August 6, 2026

Standard Construction Specifications – Seeding

Dear Minister Simard:

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) and the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association are writing to provide recommendations for improving the Manitoba Water Services Board standard construction specifications. KAP is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for farmers on issues that affect agriculture. The Manitoba Beekeepers' Association provides the voice for beekeepers working toward a sustainable and profitable honey bee industry through education, research and lobbying.

The standard construction specifications play an important role in Manitoba's water-related infrastructure. Waterways, ditches, culverts, and diversions often exist adjacent or near farmland—highlighting the need for specifications that work with agricultural production.

Section 02 48 60 references seeding. And choosing the correct plant species has many benefits. (1) Not only do native plant species provide erosion control through their deep-root structure, but they also absorb excess dissolved nutrients. (2) And the correct plant species reduce weed pressure and requires less maintenance for municipalities.

Despite the extensive plant species listed in the standard construction specifications, further improvements can be made. In the appendix below, we have recommended additional species italicized under the wet areas and nitrogen-fixer columns. We are pleased to see that the nitrogen-fixing column also includes pollinator-friendly species. And adding more species would improve ditch maintenance, reduce soil erosion, increase water retention, and promote continuous flowering throughout the growing season. And cash crops such as canola, sunflowers, buckwheat, and strawberries would benefit from additional pollinator-friendly species along Manitoba's water-related infrastructure.

The last two updates to Section 02 48 60 did not change the table's content. KAP and the MBA recommend that the department incorporate the italicized changes below that would benefit rural infrastructure, farmers, and the public. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,





Colin Hornby
General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.

Ian Steppler
Chairperson, Manitoba Beekeepers' Association

Appendix

Native Seed Mix by Zone	Dry Areas (Select 4-5)	Wet Areas (Select 1)	Nitrogen-Fixer and Polinators *(Select 2)*
Tall Grass/Interlake Prairie Zone	Canada Wild Rye	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	June Grass	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	Big Bluestem	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Little Bluestem	Tufted Hair Grass	*Yarrow*
	Awned Wheatgrass	Prairie Cord Grass	*Wild Bergamot*
	Indian Grass	*Fowl Blue Grass*	*Canada Goldenrod*
Mixed Grass Prairie Zone	Blue Gramma	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	Canada Wild Rye	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	June Grass	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Big Bluestem	Prairie Cord Grass	*Yarrow*
	Little Bluestem	*Nuttall's Alkali Grass*	*Wild Bergamot*
	Awned Wheatgrass	*Fringed Brome*	*Canada Goldenrod*
	Slender Wheatgrass		
Fescue Prairie Zone	Big Bluestem	Marsh Reed Grass	Purple Prairie Clover
	Little Bluestem	Northern Reed Grass	White Prairie Clover
	Awned Wheatgrass	Slough Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	Canada Wild Rye		*American Vetch*
	June Grass		*Wild Bergamot*
	Rocky Mountain Fescue		*Canada Goldenrod*
	Northern Wheatgrass		
Boreal Zone	Hair Grass	Tufted Hair Grass	Canada Milkvetch
	June Grass	Fowl Bluegrass	*Western Canada Violet*
	Nodding Brome	Slough Grass	*Canada Goldenrod*
	Rocky Mountain Fescue	*Fringed Brome*	
	Canada Wild Rye		
	Hairy Wild Rye		
	Northern Wheatgrass		
	White-grained Mountain Rice Grass		
	Slender Wheatgrass		