

Meeting of the
**Association of
Manitoba
Municipalities**



with

The Honourable Oscar Lathlin

Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

October 25, 2005

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A) Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Improvements to the TLE Process

- Manitoba's TLE process takes too long and research indicates that the time involved will be reduced if the municipal tax loss compensation is more in line with the compensation provided to municipalities in Saskatchewan.
- Additional recommendations to improve the process include pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding between First Nations and municipalities, clarifying the term "reasonable" which is used extensively in the Agreement, and addressing delays caused by the need for environmental assessment and land surveys.

Therefore the AMM urges the Province to revisit the current TLE compensation offered in order to improve the TLE process in Manitoba.

2. Legal Costs of Negotiating TLE Agreements

- The AMM is appreciative of the Province's assistance in developing the Guide for Municipal Development and Service Agreements (MDSA) however it is also necessary to retain lawyers trained in researching and facilitating negotiations.
- Legal fees necessary to negotiate MDSAs are prohibitive for communities, a fee compounded both by the Province's decision to expand the RST to include legal services, and by the necessity of these negotiations to involve costly and time-consuming research.

Therefore the AMM encourages the Provincial Government to provide funding for municipalities to address the legal costs associated with negotiating TLE agreements to ensure negotiations occur in an expedient manner.

3. Northern Food Prices

- Northern and remote communities do not have access to affordable and nutritious foods because the high costs of shipping these goods is passed on to the consumer who instead selects the less nutritious and less costly alternatives.
- The Northern Food Prices Report 2003 has identified a number of long-term strategies to address this problem, some of which the Province has already initiated.
- Of particular concern is the need to ensure all residents have affordable access to milk and the Report recommends that the Province review the Milk Price Review

Commission's mandate and apply the current Milk Price Review program across Manitoba.

Therefore the AMM urges the Province to take action to ensure that rural and northern communities have access to affordable, nutritious foods and beverages.

4. VIA Rail Service

- The rail system is the primary means of transportation in many parts of Northern Manitoba and the poor conditions and services provided by VIA Rail limit economic development and general travel needs in these communities.
- The 2020 – Manitoba's Transportation Vision report highlights recommendations to improve rail services across the province, including entering into public/private partnerships as has been initiated between VIA and OmniTRAX.
- The Province has indicated in the past that it would be willing to consider creative alternatives and improvements to the current service and the AMM encourages this Department to include the issue of improved rail service to Northern Manitoba in its mandate.

The AMM encourages Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to support the need for improved rail services in order to promote the economic and social well-being of northern communities.

General Issues

1. Education Funding

- Education remains the number one concern for municipalities as the current model of taxation is not sustainable and a new taxation model is needed.
- The AMM was pleased to see the Province recognize the importance of this issue with the 33 per cent reduction in farmland property taxes in 2004 and a further reduction to 50 per cent in 2005.
- However, further action is required since municipal property taxes should be used to fund strictly municipal services, and a complete removal of education funding from all property classes is needed.
- The AMM strongly supports the need for high quality education in all areas of the Province, yet maintains that other sources of Provincial revenue are more appropriate than property taxation to fund education. While every citizen should contribute to education funding, this does not occur under the current regressive system of property taxation.
- The AMM believes relief is needed on all property classes, as at present, there is an unfair reliance on property owners to fund an education system that contributes so much to the prosperity of Manitoba.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to create a 5-year plan that results in the total removal of education tax from all classes of property.

2. Land Use and Water Resource Planning

- The legislature has recently passed two pieces of legislation that are very important to municipalities: *The Planning Act* and *The Water Protection Act*. It is now crucial that the appropriate processes be implemented to resolve outstanding municipal concerns.
- At present, the public hearings for land use planning place municipalities in the position of defending Provincial policy since municipal councils are the only order of government in attendance. This situation must be rectified in order to ensure that the public has access to accurate information and Department of Conservation staff must attend public hearings to respond to environmental inquiries.
- Regarding *The Water Protection Act*, municipalities are concerned with the acute lack of detail, which raises concern for the additional responsibilities and financial contributions that municipalities will be expected to bear.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that Department of Conservation staff will attend public hearings for land use planning in order to respond to environmental concerns.

