

Amended Gender Equity Draft Resolution

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the amended “Gender Equity: Updating the Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and the British Columbia Building Codes to include provisions for menstrual supplies” resolution and forward to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for consideration at their 2024 Annual Convention.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

At the Committee of Council meeting held on March 5, 2024, Committee of Council approved the following resolution:

“GENDER EQUITY: Updating the Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and the British Columbia Building Codes to include provisions for menstrual supplies

WHEREAS the British Columbia Building Code for 2024 uses a measured approach that aims to balance accessibility and inclusivity of ALL people; and

WHEREAS the 2024 British Columbia Building Code contains updated accessibility features for universal washrooms and that they must contain full sized adult changing tables; and no new updates were made on equity or full inclusivity to include menstrual supplies or sanitary disposal bins for those who menstruate; and

WHEREAS equity-based policies around access to menstrual products helps to support inclusion, accessibility, mobility, reduces stigma, and promotes gender equality for ALL people; and

WHEREAS menstruation is a normal, healthy bodily function and needs to be managed immediately; and

WHEREAS publicly accessible washrooms across Canada are governed by federal and provincial Building Codes, which state explicitly the amenities and supplies required by law, namely free toilet paper, soap, hand-drying facilities in all restrooms, urinals in the men’s restrooms; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Building Code and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations contain no mention of menstrual supplies or sanitary disposal bins, leaving it up to the building owner to decide if menstrual supply dispensers are installed for the benefit of their visitors, and if a cost is levied for the dispensed products; and

WHEREAS in December 2023, the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations were revised to include menstrual products in ALL federally regulated workplace restrooms; and

WHEREAS numerous municipal jurisdictions across Canada have implemented new policies or pilot projects to put menstrual supplies in restrooms; and

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WHEREAS amending the British Columbia Building Codes will obviate the need for individual municipalities to pass resolutions or start pilot projects to put menstrual products in civic restrooms, ensuring equitable access across the province; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Education for British Columbia, recognizing lack of access to menstrual supplies in schools as a barrier to education and an issue of equity in 2019 required all schools to provide free menstrual products in schools, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) call upon the Province of British Columbia to update the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and the British Columbia Building Codes to include provisions for menstrual supplies, and sanitary disposal bins as is currently required for toilet paper in restrooms outside the home.”

BACKGROUND

Councillor McCurrach provided a Notice of Motion to bring forward the above draft resolution. Committee of Council waived the Notice of Motion and approved the draft resolution.

REPORT SUMMARY

While the UBCM did accept the previous resolution, which was approved by Committee of Council, it has been noted that the UBCM draft resolutions template allows for only two to three ‘Whereas’ clauses. The amended draft resolution (Attachment 1) is for Committee’s reconsideration.

OPTIONS (✓ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Approve the amended draft resolution.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Delay the amendment to the draft resolution and request staff to provide additional information (to be specified).
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Not approve the amended resolution, which will retain the originally submitted resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Amended Gender Equity Draft Resolution