Submitted Resolutions 2024 Spring

RMA Spring 2024 Submitted Resolutions

1) Call to Order
2) Resolution Session

1-24S **Declining Fire Department Services Across Rural Alberta** *(Smoky Lake County)*

2-24S **Water Apportionment Performance** *(MD of Taber)*

3-24S **Continued Support for Regional Economic Development Alliances** *(County of Paintearth)*

4-24S **Maintaining Non-Partisan Municipal Elections** *(Northern Sunrise County)*

5-24S **Legislation Consultation with Municipalities** *(Big Lakes County)*

6-24S **Interim Funding for Lost Oil and Gas Revenue** *(Clearwater County)*

7-24S **Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services** *(County of Grande Prairie)*

8-24S **Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter** *(Wetaskiwin County)*

9-24S **Funding of FCM Committee Members** *(Mountain View County)*

3) Vote on Emergent Resolutions
4) Closing of Resolution Session

Resolution 1-24S
Declining Fire Department Services Across Rural Alberta
Smoky Lake County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS the state of declining fire department services across rural Alberta is detrimental to all Albertans living or visiting outside of large urban centers; and

WHEREAS provincial Fire Services Training Program funding increases are necessary for rural firefighter training; and

WHEREAS the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) current volunteer firefighter tax credit of $3,000 is inadequate and the CRA's definition of "volunteer firefighter" is obsolete; and

WHEREAS businesses that employ volunteer firefighters do not currently receive a tax credit for doing so; and

WHEREAS the Fire Underwriter's Survey assigns "Front Line" status to firefighting apparatus and equipment used in both urban and rural communities for 15 years; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada's former Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) for fire/emergency training and equipment is no longer available;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to collaborate with the Government of Canada and Fire Underwriters Survey to assist municipalities to retain fire services by recruiting firefighters and addressing the declining fire department services across rural Alberta.

Member Background

The Government of Alberta (GOA) reinstated the Fire Services Training Program grant (FSTP) in 2022, providing a maximum grant of $10,000 per application. The grant is to financially assist municipalities to ensure fire services are adequately trained to address the community's risks and levels of service. Increasing the overall program funding of $500,000 is necessary to provide all municipalities opportunities to receive this funding and not rely on their municipal operational budget.

Rural municipalities are struggling to recruit and retain volunteer paid on-call firefighters. The tax credit would show firefighters respect for all those making sacrifices to keep us safe, this incentive will assist with their finically burdens by the return of money earned.

The tax credit is a way to support the important work the fire departments do and help retain members to allow the municipalities to maintain their current levels of service.

The Fire Underwriter's Survey insurance determines the fire protection rating based on the number of firefighters, age and capabilities of the apparatus. The Fire Underwriter's Survey insurance currently recognizes fire apparatus to only have a 15-year cycle and recommends to replace the fire apparatus every 15 years not to jeopardize the fire protection rating. If the municipalities do not comply when the level of maturity is reach of the life cycle, the fire protection rating decreases therefore increasing property insurance rates.

The Government of Canada cut the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) in 2013. The JEPP was used to fund major capital purchases for the fire department. A modernized JEPP would reduce deferred equipment purchases due to fiscal pressures. This grant imperative as the longer these purchases are deferred the higher the risk and purchase prices.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 2-24S
Water Apportionment Performance
MD of Taber

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS Schedule A of the 1969 Master Agreement on Apportionment (the Agreement) governs the apportionment of water on the South Saskatchewan River between Alberta and Saskatchewan; and

WHEREAS the Agreement requires that Alberta shall permit a quantity equal to one half of the natural flow of the River to flow into Saskatchewan during each calendar year; and

WHEREAS the Agreement allows Alberta to divert or store or consume a minimum of 2,100,000 acre feet out of the flow of the South Saskatchewan River even though its share for the year is less than that volume, provided that the actual flow of the River at the common boundary of the provinces is not less than 1,500 cubic feet per second at any time; and

WHEREAS Alberta has permitted more than 50% of the natural flow of the South Saskatchewan River to flow to Saskatchewan every year since 1969; and

WHEREAS the rate of flow on the South Saskatchewan River in Alberta is regulated by infrastructure including diversions, dams and reservoirs owned and operated by the Government of Alberta; and

WHEREAS drought conditions prevalent within the South Saskatchewan River basin in 2023 which are likely to persist in 2024 have resulted in water shortages within the basin; and

WHEREAS in times of severe drought it is vital to optimize water retention and storage;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure that, to the extent physically practical, Alberta retains its share of the natural flow of the South Saskatchewan River in 2024 and in future years when Alberta is able to divert, store, or consume its full share of the natural flow.

