

Meeting of the
**Association of
Manitoba
Municipalities**



with

The Honourable Stan Struthers

Minister of Conservation

January 26th, 2005

Table of Contents

A) Executive Summary	3
B) Departmental Issues	7
C) General Issues	15

A) Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Household Hazardous and Electronic Equipment Waste Program

- This is an issue that is consistently raised by our membership and although the Province endorsed the recommendation of the 2000 Committee that was mandated to develop options for a permanent program, there has yet to be any action.
- The fact remains that this material poses a very real danger to the health and safety of Manitobans, and is a threat to the environment when disposed of with regular garbage in municipal landfills or by other methods. This is an important issue for Manitoba municipalities and there is a need for an expanded program to be put in place that will properly dispose of this material.
- The technological component of this program is important, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to dispose of electronic equipment properly and it is ending up in municipal landfill sites.
- It is critical that the Government support municipalities to collect and manage electronic and household hazardous waste in a safe manner by ensuring that a permanent program with adequate funding is in place.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to move forward with enacting the Household Hazardous Waste Program and would appreciate an update of what is delaying the program and when it will finally be enacted.

2. Contaminated Sites

- Across the Prairies are numerous contaminated sites requiring clean-up. They include both mines and abandoned petroleum sites. The Petroleum Site Remediation Initiative (PSRI) is aimed at facilitating the clean-up of abandoned petroleum tanks.
- The AMM encourages the Province to commit to this program development and implementation and redevelop municipal brownfield projects. Redeveloping brownfields presents many advantages over the development of 'greenfields' because they are often already connected to existing infrastructure, thus reducing infrastructure costs, discourage urban sprawl, and revitalize run-down neighbourhoods.
- These sites are often in the possession of the municipalities because a business has failed or has been abandoned, and the only recourse for municipalities to recover lost costs is to sell these sites in tax sales. However when the sites are contaminated, this requires that the municipalities pay to have the sites cleaned up.

- The Federal Government recently committed \$4 billion to the clean-up of contaminated sites. The Provincial Government needs to take the same initiative and invest in the long-term clean-up of contaminated sites.
- The Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) is planning to decommission the Whiteshell Laboratories by sealing up the site and postponing major work, imposing liabilities for future generations and raising safety concerns.
- Requests to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) to move the public hearings on the AECL plan from Ottawa to Manitoba have been refused. The Province needs to work with Natural Resources Canada to compel the CNSC to Manitoba so that the people who will be affected by the plan can take part in the proceedings.

Therefore, the AMM would like to see a commitment from the Province, similar to the Federal Government's commitment, to clean up and redevelop contaminated sites in Manitoba for the environmental and economic health of Manitoba's municipalities.

3. Recycling and Efficiency Manitoba

- Waste reduction is a priority for Manitobans and the Manitoba Product Stewardship Board has been important component of the success of Manitoba's recycling system.
- Currently over 90% of Manitobans have access to some type of recycling program which has resulted in over 50,000 tonnes of waste being recycled.
- The current program works and the AMM urges the Province to ensure that the program continues to have the funding needed to maintain the 80:20 funding formula that has worked so well.
- This is all the more important as the Province looks to develop the new Efficiency Manitoba agency. The AMM is supportive of any initiatives that will improve efficiencies, however it must be ensured that programs are not adversely affected if incorporated under the wider umbrella of Efficiency Manitoba.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to ensure that those efficiency and waste reduction programs that are working continue to have the resources needed to operate.

4. Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program

- With the realities facing Municipal Governments today, the AMM has increasingly seen the need for municipalities, and in particular smaller municipalities, to reduce their operating costs in order for them to remain solvent. Since a proven and effective way of reducing operating costs is to increase energy, water, and other resource efficiencies, the AMM has developed the Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program (MMEP).
- With the help of partner organizations, the MMEP will show Municipal Governments how they can reduce their operating and maintenance costs by identifying and

implementing energy and water efficiency measures in municipally owned and/or operated facilities

- Many municipalities, especially the smaller ones, often do not have the staff and financial resources to perform audits and implement recommendations. As such, these municipalities require significant support to overcome barriers, such as a lack of awareness, knowledge, time, staff, and financial resources, to carry out feasibility studies and implementation. There is a need to give these municipalities additional support.
- The AMM is now looking for financial assistance for the remaining 50% of the funds needed to complete these efficiency audits. Our association believes this is an important project and believes this is an excellent opportunity for all three levels of government to work together.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to make a financial contribution to the AMM's Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program (MMEP). With the commitment from the partnering organizations, municipalities will have the support needed to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations.

