

# MATTERS PERTAINING TO SARM

## Midterm Convention Cancellation

### 1-23A | Rural Municipality of Lost River No. 313

**WHEREAS** conventions are an expensive undertaking for municipalities in terms of travel, hotel rooms, expenses, and remuneration.

**WHEREAS** SARM successfully held virtual conventions during the pandemic, eliminating travel expenses but still keeping SARM advocacy strong.

**WHEREAS** SARM Midterm Convention was created to deal with large volumes of resolutions throughout the year. Since 2016, resolution counts have dropped from 88 combined, to 45 between the two conventions, often with resolution topics duplicated.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM consolidates the two conventions into just one annual convention.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that if a predetermined threshold number of resolutions, (as determined by the resolutions committee) are received prior to September 30th, a virtual resolution session will be held to deal with the resolutions.

# IMPACTING THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

## Ministry of Agriculture

### Responsibility & Monitoring of Noxious Weeds on Crown Land & Rights-of-Way

### 2-23A | Rural Municipality of Dundurn No. 314, Rural Municipality of Britannia No. 502

**WHEREAS** noxious weeds along provincial highway rights-of-way are a significant problem in many rural municipalities, preventing landowners and occupants adjacent to these rights-of-way from fulfilling their general duties under part III section 15 of *the Weed Control Act, 2010*.

**WHEREAS** municipalities do not have authority under *the Weed Control Act, 2010* to take action to destroy noxious weeds in provincial highway rights-of-way or to serve orders for provincial highway land.

**WHEREAS** the provincial government downloaded the responsibility for the management and control of noxious weeds onto their individual lease holders.

**WHEREAS** the provincial government does not currently have any public inventory, mapping or information on the location of noxious weeds contained on Crown land.

**WHEREAS** the provincial government does not currently have a person or contact assigned to oversee mapping and annual control of noxious weeds in conjunction with local municipalities and weed inspectors.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to create publicly accessible mapping and information regarding the location and control of noxious weeds on Crown land.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to establish a permanent position to oversee the contact and collaboration with municipalities on local noxious weed control within provincial rights-of-way and Crown land.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to destroy the noxious weeds in provincial highway rights-of-way and on Crown land, in due season and in a diligent manner, to prevent its spread to other lands, thereby supporting rural landowner and occupant efforts to satisfy their duty to do the same.

### Saskatchewan Crop Insurance

### 3-23A | Rural Municipality of Baileon No. 131

**WHEREAS** with input costs being significantly higher, producers should have the option to purchase additional coverage.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to amend the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Policy to allow for increased coverage up to 95%.

## Rural Veterinary Service Disruptions

### 4-23A | Rural Municipality of Mount Pleasant No. 2, Rural Municipality of Moose Creek No. 33, Rural Municipality of Enniskillen No. 3

**WHEREAS** many people in rural Saskatchewan, whether livestock or pet owners, utilize veterinary services on a regular basis.

**WHEREAS** veterinary services are an essential service for ranchers in rural Saskatchewan to ensure their livelihood.

**WHEREAS** rural communities are facing a lack of veterinary services due to poor veterinary retention, replacement, and recruitment, resulting in an animal welfare issue.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to provide incentive programs to help recruit veterinarians and veterinary technicians to rural communities, including, but not limited to, funding for relocation, capital building projects, education, and operating expenses.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association (SVMA) to review the scope of practice for Registered Veterinary Technologists for expansion to their scope of practice to alleviate pressure on veterinarians.

## Ministry of Environment

### Environmental Regulations

#### 5-23A | Rural Municipality of Hillsdale No. 440

**WHEREAS** the Government of Saskatchewan states in its Growth Plan, “a plan to build a stronger Saskatchewan by growing the agricultural economy; growing the oil, gas, and natural resource economy; building stronger communities by investing in infrastructure.”

**WHEREAS** the province and municipalities have huge infrastructure deficits.

**WHEREAS** municipalities that are constructing roads and decreasing their infrastructure deficits are paying large amounts of money to meet the requirements set out in the *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Management Protection Act, 2010* and Aquatic Habitat Protection Permits.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to eliminate overregulation around small water bodies and ensure that environmental requirements are consistent across the province.

### Depredation Tag Program

#### 6-23A | Rural Municipality of Lumsden No. 189, Rural Municipality of Insinger No. 275

**WHEREAS** increased deer and elk populations and decreased hunting pressures results in farmers and ranchers being negatively impacted by large herds of wildlife depleting their winter feed supplies, crop in storage bags and piles, fences, infrastructure, and grazed pastures.

