



News Release

Western Canadian Municipal Association meets in Winnipeg

April 20, 2017 - The leaders of the municipal associations of Western Canada's three prairie provinces met in Winnipeg today to discuss areas of common concern. The Association of Manitoba Municipalities ([AMM](#)) hosted the annual meeting, comprised of elected officials and staff from the AMM, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association ([SUMA](#)), the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities ([SARM](#)), the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties ([AAMDC](#)) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association ([AUMA](#)).

With over a dozen items on the agenda, there was plenty of discussion but priority issues soon emerged: federal infrastructure funding, marijuana legalization, and disaster mitigation.

On federal infrastructure funding, the association agreed to jointly advocate for a cost-sharing formula whereby municipalities would contribute 17% of total project funding costs and the remainder coming from the provincial and federal governments.

The group also discussed the importance of municipal input into project selection.

"We've missed valuable construction seasons already, and municipalities need to be engaged in the selection process in the future," said Maryann Chickak, Vice-President of AUMA.

"Our provincial governments are facing large deficits, we realize that," added Al Kemmere, President of AAMDC. "But we aren't asking for more. Ideally we believe the funding model should be 50% federal, 33% provincial, and 17% municipal."

Disaster mitigation was another important topic. "Several years ago the disaster financial assistance arrangements (DFAA) cost-sharing formula was changed, and these changes tripled costs for municipalities," explained Chris Goertzen, President of AMM. "The group committed to drafting a letter to the Government of Canada requesting this formula revert to what it was previously."

On marijuana legalization, the majority of the concerns arose around the federal government's rapid approach to the legislation. Ray Orb, President of SARM, noted his association feels "there is a lack of clarity. More input is needed from the people who are going to be enforcing the new rules in our municipalities." Darren Hill, Executive Member from SUMA agreed. "Our members need new by-laws to enforce new legislation, and we don't have these in place yet. We need more time."

The group agreed to request the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to create a committee dedicated to creating the needed tools for municipalities.

Overall, the day was a success. "We are always stronger when we come together than when we are working as individual associations," explained Goertzen. "This annual meeting is a valuable forum not just for discussion, but for action on the issues that affect municipalities in all three prairie provinces."

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Contact:

Denys Volkov, AMM Director of Advocacy and Communications

Ph: 204-856-2362

Email: dvolkov@amm.mb.ca