

Policy Bulletin

May 2019

May 7, 2019

INFORMATION: Resolution Responses

SARM has received a response from the Ministry of Government Relations on the following resolutions:

- **[POP 1-19A Asbestos Removal Funding](#)** (Also forwarded to the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety for response)
- **[POP 5-19A Community Safety Officer Program](#)** (Also forwarded to the Ministry of Corrections and Policing for response)
- **[POP 6-19A Affected Acres Income Loss Fund](#)**
- **[POP 8-19A Emergency Services](#)**
- **[9-19A Municipal Surcharge – SaskPower and SaskEnergy](#)**
- **[10-19A Road Maintenance Agreement Rates](#)**
- **[12-19A Enforcement of Code of Ethics Provisions](#)**
- **[14-19A Independent Rate Review](#)**
- **[15-19A Survival of Rural Saskatchewan](#)**

SARM has received a response from the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety on the following resolution:

- **[21-19A Workers' Compensation Board](#)**

INFORMATION: Federal Government Support for Agriculture Industry

As SARM continues to advocate for Saskatchewan's canola producers, the federal government made an announcement on Wednesday, May 1, 2019. Ministers Bibeau (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and Carr (International Trade) announced the following measures to support producers:

- Increase the max loan limit under the **Advanced Payment Program**, from \$400k to \$1 million
- For canola producers, increasing the interest free loan from \$100k to \$500k
- In coordination with the provinces, expanding for all farmers, the extension of the AgriStability program by two months.

In addition, Minister Carr will be leading a **Canola Trade Mission** to Japan and South Korea in the short term. Minister Carr also said he will be raising canola trade at the G7 Trade Ministers Summit in France, the APEC summit in Chile and will continue dialogue with a number of countries like Pakistan, Germany, France, the UAE among others.

SARM continues to work to ensure the issue remains a focus for government and appreciates member support to do the same through our **[letter writing campaign](#)**.

INFORMATION: Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program

Last month SARM met with the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss the current status of the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP). There are currently two program streams available to support sustainable water sources for agriculture, mitigate the impact of drought, and

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improve public safety and reduce potential groundwater contamination. For program inquiries regarding the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP), or any other Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program, please contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 and communicate your Rural Municipality. They will connect you with a local Program Specialist who will answer your questions, and, if required, connect you with a local watershed technician for application assistance. Detailed program information can also be found at www.saskatchewan.ca/CAP.

INFORMATION: The Police (Regional Policing) Amendment Act Passes

On April 30, the Government of Saskatchewan passed an Act to allow rural municipalities, and other municipalities with populations under 500, to join regional police services.

Adding rural municipalities to the regional policing provisions is an opportunity to explore new policing models in the province that focus specifically on the safety of rural citizens.

[Read more](#)

INFORMATION: Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act Passes

The Government of Saskatchewan passed legislation that will enhance the province's civil forfeiture program in order to take property and profit out of the hands of criminals. Seized property can be an asset required as a proceed of crime or an object used to commit a crime.

[Read more about these changes](#)

INFORMATION: Aquatic Invasive Species: Prussian Carp

The Saskatchewan Sportfish Research Group and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation is conducting a study on Prussian Carp. These fish are expanding through the South Saskatchewan River system and are a threat to our fisheries. The associations would like any sightings to be reported to reportinvasivecarp@swf.sk.ca.

To raise awareness on this issue please post this [poster](#) in your communities.

INFORMATION: Municipal Governance Committee Meeting

The SARM Municipal Governance Standing Committee met on Thursday May 2nd. The Committee focuses on issues related to intergovernmental affairs; primarily on legislation, regulations, policy and practices that affect rural municipal governments. A variety of topics were discussed last week ranging from the resolution responses received from the Ministry of Government Relations to *The Municipalities Act*.

INFORMATION: Planning and Lakeshore Development

Planning and setting policy for development around lakeshores has been an effective way to maintain the environmental attributes of lakes and preserve the integrity of shorelands across Canada. You can find a list of current information and [resources regarding lakeshore developments](#) in What's Trending on SARM's website.

