

Weekly Policy Bulletins: May 4-8

SARM Finance Committee Appearance

President Orb appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance on April 24th. He highlighted the challenges that Rural Saskatchewan has been experiencing regarding COVID-19.

For more information see [SARM's submission to the committee.](#)

Aquatic Invasive Species Strategy

AIS, such as zebra and quagga mussels, threaten lakes and rivers in Western Canada. They can severely affect aquatic habitat, fisheries, valuable recreational resources and important infrastructure for irrigation, power generation and municipal water supplies.

An Aquatic Invasive Species Strategy was released in February 2020. The new framework is designed to help the province prevent, address and manage aquatic invasive species (AIS) threats. The strategy contains information that RMs may find useful in the prevention of AIS.

More information can be found in the [Aquatic Invasive Species Strategy.](#)

FCM Media Release – COVID-19: Municipalities

Cities and communities are major economic drivers for Canada. The emerging crisis represents a destabilizing force for our national economy and the daily lives of all Canadians and FCM appealed to all orders of government to work together in partnership.

More information can be found in the [FCM Media Release](#)

FCM Resources – Tool: Assess flood risk and develop sustainable management plans

Is your municipality threatened by the impacts of flooding caused by climate change? Are you looking for tools to help you develop a plan to protect your community and mitigate flood risks?

A project led by the National Institute of Scientific Research and supported by our Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program brought together several Quebec communities from the Petite Nation River region to develop tools that can help you assess the risk of flooding in your area and develop sustainable management plans.

[Read the case study and access the tools to help your community.](#)

Question of the Week Results

Has your RM experienced any challenges in obtaining Personal Protective Equipment?

Yes 44%

No 38%

Not sure 18%

Weekly Policy Bulletins: May 11-15

Provincial Stimulus Funding

The Province of Saskatchewan announced a \$2.0 billion capital injection to build a strong Saskatchewan. The \$2.0 billion is in addition to capital funding announced in March. The injection is allocated as follows:

- Approximately \$1.37 billion for large infrastructure projects, including \$103 million for health and \$110.5 million for education, with additional allocations to be announced at a later date. SaskBuilds will provide oversight as well as project management and procurement expertise. Design, engineering, architecture, construction and project management costs are included in this total with the goal of ensuring projects are shovel ready by 2021-22.
- More than \$300 million for highway projects for thin membrane surface upgrades, passing lanes including \$46 million dedicated for upgrades to municipal roads and airports.
- Approximately \$181 million for renewal projects to reduce deferred maintenance on provincial and third-party assets and reduce operating costs through energy efficiency. This includes new allocations of \$100 million for health and \$25.9 million for education, with the remainder addressing priority projects in various other ministries and agencies.
- \$150 million in a per capita payment through a new Municipal Economic Enhancement Program to support infrastructure projects in communities across the province.

Municipal Revenue Sharing - Announcement

On May 7th, Government Relations Minister Lori Carr announced that as part of the Government of Saskatchewan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Municipal Revenue Sharing (MRS) will be fast tracked for the 2020-21 year.

All MRS funds will be paid in full directly to all compliant Saskatchewan municipalities in June, rather than in installments throughout the year. More information on revenue sharing can be found [here](#)

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COVID Resources from Western Economic Diversification

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is taking action to support small and medium-sized businesses.

WD can assist with:

- Access to federal funding to help you stay in business.
- Advice and pathfinding services to other federal programs and services available.

More information on WD programs and services can be found [here](#)

FCM COVID-19

FCM has created an [online hub](#) of resources for municipalities and municipal leaders which showcases inspiring leadership on the front lines. The hub also profiles FCM's work to shape Canada's pandemic response and economic recovery.