Furthermore, the Province must provide further details on *The Water Protection Act* to clarify any additional financial and administrative duties and to demonstrate the impact of the legislation on municipalities.

B) Departmental Issues

1. Improvements to the TLE Process

Manitoba's treaty land entitlement (TLE) process is intended to facilitate the provision of land promised to First Nations in Treaties. Unfortunately however, the selection and conversion of Reserve land has been time-consuming. Delaying the process has serious consequences for municipalities and First Nations as plans for economic and community development are hindered in the process. In March of this year, the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. released a report comparing Manitoba and Saskatchewan's TLE implementation processes. The Report argues that the primary concern with Manitoba's process is the length of time involved, and much can be learned from Saskatchewan's process to reduce the time involved in converting land to Reserve. Our association had the opportunity to meet with the Southern Chief's Organization and discuss this issue, and the AMM agrees with many of the Report's key recommendations.

For the TLE process to be more efficient, the process must not penalize municipalities. Currently, the greatest disincentive is the rate of compensation for municipalities, which offers no incentive for municipalities to work expeditiously towards the land transfer. Manitoba's amount of compensation to municipalities is significantly less than in Saskatchewan and this disparity must be corrected. Specifically, Manitoba municipalities receive compensation equivalent to five times the annual net tax loss at the time of conversion. Saskatchewan rural municipalities receive compensation equivalent to 90% of 25 times of the previous year's tax loss to a maximum of \$25 million. Saskatchewan municipalities also receive a sum equivalent to 70% of 25 times the school taxes levied in the previous year to a maximum of \$25 million. Urban municipalities receive compensation equivalent to what the municipality has always been getting through tax from the land. By compensating at these amounts, Saskatchewan municipalities have no fiscal reasons to stall or refuse the conversion of entitlement land. The disparity in amounts is apparent, as is the lack of compensation for education tax loss in Manitoba. Perhaps most notably however, is the amount of compensation to urban municipalities. In Saskatchewan, this amount continues in perpetuity, whereas in Manitoba this amount is limited to the one-time sum set at five times the annual tax loss. This is a low amount that does more to discourage

municipal participation than encourage it. A realistic formula must be renegotiated for the TLE process to function fairly.

The Report highlights a number of additional areas to improve Manitoba's process. Further to the compensation issue discussed above, once land has been purchased by an Entitled First Nation (EFN), the EFN is obligated to pay the property taxes until negotiations with the municipality are complete. It is generally after this period that the municipality applies to the Province for tax loss compensation, however the relatively low compensation provides no incentive to speed the process. Saskatchewan's process is accelerated in part because the Federal Government pays the municipal taxes after a period of 75 days, but also because the municipality is provided reasonable tax loss compensation.

A third point raised by the Report is the recommendation that First Nations pursue a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with municipalities to facilitate mutual understanding between both parties. Recognizing each party's viewpoint may minimize misperceptions, thereby reducing delays caused by misunderstandings. Additionally, the term "reasonable" is unclear, but used throughout Manitoba's Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement. By clarifying this term and what is reasonable, all parties will be better able to access support in a timelier manner when dealing with unreasonable parties.

Another concern the Report raises is the need for environmental assessment and land surveys. These assessments are time-consuming and expensive, and must be repeated every two years, after which time they became stale-dated. In Manitoba, selected land is rarely converted to Reserve within two years and assessments must occur several times throughout the process. Creative ways of addressing these delays, such as allowing the assessor to suggest a reasonable stale-date time period based on the particular land characteristics, need to be considered.

Therefore the AMM urges the Province to revisit the current TLE compensation offered in order to improve the TLE process in Manitoba.

AMM Resolution Number 46 – 2003

Topic: Turning Back TLE Lands

Sponsor(s): RM of Kelsey

Department(s): Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

WHEREAS the Manitoba Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement was signed on May 29, 1997;

AND WHEREAS the purpose of this agreement is to provide land to 19 First Nations, fulfilling a long-standing commitment arising from treaties signed by Canada and the First Nations between 1871 and 1910;

AND WHEREAS the period for selection of Crown land is three years from the date a Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement is signed with a time limit extension for Crown land for a period of up to two years;

AND WHEREAS initially, various site selections have been made by First Nations for certain unoccupied Crown Lands;

AND WHEREAS in certain cases First Nations are no longer interested in these selections yet have not withdrawn their interests;

AND WHEREAS these lands, even though they are no longer required by First Nations, are still being upheld and are creating a hindrance for potential future development;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial and Federal Government to assist municipalities that are affected by lands being held under Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement to ensure that lands not required by Treaty Land Entitlements are turned back for public interest and to ensure that immediately following the two year time extension, land is reverted back to the public.

