

## 2024 – MCC Policies for Debate

### List of New or Revised Policies

<b>Policy No.</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Nominating Chamber</b>
MBPR-NEW	Federal Government Proposed 30% Fertilizer Emissions Reduction	Brandon
MPPR-NEW	Manitoba Relies on International Students and Graduates in our Labour Force	Brandon
MBPR-001	Churchill & Northern Manitoba	Manitoba
MBPR-003	Manitoba Budget Planning	Manitoba
MBPR-025	Addressing Barriers to Indigenous Participation in the Economy	Manitoba
MBPR-029	Increasing Road Sign and Advertising across Manitoba	Manitoba
MBPR-030	Strengthening Labour Market Information (LMI) for Business Competitiveness	Manitoba
MBPR-039	Expand and Support the Early Childhood Education Workforce	Manitoba
MBPR-005	Promotion of Mineral Exploration – Mining as Positive Economic Engine for Manitoba	Snow Lake, Manitoba
MBPR-042	Rest Stops at Intervals along Manitoba Highways	Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson
MBPR-028	First Nations Urban Development Areas (FNUDA)	Brandon

### List of Policies for Renewal

<b>Policy No.</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Nominating Chamber</b>
MBPR-002	Core Municipal Infrastructure	Winnipeg
MBPR-040	Creating a Manitoba Post-Secondary Transfer Credit System	Brandon
MPBR-026	Connectivity for Rural Manitoba	Dauphin, Thompson, Snow Lake, Swan Valley, Flin Flon, The Pas

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## New or Revised Policy Text

### Federal Government Proposed 30% Fertilizer Emissions Reduction

#### ***Issue***

The Federal Government has announced its intention to reduce fertilizer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by the year 2030. Manitoba is a prairie province, and agriculture forms the cornerstone from which its economy is built.

Using the City of Brandon and the Brandon Chamber of Commerce as an example, over 350 Brandon businesses directly serve the agriculture market. Brandon also serves as a hub for Western Manitoba and relies greatly on the spending of agricultural producers in our businesses. One Chamber member alone employs over 250 at their Brandon location. In the past 5 years, they have undergone expansions and have announced investments of over 130 million within this facility. Many local businesses have been created to provide support roles to this company. Numerous agriculture input supply dealers are in Brandon with large investments in fertilizer supply sites and other businesses that offer supplies such as truck parts and repair, agriculture equipment, and fuel are in greater demand due to these companies.

With the large number of jobs, tax base and consumer spending at risk, the following concerns must be addressed before any reduction of emissions can be legislated:

1. A study by MNP in 2019 has suggested a drop in Manitoba yearly farm income of 1.58 billion by 2030 if this emission reduction is achieved by fertilizer reduction. The Discussion Document issued by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as part of this process suggests a cost of \$30/acre for wheat to use enhanced efficiency fertilizer. Based on 2022 wheat seed acres of 3.2 M, this would result in a loss of 96 M to Manitoba farmers.
2. Reducing nitrogen fertilizer will reduce crop production. Depending on the crop, nitrogen is required in a 0.8 -2 to 1 ratio to bushels produced. The Federal Government has set a target to increase agriculture exports from 55 Billion to 85 Billion in 2025.
3. Numerous caveats are included in the Federal Government Discussion Document. This paper indicates “significant uncertainties” and acknowledge that many of the recommended practices in the document are already in use.
4. In 2019 Canada had approximately 730 Megatonnes (Mt) of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Agriculture had approximately 73 Mt and synthetic fertilizers had approximately 12.75 Mt. Assuming a 30% reduction in fertilizer emissions, this would result in 3.825 Mt or 0.52 % of our country’s total emissions.
5. Fertility reduction and impact on food affordability. Fertilizer plays a critical and integral component in food production. As fertilizer production is reduced to meet federal government emissions reduction standards, food will become even more expensive for consumers, particularly for the most vulnerable consumers in society, and will lead to further increases in poverty among these marginalized populations.

Many industry and producer led initiatives over the last 20 years have greatly improved the efficiencies of fertilizer usage and reduced farm emissions. Zero till, 4R (right source, right rate, right time, right place), agronomic advice and soil testing have all improved production yields and fertilizer efficiency. Low-carbon agriculture, for example, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farm management practices. For Western Canadian farmers, this is an opportunity for recognition of their long-standing

sustainable practices, such as no-till farming, fuel-efficient equipment, and implementing practices to improve soil health (healthy soil is an important sink for carbon). However, there is also extra cost to farms because of carbon pricing. While direct farm use of gas and diesel is exempt from carbon tax, natural gas and propane used for drying grain and heating barns and fuel used in trucking farm products are not exempt. This significantly increases costs to the farm where no other alternatives currently exist.

Agriculture must produce more food, fibre, fuel to feed a growing population and meet the needs of a booming bioenergy market on the same amount of land, all while adopting sustainable production practices to mitigate climate change. And, as commodity and food prices increase globally, poorer nations will increasingly have to fight for their access to healthy, affordable food. The resulting pressure to ensure food security means governments around the world are taking steps to mitigate risk and assure greater food security. The need for a consistent, stable source of healthy, safe, affordable food places greater importance on Western Canadian agriculture, where over 80% of Canada's farmland resides.