5. Adequate Number of Environmental Officers for Enforcement

- The Provincial Government has recently undertaken a number of key initiatives that will have very real and major impacts on municipalities, including the review of the Planning Act and the new requirements that have been laid out in Bill 22- The Water Protection Act
- Many of the new rules and regulations that are being considered will require enforcement by environmental officers in order to ensure compliance and many municipalities have expressed concern to our association that the mechanisms required for enforcement are lacking.
- These acts place greater restrictions on what is acceptable yet appear to lack any measures to ensure that these new rules are being followed. All of the efforts that were put into developing these acts will be lost if there is not an accompanying enforcement measure.

Therefore the AMM would like to see the Provincial Government ensure there are adequate enforcement officers available to enforce the extended mandates of these acts.

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

- While the AMM was pleased to see the Province recognize the importance of this issue with the recent commitment in the Throne Speech of an immediate reduction in education taxes on farmland, 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 was pleased with the commitment of further reductions in the 2005 Budget beyond the 50% reduction on farmland and 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.

Consequently, the AMM would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the 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.

2. Land Use and Water Resource Planning

- Since new water legislation is forthcoming and the Planning Act is currently under review, a municipal perspective must be represented as legislation is formulated.
- The first municipal priority for land use and water resource planning legislation is to recognize local authority.
- The need to recognize local interests pertains to the inclusion of consultation processes within land use and water resource planning legislation.
- The second municipal priority relates to the responsibilities held by the Provincial and municipal governments regarding effective land use and water resource planning.
- The AMM is concerned that municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will be expected to take on significant administrative and financial obligations in order to provide additional services.
- The Provincial Government must consider the impacts of adding new responsibilities to their own operations since requiring all municipalities and planning districts to create a development plan will increase the demand for the ministerial approval process.
- The Provincial Government must provide support for municipalities that lack the resources to meet the new legislative requirements.

The AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that legislation and regulations related to land use and water resource planning are responsive to municipal concerns, including the need for local authority and a balance between Provincial and municipal government responsibilities.

b) Departmental Issues

1. Household Hazardous and Electronic Equipment Waste Program

An issue our association has continued to raise with this department is the implementation of a household hazardous waste program in Manitoba. This has been an ongoing issue for municipalities and is consistently raised as a concern by our membership. In early 2000, the AMM was informed that the Province endorsed the recommendations of the Household Hazardous Waste Management Committee, which included two representatives from the AMM. However, no action resulted from this.

In August of 2003, the AMM met with the previous Minister of Conservation and it was indicated that this program was very close to approval and it could be expected in the next couple of weeks. Although the electronics component was cited as causing much of the delay, it was indicated at this time that this issue had been rectified. The AMM also understands that this program has yet to be approved by Cabinet. At the last meeting with this department and the AMM, our association was informed that there had not been much progress since the previous meeting and the department is still finalizing the discussion paper. Additionally, this program is being considered as part of Efficiency Manitoba, the new one-stop agency for recycling initiatives, which has not yet been established.

The technological component of this program is important, as with technological advances comes an increase in the products that become obsolete. The result is an increase in waste electronics in the household waste stream, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to dispose of these goods properly. It is a priority to implement a program whereby electronic waste can be reused, recycled or safely disposed of. It is critical that the Government support

municipalities to collect and manage electronic and household hazardous waste in a safe manner by ensuring that a permanent program with adequate funding is in place.

Our association has heard that the Household Hazardous Waste Program is close to approval for some time, yet there is currently no permanent program. The fact remains that this material poses a very real danger to the health and safety of Manitobans, and is a threat to the environment when disposed of with regular garbage in municipal landfills or by other methods. This is an important issue for Manitoba municipalities and there is a need for an expanded program to be put in place that will properly dispose of this material. The Province is well aware that the public is demanding an expanded and comprehensive Household Hazardous Waste Program. The AMM is very interested in working with the Province to improve the waste stream in Manitoba and believes this program is an important component of this.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to move forward with enacting the Household Hazardous Waste Program and would appreciate an update of what is delaying the program and when it will finally be enacted.

2. Cleaning Up Contaminated Sites

Across the Prairies are numerous contaminated sites requiring cleanup. They include both mines and abandoned petroleum sites. The Petroleum Site Remediation Initiative (PSRI) is aimed at facilitating the cleanup of abandoned petroleum tanks. In 2002, the Province commenced a review of abandoned tank programs in Alberta and Saskatchewan and estimated the number of abandoned petroleum tank sites in Manitoba at over 240. The program was to establish clean-up parameters and determine cost estimates for program

delivery and was to be cost-shared between municipal and provincial governments, as well as the petroleum industry. Each site was estimated to have 3.75 tanks, each costing between \$10,000 and \$15,000 for an average cost of over \$46,000 for their removal per site.

