mitigated if the producer fails to notify municipal authorities or fails to obtain the appropriate permits; and

WHEREAS the lack of regularity clarity related to notification requirements for medical cannabis consumption contributes to health, safety, and nuisance concerns for residents of municipal jurisdictions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta collaborate with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to advocate to Health Canada that confirmation of municipal compliance for personal medical cannabis production facilities be required for existing license holders, and prior to approval for all future license applicants.

Government Response

N/A

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

As RMA has not yet received a response to this resolution, it is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**, and will be re-visited when a government response is received.

Resolution 4-21S

Agriculture Service Board Provincial Committee Funding

Brazeau County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

WHEREAS the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee has experienced changes necessitating sustainable funding; and

WHEREAS increased advocacy is necessary in the current political and economic climate; and

WHEREAS advocacy for agriculture and forestry across the province will be very individualistic;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee.

Government Response

Agriculture and Forestry

The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry provided a letter with the following response:

Rural Municipalities, the Agriculture Service Board (ASB) Provincial Committee, and ASBs are critical partners for the Government of Alberta and we remain committed to supporting the important work they do each year to implement and enforce the *Agricultural Service Board Act*, *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and for assisting with the *Animal Health Act*. Municipalities and the province continue to have a strong relationship and we are committed to supporting the vital work ASBs do to protect Alberta's access to markets through surveillance and the control of pest threats.

As you know, the downturn in the economy and the onset of COVID-19 has led to significant reductions in government revenue. This impacted the 2020-21 budget that led to some tough decisions, including the reduction of the ASB program budget last spring. The new five-year agreement will provide over \$50 million over the term to Alberta's 69 ASBs, and includes the full \$1.78 million per year in funding under the Resource Management Stream.

As for the ASB Provincial committee, I am aware that the current agreement to support their Executive Director position expires on March 31, 2022. I am open to having further discussions on this with the ASB Provincial Committee in the coming months. However, Alberta is at the start of another tough budget year, and I cannot commit to an extension of the agreement at this time.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta's (GOA) response highlights the important role Agriculture Service Boards play in supporting provincial legislation. RMA appreciates this recognition; however, the resolution specifically calls for sustainable funding for the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee. The GOA response indicates a willingness to discuss further but does not indicate a long-term funding arrangement. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 5-21S

Preservation of Water Quality and Access to Water by Albertans

MD of Ranchland

Carried as amended

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

WHEREAS the headwaters of the South Saskatchewan River Basin found within the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains are the source of water for a significant number of Alberta and Saskatchewan industries and residents; and

WHEREAS water is a limited resource that all Albertans rely on and requires careful management; and

WHEREAS downstream users, both rural and urban, depend on an ample supply of high-quality water to sustain their communities and livelihoods; and

WHEREAS specific water allocation commitments have been made to agriculture producers, residential users, municipalities and industry; and

WHEREAS in the past, the process for the allocation of water has been implemented in an orderly manner with opportunity for meaningful input from Albertans; and

WHEREAS some industrial uses consume large quantities of water and are unable to restore the quality of that water before it is returned to the system; and

WHEREAS the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan 2014-2024* cites the creation of the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework as a proactive and dynamic management approach that assures water quality and a collaborative approach to water quality management; and

WHEREAS the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan 2014-2024* states that “collaboration and shared stewardship will be essential to achieving responsible management [of the Headwaters].”; and

WHEREAS the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan 2014-2024* clearly states under “Section 4: Water” that “shared stewardship is essential. The Province will continue to work with municipalities and other stakeholders to...encourage protection of water resources and responsible development.”;

WHEREAS collaboration and stewardship is crucial to responsibly allocating water from rivers throughout the province;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to take proactive measures to ensure that the headwaters that supply Alberta’s water basins are managed to maintain water recharge capabilities, to sustain high water quality and to provide access to sufficient water supplies for all Albertans.

Government Response

N/A

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

As RMA has not yet received a response to this resolution, it is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**, and will be re-visited when a government response is received.

Resolution 6-21S

National Flood Insurance Strategy and Community Resiliency Advocacy

RM of Wood Buffalo

Carried

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

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has created a National Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation (the “Task Force”), including representation from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments and the insurance industry; and

WHEREAS Indigenous Services Canada will work with First Nations partners on a dedicated Steering Committee on First Nations Home Flood Insurance Needs to examine the unique context on reserves; and

WHEREAS the Task Force will consider options to protect homeowners who are at high risk of flooding and do not have adequate insurance protection and examine the viability of a low-cost national flood insurance program, among other goals; and

WHEREAS flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster in Canada, causing over one billion dollars in direct damage to residential property and impacting thousands of Canadians every year; and

WHEREAS according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, in 2019 only 39 percent of residential property owners had access to overland flood insurance; and

WHEREAS many of the property owners unable to access flood insurance (affordable or otherwise) have properties located in high-risk flood areas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to participate in and contribute to the work of the National Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta’s participation on the National Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation focus on advocating for the development of a national high-risk residential flood insurance program and sustainable, long-term funding for provinces, Indigenous communities and municipalities for flood mitigation programs, projects and initiatives that increase overall community resiliency.

Government Response

Alberta Municipal Affairs

The Government of Alberta provides disaster financial assistance for uninsurable loss and damage caused by extraordinary disaster events. In Alberta, overland flood damage is one peril where insurance is not reasonably and readily available, making it eligible for financial assistance under the Disaster Recovery Program.

The Flood Insurance and Relocation Project (FIRP) is a federal/provincial/territorial initiative to expand access to overland flood insurance and relocation options for high flood risk properties, which will help Canadians reduce their financial and physical vulnerability to flooding. The purpose of the FIRP is to develop the parameters of viable residential flood insurance arrangements and a relocation action plan through a public-facing report.

The Government of Alberta is committed to improving public safety and disaster risk reduction initiatives that will reduce the social, economic, and environmental impacts of flooding. As part of the multi-disciplinary

approach, the Government of Alberta, through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, is contributing to the FIRP by participating on the Provincial/Territorial Task Team as an active partner. For this project, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is coordinating input and feedback from departments across the Government of Alberta. Representatives from Alberta Environment and Parks also participate in the task team meetings.

The Government of Alberta will continue to work with the federal government and other jurisdictions towards the development of a flood insurance option and a strategic relocation framework that works for Albertans, especially those for whom insurance is not readily and reasonably available.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta response indicates that the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is contributing to the Flood Insurance and Relocation Project's (FIRP) Provincial/Territorial Task Team. While this participation is a positive, the response does not specify the Government of Alberta's position in relation to the resolution's focus: advocacy for a national high-risk residential flood insurance program, and long-term funding for flood mitigation programs, project and initiatives.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and RMA will follow up with the Government of Alberta to better understand their priorities in relation to FIRP.

Section 2: Advocacy Report Card

The following table is a summary of RMA's current resolutions excluding the resolutions adopted in spring 2020 and fall 2020, which are detailed in Section 1. Recent developments on the resolutions are detailed below in the corresponding categories, and readers are reminded that although resolution statuses may remain unchanged, work on each resolution is ongoing. Each resolution has a three-year lifespan to reflect the nature of shifting government policy development and timelines associated with legislative changes and implementation.

Resolutions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
AGRICULTURE		
3-20F	Support for Alberta Farmland Trust	Accepted in Principle
8-20F	Enhancing Support for Farmers When a State of Agricultural Disaster is Declared	Intent Not Met
ER1-20S	Loss of 2% Strychnine	Incomplete Information
23-19F	Mandatory Agriculture Education in the Classroom	Intent Not Met
2-19S	Access to Agriculture-Specific Mental Health Resources	Intent Not Met
6-19S	Prevent Implementation of Seed Royalty on Producers for Farm Saved Seed	Intent Not Met
19-18F	Separation of Industrial Hemp from Cannabis Regulations	Accepted
BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY		
9-20F	CRTC Aggregate Wholesale Pricing to Mandate Rural Investment	Accepted in Part
3-18F	Federal and Provincial Funding of Municipal Broadband Projects	Accepted
4-18F	Enabling High-Speed Internet Access for Rural Alberta	Intent Not Met
13-18F	TELUS Failure to Maintain Landline Operations	Incomplete Information
COMMUNITY SERVICES		
19-20F	Reinstatement of the Benefit Contribution Grant for Early Childhood Educators	Intent Not Met
3-19F	Development of a Rural and Remote Lens for Government Services	Intent Not Met

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
10-18F	Community Peace Officer Access to the Canadian Police Information Centre	Intent Not Met
21-18F	Scrap Metal (Copper) Theft	Accepted
24-18F	Review of Education Funding Formula	Accepted
EMERGENCY SERVICES		
14-19F	Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance	Accepted in Part
21-19F	Cellular 911 Call Answer Fees Increase	Accepted
ENERGY		
10-20F	Weed Issues on Oil and Gas Sites in Rural Alberta	Intent Not Met
7-19F	Utility Distribution Rates in Rural Communities and Public Facilities	Intent Not Met
9-19F	Setback Referrals for Development Near Sour Gas Facilities in Crown Land Areas	Intent Not Met
11-19F	Requirement for Municipal Authority Input on Energy Resource Development Projects	Intent Not Met
1-19S	Municipal Support for the Energy Industry	Accepted
7-19S	Solar Power Reclamation	Intent Not Met
5-18F	Alberta Energy Regulator Requirements for Acquiring and Holding Energy Licences and Approval	Intent Not Met
12-18F	Multi-Stakeholder Committee to Work at Reducing the Use of Potable Water by the Oil and Gas Industry in Alberta	Accepted in Part
14-18F	Reclamation of Non-Producing Oil and Gas Sites on Agricultural Lands Owned by Bankrupt Companies	Intent Not Met
16-18F	Demand Meters and Rate Riders	Intent Not Met
ENVIRONMENT		
12-20F	Expansion of Elk Hunting for Management in Agriculture Production Areas	Intent Not Met
15-20F	Security Deposits for Dispositions	Intent Not Met
1-20S	Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive	Accepted in Part
4-20S	Water and Wastewater – Laws, Regulations and Funding	Intent Not Met

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
4-19F	Alberta Environment and Parks Water and Wastewater Facility and Landfill Approvals	Intent Not Met
13-19F	Provincial Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations	Accepted
19-19F	Water Security in Southern Alberta	Intent Not Met
4-19S	Bighorn Country Proposal Consultation	Accepted in Principle
5-19S	Amendments Required for Crown Land Recreation Disposition Applications and Renewals	Intent Not Met
9-19S	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Funding	Intent Not Met
11-19S	Update of the Provincial Code of Practice for Compost Facilities	Intent Not Met
7-18F	Municipal and Privately-Owned Protected Areas Inventory	Intent Not Met
9-18F	Impact of the Alberta Wetland Policy on the Cost of Maintaining Public Road Infrastructure	Intent Not Met
11-18F	Rural Municipalities of Alberta Represents Municipalities on <i>Water Act</i> Approvals	Accepted
15-18F	Wetland Mitigation Directive – Restoration and Compensation	Accepted
17-18F	Alberta Environment and Parks Additional Resources for <i>Water Act</i> Approvals	Accepted in Principle
20-18F	Decommissioning Costs for Wind Energy Developments	Intent Not Met
22-18F	Amendment to the Wildlife Regulations Regarding Cougars	Intent Not Met
HEALTH AND SENIORS		
ER2-20S	New Physician Funding Framework	Accepted in Principle
ER3-20S	Housing Management Body Compliance Requirements During Pandemic Response	Accepted in Part
20-19F	Policies for Supporting Community Hospice Associations	Accepted in Principle
12-19S	Making Children’s Healthcare a Priority in Alberta	Accepted in Part
8-18F	Restricting the Consumption of Cannabis based on Regulations for Liquor Consumption	Intent Not Met
MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE		

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
2-20F	Blue-Ribbon Panel to Review Unpaid Taxes Owed by Oil and Gas Companies	Intent Not Met
4-20F	Provincial Policing Costs Levy – Designate as a Requisition	Intent Not Met
17-20F	Rural Small Business Properties Assessment Sub-Classes Amendment	Intent Not Met
2-20S	Additional Depreciation of Machinery and Equipment Property (Schedule D)	Intent Not Met
1-19F	Priority of Unpaid Property Taxes on Linear Property	Intent Not Met
6-19F	Municipal Recourse for Solvent Companies Choosing Not to Pay Taxes	Accepted
12-19F	<i>Libraries Act</i> Review and Rural Library Services	Intent Not Met
16-19F	GST for Grants and Subsidies Interpretation	Accepted in Part
8-19S	Reinstatement of the Municipal Officer's Expense Allowance	Accepted
2-18F	Annual Release Date of Assessment Year Modifiers	Intent Not Met
6-18F	Securing Municipal Property Taxes in the Event of Bankruptcy or Insolvency	Intent Not Met
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
7-20F	Amendments to <i>Municipal Government Act</i> Section 619	Intent Not Met
13-20F	Provincial Government Disaster Recovery Program Payments	Intent Not Met
16-20F	Federal and Provincial Disaster Support	Intent Not Met
18-20F	Municipal Decision-making on Fire Bans in Hamlets Within Forest Protection Area	Accepted in Principle
ER1-19F	Dissolution of Mandatory Growth Management Boards	Intent Not Met
18-18F	Utility Conflict in Municipal Right of Ways	Intent Not Met
POLICING AND RURAL CRIME		
1-20F	Police Funding Model Freeze	Intent Not Met
2-19F	Government of Alberta's Police Costing Test Model	Intent Not Met
10-19F	Community Peace Officer Access to RCMP Radio Channels	Accepted in Principle
RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
5-20S	Regional Economic Development Alliances Continued Provincial Funding	Intent Not Met
6-20S	Economic State of Crisis	Intent Not Met
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
15-19F	Provincial Highway Access and Setback Authority	Accepted in Principle
17-19F	Airports Capital Assistance Program Funding for Regional Airports in Canada	Incomplete Information
3-19S	Light Weight Concrete Bridge Girders	Intent Not Met
1-18F	Provincial Contribution to Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program	Intent Not Met
OTHER		
5-20F	Legislated Notice Requirement	Intent Not Met
6-20F	Government of Alberta Embargoed Committee Work	Intent Not Met
5-19F	Landowners' Rights	Intent Not Met
8-19F	Opportunity for Improvement in FCM Representation of Rural Issues and Western Perspectives	Incomplete Information
10-19S	Strategic Direction for the RMA	Accepted
23-18F	Social Well-Being of An Employee and Domestic Violence – <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i>	Accepted in Part

AGRICULTURE

Resolution 3-20F

Support for Alberta Farmland Trust

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta support the creation of agricultural conservation easements on lands within Alberta's highly productive, food-producing areas through the following means:

1. The establishment of agricultural conservation as a priority under the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program so that agricultural land trusts can access funding, and benefit from policy support;
2. Any other policies and programs that the Government of Alberta identifies to create functional mechanisms for the protection and conservation of farmland in Alberta; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request that the Government of Canada work with Alberta and other provinces to establish an "AgriGift" program similar to the existing "EcoGift" in support of the protection, conservation and enhancement of Canada's most valuable food producing agricultural lands.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's (AAF) understanding of issues related to the loss of prime agricultural land and their commitment to develop policies to support the use of conservation easements for agricultural land under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*. While the Government of Canada has not yet responded, AAF indicates they support amending the *Income Tax Act* to recognize donors of agricultural lands for protection.