Despite having one of the safest agricultural regulatory and food supply chains in the world, activist groups, recent lawsuits in the US, and questionable social media have increased pressure on the traditional crop input industry. Government programs such as the Fertilizer Emission Reduction Initiative place a shadow on growers' freedom to operate and ability to successfully grow food without restrictive regulation. Further regulation or incentives only increase the need for trusted professional advice to farm customers.

### ***Resolution***

#### **That the provincial government:**

- **Advocate on behalf of Manitoba's Agricultural Industry to fully research all impacts that implementing a 30% reduction of fertilizer emissions by 2030 may have on the province's economy;**
- **Engage in discussions with the Federal Government with regards to establishing deliverable metrics when assessing the success of this program;**
- **Evaluate what effect reducing fertilizer emissions by 30% will have on the global food market and what impact this will have on world food security; and**
- **Encourage the Federal Government to recognize that the adoption of *all* types of fertilizer efficient agriculture including (zero till, 4R, soil testing and low-carbon agriculture and farming) has made a significant effect on GHG emissions.**

*Submitted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, 2024*

## Manitoba Relies on International Students and Graduates in our Labour Force

### **Issue**

The federal government is putting a cap on the number of international students who will be allowed to study in Canada. This number of new visas for international students will be severely reduced, with an anticipated 35 per cent or more decrease from the nearly 560,000 issued in 2023. The federal government formula for distributing study permits to provinces and territories was initially presented as a per capita allocation. However, the formula remains unclear and seems to vary across the country. Notably, Manitoba expects to receive less than expected for a true per-capita allocation.

The potential consequences for Manitoba are difficult to overstate. The cap will have far-reaching effects on Canadian communities, given that international students play a pivotal role in bolstering the economy, contributing over \$22 billion a year to our country. Their contributions are vital in sustaining local labour markets, increasing diversity, and meeting the demands of high-growth sectors. The impact of the policy extends far beyond institutions, affecting businesses and communities.

International students impact our post-secondary programming in many positive ways, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences into the classroom to benefit all learners. International enrolment allows our university and colleges to introduce and expand programming geared towards Manitoba's labour market needs, address immigration and population goals of the province, and expand post-secondary access, and affordability, to domestic students.

In the 2023-24 academic year, 90% of first-year international students said that they are working, or plan to work, while studying. 84% of these students report they are working, or intend to work, 10 or more hours a week.

92% of international students who graduated in 2021-22 were employed within nine months of completing their program and 96% of them are working in Manitoba. The top industries that graduating international students are working in are:

- accommodation and food services;
- health care and social assistance;
- transportation and warehousing;
- retail trade; and
- construction

Having fewer international students studying in Manitoba will negatively affect our post-secondary institutions in numerous ways such as:

1. Maximizing Seats in Provincially-Funded Programs
  - Without ongoing strong international student enrolment, some provincially-funded certificates, diploma, and post-graduate programs are at a high risk of being cancelled due to low domestic enrolment.
2. Expanding Programs and More Seats for Domestic Students
  - International enrolment allows our universities and colleges to meet labour market needs of employers without additional government funding. In many program areas,

international enrolment drives seat expansion through supplementary, cost-recovery offerings (not funded by government) that then provide additional access for domestic students.

3. Introducing New Programs Geared Towards Labour Market
  - Manitoba's post-secondary institutions are able to incubate and introduce new cost-recovery programs (not funded by government) geared towards pressing labour market needs in Manitoba because of strong international student interest and enrolment.
4. Meeting Government Mandates in Health and Housing
  - Our provincial government has committed to hiring more healthcare professionals, a goal that will be hard to meet without international students training and staying in Manitoba.
  - The federal government has made a significant commitment to building new housing which will require international students to meet our labour demands in trades and apprenticeships.
5. Critical Source of Immigration to meet Labour Market Needs
  - International students currently make up just over half of all provincial nominees (56%); just under half of those students were trained in other provinces.

International students are a critical source for meeting Manitoba's labour market needs.

### ***Resolution***

**That the provincial government will:**

- **Advocate to the federal government for our fair share of international student visas and to recognize the unique position of Manitoba;**
- **Provide institutions with clear guidelines and rationale for which programs are exempt from the proposed cap;**
- **Work alongside the federal government to create a new stream of student and work visas for trades and apprenticeships that is outside the proposed cap; and,**
- **Offset international student revenue losses by increasing government funding to replace those lost earnings.**

*Submitted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, 2024*

## Churchill and Northern Manitoba (MBPR-001)

### ***Issue***

The Province of Manitoba has been presented with a visionary opportunity to see the North fulfill its immense potential especially in the areas of transportation and commerce, tourism and heritage, sustainable economic development, export, mining, and health care for the indigenous peoples.

The Port of Churchill is the Gateway to the Central Arctic, and its future is important to all of Canada. Part of this strategic direction would be to work on the enhancement of the Port and the surrounding areas and to look for innovative solutions and opportunities together with some collaborative partnerships.

In 2024, there are plans to send the first shipments of zinc concentrate through the Port of Churchill, demonstrating the progress and potential of this key trade infrastructure. However, more can be done to secure export markets for Manitoba goods and increase the output through the port.

