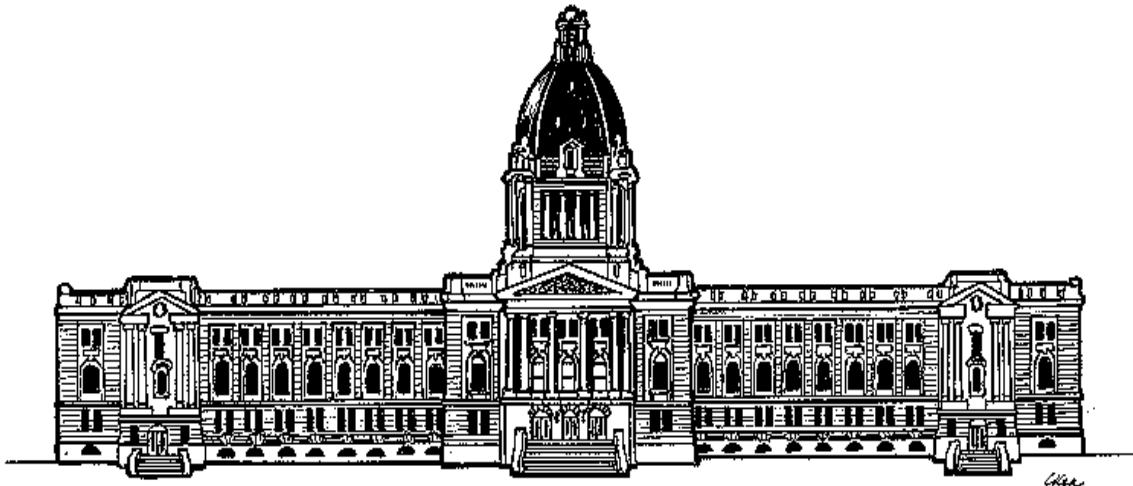




# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
2004**

Mr. Ron Harper, Chair  
Regina Northeast

Mr. Bob Bjornerud, Deputy Chair  
Melville-Saltcoats

Mr. Denis Allchurch  
Rosthern-Shellbrook

Ms. June Draude  
Kelvington-Wadena

Ms. Sandra Morin  
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Kim Trew  
Regina Coronation Park

Hon. Mark Wartman  
Regina Qu'Appelle Valley

The committee met at 15:00.

**The Chair:** — We'll convene the committee. The first order of business before the committee is the consideration of The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2004. I'll invite the minister to introduce his officials.

**Bill No. 68 — The Assessment Management Agency  
Amendment Act, 2004**

**Clause 1**

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The officials with me include, to my right, John Edwards, the executive director of the policy development branch in Government Relations; on my far left, Keith Comstock, a policy manager in the policy development branch; and to my immediate left, Norm Magnin, a policy manager in the policy development branch of Government Relations.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, if you have an opening statement, we'll entertain that now.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In the interests of time, I will be quite brief. I believe that for all those who are watching today, that my remarks at second reading are available on-line. So I can skip some of the repeats there and save us time for some of the questions that members may have.

What's in front of us is The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2004. It provides the legislative framework through which the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, SAMA, exercises its powers and duties. The Act establishes the agency, provides for a board of directors, has financial provisions, and provides direction concerning valuations and re-valuations.

The 2004 amendments are intended to strengthen and stabilize Saskatchewan's property assessment system through changes to the funding and governance of SAMA. The education sector will now play a greater role in the assessment system in the province.

Amendments are also being made to strengthen the integrity of the assessment system through quality assurance provisions. Changes are proposed to the assessment role confirmation process and to add primary and secondary audits to the current assessment system in the province.

Those would be my opening remarks, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Bjornerud.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Minister, and to your officials today, welcome. I agree with the minister. I think we've spoken . . . we've had second reading and adjourned debates on this Bill. I think we've had most of the questions that really that we have had with this Bill. We know that the concerned groups, mainly being SAMA, want this Bill passed as expediently as we can. And I think we agree with that.

The one question I noticed in here, the makeup of the board has changed, and I wonder if maybe the minister would elaborate a bit on the change to the makeup of the board and the reasons for that change.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — I'd be happy to do that. And thank you very much for the question. It's certainly a question that I've been asked on occasion when I've made presentations with regards to the amendments in front of us.

