



*104th Annual SUMA Convention
February 1 – 4, 2009
TCU Place
Saskatoon, SK*

Adopted Resolutions

2009 SUMA Convention Resolutions

1. Revenue Sharing for Urban Municipalities

SUMA Board of Directors

Whereas urban municipalities in Saskatchewan have been lobbying for years to secure a predictable, long term revenue sharing program; and

Whereas SUMA, through the MSSP process, has been working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for the past two years to develop a revenue sharing program based upon an analysis of shared provincial interests in municipal services;

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA strongly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to implement the predictable, long term revenue sharing program proposed by the Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (MSSP) process.

2. Made in Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program

SUMA Board of Directors

Whereas it is widely acknowledged that there exists a significant municipal infrastructure deficit in Saskatchewan; and

Whereas the federal infrastructure programs that have been in place have not met the needs of all urban municipalities; and

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA urge the Province of Saskatchewan to implement a long term infrastructure program for Saskatchewan's urban municipalities

3. Stricter rules for Abandoned Hydro-Carbon Sites

City of Prince Albert

Whereas there are numerous abandoned hydro-carbon sites throughout the Province that remain as idle, unproductive land; and

Whereas contamination concerns regarding abandoned hydro-carbon sites need to be addressed; and

Whereas the value of property in the vicinity of abandoned hydro-carbon sites has been adversely affected; and

Whereas there is a need for stricter environmental guidelines requiring the owners of abandoned hydro-carbon sites to resolve any contamination issues,

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which would allow for the properties to be sold for other uses and become productive taxable generating land;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Saskatchewan to enhance The Environmental Management Protection Act and Regulations to require the owners of abandoned hydro-carbon sites in the Province to:

1. Remediate any contamination issues that are outstanding on abandoned sites in all urban municipalities.
2. To explore ways to hold the property owners and their principals accountable for failing to comply.

4. Changes to the Application of Environmental Levies on Tires

Town of La Ronge

Whereas a provision exists under current regulations to charge an environmental fee on tires purchased from retail suppliers along with a charge of similar fees for the disposal of tires at Saskatchewan landfills; and,

Whereas regulations also require that monthly reporting and submission of these fees be provided to the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Association resulting in possible over reporting of tires and over-remittance of said fees; and,

Whereas if the general population is charged at the point of sale and at the point of disposal of tires, the potential for illegal dumping may exist in order to avoid additional fees;

Therefore be it resolved, that SUMA lobby the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment and the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation to review their current tire recycling fee collection system to ensure that individuals are not being charged twice and to explore the option of removing the fee being charged for disposal at landfill sites.

Background (Supplied by the Town of LaRonge)

In discussions held regarding the current environmentally regulated levies that exist when tires are purchased from a retail supplier as well as the environmental fees associated with the disposal of tires within Saskatchewan landfills, it has been discovered that circumstances may exist whereby an individual who purchases tires from a supplier, choosing to install them on their own, can be charged a levy twice – once when the tires are purchased and then again when they dispose of their old tires at Saskatchewan landfills. It would seem that this would be considered an unfair practice and would result in inaccurate reporting to the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Association, an over-remittance of fees to this Company, and leave the potential open for illegal dumping of tires in order to avoid the second fee at the landfill.

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5. Moratorium on the Closure of Waste Disposal Grounds

Town of Mossbank

Whereas Section 7(5) of *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations*, states that “The minister may impose any terms and conditions on a permit: (a) at the time the permit is issued; or (b) at any time after the permit is issued; and may amend, vary, revoke or replace those terms and conditions. No person to whom a permit is issued pursuant to this section shall fail to comply with the terms and conditions of the permit.”

