



## **2007 AUMA Policy Statement on Environment and Sustainability**

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### **Introduction**

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) provides value and leadership in advocating local government interests. The Environment and Sustainability Standing Policy Committee works to identify and recommend advocacy responses to areas of municipal interest related to water, energy, air, land use planning, waste management and municipal sustainability.

The AUMA Policy Statement on Environment and Sustainability is AUMA's position on environment and sustainability issues, as compiled from member resolutions adopted at the 2006 AUMA Annual Convention (Annex 1).

### **Statement of Principles**

**AUMA Guiding Principle 7: Responsible stewardship of our ecological systems is essential to the economic viability, quality of life, and sustainability of our community.**

As responsible municipal stewards the need to understand the environment is essential, as it is the foundation for a sustainable economy, and its social and cultural networks. The environment must be proactively managed, as it impacts our viability and social fabric.

This guiding principle permits municipalities to be flexible and responsive to individual circumstances, supporting the development of local strategies without restricting autonomy. To achieve results we must recognize and define our position on the environment. We need to think globally and act locally. Integrity, which reflects on intrinsic values and beliefs, is essential to responsible environmental stewardship.

### **Environment and Sustainability Principles for Policy Development**

The AUMA clarifies its Environment and Sustainability Principles for Policy Development into five broad categories: water, energy, air, land use planning, waste management and municipal sustainability planning. Under each category, a general policy statement and principles is followed by more specific statements, and finally a list of any pertinent supporting resolution action items adopted at AUMA's 2006 Convention.

The Environment and Sustainability Committee will make advocacy recommendations to the AUMA Board of Directors based on these broad categories and principles, and on specific resolutions from members. The Committee will recommend direct action or request coordinated action with the Government of Alberta, other relevant organizations, and member municipalities to address action items in each category.

## **Water**

Alberta's quality of life, and life itself, depends on having a healthy and sustainable water supply for the environment, for our communities and for our economic well-being. Safe and healthy drinking water is critical to the sustainability of communities. Improvements to technology or processes required to ensure the physical well-being of citizens must be supported by funding and resources from the legislating body.

With this in mind, the AUMA will:

- Advocate for active Municipal participation in decision-making regarding water management and use to protect this crucial natural resource for future generations;
- Continue to encourage conservation, re-use, and effective wastewater treatment as core policy and compliance roles for Alberta's municipalities; and
- Support innovative practices designed to handle water as a renewable resource.

## **Energy**

Energy is a key component of Alberta's economy, and communities are important in the continued innovation, responsible development, and efficient use of these resources.

With this in mind, the AUMA will:

- Work to ensure that the energy costs of public facilities do not impede access to healthy lifestyles for citizens of all ages and incomes;
- Continue advocating to lower regulated energy costs for communities and their citizens by intervening at EUB hearings;
- Support energy efficiency and conservation initiatives and the continued development of Alberta's renewable energy;
- Advocate for energy policy and utility agreements that will deliver efficiencies for municipal governments; and
- Engage the EUB in a dialogue with Alberta municipalities to establish effective procedures for their involvement in EUB Hearings that deal with resource extraction within or adjacent to their communities.

- Urge the Government of Alberta, through the Energy Minister, to encourage development and use of alternatively sourced electric generation through tax credits or other incentives that will make power generated from renewable sources competitive with power generated from traditional sources.

## **Air**

Air quality affects all Albertans, and practical solutions are needed to reduce the emission of air contaminants, greenhouse gases, and to address the risks of climate change.

With this in mind, the AUMA will:

- Continue working with Alberta Environment and agencies like the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) and Climate Change Central to develop strategies that monitor, improve, and protect air quality;
- Encourage Alberta municipalities to participate in the FCM's Partners for Climate Change Program (PCP) and to establish emission baselines and reduction targets for their communities;
- Pursue practical, economic, and proven practices that assist municipalities to reduce energy consumption and associated GHG and air pollutant emissions;
- Pursue provincial and federal government funding to allow Alberta municipalities to offset the costs of measures that are effective in reducing municipal energy use and emissions; and
- In cooperation with CASA, FCM, and others, support the development of training programs and technical exchanges for political leaders and key administrative staff to learn from the direct experience of municipalities in other jurisdictions.

