



Report Number: C2019-0448
Meeting: Combined Meeting of Council
Meeting Date: 2019 April 08

MOTION ARISING

RE: WASTE MANAGEMENT STORAGE SITE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Sponsoring Councillor(s): COUNCILLOR COLLEY-URQUHART

WHEREAS public expectations for safe and environmentally responsible waste management continue to expand, including services and facilities to support garbage disposal, hazardous waste management, recyclables diversion, and composting;

AND WHEREAS Waste Management Storage Sites are facilities where material other than hazardous waste is collected or received from multiple sources, sorted, and then either sold for recycling or sent to landfill;

AND WHEREAS operational practices at these sites, including stockpiling materials, may present a risk to public safety and the environment through garbage landslides, fires, and site contamination;

AND WHEREAS there is a potential for Waste Management Storage Sites to adversely impact adjacent properties, present safety and environmental risks to landowners, and increase financial liability to municipalities;

AND WHEREAS these sites are currently regulated by an uncoordinated set of oversight authorities by Alberta Environment and Parks through notification requirements under the *Activities Designation Regulation*, and by municipal authorities through land use amendments, subdivisions, development permits, business licensing, and enforcement of the *Alberta Fire Code*; with neither Alberta Environment and Parks or municipalities have specific operating guidelines or codes of practice for Waste Management Storage Sites;

AND WHEREAS in contrast, landfills and hazardous waste storage sites operate under an approval, a registration, a standard and/or code of practice, and oversight of the Province.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The AUMA advocate with the Government of Alberta to work with municipalities to:

- a) Develop the operational guidelines and management practices for the approval and operation of Waste Management Storage Sites;
- b) Clarify the classification of sites; and
- c) Clarify the roles and authorities of municipalities and the provincial government, to improve public safety and environmental performance.

LETTER BACKGROUNDER:

Appropriate solid waste management is important to all Albertans. Public expectations for safe and environmentally responsible waste management continue to expand, including services and facilities to support garbage disposal, hazardous waste management, recyclables diversion, and composting. This creates new business opportunities in waste management. However, municipalities need to be able to ensure that companies operating within their boundaries do so safely, while adhering to regulatory requirements and reasonable standards.

Waste Management Storage Sites are regulated under the *Activities Designation Regulation* and require a notification to Alberta Environment and Parks. No provincial environmental legislation applies specifically to the operation of these sites, other than general environmental provisions. While Alberta Environment and Parks does have the ability to inspect sites, this is not done routinely. Municipal authorities for these sites are limited to land use amendments, subdivisions, development permits, business licensing, and enforcement of the *Alberta Fire Code*. The *Alberta Fire Code* does contain requirements for stockpile content, height, and separation distance. This uncoordinated set of oversight authorities leads to confusion in jurisdiction, and may contribute to risks to public safety, environmental performance, and financial liability.

There are challenges in defining and identifying Waste Management Storage Sites in a municipality, due to the various land uses under which they were granted approval, different terminology in regulations, and limited coordination with Alberta Environment and Parks with municipal approvals. This may result in gaps in applying the setback requirements for new and existing sites under the *Subdivision and Development Regulation*.

Challenges with operational management of Waste Management Storage Sites can be a concern for all municipalities. The City of Calgary is undertaking work in 2019 to identify potential policy and regulatory controls for Waste Management Storage Sites. However, without a coordinated provincial approach, improvements in one jurisdiction could serve to shift the problem to other municipalities, or create an inconsistent system for businesses. Poor operational practices at sites may impact adjacent landowners, create financial liabilities for landowners and the municipality, resulting in public safety risks to citizens and emergency responders or environmental contamination.

Waste Management Storage Sites provide many positive benefits to municipalities, and their continued safe and environmentally responsible operation should be supported. Businesses in the growing waste management sector support citizen and industry recycling efforts and support the economic well-being of municipalities.