The AAF response also indicates a willingness to modify the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program to provide funding for agricultural easements. This work has begun, as the response from Alberta Environment and Parks indicates the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program is available for agricultural land, currently focusing on native rangeland conservation associated with ranching operations. Based on historical application periods, RMA expects more information on any changes to the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program to become available in August 2021.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will revisit this assessment after receiving responses from the Government of Canada, and based on further action from the Government of Alberta.

Resolution 8-20F

Enhancing Support for Farmers When a State of Agricultural Disaster is Declared

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta review supports for farmers when a state of agricultural disaster is formally declared within a municipality; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the Government of Alberta develop additional programs to enhance support to farmers when a state of agricultural disaster is declared; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the Government of Alberta take a regional approach to declaring agricultural disasters such that they can be initiated within a region of Alberta where several

municipalities have declared a state of agricultural disaster to allow for the release of reserve funds for farmers in that region.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the explanation of the various programs available to farmers through Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) and how a review of these programs is triggered after a declaration of agricultural disaster. The explanation of these programs notes that AFSC does include a regional component to their review. However, the resolution calls for a Government of Alberta review of existing programs, which the resolution response does not commit to. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's response goes on to indicate there are no plans to establish new programs to support farmers when an agricultural disaster is declared.

2021 has seen an increase in the number of municipal declarations of agricultural disasters. Due to the conditions in much of Alberta, the Government of Alberta and AFSC have announced several new assistance measures, including reducing crop insurance premiums. RMA appreciates these initiatives to support farmers, however, because they are not tied to municipal agricultural disaster declarations, these changes do not address the nature of this resolution.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for support for the agricultural sector in response to states of agricultural disaster.

Resolution ER1-20S

Loss of 2% Strychnine

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that Health Canada and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) reinstate the use of 2% Liquid Strychnine on a permanent basis to agricultural producers to utilize on their farms for control of Richardson's Ground Squirrels (RGS), or that Health Canada and the PMRA provide an alternative solution that produces as effective a result as strychnine in a financially responsible manner for the continued control of RGS.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA recognizes the ongoing need for tools for farmers to control pest species that impact agricultural information. As RMA has not yet received a response from the advocacy targets identified above, this resolution is assigned the status of **Incomplete Information**.

Resolution 23-19F

Mandatory Agriculture Education in the Classroom

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta work with fellow rural stakeholders, Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and all elected school boards to request that mandatory agriculture education be implemented in the school curriculum in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the Government of Alberta response does outline how agricultural topics may be included in classroom education, it does not indicate action to have mandatory education in agricultural topics for all Alberta students. As a result, this resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 2-19S

Access to Agriculture-Specific Mental Health Resources

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta facilitates the formation of a free, year-round, all hours, mental health crisis hotline, dedicated to the agriculture industry, providing farm families with direct access to uniquely qualified professionals and resources, whom have both an understanding of mental health issues and agriculture-specific stresses;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta secure long term, sustainable funding for the operation and maintenance of this mental health crisis hotline.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response highlights existing mental health resources, including 24/7 help lines that are accessible in rural areas. The Alberta Health response also includes a budget commitment to increase funding for addictions and mental health services by \$100 million. However, there is no indication as to how this additional funding will be distributed geographically in Alberta. The Alberta Health response also identifies the possibility for rural municipalities to provide Health Link – 811 with local resources that are available for farm families; Health Link can then provide this information to those that call in from that area. As follow up, RMA staff will reach out to Health Link about how to best facilitate this information-sharing, and contact Farm Management Canada to explore the possibility of providing input into their study on mental health and farm business.

The Government of Saskatchewan operates a 24/7 Farm Stress Line that provides farm families with resources. The Farm Stress Line is answered by Mobile Crisis Services, a non-profit organization providing crisis intervention services in Saskatchewan since 1974.

The Do More Agriculture Foundation has hosted several mental health webinars in 2020. While these webinars do not meet the need of a 24/7 support line, they do share information and raise awareness of mental health issues for farmers.

Because the government responses do not commit to an agriculture-specific mental health line, or any funding for this resource, this resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**. While the response from Alberta Health does not satisfy the intent of the resolution, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has recommended that the Government of Canada expand agriculture-specific mental health resources. RMA will continue to monitor developments at the federal level and advocate to Alberta Health for an agriculture-specific mental health line.

Resolution 6-19S

Prevent Implementation of Seed Royalty on Producers for Farm Saved Seed

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency abandon the proposal to implement the adoption of End Point Royalties or farm saved seed “trailing royalty contracts”.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) response outlines the rationale for seed royalties on farm saved seed: to increase research investment in Canada’s cereal sector. CFIA also acknowledges the interest of farmers to save seed for their own use in the next growing season. A planned online consultation for spring 2019 was delayed, and there has not been an update since. An industry-led pilot, separate from the CFIA program, launched in 2020 using a seed variety use agreement for three crop varieties. Because RMA has not received notice that the program is formally ending, this

resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to engage with CFIA through consultations on this topic.

Resolution 19-18F

Separation of Industrial Hemp from Cannabis Regulations

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to classify industrial hemp as an agriculture product.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the clarification of jurisdiction from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Given that there is no provincial regulation or Act limiting industrial hemp production, reclassifying industrial hemp at a provincial level is unnecessary in Alberta if a producer is approved federally through the *Cannabis Act*.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY

Resolution 9-20F

CRTC Aggregate Wholesale Pricing to Mandate Rural Investment

Status: Accepted In Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) urge the Government of Canada and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to reconsider its position on wholesale internet pricing; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request the Government of Canada and CRTC to create a financial framework where communication and internet fee structures include funds for mandatory investment of network expansion into currently unserved areas of Canada by all telecom and internet service providers.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) released Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-181 in May 2021. This decision reversed the previous CRTC decision regarding wholesale internet pricing and reverts wholesale rates to 2016 level. This decision satisfies the first operative clause of Resolution 9-20F.

The second operative clause asks for guaranteed investment in rural broadband infrastructure through the collection of a fee. The CRTC response describes how their broadband fund is open for eligible projects to provide access to 50/10 internet speeds. However, these funds are not the result of a fee, and do not guarantee investment in rural broadband.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted In Part**, and will continue to advocate for funding for underserved areas of the province.

Resolution 3-18F

Federal and Provincial Funding of Municipal Broadband Projects

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the governments of Alberta and Canada to provide direct funding to municipalities to support rural, remote and northern communities' development of high speed (50 megabits per second and faster) community broadband, with federal government grants matching municipal and provincial investment in broadband network infrastructure.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has announced \$150 million in funding for rural and Indigenous communities to develop broadband infrastructure. This is a welcome investment in rural Alberta to support quality of life and attract economic development. RMA will monitor how this fund is administered, identifying opportunities for municipalities to become involved.

The response from the CRTC indicates that municipalities are eligible to receive funding from the Broadband Fund if they, or a partner, meet the applicant eligibility requirements. RMA understands that municipalities that can meet the eligibility requirements on their own will not need to partner with an ISP, in addition to all municipalities having the option to apply for funding if they partner with an experienced ISP.

The Government of Canada has stated their goal to provide high speed internet to all Canadians by 2030. This plan is supported by \$2.75 billion in funding through the Universal Broadband Fund. RMA is pleased to see a funding commitment made to provide broadband internet access in rural and remote areas, and is advocating for a prompt rollout out of funding for projects in rural Alberta.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted** and will be monitored for additional funding announcements, including details for the provincial funding pool.

Resolution 4-18F

Enabling High-Speed Internet Access for Rural Alberta

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) urge the Government of Alberta to deliver a comprehensive rural broadband strategy that realizes the path forward for all residents of rural Alberta to achieve the CRTC's universal service objective targets of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload for fixed broadband services;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA emphasize to the Government of Alberta that, for economic, political, and social concerns, the completed strategy should be made available to the public in the shortest possible time;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that such a strategy should include the following components to best serve the interests of rural Albertans and to facilitate the effective implementation of the strategy in pursuit of its goals.

- I. That the Government of Alberta should mandate (where legally permissible) and advocate for (where not within the scope of their authority) common carrier/shared access laws to allow for the more efficient deployment of infrastructure.
- II. That the Government of Alberta should incent partnerships and cooperation between municipalities, the Province, and private industry to develop rural broadband infrastructure, providing matching funds for qualified infrastructure deployments.
- III. That the Government of Alberta should enable significantly more affordable access to the Supernet for Albertans, through their relationship with Bell Canada, to provide backhaul access for local network solutions.
- IV. That the strategy should enhance competitive access to the broadband industry in Alberta for more businesses and should promote an increasingly competitive business environment.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the consultation on a provincial broadband policy and the Government of Alberta's willingness to advocate to their federal counterparts. However, there is not yet a publicly available provincial broadband strategy or draft. RMA is supportive of the Government of Alberta's \$150 million funding announcement to support broadband development, and is advocating for this funding to be used to support a provincial broadband strategy.

RMA is pleased with an acknowledgement of wholesale and backhaul services available for purchase in SuperNet communities, however the cost of accessing these services is not addressed in Service Alberta's response.

As a result of a lack of publicly available provincial broadband strategy or draft, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. As policies change the status of this resolution will be monitored.

Resolution 13-18F

TELUS Failure to Maintain Landline Operations

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that Service Alberta direct TELUS to maintain their complete landline network until such time that there are assurances that the wireless system is as secure, economical and stable as the previous landline system has been;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) review the original agreement with TELUS to ensure they are meeting their responsibilities.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA has not yet received a response to this resolution from the CRTC.

RMA appreciates the response from Service Alberta and their offer to discuss maintenance of the landline network with TELUS. RMA will contact ISED regarding this issue.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Incomplete Information** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Resolution 19-20F

Reinstatement of the Benefit Contribution Grant for Early Childhood Educators

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta reinstate the Benefit Contribution Grant for early childhood educators, retroactive to July 1, 2020.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response states that the program that this resolution appears to reference is the Northern Living Allowance (NLA) rather than the Benefit Contribution Grant (BCG). Both the NLA and BCG are important tools for ensuring stability for early childhood educators in northern Alberta, and, in the case of the BCG, throughout the province. The Government of Alberta response highlights their recent relief funding in response to COVID-19. While this funding is appreciated, the response indicates that funding will not be restored for the NLA. As a result, this resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 3-19F

Development of a Rural and Remote Lens for Government Services

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to develop a rural and remote lens to better understand the context of, and mitigate the unique challenges of, geographic remoteness, low population, and service accessibility/density faced by human service programs in Alberta's rural and remote communities.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that although Alberta does not have a specific "rural lens" for evaluating policy decisions, community impact is a formal component of the provincial policy development cycle.

Based on the endorsement of the resolution, the current community impact measures used by the Government of Alberta are inadequate in addressing and mitigating the unique impacts that provincial policy decisions may have on rural and remote areas of the province.

In recent consultations related to the *Police Act* and the delivery of victims services, RMA has emphasized the importance of ensuring that provincial legislation, regulations and policies allow for local service delivery and community input to be adequately flexible to reflect the unique needs of rural and small urban communities, and that a "one-size-fits-all" or centralized approach to service delivery and input will often not meet the needs of diverse communities across the province. At this time, the outcomes of either review are not yet known.

The 2015 Government of Alberta [*Rural Health Services Review – Final Report*](#) identified several concerns with mental health services in rural Alberta. Firstly, the report points out that service availability is much more limited in rural areas, with demand often outweighing availability, resulting in long waits and travel times for both acute and primary services. The report also identified unique challenges with continuity of care, as service providers may only be available in rural areas temporarily or inconsistently. The report also points out that certain stigmas regarding mental health services may exist in rural areas,

which require targeted education strategies. A [report from Ontario](#) identifies similar rural service issues, suggesting these trends exist across jurisdictions.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to advocate for the Government of Alberta to more deliberately consider the impacts of policy changes on rural and remote areas of the province.

Resolution 10-18F

Community Peace Officer Access to the Canadian Police Information Centre

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that Alberta Justice and Solicitor General work with the Canadian Police Information Centre, and any other Ministry necessary, to provide direct, mobile and timely Canadian Police Information Centre access to Community Peace Officers that can be used as a proactive and preventative tool within defined guidelines.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates an ongoing collaborative effort between the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General and other organizations to ensure that community peace officers (CPOs) have adequate access to Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). The short-term commitment of five-minute processing time through Sheriffs Operations Control Centres and the long-term commitment enabling direct access through in-car laptops to eligible CPIC officers is encouraging.

In 2019, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Alberta Association of Community Peace Officers jointly requested that CPO access to CPIC be facilitated through the Provincial Radio Control Centre (PRCC), which is under the jurisdiction of Service Alberta. RMA has formally supported this request. In December 2020, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General informed RMA that the plan to provide CPOs with access to CPIC through the PRCC is no longer being pursued, and CPOs will not have access to CPIC through the PRCC for the foreseeable future. However, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General did indicate that there is work being undertaken to provide CPOs access to CPIC through the Sheriffs Operational Communications Centre (SOCC). Although CPOs may access CPIC through the SOCC, this agreement does not meet the intent of this resolution, as access relies on relaying a request through the SOCC rather than direct CPIC access.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and will be updated when direct CPO access to CPIC commences.

Resolution 21-18F

Scrap Metal (Copper) Theft

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to proclaim the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act* and create the regulation to assist with the deterrence of copper theft and other scrap metal.

DEVELOPMENTS: The initial Government of Alberta response indicated that action was being taken on scrap metal theft in the form of a cross-ministry working group that would review the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act* as well as other potential options for addressing copper theft.