Whereas this section of *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* is one that gives the Ministry of Environment and its agents the power to impose any terms and conditions deemed necessary in order to close all the waste disposal grounds in all the smaller urban centres thereby forcing the centralization of these essential services to the larger urban centres; and

Whereas the officers of the Ministry of Environment are not required to impose the same terms and conditions on all the permits and are consistently amending terms and conditions, at their discretion, thereby forcing these closures to occur due to the prohibitive costs incurred as a result of the municipality’s efforts to comply. This forced closure removes another essential service from these communities which is detrimental to their growth; and

Whereas the environment officers are recommending that the refuse be taken to the larger urban centres or have companies like Waste Management hired, which puts a financial strain on all municipalities;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the provincial Ministry of Environment to initiate a review of the terms and conditions being applied on all operating permits.

6. Agency to Assist Municipalities in Securing Markets for Recyclable Material

Town of Unity

Whereas the Provincial and Federal levels of government are encouraging “Green Initiatives”; and

Whereas the population of Saskatchewan and Canada are seeking more effective and long term recycling programs;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association lobby the provincial government to develop a central marketing agency to assist municipalities to access consistent and viable markets for recyclables.

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Background (Supplied by the Town of Unity)

The constant market changes in the recycling industry are becoming daily occurrences. Commodity price markets are inconsistent and costly to access. To provide long term options for recycling programs, a sustainable market or markets must be developed.

7. Increase Funding to Assist Regional Recycling Programs

Village of Maryfield / Town of Kipling / Town of Grenfell / Town of Carlyle / Village of Creelman
Village of Kenosee Lake and the Village of Tantallon.

Whereas most urban centres either operate, or belong to Regional Authorities that operate a solid waste collection and disposal service, as well as a recycle program; and

Whereas the twelve or more Regional Authorities operate a solid waste collection and disposal service as well as a recycling program; and

Whereas the cost of transporting the recycled material to a multi-material recycling facility far exceeds the salvage value received for the materials; and

Whereas the demand for cardboard and newsprint has plummeted as the global financial crisis unfolds; and

Whereas buyers of fibre material advise that production in mills has slowed and the inventory is high; and

Whereas the permit to operate a Sanitary Landfill contains regulations that, because of the cost, cause a number of Regional Authorities to consider discontinuing their recycling program in order to economically sustain a sound solid waste collection and disposal service; and

Whereas the Ministry of Environment has in the past provided some funding to assist Regional Authorities with recycling;

Therefore be it resolved that the Ministry of Environment be asked to provide all centres offering recycling services, including Regional Waste Management Authorities, with substantially more funding in order for the interested parties to be able to continue to provide a sustainable method of recycling for the people of our province, thereby reducing waste at our landfills.

8. Environmental Deposits on Plastic Milk Jugs

Town of LaFleche

Whereas space at most municipal landfills is at a premium; and

Whereas a refundable deposit paid on plastic milk containers that can be recycled increases the chance they are returned; and

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Whereas persons not willing or unable to pay the deposit on plastic milk jugs can still purchase milk in cardboard containers which breakdown faster in the landfill with the least environmental impact;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association lobby the provincial government to have refundable environmental deposits placed on all plastic milk containers.

Background:

Though plastic milk containers can be returned to SARCAN many still end up in the landfill as there is no incentive to return them. We appreciate that milk is a staple food item; however, it can be purchased in a container that has less of an environmental impact when, instead of being recycled, it's taken to a nuisance ground. Milk purchased in the plastic containers, as opposed to cardboard, is a convenience to the user more than anything, thus, we feel it is reasonable that these containers carry an environmental charge.

9. Impose Deposit on all Plastic Containers

Town of LaFleche

Whereas space at most municipal landfills is at a premium; and

Whereas when a refundable deposit is paid on an item it increases the chance the item is returned and recycled or reused;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association lobby the provincial government to have refundable environmental deposits placed on all plastic containers, such as but not limited to, chemical and herbicide jugs, pesticide pails, grain storage bags, etc.