Currently, Northern communities such as in Nunavut, rely on shipments through the Port of Montreal which can result in increased costs due to the extended route for logistics. Particularly for the Kivalliq region, there is additional potential for supply through the Port of Churchill.

Working in partnership, Indigenous communities and northern businesses will look to models that have been successful in other northern and remote regions of Canada and the world and will move forward on a new path toward the expansion of existing sectors and the development of new economy-building enterprises.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-001)***

**That the provincial government works with the Arctic Gateway Group and OneNorth to:**

- **Facilitate opportunities to build trade agreements, interprovincial/territorial partnerships, and support Northern and Manitoba industry exports.**

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*

*Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*

## Manitoba Budget Planning (MBPR-003)

### ***Issue***

Manitoba is forecast to have the highest debt to GDP ratio on record, reaching over 37% at the end of 2023-2024. Consequently, debt servicing costs have continued to rise, and now exceeds the majority of individual department annual budgets. For Manitoba to achieve future prosperity, investments must be focused to deliver the best value for a given budget.

GDP growth alone can be a misleading indicator, as population growth generally leads to increased output. However, labour productivity is a metric that tracks economic output per worker-hour which demonstrates how much value a worker can generate for their time. This is a key metric to track as it demonstrates whether the business and economic conditions allow for companies to generate products and services that are highly valued in an efficient manner. Growth of this metric leads to an increasing quality of life, key for the long-term prosperity of the province.

The provincial government should consider key indicators during budget deliberations, ensuring decisions positively influence the following economic indicators:

- Labour productivity or GDP per capita
- Debt indicators including:
  - Net debt to GDP
  - Debt servicing costs to GDP
- Labour force growth – public and private
- Average weekly wages
- Interprovincial migration
- Exports of goods and services
- Number of head offices in Manitoba
- Entrepreneurial intensity indicators including:
  - Business openings and closures
  - Number of high-growth firms

If the provincial government is focused on increasing Manitoba's economic opportunities and prosperity, these indicators will be positively influenced.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-003)***

**That the provincial government publish annual targets and results for economic indicators in the budget and annual reports to:**

- **Ensure Manitoba's labour productivity is growing and keeping pace with key partners;**
- **Ensure fiscally responsible spending that maintains a sustainable debt burden;**
- **Ensure Manitoba's annual labour force growth is nationally competitive;**
- **Ensure Manitoba's goods and services export growth is nationally competitive; and**
- **Ensure annual net-positive interprovincial migration.**

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*



## Addressing Barriers to Indigenous Participation in Canada's Economy (MBPR-025)

### **Issue**

The lack of clarity or progress regarding the government's approaches to many Indigenous issues – including the duty to consult and unresolved land claims – threatens the future socioeconomic well-being of communities across Manitoba while hindering meaningful discourse on the development of reconciliation and natural resource sector projects.

The duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities which may be adversely affected by resource development lies with both the Canadian and provincial governments, who are increasingly shifting that responsibility to resource sector businesses seeking to advance projects on or near Indigenous lands. However, the government's lack of clarity or direction on the extent of that approach has frequently created considerable challenges for all involved; in some cases, that lack of clarity has led to the stalling or outright halting of projects with potential economic and social benefits for the affected Indigenous communities, and Manitoba at large. Indeed, addressing the questions surrounding this process would also help to build unity between the Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

Canadian governments have a constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples when proposed developments have the potential to impact their constitutionally protected rights (e.g., land, hunting and fishing, etc.). There is confusion in the business community regarding its role in the duty to consult process, and lack of clarity regarding companies' responsibilities to Indigenous peoples has become more obscured in light of the government's commitments.

This lack of clarity can lead to the failure to pursue, delay or cancellation of private sector projects that have the potential to provide long-term economic and social benefits to Indigenous communities and all Manitobans including:

- education and training;
- employment;
- Indigenous business development;
- health care;
- housing; and
- the means to sustain cultural priorities including language, traditions, etc.

Our government leaders, both national and provincial — as the primary interlocutor between our Indigenous peoples and other constituencies — need to lead the way.

### **Unresolved Land Claims**

Also in need of immediate attention is the government's lack of progress in addressing unresolved land claims. The land claims process is a complex one, involving multiparty negotiations of complicated historical, property, legal, financial, and implementation issues, which are often further complicated by other concerns such as bureaucratic issues and a lack of resources or capacity. As a result, the process is often lengthy: reaching a final agreement can take from 5 to 20 years.

Indeed, since the federal government began negotiating modern treaties with Indigenous groups and provincial/territorial governments in 1973, 26 comprehensive land claims and three self-government

agreements have been signed. Numerous land claims negotiations are currently underway across Canada, with 80 comprehensive land claims under negotiation with the federal government.

This backlog of longstanding legal issues poses significant challenges for the natural resources sector and First Nations communities alike, creating considerable investment and operational uncertainties that inhibit meaningful progress. Resolving these issues is of benefit to all, as they allow for paving the way for productive dialogue on resource development, while also helping the communities themselves. Resolution and reconciliation with these communities are crucial, particularly in a time where they represent Canada's youngest and fastest-growing population.

### **Reconciliation**

Many non-Indigenous businesses are seeing opportunities in the commitment to a renewed relationship with our Indigenous peoples and believe they have a role to play in its accomplishment. Recommendation 92 of 2015's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report is a call-to-action for businesses to:

"... adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework ..."

