

Public Utilities Board

- During the past year, the Public Utilities Board (PUB) issued a number of orders that affect municipalities.
- At the 2008 Convention the AMM passed two resolutions relating to changes at PUB.
- First, the PUB is seeking to regulate water wholesalers and cooperatives to ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for public input.
- The PUB has a mandate to regulate water and sewer utilities in Manitoba (except for those operated by the City of Winnipeg and the Manitoba Water Services Board), and believes it is appropriate for this regulation to extend to cover water wholesalers and cooperatives.
- But municipalities already provide opportunities for public feedback through public budget consultations and the annual reporting that is required under *The Drinking Water Safety Act*.
- The PUB is proposing to duplicate established processes which subjects municipal ratepayers to unnecessary and time consuming interventions.
- We believe that the legislated mandate should not be extended to wholesalers and cooperatives and we have made this position clear to Minister Ashton, who is responsible for the PUB.

- The second resolution calls for the PUB to rescind Order #127/08, which sets out a Conditions Precedent for disconnections on unpaid accounts.
- Although the PUB consulted with the AMM and MMAA as this Order was prepared, neither organization provided support for the order that was ultimately passed.
- The AMM and the MMAA expressed concerns with the potential increases in administrative requirements; the inappropriateness of municipalities making referrals to social assistance; and the lack of detail regarding a municipality's ability to add unpaid or uncollected water bills to landlords' taxes.
- However, the PUB maintains that this order is in the best interests of the public and is largely consistent with practices that were already in place.
- Therefore, the PUB has indicated that it is not inclined to make any changes to this Order at this time.
- This issue was also discussed with the Premier, as well as Minister Ashton, who committed to raise these concerns with the PUB.