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May 28, 2020

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 29: *The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act*.

The AMM supports many of the proposed changes as outlined in Bill 29, including those reduce provincial red tape and grant municipalities more autonomy. For instance, we welcome the removal of the requirement for municipalities to obtain Municipal Board approval to enter into a lease of capital property other than real property as well as allowing the cities of Brandon, Thompson, Portage la Prairie and Flin Flon to set their Council size, which aligns practices among all other municipalities outside of Winnipeg. Moreover, measures that ease financial pressures on regional libraries will also benefit local communities.

In addition, the AMM supports the proposed elimination of the outdated requirement for municipalities to pay 4.75 per cent interest on excess taxes. As the current requirements are not in line with economic conditions and have not been reviewed since 1997, they have resulted in significant financial expenses for municipalities. Eliminating the interest rate will align with the approach taken by the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and therefore should benefit Manitoba municipalities.

Lastly, in consultation with the City of Winnipeg, the AMM proposes amending Bill 29 to apply the same change to Municipal Elections as was applied to Provincial Elections in 2017, that is require an in-service day be taken by schools used as voting places on municipal election days every fourth year. Alternatively, municipal election days could be potentially moved to the weekend when schools are empty. This option would not only reduce public safety concerns but also enhance customer service by allowing use of empty parking lots as well as the designation of additional accessible parking spots and community locations that are walkable to be used. Having municipal elections on weekends is common in Canada – for example, all





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British Columbia municipal elections are held on Saturdays and all Quebec municipal elections are held on Sundays.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these brief comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denys Volkov", written over a horizontal line.

Denys Volkov
Executive Director

cc: Hon. Rochelle Squires, Minister of Municipal Relations
Deputy Minister Bruce Gray, Manitoba Municipal Relations

