

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 Baidon 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 Baidon 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 Baidon 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.