On November 5, 2019, Alberta's Lieutenant Governor proclaimed the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act* into force. The Act includes an immediate requirement for scrap metal dealers and recyclers to report suspected stolen property to authorities.

In July 2020, the Government of Alberta passed Bill 25: *Protecting Alberta Industry from Theft Act, 2020*, which made further enhancements to the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Information Act* and introduced the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Regulation*. The Regulation builds on the requirements of the Act by requiring scrap metal dealers to collect personal information from all sellers, to require proof that sellers are over the age of 18, and to require the use of traceable currency. The Regulation also empowers law enforcement officers to require scrap metal dealers to hold scrap metal that is suspected of being stolen property for 30 days.

Based on the coming into force of the *Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act* and associated Regulation, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 24-18F

Review of Education Funding Formula

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta supports the Alberta School Boards Association position that the Government of Alberta review the K-12 funding formula for schools and school boards.

DEVELOPMENTS: In budget 2019, the Government of Alberta committed to reviewing and replacing the current education funding formula with a new "K-12 Assurance and Funding Framework" that will come into effect in September 2020 for the 2020-21 school year. The transition to the new Framework is based on a recommendation earlier in 2019 from the *Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances* which called for a shift in education funding to "provide incentives for sharing services and achieving better student outcomes." According to the Government of Alberta's 2019-23 Fiscal Plan, the new Framework will, among other things, "assure the long-term viability of rural schools."

Following a review of the formula and stakeholder consultations in early 2020, the Government of Alberta announced a new funding framework in February 2020, for implementation in the 2020/2021 school year.

The new model introduces a Rural Small Schools Grant, which provides rural small schools (those in rural areas or in population centres below 30,000) with guaranteed block funding based on broad enrollment categories. This provides rural small schools with greater funding certainty as annual funding will not fluctuate to the same extent as under the previous model.

The model also introduces a Geographic Grant, which provides additional funding to school jurisdictions to address unique geographic challenges such as rurality, sparsity-distance, area, and location.

Based on the completion of the review and the consideration of rural school funding in the new model, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Resolution 14-19F

Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta provide funds to locally- and regionally-operated emergency response air ambulance services at the same ratio as Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) funding;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta commissions an independent review, which includes engagement with the public, industry stakeholders and municipalities across Alberta, of the helicopter emergency medical services system in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: Alberta Health Services (AHS) conducted a review of current services that provide helicopter EMS in rural and remote areas of Alberta. RMA provided feedback on the AHS helicopter ambulance review, emphasizing the important role helicopter ambulances play in rural healthcare.

Alberta Health released their Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) report in June 2021. The report recommends that STARS become the sole provider of HEMS in Alberta, with HALO and HERO being phased out. RMA has requested additional information on the implementation, especially regarding response times in zones currently served by HALO and HERO. RMA will continue to advocate for prompt response times in all areas of the province.

Air ambulance funding mechanisms vary across jurisdictions. In British Columbia, air ambulance services are fully funded by the province. Ontario's ORNGE air ambulance service appears to be funded in a similar manner to STARS. Quebec began a pilot in September 2018 for two helicopter ambulances in partnership with a private operator.

Regarding funding, the HEMS report recommends the Government of Alberta fund 50% of STARS operating costs, an increase from the previous model. However, transitioning to STARS as the sole provider means other helicopter ambulance services will not be funded at all, let alone at a comparable level to STARS, as requested in this resolution. However, the HEMS review does satisfy the second operative clause. As a result, this resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted in Part**.

Resolution 21-19F

Cellular 911 Call Answer Fees Increase

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta amend the *Emergency 911 Levy Regulation* and increase the 911 levy payable by cellular device subscribers to \$0.97 per month;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the increased revenues be distributed to the entities operating 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response acknowledges that the costs of implementing Next Generation 911 services will have significant impact on Alberta PSAPs and that research is underway to determine how best to fund required upgrades.

In June 2021, Bill 56: *Local Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2021* received Royal Assent. Bill 56 includes amendments to the *Emergency 911 Act*, as well as expected changes to the *Emergency 911 Levy Regulation*, that will have the effect of increasing the 911 levy payable by wireless subscribers from \$0.44 per month to \$0.95 per month beginning on September 1, 2021. This levy increase is expected to better support 911 call centres to upgrade technology to comply with new Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) mandated changes.

Bill 56 also broadens the eligible recipients of the levy revenues to include secondary 911 call centres. This change means that levy revenues will now be accessed by an additional nine secondary call centres, including several operated by the Government of Alberta and RCMP. The exact impacts of this expansion on the revenues that will flow to primary call centres is not known, but RMA is concerned that the broadened pool of levy recipients will partially offset the increased revenues that would be received by the primary call centres due to the levy increase.

Although this resolution calls for the levy to be increased to \$0.97, RMA considers the actual increase to \$0.95 to meet the general intent of the resolution. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

ENERGY

Resolution 10-20F

Weed Issues on Oil and Gas Sites in Rural Alberta

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the governments of Alberta and Canada to put in place appropriate legislation and standards to protect landowners from undue hardship as a result of oil and gas company neglect of weed control on well sites.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates Alberta Energy's response outlining the *Weed Control Act* and the responsibilities of the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and Orphan Well Association (OWA) regarding weed management. However, due to the ongoing challenges oil and gas companies are facing, many have opted to forgo weed control measures on their lease sites on both private and Crown lands. This includes companies whose assets have been assigned to the OWA, companies in receivership or bankruptcy proceedings and companies that continue to operate. While municipalities have the authority under the *Weed Control Act* to serve and enforce a notice of non-compliance, many go unresolved from not being able to find a contact person or the company refuses to comply.

Weeds can have serious negative consequences when they spread to neighboring lands as it can cause reduced crop yields. In most cases, landowners incur the cost, inconvenience and liability of managing these weed issues themselves. As stated in Alberta Energy's response the AER has limited authority over weeds and the OWA only addresses weed infestations on orphan well sites after the well has been moved to its reclamation inventory.

RMA appreciates the Farmer's Advocate Office's work helping landowners file their paperwork to apply for compensation for adverse effects, which could include compensation for weed control, under the five-year lease review provisions of the *Surface Rights Act* (Section 27).

Natural Resources Canada has not provided a response to this resolution. RMA will update members and the status of this resolution when a response is received.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** as the current legislation has no enforcement measures for weed management and the OWA and AER do not provide weed control on suspended or abandoned orphaned oil and gas sites. RMA will continue to advocate to the provincial and federal government for appropriate legislation and standards to protect landowners from undue hardship as a result of oil and gas company neglect of weed control on well sites.

Resolution 7-19F

Utility Distribution Rates in Rural Communities and Public Facilities

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) requests the Government of Alberta review regulatory requirements relating to transmission and distribution rates of utility companies;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA requests the Government of Alberta review the requirement that public facilities are charged commercial rates and bills based on peak demand.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates that Alberta Energy and the Alberta Utility Commission (AUC) is aware of customer concerns over transmission and distribution system costs, especially in rural Alberta.

The resolution is requesting that the Government of Alberta review the regulatory requirements relating to transmission and distribution rates of utility companies. The Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) determines the tariff design to cover system costs, which is approved by the AUC. In 2021, the RMA Board met with the Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity. During this meeting, the Associate Minister stated that the Government of Alberta had no plans to review regulatory requirements relating to transmission and distribution rates of utility companies as it was under the mandate of the AUC.

The second part of the resolution is requesting the Government of Alberta review the requirement that public facilities are charged commercial rates and bills based on peak demand. In 2021, the AESO reached out to RMA to discuss proposed changes to the Independent System Operator (ISO) tariff, which consists of the rates, terms, and conditions that apply to persons who receive system access service from the transmission system. The AESO recovers bulk system costs based on a 12 coincident-peak (CP) methodology. Due to recent peak rate increases, 12 CP no longer incentivizes the drivers of transmission costs to adjust with changes occurring in the landscape of Alberta's electricity system. Further, the AESO has reported an increase of large industrial electricity consumers avoiding consumption during peak rate hours, which has shifted a larger portion of costs to consumers who are not necessarily able to avoid using electricity during peak times. According to the AESO, the current ISO tariff rate design should be updated to address these changes while still providing clear and stable price signals to consumers to support effective business decisions. Even with these proposed changes to the ISO tariff.

The AESO and the AUC have not indicated that a unique rate class will be created for public facilities, or that rates will be determined on any bases other than how the customers use energy and, accordingly, drive costs for the system. The final report from the AESO is scheduled to be published in early Fall.

RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met** but will continue to participate in the AESO General Tariff Application hearing to ensure that rural concerns are being addressed. Based on the outcome of the hearing process, RMA staff will update the status of this resolution.

Resolution 9-19F

Setback Referrals for Development Near Sour Gas Facilities in Crown Land Areas

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta review the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) timelines for responding to setback referrals for development near sour gas facilities, particularly in Crown land areas, to ensure they consistently respond to applicants within their own 30-day response commitment.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) response to this resolution provides an update on AER Bulletin 2013-03 to clarify setback requirements. RMA understands the AER's commitment to public safety through setback requirements for residential and commercial developments in close proximity to sour gas facilities and pipelines. However, this resolution requests that the Government of Alberta and the AER review their setback requirement timelines to ensure they meet their 30-day response commitment. RMA has reported that late responses from the AER have prevented municipalities from meeting their legislated timelines without requesting extensions from applicants. RMA is pleased to hear that there has been communication between the MD of Greenview, the AER and Alberta

Environment and Parks, however, the concerns are still being reviewed. RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met** as AER is not considering any changes to these requirements.

Resolution 11-19F

Requirement for Municipal Authority Input on Energy Resource Development Projects

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta directs the Alberta Energy Regulator to incorporate municipal authorities' input into the energy resource development project and change of use approval process.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that municipalities already have an opportunity to participate in the AER project-approval process through the submission of a statement of concern or request to participate in a public hearing. However, the background to resolution 11-19F indicates that these current methods are limiting as they require a municipality to be adversely affected, which requires that the project directly impact municipal infrastructure. The resolution refers to the need for AER to broaden the circumstances in which municipalities can provide input to empower municipalities to advocate on behalf of local property owners who may be adversely affected by a project but lack the ability to participate in the project review process individually.

The AER has indicated that municipalities will be expected to address unpaid tax concerns through the same statement of concern process. This is problematic as monitoring the AER website for approval hearings is administratively burdensome, and it is doubtful that the AER will consider a municipality's concerns about a company's tax payment record in other municipal jurisdiction as an issue that has a "direct and adverse" impact on the intervening municipality. A preferred approach is an ongoing partnership between the AER and municipalities to regularly share this information.

As the resolution makes clear that current municipal participation processes are not adequate to address municipal and landowner concerns with energy projects, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 1-19S

Municipal Support for the Energy Industry

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to further develop and implement a targeted, national education and marketing campaign on behalf of Albertans in order to offset foreign protectionism and de-marketing campaigns, regulatory delays, and the combined infrastructure and economic factors that are creating a significant, negative effect on Canada's local, provincial, and national economies. The elements of the education and marketing campaign include as outlined in "Schedule A";

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta provide resources to offset the combined negative impacts affecting the energy industry through:

1. the continuation of the Petrochemicals Diversification Program;
2. key energy industry-supporting infrastructure development; and
3. a continued strong presence and advocacy with federal, municipal and foreign governments.

DEVELOPMENTS: In December 2019, the Government of Alberta launched the Canadian Energy Centre (commonly referred to as the “energy war room”) in an effort to promote and combat misinformation about Alberta’s energy industry. The energy war room is broken into three sections:

- A rapid-response unit which is responsible for issuing swift responses to misinformation about Alberta’s oil and gas industry through social media.
- An energy literacy unit which will create original content to elevate the general understanding of Alberta’s energy sector and help the province take control of its energy story.
- A data and research unit which will centralize and analyze data to reinforce Alberta’s energy story with factual evidence from investors, researchers and policy makers.

In addition to the war room, the Government of Alberta has also launched a public inquiry into foreign funding of anti-energy campaigns, with the plan to ban foreign money from interfering in Alberta politics.

In 2020, funds initially budgeted for the energy war room were redirected to support the Government of Alberta’s efforts to protect Albertans against the COVID-19 pandemic. At the 2020 RMA Fall Convention, the Minister of Energy stated that the energy war room was conducting an internal review to strengthen their national education and marketing campaigns related to Alberta’s energy sector. The outcomes of the internal review will be implemented in 2021.

RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta’s confirmation that the Petrochemicals Diversification Program will continue and that two projects have already been approved under this program. These projects will help revitalize Alberta’s natural gas sector resulting in job creation and economic growth. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 7-19S

Solar Power Reclamation

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to direct the Alberta Utilities Commission to establish a method of ensuring that there is funding in place for abandoned wind and solar energy to be decommissioned and reclaimed in an environmentally-responsible way.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that this resolution is not within the mandate of the Alberta Utilities Commission. However, Alberta Environment and Parks has amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation to include renewable energy operations (REO) as an activity requiring reclamation at end of life. While RMA recognizes that AEP has amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation, there is no requirement for an operator of a REO to provide a reclamation security. Landowners have the right to allow or deny REOs on their property and have the ability to negotiate reclamation security for activities related to REOs on their property. RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met** and will continue to work with AEP on ensuring that there is funding put in place for abandoned wind and solar energy to be reclaimed.

Resolution 5-18F

Alberta Energy Regulator Requirements for Acquiring and Holding Energy Licences and Approval

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) be required to ensure that there are no outstanding municipal property taxes before licenses are transferred, including licensed properties declared as “Orphan Sites”;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that outstanding property taxes form part of the liability rating for oil and gas companies;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that oil and gas companies be required to post deposits in the amount of all outstanding municipal property taxes before they can apply for a license or transfer, and that these deposits are forwarded to the municipality from the AER upon the approval of the license or transfer.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2020, the Government of Alberta announced a new Liability Management Framework which includes a series of mechanisms and requirements to improve and expedite reclamation efforts and set clear industry expectations throughout the life cycle of oil and gas projects. Under this new framework, the Government of Alberta directed the AER to develop new liability management programs to implement this new framework. The AER is currently building programs, systems, and processes to implement the framework. One such initiative is the development of Directive XXX: Licensee Life-Cycle Management, which will replace Directive 006: Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and Licensee Transfer Process. In the summer of 2021, the AER reached out to stakeholders to provide feedback on Directive XXX. RMA’s feedback focused on the limited inclusion of unpaid taxes as a factor in assessing a company’s “capabilities and performance.” The directive only includes unpaid taxes as a consideration on public lands during the license transfer process. RMA’s position is that it should not matter whether a development is on public or private land in terms of whether the AER considers unpaid taxes as a factor in a company’s lifecycle management performance, and the focus should not be specifically on license transfers. The AER is in the process of reviewing the feedback and has stated that the directive will be finalized in fall 2021.