And I don't think I need to refer too much to my notes here, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to make sure I . . . or Mr. Chair, I just want to make sure I have them in front of me.

Currently the board of SAMA is made up of nine members. There are five members from local government, three representatives from the provincial government, and one representative from the professional assessors' association. The amendments, Mr. Chair, will bring the total number of board members to 11.

Because of the changes in funding from the education sector which I will elaborate on before I finish my remarks in answer to this question, because of these changes in financing we are adding two members from the education sector. We are adding one government appointment and we are removing the independent assessor's position from the board.

Essentially the Act itself in front of us, the amendment's restructure to a certain extent, the financing of the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. The financing is restructured so that the education sector will be for the first time providing core funding to the agency. The education sector currently benefits considerably from the assessment system, but until now has not contributed anything to the financing of the agency.

As a result of negotiations, discussions, a review of the Boughen Commission, and other matters, the Act is being amended so that funding from education will now benefit the responsibilities of SAMA. As a result of more money — in fact, money period — coming from education, it was felt that the board should include representation from the education sector. So as a result there are education representatives being added to the board.

Secondly, the assessors have in the past been represented by a SAMA employee, and of course it was felt that there was a conflict of interest on the board when an employee sits there. And as a result the representation from the assessors' association, a SAMA employee, that position has been removed from the board.

And lastly, we've had representation on numerous occasions whenever we sit down with, for example, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce representatives, of the business, commercial, industrial, manufacturing, oil and gas sector in Saskatchewan. We've had representation from them that indicates that the current governance of SAMA does not include any direct representation from those sectors. And it was our feeling that an additional government representative should be added to the board to give us an opportunity to provide

representation from other sectors not represented on the board through the normal appointment and nomination process.

So the extra board member from government gives us an opportunity to appoint someone from the business community, representing the commercial sector, or the industrial, the manufacturing, the resource sector.

I hope that answers your question.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Not really. It actually creates some more questions. If my understanding as the board was before, there was nine members, five local government, if I'm right.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Yes.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Three government and one professional person from the assessment agency. Now if I'm reading it right, actually the majority comes back to the government of members on that board.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Chair, I believe that one could interpret that from looking at the numbers. That's not necessarily the case. I think when you sit down to think about it, the current representation, for example, one of the government appointees — in fact, the most recent government appointee — was previously a vice-president of the rural municipalities association. As a result of that appointment, the board has even greater support from the municipal sector as opposed to the so-called government sector.

As long as government recognizes the value of independent thinking, skilled, accountable board membership, that we should have a very strong, functioning, independent board.

**A Member:** — I agree.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Chair, one more thing. I think that when you take a look specifically at the numbers — and again this is subject to interpretation. Of the 11, you have five provincial appointees, you have six local government representatives, two from the urban municipalities, two from the rural municipalities, and two from the school boards, which you have to acknowledge, are local government representatives.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Another question, Mr. Minister, then if this is how you've set up the board. I want to go to the \$750,000 that we're putting in through education — if I understand this right, and I'm sure that's what it says here — to SAMA, much needed money they need for updates; in fact I think their feeling was even probably they needed more, but they got the 750.

What was the purpose of putting this through education? What would be the difference of taking it out of the General Revenue Fund as part of your budget for 2003 and giving it to SAMA straight out of the General Revenue Fund, as you do with other entities all over the province to run them? Why did we have to put that into education and then, in turn, education turned around and gave it to SAMA?

And I think you've made comments on this before, but I can't understand the reasoning for that. Why wouldn't we take it out

of the General Revenue Fund as part of our budget for the year and give it to SAMA?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much for that question. I think it's very simple. The question begs for a bit of a complicated answer, but it's very simple and it comes down to accountability.

The education sector is being served by the assessment activity. It's the education sector that will contribute towards that. The education money is coming through the foundation operating grant; so there's a direct connection to the education sector. It is not just government increasing its funding. It's involving the education sector. So simple answer, accountability.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well I wouldn't argue with the minister on that except that you say it's coming out of the foundation operating grant. And what I would suggest and I know the minister of Education has been saying in half of his answers last spring and again this fall in question period, that look at all the extra money we've put in for education. When really in essence all you've done is you've taken another pretty near almost a million dollars, put it into education, turned around and gave that to SAMA. So what that gives you the availability to is saying, oh, look at us, we've put all this money into the education system in the province of Saskatchewan; when really all you're doing is taking pretty near a million dollars and funding SAMA with that money.