**WHEREAS** finding additional feed and supplements is becoming difficult to replace due to damage sustained by the large deer and elk herds consuming the winter feed rations.

**WHEREAS** many laws and regulations exist to protect wildlife, but very few avenues or programs are available to producers to allow them to protect their winter feed supplies.

**WHEREAS** from 2017 to 2021 there were 15,521 claims.

**WHEREAS** the Provincial Crop Insurance number of claims for big game wildlife also continue to increase each year.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to reintroduce the depredation tag program to Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers who are being impacted by wildlife damaging and depleting winter feed supplies.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to work with Crop Insurance on obtaining the information for high claim areas.

# Transport Canada & Rail Companies

## Stagger Railway Crossing Signs

### 7-23A | Rural Municipality of Bayne No. 371

**WHEREAS** farmers incur crossings in fields and along back roads and cannot move their equipment across without removing headers to access their land.

**WHEREAS** many rail crossings run through a farmer's field.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that rail companies stagger their crossing signs to allow for farm machinery to navigate through the crossing without removing headers.

# Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

## Extended Drought Tax Deferral

### 8-23A | Rural Municipality of Chesterfield No. 261

**WHEREAS** the federal government grants a one-year tax deferral on the proceeds of sale of breeding stock sold due to drought for producers operating in designated drought zones.

**WHEREAS** one year is often insufficient time for grasslands to recover from drought.

**WHEREAS** returning livestock to drought damaged grasslands before they have recovered is detrimental to long term sustainability.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the federal and provincial government to extend the drought tax deferral to a minimum of two years.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that in cases where a municipality is designated as a drought zone in consecutive years, that the deferral be extended to one year following the removal of that municipality from designated drought zone status.

# MUNICIPAL IN NATURE

# Ministry of Government Relations

## Tax Rate Ratio

### 9-23A | Rural Municipality of Mervin No. 499

**WHEREAS** the Government of Saskatchewan has implemented tax tool changes including lowering the effective tax rate ratio to 7:1 from 9:1 without consulting with the municipalities of Saskatchewan.

**WHEREAS** these changes detrimentally impact municipalities in which commercial enterprises cause extensive costs that were previously funded using a 9:1 ratio and tax tools such as base taxes.

**WHEREAS** these municipalities now need to recover these costs elsewhere.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the government to rescind the ratio changes.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that if the ratio changes are "arbitrarily" implemented, SARM lobby the government to offset the tax losses by 50% for 3 years to give the affected municipalities time to develop initiatives.

## Lake District

### 10-23A | Rural Municipality of Meota No. 468

**WHEREAS** the provisions for the establishment of a municipal district under *The Municipalities Act* do not allow for a portion of a rural municipality to form a municipal district and requires that a municipal district contains at least one former rural municipality and one former urban municipality in their entirety.

**WHEREAS** organized hamlets located adjacent to lakes have unique governance interests from the rural municipality. Establishing provisions for the formation of a lake district that may include portions of a former rural municipality, organized hamlet, unorganized hamlet, and/or urban municipality will provide a legislative governance framework to satisfy these unique interests and foster collaboration.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Government Relations to amend *The Municipalities Act* to allow for the establishment of a Lake District.

### **Reassignment of Development Costs**

#### **11-23A | Rural Municipality of Mervin No. 499**

**WHEREAS** subdivision development is becoming more prevalent in both rural and small urban municipalities

**WHEREAS** section 92 of *The Municipalities Act* states that council must maintain the financial integrity of the municipality.

**WHEREAS** *The Municipalities Act* further states that council must represent the public interest and wellbeing of the municipality.

**WHEREAS** most subdivisions are completed either for profit of selling the resultant properties, or for estate planning purposes.

**WHEREAS** municipalities must conduct a thorough review of proposed subdivisions which results in the municipality incurring costs associated with the additional resources required to complete these applications.

**WHEREAS** it is the expressed stance of all levels of government that development should pay for itself. To continue to pass the costs to taxpayers could be interpreted as a contravention of section 92 of *The Municipalities Act*.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government that all costs to the municipality for the review, processing, and evaluation of a proposed subdivision should be charged back to the Developer.

### **Fees for Drilling Oil Wells and Gas Wells**

#### **12-23A | Rural Municipality of Browning No. 34**

**WHEREAS** the *Municipalities Act* and *The Municipalities Regulations* authorize municipalities to charge a fee for drilling oil wells and gas wells.