The Government of Alberta has indicated that the new Licensee Capability Assessment System will be implemented at some point to replace the Licensee Liability Rating program, and that changes made to Directive 067 to allow the AER to consider unpaid municipal taxes as a factor in assessing licensee risk may be integrated into the new system. RMA considers this a positive step in better addressing unpaid municipal taxes from the oil and gas industry and looks forward to better understanding how the new system will consider unpaid taxes.

Given that lack of payment of municipal taxes is often a sign of financial distress for companies, and may lead to further abandonment of other commitments, RMA urges the AER to consider unpaid taxes on all land in the liability rating for oil and gas companies.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 12-18F

Multi-Stakeholder Committee to Work at Reducing the Use of Potable Water by the Oil and Gas Industry in Alberta

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to immediately strike a multi-stakeholder committee to work at reducing the use of potable water and explore alternate options for use by the oil and gas industry in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta and the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) are currently considering expanding the use of temporary surface pipelines (TSPs) as a regulated alternative for the transportation of various types of water, including some wastewaters. The reasoning behind expanding the use of TSPs is that the short-term need for water has increased and many stakeholders have requested that the AER reduce industry's use of high-quality water. The AER is currently engaging with Albertans in the development of a regulatory framework for TSPs. RMA has distributed the engagement opportunity to members and has provided feedback as well. While this information is encouraging, it does not address the intent of the resolution to form a committee.

Because provincial action is being taken to reduce the use of potable water by the oil and gas industry, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and will continue to advocate for the formation of a committee on this issue.

Resolution 14-18F

Reclamation of Non-Producing Oil and Gas Sites on Agricultural Lands Owned by Bankrupt Companies

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Orphan Well Association prioritize the reclamation of abandoned oil and gas sites on the following basis:

1. **Health, safety and environmental needs**
2. **Agricultural land**
3. **All other lands**

DEVELOPMENTS: The response by the Government of Alberta indicates that public safety and environmental protection are priorities in the reclamation of oil and gas wells, although the actual prioritization process is completed by the Orphan Well Association (OWA). The OWA has released an update on how the reclamation process of abandoned oil and gas sites is conducted. Phase 1 of the Assessment is to identify any potential concerns that may warrant further investigation. Phase 2 of the Assessment involves soil and ground water samples to be collected and sent to a laboratory for analysis. If any soil or groundwater is contaminated, it will be a priority for reclamation. RMA has assigned this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, as the OWA reclamation process does not consider the type of land being impacted or provide any priority rating to agricultural lands. RMA will continue to monitor the progress of the OWA reclamation process of abandoned oil and gas wells.

Resolution 16-18F

Demand Meters and Rate Riders

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Alberta Utilities Commission create a separate rate class for municipal buildings and recreational facilities and require that all demand meters are reset and billed accordingly on a monthly basis.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2021, the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) reached out to RMA to discuss proposed changes to the Independent System Operator (ISO) tariff, which consists of the rates, terms, and conditions that apply to persons who receive system access service from the transmission system. The AESO recovers bulk system costs based on a 12 coincident-peak (CP) methodology. Due to recent peak rate increases, 12 CP no longer incentivizes the drivers of transmission costs to adjust with changes occurring in the landscape of Alberta's electricity system. Further, the AESO has reported an increase of large industrial electricity consumers avoiding consumption during peak rate hours, which has shifted a larger portion of costs to consumers who are not necessarily able to avoid using electricity during peak times. According to the AESO, the current ISO tariff rate design should be updated to address these changes while still providing clear and stable price signals to consumers to support effective business decisions.

The AESO has not indicated any plans to create a separate rate class for municipal buildings (as requested in the resolution); however, the AESO has stated that changes to the ISO will reduce the opportunity for companies to shift costs to others by avoiding peak rate hour times and this has the potential to decrease electricity costs for municipal buildings.

As the AESO has not indicated any plans to create a separate rate class for municipal and recreation facilities, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

ENVIRONMENT

Resolution 12-20F

Expansion of Elk Hunting for Management in Agriculture Production Areas

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta increase the number of antlerless elk draw seasons to a minimum of two per wildlife management unit (WMU) located within agricultural areas; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the Government of Alberta increase the number of antlerless elk tags allocated within WMUs that are located within agricultural areas to compensate for poor hunter harvest success.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) response outlining the several management strategies currently employed to mitigate elk depredation in agricultural areas. AEP's response has indicated that the department will be evaluating the antlerless elk special licence as part of its annual process for recommending changes to hunting rules and will adjust the number to better address concerns over agricultural conflict.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will update the status of the resolution if there are any changes to elk hunting management from the annual evaluation.

Resolution 15-20F

Security Deposits for Dispositions

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta remove the requirement for municipalities to provide a security to receive Crown land dispositions.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta response that local municipalities are exempt from providing reclamation security if they are operating under an approval, registration, or code of practice, per s. 17.1 of the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation. However, this resolution is stating that municipalities are being held accountable to pay a security deposit for dispositions on Crown land. RMA staff will follow up with the sponsoring municipality to gain further context on what instances they have had to pay a security deposit and will follow up with AEP once the information is received. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will update this resolution once clarity has been received.

Resolution 1-20S

Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to modify the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive to minimize the administration and assessment process to reduce costs and approval times for municipalities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that funds collected through the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive be directed to environment improvement projects that have low administration fees.

DEVELOPMENTS: Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) response acknowledges the challenges being faced by rural municipalities related to wetland applications and indicates that AEP is currently developing a streamlined regulatory process to reduce red tape for low-risk wetland impacts resulting from municipal road maintenance activities. RMA and its members have been actively engaging with AEP and sharing challenges rural municipalities are facing in wetland applications, and RMA is pleased to hear that those concerns have helped scope the department's work to reduce red tape for municipal road maintenance activities impacting wetlands. RMA and its members look forward to continued engagement with AEP to share ideas on red tape reduction for wetlands.

One of AEP's major initiatives is the Wetland Replacement Program (WRP) which will provide funding for approved wetland replacement projects in accordance with service agreements with municipalities. One goal of the WRP is to establish agreements with municipalities to restore and construct wetlands that will directly benefit communities and the surrounding ecosystem. AEP intends for the WRP to reduce liability and increase financial funding opportunities for municipalities by ensuring collaboration to achieve shared provincial and municipal outcomes, reducing administrative burden and liability associated with long-term *Water Act* conditions to complete permittee-responsible replacement and providing financial security to complete wetland restoration projects.

This resolution specifically asks for the Government of Alberta to modify the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive to minimize the administration and assessment process to reduce costs and approval times for municipalities and that funds collected be directed to environment improvement projects. Although AEP's response does not directly state any modifications to the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive, AEP's intent for the WRP is to minimize the administrative burden, liability and reduce costs for municipalities.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part** and will be re-evaluated based on the progress of the WRP.

Resolution 4-20S

Water and Wastewater – Laws, Regulations and Funding

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the governments of Canada and Alberta consider and evaluate the financial impacts that all existing and proposed laws and regulations governing the production and distribution of potable water and the collection, treatment and release of wastewater will have on municipalities, municipal commissions, or municipally-owned utility companies, and share this information with RMA; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the governments of Canada and Alberta to recognize water commissions and cooperatives and deem them eligible for funding programs; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the governments of Canada and Alberta establish adequate, stable, long-term funding for all affected water and wastewater service providers which considers the rising costs of providing these services due to federal and provincial laws and regulations.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta's response acknowledges the resource challenges rural municipalities face in delivering safe, reliable drinking water and wastewater services. Currently, the Government of Alberta administers two programs: Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership

and the Water for Life program to help finance water and wastewater infrastructure in smaller municipalities and has committed to a combined \$207 million to municipal works over the next three years.

This resolution is requesting that the Government of Alberta and Canada to recognize water commissions and cooperatives and deem them eligible for funding programs and to establish adequate, stable, long-term funding that considers the rising costs of providing water and wastewater service providers.

The Government of Alberta response indicates that due to the current fiscal reality, there are no immediate plans to change the funding model for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to advocate for the Government of Alberta and Canada to establish adequate, stable, long-term funding for water and wastewater service providers that considers the rising costs of providing services.

Resolution 4-19F

Alberta Environment and Parks Water and Wastewater Facility and Landfill Approvals

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta adjust their processes related to municipal water and wastewater facility and landfill approvals or renewals to require that in order for a statement of concern or appeal to be valid, 10% of the landowners/residents deemed to be affected must endorse the statement of concern or appeal.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's acknowledgement of the importance of municipal infrastructure projects to Albertans and that timely and cost-effective delivery remains a challenge. However, the Government of Alberta's response does not state that municipal water and wastewater facility and landfill approval or renewal process will be adjusted to require endorsement from 10% of landowners/residents deemed to be affected for a statement of concern to be valid. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will update this resolution based on the outcomes of future meetings with AEP regarding RMA's concerns on environmental appeals.

Resolution 13-19F

Provincial Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta join the advocacy campaign to encourage the Government of Alberta to implement extended producer responsibility regulations.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's commitment to working with external stakeholders to enhance provincial recycling programs that work for all Albertans. RMA participated as a project partner in the Alberta Collaborative Extended Producer Responsibility Study (ACES) to provide the rural context for implementing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system in Alberta. The ACES study was funded by the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Canadian Stewardship Services Alliance and the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. ACES outlines a made-in-Alberta vision for EPR for residential packaging and paper products. The study proposes that producers of packaging and paper products in Alberta manage both the financial and operational obligations of collecting their products and finding markets to recycle them.

In 2021, Alberta Environment and Parks announced the beginning of consultations with municipalities and industry leaders to develop an EPR program. The RMA participated in these engagement sessions and advocated for an EPR program that has a comparable level of service at a comparable cost in urban municipalities and rural municipalities. The service method and service level may differ due to the cost challenges of servicing large and sparsely-populated areas, but an effective EPR model must make recycling available in a way that is reasonably accessible to rural residents. In a recent meeting, the Minister of Environment and Parks indicated a goal of implementing an EPR system by mid-2022.

RMA has assigned this resolution a status of **Accepted** and will continue to work with the Government of Alberta and external stakeholder to provide the rural perspective so that a recycling program works for all Albertans.

Resolution 19-19F

Water Security in Southern Alberta

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta address water security issues in southern Alberta by constructing additional water storage in southern Alberta for the purpose of buffering flood events and to retain water during periods of shortage.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the acknowledgement from the Government of Alberta that new storage opportunities are more feasible if the costs and benefits of new infrastructure is shared among a broad number of water users. However, the resolution is calling for the government to construct additional water storage in southern Alberta and since there is no indication of construction being started at this time, RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 4-19S

Bighorn Country Proposal Consultation

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to delay the Bighorn Country Proposal until an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process that includes and respects First Nations, municipalities, stakeholder groups and residents of Alberta can be developed.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that they will not be proceeding with the previous government's proposed plan for protected areas in Bighorn Country. The Minister of Environment and Parks has stated that residents, municipal officials and First Nations groups have raised concerns about how the proposal might affect oil and gas explorations and off-road vehicle use, and that economic and environmental concerns were not adequately answered through the initial consultation process. The Government of Alberta response indicates that future land use planning decisions will be dealt with through the North Saskatchewan regional planning process under the Land-use Framework. RMA appreciates that under the North Saskatchewan regional planning process, the government will consult with local residents, municipalities, Indigenous groups and other stakeholders to determine how best to manage the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan region. However, since the new consultation process has not begun, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will re-evaluate the resolution based on the progress of further consultation.

Resolution 5-19S

Amendments Required for Crown Land Recreation Disposition Applications and Renewals

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request the Government of Alberta to amend their policies and requirements on Crown land dispositions (leases) for not for profit organizations and municipalities;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request the Government of Alberta to engage in additional public consultation with municipalities and not for profit organizations on the policies, requirements and process to lease Crown lands.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta's response indicates some recognition of the concerns that municipalities and not-for-profit organizations have shared regarding disposition applications and renewals. However, the intent of the resolution is not addressed through the creation of the Fish Creek Provincial Park pilot. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the RMA will continue to work with the Government of Alberta to fulfill the intent of this resolution.

Resolution 9-19S

Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Funding

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to provide Watershed Planning and Advisory Council funding annually before May 1 to assure that professional staff can be retained to deliver extension and education programs, as well as examine the advantages of a three-year funding model for these.

DEVELOPMENTS: In the 2020 Budget, the Government of Alberta increased Water for Life funding to \$51 million dollars.

RMA is pleased by the commitment from Alberta Environment and Parks that they are working to further improve the grant application process, decision-making processes and to provide timely-status updates to applicants, however, the intent of the resolution is not addressed by the government's response. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to work with the Government of Alberta to fulfil the intent of this resolution and update members on the government's progress.

Resolution 11-19S

Update of the Provincial Code of Practice for Compost Facilities

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to update the Code of Practice for Compost Facilities to reflect, at a minimum, the Standards for Composting Facilities in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the commitment from Alberta Environment and Parks to work with municipalities to resolve issues surrounding composting and compost facilities. However, the resolution requests the Government of Alberta to update the Code of Practice for Compost Facilities to reflect, at minimum, the Standards for Composting Facilities in Alberta.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to work with the Government of Alberta to fulfill the intent of this resolution.

Resolution 7-18F

Municipal and Privately-Owned Protected Areas Inventory

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) urge the Government of Alberta to recognize municipal and privately-owned protected areas in their reporting towards Alberta's 17% protection of terrestrial areas and inland waters target if they satisfy international standards for protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs);

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA partner with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to compile an inventory of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas in Alberta, for the purpose of providing Alberta Environment and Parks with a complete inventory of candidate protected areas and OECMs, for their 2020 17% terrestrial areas and inland waters protection target.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA is encouraged by the Government of Alberta's recognition of the ecological and biodiversity benefits of municipal and privately-owned protected areas. RMA has been in contact with the Alberta Land Stewardship Centre which has an existing inventory of privately held conservation areas, but does not include municipally held land. In addition, RMA has reached out to the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) to discuss what options are available to RMA to create a database of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas.

