

News Release

Province heavy-handed on sewage rules, ejector ban

September 29, 2009 – The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) is extremely disappointed in the Province’s heavy-handed decision to move forward with aggressive amendments to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation, particularly the province-wide ban on sewage ejectors. The Province announced yesterday it would proceed with the amendments, despite widespread objection heard through its consultation with municipalities.

Doug Dobrowolski, AMM President, explains: “Many municipalities had concerns with the proposed amendments right from the start. We have absolutely no problem with supporting the amendments in environmentally sensitive areas, but to apply these rules to the entire province is excessive.”

The new regulations were first posted for public comment in January, and after meeting with the AMM in February, the Province agreed to extend consultations into May. During this time the Province held a series of regional meetings and addressed AMM members at the Municipal Officials Seminar in Brandon in April in order to hear municipal concerns. The AMM also met directly with Conservation Minister Stan Struthers on the issue.

“The message our members delivered throughout these consultations was loud and clear,” according to President Dobrowolski. “There is no scientific evidence to support these changes throughout the entire province. To implement new rules that will cost our ratepayers a great deal of money—with no apparent environmental benefit—is unnecessary and unfair.”

While the AMM continues to monitor the impact the new rules will have on its members, the contentious issue has also resulted in several municipalities drafting a resolution asking for the Province to apply the new regulation on a “case by case basis where there are scientifically justified environmental concerns and identified high risk areas.” AMM members will vote on the resolution at the AMM Annual Convention in November.

Dobrowolski says the fact that the Province disregarded municipal concerns is as alarming as the changes themselves. “Why consult if you have no intention of listening?” he asks. “Our members spoke out on an important issue and their concerns were completely ignored.”