

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

Proud to serve
Manitobans

MANITOBA BOOSTS MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING



March 22, 2019

Basket funding was established in 2017 as a simplified approach to provide municipalities with a fair say in how dollars are invested. The minister noted it ensures strategic outcomes and maximizes value for money while allowing municipalities to invest in their own priority projects, such as road renewal or bridge rehabilitation. The additional \$10 million will be allocated based on population thresholds and all local governments will receive an equitable share.

Funding added to the municipal operating basket is predictable and stable. Municipalities no longer have to apply for this funding for annual road work, reducing administration and red tape for local government, while ensuring communities can plan ahead and have access to the resources needed.

“Ensuring that municipalities receive predictable, stable funding has been a priority for our government,” said Wharton. “The increase to the municipal baskets will allow municipalities to efficiently plan for future infrastructure projects while also maximizing their time during construction seasons.”

For more information on Budget 2019, visit www.gov.mb.ca/budget2019/index.html.

The Manitoba government will be distributing an additional \$10 million in unconditional operating funding to rural municipalities as part of Budget 2019 to support their critical infrastructure needs, such as fixing roads and bridges, Municipal Relations Minister Jeff Wharton announced this week.

“The increase to the municipal baskets demonstrates continued efforts by our government to further streamline grant funding provided to municipalities,” said Wharton. “This additional funding reduces red tape and enhances the flexibility given to local governments on how to best invest provincial funding for important municipal services and local priorities, including road infrastructure.”

NEW EMERGENCY ROOM SET TO OPEN IN FLIN FLON



Flin Flon General Hospital's new \$27.1-million emergency department, featuring modern design that will improve patient flow, will open to the public on April 1, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

"People needing emergency care need it quickly," said Pallister, who toured the new emergency department today. "This new, modern space will make a real difference for patients, staff and visitors. We are keeping our word and helping patients access better health care sooner, while ensuring staff have the tools they need to provide consistent, reliable care."

The 14,000-square-foot space is approximately eight and a half times the size of Flin Flon's current emergency department. It includes four stretcher bays, two treatment rooms, a procedure room, a trauma room, a family consult room, an isolation room/gynecological room, an intravenous therapy room and improved patient access from ambulance to treatment areas.

This project began in June 2016 with the start of demolition. The province funded most of the project, with the Northern Regional Health Authority and community partners providing \$950,000 in contributions.

PROVINCE EXPANDING DIALYSIS, HIRING MORE NURSES ACROSS MANITOBA

The province is investing nearly \$5.2 million for dialysis services, including \$2.4 million from Budget 2019, to provide critical life-saving services for up to 72 patients while hiring more nurses and other staff to support access for more patients, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

"We are cleaning up the mess left behind by the previous government in health care by investing in services that benefit Manitobans," said Pallister. "These investments will provide life-saving care to Manitobans in need, when and where they need it most. This includes Thompson, which will see in-centre dialysis expand to accommodate an additional six patients."

About 14 per cent of Manitobans live with kidney disease and about one-third of them may develop kidney failure in their lifetime. Over the coming months, the expansion will include additional dialysis spaces at local renal health centres throughout the province. In addition to Thompson, this investment includes space expansions in Hodgson, Pine Falls, Portage la Prairie, the Boundary Trails Health Centre, and Winnipeg.

The funding will also be used to expand home dialysis treatments, including a 10-patient peritoneal dialysis expansion in Winnipeg, to ensure a better quality of life for patients.

There will be 57 positions included in this expansion, including nearly 30 nurses. Health care aides, pharmacy, social services, technologists, maintenance and administrative support positions will also be added.

Learn about kidney health and the Manitoba Renal Program at www.kidneyhealth.ca.

MANITOBA CALLS FOR CLARITY ON FEDERAL BILL C-69

Testifying before the Senate of Canada Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources this week, Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade Blaine Pedersen demanded clarity and improvements from Ottawa on Bill C-69, to avoid making it more difficult to build strategic infrastructure, like transmission lines, pipelines or critical disaster mitigation projects.

“Strategic infrastructure investments in flood protection projects, clean hydroelectricity and mining – that are critical for the safety of our communities and our shared prosperity – are at risk of being delayed, becoming more expensive to realize, or being stopped altogether,” said Pedersen.

The bill could also kill jobs by creating uncertainty and unpredictability over long-term investment decisions, the minister noted. Mineral and petroleum developments are the second-largest primary resource sector in Manitoba. In real 2007 dollars, the sector contributed approximately \$2.7 billion to the provincial economy and employed approximately 5,700 workers in 2018.

“As it stands, Bill C-69 does not strike an appropriate balance between environmental protection and economic growth,” said Pedersen. “It risks the future prosperity for Manitoba communities and families that our government is positioned to support, without meaningfully improving environmental outcomes.”

The minister noted Manitoba joins a majority of Canadian provinces and territories that have been critical of the federal government over Bill C-69, arguing it does not achieve its objectives and is too complex, expensive and time-consuming.

PROVINCE INVESTING MORE IN WATER AND WASTEWATER PROJECTS



The Manitoba government has increased the Manitoba Water Services Board capital budget by \$2 million for 2019-20, to a total of \$15.8 million, Municipal Relations Minister Jeff Wharton announced this week.

“We continue to make significant investments in water and wastewater infrastructure throughout our province,” said Wharton. “In addition to supporting economic growth and improving services for residents, these important projects are critical to ensuring our municipalities remain healthy and sustainable for years to come.”

The board’s capital budget will total \$15.8 million in the next fiscal year to better support municipalities to address their water and wastewater needs. This additional funding will allow municipalities to initiate more capital projects and undertake engineering studies and designs, ensuring there are enough tender-ready projects to maximize federal and provincial funding.

This announcement is part of a new capital plan that includes a total provincial commitment of \$75.5 million over five years for water and sewer infrastructure in rural Manitoba.