Member Background

The Master Agreement on Apportionment was made October 30, 1969 between the governments of Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to govern the apportionment of water between provinces in rivers which flow across provincial boundaries. Simplistically, but with at least one notable exception, it requires that 50% of the natural flow of interprovincial rivers flow from an upstream province to the province downstream each calendar year. Natural flow is the flow calculated to occur if there were no human interference with the flow of rivers such as diversions and storage or release of water.

For apportionment purposes, the flow rate and volume of the South Saskatchewan River is measured at the confluence with the Red Deer River, just east of the provincial boundary. Schedule A of the agreement allows Alberta to consume, divert, or store 2.1 million acre feet of water each year regardless of the flow to Saskatchewan, provided that the flow rate is never less than 1500 cubic feet per second (cfs). This would allow Alberta to take more than 50% of the natural flow if the natural flow volume if less than 4.2 million acre feet, although in even the driest years the volume is usually higher than that. In the past it has typically been assumed that Alberta must pass at least 50% of the natural flow while always maintaining a minimum flow of 1500 cfs, which is incorrect. The minimum flow rate only applies if Alberta wishes to take over 50% of the flow in an extremely low-flow year.

Alberta has always passed at least 50% of the natural flow to Saskatchewan, and most years at least 75% of the natural flow is passed because Alberta takes all the water it needs and there is still a large surplus remaining. However, in extreme drought years Alberta needs more water, but still passes over 50%. Prior to 2023 the two years with the lowest percentage of flow passed were 1988 and 2001, when 58% of the natural flow was passed, and the surplus 8% was equal to over 300,000 acre feet of water each year. Final results are not yet available for 2023, but based on projections late in the year it is expected to be similar to 1988 and 2001.

Flows on the main tributaries of the South Saskatchewan River are regulated and affected by Government of Alberta-owned infrastructure such as the Waterton, St. Mary, Oldman, and Dickson dams and several irrigation diversions, as well as by private infrastructure owned by TransAlta, the Eastern and United irrigation districts, municipalities, and others.

With a more concerted effort to maximize Alberta's share of the water, particularly at large government-owned reservoirs and diversions, Alberta should be able to retain a greater portion of its share of the water in drought years to reduce the impact of drought.

RMA Background

5-21S: Preservation of Water Quality and Access to Water by Albertans

> 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.
>
> Click here to view the full resolution.

Resolution 3-24S
Continued Support for Regional Economic Development Alliances
County of Paintearth

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, the purposes of a municipality are to "provide good government, foster the economic development of the municipality, to provide services, facilities or other things that, […] are necessary or desirable for all or part of a municipality; and, to develop and maintain safe and viable communities"; and

WHEREAS for over 20 years, the Government of Alberta has embraced a partnership with Alberta's municipalities to plan and undertake regional economic development initiatives of mutual interest; and

WHEREAS the success of this partnership made Alberta a leader in the delivery of regional economic development; and

WHEREAS Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) have been in operation for over 20 years as a supplementary asset to municipal economic development service delivery; and

WHEREAS REDAs are especially important to offset cost-constraints and limited budget capacity for both small urban and rural communities; and

WHEREAS through a focused strategy, an innovative solution can be implemented to budget long-term, consistent funding for REDAs to support their continued role in supporting overall provincial economic growth;

THEREFORE, BE IT BE RESOLVED that Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that a memorandum of understanding be held, in committee, between the Government of Alberta (GOA), Alberta's municipalities, RMA, ABmunis, and existing Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) to redevelop a clear purpose and program structure for the REDAs, inclusive of a stable, long-term, collaborative approach to funding the same; and

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED that the GOA provide continuous, stable funding to existing REDAs to support a combined budget of $125,000/year in operational funding and $100,000/year in project funding, until a memorandum of re-organization is complete and enacted.