RMA has reached out to AUMA to discuss this resolution and to learn if this issue is a priority among its members. AUMA has informed RMA that its members have not passed a resolution seeking the creation of an inventory of municipal and privately-owned areas, and therefore the project would not be a priority for AUMA. RMA is continuing to determine how to proceed on this resolution and will update its members on any progress. The current status is **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 9-18F

Impact of the Alberta Wetland Policy on the Cost of Maintaining Public Road Infrastructure

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to modify the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive to allow all wetland impacts as a result of municipal road maintenance or re-building of existing roads to utilize a one to one ratio, or D to D value wetland replacement; and/or consider exempting all wetland impacts in road right of ways that are smaller than one hectare in size.

DEVELOPMENTS: In January 2020, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) conducted a survey to gather information from municipalities about municipal road maintenance activities impacting wetlands. Based on the survey feedback, AEP updated the Wetland Assessment and Impact Form (WAIF) to allow low-risk activities such as widening, improvements or maintenance of an existing road within a registered road plan right of way or within 15 meters of the center line of an existing unregistered or private road to require a WAIF rather than a full Wetland Assessment and Impact Report (WAIR). AEP has stated that this change will reduce red tape by allowing more flexible and less costly wetland assessments within a larger project area, therefore reducing costs for municipalities.

RMA acknowledges that AEP has introduced a system change that will help reduce costs; however, it does not address replacement costs in a substantial manner and the WAIF program does not allow for

the exemption of all wetland impacts in road right of ways that are smaller than one hectare in size. RMA assigns this resolution **Intent Not Met** and will continue to be in contact with AEP on this issue.

Resolution 11-18F

Rural Municipalities of Alberta Represents Municipalities on *Water Act* Approvals

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta work with Alberta Environment and Parks to provide the rural perspective and input related to streamlining and improving the *Water Act* approval process.

DEVELOPMENTS: Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) continues to modernize its regulatory system. One initiative to support this process is the creation of the Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS), which is now the only system used for submitting and tracking *Water Act* approvals, applications, amendment applications, and Code of Practice notices. DRAS is designed to streamline the approval process by providing clear, upfront expectations to applicants and will be used to manage the entire lifecycle of a project from application to authorization, monitoring and compliance reporting, to remediation and closure. The first stage of DRAS is live and the remaining stages will be rolled out between 2021 to 2023. By mid-2023, all applications will be moved online to the DRAS system supporting all authorization types managed by AEP under the *Water Act*, *Public Lands Act*, and *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The RMA is currently working with AEP to share updates on the DRAS system to members through the Contact newsletter.

In 2020, AEP developed a draft code of practice on wetland restoration projects to reduce red tape and streamline the regulatory process. This was informed by an engagement process with stakeholders including RMA and its members to ensure that the draft code will meet the needs of those conducting wetland restorations. From the feedback, AEP has developed a new *Water Act Code of Practice for Wetland Replacement Works* which will reduce red tape for proponents restoring or constructing wetlands by replacing *Water Act* approval requirements with a notice process for activities that meet the Code of Practice; thereby eliminating approval wait times.

In January 2020, AEP conducted a survey to gather information from municipalities about municipal road maintenance activities impacting wetlands. Based on the survey feedback, AEP updated the Wetland Assessment and Impact Form (WAIF) to allow low risk activities such as widening, improvements or maintenance of an existing road within a registered road plan right of way or within 15 metres of the centerline of an existing unregistered or private road to require a WAIF rather than a full Wetland Assessment and Impact Report (WAIR). AEP has stated that this change will reduce red tape by allowing more flexible and less costly wetland assessments within a larger project area.

The Minister of Environment and Parks has stated that AEP is open to working with RMA to provide the rural perspective and improving the current *Water Act* approval process. In the past year, RMA has seen an increase in engagement opportunities with AEP on streamlining and improving the *Water Act* regulatory approval process. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted** and will continue to provide the rural municipal perspective related to streamlining and improving the *Water Act* approval process.

Resolution 15-18F

Wetland Mitigation Directive – Restoration and Compensation

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that Alberta Environment and Parks follow the Wetland Mitigation Directive and that permittee-responsible mitigation either through enhancement or construction of wetlands be allowed, be it either through the Alternative Land Use Services program or through wetlands constructed as a part of stormwater management ponds.

DEVELOPMENTS: Changes to the management of wetland replacement in Alberta allow for greater flexibility in how municipalities can work locally to replace disturbed wetlands. The Government of Alberta has created Alberta Guide to Wetland Construction in Stormwater Management Facilities, which provides guidance on wetland construction practices in stormwater management facilities based on scientific and practical knowledge and experience across Canada. This guide allows municipalities to apply wetlands constructed as part of a stormwater management system towards their wetland replacement obligations. As a result of the release of the guide, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 17-18F

Alberta Environment and Parks Additional Resources for *Water Act* Approvals

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to allocate sufficient financial resources to improve and streamline its *Water Act* approvals process and systems.

DEVELOPMENTS: Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) continues to modernize its regulatory system. One initiative to support this process is the creation of the Digital Assurance Regulatory System (DARS), which is the technological backbone of the transformed regulatory system. DARS replaces the OneStop system and will be the only system used for submitting and tracking *Water Act* approvals, applications, amendment applications, and Code of Practice notices. DARS will streamline the approval process by providing clear, upfront expectations to applicants and will be used to manage the entire lifecycle of a project, from application to authorization, monitoring and compliance reporting to remediation and closure. The first stage of DARS is live and will be rolled out in stages throughout 2021 to 2023. By mid-2023, all applications will be moved online to the DARS system supporting all authorization types managed by AEP under the *Water Act*, *Public Lands Act*, and *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*.

In 2020, AEP developed a draft code of practice on wetland restoration projects to reduce red tape and streamline the regulatory process by restructuring the risk management system by lifting the requirements on minor works orders and focusing on more regulation on high-risk projects. AEP undertook an engagement process through TalkAEP with RMA and other stakeholders to ensure that the draft code will meet the needs of those conducting wetland restorations. From the feedback, AEP has developed a new *Water Act Code of Practice for Wetland Replacement Works* which will reduce red tape for proponents restoring or constructing wetlands by replacing *Water Act* approval requirements with a notice process for activities that meet the Code of Practice; thereby eliminating approval wait times.

In January 2020, AEP conducted a survey to gather information from municipalities about municipal road maintenance activities impacting wetlands. From the survey feedback, AEP updated the Wetland Assessment and Impact Form (WAIF) to allow low-risk activities such as widening, improvements or

maintenance of an existing road within a registered road plan right of way or within 15 metres of the center line of an existing unregistered or private road to require a WAIF rather than a full Wetland Assessment and Impact Report (WAIR). AEP has stated that this change will reduce red tape by allowing more flexible and less costly wetland assessments within a larger project area.

The Minister has stated that these changes will help improve and streamline the *Water Act* approval process. Although these changes are new or still in the process of being implemented and the impact of these processes on approval times is unknown, AEP has allocated sufficient financial resources to create processes which are intended to improve approval times. RMA assigns this resolution as **Accepted in Principle** and will update the status of this resolution once the impact of these processes is known.

Resolution 20-18F

Decommissioning Costs for Wind Energy Developments

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request Alberta Energy to direct the Alberta Utilities Commission to establish a method of ensuring that there is funding in place to ensure that an abandoned wind energy plant is decommissioned and reclaimed in an environmentally responsible way.

DEVELOPMENTS: The RMA has been involved in a number of consultations on the end-of-life management of renewable energy infrastructure in Alberta to ensure that reclamation and remediation occurs in a timely and effective manner that will minimize future impacts to the land, neighbours, and land owners. In comparison to oil and gas activity, landowners have more control over the direct siting of renewable energy projects and have a greater ability to request accountability for the end-of-life management if they are informed at the outset of a project. The RMA has developed, in partnership with the Miistakis Institute, a resource to inform municipalities of the renewable energy approval process.

Alberta Environment and Parks has amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation to include renewable energy operation as an activity requiring reclamation at end of life. While the RMA recognizes that AEP has amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation, there is no requirement for an operator of a renewable energy operation to provide a reclamation security. RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met** and will continue to work with AEP to ensure there is funding put in place to reclaim abandoned wind energy plants in a responsible way.

Resolution 22-18F

Amendment to the Wildlife Regulations Regarding Cougars

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to amend section 7, subsection 3 of the *Wildlife Regulation* to provide the same hunting allowances for cougars on private land that already exist for wolves and black bears;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that section 7, subsection 8 of the *Wildlife Regulation*, which establishes separate hunting allowances for cougars on private land, be repealed;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that reporting a cougar kill remain as a requirement of the *Wildlife Regulation*.

DEVELOPMENTS: The response from the Government of Alberta indicates that there is not anticipated legislative or regulatory changes that impact the management of cougars and therefore, this status is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

HEALTH AND SENIORS

Resolution ER2-20S

New Physician Funding Framework

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to reengage in negotiations with the Alberta Medical Association to mutually arrive at a new master agreement that ensures continued timely access to healthcare for all rural Albertans.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA remains engaged in issues regarding access to healthcare for rural Albertans, and is closely following the relationship between Alberta Health and the Alberta Medical Association. The Alberta Medical Association and Alberta Health did return to negotiations. However, Alberta Medical Association members voted to reject the newly proposed master agreement. RMA understands that negotiations are expected to continue in the future. As a result of renewed negotiations, but lacking a new master agreement, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

Resolution ER3-20S

Housing Management Body Compliance Requirements During Pandemic Response

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request the Government of Alberta to provide funding to Alberta housing management bodies (HMBs) and continuing care operators (CCOs) in support of front-line workers for the additional labour, personal protective equipment and operational supplies and lost revenues due to complying with COVID-19 pandemic directives and orders; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request the Government of Alberta to immediately provide a plan for emergency supply of labour, personal protective equipment and operational supplies to Alberta HMBs and CCOs in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak at a facility in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that specific emergency provincial funding was provided to HMBs and CCOs beginning on June 8, 2020 to allow for the purchase of PPE and other related equipment. Additionally, the response indicates that AHS has supplied PPE to HMBs and contracted CCOs at no cost. This, combined with the two-dollar-per-hour wage subsidy to better support employees during this time, effectively addresses the resolution's first operative clause.

The resolution response also indicates that the AHS Coordinated COVID-19 Response Team has been made available to assist HMBs and CCOs in procuring and deploying PPE.

The resolution response does not indicate that the Government of Alberta has developed an emergency response plan to address a breakout of COVID-19 at a facility in Alberta. Ensuring both the province and facility operators and staff are prepared to recognize and mitigate the impacts of a breakout is critical to supporting the safety of residents, staff and the broader community. As the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, the Government of Alberta has begun introducing plans for the ongoing management of COVID-19, including outbreak response plans. RMA will continue to monitor for updates. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**.

Resolution 20-19F

Policies for Supporting Community Hospice Associations

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta develop standardized procedures and policies to interface community hospice associations with Alberta Health Services.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA is pleased to learn that the Government of Alberta (GOA) is investing \$20 million over four years to improve palliative care in rural communities. The GOA response indicates that part of this funding is to develop training and education, which supports the operative clause in this resolution. Additionally, their engagement with the Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association is welcomed by RMA. However, as a policy with clear rules outlining how AHS works with hospice and home care organizations has not yet been developed, this resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted in Principle**.

Resolution 12-19S

Making Children's Healthcare a Priority in Alberta

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta make all aspects of children's health care a priority by making excellent pediatric care accessible to all Alberta children, regardless of where they live;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request that the Government of Alberta support enhancements to existing infrastructure and programming in order to provide an increased level of care to children and recognize that the Stollery Children's Hospital and the Alberta Children's Hospital serve as critical hubs to this network of care for children's health across the province.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Alberta Health response affirms ongoing support for the Stollery Children's Hospital, including new funding for a pediatric intensive care unit. Their response also highlights increased funding for mental health services in rural areas including child psychiatry. This additional funding for children's mental health care is welcome; RMA will continue to monitor how these services will be accessed by rural Albertans. The Alberta Health response closes by outlining existing children's healthcare services available through the Primary Care Network, which has offices in rural Alberta, however 16 of the 41 offices are in the Edmonton or Calgary regions. RMA assigns this resolution the status of **Accepted in Part**, and will continue to advocate for access to children's healthcare in rural Alberta.

Resolution 8-18F

Restricting the Consumption of Cannabis based on Regulations for Liquor Consumption

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta amend Section 90.28 (a) of *An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis* to reflect that no person may smoke or vape cannabis in any area or place where that person is prohibited from consuming liquor under the *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act* or any other Act or the bylaws of a municipality.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA understands that public consumption challenges differ between cannabis and alcohol due to the different ways the substances are consumed. However, several provinces and territories in Canada have chosen to prohibit public consumption of cannabis. RMA encourages Alberta

to review the public health and enforcement impacts of its current public consumption allowances and compare them with impacts in jurisdictions that prohibit public consumption periodically.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Resolution 2-20F

Blue-Ribbon Panel to Review Unpaid Taxes Owed by Oil and Gas Companies

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to appoint an independent panel of experts to review unpaid property taxes owed by oil and gas companies and its impact on rural municipalities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the panel provide the Government of Alberta and rural municipalities with implementable recommendations related to the recovery of property taxes owed by oil and gas companies.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response makes no reference to the specific request made in the resolution: that the province appoint an independent panel of experts to review the issue of unpaid municipal property taxes by oil and gas companies. Additionally, the comment relating to Alberta Municipal Affairs working on this issue with internal ministry partners is frustrating, as responses to similar resolutions from 2019 (1-19F) indicated that the same internal work was ongoing, with solutions estimated to be proposed in spring 2020. Clearly, no solutions have yet to be proposed, and RMA has not received any detailed information on the progress being made on this issue by the Government of Alberta.

The Government of Alberta has demonstrated its recent willingness to conduct independent reviews, panels, and inquiries on issues that it deems significant, including the Alberta Health Services review, the COVID-19 response review, the Fair Deal Panel, and the Inquiry into Anti-Alberta Energy Campaigns. Given the province's frequent use of independent reviews, it is disappointing that the Government of Alberta response to resolution 2-20F does not even reference the specific request in the resolution and does not explain why an independent review of this issue may not be the province's preferred approach. Meanwhile, Alberta's rural municipalities face approximately \$245 million in unpaid taxes based on a January 2021 RMA member survey, suggesting that this issue is extremely important for rural viability.

The AER, Alberta Energy, and Alberta Municipal Affairs have indicated that they are working on legislative or policy changes to help address this issue, which is a positive development. However, given the complexity and the cross-ministry impacts of the issue, an independent panel review would be preferred.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to emphasize the importance of this issue.