**WHEREAS** the fee is set at \$450 for drilling an oil or gas well, and \$225 for exploratory drill holes.

**WHEREAS** the fees for drilling oil wells and gas wells were originally at their current prices in The Rural Municipality Oil Well and Gas Well Drilling Fees Schedule Regulations in 1991, and resolutions to review these fees were presented at the 2002 and 2008 SARM Midterm Conventions but resulted in no change.

**WHEREAS** the fees for drilling oil wells and gas wells do not adequately cover the expenses of the municipality in the review and administration of drilling applications.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Government Relations to engage in consultations with all applicable stakeholders to review the fees for drilling oil wells and gas wells, and that the Ministry of Government Relations set the well fees in *The Municipalities Regulations* at a fair rate for both industry and municipalities.

### **Municipal Code of Ethics Bylaws – Provision to Disqualify from Office**

#### **13-23A | Rural Municipality of Baildon No. 131**

**WHEREAS** all rural municipalities are required to have a Code of Ethics bylaw, pursuant to section 93.1 of *The Municipalities Act*.

**WHEREAS** subsection 93.1(7)(d) of *The Municipalities Act* states that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing rules or limitations regarding the censure or suspension of a member of council who has contravened a code of ethics adopted pursuant to this section.

**WHEREAS** the sample Code of Ethics Bylaw prepared by the Ministry of Government Relations only contemplates remedial actions as strong as suspension of a member of council for a Code of Ethics violation.

**WHEREAS** section 147 of *The Municipalities Act* states the reasons that a member of council may be disqualified, which include violations of section 142 (Public Disclosure Statements) and section 144 (Disclosure of Conflict of Interest) of the act, but not around matters relating to violations of Code of Ethics.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to amend *The Municipalities Act* to contemplate members of council being disqualified from council as a remedial measure to the most severe violations of a Code of Ethics bylaw.

### **Municipal Code of Ethics Bylaws – Immunity Provisions for Municipalities from Litigation**

#### **14-23A | Rural Municipality of Baileon No. 131**

**WHEREAS** all rural municipalities are required to have a Code of Ethics bylaw, pursuant to Section 93.1 of *The Municipalities Act*.

**WHEREAS** aggrieved members of council, committees, controlled corporations or other bodies established by council who are not members of council, who, upon being made subject to remedial provisions of a municipal Code of Ethics bylaw, could pursue legal recourse against the municipality, rather than complying with the bylaw provisions.

**WHEREAS** such legal recourse taken against the municipality can cost the municipality greatly in terms of financial resources, human resources and morale.

**WHEREAS** municipalities placed in this situation can be there through no fault of their own, other than the legal requirement to have a Code of Ethics bylaw.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to amend *The Municipalities Act* to add provisions for immunity for municipalities against litigation over their Code of Ethics bylaws, unless the aggrieved party can prove that such action was taken as a result of bad faith on the part of the municipality.

### **Taxable Enforcement of Bylaw Penalties**

#### **15-23A | Rural Municipality of Estevan No. 5**

**WHEREAS** there are minor Bylaw offences, such as, but not limited to, dogs running at large and parking infractions, to which a voluntary payment option may be available to the offender pursuant to the terms of an RM Bylaw.

**WHEREAS** in the event an offender does not voluntarily make payment, further enforcement action against the offender is required through the Court system which is cost prohibitive and time consuming for Rural Municipalities to pursue.

**WHEREAS** it would be desirable that if the offender (a) is a ratepayer of the Rural Municipality in which the offence took place; (b) fails to respond to the offence notice; and (c) fails to pay an amount equal to the specified penalty sum for the offence within a stipulated time period, that the specified penalty sum be added to the ratepayer's annual municipal taxes, in order to enforce and collect the specified penalty sum.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to amend *The Summary Offences Procedures Act, 1990*, and, to the extent required, *The Municipalities Act*, to allow enforcement of certain Bylaw offences to which a voluntary payment option exists by adding such fine to the ratepayer's annual municipal taxes if not paid within the time stipulated in the Bylaw.

## **Ministry of Energy and Resources**

### **Single-Window Development System**

#### **16-23A | Rural Municipality of Browning No. 34**

**WHEREAS** the Ministry of Energy and Resources is in the process of creating a single-window application system for all resource development activities requiring permitting or invoicing from municipalities as per the Province of Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth to 2030.

