

October 17, 2018

Municipal Cannabis Transition Program Introduced

Government of Alberta unveils program to provide funding to urban municipalities with populations above 5,000 to support cannabis legalization costs

On October 15, 2018, the Government of Alberta introduced the **Municipal Cannabis Transition Program** (MCTP), a two-year, \$11.2 million funding commitment that will be distributed on a base plus per capita basis to urban municipalities with a population above 5,000. Specialized municipalities with an urban service area population above 5,000 are also eligible. The MCTP is intended to support eligible municipalities in covering administrative and enforcement costs related to cannabis legalization, including costs for the development or modification of land-use bylaws and permitting processes, studies and research related to the municipal impacts of cannabis legalization, education related to cannabis use regulations within the municipality, and administrative and enforcement staffing costs directly related to cannabis legalization.

RMA expressed disappointment in the MCTP's eligibility criteria, as approximately 85% of Alberta's municipalities will not be ineligible for funding, including all municipal districts and counties. Alberta's small urban municipalities will also be excluded, despite being the most likely to require additional funding and capacity support to prepare for legalization.

The MCTP does not align with the input the RMA provided to the Government of Alberta on how to best share federal cannabis excise revenues with municipalities, which called for 50% of Alberta's share of excise tax revenue to be shared among all municipalities, as municipalities of all types and sizes will incur costs to prepare for legalization. Unfortunately, the Government of Alberta chose not to engage RMA, AUMA, or other municipal organizations in the development of the MCTP, and as a result, it appears to exclude many of the municipalities who would most benefit from additional support in preparing for implementation.

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