So really what the minister is saying isn't quite exactly true, because that money is just going from one hand to another hand to another hand. And really, I would say all it's really doing is letting the government of the day say, oh, we're really funding education; when in turn, actually part of this money is going straight to SAMA where it should have gone in the first place.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Chair, government funding for SAMA is currently at \$5.82 million; that's a 40.2 per cent increase in funding since 2002-03. SAMA's activities have increased dramatically during this period of time and with reassessment coming forward there's certainly a recognition of the need for additional funding.

I think, as I'd indicated earlier, school divisions' education tax currently represents about 59 per cent of total taxes raised throughout the province. And it's only reasonable to assume that education contributes to SAMA.

Bottom line is, I think on any department . . . One could argue that it doesn't have to be accountable through a department; just fund it directly through the GRF (General Revenue Fund). But the bottom line is, there's a benefit to education, education will be accountable for those dollars, and it's specifically assigned to education for that purpose.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — But, Mr. Minister, correct me if I'm wrong, that the \$750,000 figure was set by, I would believe, your government, and the 875,000 each of the next two years was also set by your government. So really education, the Education department had no say in what they're going to pass on to SAMA. It's already been . . . in fact it's in legislation what these numbers are. So as far as Education having . . . the department having more input into this, I would say is all

they're really being used for is just another stop-gap on the way to getting back to SAMA.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well, Mr. Chair, again the short answer to this question is that all of this was worked out with Learning in advance of our budget process. If there's one thing that this government believes in, it's consultation with the sectors that decision making involves. We've done it in almost all of the activities of Government Relations since I've been here during the course of the last year, and this is no exception. There was consultation with SAMA. More importantly, there was consultation with Learning.

I want to add that, just for clarity, Mr. Chair, funding to SAMA will be paid on behalf of school divisions from the education foundation operating grant pool before calculating the distribution of the grant funding to school divisions in the province. Incremental funding for the education foundation operating grant was provided in the 2004-05 budget, so those dollars are certainly in place through FOG (foundation operating grant). The money identified may in the future be a reallocation of funds available in the education foundation operating grant freed up due to adjustments such as reductions in enrolments across the province. So there's quite a number of factors involved in all of this.

I also might add, just reviewing some information that was provided to me from Mr. Lance Bean, the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, a letter that was sent to me dated November 12. He says:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association with respect to . . . *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act* . . . Boards of education have advocated for more than a decade that the governance of the property assessment system in Saskatchewan should equitably reflect all of the local authorities that depend upon an "accurate up to date, universal, equitable and understandable" property assessment system in the foundation of the property taxation system.

Bill 68 (he goes on to say) will correct an unfairness and inequity in the governance of the . . . (SAMA) at the Board of Directors level that has existed since SAMA was created. Consequently (on behalf of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association) we urge you to give Bill 68 speedy passage. The 2005 reassessment will take effect shortly and we believe it is important that boards of education are equitably represented from the outset of . . . (the) latest assessment.

There's more in that letter, but I think it indicates that our consultation with the association, with the Department of Education, with other stakeholders in this regard has been thorough and the support for the legislation is pretty universal.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — I agree with that Mr. Minister, but I want to bring concerns of the local . . .

**The Chair:** — Order, order. I'd just like to draw everyone's attention to a chit; we've have Mr. Yates chit in for Ms. Morin.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I think the concern that we're hearing from taxpayers, out in the province right now, is a grave concern that should the government decide to fund education as they have in the past to cover, say, such things as the increase in teachers' salaries and things like that, but not going far enough to cover a lot of the other expenses that school divisions have out there, such as janitorial and busing, there's a number of things that aren't . . . the additional costs that they have every year are not always covered by the funding going in. Now what we're doing is taking another 750 this year, 875 for the next two years, out of the foundation operating grant, which will even lower the amount of dollars that the Education department has. I think that's going to be a concern.

