



Saskatchewan Association  
of Rural Municipalities

SARM represents its membership of rural municipal government in Saskatchewan and is the principal advocate in representing them before all levels of senior government.

## SPECIES AT RISK ACT

The Species at Risk Act (SARA) creates unintended consequences, including acting as an impediment to economic development, especially in the agriculture sector.

- SARM agrees that unfavourable weather conditions can negatively affect a species and its population. However, we ask that this is not merely referenced as climate change but rather as weather occurrences or weather conditions when referenced in its legislation and throughout consultation process.
- A multitude of activities necessary for an agriculture producer’s livelihood and those required by a municipality may inadvertently result in incidental take of species at risk that, in some cases, a producer or municipality may not even be aware of.
- When SARA proposes the addition of terrestrial species that make their homes on either crop lands or pasture lands it often results in agricultural producers and municipalities having to modify their current practices to ensure habitat is maintained to house the species, which generally includes setting aside lands.
- Most producers and municipalities are willing to help preserve species at risk, where these are identified, but dedicating land to habitat comes is an opportunity cost; i.e. preserved land will not generate revenue, infrastructure may need replacement or less economical projects may need to be undertaken, and land taxes must still be paid.
- While there is currently a provision in SARA providing for compensation, it is only offered under extraordinary circumstances.

**SARM believes that the federal government can mitigate the negative effects of SARA with changes to the current legislation and regulations. Therefore, SARM recommends that the Federal Government make amendments to ensure that:**

1. A comprehensive cost/benefit analysis is conducted when adding new species to the listed wildlife species. Similarly, ensuring the legal and financial implications for agriculture producers and health and safety implications for rural residents are seriously considered.
2. Normal – day to day - agriculture activities (to be defined in regulation) and maintenance (to be defined in regulation) of municipal infrastructure be made a permanent exemption to SARA to ensure neither party is legally liable for inadvertent incidental take.
3. Agriculture producers, in circumstances where they enter into an agreement with government to maintain the species at risk habitat, they do so in exchange for compensation that is automatically provided and based on lost opportunity costs.

The Voice of Rural Saskatchewan | [sarm.ca](http://sarm.ca)



Baird's sparrow



Buffalograss



Buff-breasted sandpiper



Chimney swift



Evening Grosbeak



Greenish White Grasshopper



Western Grebe



Yellow Banded Bumble Bee