Member Background

Alberta's municipalities, in partnership with the Government of Alberta (GOA), have a significant opportunity to re-strategize resources funding provincial economic initiatives by redeveloping a clear purpose for Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs). The GOA's announcement to defund the current REDA program structure on January 19, 2024, for a second time in five years, foretells that the current structure requires a new focus to maximize its strategic value in current market conditions. The intent of this resolution is to evolve the REDAs into a trusted economic development resource, having them stabilize Alberta's advantage for long-term, approachable market readiness and world class customer service as they connect people to grow. To outline this transformational opportunity, first, the value of the REDAs will be outlined.

REDAs inherently hold a powerful role by serving as an ethically neutral information hub; wherein, the capacity of the REDAs strategically supports two diverse regulatory bodies' (both the GOA and Alberta's municipalities) terms and conditions (i.e. minimum wage or mill-rates) while maintaining a trusted third-party cooperative position to build venture networks, connecting local assets to a global economy. Their position expands growth opportunity by removing red tape and policy bias limitations in the response time required to capture market investment. Further to their ability to expand capital innovation, REDAs are the ambassadors of "Made in Alberta" as they support a complex web of interactive relationships including: Government of Canada, GOA, lobbying associations, municipalities, post-secondary institutions and local school districts, chambers of commerce, industry, local producers/entrepreneurs, transportation networks, REDA counterparts, local economic societies, lending providers, grant providers, investment cooperatives, economic advisors, external markets, independent educators and market consultants service supports, site selectors, assessment firms, developers, etc.

For over 20 years, this network has supported Alberta's economic investments, thereby building confidence in complex market networks and supportive information exchange to capture investment and growth on a minimal program budget. Rather than suffer a slow loss of this rich asset, REDAs are a resource that require new investment of focus and assignment of resources to support Alberta's economy. Further to the qualitative value of relationships provided, REDAs also offer a significant resource cost-benefit ratio, being a low-risk investment for the benefits provided.

For example, if each municipality were to employ an Economic Development Officer ("EDO") (at a median annual wage of $109,262.39/year) to meet the intent of section 3(2.a) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the total employee resource cost (one resource per 332 municipalities) for the province would be $36,275,113.48/year. Comparatively, if the REDAs received an innovative restructuring where 13 regional zones are established, each resourced with a Senior EDO (at a median resource cost of $160,863.04/year), a Junior EDO (at a median resource cost of $108,010.96/year) and an Administrative/Financial Clerk (at a median resource cost of $63,929.33/year) the total employee resource cost (13 zones with three resources each, 39 total resources) would be $4,326,443.20/year.

REDAs are a high-value quality resource, capable of meeting real market inquiry by providing sound investment information. By resourcing this tool with sufficient and qualified staff there is more value-added in an organized group of regions showcasing Alberta as an asset rich whole-sum community, from which no opportunity leaves. For example, should a market inquiry not fit one REDA, but another REDA does have the market indicators for investment, the inquiry is not lost. Rather, it is diverted with a tactical approach to retain maximum provincial growth. In other words, cooperative investment attracts further investment.

In a memorandum of understanding, held by the GOA, Alberta's municipalities, RMA, ABmunis, and existing REDAs, the opportunity to evolve the REDAs into a modernized economic tool could be met with enthusiasm. By supporting an ideological change in how Alberta connects with the world, the announcement of a restructure demonstrates Alberta's innovative approach to market readiness through market diplomacy. Through collaborative planning, a committee comprised of the aforementioned partners can refocus the organizational nature of the REDA for world class customer service, while developing a long-term stable approach to funding. During the interim, it is requested to stabilize existing funding, having $125,000/year for operational costs and $100,000/year for project costs (to participate in project-based opportunities) provided annually to the existing organizations. REDAs are encouraged to increase membership baselines. The provision of interim stabilizing funding will maintain existing relationships within the REDA networks and will allow the connections at this level to flow without continuity disruption.