Resolution 4-20F

Provincial Policing Costs Levy – Designate as a Requisition

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to amend section 326(1)(a) of the *Municipal Government Act* by designating the provincial policing costs levy as a requisition to allow municipalities to show separately on their property tax notices the tax rate imposed to raise the revenue required for the provincial policing costs levy.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that the request in the resolution will be considered when the finance provisions of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) are reviewed in

2021 or 2022. The Government of Alberta's response that designating the police costing levy as a requisition may create additional red tape is unclear, as the current levy process already requires municipalities to pay the province directly for police services on a regular basis, similar to a requisition process. Any minor administrative challenges would be more than offset by the improved transparency that allowing policing costs to be displayed on property tax notices would provide for municipal taxpayers.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will advocate on this issue during the upcoming review of the finance provisions of the MGA.

Resolution 17-20F

Rural Small Business Properties Assessment Sub-Classes Amendment

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to amend the Matters Relating to Assessment Sub-Classes Regulation to allow a tax rate differential of up to 50% between the "small business property" and "other non-residential property" sub-classes.

DEVELOPMENTS: While RMA appreciates the tools currently in the *Municipal Government Act* that allow municipalities to modify tax rates for certain non-residential properties, this resolution specifically requests an amendment to the Matters Relating to Assessment Sub-Classes Regulation, which is not considered in the Government of Alberta response.

The resolution request would be particularly helpful for municipalities with large oil and gas properties within their boundaries, as the current 75% tax rate differential allowance may not allow for adequate tax equity between large industrial properties and small commercial properties taxed under the same rate class. While this issue could potentially be addressed through MGA sections 347 or 364.2, neither appear to be designed for a permanent, broad tax rate differential within a rate class, and applying them in this way may result in increased red tape and complexity in the taxation process.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 2-20S

Additional Depreciation of Machinery and Equipment Property (Schedule D)

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate for the Government of Alberta to take steps to ensure that assessments for Machinery and Equipment are not adjusted under Schedule D of the Alberta Machinery & Equipment Assessment Minister's Guidelines on the basis of industry-wide economic conditions; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to amend Schedule D of the Alberta Machinery & Equipment Assessment Minister's Guidelines to confirm the status of the current policy that additional depreciation under Schedule D is not available on the basis of industry-wide economic conditions; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to not consider any changes to the Alberta Machinery & Equipment Assessment Minister's Guidelines without full consultation and consideration of the impact of any changes on all Alberta taxpayers.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2020, the Government of Alberta undertook a review of the assessment model for regulated oil and gas properties. The review process included consideration of changes to how Schedule D depreciation is applied to various property types, including a shift away from the use of additional (Schedule D) depreciation in some proposed scenarios.

Following the review, the Minister of Municipal Affairs made temporary adjustments to the assessment model, which included a further reduction in the assessment value of low producing wells through changes to Schedule D of the Alberta Machinery & Equipment Assessment Minister's Guidelines. This change is intended to reduce costs of oil and gas companies responsible for low-producing wells due to the broader economic challenges currently facing the industry, which is in direct opposition to the request in the first operative clause of the resolution.

Additionally, RMA does not believe that the Government of Alberta has adequately considered impacts of changes to Alberta taxpayers during the assessment model review process (as mentioned in the third operative clause). Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to advocate for the reduced use of artificial changes to assessment levels through Schedule D in future reviews of the assessment model.

Resolution 1-19F

Priority of Unpaid Property Taxes on Linear Property

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate for the Government of Alberta to take steps to ensure that municipalities are able to effectively recover all property taxes, including property taxes on linear property;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to address the growing concern regarding unfunded abandonment and reclamation costs for oil and gas properties and the affect that those costs have on the ability of municipalities to recover unpaid property taxes;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to make immediate amendments to *the Municipal Government Act (MGA)* to

- 1. Clarify that the reference to “property tax” in section 348 includes all property taxes, including property taxes on linear property;**
- 2. Clarify the meaning of the phrase “...land and any improvements to the land...” in section 348 to specify that all of the property that is subject to assessment pursuant to Part 9 of the MGA within that municipality is subject to the special lien established in that section;**
- 3. Provide municipalities with improved enforcement powers, such as the specific power to apply to the courts for the appointment of a receiver to enforce a claim for unpaid linear property taxes against the assets that are subject to a special lien established by section 348;**
- 4. Apply the above amendments retroactively to ensure that existing linear property tax arrears constitute a secured claim.**

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response acknowledges the challenges being faced by rural municipalities related to unpaid property taxes on oil and gas properties and indicates that multiple Government of Alberta ministries are working to develop solutions to the issue, including special liens and other options. In June 2021, Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Energy reached out

to RMA for legislative suggestions to address this issue. RMA's submission included recommendations contained in this resolution, as well as others. At this point, RMA has not received a response from the Government of Alberta or an indication of possible next steps.

In terms of the first operative clause, Alberta Energy's response indicates the importance of designing an abandoned well remediation approach that supports industry competitiveness. However, this approach must also consider industry accountability and the impacts that municipalities are facing due to the lack of municipal input into the current liability management system. A January 2021 RMA member survey indicated that rural municipalities face an estimated \$245 million in unpaid taxes from the oil and gas industry, which illustrates the seriousness of this issue and the need for both short-term fiscal support for municipalities and long-term legislative and policy change to prevent the continuation of this issue.

Following an October 2020 announcement by the Minister of Municipal Affairs of several short-term oil and gas property assessment changes intended to support industry competitiveness, former RMA President Al Kemmere stated in a media article (<https://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/varcoe-after-providing-tax-relief-to-oilpatch-province-must-tackle-unpaid-taxes-to-municipalities>) that "unpaid taxes is our number one concern. It has got some of our member municipalities on the cusp of not being able to pay their bills." In the same article, industry organizations also acknowledged the seriousness of the issue, with an Explorers and Producers Association of Canada representative stating that "from an oil and gas perspective, property taxes have to be paid. We understand there's a problem." The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers stated that "the fix is to find a path, some tool, that would enable government to compel companies to pay."

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and will be re-evaluated based on engagement with Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Energy in collaborating with RMA on this issue.

Resolution 6-19F

Municipal Recourse for Solvent Companies Choosing Not to Pay Taxes

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta direct the Alberta Energy Regulator to add unpaid municipal taxes to the grounds for which a company may be denied a licence to operate in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: In April 2021, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) released a new edition of Directive 067: Eligibility Requirements for Acquiring and Holding Energy Licences and Approvals. The revised version of Directive 067 added outstanding debts owed for municipal taxes as a factor used by the AER to determine "unreasonable risk" for an energy licence applicant. Under Directive 067, the AER could deny a company's application to be eligible to hold energy licences due to unpaid taxes, which was not previously the case.

While the changes to Directive 067 represent a crucial step forward in how oil and gas companies may be held accountable for non-payment of property taxes, RMA continues to work with AER to understand how the addition to Directive 067 will be implemented. Outstanding questions include how unpaid tax information will be gathered and updated and the extent to which unpaid taxes will be weighed in relation to other risk factors when assessing a company.

Despite these outstanding questions, the changes to Directive 067 meet the intent of the resolution. The resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 12-19F

Libraries Act Review and Rural Library Services

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta review the the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation* through a comprehensive public consultation process;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the review include a focus on amending population density and service point indicators related to requirements for hiring professional librarians;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA requests that the Government of Alberta update population lists to the most recent census information to ensure proper funding is provided to rural library boards.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that funding for library operating grants has remained steady at \$30 million in budget 2019, as has other related funding. Funding also remained stable in budget 2020. While this stability is appreciated, the response does not address any of the requests within resolution 12-19F, including a public review of the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation*, a greater focus on population density related to professional librarian hiring requirements, and updating of population lists to determine proper funding is provided to rural library boards.

In June 2021, Alberta Municipal Affairs introduced a plan for a targeted red tape reduction-focused review of the *Libraries Act*, with a focus in four specific areas, including the current requirement that library boards serving a population above 10,000 hire at least one professional librarian. The specific consultation on this issue is expected to take place in fall 2021.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will revisit this resolution based on the outcome of the *Libraries Act* review.

Resolution 16-19F

GST for Grants and Subsidies Interpretation

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta advocate to the Government of Canada on behalf of the municipalities of Alberta that the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) interpretation be reviewed and the tax status of cost-sharing agreements be clarified;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the CRA reassess the 2019 GST/PSB audit on the Town of Peace River regarding the interpretation of the CRA Bulletin on GST for grants and subsidies.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates a concern with the impact that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) interpretation of the tax status of cost-sharing agreements may have on Alberta's municipalities. RMA appreciates that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has informed his federal counterpart of this concern.

The response from Alberta Treasury Board and Finance indicates that it is the Ministry's policy not to interfere in the application of federal rules in specific cases. As the CRA decision has fiscal impact on

both municipalities and the province more broadly (as a municipal funding source), RMA is concerned with this lack of response from Treasury Board and Finance.

RMA also continues to work with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to address this issue with the CRA, including through the possible development of a guide or FAQ document to ensure municipalities use language in cost-sharing agreements that minimizes the likelihood of a perception of an exchange of taxable services.

As Municipal Affairs has noted that Minister Madu wrote a letter expressing concern about this issue to the Minister responsible for the CRA, this resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted in Part**.

Resolution 8-19S

Reinstatement of the Municipal Officer's Expense Allowance

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta requests that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities ask the Government of Canada to consider reinstating the municipal officer's expense allowance.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) response indicates that they have categorized the resolution as "Category D." According to *FCM Procedures for Resolutions*, Category D resolutions are defined as follows:

this category contains resolutions on issues dealt with by FCM in the previous three (3) years or that are in accordance with FCM's standing policy and advocacy priorities. These resolutions will be received by the Board of Directors for information only. FCM staff is authorized to inform a sponsoring local government or affiliate member that its resolution will be categorized as "D".

Based on this categorization, FCM is already advocating for the return of the municipal officer's expense allowance. RMA is aware of a guide developed by FCM titled *Change in "One-Third" Federal Tax Exemption for Elected Officials: A Guide for Canadian Municipalities* that is intended to support municipalities in understanding the implications of the change and considering various options for addressing the elimination of the exemption, including increasing elected official salaries and expanding expense policies.

RMA is also aware of a response that the federal Minister of Finance provided to FCM on this issue, which stated the following:

Government took steps to bring the tax treatment of non-accountable allowances to municipal office holders in line with that afforded to other employees. An employer may reimburse work-related expenses on a tax-free basis, but non-accountable allowances may substitute for salary and are thus taxable.

The letter also indicated that the federal government was not planning to reconsider its decision on the issue. Although the finality of the federal decision is disappointing, the letter provides confirmation that FCM has advocated on this issue, which is the intent of the resolution. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 2-18F

Annual Release Date of Assessment Year Modifiers

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to set the annual date of release of assessment year modifiers at September 15th or the nearest business day afterwards to allow municipalities to be properly informed when making budget decisions.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that due to requirements within the *Municipal Government Act* requiring assessed values to be based on a July 1 date, the process of gathering and analyzing assessment data and developing the annual assessment year modifier (AYM) cannot be significantly changed. RMA understands the impact of these regulatory requirements.

RMA has followed up with Alberta Municipal Affairs to discuss the possibility of amending the *Matters Relating to Assessment And Taxation Regulation* to change the July 1 estimate date to allow the finalized AYMs to be shared with municipalities at a date that better aligns with the municipal budget cycle. Alberta Municipal Affairs staff appeared open to considering this change, but no formal action has taken place to date.

As the 2020 assessment model review process concluded with no major changes to the actual assessment model, RMA expects a new multi-year assessment model review to commence in 2021. The mechanism for determining and applying AYMs is likely to be a part of the upcoming review.

Additionally, as this resolution was partly necessitated due to the unexpected freezing of AYMs in late 2017 after draft AYMs were shared earlier in the year with no indication of a possible freeze, Alberta Municipal Affairs should enact a policy or internal requirement that final AYMs can differ by no more than a set percentage from draft AYMs, to allow municipalities with some assurance when drafting budgets prior to receiving final AYMs.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will work with Alberta Municipal Affairs to develop possible solutions.

Resolution 6-18F

Securing Municipal Property Taxes in the Event of Bankruptcy or Insolvency

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta partner with Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend section 348 and other relevant sections of the *Municipal Government Act* to ensure that municipal property taxes are legally assured a status as a secured claim in the event that the property owner enters bankruptcy or receivership.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has taken some action in recent years to lessen the impacts of unpaid taxes (such as the Provincial Education Requisition Credit [PERC] and allowing municipalities to place a \$0 assessment on linear properties owned by defunct companies).

Unfortunately, these measures provided limited support and come nowhere close to addressing the fundamental issue of a lack of tools for municipalities to address tax recovery from bankrupt companies. According to a January 2021 RMA member survey, rural municipalities are facing approximately \$245 million in unpaid property taxes from oil and gas companies, many of which are bankrupt.

In September 2019, the Supreme Court of Canada denied the application brought forward by three Alberta rural municipalities related to the Alberta Court of Appeal decision in *Northern Sunrise County v*

Virginia Hills Oil Corp, 2019 ABCA 61. The denial confirms that the *Municipal Government Act* does not grant a municipality a special lien for unpaid linear property taxes. The decision confirms that municipalities cannot use s. 348 to seize linear property for unpaid taxes, severely limiting their tax recovery tools. The decision heightens the urgency for action on amending the MGA to ensure municipalities have tax enforcement and recovery powers.

In September 2020, the Government of Alberta introduced the Municipal Operating Support Transfer Program (MOST), which provides financial support for municipalities to offset increased expenses or lost revenue linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Included among eligible MOST expenses are any unpaid property taxes from the 2020 tax year. There is no need for taxes to be written off to apply the unpaid taxes to MOST, and taxes can still be collected at a later date. Although this is a helpful tool for rural municipalities continuing to struggle with unpaid taxes, it does not address the legislative gaps causing the problem.

In June 2021, Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Energy reached out to RMA for legislative suggestions to address this issue. RMA's submission included recommendations contained in this resolution, as well as others. At this point, RMA has not received a response from the Government of Alberta or an indication of possible next steps.

