



**CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH HURON**  
**Media Release**  
**South Huron Digging Out After the Storm**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 17, 2018**

## **Municipal empowerment tops FCM Board of Directors agenda attended by Mayor Maureen Cole**

South Huron – Local Mayor Maureen Cole was joined by municipal leaders from across the country in the County of Annapolis, Nova Scotia, to discuss the goals and objectives of Canada’s municipalities for the year ahead. The topics of infrastructure, cannabis legalization and rural broadband dominated the conversation.

The discussion of municipal autonomy at this fall’s Board Meeting took place against the backdrop of an important national discussion about the role of municipalities and their relationship with the provincial and federal orders of government. Above all, members agreed that now is the time to focus on local decision-making, greater empowerment for cities and communities, and the fiscal tools necessary to make that happen.

The FCM Board sent a unanimous message that municipalities will oppose any use of Section 33 (the notwithstanding clause) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that would have the effect of overriding local decision-making and democratic rights at the local level. The FCM Board also reaffirmed its support for the ability of municipalities to govern their own affairs and represent the interests of their residents.

“As federal political parties prepare for next year’s election, it is time for a mature and modern conversation about how to empower municipal autonomy,” said FCM President Vicki-May Hamm. “We need political will from every order of government to have a conversation about how we work together within the Constitution. With engaged federal partners, we know it can be done.”

With legalization fast approaching, cannabis was key on the agenda during this year’s meeting. Municipalities have been working hard to get ready for October 17<sup>th</sup>, but success requires ongoing collaboration and cooperation across all orders of government, most critically at the municipal level.

“Local governments are on the front lines of legalizing cannabis across Canada. Our priority is to keep our citizens safe and well-served,” said Mayor Cole “As October 17 draws near, municipalities need more details on implementation, including assurances that municipal costs will be covered through financial tools like excise revenue sharing.”

Reliable broadband is an essential service for Canadians, yet remains elusive for two million living in rural, remote and northern communities. FCM board members discussed the urgent need for an ambitious, long-term national broadband strategy lead by the federal government to ensure rural communities maintain their vital part role in Canada’s economy.

“We have a situation where Canadian households are struggling to connect and businesses are unable to unlock their full potential. This is unacceptable,” said Mayor Cole. “We need the federal government to lead this strategy through long-term, predictable solutions and major investments.”

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Board members were also updated on developments in the federal infrastructure plan. This plan was designed to empower municipalities to deliver transformational transit, green and rural infrastructure projects across Canada and in South Huron.

“The federal infrastructure plan we helped shape is unprecedented — in its \$180 billion scale, its 12 year commitment, its prioritization of municipal projects, and its tailored tools for rural and northern communities,” said Cole. “These investments can move projects forward to build stronger economic growth, lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve quality of life for all.” Across Canada, in communities large and small, urban and rural, municipalities are the order of government closest to people’s lives. Their local solutions are helping tackle national challenges—from growth and productivity to climate change—and are building a more livable, competitive Canada.

*FCM is the national voice of municipal government in Canada. Its [Board of Directors](#) represents communities of all sizes from coast to coast to coast.*

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