To ensure clarity, REDAs are a whole-sum community baseline of total provincial economic investment, providing market customer service of economic development opportunity. This baseline is to be built upon by incentives generated by both the GOA and Alberta's municipalities, having the same encouraged to support economic attraction through sound policy, red tape reduction and readiness to self-invest in economic positioning. This collaborative position supports autonomy for each participant while stabilizing policy influence on broad market behaviors. Communication within a stabilized REDA structure would also encourage short-economic chains of value-added market investment both locally and regionally, encouraging market actors to support localized economies (i.e. local GDP values for developing attractive indicators to encourage positive market behavior). Mindful resourcing also does not create market competition, but rather stabilization. As the customer service base resource, REDAs are encouraged to connect current and future economic services to market inquiry when nearing capacity to ensure robust market capture and cooperative relationship stewardship.

Alberta has the opportunity to evolve REDAs to produce a world class customer service response to market education, attraction and retention of economic development. “Welcome to Alberta, how may I help you grow?”

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 4-24S

Maintaining Non-Partisan Municipal Elections

Northern Sunrise County

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS municipal elections in Alberta have been predominantly free from political party influence; and

WHEREAS this non-partisan structure has afforded local elected officials the autonomy to debate and vote on municipal issues based on the best interests of their community; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is considering formalizing political parties at the municipal level; and

WHEREAS formalizing political parties at the municipal level would restrict individual elected officials from independently pursuing the best interests of the municipality but instead bind them by the ideology of the political party they represent; and

WHEREAS the current *Local Authorities Elections Act* does not explicitly restrict political party influence in local elections.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to refrain from formalizing partisan politics in local government elections;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to amend the *Local Authorities Elections Act* (LAEA) to prohibit partisanship from infiltrating local elections or politics in any way including political party endorsements of local candidates, donations directly or indirectly from political parties to local candidates, or by way of any other influence.

Member Background

Local government elected officials are closer to the people they represent than those of any other form of government. These representatives also live in their community, which is not always the case for those elected provincially or federally. Local representatives interact with their citizens often, are accountable to their citizens and are easily accessible.

On any community issue they face, these local elected officials bring their experience and what they believe is best for the overall community and express this through their debate and vote. This is critical in local government and plays a big part in why local government is the most accountable and efficient form of government.

Partisanship in local politics would be a disappointment. No longer could our local elected officials vote on what they believe is best for the community, but instead, they would be beholden to vote based on the ideology of the political party they represent. In the few cases where elected officials in non-local governments dare vote on what they feel is in the best interests of their constituents rather than by their parties' ideologies, they have been alienated by the party. This has the effect of leaving their constituents frustrated with the feeling their voice has been further eroded.

For our municipalities to remain efficient, effective and accountable, it is critical that we leave no room for partisan politics.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 5-24S
Legislation Consultation with Municipalities
Big Lakes County

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS past decisions of the Government of Alberta (GOA) have negatively affected municipal financial planning and budgeting when prior consultation has not occurred; and

WHEREAS it is critical for the GOA to sufficiently inform municipalities of any legislation, regulation or administrative action that could decrease revenues or increase expenditures; and

WHEREAS all orders of government serve the same taxpayer; and

WHEREAS several provinces and territories have passed legislation requiring consultation with municipalities in advance of any policy change that may have a fiscal impact on municipalities; and

WHEREAS prior consultation is a procedural matter and would not in any way bind the GOA to act upon recommendations put forward by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and ABMunis; and

WHEREAS meaningful municipal consultation would enhance the decision-making process and prevent unintended consequences of legislative changes;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to include the following statement:

> **Requirement to notify**
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> **(1) The Minister shall notify the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) and Alberta Municipalities (ABMunis) at least one year prior to the effective date of any legislation, regulation or administrative action undertaken by or on behalf of the Government of Alberta that would have the effect of decreasing the revenue received by the membership of RMA and ABMunis or increasing the required expenditures of the membership of RMA and ABMunis.**
>
> **(2) Subsection (1) does not apply with respect to any legislation, regulation or administrative action applying to the Province generally and not specifically to municipalities.**

Member Background

This resolution will allow municipalities to work with the Government of Alberta (GOA) and be partners in achieving solutions that, while supporting the needs of the province, do not create negative financial extremes and hardships for municipalities.