As the Government of Alberta has not amended section 348 this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue moving forward.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 7-20F

Amendments to *Municipal Government Act* Section 619

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to amend Section 619 of the *Municipal Government Act* to clearly state that the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Energy Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or the Alberta Utilities Commission must consider municipal statutory land use planning related to the protection of productive agricultural lands when making decisions on licenses, permits, approvals and other authorizations under their jurisdiction.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to amend section 619 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to ensure that provincial regulatory bodies must consider a project's impact on agricultural lands when making decisions on licenses, permits, approvals and other authorizations under their jurisdiction. Additionally, recent changes to the MGA under Bill 48: *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2)* have resulted in appeals of local development and subdivision decisions made on projects regulated under section 619 being sent to the Land and Property Rights Tribunal (formerly the Municipal Government Board), rather than the local subdivision and development appeal board. This further erodes the ability of local land use issues (including impacts on agricultural lands) from being considered in relation to approvals under section 619.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 13-20F

Provincial Government Disaster Recovery Program Payments

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta review its Disaster Recovery Program processes to ensure municipalities receive payments within a defined timeline for resources deployed to assist during regional disasters.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that the current Disaster Recovery Program (DRP) municipal reimbursement process does allow for advance payment of municipal costs if certain conditions are met. However, the resolution indicates that the process for the reimbursement of routine municipal claims under the DRP is unnecessarily lengthy and places an unfair financial burden on municipalities.

The current Disaster Assistance Guidelines do not appear to include any timelines by which DRP support funds will be paid out to municipalities, aside from section 2.10, which states that "final payments will be made based on receipt and review of all documents submitted by the applicant prior to the program closure." RMA appreciates that the time needed to review documents will depend on the scope and complexity of the application. However, a complete lack of timeline (even of a "goal" or "benchmark" time for reimbursement) reflects a lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the Government of Alberta, and places municipalities into a challenging state of uncertainty.

March 2021 changes to the Disaster Recovery Program introduced a 90/10 cost-sharing split between the Government of Alberta and municipalities. This change adds financial pressures onto municipalities

in relation to disaster recovery costs and makes the timely payment of the provincial portion of costs even more important. Unfortunately, no changes were made to the payment timelines.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 16-20F

Federal and Provincial Disaster Support

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta for continued Disaster Recovery Program funding to support community resilience and enable the relocation of affected property owners where re-construction is impractical or inadvisable.

DEVELOPMENTS: In March 2021, the Government of Alberta amended the terms of the Disaster Recovery Program to introduce a 90/10 provincial/municipal cost share for all eligible DRP costs. According to the initial Alberta Municipal Affairs response to this resolution, DRP-eligible costs associated with 2020 spring flooding costs across the province totalled \$147 million, meaning that were the 90/10 cost share introduced for the 2020 year, impacted municipalities would have been responsible for a combined \$14.7 million in unanticipated costs.

These changes place a significant burden on municipalities to financially plan for disaster events that are impossible to predict in terms of their location, frequency or severity, and place an additional financial burden onto municipalities that are already adapting to downfalls in many different areas.

Given the major impacts this change may have on municipalities, RMA is disappointed that the change was announced with no consultation or transition period, placing municipalities in a very difficult position to prepare for the 2021 flood and wildfire season.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 18-20F

Municipal Decision-making on Fire Bans in Hamlets Within Forest Protection Area

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend necessary legislation (including the *Municipal Government Act* and/or the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act*) to clarify that councils of municipal districts and specialized municipalities may make decisions on fire bans in hamlets within the Forest Protection Area.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the support of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) has invited RMA to participate in consultations to amend legislation to allow municipalities to make decisions on fire bans in hamlets within the Forest Protection Area. However, RMA is concerned that AAF also indicated support for municipalities taking on a greater degree of responsibility for fire suppression within these hamlets. As local decision makers, RMA members are well positioned to understand local conditions, placing them in a position to make informed decisions about fire bans within hamlets. However, RMA members are not in a financial position to increase their service levels regarding fire management in hamlets without support from the Government of Alberta.

The Alberta Municipal Affairs response indicates a willingness to review section 75 of the *Municipal Government Act*, which relates to the ability of municipal districts to pass bylaws respecting fires that

apply to land within the forest protection area. Re-wording of this section has the potential to address the issue identified in the resolution.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will participate in consultations with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and Alberta Municipal Affairs on this issue and provide an update based on the outcomes.

Resolution ER1-19F

Dissolution of Mandatory Growth Management Boards

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the Government of Alberta remove mandatory growth management boards (GMBs) from the *Municipal Government Act*;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate that the Government of Alberta strengthen existing regulatory tools and mechanisms to encourage and incentivize regional cooperation with respect to land use planning and service delivery to residents;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should the Government of Alberta fail to abolish mandatory GMBs, the RMA shall advocate to amend the current voting structure to remove double majority vetoes and ensure the interests of all members of a GMB are equally considered and represented;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should the Government of Alberta fail to abolish the mandatory GMBs, the RMA shall advocate to implement an independent appeal process for members to appeal decisions of the GMB that may have a detrimental impact on a member;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should the Government of Alberta fail to abolish the mandatory GMBs, the RMA request that the Government of Alberta amend the Regional Evaluation Framework and the Interim Regional Evaluation Framework for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board and the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board respectively.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that a review of growth management boards (GMBs) will take place soon and provide member municipalities an opportunity to provide input on solutions to challenges facing the boards. Unfortunately, the resolution response provides no information related to the specific changes to GMBs requested in resolution ER1-19F, including the removal of mandatory GMBs from the *Municipal Government Act*, or alternatively, strengthening of tools to incentivize regional collaboration within GMBs, the development of a more equitable GMB voting structure, an independent appeal process, or amendments to regional evaluation frameworks.

In late 2020, the Government of Alberta passed Bill 48: *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020* (No. 2). Bill 48 included several changes to the sections of the *Municipal Government Act* establishing the requirements for GMBs. The majority of changes made to the GMB structure through Bill 48 removed specific requirements related to the development and approval of growth plans, the ability of a GMB to require a member to cease an action deemed inconsistent with a growth plan, and other areas. Most of the areas removed may be addressed through regulations, as Bill 48 also alters the Minister's regulation-making power by allowing the Minister to make regulations relating to areas such as membership and voting rights, operations and management, consistency with municipal plans and bylaws at any time, whereas the MGA previously allowed such regulations to be made only when a GMB was established. While broadening the Minister's regulation-making power could result in some of the

changes requested in resolution ER1-19F being implemented for existing GMBs, there is no indication at this time that any changes to the current operations will take place.

In 2021, RMA has heard from several members participating in the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board that the flawed voting and governance structure is leading to serious consequences for rural land use planning in the region through the repeated vetoing of rural plans by urban CMRB participants, despite the fact that they are in compliance with CMRB requirements. Rural CMRB participants have also indicated serious concerns that the CMRB growth plan has been finalized and submitted to the Minister despite opposition from rural CMRB members, and that if implemented, the Growth Plan will significantly reduce the autonomy of rural CMRB members to make local land use planning and growth decisions.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 18-18F

Utility Conflict in Municipal Right of Ways

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders to create a better process of locating and marking utilities to alleviate the added costs and delays being incurred by municipalities conducting infrastructure maintenance or construction; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that options considered in this process include:

- **negotiate with utility companies to ensure they honor their schedules or be held responsible to pay for all delays, impacts and costs associated with these delays; and**
- **create a universal master agreement for utility companies to enter into with all municipalities whereby utility companies pay a fee per lineal meter for their utilities to be located within municipal road right of way.**

DEVELOPMENTS: The response provided by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) indicates the unique challenges related to the utility right of way approval process. The first part of this resolution requests an improvement to the utility marking and locating process to reduce delays and costs. The AUC response explains the current process but does not indicate plans to improve it. Not mentioned in the response but relevant to the resolution is the introduction of Bill 211: *Alberta Underground Infrastructure Notification System Consultation Act* in the Alberta Legislature in early 2019. Bill 211 would form a committee of the Legislative Assembly to prepare and submit a “report on the underground infrastructure notification system in Alberta, which must include any recommendations for amendments to legislation to improve safety for excavators and to protect underground infrastructure.” Among other things, the report must consider “enforcement of rules pertaining to the underground infrastructure notification system.” RMA formally supported the passing of Bill 211. Bill 211 received first reading in March 2019. Unfortunately, due to the provincial election in April 2019, the Bill did not proceed to second reading or receive royal assent. In May 2020, RMA submitted a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs requesting the re-introduction of Bill 211 or similar legislation to support ground disturbance notification requirements. More recently, RMA has supported work by the Alberta Common Ground Alliance to reintroduce a private member bill on this issue, potentially for the spring 2021 legislative session.

The second part of this resolution requests the development of a master agreement which would include a fee per lineal metre to be paid by utility companies with infrastructure within a municipality's boundaries. The AUC response raises concerns about the costs such an approach would impose on utility companies, which would be passed along to consumers. RMA looks forward to discussing this approach and its pros and cons with the AUC. At this point, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

POLICING AND RURAL CRIME

Resolution 1-20F

Police Funding Model Freeze

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to freeze municipal contributions under the police funding model at no greater than 10% of the total policing costs under the Provincial Police Services Agreement (PPSA) until a corporate review of the PPSA and the overall organizational structure, efficiency and effectiveness of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) policing service has been completed and the review made available to all municipalities in Alberta; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta that all monies collected from the police funding model remain in the Rural Municipalities of Alberta district from which they were collected.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that the implementation of the Police Funding Model (PFM) will contribute to improved policing service levels in rural Alberta, both through an increase in frontline police presence in rural municipalities, as well as through enhanced capacity in specialized policing service areas such as crime reduction units.

Although this may be the case, the resolution requests a fulsome and transparent review of current RCMP policing services under the Provincial Police Services Agreement prior to implementing the PFM and requiring rural and small urban municipalities to increase their contributions to frontline policing. While adding officers to rural detachments and specialized units is likely to improve rural police service levels to some degree, RMA members have expressed concern about the lack of transparency as to how, where and to what extent service levels will be improved. This concern is reflected in resolution 1-20F and unfortunately not addressed in the government response. The focus of the resolution is on the need for the Government of Alberta to determine service level baselines and a concrete and measurable approach to where and how service levels will be improved prior to requiring rural and small urban municipalities to collectively commit hundreds of millions of dollars to policing.

Throughout the PFM consultation process, the Government of Alberta did not provide municipal stakeholders with any information on how the new costing model would be linked to improved local police services. There was no plan, outline or principles to provide stakeholders peace of mind that the cost model was anything other than a download. Following the completion of the consultation, the Government of Alberta announced that the cost model would be used to support 300 new RCMP officers and 200 new civilian administrative staff for the province, but provided no information on how these resources would be deployed or whether municipalities would have any input as to how they would be used to address local rural crime challenges. Currently, the RCMP shares routine updates on staffing increases linked to the PFM. While these updates are appreciated, they continue to have no linkage to any plan or strategy regarding service levels in specific communities.

In recent discussions with the Alberta Police Interim Advisory Board, the RCMP has indicated that work is underway to develop performance metrics to evaluate the impacts of new policing resources added under the PFM, and that their development may include input from RMA and other stakeholders. This is a positive development and RMA looks forward to supporting the development of the performance metrics.

RMA is also aware of likely upcoming policing cost increases linked to the recently signed collective bargaining agreement between the Government of Canada and the National Police Federation (NPF),

which represents 19,000 RCMP officers below the rank of “Inspector.” While the exact financial implications of the agreement are not currently known, it is expected to include a retroactive pay increase for NPF members. It is crucial that this pay increase not be downloaded onto municipalities that receive RCMP policing under the Provincial Police Services Agreement, as these municipalities had no say into the negotiation of the agreement and are already facing major cost increases due to the new police funding model.

The Government response also does not reference the resolution’s request that proceeds collected through the model be reinvested into the contributing RMA district. The PFM model heavily relies on equalized assessment to determine municipal contribution requirements. As equalized assessment has little link to criminal activity and other factors that determine required police service levels, it is especially important that municipalities contributing high amounts due to their equalized assessment have those contributions reinvested into policing services within their regions, rather than used to subsidize policing in a completely different region of the province.

Finally, the Government reference to the transition study being conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Canada on a possible Alberta provincial police service appears to misunderstand the intent of the resolution. The request for a full study into current RCMP service levels and effectiveness is in relation for the need for the Government of Alberta to have baseline data and a specific plan for improving current RCMP services prior to imposing the PFM, and is unrelated to replacing the RCMP with another police service provider.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for improved planning and information sharing in relation to the PFM.

Resolution 2-19F

Government of Alberta's Police Costing Test Model

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to engage in further consultation with municipalities on the police costing test model to examine options to meet the Government of Alberta’s goal of reducing policing costs without negatively impacting policing service delivery or municipal financial viability.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that adequate consultation occurred with municipal stakeholders during the development of the police costing mode in late 2019. While consultation did take place, RMA does not consider the original test model, or the final model, as adequate to improve police service in rural and small urban communities in the province. RMA has the following concerns with the model that should be addressed through further consultation with municipal stakeholders:

- The Government of Alberta response indicates that the new cost model “will bring small and rural municipalities into line with larger communities and cities.” However, the cost model does not provide rural and small urban municipalities with any enhanced local input into policing to align with their new financial responsibilities. While large cities with their own police forces can form police commissions to provide mandated direction to local police services, rural and small urban communities continue to be limited to forming voluntary police committees, which are much more limited in both scope and power. RMA’s formal submission into the police costing model development requested “no costs should be recovered from municipalities without corresponding

enhancements to service delivery and local input into policing.” While the Alberta Police Advisory Board will allow RMA (and AUMA) to provide input into high-level policing priorities in the province, it will in no way allow individual municipalities to provide enhanced **local input** into policing that reflects their new financial responsibilities.

