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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUMA Renews Call for Meaningful Consultation as Bill 64 Becomes Law

Today, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) renewed its call for meaningful consultation with the provincial government, following the passage of Bill 64, An Act to amend *The Power Corporation Act* and *The SaskEnergy Act*.

With the proclamation of Bill 64 today, the provincial government has taken \$33 million in annual funding from 109 Saskatchewan hometowns, beginning in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

This has been a difficult time for hometowns. They've been put in a very tight spot and have to make tough decisions: hike property taxes, cut services or staff, or even defer vital infrastructure projects.

SUMA is thankful that the provincial government removed Section 6 from the bill in committee – the contentious section that would have denied local governments the ability to defend legal agreements, or be compensated for this loss of revenue. We are currently in the process of consulting with legal counsel to reassess our options on this matter.

SUMA believes the provincial government's lack of consultation on this decision affecting our hometowns simply did not work. The provincial government has promised to re-engage with us on the future of libraries, and we need a return to an open dialogue between both levels of government on municipal financing, from the ability for hometowns to generate own-source revenue to the future of municipal revenue sharing.

SUMA has more than 440 members across the province, in every provincial constituency. These hometowns are the engines of economic growth, vital to the future of Saskatchewan. We must be at the table to discuss the issues facing our cities, towns, villages, resort villages, and northern municipalities.

We look forward to participating in meaningful consultation on library funding, and on all other aspects of the provincial budget and operations that affect our members.