Question of the Week

Let us know if you're using BoxofDocs and if you're not using it tell us more about why:

[**Don't know about it**](#)

[**Too difficult to navigate**](#)

[**Not a valuable option**](#)

[**Other**](#)

Weekly Policy Bulletins: May 18-22

Municipal Economic Enhancement Program

In light of challenges arising out of COVID-19, the Ministry of Government Relations has announced the \$150 million **Municipal Economic Enhancement Program 2020**. MEEP is a grant-based program that will see funding distributed on a per capita basis to municipalities as part of Saskatchewan's economic stimulus plan.

This new provincial investment is in addition to other financial initiatives to support municipalities.

Municipalities will also be receiving information from the ministry via email on this new program and how to participate.

\$300 Million Highways Stimulus Package

The Government of Saskatchewan is releasing \$300 million in new highways projects to boost the Saskatchewan economy while improving safety and capacity. The \$300 million in highways stimulus funds will be invested over the next two years as we work to quickly re-start the Saskatchewan economy. These projects will include thin-membrane surface upgrades, passing lanes and improvements to municipal roads and airports.

Highlights include:

- Upgrades to 325 km of thin-membrane surface highways;
 - 24 to 26 new sets of highway passing lanes;
 - Rehabilitation of at least 100 RM roads when combined with our existing municipal roads program; and
 - Improvements to community airports.
-

The Elections Act Regulations Changes

On May 13th, the Government of Saskatchewan approved changes to The Elections Act Regulations to give the Chief Electoral Officer clear authority to take any necessary action to ensure the October 26 provincial election is conducted safely, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Resort Village elections have been delayed from July 25th to August 29th.

Western Economic Diversification – Regional Relief and Recovery Fund

On May 13th, the Government of Canada announced that western Canadian businesses can now apply for the new **Regional Relief and Recovery Fund** (RRRF) through Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

Businesses are encouraged to visit the **WD website** to learn about eligibility criteria and determine which funding stream is right for them.

All applicants are encouraged to consult the Program Guidelines prior to submitting an application, and to **contact WD** should you have additional questions. Inquiries via email are encouraged and can be sent to **wd.sk-sk.deo@canada.ca**.

A high volume of applications is anticipated. WD is accepting applications on an ongoing basis and will review them on a first-come, first served basis. For more information about additional support offered by WD and the Government of Canada, please visit the **WD COVID-19 response page**.

Reminder: Webinar – Rural Municipal Construction: Stimulus and capital project management during and after COVID-19

Date: May 19th

Time: 1pm

SARM is partnering with the Colliers Project Leaders and SaskBuilds to host a webinar. The webinar will review capital project management now (e.g. contract issues, postponements / cancellations, procurement); activities that must happen soon (e.g. budget / process reviews, preparing lists of ‘shovel ready’ and ‘shovel worthy’ projects, writing clear, strong business cases and funding applications) and what to prepare for later (e.g. ensuring capacity / capability to resume existing and deliver new projects). Each effort is key to ensuring the stimulus has a positive and lasting impact locally.

To find out more and register, please visit: [**Rural Municipal Construction: Stimulus and capital project management during and after COVID-19.**](#)

Funding to Support Livestock Producers during COVID-19

On May 14th the Government of Saskatchewan announced \$10 million in additional funding to help livestock producers manage the impacts of COVID-19 related market disruptions.

The support includes \$5 million for Saskatchewan’s share of the costs associated with participation in the national AgriRecovery set-aside program and \$5 million to partially offset higher premium costs under the Western Livestock Price Insurance Program (WLPPI).

With today’s announcement, the Saskatchewan government will fund the 40 per cent provincial contribution to the AgriRecovery set-aside program.

Saskatchewan livestock producers will now be able to access a total of \$12.5 million under the set-aside program. On May 5, the federal government announced their 60 per cent contribution to the AgriRecovery program.

For more [**information**](#)

New Asset Management Grants for Municipalities

Starting today, we're offering new grants to help your municipality strengthen its asset management practices, thanks to a renewed federal investment in FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program announced in the 2019 federal budget. Doubling down on this federal-municipal partnership will enable funding support for hundreds more municipal projects, mostly in smaller and rural communities.