This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
2. Ensure that Indigenous peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector and that Indigenous communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
3. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Article 19 of the Declaration states:

"States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their representative institutions to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adoption and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them."

Businesses are willing to do more in the interests of their projects moving forward. However, it is not clear to businesses what reconciliation means and what is required of them to participate in the reconciliation process, as well as the impact and outcomes they can expect as a result.

### **Resolution (MBPR-025)**

**That the provincial government builds relationships with the federal government that will:**

- **Develop a consistent, coordinated approach to Indigenous consultation and accommodation which clearly identifies Indigenous rights and responsibilities and the duties of the Crown and the**

role of industry as a stakeholder supporting the process; harmonizes provincial, territorial and federal processes; and reflects relevant factors such as new and existing obligations within established case law;

- Ensure sufficient resources are dedicated to communicating and implementing this approach across government, industry, and Indigenous communities;
- Accelerate the process of resolving land claims in a manner that reflects due financial prudence; and,
- Establish the framework and timelines for a process for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples that includes:
  - Examining international best practices;
  - Seeking the perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders including businesses and Indigenous communities to share ideas and provide greater clarity regarding:
    - The meaning of its commitment to “implement” the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
    - The scope of the “full review of laws, policies, and operational practices” and its intentions for amending current laws, including the meaning and potential implications of Free, Prior and Informed Consent; and,
    - Tools to be available to businesses and Indigenous communities to help both — as well as government — fulfill the obligations required of them, including guidelines for engagement to seek the level of cooperation and trust needed as a foundation for reconciliation.

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*



## Increasing Road Sign and Advertising across Manitoba (MBPR-029)

### ***Issue***

The future of the tourism industry is bright for Manitoba with the industry targeting \$3 billion in visitor spending by 2030. Government and industry have increased investment in tourism yielding results and growing visitation significantly for Manitoba residents during the pandemic. Given the significant amount of vehicle traffic that this generates, Manitoba is an outlier among provinces as it does not provide a mechanism to promote roadside essential services (fuel/electricity, food, and/or lodging).

The Manitoba Regional Tourism Network (MRTN), is a collaboration of the six rural Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) in Manitoba, and partially funded by the Province to develop and promote tourism experiences in conjunction with rural businesses, municipalities, and the industry. Through research and consumer feedback they have advocated for providing safe, clear directional signage that communicates and strategically promotes the attractions and services available in the regions would be a significant help to the industry and for local businesses.

In 2015, the Rosenort Chamber requested a highway “amenities sign” to help promote their community and businesses to the busy highway travelers on Highway 75, however this is still not allowed by provincial law. As a result, the community misses out on attracting those travellers who are driving by the community. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce has worked with Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) to develop a proposal for a new signage program, but this program has not been approved by the department.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-029)***

**That the provincial government revises the Advertising Sign Design and Locations Standards Policy to:**

- **Enable signs to provide accurate and adequate information for finding destinations, services, local festivals, events, and other regional attractions,**
- **Develop a guideline such that these signs are consistent and are easily recognizable by motorists; and,**
- **Ensure that motorist safety remains a priority.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*

## Strengthening Labour Market Information (LMI) for Business Competitiveness (MBPR-030)

### **Issue**

Labour Market information (LMI) is valuable information, especially reflecting the ever-changing modern labour market demands. LMI can give provide important context on how the economy is performing and provide comparison to other jurisdictions. Insufficient labour market information (LMI) limits effective funding, policy-making, program design and delivery, and results in suboptimal hiring decisions for businesses.

A primary concern for Manitoba business leaders is the lack of available local and occupational level LMI. There are significant gaps in information on job vacancies across the province. Currently, data can demonstrate when a province is experiencing shortages but not precisely where labour is needed within regions or which specific skills are in demand. In Don Drummond's 2014 report on LMI, he cites that one of the biggest challenges is that labour market survey results are often only available on a provincial basis and are aggregated into a small number of industries, masking dissimilarities between individual occupations.

It is essential for Manitoba to provide specific and local information. The more information gathered and available to individuals, the better career decisions they can make. The provincial government funded Economic Development Winnipeg to create the WorkInManitoba portal which is utilized primarily for immigration recruitment missions. However, there is a notable lack of breadth of opportunities as many employers are not on the platform. Additionally, the LMI collected through this portal is not publicly available. To increase the usefulness of this website, Manitoba might take inspiration from British Columbia and its WorkBC website; the site contains a list of job openings across the province, analysis of the provincial labour market, and the results of employment surveys among post-secondary education graduates (including information on where jobs are in demand).

BC also has a distinct strategy of partnerships and active networks across the province to improve coordination of LMI including a cross-ministry LMI roundtable committee bringing together various ministries involved in LMI. The work of this committee has allowed for strengthened provincial provision and dissemination of LMI.

Beyond a lack of internal collaboration in the province, there is insufficient intergovernmental coordination and sharing of information between the provincial and federal governments. The timeliness of data would be enhanced if provincial and federal governments were willing to extract LMI from the wealth of data already collected from Canadians for other purposes while ensuring the protection of private information. This includes evidence from income tax, employment insurance (EI) and social assistance purposes.