AMM Resolution Number 13 – 2001

Topic: Treaty Land Entitlements -- Loss of Tax Base

Sponsor(s): RM of Kelsey

Department(s): Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities expedite the process of lobbying the federal and provincial governments to ensure that municipalities are protected from losing school tax base should a treaty land entitlement result in land within a municipality being acquired by a First Nations band and subsequently being granted Reserve status so that the information can be included in service agreements.

2. Legal Costs of Negotiating TLE Agreements

Treaty land entitlement (TLE) negotiations are a time-consuming and costly endeavor. The costs are further increased by the necessity to hire lawyers trained or experienced in conducting negotiations. As discussed earlier, the AMM is appreciative of the Provincial Government's commitment to provide some compensation to municipalities for property tax loss following negotiations. We are also pleased the Province has developed the Guide to Municipal Development and Service Agreement (MDSA) to aid municipalities through the negotiation process. However, the compulsory costs associated with these agreements are prohibitive for communities. The additional time involved in researching these cases add a further factor to the costs, as does the Province's decision to expand the retail sales tax (RST) to include legal services.

To aid municipalities in accessing lawyers already trained in TLE agreements, the AMM has provided municipalities with a list of Manitoba lawyers trained and/or experienced in these negotiations. Further assistance with the actual costs of retaining lawyers' services is needed however. The AMM urges the Province to assist municipalities in defraying the costs of retaining legal services for this purpose. We would be pleased to work with the Province in exploring a manageable solution to finance this necessary expense.

Therefore the AMM encourages the Provincial Government to provide funding for municipalities to address the legal costs associated with negotiating TLE agreements to ensure negotiations occur in an expedient manner.

AMM Resolution Number 72 – 2000

Topic: Legal Costs of Negotiating Treaty Land Entitlements

Sponsor(s): RM of Kelsey

Department(s): Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

WHEREAS Indian bands that are eligible for treaty land entitlements also receive funding to defray legal costs when acquiring lands;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba municipalities must pay any and all share of any legal costs associated with developing a municipal development and services agreement relating to treaty land entitlements;

AND WHEREAS municipalities must rely on funding from property taxes to pay their legal expenses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the federal and provincial governments to cost-share municipal legal costs relating to treaty land entitlements negotiations and preparation of municipal development and services agreements.

3. Northern Food Prices

Affordable access to nutritious foods and beverages has been an ongoing concern in northern communities across Manitoba. The high costs of transporting these perishable foods are passed on to the consumer. The costs are ultimately a deterrent for many, particularly where less expensive alternatives are available. Unfortunately however, these alternatives tend to be less nutritious and the overall health of the community suffers.

The Northern Food Prices Report 2003 identified a number of areas requiring comprehensive and long-term strategies. Included are supporting self-sufficiency in producing nutritious foods locally through facilitation of northern gardening, identifying greenhouse-type production practices and sharing of successful community models of community foods programs. These are all excellent strategies aimed at reducing the high costs of nutritious foods in Northern Manitoba. The AMM is aware that some community gardens are underway as are the development of community-identified food self-sufficiency plans with technical support from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, and the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative is beginning to develop in-school programs focusing on healthy lifestyles to include both food-based and physical activity strategies. These are excellent first steps and we encourage the Province to continue to commit to this critical investment for the long-term health and sustainability of Manitoba's northern population.

The AMM is particularly concerned with the high cost of milk in rural and northern communities. The severity of the situation is emphasized by the Provincial Government's control of liquor prices across the Province while milk prices vary widely. The Canadian

Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends that all people over the age of four should have at least two servings of milk every day, however liquor and soda are more affordable than milk in rural and Northern Manitoba. Both of these alternatives to milk deprive residents of important nutrients and encourage an unhealthy lifestyle. Additionally, alcohol consumption is positively correlated with criminal activity. In every respect, municipalities are adversely affected by this situation and the AMM urges the Province to undertake the Northern Food Prices Report's recommendation to review the Milk Price Review Commission's mandate and apply the current Milk Price Review program to all of Manitoba.