**WHEREAS** in January 2022, the Ministry of Government Relations, SARM, CAPP, and EPAC created a Steering Committee to direct this project and did not notify any municipalities or other affected parties until the 2022 SARM Midterm Convention.

**WHEREAS** there are existing private companies offering uniform application systems for oil and gas development, which are utilized by most municipalities receiving majority of the applications; and that all municipalities utilizing these private companies have already invested significant municipal time and funds.

**WHEREAS** the primary purpose for the Province of Saskatchewan is to create the Laws and Policies for the province, and not to create businesses that are already clearly serviced by the private sector.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Government Relations and the Ministry of Energy and Resources to abandon any further development of a Single-Window Development System for applications in the oil and gas sector to municipalities.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM encourage the Ministry of Government Relations and the Ministry of Energy and Resources to work with the existing private companies to create an optional development system for applications in the oil and gas sector to municipalities for any municipality that chooses to do so.

## Ministry of Highways

**Interactive Road Mapping**

### 17-23A | Rural Municipality of Lumsden No. 189

**WHEREAS** one of the biggest responsibilities of a rural municipality is maintaining a large network of municipal roads.

**WHEREAS** communicating specific land locations for road condition reporting can be cumbersome for both the municipality and ratepayers looking for the information.

**WHEREAS** to the best of our knowledge, there are no municipalities currently using an interactive mapping option, and those we have researched are expensive.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM investigate an interactive mapping option that is affordable and reaches province wide, such as the Highway Hotline, which can be used year-round for all road conditions (snow, construction, closures, etc.).

**Municipalities Provided First Right of Refusal for Land**

### 18-23A | Rural Municipality of Blucher No. 343

**WHEREAS** the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure continues to improve major provincial highways which sometimes includes twinning.

**WHEREAS** in the process of these upgrades and changes sometimes highway rights-of-way and lands are no longer necessary for the Ministry.

**WHEREAS** the current policies in place for the disposal of these lands include public tender in some instances and/or selling the land to the adjacent landowners for market value regardless of the state or usability of the lands.

**WHEREAS** these policies can and have resulted in huge delays due to justifying lower sale prices for the lands and sometimes parcels of lands that are completely useless after their sale.

**WHEREAS** the municipality, be it rural or urban, is not offered first right of refusal on these lands even though they would be used for municipal purposes.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to amend their policies to give municipalities the first right of refusal when reasonable and negotiate with those municipalities in good faith and with reason.

## Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan

**Improvement of Internet Access in Saskatchewan Rural Schools**

### 19-23A | Rural Municipality of Prince Albert No. 461, Rural Municipality of Garden River No. 490

**WHEREAS** there currently exists a disparity with respect to internet connectivity between urban and rural schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

**WHEREAS** there is a need to bridge the connectivity gap of broadband service provided to rural schools when compared to urban schools. It is crucial for rural students to have equitable access to technology and learning opportunities.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government, including the Ministry of Education, and all internet service providers in Saskatchewan, to jointly review and make recommendations on expanding broadband service to rural schools.

## Ministry of Environment

### Increase Fines for Littering

#### 20-23A | Rural Municipality of Bayne No. 371

**WHEREAS** littering has become a significant issue for RM's throughout the province costing RM's time and money cleaning up the mess.

**WHEREAS** garbage is unsightly and creates a risk to wildlife and the environment.

**WHEREAS** conservation officers are left to deal with people's garbage which is taking them away from other pressing violations.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to increase the fines to those that are littering.

### Designated Dumping Area for Truckers

#### 21-23A | Rural Municipality of Silverwood No. 123

**WHEREAS** truckers hauling commodities are stopping to clean out and dump trailers along roadways which can cause the unwanted spread of weed and commodity seeds.

**WHEREAS** trucks hauling fertilizer that are cleaned out on roadways can cause contamination of waterways.

**WHEREAS** grain dumped on roads attracts wildlife which can lead to more vehicle collisions.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to require all grain handling facilities to have a specific area designated where trucks can be cleaned out after unloading.

### Rat Control Program Compensation

#### 22-23A | Rural Municipality of Parkdale No. 498

**WHEREAS** rat control is a very important part in maintaining our health, and maintaining a higher quality of grain, which in turn, helps us support our farmers' livelihoods.