Provinces do not have access to postal codes and National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes for EI recipients. This type of information regarding which regions and occupations are experiencing changes in employment would allow Manitoba to build more responsive training programs.

The other key component is the buy-in from business to share and make their data available to develop a better sense of where the needs are. As it stands, the ability to get access to this information is simply not there. Whether it is a lack of trust from business or a lack of incentive to share the information, the infrastructure and information already exist, but we must determine who is doing it well so it can be replicated.

Labour market policies and programs also suffer from a lack of standard performance measures linked to employment outcomes. Based on existing metrics, it's difficult to evaluate program effectiveness. Collaboration between business and government is needed to establish a new framework to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of information and to strive to adopt a standard set of performance measures that can be applied to all future-funded employment services.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-030)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Works with business and education institutions to establish a new governance framework to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of LMI;**
  - **Creates a set of standard performance measures for program evaluation;**
- **Makes LMI easily accessible so that businesses can strategically identify students, market-ready individuals, and new immigrants to fill talent requirements;**
- **Ensures that LMI is utilized for target immigration recruitment through both federal and provincial immigration programs;**
- **Works with school boards to communicate education and local career paths for students, including forecasted demand by occupation; and,**
- **Enhances interprovincial collaboration on LMI and considers the establishment of a cross-ministry committee to improve coordination on LMI efforts.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*

## Expand and Support the Early Childhood Education Workforce (MBPR-039)

### **Issue**

Childcare must be considered critical infrastructure in Manitoba. An affordable, accessible, and high-quality early learning childcare framework is necessary to support workforce participation and economic growth. The Government of Manitoba committed to developing 23,000 new, regulated, not-for-profit childcare spaces for children under aged seven across the province by 2026. If these spaces cannot be staffed by qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), the physical infrastructure will not serve its purpose, and we cannot serve Manitoba's economy nor families.

According to the Manitoba Child Care Association, there is an estimated shortage of 1,000 ECEs in Manitoba, and approximately 35 per cent of the province's licensed child care facilities are operating with an exemption to their licenses due to inadequate staffing levels. This workforce shortage is a significant impediment to supporting parents as they re-enter the workforce after they've had a child. A supported ECE workforce is key to the province's ability to meet its expansion targets, to ensure quality provision, and a successful, sustainable system.

Women are essential to economic growth and fiscal sustainability. The OECD estimates that if women's labour force participation rate equalled men, [GDP would increase](#) by an average of 12% by 2030. According to the International Monetary Fund, if 150,000 educated stay-at-home mothers entered the workforce, [Canada's GDP](#) would be raised by 2%, resulting in an additional \$8 billion in income tax revenues.

Women's participation in the labour force is greatly enhanced by childcare availability, resulting in significant economic growth. In Quebec, the introduction of the early child care model resulted in an additional [70,000 mothers](#) in the labour force—an increase of 3.8% in women's employment. Quebec's GDP grew by 1.7% (\$5 billion) as a result. The tax-transfer returns to the federal and QC governments significantly exceed the cost, at 47% more than the net cost of the program. TD Economics notes several studies that show that every dollar invested in early childhood education returns between [\\$1.49 and \\$2.78 in benefits](#).

Parents have difficulty accessing child care in Manitoba for [several reasons](#), including affordability, a lack of care that fits parents' work or study schedules, and difficulty finding licensed care providers. The Early Learning and Child Care Transformation report prepared by KPMG for the Manitoba Department of Families found that Manitoban parents are [more likely to report difficulty](#) finding child care than the Canadian average. According to Statistics Canada, nearly one-third of Manitoba children have parents who reported [difficulty finding child care](#) in 2020.

Manitoba has made progress on childcare affordability, with Winnipeg seeing a greater than 47% reduction in fees for childcare of all ages, with infant care seeing a reduction of [nearly 67%](#). However, the availability and quality of childcare depend on child care facilities' ability to recruit and retain staff. StatsCan notes that the number of childcare workers in Manitoba has [fallen by 6% from 2016 to 2021](#). This can be partially attributed to the disparity in wages for the industry compared to other occupations. As of 2015 in Manitoba, childcare employment median income was [\\$22,900](#), which makes up less than 47% of the average of all other occupations, qualifying as low-income according to StatsCan. Despite the majority of ECEs having a university degree, this income level will continue to affect workforce availability and hamper any progress towards improved availability of childcare spaces.

***Resolution (MBPR-039)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Ensures that Manitoba has the necessary supply of trained Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to support the implementation of the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement by:**
  - **Expanding training options;**
  - **Improving access to ECE programs through financial support; and,**
  - **Ensuring ECEs are well-compensated with benefits and improved working conditions.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Policy Committee  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2024*



## Promotion of Mineral Exploration - Mining as a Positive Economic Engine for Manitoba (MBPR-005)

### ***Issue***

Mineral exploration is vital to a healthy and sustainable mineral resource industry and province. Growth in the industry has significant economic and social benefits such as job creation, local business opportunities, tax revenues, infrastructure improvements, and the potential to provide a more sustainable supply of the critical resources needed for the green economy.