Therefore the AMM urges the Province to take action to ensure that rural and northern communities have access to affordable, nutritious foods and beverages.

AMM Resolution Number 43 – 2002

Topic: Milk Price Controls in Rural and Northern Communities

Sponsor(s): Town of Churchill

Department(s): Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

WHEREAS the sale of liquor is regulated by The Liquor Control Act under section 51(1) which states: "The price of each particular variety of liquor shall be the same at all liquor stores and premises of liquor vendors appointed under section 17";

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba controls the price of liquor sold in stores regardless of geographical location;

AND WHEREAS the Province controls the operation and production of milk which is regulated under The Dairy Act;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not regulate or control the price of milk as is the case with liquor;

AND WHEREAS the price of milk in rural and northern communities is more expensive than the southern region of the province and is, at times, more expensive than an equal quantity of liquor;

AND WHEREAS the availability of fresh milk is an essential component of healthy living, especially for children, and is one cornerstone of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, while liquor is not;

AND WHEREAS Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating suggests that children 4-9 years consume 2-3 servings per day, children 10-16 years consume 3-4 servings per day, adults consume 2-4 servings per day and breast-feeding women consume 3-4 servings per day. The same cannot be said for liquor;

AND WHEREAS alcohol and drug abuse is the largest socioeconomic crisis in rural and northern Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Province has placed more effort into supplying affordable liquor to rural and northern communities than any other consumable;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province to regulate and control the price of milk in rural and northern communities in the same way as liquor is regulated and controlled by The Liquor Control Act.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province to amend The Dairy Act to include similar pricing controls as are found in section 51(1) of The Liquor Control Act, to ensure that the price of milk in rural and northern communities is the same across the province regardless of geographical location.

4. VIA Rail Service

In many parts of Northern Manitoba, the rail system is the primary means of transportation. Rail is relied upon by the tourism industry, general travel needs of residents, and for shipping goods into and out of communities. Unfortunately however, this heavily relied-upon infrastructure continues to disappoint those who utilize it. Both the conditions of the rail cars and the services provided by VIA Rail are increasingly poor.

The rail system is of particular importance in northern communities where rail is relied upon for supply and passenger transportation. Many communities are only connected to Southern Manitoba by rail and air, as is the case in the Town of Churchill, for example. Rail infrastructure provides these communities with basic necessities, but also promotes economic development opportunities such as tourism and industry. Without a reliable source of transportation for supplies and passengers, northern communities will remain isolated from the rest of the Province and may forego such opportunities as a result. Additionally, improvements to the rail services will provide reduced costs for nutritious foods, an added incentive corresponding with this Department's Healthy Foods mandate.

The Province recently released the 2020 – Manitoba’s Transportation Vision report. This Report made a number of recommendations aimed at improving rail services across the province including encouraging and facilitating private sector investment in shortline railways, entering into public/private partnerships to operate remote community rail lines and establishing railway infrastructure, and work with rail companies to establish training and education programs. The Report also made general recommendations to improve freight transportation, possibly by forming multi-jurisdictional partnerships. The AMM is aware that VIA and OmniTRAX, the owner of the rail line, are in discussions to explore opportunities to improve the Winnipeg-Churchill service and to continue the service on The Pas-Lynn Lake route. We urge the Province to investigate these operations further and work with VIA and OmniTRAX to encourage the improvement of the rail services to Northern Manitoba.

The Province has indicated to the AMM in the past that it would be willing to re-consider alternatives that have been previously raised, including the rail bus concept, mixed passenger/freight train service, and intermodal bus-train service. We urge the Province to investigate alternatives and improvements to the current service. While we recognize that this issue is largely the responsibility of Federal and Provincial Transportation Departments, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is encouraged to include the issue of improved rail service to Northern Manitoba in its mandate.

The AMM encourages Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to support the need for improved rail services in order to promote the economic and social well-being of northern communities.

