



**RMA**  
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES  
of ALBERTA

# **RMA Advocacy Report Card**

**Spring 2018**

*April 2018*



## **RMA Advocacy Report Card: Spring 2018**

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# Introduction

The Advocacy Report Card is divided into two sections.

- **Section 1** provides detailed information on the government response to the fall 2017 resolutions and includes the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Board of Directors' reaction to the response as well as anticipated follow up.
- **Section 2** updates members by reporting on all active resolutions, grouped by advocacy area.

**Please note that any reference to the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties or AAMDC in the Advocacy Report Card is equivalent to the Rural Municipalities of Alberta or RMA.**

## Definition of Terms

Following the adoption of resolutions at RMA conventions, resolutions are sent to the appropriate level of government for response. Once a response is received, RMA labels the resolution with one of five indicators which determines the status of that resolution. The intention of providing a status for each resolution is to evaluate whether the government response meets the intent of the resolution. The status is not intended to reflect RMA's advocacy efforts on a resolution.

Below are the descriptions of all resolution ranking statuses.

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Accepted	Meets RMA criteria as outlined in a) the resolution and b) as per the expectations of the Board of Directors.
Accepted in Principle	The development addresses that action is being taken to meet the intent of the resolution, but further action is required.
Accepted in Part	Some resolutions include multiple 'asks' in the operative clause. This status indicates that one of the 'asks' has been met while others require further action.
Intent Not Met	The intent of the resolution has not been met as outlined in the resolution or the current developments do not meet the approval of the Board of Directors.
Incomplete Information	RMA has not received enough information to assign a status. Further follow-up is required for RMA to make an informed decision on how to proceed.

# Section 1: Government Responses to Fall 2017 Resolutions

RMA recently received responses to the resolutions adopted at the fall 2017 convention from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada. The following table provides an overview of the initial assessment to resolutions following the response. **RMA emphasizes that this table only reflects the initial response received from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada and that advocacy efforts on all resolutions are in progress.**

## Reactions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION NAME	STATUS
1-17F	Centralization of Industrial Properties Assessment	Intent Not Met
2-17F	Completion of Alberta's Land-use Framework Prior to Establishment of Conservation and Protected Areas for Species at Risk	Accepted in Principle
3-17F	Municipal Action on Caribou Recovery Planning	Intent Not Met
4-17F	Water Act Approvals for Municipal Projects on Municipal Land	Intent Not Met
5-17F	Alberta Energy Regulator – Amendment to Transfer Approval Process	Intent Not Met
6-17F	Financial Support from AAMDC for Appeal of Virginia Hills/Dolomite Decision	Accepted
8-17F	Provincial Communications Plan for Farm Workplace Legislation	Accepted in Part
9-17F	AAMDC Refusal to Engage in Exploratory Discussion to Merge with AUMA	Accepted
10-17F	Provincial Industry-led Methane Flaring Strategy	Intent Not Met
12-17F	Specialized Clinical Counselling and Therapy for Distressed Emergency First Responders	Accepted in Principle
13-17F	AAMDC Advisory Committee to Support the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in Reviewing Charitable Gaming in Alberta	Accepted in Principle
14-17F	Cannabis Act	Intent Not Met
15-17F	Stopping the Implementation of Proposed Federal Tax Reforms	Accepted in Part
18-17F	Integrate Emergency Social Services into Emergency Management at Provincial Level	Accepted

19-17F	Builder Licensing Program Impacts	<b>Intent Not Met</b>
ER1-17F	Support for Trans Mountain Expansion Process	<b>Accepted in Part</b>
ER2-17F	Continued Provincial Funding Support for Agriculture Service Boards and Agricultural Societies	<b>Accepted</b>
ER3-17F	Effective Representation for Rural Albertans in Alberta's Legislative Assembly	<b>Intent Not Met</b>

## Resolution 1-17F

### Centralization of Industrial Properties Assessment

MD of Taber

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS Bill 21, the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* (MMGA) has created the new property type of Designated Industrial Property to be assessed by the new position of Provincial Assessor; and

WHEREAS Designated Industrial Property means: facilities regulated by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), or the National Energy Board (NEB), linear property, railway, and major plants as designated by the Minister in the regulation; and

WHEREAS sufficient conflict and ambiguity in the definitions between the MMGA and the draft regulations exist leaving municipalities open to significant risk in their primary funding model – property taxation; and

WHEREAS there is no published defining criteria on which the designation of ‘major plant’ is based; and

WHEREAS the valuation standard(s) for Designated Industrial Property are yet to be determined, published, and implemented by the Minister; and

WHEREAS studies of the impacts resulting from the draft regulatory definitions have not been completed and discussed with the affected municipalities; and

WHEREAS there has been little effort made to communicate the changes and impacts with municipalities and their representatives in a collaborative fashion; and

WHEREAS under the transitional model contracts for services have not been fully communicated to municipalities so municipalities may understand their responsibilities, the delegation of authority, reimbursement methods, levels and frequency of communication, and right of appeal, and/or the methodology related to the exchange of information between the Government of Alberta and the municipality; and

WHEREAS the capacity and qualifications of the Provincial Assessor and his/her staff is unknown; and

WHEREAS implementation of the components of this initiative must occur prior to January 1, 2018 in accordance with Statute;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request Alberta Municipal Affairs to delay implementation of the centralization of industrial property assessment until such time as Ministry personnel can procure the appropriate resources to develop valuation standards, regulated assessment rates, undertake and complete impact studies, communicate and collaborate with municipalities so the identified risks to their primary revenue structure can be mitigated throughout the transition and beyond.**

## ***Government Response***

### **► Alberta Municipal Affairs**

The centralization of industrial assessment constitutes a significant shift for both the province and municipalities. While it is recognized that implementation will take time, Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA) assumed responsibility for this function in January 2018, in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

MA will continue to work closely with municipalities and industry to shape this transition, inclusive of maintaining the standing advisory bodies currently in place, and providing regular updates through information bulletins, web-based materials, and participation in municipal forums.

