

Recap of the second session of the 38th Legislature

by Tyler MacAfee – AMM Director of Policy and Communications

The second session of the 38th Legislature came to an end on June 10, 2004 with some new legislation passed and some bills still waiting for further debate. A total of 51 public bills were passed this session, including some bills of interest to municipalities.

The AMM was pleased to see *Bill 8: The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment Act* passed on March 11, after being introduced in November of last year. This Bill creates a one-tier system of social assistance in the Province of Manitoba, relieving municipalities of the administrative duties of managing part of the program and stabilizing municipal financial contri-

butions based on a seven-year average.

Bill 14: The Gas Tax Accountability Act was introduced in early March and received royal assent on June 10. This legislation is important to municipalities as it ensures that any share of federal fuel tax revenues received by the Province is invested in municipal infrastructure.

Introduced and passed on the same day was *Bill 54: The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act 2004*, extended the scope of the Retail Sales Tax to include legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, security and private investigation services. This decision on the part of the Province will impact municipal budgets

across the Province, and will do little to help already funding-challenged projects move forward.

Some other bills of interest to municipalities include *Bill 32: The Provincial Railways Amendment Act*, which clarifies responsibilities for railway crossings; *Bill 24: The Travel Manitoba Act*, which creates a new corporation to foster development, growth and diversity in the tourism industry in Manitoba; and *Bill 50: The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act*. This act provides that municipally-owned land that is occupied by a non-profit organization continues to be assessed in the name of the municipality and provides an exemption for trails owned by the Manitoba Recreational Trails Association and other similar organizations.

Perhaps of most interest to municipalities are the bills that will be reinstated during the 3rd session that will begin November 22, 2004. *Bill 22: The Water Protection Act* will be an important piece of legislation for municipalities. While described in greater detail in this issue's special feature on water, this is an important piece of legislation and one the AMM is following closely.

Bill 40: The Planning Amendment Act is another important piece of legislation for municipalities and makes a number of changes to how municipalities consider applications to develop or expand livestock operations. This bill proposes to require all municipalities and planning

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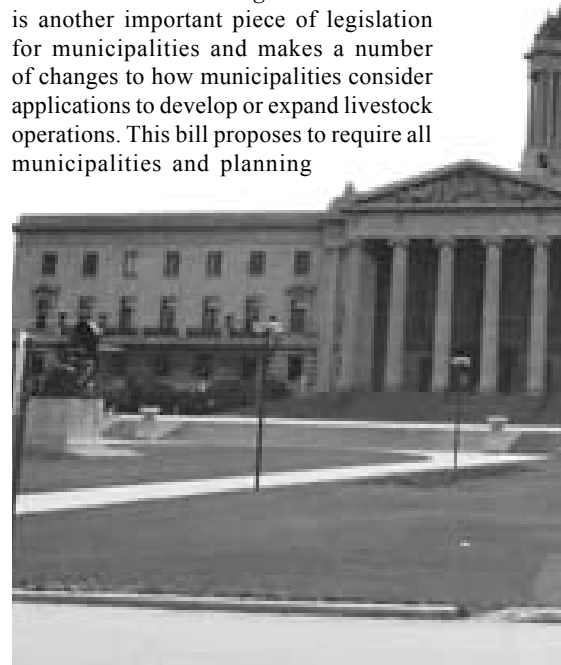


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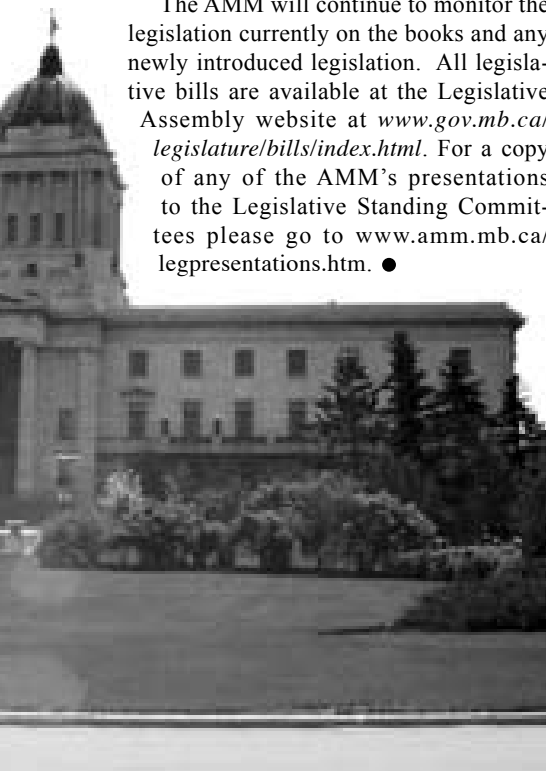


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districts to adopt development plans which must include a livestock operation policy setting out the areas where applications will and will not be approved. Committee hearings on this bill will likely begin in the fall and the AMM will be voicing some of the concerns expressed by our members at those hearings.

Bill 49: The Municipal Amendment Act enables municipalities to establish financial assistance programs and tax increment financing programs and clarifies the ability of municipalities to amend the licence fees for mobile homes. This bill has received second reading but was amended at the Legislative Affairs Committee and therefore held over until November.

The AMM will continue to monitor the legislation currently on the books and any newly introduced legislation. All legislative bills are available at the Legislative Assembly website at www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/bills/index.html. For a copy of any of the AMM's presentations to the Legislative Standing Committees please go to www.amm.mb.ca/legpresentations.htm. ●



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