I just want to bring to your attention . . . on many of the petitions that you heard presented this session, have been that same concern. I just want to read you part of the prayer on one of these — and I'm sure you've heard it before — but this is a concern that is being brought to us constantly. The prayer reads again:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary action to reverse changes recently made that require the education sector to contribute to the cost of SAMA as this added burden for school boards will ultimately lead to higher property taxes for Saskatchewan residents.

I think what these people are saying is that should you get to a position where you can't, as a provincial government, put X number of dollars in for education, we all know who is going to pick up this extra \$750,000 — it's going to be the local taxpayer. So I know the school boards would like this passed very quickly and that will happen today, very shortly.

But I think we need to have it on the record what the local taxpayers' concerns are that they . . . if they can have your assurance that you will cover this every year and the funding won't be cut at some point. But I think they have grave concerns that that's happened in the past and may happen again.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much for the question and the additional information. And most importantly, thank you very much for indicating your support for speedy passage of the legislation today. Obviously this goes a long way to ensuring that the money can be delivered and that SAMA can do the work that we're asking it to do.

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that indeed the school boards are very supportive of the measure. I think that any of the people who are watching here today, who had the opportunity to watch the proceedings of Human Services Committee last night — I think it was three hours of questioning of Minister Andrew Thomson — would have heard and would remember him saying that, while a lot of these questions have been dealt with through our consultation and our planning process, the relationship between the changes in SAMA and the restructuring that's being done by Learning are indirectly related. They aren't directly related. But there's no doubt that we have to have a stable, equitable assessment system before the local entities — whether it be municipal

governments or school boards — can deliver a fair tax system.

The bottom line is that prior to the budget process of this year and in our forward planning, Treasury Board and government took into account the need for this money to be moved from Learning to SAMA. And secondly, that in what we call the out years — '05-06, '06-07, and for what planning we could do into '07-08 — we've recognized that there will be restructuring. There will be some savings that take place in the education system, that the foundation operating grants with fewer school boards will of course be more equitable in the way in which they're delivered.

And it's our assessment at this point that the steps that we are taking today will indeed lead to lower property tax burden for urban and rural property taxpayers throughout the province.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Draude.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister, I appreciate your answer but I was one of the individuals last night having a discussion with the minister, and he had indicated that there would be savings seen with the amalgamation process.

But he'd also indicated that those savings were going to be directed towards front-line learning, to teachers, and not to superintendents and not to directors. And he definitely didn't mention the extra money that was going to be going to SAMA because the extra money we need in education has to go for students. And that's good to hear that Learning has to put money into another department is not the kind of words that people in the province want to be hearing.

The big concern for property owners in this province, and all people in this province, is education property tax. And we can't . . . To have it say that we're going to dilute the money more isn't going to bring joy to many people's hearts. So I am directly concerned with that.

And the other thing I'm concerned about is the reassessment that I understand is taking place for next year. And the two board members that are here for representing education, or the trustees on the SAMA board, are important. Their voice, I'm hoping their voice is going to be heard to make sure that people realize that when you're paying for education, it's not just the mill rate that's the important issue. It's mill rate times the assessment, because that's the bottom line. We can't just talk about the mill rate.

So when the decision has already been made on the reassessment, I'm concerned that the voice of people representing education will be a little bit too late. The fear is that the reassessment is going to affect farm land again greatly, especially on the east side of the province. And it's going to be the questions that we hear from the people in our communities.

So I guess I'd like to hear what you have to say about the voice of the people from the education sector on the new SAMA board.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much. I appreciate the question. There's a number of matters that were raised that I

would like to comment on.

The first and foremost is of course this government's commitment to education property tax relief. And I think even you would have to admit that the promise that the government made is being delivered upon and is being worked on in the long term to avoid what we've had in the past, which were short-term, ad hoc circumstances that had programs in place one year and gone the next.

We have two opportunities to provide education property tax relief. The first is the short term and we've consulted again with the sectors — urban municipalities, rural municipalities, and school boards — on the delivery of \$110 million worth of education property tax relief. And while I realize it doesn't have any direct impact on the Bill in front of us, I feel that I should answer this in terms of the question that was asked.