**WHEREAS** the rat control program in place currently helps ensure the rat population will stay at a minimum.

**WHEREAS** if the rat control program does not see an increase in funding, it is likely that areas may have to reduce their contribution to the program, in turn, seeing an increase in the rat population once again.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Agriculture to increase the funding for the Rat Control Program to ensure that the program can continue, without the need to pass on any associated costs to our ratepayers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM approach the Ministry of Environment and request that compensation for the Rat Control Program see an increase in funding in the coming years.

### Packing of Pest Control Products

#### 23-23A | Rural Municipality of Storthoaks No. 31

**WHEREAS** pest control products are being packed in larger quantities.

**WHEREAS** packages of pest control products need to be divided at times to hand out in smaller portions to ratepayers resulting in difficulties distributing the products and creating potentially hazardous situations during the handling of the products.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby to have pest control products packaged in smaller quantities for distribution.

# Water Security Agency

**Water Drainage Practices in Rural Municipalities**

**24-23A | Rural Municipality of Pleasantdale No. 398**

**WHEREAS** municipalities and landowners are unjustly penalized for unpermitted works performed by others on their land with corrective compliance measures being issued against the landowner regardless of who did the work.

**WHEREAS** these drainage works are being constructed within municipal infrastructure and on private lands without the authorization of the Water Security Agency.

**WHEREAS** costs associated with the drainage works can be passed to the responsible party if they are a ratepayer, however this opens the municipality up to the possibility of litigation.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Water Security Agency to hold those initiating the drainage activities responsible and to enforce actions to remediate all the unapproved drainage activities on those that are responsible for facilitating the work.

# Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

**Increased Conservation Officers for the Province**

**25-23A | Rural Municipality of Bayne No. 371**

**WHEREAS** the umbrella of a conservation officer is vast, involving fish & game violations, garbage violations, the new trespassing law, paperwork, along with many more duties.

**WHEREAS** conservation officers have a large area to cover, and response times lag due to all their duties.

**WHEREAS** there are not enough conservation officers to cover all their duties.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to recruit more conservation officers to better serve our municipalities and protect the wildlife and environment.

**Rural Crime Increasing**

**26-23A | Rural Municipality of Pittville No. 169**

**WHEREAS** crime has continued to increase in rural areas.

**WHEREAS** landowners/individuals have wait times for the RCMP responding for service that are too long.

**WHEREAS** landowners/individuals do not have sufficient rights to protect themselves and their property.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial and federal governments to increase the number of officers.

# Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

**Ducks Unlimited Canada Lands**

**27-23A | Rural Municipality of Churchbridge No. 211, Rural Municipality of Lakeview No. 337, Rural Municipality of Calder No. 241**

**WHEREAS** Ducks Unlimited Canada is not an agricultural Producer.

**WHEREAS** Ducks Unlimited Canada's main source of income is not agriculture related.

**WHEREAS** Ducks Unlimited Canada has benefited from agricultural property classification.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the provincial government to change the classification of land owned by Ducks Unlimited Canada and similar organizations to a commercial land classification.

# **Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health (Provincial) & Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health (Federal)**

**Mental Health Support for Youth**

**28-23A | Rural Municipality of Lake of the Rivers No. 72**

**WHEREAS** the protection of our youth should be a priority to municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

**WHEREAS** 1.2 million children and youth in Canada are affected by mental illness, yet less than 20% will receive appropriate treatment.

**WHEREAS** 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood and adolescence.

**WHEREAS** an estimated 75% of children with mental disorders do not access specialized treatment services.

**WHEREAS** in 2016 suicide accounted for 19% of deaths among youth aged 10-14 and 29% among youth aged 15 to 19.

**WHEREAS** the federal government introduced red flag legislation to combat self-harm involving firearms that allow people to apply to the court for immediate removal of an individual's firearm or ask to suspend or review an individual license to own firearms.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby all levels of government to work together to develop red flag legislation to combat mental illness in youth by allowing people, such as concerned citizens and relatives, to apply to the court for immediate intervention for youth in danger of themselves and place them in a safer environment for treatment.

# **Ministry of Agriculture**

**Gravel Resources on Crown Land**

**29-23A | Rural Municipality of Dundurn No. 314**

**WHEREAS** gravel resources within the province are becoming scarcer and municipalities are facing increased costs associated with availability and hauling of aggregate greater distances.

**WHEREAS** the Ministry of Agriculture enters into lease agreements with private individuals and corporations to extract gravel resources from Crown land at a below market value rate.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Agriculture to increase the gravel royalty on existing private lease holders to fair market value.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that SARM lobby the Ministry of Agriculture to place a moratorium on gravel resource expansion and development to private interests.