Well-managed assets ensure that your community is making the most of every infrastructure dollar. It will help you secure the future of your transportation systems, drinking water and wastewater systems, buildings and other key infrastructure. It will equip you to continue providing your community with reliable services and a high quality of life.

Apply for a grant of up to \$50,000 for an asset management initiative that will help your community make better decisions regarding infrastructure.

[Watch a video](#) to learn more.

AAFC Announcement - Eligible Costs

The Government of Canada recently announced up to \$50 million to assist farmers, fish harvesters, and food production and processing employers with the incremental costs associated with the mandatory 14-day quarantine period for temporary foreign workers arriving from abroad.

Canadian employers in the primary agriculture, fish, seafood and food processing industries can receive a maximum contribution of \$1,500 per temporary foreign worker for the incremental costs incurred during the mandatory 14-day quarantine period such as:

- wages and benefits of the temporary foreign workers;
- food or food allowances;
- health and safety supplies; and/or
- other incremental costs directly associated to the mandatory 14-day quarantine period of temporary foreign workers.

This funding is eligible for costs retroactive to March 26, 2020. Applicants will be required to disclose if they received funding from provincial/territorial governments or any other third-party organization, as the maximum non-repayable contribution of \$1,500 for each temporary foreign worker may be adjusted to reflect the employers out of pocket costs.

Question of the Week Results

Let us know if you're using BoxofDocs and if you're not using it tell us more about why:

Don't know about it	61%
Too difficult to navigate	5%
Not a valuable option	7%
Other	27%

Weekly Policy Bulletins: May 25-29

Provincial Program – Inactive Wells

The Government of Saskatchewan is launching the Accelerated Site Closure Program (ASCP) for the abandonment and reclamation of inactive oil and gas wells and facilities. The ASCP will also support employment in the oil and gas service industry.

ASCP will access up to \$400 million, over two years, subject to the conclusion of an agreement with Canada, through the federal COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. It will be overseen by the Ministry of Energy and Resources and delivered in partnership with the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC), which has technical expertise to provide engineering and oversight work.

For more [information](#)

Submission to Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food – COVID-19 Response

SARM made a [submission](#) to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on May 6th regarding the federal government's COVID-19 response. The submission highlights the importance of the agriculture sector provincially, nationally and globally and the cooperation necessary from all levels of government to address the current and future challenges resulting from the pandemic.

Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week in Saskatchewan

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are plant, animal and invertebrate species that threaten our waterways and can damage aquatic habitat, fisheries, valuable recreational resources and important power generation, irrigation and municipal water infrastructure. May 24-30, 2020 has been declared AIS Awareness Week in Saskatchewan. SARM participates on the provincial AIS Task Force that has a focus on the prevention, introduction and spread of AIS in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has eight mobile watercraft decontamination units to support its AIS inspection and decontamination program. Two units will be set up at fixed points along the Manitoba border, three along the U.S. border, and the rest placed strategically throughout the province.

More information about aquatic invasive species can be found at www.saskatchewan.ca/invasive-species.

Transport Canada – Info Session *Rail Safety Improvement Program (RSIP)* and the *Grade Crossings Regulations (GCR)*

Transport Canada has provided [information](#) and is hosting a WebEx information session on the RSIP and GCR:

- English session on June 23rd from 14:30 to 16:00 (EST)
- French session on June 25th from 10:30 to 12:00 (EST)

The information sessions will share information with road authorities on some of the key points to consider when applying for funding under the Rail Safety *Safety Grade Crossings Regulations (GCR)* that will be required by November 28, 2021.

To register or express interest to one of the sessions please the following address Parvina.Ramsahok@tc.gc.ca. Attendance is on a first come first served basis and with a maximum of 40 participants per session.

In the meantime, if you have any questions on the Rail Safety Improvement Program, please e-mail tc.rsipitr-pasfitr.tc@tc.gc.ca.

Question of the Week

In the last two years, has your RM experienced long wait times or delays with ISC processing RM roadway plans?

Yes

No