The 2022 Fraser Institute report ranked Manitoba 14th out of 62 jurisdictions on the Investment Attractiveness Index. Manitoba's policy perception score has increased; its ranking improving from 53rd in 2019 to 24th in 2022. Manitoba is the 7th-ranked Canadian jurisdiction in policy perception. Three policy areas continue to hinder Manitoba's policy perception and investment attraction:

1. Uncertainty concerning disputed land claims (83 per cent of respondents cited this factor as a deterrent to investment, increasing from past surveys)
2. Protected areas (67 per cent of respondents)
3. Environmental regulations (50 per cent of respondents)

Additionally, a significant number of Manitoba-based companies cited concerns regarding the Province of Manitoba's permitting process. Of these respondents, 25% claimed that it took longer than 24 months to receive exploration permits, the highest percentage among Canadian jurisdictions. Additionally, respondents noted that permitting approval met established timelines less than half of the time; again, this was the lowest percentage of time for meeting deadlines in Canada.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-005)***

**That the provincial government takes a leadership role in advancing Manitoba as a top jurisdiction in the world for mineral exploration and development investment by:**

- **Making significant improvements in the following policy areas:**
  - **Disputed land claims;**
  - **Protected areas;**
  - **Environmental regulations;**
- **Developing a transparent and timely permitting process for mineral exploration projects;**
- **Working together with Indigenous communities in a partnership-based approach to the above policy improvements areas; and,**
- **Continuing to build competitive incentives to attract mineral investment in Manitoba.**

*Submitted by Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce, 2014  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2014  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*

## Rest Stops at Intervals along Manitoba Highways (MBPR-042)

### ***Issue***

Rest areas are one of the most common roadside service facilities designated for parking and resting purposes. They are considered crucial components in the roadway network since they provide road users with a safe and comfortable place to stop while traveling.

Rest stops improve the lives of Manitobans and the Northern tourist experience. A long highway drive is daunting but knowing that there will be places to stop to use the washroom, throw out trash, change the baby, have lunch, or just stretch your legs will make the trip go by quickly and safely.

The recommended maximum distance between rest stops is 100km per The [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#) (AASHTO) guidelines, however that is often not met in Manitoba<sup>1</sup>. Northern Manitoba in particular has several locations where the highway stretches vast distances without any rest stops. In particular, the below locations are notably lacking any roadside rest stops:

- PTH 10 North of The Pas (a 91.8km stretch to Cranberry Portage);
- PTH 6 North of Saint Martin (a 181 km stretch to Grand Rapids); and,
- PTH 39 connecting PTH 10 to PTH 6 (a 157 km stretch).

Regular rest stops would provide a safe parking place for long haul drivers as well as anyone who feels drowsy. Having rest stops will help prevent people pulling over onto the shoulder for a variety of reasons and being a traffic risk. Better rested drivers – whether from sleep or a break – makes the highways safer for everyone and could lead to a reduction in accidents on Manitoba highways. Having regular garbage cans and washroom facilities at intervals along all Manitoba highways would help keep the highways and ditches clean and scenic while also protecting the environment from litter and pollution.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-042)***

**That the Province of Manitoba:**

- **Introduces garbage cans, public washrooms, and rest stop areas along provincial highways in Manitoba which will be no more than 100 kilometres apart or from a community which can provide such services.**
- **In particular, the following three locations should be prioritized for much needed rest stops:**
  - **PTH 6 at Devils Lake;**
  - **The intersection of PTH 6 and PTH 39; and**
  - **The intersection of PTH 10 and PTH 39.**

*Submitted by The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce  
Thompson Chamber of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021  
Additions from Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, 2024*

## First Nations Urban Development Areas (FNUDA) (MBPR-028)

### *Issue*

There is evidence that creating First Nations Urban Development Areas (FNUDSAs, commonly referred to as Urban Reserves) in communities across Canada are often challenging from a process and general public perspective. This is primarily based on beliefs of tax advantages offered to First Nations businesses and people, leading to an unfair competitive business environment. There also exists a belief by some that establishing FNUDA's would have an adverse impact on the social fabric of Manitoba communities.

First Nations Urban Development Areas are not only an important opportunity to engage First Nations people in Business and Employment opportunities with one of Manitoba's fastest growing populations, but it is also an untapped economic development engine. On October 15, 2016, the National Aboriginal Economic Board shows that, six communities had already collectively created over 7,000 jobs and over \$77 million in annual economic activity benefiting both First Nations and neighboring municipalities. Combined success of the six communities mentioned above include:

- Existing and planned investment estimated to exceed \$1.5 billion;
- Current and anticipated investment has and will generate approximately 2,700 ongoing jobs held by reserve residents and approximately 4,400 ongoing jobs held by off-reserve residents;
- Approximately \$77 million annually in support of off-reserve economic activity;
- Over \$30 million annually in First Nation government revenues generated by the investment of the six urban reserves;
- Approximately \$5 million annually in property taxes collected by non-First Nation local governments attributable to the investment of these six urban reserves.

In addition to quantifying the economic success of urban reserves, the report also identifies the five key factors that contribute to their success. These include infrastructure and services, governance, land management regime, own source revenues and community support. These factors were determined by interviewing key community members in each of the six First Nations Urban Development Areas.