This formal collaborative arrangement will enhance due process, which benefits both parties and, most importantly, the citizens of Alberta, which we both serve.

This resolution asks that a new section in the *Municipal Government Act* titled "Requirement to Notify Municipalities" be added that requires the GOA to provide one year's notice to any action that will have the effect of decreasing municipal revenue or increasing our required expenses.

By voting for this resolution, we will achieve the meaningful consultation process necessary to achieve good governance and better provide essential municipal services to all Albertans.

The following provinces and territories all provide consultation in their legislation:

- Nova Scotia: Consultation Required Before Amendment

"The Minister is required to consult the executive of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities respecting any proposed amendment to the MGA" (S.518).

- Prince Edward Island: Consultation

"The Minister shall consult with the Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities respecting any substantive amendment that the Minister proposes to this Actor the regulations under this Act." (2016,c.44,s.9.)

- Ontario: Consultation

"The Province of Ontario endorses the principle of ongoing consultation between the Province and municipalities in relation to matters of mutual interest and, consistent with this principle, the Province shall consult with municipalities in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the Province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario" (2005, c. 8, s. 1).

- British Columbia: Principles for governmental relations

"The minister responsible must provide the representatives of the municipal association with sufficient information respecting the proposed change and allow the representatives sufficient time to consider the proposed change and provide their comments to that minister" (S.276 of B.C Community Charter).

"The relationship between local governments and the Provincial government in relation to this Act is based on the following principles: (c) notice and consultation is needed for Provincial government actions that directly affect local government interests" (Part 1 Section 3 Local Government Act).

- Yukon: Changes to this Act

"The Government of the Yukon must consult with the Association of Yukon Communities on any direct amendments that a Minister proposes to this Act" (S.Y. 1998, c.19, s.11).

Works Cited:

- http://www.fpeim.ca/pdf/mun%20act%20submission.pdf
- https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/municipal%20government.pdf

- http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/consol21/consol21/96323_01#section3
- https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01m25#BK3
- http://www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/acts/municipal.pdf

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 6-24S
Interim Funding for Lost Oil and Gas Revenue
Clearwater County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta initiated a three-year property tax holiday on new wells and pipelines, eliminated the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET) and implemented a 35% assessment reduction for shallow gas wells and pipelines and additional depreciation adjustments for lower-producing wells; and

WHEREAS these incentives were introduced as temporary measures to support oil and gas industry needs, boost the industry's competitiveness, and incentivize investment; and

WHEREAS municipalities experienced three years of reduced revenue because of these temporary measures resulting in decreased service levels, increased tax rates for residential, non-residential, and agricultural properties and increased risks to sustainable revenue-sharing agreements between rural and urban municipalities; and

WHEREAS municipalities have absorbed provincial downloads associated with policing, affordable housing, and other provincial services, in addition to losses in oil and gas revenue, based on the need to help the oil and gas industry and the province address fiscal challenges; and

WHEREAS the *Municipal Government Act* allows for municipal councils to pass a bylaw imposing a WDET to be assessed on the equipment used to drill a well for which a license is required under the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act*; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has communicated there are no plans to reinstate the WDET and that the assessment reduction and additional depreciation adjustments are to continue until regulated assessment models for wells are updated; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta requires municipalities to budget up to five years in advance; and

WHEREAS unpredictable industry property tax incentives make long-term municipal budgeting extremely difficult;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to reinstate the Well Drilling Equipment Tax and eliminate the thirty-five percent (35%) assessment reduction and additional depreciation adjustments for lower-producing wells.

Member Background

In 2020, the Government of Alberta implemented property tax incentives for the oil and gas industry to promote investment and economic activity in the energy sector. As a result of these incentives, municipalities have faced significant financial shortfalls due to reduced oil and gas tax revenues. This has caused concern about their continued financial viability and service level sustainability.

Municipalities understood that these incentives were temporary measures until the Assessment Model Review was completed and new assessment models for regulated property were developed.

