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November 24, 2025

City of Saskatoon
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Saskatoon SK S7K 0J5

Re: 2026–2027 Budget — Saskatoon's climate and environmental leadership

To Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES), thank you for your continued commitment to climate action and environmental stewardship in Saskatoon. SES has long supported the City of Saskatoon's climate and environmental initiatives, and we appreciate the adoption of a climate budgeting framework that clarifies the investments required to meet Saskatoon's climate goals. With the impacts of climate change already being felt locally and globally, timely action is critical. **Without timely action, Saskatoon residents will face growing financial burdens as climate impacts intensify and become more costly to address.** Each year of delayed investment also heightens risks to Saskatoon's infrastructure, public health, and natural systems.

As Council considers the 2026–2027 budget, **SES encourages you to prioritize strategic capital and operational investments that will allow Saskatoon to meet its climate commitments and strengthen community resilience**. The City's Climate Budget shows both the progress achieved and the scale of work still ahead: funded mitigation measures to date achieve only 25% of emissions reductions needed by 2027, leaving a gap of 162,900 tCO_2e. Addressing this 75% shortfall will require additional investment in unfunded climate mitigation items and in transformative measures such as deep energy retrofits, renewable energy installations, district energy planning, and the protection of natural areas. Continued support for funded climate actions will also remain essential to enabling future emissions reductions.

We further encourage Council to sustain investment in the programs that engage residents in climate solutions. Strong climate action requires not only infrastructure and technology, but also informed and engaged residents. Saskatoon's environmental education and engagement programs play a vital role in enabling behaviour change and help residents adopt practices that reduce emissions and conserve resources. Maintaining these programs in the 2026–2027 budget is essential to ensuring the continued success of the City's climate commitments.

As Council considers the broader environmental impacts of its 2026–2027 investments, **we also ask that you continue the City's long-standing commitment to least-toxic approaches to turf management**. The City has taken meaningful steps over the last two decades—through programs, practices, and policy direction aimed at lowering risks to soil and human health. In this context, the proposed $147,300 herbicide-based weed management program represents a significant departure from this progress. While we recognize the desire to address weed pressure and improve turf quality, herbicides pose well-documented risks to human health, soil health, biodiversity, and pollinators. SES recommends pausing the proposed herbicide program, reaffirming least-toxic practices, and directing investment towards

soil improvement, aeration, overseeding, and ecological maintenance rather than expanding chemical applications.

The City of Saskatoon has already made important strides towards becoming a climate-resilient, low-emissions city. The 2026–2027 budget is an opportunity to reinforce this progress by prioritizing investments that reduce emissions, safeguard ecosystems, and protect public and environmental health. With thoughtful budgeting choices, Council can ensure Saskatoon continues to move towards a healthy, resilient, and sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Van Buskirk
SES Director of Policy & Communication