
SUMA Position Statement

In anticipation of the Ministry of Environment's development of a Solid Waste Management Strategy, SUMA conducted research on solid waste management and implications of increased landfill standards, and collected member input. Based on this research and member input, SUMA calls on the provincial government to:

- closely consult urban municipalities on regulatory changes;
- match increased standards with provincial support;
- support regionalization rather than imposing it; and
- prioritize waste reduction and diversion.

Key Messages

- Urban municipalities have been operating landfills in an uncertain regulatory environment for some time. They should be consulted on changes. Once changes are implemented, they need to be consistently applied, supported with resources and information, and continually improved through collaboration.
- New standards or closing landfills involve significant cost. Setting unrealistic standards will result in failure. Municipalities need financial and technical support from the province, especially when it comes to decommissioning landfills.
- Urban municipalities support the province providing guidance and support to municipalities willing to regionalize. Provincial leadership through promotion and incentives could increase interest and participation in regionalization.
- SUMA members strongly support waste reduction and diversion. Increasing access to recycling has helped increase waste diversion, but the response to complex waste disposal issues needs further work.

Current Status

- SUMA adopted the Urban Solid Waste Management Policy on June 23, 2017.
- SUMA responded to the provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy consultation with a report based on member input and research.

Background

Urban municipalities have been operating landfills in an uncertain regulatory environment for a number of years. Guidance on standards has been lacking, and regulations have been unchanged since 1986. Our members do not want changes to hinder their ability to provide solid waste services to residents, businesses, and visitors.

In 2015, SUMA commissioned a Landfill Research Project to quantify the province-wide cost of meeting the standards in the draft landfill chapter of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code. The research estimates the cost would be approximately \$56.9 million over 20 years, with most of the expenses incurred in the first years.

SUMA has also gathered input from members through a solid waste management survey, in written submissions, and through discussion at meetings, such as Regional Meetings, Town and Village Sector

Meetings, at conventions, and City Mayors' Caucus meetings. Members also provided SUMA with resolutions at conventions, including:

- financial and technical assistance to help municipalities decommission landfills (2016, Village of Neville);
- disposal of demolition materials (2014, Town of Cabri);
- changes in provincial regulations that add costs be met by increased provincial resources (2011, East Central Region and New North);
- funding for northern communities to comply with environmental standards (2010, New North); and
- twenty-two resolutions supporting recycling initiatives from 1997 to 2015, including four resolutions (2001, 2004, 2005, and 2011) supporting a provincial household hazardous waste program.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Environment started work on a provincial waste management chapter of the Environmental Code (code) in 2009. While a draft code chapter on landfills was prepared, it was not included in the first chapters of the code issued in 2014. The ministry has stated a provincial solid waste management strategy will be required before a landfill chapter, and began consultations on the strategy in March 2017.

Certain guiding principles emerged from member input, which informed this policy:

- **Leadership means consultation to identify goals.**
Saskatchewan needs a made-in-Saskatchewan strategy. Our history, governance, geography, and population density make us unique.
- **Goals must be collaboratively implemented in a timely and consistent way.**
Once identified, goals need to be supported by provincial leadership. Throughout implementation, the province should work with urban municipalities to identify challenges and continually improve processes.
- **Make the best decision the easiest decision to make.**
Change does not always mean costs, so low- or no-cost changes should be a priority. For changes involving costs, communication, supports, funding, and resources can help ensure success.

Statistics Canada released 2014 numbers for waste disposal and diversion in Saskatchewan in September 2016 and March 2017. Waste disposal per capita numbers were down 4.9 per cent from 2012 to 839 kilogram per individual and waste diversion numbers increased 8 per cent to 155 kilograms per individual. The 4.9 per cent decrease in disposal from 2012 to 2014 was the most significant decline in Canada and Saskatchewan had the second highest increase in diversion.

Contacts

Staff Contact: Steven Dribnenki sdribnenki@suma.org 306-525-4389