While the term Urban Reserves once conjured up a negative response in many non-aboriginal communities, today there are 14 Urban Reserves that have been created or exist in Manitoba and approximately another 65 in Saskatchewan. As of October 2023, more than 99 properties located in urban municipalities or northern communities across Saskatchewan are in various stages of the reserve creation process. Saskatoon signed an agreement for its 10th FNUDA in 2023.

In Manitoba, the Naawi-Oodena development (former Kapyong Barracks in Winnipeg) is now the largest urban reserve in Canada. Established in 2022, It is owned by a group of seven First Nations in Treaty One territory. Over three phases it will include:

- \$ 1 billion of development
- 1,100 residential units
- Over one million square feet of commercial space, and
- \$85 million of infrastructure development

A Winnipeg city report estimates the development will generate \$512 million for Manitoba's gross domestic product and create 5254 jobs.

A FNUDA represents an area within an urban zone that a First Nation owns and has surrendered to the Crown so that it be designated as reserve land for the First Nations. Such lands allow for First Nations business ventures to enjoy the same privileges as those on traditional reserve lands. For First Nations businesses, this means that they must apply through a laborious and long process through Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and receive approval by way of Order-In-Council before receiving status as an Urban Reserve.

Once approved, businesses and First Nations members who would have received tax benefits on traditional reserve lands as set out in the Indian Act are entitled to the same benefits on the Urban Reserve. Urban Reserves are under the jurisdiction of the First Nation governance not the municipality and therefore are not subject to Municipal, Provincial, or Federal taxes and the Status First Nation employees working on reserve do not pay Provincial or Federal Personal Taxes.

However, for a FNUDA to receive City services, the First Nation must enter into a "Municipal Services Agreement", that stipulates the services they will receive, and the fee associated with those services. Municipal Service Agreements are negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the municipality and the First Nation and might include all the services provided to non-reserve businesses or specific services only such as policing, garbage, fire, or emergency services. Typically, the fee for these services is comparable to the non-reserve property taxes paid to the municipality.

In addition, the Provincial and Federal Governments have been clear in their direction and appetite for First Nations Economic Developments. They see Urban Reserves as an economic driver for not only the urban economy but also for the First Nations, provincial, and federal economies.

In summary, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce sees FNUDAs as positive opportunities to build economic development, enhance our business communities, and the Province's openness to build strong relationships with our First Nation's community.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-028)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Works with Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Municipalities to be proactive in building relationships with First Nations and supporting the development of FNUDAs in Manitoba;**
- **Supports Municipalities in facilitating FNUDAs in their communities by developing a template Municipal Services Agreement for their customization that is based on best practices with regards to parity with non-reserve businesses in matters such as service fees paid to municipalities in lieu of property taxes, by-law compatibility and enforcement and dispute resolutions;**
- **Proactively informs Manitoba Municipalities of opportunities to leverage infrastructure funding from higher levels of Government for FNUDA projects and wherever possible supports the Municipalities in their efforts to leverage existing infrastructure opportunities; and,**
- **Encourages and supports with applicable information pieces, the Manitoba business community, to proactively gain an understanding of First Nation Urban Development Areas and foster a business relationship with First Nation communities and FNUDA tenants conducting business in Manitoba.**

*Submitted by The Brandon Chamber of Commerce, 2017  
Adopted by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2017  
Renewed by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 2021  
Additions from The Brandon Chamber of Commerce, 2024*

# Policies for Renewal

## Core Municipal Infrastructure (MBPR-002)

### **Issue**

A common ground, principle-based Manitoba solution with which to invest in core municipal infrastructure which includes trade and transportation assets, in the broader context of funding municipal infrastructure in a sustained manner, is required to support growth and prosperity throughout Manitoba.

A well-funded and maintained, seamless multi-modal transportation system in Manitoba ensures the ability to attract new areas of economic growth and sustain and/or enhance existing economic activity. Implicit in its mandate is recognition that without core municipal infrastructure including a transportation plan each of which is strategically and permanently funded, we place our economic stability and our social well-being at risk.

Infrastructure is not of passing interest or unimportant to our collective progress. It enables and underpins our economy, and therefore, quality of life. Investment in infrastructure, including a focus on trade enabling and supporting transportation systems on a permanent basis, is our economic and social healthcare program.

### **Resolution (MBPR-002)**

**That the provincial government, in partnership with municipal governments and the private sector, establishes a core municipal infrastructure plan that:**

- **Is permanent yet flexible, not unlike our 'permanent' investment in healthcare, education, recreation, public safety, and the like;**
- **Invests in a sustained and strategic manner in assets which enable, create and open new opportunities for economic growth, without ignoring, maintaining, or rehabilitating key assets that already enable economic activity;**
- **Embraces environmentally sustainable practices and innovation through the use new products and practices, including award consideration based upon sustainability, innovation and life cycle costing.**
- **Seeks partnerships with the private sector which is the engine of innovation, growth, jobs, prosperity, taxes, and revenues to government;**
- **Mandates, through legislation, dedicating revenue streams including growth based taxes to these purposes in a clear, transparent, transitional, and accountable manner; and,**
- **Legislates periodic transparent public reviews enabling experience-based improvements and adjustments for the future.**

*Submitted by The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*

## Creating a Manitoba Post-Secondary Transfer Credit System (MBPR-040)

### **Issue**

In Manitoba, universities and public colleges independently determine credit transfer eligibility and articulation for students seeking admission to a program and the details of credit transfer procedures and policies vary by institution. This causes unnecessary additional costs and delays to graduation and entry into the workforce.