Secondly, the working group that we've put into place is looking at the long term. Obviously the \$110 million is one-time money, but our commitment to reducing education property tax across the province is long-term. It's got to be sustainable and long-term, which means additional money into the system, whether it's education system or it's direct to the property tax payers themselves.

The working group that's been assigned the task of providing us with advice in this regard has put together a number of options, one of which of course is the . . . or two of which include the foundation operating grant. We are looking very seriously at that advice that's being provided in conjunction with the whole restructuring effort, and we believe that additional monies attached to the foundation operating grant will be able to provide some significant, long-term, sustainable property tax relief on the education side.

I think it's also clear that we've increased revenue sharing grants over the last three years to municipalities, urban and rural, and on the basis of those, we have allowed municipalities to set mill rates that would be lower than they would otherwise have to if we didn't have additional resources available through revenue sharing.

So we're trying to do the best we can with the resources that we have, in consultation with the sectors that most involved to ensure that the burden of property tax to fund education will be reduced as much as is physically and humanly possible.

As far as the school boards influencing the assessment process or whatever, obviously the school boards have a lot at stake as far as the value of assessment, just as the municipalities do. And that's why we have two representatives on the new board from the urban sector, two from the rural sector, and two from the school board sector. Hopefully they'll all be able to work together to ensure that the system functions well. And I have confidence in the nomination process that they will engage in to ensure that we do have individuals who are concerned about the assessment process, and want the system to work for the municipalities and the school boards.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I did hear you saying that you're basing . . . there is going to be an improvement, but it's going to be delivered upon in the long

term. Well I know that the minister's been listening to all the concerns of people in the province this year with economic disaster in rural Saskatchewan. And we also know that the \$110 million that your government has promised for education is going to be seen starting next year. But this year we . . . your government raised a considerable amount of money by increasing the PST (provincial sales tax) 1 per cent which was supposed to be towards, going towards education tax, if we look at the Boughen report.

But again, the real issue for people is not just the question of the mill rate, which you had discussed a minute ago, but it's mill rate times the assessment. When your assessment in various parts of the province is unequal, people can't say I'm paying a mill rate of 19, and somebody else is paying a mill rate of 21 — that doesn't mean anything until you know what the assessment is. So my real question is, the voice of the people that are going to be on the new board is going to be important to education. Is there still going to be an opportunity to have their voice heard for the new assessment that's going to be brought in next year or is that decision already made?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Okay. Thank you very much for the question. First of all, assessment is quite simply . . . what the agency does is it provides a number to the value of property from year to year. In the current situation, it's each four year period of time.

What SAMA and its board do is update the value of property throughout the province. At the beginning of the process, the assessment, the way in which we conduct assessment has to be seen as fair, equitable, and for all intents and purposes equally applied across the province. The Assessment Management Agency, which is relatively new in Saskatchewan, was created to ensure that these values do represent true value. And the tax system is based on that assessment, but it isn't related to the assessment except through the mill rate as the questioner has indicated.

But we want to ensure we have proper assessments completed. So with the agency in place to do these assessments, with a manual or a set of rules and a board of directors that exists to ensure that assessments are done in a fair and equitable fashion, we believe that Saskatchewan is well served.

The fact of the matter is assessments do increase. As the province grows we want to see the assessment numbers higher. Higher assessment numbers don't necessarily translate into higher taxes. That depends on local needs, on local services, on local budgeting processes, and indeed on the way in which municipalities utilize tax tools that are provided to them.

I agree with the questioner in that assessment should be fair from one side of the province to another, that people should recognize that how assessment is done on one side of the province is the same as on another. And that indeed is what the board is there to do.

It is equally in the interests of the school board representatives, as it is the municipal representatives, to ensure that assessment is done correctly for the exact reason that they then will utilize that assessment, as municipal leaders will, in order to apply their own tax rates to it. They want it to be fair. And in fact

bottom line is, I think, the school boards who represent taxpayers as well as . . . because they are elected . . . represent taxpayers as well as municipal elected officials, are looking forward to ensuring that the system is fair and equitable.