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INFORMATION: Saskatchewan Court of Appeal Carbon Tax Ruling

In a decision released on Friday May 3rd, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal ruled that the carbon tax imposed on the province by the federal government is constitutionally sound and falls within the legislative authority of Parliament. The Saskatchewan Court's decision was 3-2 and the case may be appealed before the Supreme Court of Canada.

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INFORMATION: Minister's Meetings

On May 6, SARM President Ray Orb met with the Honourable Bill Blair to discuss the Rural Crime Watch program, the Crime Advisory Network, the recent changes to trespassing rules in Saskatchewan and the importance of firearm education and awareness.

On May 9, the SARM Executive met with The Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister of Environment to discuss topics such as Chronic Wasting Disease, water management, and agricultural plastics recycling.

ADVOCACY UPDATE: Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans Appearance

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans studies and reports on matters referred to it by the House of Commons and on topics the Committee itself chooses to study. On May 6, SARM President Ray Orb appeared as a witness for the Committee's hearing on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). AIS and in particular invasive mussels pose a threat to Saskatchewan's waterways. As such SARM remains active on the AIS Task Force and is in regular contact with Saskatchewan's Ministry of Environment on the file. More information on AIS and the brief that SARM submitted to accompany the appearance can be found [here](#).

INFORMATION: Legislation on Trespass Moves Forward

The Government of Saskatchewan is passing legislation to better balance the rights of rural land owners and members of the public. *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2018* and *The Trespass to Property Consequential Amendments Act, 2018* received third reading on May 8th.

This legislation clarifies existing laws and provides consistency in the rules regarding trespassing. It moves the onus of responsibility from rural land owners to individuals seeking to access their property. The legislation will come into force after the necessary regulations are developed. Under the previous legislation, responsibility rested primarily with the land owner to post their land if they wanted to limit public access. Under the new legislation, those wishing to access a rural land owner's property for recreational purposes will need to first gain access from the land owner. Land owners will be able to provide consent for activities, like berry-picking and hunting, on their land through posted signs.

The requirement for improved communication will help ensure that land owners and occupiers are aware of the presence of others on their property. The legislation also provides legal protection to land owners and occupiers against property damage and the risk of agricultural diseases, and limits any liability that may arise from a trespasser's presence on their property.

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Innovation Saskatchewan is working with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to develop a technological solution to promote contact between land owners and those seeking access to private property. The Innovation Challenge is underway and will select a successful applicant to develop their solution over a 16-week residency period.

INFORMATION: Municipal Governance Support Resources

A [list of resources](#) for rural municipal governments can now be found on SARM's website under Resources > Guides and Manuals.

INFORMATION: Guide to Establishing Municipal Districts

The Ministry of Government Relations has released a resource document titled a [Guide to Establishing Municipal Districts](#). This manual is intended to answer questions municipal council and administration may have on municipal districts (MD). It also sets out the process an urban municipality(s) and a rural municipality(s) would use to become an MD under *The Municipalities Act*.

The guide is available on SARM's website under Resources > Guides and Manuals.

Any questions municipalities have on the process can be forwarded to Colleen Christopherson, Manager of Advisory Services at 306-787-2637 or colleen.christopherson@gov.sk.ca

ACTION REQUIRED: Member Engagement in Advocacy

SARM continues to find ways to engage our membership in advocacy efforts. The [Member Engagement in Advocacy](#) initiative was launched in 2015. In 2019 there are ever increasing opportunities for rural municipalities (RM) to reach out through mail, email and social media. One way that SARM would like to get members involved is by letting government officials know how their decisions impact Saskatchewan's RMs.

In 2019-20, the Government of Saskatchewan will share \$71.715 million with RMs through the Municipal Revenue Sharing (MRS) program and the 2019 federal budget doubled the federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) transfer for one year. These transfers are invaluable tools for municipalities and SARM would encourage you to share your stories.