The AMM encourages the Province to commit to this program development and implementation and redevelop municipal brownfield projects. Brownfields are vacant or abandoned site where past use of the property has left real or possible environmental contamination. These sites exist where municipal services are available and represent an economic loss to municipalities. Redeveloping brownfields presents many advantages over the development of 'greenfields', or undeveloped sites, because in most cases, brownfields are already connected to existing infrastructure. This will reduce infrastructure costs and also discourage urban sprawl. Redeveloping sites that have been abandoned has the added advantage of revitalizing run-down neighbourhoods. Until these sites are cleaned up, municipalities continue to lose property tax revenue and in some cases, potential economic activity because of the perceived blight of some of these sites.

Often these sites pose an additional cost to municipalities as typically municipalities take possession of these sites because a business has failed and stopped paying taxes or when the sites become abandoned. The only recourse for municipalities in these situations to recover lost costs is to sell these sites in tax sales. However, when these sites are contaminated, this is not a possibility. Often municipalities are left having to pay to have the sites cleaned up.

In the 2004 federal budget, the Federal Government committed \$4 billion over the next 10 years to the clean-up of contaminated sites across Canada. While some of these funds are

already earmarked for federally owned sites, the AMM is pleased some funding will be available for provincial and municipal sites. This investment in the environmental and economic health of Canada's municipalities is an excellent beginning and the AMM would like to see the Manitoba Government follow with a similar commitment. Communities such as Lynn Lake, Wawanesa and Grosse Isle are extreme examples of the dangers such sites can pose if left without aid.

In addition, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited is planning to decommission the Whiteshell Laboratories by sealing up the site and postponing major work for decades. This imposes huge liabilities on future generations and raises significant safety concerns. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has refused the Manitoba's Minister of Conservation's request as well as requests from local communities to move their public hearings on the AECL plan from Ottawa to Manitoba. It is of significant importance that Natural Resources Canada and the Manitoba Government compel the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to hold public hearings in Manitoba so that Manitobans, the people the plan will be affecting, can appear in person before the Commission and witness the hearings, and determine the fairness and transparency of the hearing process for themselves.

Therefore, the AMM would like to see a commitment from the Province, similar to the Federal Government's commitment, to clean up and redevelop contaminated sites in Manitoba for the environmental and economic health of Manitoba's municipalities.

3. Recycling and Efficiency Manitoba

Waste reduction is a priority for Manitobans. The Province of Manitoba and municipal governments have significantly invested in the development and implementation of recycling

programs across the Province. Through the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation (MPSC), the Tire Stewardship Board and the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation (MARRC), programs for the recycling of tires, corrugated cardboard, as well as numerous other household and farm containers, have been created in many Manitoba communities. MPSC in particular has worked to establish an effective recycling support program for Manitoba communities. MPSC has been very successful in encouraging and facilitating waste reduction across Manitoba through its programs. Most visibly, over 90 per cent of Manitobans have access to some sort of recycling opportunity. This has resulted in more than 50 000 tonnes of residential recyclable materials being diverted from local landfill sites last year. The AMM has two representatives on the MPSC board and believes it is a well-functioning and important program for Manitoba communities. Clearly, Manitoba has one of the most successful recycling programs in Canada and it is therefore crucial that MPSC has the funding needed to deliver recycling programs on the 80:20 funding ration currently used.

On December 2, 2003, the Provincial Government announced the creation of a one-stop agency to promote conservation of energy and resources in Manitoba. Efficiency Manitoba will help Manitobans cut their energy and water bills and decrease the amount of waste destined for landfills. However, one of the goals of the Manitoba Efficiency Agency is to minimize the duplication of existing efficiency efforts in order to increase the effectiveness of these efforts and reduce the cost to deliver programs and services. Although the AMM agrees with this in principle, there are many well-functioning efficiency programs that currently exist, such as those that are run through MPSC, and it must be ensured that these

programs are not adversely affected if incorporated under the wider umbrella of Efficiency Manitoba.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to ensure that those efficiency and waste reduction programs that are working continue to have the resources needed to operate.

4. Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program

Just as the Provincial Government is exploring options to improve efficiencies, so too are municipalities. Municipalities, and particularly smaller municipalities, have increasingly seen the need to reduce their operating costs in order for them to remain solvent. Since a proven and effective way of reducing operating costs is to increase energy, water, and other resource efficiencies, the AMM has developed the Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program (MMEP).