## **Land Use Planning**

Effective land use planning is essential to the long-term viability and sustainability of Alberta. How we plan, grow, and manage land within municipal boundaries affects all municipal citizens and their regional neighbours.

With this in mind, the AUMA will:

- Monitor, consult, and advocate for programs relative to remediation and reuse of Brownfields and contaminated sites;
- Ensure fair and effective regulation of all businesses that store and handle petroleum and petrochemical products in Alberta;
- Promote provincial accountability for their responsibilities within urban boundaries; and
- Support responsible urban development planning and design in order to contribute to a reduction of the ecological footprint, and the overall sustainability of communities.

## **Waste Management**

Solid waste disposal and the methane emissions from new and existing landfills are significant and growing challenges for all Alberta municipalities. All communities can contribute to addressing and improving solid waste management so that Alberta is recognized as a world-class leader in solid waste management.

With this in mind, the AUMA will:

- Encourage responsible procurement and consumption practices by municipalities, other orders of government, and the private sector, with a focus on waste reduction and recycling;
- Advocate that new technologies and regulations supporting waste avoidance be given the utmost priority as they are most effective in reducing the volume of community waste streams;
- Support municipalities' participation in meeting provincial waste reduction targets as an effective means to reduce our ecological footprint, and recognize the need for provincial and federal financial and technology support in these efforts; and
- Promote green building and innovative approaches to waste avoidance, recycling, and re-use including: developing bio-diesel producing plants, drywall recycling, gasification, and lifecycle management.

## **2006 Convention Resolution: Recycling and Extended Product Stewardship**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta extend Alberta's product stewardship programs to include high volume municipal waste streams (i.e. packaging, cardboard, paper products) and that any funding derived from such programs be redirected to municipalities to sustain and expand local recycling programs.

## **2006 Convention Resolution: Environmental Building Standard for New Residential Housing**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Alberta Government to amend applicable building codes to the equivalency of Built Green Alberta standards for new homebuilders, to ensure the future reduction of energy, water, waste, greenhouses gases, and the health and wellness of new home occupants are met.

## **Municipal Sustainability Planning**

AUMA initiated a Municipal Sustainability Planning project in July 2005, and has built a substantial set of resources and tools that are used as a guide to sustainability planning for municipalities ([www.msp.auma.ca](http://www.msp.auma.ca)).

AUMA takes a broad view of sustainability, suggesting that a municipal government should plan for sustainability by investigating and developing actions, integrating the five dimensions of sustainability (culture, society, environment, economy and governance) to provide a comprehensive and long-term plan for sustainable communities.

As we continue with the Municipal Sustainability Planning initiative, AUMA will:

- Assist 5-6 pilot communities with the MSP process, and share the learnings from those pilot communities through the MSP website ([www.msp.auma.ca](http://www.msp.auma.ca))
- Maintain and add to the resources/tools on the MSP website ([www.msp.auma.ca](http://www.msp.auma.ca));
- Build partnerships with other governments and other organizations in encouraging and assisting municipal sustainability planning

## **ANNEX 1**

### **2006 ADOPTED MEMBER RESOLUTIONS – Environment and Sustainability**

#### **CATEGORY C.ii. ISSUE-BASED RESOLUTIONS – Roles, Responsibilities and Resources**

##### **RESOLUTION 2006.C.ii.16: Recycling and Extended Product Stewardship**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta extend Alberta's product stewardship programs to include high volume municipal waste streams (i.e. packaging, cardboard, paper products) and that any funding derived from such programs be redirected to municipalities to sustain and expand local recycling programs.

**2006 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

#### **ISSUE-BASED RESOLUTIONS – Results and Reactions** **Category C.v.**

##### **RESOLUTION 2006.C.v.1: Environmental Building Standard for New Residential Housing**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Alberta Government to amend applicable building codes to the equivalency of Built Green Alberta standards for new homebuilders, to ensure the future reduction of energy, water, waste, greenhouses gases, and the health and wellness of new home occupants are met.

**2006 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**