

Electoral Boundary Commission Interim Report Released: AAMDC Submission Featured (Updated)

The **Alberta Electoral Boundary Commission** (AEBC) has released its **interim report** on their proposed changes to Alberta's provincial electoral boundaries. The proposed changes are not final but if the proposed changes are accepted it could have an impact on rural Alberta's representation in the Alberta Legislature as three seats are to be redistributed from rural areas and allocated towards urban communities. The AEBC did recognize that rural Alberta's population is growing but that the population of Alberta's urban areas are growing at a faster rate and therefore, justified the redistribution of seats based on that rationale.

An important consideration when reading the interim report is in Appendix A which is the minority report put forward by panel member Gwen Day. A minority report is an opinion that diverges from the rest of the panel's recommendations and puts forward an alternative view point. The perspectives put forward in the minority report aligns more closely with the submission made by the AAMDC in early 2017. To view the AAMDC's entire submission to the AEBC, click [here](#).

The most significant proposed changes to the existing electoral boundaries featured in the interim report are:

- Consolidating four electoral divisions into three in the central northeast area of the province. Those current four electoral divisions are Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, and Bonnyville-Cold Lake.
- Consolidating five electoral divisions into four in the central west area of the province. Those current five electoral divisions are Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, West Yellowhead, Drayton Valley-Devon, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, and Stony Plain.
- Consolidating seven electoral divisions into six in the eastern side of the province. Those current seven electoral divisions are Battle River-Wainwright, Drumheller-Stettler, Strathmore-Brooks, Little Bow, Cardston-Taber-Warner, Cypress-Medicine Hat, and Vermilion-Lloydminster.
- Creating a new electoral division to the immediate north and west of Calgary, to account for the significant increase in the populations of Airdrie and Cochrane.

The report does, however, acknowledge comments made by the AAMDC during the public consultation process. On page 71 of the report, the AAMDC's submission is featured:

"...the AAMDC clearly communicated in their presentation to the Commission that: [t]he process or means through [which effective] representation is achieved [is] by balancing population and demographics, community interest and characteristics, existing municipal and natural boundaries, and other relevant criteria. Over-reliance on absolute voter parity may

not achieve the desired outcome and may inhibit the ability of Albertans to be effectively represented – effectively weakening Alberta’s democratic institutions.”

The AAMDC will continue to engage with the AEBC and will provide feedback on the interim report that emphasizes the need to ensure effective representation for Alberta’s rural residents and rural communities. AAMDC members are encouraged to submit their own feedback to the AEBC. The deadline for submissions is **July 16, 2017**. For more information on the submission process, click [here](#).

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