AMM Resolution Number 21 – 2001

Topic: VIA Rail Service

Sponsor(s):

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services, Transport Canada

WHEREAS rail access to and from the Town of Churchill is an essential mode of transportation;

AND WHEREAS rail transportation of freight, both perishable and non-perishable goods, is vital to the re-supply of the Town of Churchill;

AND WHEREAS rail transportation of tourists into the Town of Churchill is vital for the continued economic development of the town;

AND WHEREAS rail service is the economic lifeline for many communities, which include the transportation of passengers and goods to and from communities, and directly encourages the tourism sector in Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the condition of VIA Rail train cars is below standard for many rural and northern Manitoba communities;

AND WHEREAS the customer service that is provided to rail passengers is not of an acceptable standard and there is sufficient documented proof that VIA Rail is unwilling to remedy the problems that plague this rail service;

AND WHEREAS the cost of rail travel has increased steadily over the past five years for most remote and northern Manitoba communities having a negative impact on their ability to conduct business;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities petition both VIA Rail Canada and the provincial and federal ministers of transportation to improve passenger service into northern and remote Manitoba communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities petition VIA Rail Canada and the provincial and federal ministers of transportation to improve the condition of the passenger cars, improve customer service, and reduce and stabilize the cost of transporting people and goods into northern and remote Canadian municipalities.

C) General Issues

1. Education Funding

For 2005, the AMM has identified education funding to be its top priority. The ongoing need to shift education funding away from property taxes was demonstrated when our membership passed a resolution requesting that the Province develop a new taxation model that removes school tax levies from all properties. The current model is not sustainable and further action must be taken to relieve the pressures on municipal property taxes.

The November 2004 Throne Speech included a significant first step that was much appreciated by the AMM membership. A 33 per cent reduction in farmland property taxes for 2004 and a further reduction to 50 per cent in the 2005 Budget will assist an agricultural community that has experienced ongoing pressure as a result of BSE and several consecutive years of poor weather conditions. This commitment of \$33 million over two budget years represents an appropriate beginning to the process of separating education funding from property. Municipal property taxes should be used to fund strictly municipal services, and reducing the education portion of property tax will facilitate this process.

The Province had previously made reference to further education tax relief being unveiled in the 2005 Budget. However, the AMM was disappointed to learn that no additional reductions in education taxes across other property classes have been announced. In order for further action to incorporate municipal interests, education tax relief must be applied equitably to all classes of property. Phasing out the residential Education Support Levy (ESL) is an essential part of this initiative and the new \$30 million reduction for 2005 is certainly beneficial to residential landowners. However, reductions in education tax should be available to all property owners since it is incongruous for education funding to be associated with property. At the same time, a shift away from property should not justify a reduced investment in the education system. The AMM strongly supports the need for high quality education in all areas of the province, yet maintains that other sources of Provincial revenue are more appropriate than property taxation. While every citizen should contribute to education funding, this does not occur under the current regressive system of property taxation. At present, there is an unfair reliance on property owners to fund an education

system that contributes so much to the prosperity of Manitoba. Consequently, the AMM was disappointed that the Province did not take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 to make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the total removal of education funding from property. The AMM believes a clear five-year plan is needed where the end result is the total removal of education funding from property.

An important aspect of this issue is that municipalities are required to provide a wide variety of services while relying almost exclusively on property taxes as a source of revenue. Until methods of municipal financing are drastically changed, municipalities must be empowered to control the level of local property taxation without having to use this mechanism for Provincial purposes such as education. The current funding system places an unfair burden on property owners and hinders the ability of municipalities to provide property services, such as infrastructure improvements. The AMM appreciates that the Province has begun to take action to improve this situation and looks forward to working with the Provincial Government to develop a long-term plan to shift education funding away from property taxation.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to create a 5-year plan that results in the total removal of education tax from all classes of property.

AMM Resolution Number 17 – 2004

Topic: Total Removal of Education Tax From Property

Sponsor(s): RM of Alexander, RM of Brokenhead (Eastern District), City of Dauphin (Parklands District), RM of Albert, RM of Brenda, RM of Cameron, RM of Edward, RM of Glenwood, RM of Winchester (Western District).