One way to facilitate quicker graduation rates for Manitoba learners would be to streamline the process whereby students can more easily transfer credits from one institution to another. At present students are evaluated by the recipient institution to see which credits a student has received elsewhere can be counted toward their diploma/degree. The result can often mean students end up taking courses that are very similar to credits they have already received. Not only does this increase the cost to students but can create delays in graduation and entry into the workforce.

A comprehensive transfer credit system would facilitate a more rapid advancement from learner to earner. We would encourage the province to look to British Columbia as a model of student transfer. The province invested time and resources to complete a compendium of transfer credits. Students can simply go on-line, enter their home institution and the course they have taken and find the equivalent course in the institution that they intend to transfer to. They also delineate reasons why students might not be eligible to receive credit for courses taken and the institution of origin. These reasons are straightforward and, as per the transfer credit website ([bctransferguide.ca](http://bctransferguide.ca)), they include:

- you took only one course where a two-course combination was required. e.g. COQU ACCT 101 (3) + ACCT 102 (3) = UNBC Commerce 210 (3);
- you failed the course;
- you took the course outside the effective dates of the transfer agreement;
- you took the course too long ago;
- you took too many credits;
- you took a course at another institution without approval or did not get a high enough grade;
- you take two courses that are equivalent to the same course at a receiving institution, you will only receive credit once.

We welcome opportunities to support the development of a more streamlined and efficient model of transfer credits which will create a more accessible postsecondary education system that benefits our learners, our employers, and our economy.

### **Resolution (MBPR-040)**

- **That the Province of Manitoba: in consultation with Manitoba post-secondary institutions, creates a streamlined and comprehensive transfer credit system.**

*Submitted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*

## Connectivity for Rural Manitoba (MBPR-026)

### ***Issue***

Despite major cellular providers claiming to have impeccable mobile coverage, servicing a majority of the province, there are still vast regions of the province (in 'covered areas' and along highway routes), that continue without mobile services.

Having limited or no service to major routes and communities in the province not only segregates/ostracizes businesses and people in our province, but also reduces our national economic competitiveness. Even though nearly 60% of Manitoba's population lives within the limits of Winnipeg and Brandon where optimum mobile coverage is supplied, everyone who travels outside of those limits will lose mobile cellular connection depending on where they are in the province. This goes for rural, northern and Indigenous communities in Manitoba which require open access broadband fibre-based networks in order to reduce the digital divide.

Meeting the minimum requirements of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload accessibility, as set out in Canada's Connectivity Strategy, is a priority infrastructure investment to ensure that no rural community is left behind. Local residents in rural and northern communities know, if they have service in town, they will lose or have spotty service outside of town or won't have any cellular service at all. Residents know where cell service is lacking or nonexistent but major cellular provider network maps on their websites would have you believe they have it covered.

As for the accessible internet, many communities or rural users are left with minimal options that are expensive and unreliable. Cellular and broadband services go hand in hand. Infrastructure for both services can be installed simultaneously in many cases. Providing consistent mobile services along highways in rural and northern Manitoba will make the province more economically competitive. Landlines are becoming a service of the past, and mobile capabilities are becoming an essential service for business.

The pace of not just e-commerce but m-commerce (mobile business), is advancing daily. Increasing the reach of cellular services along these routes and to the communities that reside along these routes makes them more attractive for business. Businesses can be more inclined to travel and perhaps set up new shops in these communities. Having adequate mobile services can lead aspiring entrepreneurs to generate new business and/ or current businesses can expand.

The business sector residing across all rural, indigenous, and northern Manitoba proves to be at a disadvantage. Farmers, local producers, rural and northern businesses should have similar advantages to urban businesses in regards to connectivity in their line of work.

Safety is another concern whereas workers are typically isolated in remote locations without adequate means of communication should a situation arise. Emergency notifications like those sent out to warn residence of major storms via text message are essentially useless in a lot of rural settings.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-026)***

That the provincial government encourages cellular and broadband providers to:

- **Survey their coverage areas and properly service the major routes in the province (highways); getting “boots on the ground” to assess the routes and determine where added services are required;**
- **Plan towards 100% mobile coverage on every piece of paved highway by 2027 as well as making it a priority as federal government to see rural connectivity achieved by 2027;**
- **Implement consistent and reliable coverage. No drop of cellular coverage which means having access to mobile calls and mobile data internet at all times along highways;**
- **Grant rural business similar mobile-commerce advantages to urban businesses, giving rural businesses the platform to expand, become more efficient, and also added safety.**
- **Use towers and other infrastructure that are already constructed by industry and partially paid for by government to defray the cost of coverage.**
- **Leverage the federal funding and be mindful of the efficiencies that supporting broadband and cellular development simultaneously; and**
- **Make clear strategies with rural broadband providers to initiate connecting rural, northern, and indigenous areas as a partner in Canada’s Connectivity Strategy.**

*Submitted by Dauphin Chamber of Commerce, 2017*

*Supported by: Thompson & District Chamber of Commerce*

*Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce, Swan Valley Chamber of Commerce,*

*Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*