Let decision-makers know how you plan to use this year's funding in your RM to build better lives for the people of rural Saskatchewan by emailing your local MLA or Member of Parliament and cc'ing SARM or tweeting your story using the hashtags #skpoli #buildingcanada #revenuesharing

INFORMATION: Resource Communities of Canada Coalition

Over the past few months, SARM with our sister municipal associations across Western Canada have formed the **Resource Communities of Canada Coalition**. We have all agreed there is a need to coordinate our Canadian municipal voice to:

- Advocate for a responsible resource industry;

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- Ensure municipal perspectives are being heard on issues impacting resource development and;
- Share factual information regarding resource development interests.

SARM invites RM's to become involved in this movement. The Canadian resource industry is the backbone of our economy and is key to Canada's future prosperity. There are direct and indirect economic benefits that will impact all municipalities. SARM asks that you pass a motion at your next Council meeting to support the Resource Communities of Canada Coalition to ensure our municipal voice is heard.

Council Motion Template

May 21, 2019

INFORMATION: Minister Meeting

On May 13, members of the SARM Agriculture and Environment Standing Committee met with Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable David Marit and the Legislative Secretary of Agriculture to discuss growth in Saskatchewan's agriculture industry

INFORMATION: Resolution Responses

SARM has received a response from the Water Security Agency on the following resolution:

- **24-19A Aquatic Habitat Protection Permits**

ACTION REQUIRED: Feedback Requested: Rural Economic Development

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is working to identify practical opportunities to advance rural economic development to be shared with the federal Minister for Rural Economic Development. FCM is seeking examples in specific policy areas which include:

Streamlined Application Process: Are application deadlines for federal programs unreasonable or requirements too onerous?

Eligibility Criteria: Have you been ineligible for a project for reasons you feel were unreasonable?

Consultation: Do you have an example of a consultation that was effective or ineffective with a federal department?

Stacking of Funds: Do you have an example of a time when a project would have been viable if your community had been able to stack funds from several federal programs?

For more information or to share your examples of challenges facing RMs in accessing federal funding programs or of any past solutions that have improved processes please contact:

Karen Morris

Policy Coordinator, SARM

Phone: (306) 761-3735

kmorris@sarm.ca

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INFORMATION: Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) Survey Results

The results for the PDAP survey are in and can be found [here](#). 133 out of 296 possible respondents answered the survey. Thank you to all members who participated for the helpful feedback!

INFORMATION: Rural Municipal Administrators Association (RMAA) Convention 2019 – Portraits of Success

The 99th annual RMAA convention and trade show took place from May 13th-16th in Saskatoon this year. On Tuesday, SARM President Orb addressed the delegates and SARM staff from accounting and trading services had the opportunity to provide an update on activities.

ACTION REQUIRED: Fish and Wildlife Development Fund Survey

A graduate student at the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan is undertaking a research project to assess public attitudes towards Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF) Lands and land management practices in Saskatchewan.

Information gathered from this survey will be used to identify where improvement can be made in how FWDF lands are used and accessed, as well explore ways in which their conservation lands and management practices could be better aligned with the public's values and perspectives. The results will be presented to the FWDF members, and will assist them in working towards the goal of improving biodiversity conservation in Saskatchewan.

Participation is voluntary and survey responses are kept confidential. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

[Take Survey](#)

INFORMATION: Policy Summer Research Student

On May 6th SARM welcomed Derrick Gagnon to the policy team as our summer policy research assistant.

Derrick is studying political science at the U of R. and for the last two years, he has served as the Vice President of Operations and Finance at the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU). In his spare time, Derrick is also training to be a pilot.

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INFORMATION: Canola Crisis

SARM continues to advocate on behalf of canola farmers during the ongoing trade situation with China. We have heard concerns from RMs regarding the federal government's handling of the crisis and will continue to push for support for Saskatchewan's canola growers. In the [May 1st media release](#), SARM articulated that while the increase in dollars available through the Advance Payment Program (APP) will act as a stop-gap measure, it does not serve as a long-term solution.

