

## Government of Alberta Launches Consultation on Cannabis Legalization

The Government of Alberta has launched [stakeholder consultations](#) on the legalization of cannabis at the federal level, and how the Government of Alberta and other stakeholder groups (including municipalities) will adapt to the legalization, which is expected to come into effect by July 2018.

Federal [Bill C-45](#) (commonly known as the *Cannabis Act*) will [legalize and regulate](#) the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis across Canada. The legalization and regulation process will place new expectations and responsibilities on federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal levels of government, as well as law enforcement agencies.

To develop a framework around the provincial role in cannabis legalization, [the Government of Alberta has developed a survey](#) to be completed by stakeholders and the public. The survey can be accessed [here](#). Written responses can also be emailed to [acs@gov.ab.ca](mailto:acs@gov.ab.ca), and will be posted publicly. The deadline to complete the survey or provide feedback is **July 31, 2017**.

In addition to the survey, the Government of Alberta has also provided a [community toolkit](#) that can help to guide community conversation on cannabis legalization.

The AAMDC encourages members to complete the survey or submit written input emphasizing the rural perspective on the legalization of cannabis. Challenges with the location of retail sales, monitoring and enforcement of private cultivation, and enforcement of cannabis-impaired driving could carry specific challenges for rural municipalities that may not be present in larger urban centres.

Perhaps most importantly, AAMDC members are encouraged to share their perspectives on how rural municipalities may be impacted by the commercial production of cannabis. The [2016 report](#) by the federal [Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation](#), upon which the *Cannabis Act* is based, framed the commercial production of cannabis as largely a federal issue. However, most cannabis production facilities will likely be in rural areas, which may have significant impacts for rural municipalities related to assessment, taxation, emergency response, law enforcement, economic development, environmental considerations, and other areas.

It is critical that rural municipalities advocate for open communication between federal regulators and the municipal governments likely to host cannabis production facilities to ensure that communication between all those involved in the process is consistent. Emphasizing the rural municipal impacts of production to the Government of Alberta will assist in furthering this conversation.

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