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Committees Branch
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Room 251, 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8
Via email: committees@leg.gov.mb.ca

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), which represents Manitoba's 137 municipalities, I am writing to provide some comments regarding Bill 7: *The Sustainable Watersheds Act*.

As water management affects all municipalities, AMM members overwhelmingly support improvements to water management and water quality in Manitoba's lakes and waterways. That is why the AMM has been calling for a comprehensive provincial water management strategy to be developed in consultation with municipalities and Conservation Districts (Watershed Districts). Moreover, the AMM has long advocated for a made-in-Manitoba Ecological Goods and Services policy based on the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) model since municipalities are front line stewards of the environment that have invested considerably in flood mitigation infrastructure.

In Manitoba, effective water management and watershed programming demand financial support and incentives from the Province of Manitoba so that any new processes can be properly implemented and fully observed in practice. For instance, if Conservation Districts (Watershed Districts) are expected to fulfill any new role or additional responsibilities to help deliver *GROW*, increased operating funding for Conservation Districts must be provided by the provincial government. Therefore, more consultation is needed about integrating provincial funding from multiple sources as costs and responsibilities must not be downloaded to municipalities. We also encourage the Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation (MHHC) to partner with municipalities and Watershed Districts when coordinating investments to support the effectiveness of watershed projects.

In regards to drainage issues, the AMM welcomes the provincial government's recognition of existing red tape in the current drainage application process and corresponding reporting requirements while our organization is committed to identifying red tape barriers and sharing practical ideas to streamline provincial government processes to benefit Manitoba municipalities.





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Reducing time delays caused by provincial process inefficiencies should also help prevent added financial or staff resources when municipalities deal with provincial Acts, regulations, license requirements, and permit applications. Municipal frustrations with the current drainage licensing process are well-documented, particularly since cumbersome surveying and engineering requirements as well as inconsistent enforcement and information sharing by local Water Resource Officers featured prominently in our comprehensive submission to the Red Tape Reduction Task Force in March 2017. Thus, the AMM appreciates participating on the Drainage Regulation Steering Committee and looks forward to continuing to provide input on establishing an efficient drainage registration and licensing process.

Lastly, the AMM welcomes the commitment to transboundary water management and working with other provincial jurisdictions to improve water quality and reduce flooding. Several municipalities situated along the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border have faced significant financial hardship and substantial infrastructure damage due to drainage practices upstream in Saskatchewan. Greater coordination is urgently needed to mitigate damages to municipal infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these brief comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Masi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Masi
Executive Director

For more information regarding the AMM's previous submissions regarding Manitoba Sustainable Development's new watershed-based policy framework, please see the following links:

- *Modernizing Manitoba's Conservation Districts Program:*
http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/legislative_comments/2017.10.06-AMM-submission-Modernizing-Manitobas-Conservation-Districts-Program.pdf
- *GROWing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW):*
http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/legislative_comments/2017.10.06-AMM-submission-Growing-Outcomes-in-Watersheds-GROW.pdf
- *Watershed-Based Drainage and Water Resource Management:*
http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/legislative_comments/2017.10.06-AMM-submission-Watershed-Based-Drainage-and-Water-Resource-Management.pdf