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On May 24th, there was an open call hosted by the Canola Council of Canada to provide updates on the developments and ongoing work being pursued by the federal government and the canola working group. We heard from Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Honourable Mari-Claude Bibeau, Canola Council of Canada President, Jim Everson and Rick White CEO of Canadian Canola Growers Association. The speakers answered questions about the ongoing efforts of the canola working group and their work in three priority areas: re-engaging the Chinese market, diversification of the canola market and support for producers and industry. The question regarding timelines for access to the enhanced APP was not met with a definite answer, however, all parties assured call participants that the federal government is working to make the regulatory changes necessary to allow producers to take advantage of the enhanced program as soon as possible.

More information can be found on the [Canola Council of Canada's website](#).

INFORMATION: Farm Fuel Tax

At the 2019 Annual Convention POP Resolution 3-19A asked that SARM lobby government to ensure that all purchases of farm fuels are exempt from the carbon tax regardless of where the fuel is purchased. The response received from government has been positive. Initially the exemption only applied to fuel delivered to the farm leaving fuel purchased at the cardlocks subject to the tax. However, the federal government's 2019 Budget noted that legislation would be amended to exempt fuel used for on-farm purposes that is purchased at cardlocks as well. Information provided by the federal Department of Finance indicates that these changes are "deemed to come into force on April 1, 2019" and that farmers will need to complete the Canada Revenue Agency form *L402 E - Fuel Charge Exemption Certificate for Farmers* - and provide the completed form to their fuel dealer in order to receive the exemption.

INFORMATION: Funding for Clean Innovation, Climate Change Resiliency and Infrastructure Planning

The Government of Canada and FCM announced support for 125 new initiatives on communities across Canada amounting to just over \$9.7M. RMs in SK that received funding under the 'approved initiatives under the Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP)' include: Wawken (RM no. 93), Hazelwood (RM no. 94), Walpole (RM no. 92), Grayson (RM no. 184), Lomond (RM no. 37).

INFORMATION: Civic Address Registry

Has your rural municipality registered with the [Civic Address Registry](#)? The Civic Address Registry is a province-wide standardized system of identifying and locating properties associated with human activity by establishing a unique access point location (driveway). This system, in addition to traditional methods, is used to assist dispatchers and emergency responders such as police, fire and ambulance in finding your home or business quickly. Civic Addressing becomes essential to support emergency responders with limited local knowledge of the municipality, especially in e.g. non-fire situations where indicators like smoke may not be obvious.

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Municipal participation in civic addressing is voluntary, but recommended for emergency response purposes. SARM has developed a [civic addressing signage policy](#) for your consideration.

If you have questions about civic addressing, please contact [Cynthia Mamer](#).

INFORMATION: SARM Meetings

The SARM Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment met on May 23rd.

A Municipal Forum with Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Ministry of Government Relations was held on May 24th. In attendance were members of the SARM and SUMA executive and Minister Kaeding and members of his staff. Topics on the agenda included Municipal Revenue Sharing, the Municipal Acts, tax tools and other municipal revenue generators and other items of importance to both rural and urban municipalities in Saskatchewan.

ACTION REQUIRED: Feedback on *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*

The Ministry of Government Relations, Community Planning Branch is seeking feedback on [The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations](#). The submission deadline for written comments is June 21, 2019. If you would like to submit written comments, please contact Jenna Schroeder, Director of Regional Planning, at jenna.schroeder@gov.sk.ca or 306-787-2649. We would ask that you cc Dana Schmalz, Director of Community Planning Services, at dschmalz@sarm.ca on your correspondence.

Prairies Regional Adaptation Collaborative Webinar – The Value of Natural Infrastructure June 6 at 2:00pm CDT/1:00pm MDT

The webinar will focus on how municipalities are advancing adaptation to climate change through management of natural infrastructure assets that provide municipal and ecosystem services. An overview presentation will introduce the concept of natural infrastructure, followed by a presentation that highlights the value of natural infrastructure for municipalities. Two case study presentations will feature valuation of natural assets by the City of Saskatoon, and a planning tool created by the Miistakis Institute and piloted in partnership with the Town of Cochrane to increase resilience to flooding and drought using natural infrastructure.

[Register](#)