Background:

Chemicals used for agriculture such as, but not limited to, pesticides, herbicides, rodent poisons, etc. come in large plastic pails or jugs. Though the chemical jugs can be returned, and many are, to the dealer there is no incentive to ensure that is happening. Those not returned often end up in the landfill or burned on site. This kind of "packaging" problem is not limited to the agricultural sector. Many industries use large plastic pails that could certainly be recycled and/or even reused. In addition to the pails and jugs, we are now seeing large heavy plastic "grain storage bags" in the fields. The purpose of these bags is to provide temporary storage for grain, as opposed to bins. The "bags" are not reusable. This method of short-term grain storage for farmers is a real "long term problem" for municipalities if these storage bags start showing up in our landfills.

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10. Funding for Decommissioning of Unused Water Wells

Town of Sturgis

Whereas ground water is an important water source for a majority of residents of Rural and Urban Municipalities in Saskatchewan; and

Whereas old and abandoned wells are direct entry source for contamination of ground water; and

Whereas all Source Water Protection Plans in Saskatchewan have addressed ground water protection as a key action in their plans; and

Whereas these watershed plans have stated that Environmental Farm Planning is an important process to address key actions within their watersheds; and

Whereas the current funding for well decommissioning under the Farm Stewardship Program is only at 50 per cent funding; and

Whereas there is a poor uptake of the well decommissioning Best Management Practice by land owners and more monetary incentive may be needed; and

Whereas protecting ground water which is an important natural resource for the people of Saskatchewan, is vitally important;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the provincial and/or federal governments to fund 100 per cent the decommissioning of unused water wells, including well head protection, for existing wells.

11. Exempt Recreation Facilities from further Power and Energy Rate Increases

City of Melville

Whereas SaskPower and SaskEnergy utility rate charges continue to increase in the Province with local governments having no control over such rate increases; and

Whereas public recreation facilities such as arenas, curling rinks, swimming pools, etc., provide recreation opportunities for users of all ages; and

Whereas utility rate charges account for a significant portion of the operating costs of these facilities which result in an increase in user fees and a potential decrease in users;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association request that SaskPower and SaskEnergy exempt all recreation facilities from further utility rate increases.

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Background (Provided by the City of Melville)

Many user groups, as well as the City as the owner of recreation facilities, are having a difficult time maintaining a balanced budget due to high utility costs while keeping user fees at a reasonable level. Utility rates increase year after year and, in turn, our facility user fees must increase as well. We currently subsidize some of our recreation facilities in excess of 60 per cent. Further increases in user fees will place an additional financial burden on those who utilize these facilities. The main purpose of these facilities is to provide recreational opportunities for all people, young and old. We do not wish to deter patrons of the facilities due to continued increases in user fees. We must also give consideration to the amount of tax dollars we use to offset these increases.

Exempting recreation facilities from further rate increases would allow us to maintain acceptable user fees and also allow patrons of these facilities to continue to use them for the benefit of their health as well as an opportunity for social networking. This would be a direct benefit to every user of a recreation facility in this Province.

12. Equitable Funding for Policing

City of Estevan

Whereas funding provided for policing in Canada is fundamentally flawed as municipalities with RCMP detachments pay either 70 per cent or 90 per cent of the costs; and

Whereas municipalities that have municipal forces pay 100 per cent of the costs of policing with some funding from various programs; and

Whereas the subsidy provided by the federal government is in recognition of the amount of time RCMP officers spend on enforcing federal laws while on municipal duty; and

Whereas municipal police officers spend a corresponding amount of time enforcing federal laws; and

Whereas the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has completed a Report on the Policing Roles, Responsibilities and Resources in Canada in May, 2008;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association encourage the Government of Saskatchewan to review the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Report and request funding from the Federal Government for municipal police forces in Saskatchewan to correct this flawed funding system.

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13. Provincial Emergency Services Communication System

Town of St. Walburg

Whereas the development and possible implementation of the province-wide radio system has extensive costs associated with it; and

Whereas the extensive costs would not be feasible for a municipality to take on without extra funding;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association encourage the provincial governments to provide additional funding to municipalities for the provincial emergency services communication system.