Department(s): Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba currently collects a significant portion of the funds necessary to provide educational services through property taxation;

AND WHEREAS the level of school taxation as a proportion of overall property taxation has increased significantly in the past decade;

AND WHEREAS the increased level of school taxation has had a significant negative impact on municipalities' ability to raise adequate municipal revenue to service their residents;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are very concerned that the current taxation model regarding the levying and collection of taxes for educational purposes on properties in the Province of Manitoba is no longer a viable, fair and realistic method to fund education in the Province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the development of a new taxation model would ensure the removal of all education tax levies from all properties, would address the current taxation inequities and create a fair taxation system applicable to all property classification in the Province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to develop a taxation model that removes school tax levies from all properties in the Province of Manitoba.

2. Land Use and Water Planning

The legislature has recently passed two pieces of legislation that are very important to municipalities: *The Planning Act* and *The Water Protection Act*. Municipalities are necessarily involved in planning for both land use and water management purposes and this legislation will certainly impact these planning processes. In general, the AMM is supportive of the changes to *The Planning Act*, however there is a significant issue that must still be addressed regarding public hearings. As well, although *The Water Protection Act* will target important environmental issues, municipalities are concerned that major responsibilities will be downloaded to the local level. Since both acts have been passed, it is now crucial that the appropriate processes be implemented to resolve these concerns.

Regarding *The Planning Act*, there is a need for a greater interaction between the public and the Provincial Government, particularly at public hearings. The present system expects municipalities to defend provincial policy since municipal councils are the only order of government attending public hearings. This situation must be rectified in order to ensure that the public has access to accurate information. When technical questions arise, it is more appropriate for Department of Conservation staff to respond since it is an explanation of Provincial environmental regulations that is required. Since Department of Conservation staff is not required to attend public hearings, this creates a perception that municipal councils are accountable for Provincial decisions. If the public has no opportunity to be reassured that the environmental concerns have been addressed, they will continue to pressure councils to deny livestock applications. Rather, the Provincial Government must be

accountable for its environmental regulations and ensure the transparency of the process by attending public hearings, just as municipal councils must be present to defend their decisions. Without these fundamental changes to the public hearing process, the livestock portion of this legislation will be totally ineffective.

There is a persisting municipal concern regarding the acute lack of detail in *The Water Protection Act*, which raises concern for the additional responsibilities that municipalities will be expected to bear. Municipalities, conservation districts and planning boards will certainly have a role to play in the implementation of the concepts under consideration, however the extent of this role remains unclear. The Province has been unclear regarding how the newly legislated ideas and requirements will be implemented. The Province must work with key stakeholders to clarify the roles of all affected organizations and to ensure that local people are effectively consulted and involved in the process.

This issue extends to the financial resources that will be required to implement *The Water Protection Act*. Without a significant financial investment from the Provincial Government, none of the act's key attributes can be achieved. Furthermore, the consultation document *Regulation Under The Manitoba Water Protection Act*, does not provide the comprehensive information that was expected of the Province's commitment to detailed zone mapping. Rather, the zone maps are too imprecise to be appropriately employed and urban areas are completely omitted from the regulation. An additional investment is required to enhance the available mapping in order to create functional planning documents and this responsibility should not belong to individuals or municipalities. Another concern is that watershed planning authorities cannot create the required watershed management plans using existing tools, yet there is no indication that the Provincial Government will provide funding for the development of these plans. It is essential that the Province establish and explain the financial underpinnings of this legislation in order to move forward with its implementation.

Land use and water resource planning are very important for municipalities since each has wide-ranging impacts on the way municipalities function and the development that occurs within their boundaries. Environmental considerations are very important to municipalities as they strive to balance the protection of natural resources with community development.

Both types of planning ensure that municipalities are implementing a long-term approach and considering the impacts of current actions on the future of their communities. The AMM is supportive of the Provincial Government's efforts to improve land use planning and water resource management in Manitoba, yet the application of the legislation must take these municipal concerns into account.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that Department of Conservation staff will attend public hearings for land use planning in order to respond to environmental concerns.

Furthermore, the Province must provide further details on *The Water Protection Act* to clarify any additional financial and administrative duties and to demonstrate the impact of the legislation on municipalities.