A review of the work being done in this area illustrated that past methods for increasing municipal efficiencies would need to be revised in order to overcome the major barriers that have prevented smaller municipalities from increasing their resource efficiencies. Many municipalities, especially the smaller ones, often do not have the staff and financial resources to perform audits and implement recommendations. Ninety percent of Manitoban municipalities have populations of less than 5,000 people and due to their small size and dispersed geographic locations, these municipalities require significant support to overcome barriers, such as a lack of awareness, knowledge, time, staff, and financial resources, to carry out feasibility studies and implementation. There is a need to give these municipalities additional support.

Recognizing this, the AMM, with assistance from Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Manitoba Hydro and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, initiated a pilot project to facilitate the provision of technical, financial, and other necessary support required to walk smaller municipalities through the process to increase their resource efficiencies. The MMEP is the extension of this pilot project, with sixteen municipalities agreeing to participate in the program.

With the help of partner organizations, the MMEP will show Municipal Governments how they can reduce their operating and maintenance costs by identifying and implementing energy and water efficiency measures in municipally owned and/or operated facilities. The audits would be conducted and report recommendations would aim to address water distribution and wastewater collection system efficiencies, and energy and water efficiencies in municipally owned and/or operated buildings. Renewable and more efficient technologies would be considered so that the most cost effective and eco-efficient solutions would be recommended to the municipality.

The MMEP's multi-partner collaborative approach will relieve the inherent redundancy involved when 16 municipalities, each at considerable individual effort and expense, duplicate the logistics of developing a project, including concept, design, project management and implementation. As well, this project enables municipalities to become more economically and environmentally sustainable, no matter the location or population, as the profit margins do not exist for energy services companies to go out to these communities on a case-by-case basis to provide this service.

The benefits of this project are far-reaching, including developing local expertise and building capacity so that similar work can continue throughout the community with minimal outside expertise long after the project is complete. With the implementation of the recommendations, some of the direct benefits include reducing energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, reducing the flow of money out of the community that results in greater community fiscal sustainability, the creation of new jobs, improved infrastructure and building stock, improved quality of life for local residents, and more informed Manitobans about water and energy efficiency and about the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. With a commitment from partnering organizations, municipalities will have the support needed to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations.

MMEP is an efficient and effective way for all the partners to address multiple municipal issues through just one project. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has committed to fund 50% of the project from its Green Municipal Enabling Fund, a fund set up by FCM to allocate Federal Government funding endowed to Canadian municipalities for green projects. The AMM is now looking for financial assistance for the remaining 50% of the funds needed to complete the audits. Our association believes this is an important project and believes this is an excellent opportunity for all three levels of government to work together. This project will have a very positive effect on Manitoba and the AMM believes it is imperative that the Province make a financial contribution to the project.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to make a financial contribution to the AMM's Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program (MMEP). With the commitment from the partnering organizations,

municipalities will have the support needed to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations.

5. Adequate Number of Environmental Officers for Enforcement

The Provincial Government has recently undertaken a number of key initiatives that will have very real and major impacts on municipalities. The changes that are being proposed to the Planning Act and the new requirements that have been laid out in Bill 22- The Water Protection Act will change the way planning and development is done in Manitoba. Many of the new rules and regulations that are being considered will require enforcement by environmental officers in order to ensure compliance and many municipalities have expressed concern to our association that the mechanisms required for enforcement are lacking. These acts place greater restrictions on what is acceptable yet appear to lack any measures to ensure that these new rules are being followed. All of the efforts that were put into developing these acts will be lost if there is not an accompanying enforcement measure.

Therefore the AMM would like to see the Provincial Government ensure there are adequate enforcement officers available to enforce the extended mandates of these acts.

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 recent Throne Speech included a significant first step that was much appreciated by the AMM membership. A 33 per cent reduction in farmland property taxes will assist an agricultural community that has experienced ongoing pressure as a result of BSE and consecutive years of poor weather conditions. The prospect of a further reduction in the 2005 Budget to 50 per cent will also lessen the negative impact of past years. This commitment of \$33 million over two budget years is 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 has also made reference to further education tax relief being unveiled in the next budget. In order for further action to incorporate municipal interests, education tax relief must equitably be applied to all classes of property. Phasing out the residential Education Support Levy (ESL) is an essential part of this initiative and is certainly beneficial to residential landowners. However, reductions in education tax relief should be available to all property owners since it is incongruous for education funding to be associated with property. At the same, 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 would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the 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. Budget 2005 should therefore build on what the Provincial Government has already accomplished to ensure that all Manitobans fund education equitably.

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.

Consequently, the AMM would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the 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.