14. Establishment of Classes and Sub- Classes within “The Municipalities Act”

Town of Big River /Town of St. Walburg

Whereas The Municipalities Act has no provision for Councils to establish classes and sub classes of property for the purpose of establishing tax rates; and

Whereas there are many abandoned sites within the boundaries of municipalities owned by oil/chemical companies that generate municipalities minimal tax revenue;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the provincial government to make an amendment to The Municipalities Act 284 to provide for the establishment of classes and sub classes of property for the purpose of establishing tax rates in the same manner as provided for in The Cities Act 254.

Background (Supplied by Towns of Big River and St. Walburg)

Small urban municipalities continue to have vacant industrial, commercial and residential properties that have been decommissioned by oil/chemical companies. These lands take up valuable space within the municipal boundaries and limit the amount of potential revenues to towns and villages. There is very little incentive for the owners of these properties to do anything positive as they are taxed at minimum and cost to upkeep is very little.

If legislation provided smaller urban municipalities the ability to establish classes and sub-classes of property, they would have opportunity to establish tax rates for those specific properties and perhaps provide incentive for the oil/chemical companies to become active in making the lands productive.

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15. Program to Encourage Construction of Affordable Accommodations

City of Estevan

Whereas Saskatchewan is experiencing growth and prosperity and is a “have” Province; and

Whereas many Communities in Saskatchewan have less than 1 per cent rental vacancy rates and few residences for sale; and

Whereas costs of construction are such that rental rates on new apartment buildings must be in excess of \$ 1,000 per month and employees earning \$ 10 to \$ 15 per hour cannot afford to spend a majority of their earnings on accommodation; and

Whereas the lack of affordable accommodation is limiting growth as there are 10,000 jobs available, but there is no place for these people to live; and

Whereas municipalities have limited resources and funding available to assist to address this issue; and

Whereas the Government of Saskatchewan receives increased revenue from a growing economy and has the responsibility for housing;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Saskatchewan to develop a program that would provide incentives to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation or private developers for the purpose of the construction of new affordable rental units.

Background (supplied by the City of Estevan)

In March 2008, the City of Estevan offered a full four year property tax exemption and has had regular contact with developers urging the construction of apartments. In July 2008, the city placed a moratorium on condominium conversions in an effort to keep the dwindling supply of rental accommodation static. We have been in regular contact with Saskatchewan Housing and are working with three developers for apartment building construction.

Developers have advised that with construction costs earlier in 2008 any rental rates on new apartment buildings would have to be in excess of \$ 1,000 per month per door. This is certainly not affordable for lower income singles and families. In December 2008, CMHC advised that the rental rate in Estevan was at 0 per cent

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17. Fund Education through Sales or Income Tax

District of Katepwa

Whereas Saskatchewan residents are required to pay for education on their property tax; and

Whereas the current mill rate for school taxes is based on assessed value on the replacement value of the property; and

Whereas the current market and replacement values have risen drastically; and

Whereas the provincial government ceased funding education by way of the provincial sales tax and instead chose to fund education through the property tax system;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to move education costs back to either sales or income tax.

18. Effective Federal Infrastructure Program

SUMA Board of Directors

Whereas the federal government's recent budget contained substantial infrastructure funding for municipalities as part of their economic stimulus package; and

Whereas this new infrastructure funding will be distributed through an application-based program that will require cost-sharing with municipalities; and

Whereas an application-based infrastructure program is a barrier to any infrastructure money flowing to municipalities this year; and

Whereas municipalities have yet to receive any funding from the application based Building Canada Fund since its announcement in 2006, and

Whereas Saskatchewan municipalities have set their priorities and are prepared with shovel-ready projects;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the federal government to reconsider the criteria for infrastructure programs such that funds be distributed on a per capita basis not on an application basis ensuring that funds flow to shovel-ready projects in time for the 2009 construction season.

Be it further resolved that the SUMA Board of Directors meet with Saskatchewan's government Members of Parliament to push for a more effective federal infrastructure program.