



SARM

Advocacy Team

Who we are?

- Brian Rakochy, Director, Advocacy and Communications
- Alicia Bay, Manager of Advocacy
- Deanna Nichols, Policy Analyst
- Kaylee Dodds, Policy Analyst
- Christine Breitkreuz, Policy Administrator

What we do?

We are responsible for the oversight of all research, analysis, and the development and preparation of related documents and proposals. We evaluate the effectiveness of existing government policies and programs and draft policy related correspondence, as well as attend meetings as required, while supporting the Board and the Executive Director.

Duties and Roles on the Team

Brian Rakochy, Director of Advocacy Communications

- Provides strategic leadership for SARM's advocacy, policy, research, and communications
- Oversees and collaborates with communications and advocacy teams
- Leads media relations, public engagement, and member communications
- Guides policy analysis, advocacy, and research; evaluates government policies and programs
- Represents SARM at key meetings and supports the Board and Executive Director with expert advice



Duties and Roles on the Team

Alicia Bay, Manager of Advocacy



- Oversees all resolutions, research, analysis, and development of related documents and proposals
- Evaluates the effectiveness of existing government policies and programs
- Designs and implements SARM's advocacy plan
- Attends meetings as required
- Supports the Board and Executive Director

Duties and Roles on the Team

Deanna Nichols (MPA Candidate), Policy Analyst

- Researches municipal, agricultural, and environmental issues
- Monitors and reports on SARM's priority policy topics
- Evaluates the effectiveness of government policies and programs
- Drafts policy-related correspondence and briefing material
- Recommends and coordinates policy actions and responses
- Attends meetings as required



Duties and Roles on the Team

Kaylee Dodds (M.Sc. Candidate), Policy Analyst



- Undertakes issues related to Agriculture through research on municipal, agricultural, and environmental issues
- Evaluates existing government policies and programs
- Drafts policy-related correspondence and briefing material
- Attends meetings as required

Duties and Roles on the Team

Christine Breitkreuz, Policy Administrator

- Assists with the administration of advocacy, policy, and research efforts
- Supports a wide range of organizational issues
- Brings valuable expertise as a former municipal administrator
- Enhances the organization's capacity to address municipal governance and administrative matters



POLICY ISSUES UPDATE



Treaty Land Entitlement

- Met with concerned RMs actively working on TLE
- Advocated federally and provincially for fair compensation
- Manage Tax Loss Compensation Trust Fund for RMs
- Focus on protecting RM revenues and fund sustainability
- Promote cooperation among governments, First Nations, and RMs



Communities in Transition

- CIT Fund Gaps:
 - Current CIT funding often inadequate for RM costs
 - RMs inherit infrastructure deficits and deferred maintenance
- Fair Funding Advocacy:
 - Push for urban municipalities to contribute to CIT or create a dedicated provincial fund
 - Recommend increased grants based on actual infrastructure audits
- Policy & Legislative Change:
 - Annual CIT Fund reviews to reflect real costs and inflation
 - Require comprehensive, sustainable dissolution plans
- Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Collaborate with province, urban municipalities
 - Raise public awareness about RM financial impacts

Municipality Act

- Been going through the consultation process for a year now. Have several submissions on behalf of RM's.
- Ministry of GR is close to having final draft of legislation. Details in regulations will be key to a lot of the Act.
- Boundary dispute cooling-off: 3 years
- Councillors training, procedural fairness

Continued Advocacy:

- Update 293 exemptions
- Equal sub-classing
- Online notice for all Acts

Oil & Gas Tax Arrears

- Municipalities can garnish all revenue streams from oil/gas companies in arrears, including sites in other RMs.
- Administrators may request and use information from any source to enforce tax arrears collection.
- Notice of arrears is deemed served 10 days after sending—no proof of receipt needed.
- Notice must specify which wells, battery sites, or pipelines are in arrears.
- Municipalities can add their collection costs to the tax arrears total.
- Advocacy priorities:
 - Enable tax arrears collection for abandoned sites.
 - Ensure up-to-date, accurate information from the Ministry of Energy and Resources.
 - Add the collection process to the *Tax Enforcement Act*.

CO² Resolution Update

- Passed resolution 5-24A: Naturally occurring CO₂ is not a pollutant
- Oppose policies targeting natural CO₂ and “net zero” agreements
- Advocate for Saskatchewan’s removal from national/international net zero commitments
- Support Saskatchewan’s move to eliminate industrial carbon levy
- Promote practical, made-in-Saskatchewan environmental solutions
- Ongoing dialogue with federal government on carbon offset protocols
- Advocate for recognition of SK farmers’ sustainable practices in national policy

ADVOCACY WORK UPDATE



Ottawa Lobbyist Trip 2024

- 21 meetings with federal ministers, MPs, senators, and officials
- **Advocated on:**
 - Opposition to carbon tax on natural gas for rural use
 - Federal funding for the Lake Diefenbaker Expansion Project
 - Broadband access
 - Agricultural support programs improvements
 - Firearm legislation, healthcare, policing, food security
 - Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) – fair compensation for RM tax losses
- Emphasized the need for federal-provincial cooperation & clear communication
- **Goal:** Protect RM revenues, secure funding, and support rural growth

Previous Advocacy to Date

- 26 Consultations in 2025 so far
- 2024 Resolutions:
 - 14 Active Midterm Resolutions
 - 23 Active Annual Resolutions
- 5-year Active Resolutions: 182
- Rail Strike
- Mail Strike

- Active Agriculture Advocacy:
 - Canola Tariffs
 - Tuberculosis Compensation
 - Weight Restrictions

Changes to SARM Member Communications

- **Rural Councillor Magazine**
 - Published quarterly: March (spring), June (summer), September (fall), & November (winter)
 - Changes were made to the content, layout, and design to improve readability and create a more effective communication medium for relevant information relating to rural Saskatchewan.
- **Rural Sheaf and Rural Dart Digital Newsletters**
 - Changes were made to the format and content of the Rural Dart (weekly) and Rural Sheaf (monthly) newsletters to assist in highlighting SARM departmental activities as well as timely resources that meet the needs of our member municipalities.

Questions

We look forward to any questions during the breakout sessions.