- Throughout the consultation process, the Government of Alberta did not provide municipal stakeholders with any information on how the new costing model would be linked to improved local police services. There was no plan, outline or principles to provide stakeholders peace of mind that the cost model was anything other than a download. Following the completion of the consultation, the Government of Alberta announced that the cost model would be used to support 300 new RCMP officers and 200 new civilian administrative staff for the province, but provided no information on how these resources would be deployed or whether municipalities would have any input as to how they would be used to address local rural crime challenges. More recently, the RCMP has provided monthly staffing updates to the Alberta Police Interim Advisory Board. As of December 2020, 76 new regular member positions and 57 public service employee positions have been linked to the costing model and are in the process of being filled, both in rural detachments and in specialized or centralized units. While this progress is a positive step, municipalities have not had a say in determining how these resources are allocated.
- RMA emphasized the importance of linking the police costing model to service levels by including a subsidy or modifier based on the proximity of a municipality to a detachment. While the costing model includes a detachment subsidy (municipalities without a detachment receive a 5% reduction on their invoice) rural municipalities are inexplicably excluded from this subsidy, although at least nine rural municipalities should qualify. While urban municipalities located as close as four kilometres to a detachment in a neighbouring municipality receive the subsidy, there are cases of hamlets in rural municipalities being located approximately 75 kilometres from a detachment that are ineligible for the subsidy.
- The Government of Alberta response correctly indicates that rural municipalities expressed concern with the use of equalized assessment in the costing model formula. However, the reduction of the weighting of equalized assessment from 70% in the test model to 50% in the final model does not address RMA’s primary concern with the metric, which is that it in no way aligns with required service levels, which should be driven by a combination of population and crime statistics. RMA’s formal submission into the police costing model development expressed the following concerns with the use of equalized assessment:
 - Equalized assessment is not an accurate measure of municipal “wealth” or ability to pay
 - In rural municipalities, equalized assessment represents “high-risk” revenue from the oil and gas industry, which is reflected in current issues with uncollected municipal taxes on oil and gas property
 - Relying on equalized assessment to measure ability to pay may result in a greater tax burden on oil and gas companies operating in rural municipalities
 - Other provincial programs use equalized assessment as a measure of need, rather than wealth, which calls into question its usefulness as a measure of a municipality’s ability to pay

The examples above are intended to demonstrate that although consultation did take place in relation to the development of a police costing model, the test model, the consultation process, and the final

model did not adequately consider rural municipal concerns relating to service levels or local input. The current model has the potential to impact both local police service and municipal viability and does require further consultation. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to request further amendments to the model moving forward.

Resolution 10-19F

Community Peace Officer Access to RCMP Radio Channels

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) 'K' Division and National Headquarters, and any other organizations necessary, to develop policies and/or a memorandum of understanding to permit community peace officers to monitor and transmit on local RCMP Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System radio channels in the normal course of their duties.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2020, the Government of Alberta completed a pilot project involving the use of the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System (AFRRCS) to allow shared radio communications between RCMP and community peace officers (CPOs). The pilot involved six municipalities (Town of Okotoks, County of Grande Prairie, City of Grande Prairie, City of Red Deer, Foothills County and Clearwater County). According to the Government of Alberta, the pilot was successful, and plans are in place to enact the permanent use of AFRRCS for RCMP/CPO communications in the six pilot municipalities, as well as expand the option of using AFRRCS for RCMP/CPO communications in all municipalities in the province.

At this point, the Government of Alberta and RCMP are developing the process for making this option available, and hope to provide municipalities with detailed implementation information, including technology requirements, costs, etc. at some point in 2021.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be re-assessed based on the roll-out of enhanced RCMP/CPO communication through AFRRCS.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 5-20S

Regional Economic Development Alliances Continued Provincial Funding

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the Government of Alberta enter into a five-year contract with the existing nine Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) at an equivalent or higher funding arrangement as was in effect in the previous agreement; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the Government of Alberta enter into meaningful discussions with REDA chairs to ensure long-term sustainability of REDAs.

DEVELOPMENTS: While the Government of Alberta response indicates the important role that regional economic development alliances (REDAs) play in Alberta's economic growth, RMA is concerned with the indication that REDA funding will be reduced due to the province's fiscal challenges. REDA's play a crucial role in providing promotion and support for regional investment in the province and reducing their funding may provide the province with modest short-term fiscal relief but will likely result in reduced long-term investment and economic growth in rural areas.

In further follow-up correspondence on this issue, Alberta Jobs, Economy and Innovation (formerly Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism) indicate that new three-year funding arrangements (2020-22) are being completed at a reduced rate from previous agreements. This is concerning as the resolution requests five-year funding arrangements at a level equivalent or higher than previous levels. Additionally, the supplementary correspondence indicated no plan to meet directly with the chairs of each REDA.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for adequate funding for REDAs, and for increased collaboration between the Government of Alberta and REDA chairs.

Resolution 6-20S

Economic State of Crisis

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the governments of Alberta and Canada to declare an economic state of crisis and work with all levels of government to develop and enact policies designed to secure investment and employment in the energy and agricultural sectors.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Alberta Energy response indicates that the Ministry is working on developing a provincial environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy that will be aimed at strengthening and promoting Alberta's position as a responsible energy producer and attracting investment to its energy sector. In addition, Alberta Energy has been reducing red tape in the energy sector by repealing unnecessary and outdated regulations and legislation and expanding the Orphan Well Association's (OWA) powers to better manage and accelerate their clean-up of wells and sites. RMA appreciates Alberta Energy's efforts to attract and secure investment with these initiatives, it is too early to determine whether these efforts will attract investment to Alberta. The RMA will continue to monitor these initiatives and update members on their status.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's responses also include encouraging initiatives to support the growth of the province's agriculture industry.

Although the investment and growth strategies and supports identified in the Government of Alberta's response is an encouraging step toward supporting the province's economic recovery, the response makes no reference to declaring the economic state of emergency referenced in the operative clause of the resolution, or of working with the Government of Canada to encourage increased investment and growth in Alberta's energy and agriculture sectors.

Further follow-up correspondence on this issue from Alberta Jobs, Economy and Innovation (formerly Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism) also highlights collaborative provincial-federal efforts to support Alberta's economic recovery, including internationally-focused attempts to define and defend Alberta's environmental, social and governance standards across all sectors as a means to attract international investment to the province, as well as matching levels of municipally-focused funding that will indirectly support the agriculture and oil and gas industries by supporting Alberta's infrastructure.

As the provincial responses do not indicate a plan to declare a specific economic state of crisis, and RMA has not yet received a response from the Government of Canada, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Resolution 15-19F

Provincial Highway Access and Setback Authority

Status: Accepted in Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta engage with the Government of Alberta to reduce red tape that limits rural development or economic potential, through a delegation of additional authority to municipalities to regulate provincial highway access and setback requirements, and a review of the provincial framework in this area to reflect best practices from jurisdictions across Canada.

DEVELOPMENTS: The response from Alberta Transportation does include a discussion of the current role municipalities play in development near provincial highways through the development of area structure plans. However, the Alberta Transportation response is clear that they do not support delegating provincial highway access and setback authority to municipalities.

While Alberta Transportation is not delegating the approval of permits in highway control zones to municipalities, they have engaged RMA in a consultation to develop a framework for highway vicinity management agreements (HVMAs). HVMAs would be an enabling tool that would allow municipalities the option to exempt certain types of developments within highway control zones from Alberta Transportation approval, while not limiting the authority of municipalities to issue municipal development permits. Several RMA members have volunteered as pilot municipalities to test the HVMA process. Alberta Transportation is working with the municipalities directly, although to date no HVMAs have been formalized.

As a result, this resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted in Principle**.

Resolution 17-19F

Airports Capital Assistance Program Funding for Regional Airports in Canada

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request the Government of Canada to review and increase funding for the Airports Capital Assistance Program (ACAP);

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request support from all relevant federal, provincial, municipal, and business associations for ACAP funding for regional airports in Canada.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA has not yet received a response from Transport Canada, making it not possible to evaluate the first therefore clause. However, Alberta Transportation's response does clarify their role in funding capital costs for regional airports. While Alberta Transportation is not involved with the ACAP funding, they do administer the Community Airports Program (CAP), which supports small airports. This supports the operation of regional airports outside of the ACAP program. Until a response from Transport Canada is received, this resolution is assigned the status of **Incomplete Information**.

Resolution 3-19S

Light Weight Concrete Bridge Girders

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to establish a program for financial assistance, over and above current Strategic Transportation Infrastructure

Program funding, to municipalities that manage bridges affected by the premature deterioration of “SC” light weight bridge girders.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response provides a summary of why legal action was not pursued. Alberta Transportation identifies the resources they developed and shared with affected municipalities to mitigate the effects of the deteriorating girders. Finally, Alberta Transportation confirms that there is no additional funding for the repair or replacement of the municipal SC girder bridges. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to monitor resources available to municipalities to address the SC girder bridges.

Resolution 1-18F

Provincial Contribution to Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to provide additional funding to municipalities for the provincial contribution of Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that due to fiscal constraints additional funding is not available to support municipalities in leveraging funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) beyond the use of existing provincial grants that support the same project types as those eligible under ICIP.

RMA appreciates the fiscal challenges facing the Government of Alberta and the challenges that federal cost-share requirements can have on provincial budgets. However, ICIP presents a unique opportunity to leverage federal funding to cover a significant portion of the costs of infrastructure projects that would otherwise be entirely a municipal or provincial (through grant funding) responsibility.

Additionally, Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding is intended to support long-term municipal capital planning and expecting municipalities to redirect that funding to apply to ICIP-supported projects contradicts the emphasis that the Government of Alberta has placed on long-term planning in recent years.

RMA appreciates that, as identified in Alberta Infrastructure’s response, ICIP’s Community, Culture, and Recreation stream, which is most likely to require municipalities to use funds to meet provincial cost-share requirements, is already significantly oversubscribed. However, this is not an indicator that the provincial cost-share contribution is meeting the needs of most municipalities in the province, but rather that many of Alberta’s municipalities are so in need of infrastructure funding that they are willing to divert previously planned MSI funding to pursue ICIP-supported projects.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will advocate for the more strategic leveraging of provincial funding in future federal grant programs.

OTHER

Resolution 5-20F

Legislated Notice Requirement

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta amend the *Municipal Government Act* to provide a mandatory notice period of one year before implementing any action that will have the specific and direct effect of decreasing revenue or increasing required expenditures for municipalities.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to amend the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to provide municipalities with one year notice prior to any legislative change impacting municipal revenue. In fact, the response does not indicate any willingness to collaborate with RMA or its members to improve on the current consultation process, which is often inconsistent, ad hoc, and lacking adequate time for associations and municipalities to develop comprehensive positions on the issues being addressed.

The example of effective consultation provided in the Government of Alberta's response (changes to the planning and development provisions in the MGA) was actually quite challenging for RMA, as limited time was provided for participating associations to reach out to members, and specific proposed changes based on the request of the development industry (most of which would have the impact of reducing or narrowing municipal land use planning powers) formed the basis of the consultation. Similar challenges characterized the recent assessment model review, as municipal participants had no choice but to push back against four different proposed changes to how oil and gas wells were assessed, all of which would have reduced municipal revenues to various extents. Despite the massive implications that the changes being considered would have had on rural and small urban municipalities, RMA and AUMA were not permitted to inform their members of the changes being considered or solicit member input until the review was concluded.

RMA appreciates that due to the fast pace and unpredictable nature of government, all consultations may not be able to follow an identical process. However, this resolution suggests that RMA members are concerned with the province's current approach to consultation, and even if a legislated one-year notice period is not being considered, the Government of Alberta needs to work with RMA and its members to improve the consultation process to ensure the municipal voice is heard. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 6-20F

Government of Alberta Embargoed Committee Work

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to amend its policy development processes for embargoed committee work to ensure that organizations that represent municipal governments can share information and seek input from their member municipalities during the committee process.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that the province does not currently have a formal process for determining when an embargoed process is required and have no plans to do so. As RMA members are concerned with the current arbitrary nature of when consultations are embargoed, and the lack of ability for organizations such as RMA to engage their members on issues

that have been embargoed, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to emphasize the need for member updates and engagement in future embargoed consultation processes.

Resolution 5-19F

Landowners' Rights

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to develop a clear definition of landowners' rights;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that all relevant acts and regulations be amended to reflect the clarified definition of landowners' rights.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta's response indicates that they amended the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA) to include a clear statement that government must respect property and other rights of individuals. However, the government has stated that although the definition of landowners' rights may not be centrally located, Alberta's various legislation and regulations already contain consideration of rights largely in respect to property and land. This resolution is requesting the Government of Alberta to develop a clear definition of landowners' rights and that all regulations be amended to reflect the clarified definition. The RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met**, as based on the government's response, property rights are being considered as part of a platform commitment to create legislation to address property rights, however legislation has not been created yet.

Resolution 8-19F

Opportunity for Improvement in FCM Representation of Rural Issues and Western Perspectives

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) use their collective strength and understanding of the rural municipal perspective and priority issues to promote accurate inclusion of rural and western Canadian issues and perspectives at the annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference, and in FCM communications and advocacy efforts;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA send a letter to FCM identifying areas of alignment and concern with the content of the 2019 annual FCM conference and requesting that planning committees for future annual conferences include appropriate representation from rural western Canada to ensure that conferences are relevant and meaningful to all member municipalities.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA is represented on FCM's Standing Committee on Conference Planning by RM of Wood Buffalo Councillor Krista Balsom, Sturgeon County Councillor Wayne Bokenfohr, and Cypress County Councillor Robin Kurpjewit. Combined, these RMA and rural municipal representatives provide input into the structure and content of annual FCM conventions. However, the committee also includes participation from 35 other municipal representatives from across Canada, each with their own priorities for conference content. Due to the cancellation of the 2020 FCM Conference, it is currently unknown the extent to which rural programming will be improved over the 2019 conference. RMA will continue to advocate for adequate rural programming, both through the FCM Standing Committee on Conference Planning and other means, and re-evaluate this resolution based on the 2021 FCM Conference. This resolution is currently assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**.

Resolution 10-19S

Strategic Direction for the RMA

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) adopts the Strategic Direction as presented at the Spring 2019 Convention to guide planning and activities for the organization from 2019 through 2022.

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

Resolution 23-18F

Social Well-Being of An Employee and Domestic Violence – Occupational Health and Safety Act

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta define what is meant by “social well-being” of an employee within the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and the responsibilities of an employer with regard to “domestic violence or suspicion of domestic violence” within the OHSA.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that although “social well-being” is now included in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), it is not specifically defined. As monitoring and identifying risks to social well-being can often be much more difficult than physical aspects of health and safety, employers (including municipalities) may face significant difficulties in balancing the need to be aware of situations which may compromise social well-being with the need to respect the privacy of their employees, even within the workplace. For employers to effectively monitor the social well-being of their employees, further guidance is needed from the Government of Alberta.

The Government of Alberta response is effective in clarifying how domestic violence is linked to the workplace and employer. Clarifying that this is a valid consideration in health and safety planning will help to support safe workplaces. However, like the comment above, guidance on how municipalities can appropriately monitor their workplace for risks of domestic violence without infringing on employee property would be appreciated.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and will continue to advocate on greater clarity around defining “social well-being.”

CONTRIBUTORS

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta wishes to thank the Board of Directors members who provided content, input, and advice to this Report Card:

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Acknowledgements also to RMA staff who worked to produce this report:

- ♦ Gerald Rhodes, Executive Director
- ♦ Tasha Blumenthal, Director of External Relations and Advocacy
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