While it is appreciated that the property tax holiday on new wells and pipelines is over, the loss of revenue from the continued elimination of the WDET and~~,~~ the continuation of the assessment reduction and additional depreciation adjustments for mature oil and gas assets for an indefinite period will cause further assessment base loss resulting in continued reduction of oil and gas revenues.

Municipalities rely on oil and gas property tax revenues to fund infrastructure that the oil and gas industry utilizes daily. To offset this revenue loss, municipalities may have no choice but to increase tax rates, reduce service levels and incur debt, which shifts the tax burden from the oil and gas industry on to all other businesses and residents who are already facing an affordability crisis.

The Government of Alberta recently announced reinitiation of an assessment model review which is currently at phase one (proposed engagement plan) with no timeline in place for completion. While the review is underway, municipalities are still at risk of further revenue loss with the temporary measures in place. Meanwhile, according to the Alberta Energy Regulator, oil production and new wells placed on production has been steadily increasing since 2021 (https://www.aer.ca/providing-information/data-and-reports/statistical-reports/st98/crude-oil/production). There is also a significant increase in natural gas production and new wells placed on production since 2021 (https://www.aer.ca/providing-information/data-and-reports/statistical-reports/st98/natural-gas/production).

Municipalities recognize the oil and gas industry is critical to Alberta as they are a valuable member of the community and a major source of economic activity, jobs, and tax revenue. Municipalities also recognize they have supported the industry and the province in addressing their fiscal challenges over the last three years by absorbing the impact of reduced assessment values and the elimination of the WDET. Now that the Assessment Model Review has been restarted with engagement scheduled for early 2024, and that oil and gas production is increasing, it would be beneficial to municipalities to have opportunity, at least until the review is completed and assessment models are updated, to raise revenue to offset new costs associated with oil and gas industry growth.

RMA Background

4-22: Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation

> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta reintroduce a Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation or otherwise provide funding to restore municipal revenue streams that assist with recovering costs for maintenance of public infrastructure from active industry participants.
>
> Click here to view the full resolution.

Resolution 7-24S

Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services

County of Grande Prairie

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS there is currently no provincial level of service for emergency social services support when municipalities host individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters; and

WHEREAS host municipalities each set a level of service for emergency social services resulting in significant inconsistency among host municipalities; and

WHEREAS there have been inconsistent answers from the Government of Alberta regarding what emergency social services costs are eligible for cost recovery, resulting in host municipalities absorbing expenses that have later been deemed ineligible for cost recovery; and

WHEREAS there were a record number of community evacuations in Alberta in 2023 and the frequency, severity, and duration of emergency evacuations is increasing.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta create a provincial level of service for emergency social services as a framework for municipalities to use when providing support to individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services include schedules that indicate services that are considered basic survival needs, and which services are discretionary; with identification of what costs are eligible for cost recovery;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services acknowledge that the host municipality is providing a fee for service and that they will directly invoice the home jurisdiction, or the Government of Alberta and will not be required to apply for Disaster Recovery Program funding to recover their costs.

Member Background

When a host municipality agrees to accept evacuees from another municipality, reserve, Metis settlement, or from outside of the province, they are doing so in good faith and trying to help others in their time of need. Unfortunately, the result is a significant disruption of services provided to its own residents. Even worse, local taxpayers are often saddled with a portion of the costs that have been determined ineligible under a Disaster Recovery Program (DRP). This should not be happening when the host community is not the one experiencing the emergency.

During an emergency when a host municipality is asked to accept evacuees on short notice, there is verbal reassurance that all costs will be covered, but there is not enough time to prepare a written agreement. Consequently, the details are subject to individual interpretation. Even when trying to clarify expectations and eligibility for cost recovery through the Government of Alberta, answers will vary from one day to the next as staff changes occur and new staff are unaware of previous decisions.

Host municipalities are also asked to apply for DRP funding to recover their costs, even though they were not the community that had the emergency. This process extends the time to recover costs well beyond their fiscal year-end, forcing them to carry those costs forward sometimes for years. In many cases, a very large portion of costs have gone unrecovered.