2. Land Use and Water Resource Planning

Municipalities are highly involved in planning for both land use and water management purposes. As a main stakeholder in these processes, the AMM has appreciated the opportunity to actively participate in the consultations regarding the legislation that affects these two types of municipal planning efforts. Since new water legislation is forthcoming and the Planning Act is currently under review, a municipal perspective must be represented as legislation is formulated. There are two major municipal considerations that must be given priority in any new legislation and these are consistent for both land use and water resource planning. The first pertains to recognizing local authority regarding planning

matters. The second consideration relates to the division of responsibility between municipalities and the Provincial Government.

Municipalities are in the best position to make the majority of planning decisions since they represent a local body of knowledge and expertise. For this reason, the first municipal priority for land use and water resource planning legislation is to recognize local authority. The review of the Planning Act will provide several opportunities to meet this objective, such as ensuring that municipalities have the final say in all land use planning decisions. In order to guarantee local control over land use planning, there should be no appeals process to another jurisdiction that supersedes municipal land use decisions. This is very important to AMM members as councils are elected officials with first hand knowledge of suitable land use within their jurisdiction. They also have a responsibility to objectively consider the consequences for all stakeholders and to establish a plan on that basis. An appeal process beyond this level would undermine the authority of the municipal council. Similarly, appeals to the Municipal Board should only be considered when a critical mass of ratepayers formally objects to a land use decision. Through these policies, local interests will be upheld based on the authority of the municipal council to undertake effective long-term land use planning.

The need to recognize local interests also pertains to the inclusion of consultation processes within land use and water resource planning legislation. Meaningful consultations provide a vehicle for municipalities to express their concerns and ensure that these concerns will be taken into account. Such consultations should occur while developing the legislation and its accompanying regulations. This will be particularly important regarding water resource

planning since the regulations are expected to articulate crucial details regarding the implementation of the Water Protection Act. Local expertise should also contribute to the development and implementation of watershed management plans since this type of expertise is based on historical information about the area. In addition, the review of the Planning Act should include public consultation, as it is essential that municipalities have the opportunity to express their specific views and garner a deeper understanding of the specific details of the proposed act.

New procedures within the Planning Act should also allow for public input, such as the environmental approvals processes. While the Province is well-equipped to conduct environmental assessments through the Technical Review Committees, the process would benefit from the inclusion of local input. The ongoing use of public consultation as required under the Planning Act also supports the ability of local authorities to effectively undertake land use planning. Community consultations are therefore critically important to land use and water resource planning and the inclusion of consultation feedback will strengthen support for legislation and regulations.

The second municipal priority relates to the responsibilities held by the Provincial and municipal governments regarding effective land use and water resource planning. In particular, the extent of new municipal responsibilities remains unclear for the Water Protection Act and the Planning Act review. As a result, the AMM is concerned that municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will take on significant administrative obligations in order to provide additional services. Due to the limited resources available to these organizations, the AMM cannot support policies that unfairly

burden local authorities. Therefore, minimizing the uncertainty surrounding the responsibilities of municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will clarify the impacts of the new policies and contribute to a greater understanding of the legislation.

The Provincial Government must also consider the impacts of adding new responsibilities to their own operations. For instance, requiring all municipalities and planning districts to create a development plan will increase the demand for the ministerial approval process. Presently, municipalities view the approvals process as too lengthy and the AMM is concerned that an increased demand for development plan approvals will further delay the approvals process and plan implementation. This concern will potentially impact the public hearing process where technical staff from the Province is required to attend. The Province is most appropriately positioned to address environmental concerns, however the presence of Provincial representatives at public hearings will facilitate understanding and acceptance from communities. Development plan approvals and public hearings provide municipalities with important tools to accomplish community planning, therefore the Province should avoid delays in completing these processes and ensure effective information sharing.

Administrative responsibilities must often be supplemented by additional technical requirements that may not be available to all municipalities. Integrating land use and water resource issues through comprehensive planning will therefore require additional financial resources. In order to undertake the type of detailed planning that is expected, mapping and other technical services will be required. For instance, the Water Protection Act refers to the identification of watershed quality management zones however, in many cases, municipalities do not have the necessary levels of expertise or financial resources to meet this

requirement. A similar situation could arise if development plans become mandatory for all municipalities or if the need to map agricultural zones is part of the reviewed Planning Act. For this reason, the Provincial Government must provide support for municipalities that lack the resources to meet the new legislative requirements.

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. Due to the strong interconnection between land use and water resource planning, municipal concerns are consistent across these two issues. The legislation that is currently under consideration will only be effective to the extent that it incorporates the municipal concerns outlined above.

The AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that legislation and regulations related to land use and water resource planning are responsive to municipal concerns, including the need for local authority and a balance between Provincial and municipal government responsibilities.