Rather long, rambling answer, Mr. Chair, but to summarize, assessment is important. The agency is there to ensure that the assessment is done fairly and all of the board reps who represent taxpayers are looking forward to ensuring that the assessment system is indeed fair and equitable.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Not seeing any further questions, the committee will now go clause by clause consideration of the Bill. Clause 1, short title. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enacts as follows, the Act to amend The Assessment Management Agency Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Now I would invite a member to report the Bill without amendment. Mr. Trew.

**Mr. Trew:** — I move that we report this Bill without amendment.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Trew has moved that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Is this agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### **Bill No. 58 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2004**

#### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — The next item of business before the committee is the consideration of Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Minister, I invite you to make your opening statements.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it. Just in terms of a carryover from the previous Bill discussed, my officials, even though they've changed chairs, remain the same as identified earlier.

The Bill in front of us today is The Cities Amendment Act, 2004. I will make a quick summary and then I will outline just two things that I think are important with regards to the Bill.

The changes proposed in The Cities Amendment Act can be categorized in two ways: amendments to continue correcting errors and omissions that survived the abbreviated drafting process and have been discovered as the Act has been implemented. As you will recall, Mr. Chair, The Cities Act was brought forward in 2001, took effect in 2002, and we're now in the process of ensuring that it meets the practical terms that were set in place when the theory was being discussed.

And also, Mr. Speaker, The Cities Amendment Act in front of us contains policy amendments that, while relatively minor, will improve the effectiveness of the Act. And in this regard I can indicate that virtually all of the amendments in front of us today have been requested by the cities themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, what are some of the error and omission types of amendments? Well first of all, changing the definition of a parcel of land to reflect the repeal of The Land Titles Act, Mr. Chair, and to restore the definition contained in other municipal Acts. Since this Act was drafted and proclaimed, of course, The Land Titles Act has been repealed, so any reference to it must be removed from the Act in front of us.

Also we are clarifying the wording around when a proposed bylaw is deemed to have been defeated. There's some incongruity here, Mr. Chair, that needed to be addressed.

Also we are removing a circular reference regarding when a council's term of office begins, clarifying that a council's powers, duties, and limitations related to council committees also apply to other bodies appointed by council, clarifying that it is the city assessor who is responsible for various assessment related duties, not the city council. That was a concern of the cities brought forward.

And of course, restoring wording comparable to that in the urban municipalities Act regarding special taxes and warrants that orders related to bylaw infractions and dangerous animals.

There also are the additions relating to natural person powers and, what's the other phrase we use here?

**Mr. Edwards:** — Areas of jurisdiction.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Areas of jurisdiction — again, areas that have had considerable consultation and review by the cities themselves. Those would be my opening remarks.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just a moment. I recognize Mr. Wartman.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I would like to ask leave to introduce guests.

**The Chair:** — Ask leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Wartman.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you very much, Chair and

members. I would like to introduce to you, and to all who are gathered here, four guests up in the Speaker's gallery. A former member of this House, Dwain Lingenfelter, was deputy premier and Agriculture minister as we served together. And with him is, on his right, Roger Thomas. And on his left are Tim Thomas and Verne Barr. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to this Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** — Mr. Bjornerud.

#### Bill No. 58 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2004 (continued)

##### Clause 1

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Lingenfelter back and his colleagues to the legislature. Mr. Lingenfelter was a very colourful MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in this legislature and we had many good debates with him. I understand some of my colleagues had the good fortune to have dinner with him the other night at a Sask Party fundraiser in Calgary. So it shows that Mr. Lingenfelter has kept an open mind and, as he did in here, can certainly think for himself.

Mr. Chair, I would like to just pass on to the minister, I think we all know with The Cities Amendment Act that when The Cities Act was brought in a couple of years ago, I think these changes were asked for by the cities very quickly after the legislation was brought forward. He has addressed really our questions in his initial comments to the Bill and we have no problem with letting this Bill go forward at this point.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Seeing no further questions the committee will now consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 34 inclusive agreed to.

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and the consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enacts as follows, the Act to amend The Cities Act, 2004. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — I invite a member to report . . . to move the Bill be reported without amendment.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Trew has moved that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.



**The Chair:** — Carried.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**The Chair:** — That concludes the business before the committee. I will ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Wartman.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Wartman moves the committee adjourn. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — The committee now stands adjourned. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 15:54.