The rules established for DRPs are often referred to by provincial staff to answer level of service questions. There are several problems with this approach because there are several assumptions made in the DRP rules that do not apply to the host community. DRP rules are intended as a cost-sharing arrangement between the federal and provincial governments and the affected municipality. An example of this is regular staff time not being covered, only overtime. For the host municipality that forces them to subsidize the emergency costs of another municipality.

Many of the problems faced by host municipalities can be prevented if the Government of Alberta creates a level of service for emergency social services for hosting an external community. This level of service should list the services that are required to meet an evacuee's "basic survival needs", services that are discretionary and require approval of the Director of Emergency Management, and what services are eligible for cost recovery.

This level of service must be created without using the lens of the DRP rules.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 8-24S

Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter

Wetaskiwin County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS Bill S-270 is introducing an Act for the prohibition of exporting live horses for slaughter and Bill C-355 is introducing the Prohibition of the Export of Horses by Air for Slaughter Act; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is proposing new legislation and changes to three Acts that will dramatically impact the industry of raising draft horses by imposing fines of $50,000 and up to six months imprisonment for a summary conviction or $250,000 and up to two years imprisonment for an indictment for transporting horses by air for slaughter; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is regularly seeking new trade partners and opportunities; and

WHEREAS restrictions on export of live horses for slaughter will shut down an existing market with products already leaving Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not conducted or completed a scientific study as to the impact of transporting draft horses overseas by air on draft horses; and

WHEREAS there are approximately 12,000 to 13,000 draft mares, studs, and foals in Canada that are currently being raised for this market; and

WHEREAS numerous western Canadian slaughter facilities for horses have ceased operations and are not purchasing animals to be processed at their facility; and

WHEREAS producers do not have a local market to distribute their product, but have an already established market globally;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta collaborate with the Government of Alberta and Alberta's Agricultural Service Boards to oppose federal legislation restricting the export of live horses for slaughter.

Member Background

In June 2023, singer-songwriter Jann Arden and Senator Pierre Dalphond introduced the *Horse Protection Act* to the Senate; proposing to ban the export of live horses for slaughter overseas. The ban will come into effect the day the Bill is adopted.

In February 2022 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency suspended its Safe Food for Canadians License for Bouvry Exports in Fort Macleod, Alberta. This facility processed several types of meat including horse, beef, elk and bison and was an avenue for producers to get their product to market. When Bouvry's ceased operations, producers had to find other ways to get their product to market. Shipping live horses overseas was one way of accomplishing that.

Canada has seen an increase in the number of animals sent overseas in 2023. There are approximately 12,000 to 13,000 mares, studs and foals (mainly draft type) that are raised for this market with an approximate value of $6,000 to $8,000 per mare, $5,000 to $7,000 per stud and $2,000 to $3,000 per foal. Losing this export option will result in many animals either being set loose to the wild and becoming feral or being euthanized. It will have an impact on other businesses such as farriers, truckers, vets and hay producers.

As a result of this legislation, the Government of Canada will quash an already established market while meeting with other nations around the world to open new markets and trade agreements.

- Bill S-270: https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/S-270/first-reading
- Bill C-355: https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-355/first-reading

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 9-24S

Funding of FCM Committee Members

Mountain View County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS Alberta's rural municipalities have the opportunity, through their municipalities and Rural Municipalities of Alberta districts, to endorse elected officials to be nominated to participate on Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) committees; and

WHEREAS any elected official that participates on an FCM committee represents the entirety of rural Alberta, thereby benefitting the entire RMA membership; and

WHEREAS currently, the per diem and expenses incurred by elected officials that participate on FCM committees are either funded by their own municipality or by their RMA District;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) fund all expenses for any elected official of an RMA member municipality that participates on an FCM committee or board, who has been endorsed by their municipality and district, at the same rate as the RMA Board of Director per diem and expenses policy.

Member Background

There is currently an inconsistency across RMA districts related to funding of travel, accommodations and remuneration expenses associated with FCM committee work.

Representation on FCM committees by any elected official is to the benefit of the entire RMA membership and therefore should be reflected in reimbursement of per diems and expenses.

It was determined that representation of an elected official on FCM committees may require attendance of up to four meetings per year as well as require some travel to Ontario specifically, resulting in a cost of approximately $8,000 to $10,000 per annum per attendee.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.