With legislative provisions and regulations now finalized, it is important to note that the valuation standards and other rules for preparing assessments have not changed. Rather, the responsibility for the preparation of industrial assessments will transition from municipalities to the Provincial Assessor. Further, impacts from changes to regulatory definitions are expected to be minimal, as the regulatory review did not result in major policy change.

A hybrid delivery model is being pursued to assist in the broader transition. Within this model, the province will fulfill its responsibility using a combination of qualified in-house and contracted assessors. The province has commenced the process of integrating the assessment function for many of the Designated Industrial (DI) Properties into its direct operation. For other DI Properties, assessment services contracts are being finalized with a selected number of municipalities and are expected to be finalized with other municipalities in the coming months. Additional details regarding municipal responsibilities, reimbursement, and ongoing communication will be contained in these contracts.

MA appreciates the input received from municipalities in relation to the draft list of industrial properties designated as ‘major plants.’ This list has been finalized based on this input and is available in the Machinery and Equipment Minister's Guidelines.

## ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The centralization of industrial assessment was a significant shift to the *Municipal Government Act* under the most recent review. This change has the potential to disrupt municipal assessment operations and remove established local knowledge of facilities within municipalities. The resolution requests a delay in the implementation of the centralization until “...Ministry personnel can procure the appropriate resources to develop valuation standards, regulated assessment rates, undertake and complete impact studies, communicate and collaborate with municipalities....” Since Alberta Municipal Affairs assumed their new responsibilities as of January 2018 and there was no delay, this resolution’s intent has not been fulfilled. RMA will, however, continue to monitor this transition to ensure it meets the needs of municipalities. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.



## Resolution 2-17F

### Completion of Alberta's Land-use Framework Prior to Establishment of Conservation and Protected Areas for Species at Risk

County of Northern Lights

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS provincial recovery and action plans for species at risk appear to be developed and fully implemented in isolation; independently from directly impacted stakeholders, communities and other levels of governments; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta formally established the Land-use Framework (LUF) in 2008; which provides the tools, mechanisms and formal process for the delineation of smart regional growth opportunities, landscape-level planning and land-use management to effectively manage competing and sustainable activities through the development of regional land-use plans; and

WHEREAS natural resource industries form the lifeblood of many rural communities throughout Alberta by providing vital jobs and enhancing local wealth creation, and any restriction on land access will negatively impact local economies; and

WHEREAS the objective of Alberta's *Plan for Parks* (2009) is to improve the quality of human life; through new recreational opportunities and ease of local access to the Canadian wilderness; and

WHEREAS one objective of new parks or conservation areas is to enable protection for rare or vulnerable wildlife species; and

WHEREAS the local communities of rural Alberta are willing to participate in measures to enhance the natural environment, in conjunction with ensuring the existing and future economies of rural regions continue to prosper today and for future generations to come; and

WHEREAS the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* establishes the legal basis for regional land use planning in Alberta, requiring local government bodies to review their regulatory instruments to ensure compliance with the regional plan developed under the LUF; and

WHEREAS regional land-use plans developed under the LUF would serve as an ideal mechanism to inform planning for conservation and protected areas as regional plan development should take into consideration both environmental and economic priorities within a region;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that no additional conservation or protected areas be established, proposed or expanded in Alberta prior to the implementation of the remaining regional land-use plans.**

## *Government Response*

### **► Alberta Environment and Parks**

Regional planning is the key mechanism for protected area establishment. It is an integrated planning approach that looks at the balance across economic, environmental and social considerations, and provides for consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and the public.

Through regional planning, the provincial government will ensure there is consideration for species at risk recovery. Caribou range plans will be adapted over time to ensure they are benefiting caribou, while contributing to regional objectives in an integrated way with regional plans.

Federal recovery strategies for woodland caribou directed provinces to complete range plans by the fall of 2017. If Alberta does not create caribou range plans that satisfy federal criteria, the federal government can restrict or prohibit new and ongoing operations of Alberta industries through a Species at Risk protection order. If this happens, the process for creating and implementing these plans will be taken out of the hands of Albertans. Alberta released its Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan on December 19, 2017. Engagement with stakeholders on the draft range plan will continue in 2018.

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) staff will continue to discuss caribou range planning, including timelines, with Environment and Climate Change Canada in the development of a made-in-Alberta solution. Some conservation areas that contribute to management of caribou habitat are being considered under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan: Dillon River, Richardson, and Birch Mountain Wildland Provincial Parks and the Birch River Conservation Area.

There is flexibility in the regional planning process, and it can be used to advance priorities for identification of conservation areas in other regions. The analysis and scientific work used for assessing potential conservation areas can be used, and where conservation areas are identified, this can be aligned with other content in regional plans when they are completed. AEP staff will continue to evaluate opportunities to use regional planning processes as we believe that they are an effective way to set objectives and create a plan to achieve them.

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The regional planning process under the Land-use Framework has been slowed considerably and Alberta remains without regional plans in areas of significant future development.

As noted in the response from the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada has mandated the creation of caribou range plans – a process which is complicated by the lack of a regional plan in north western Alberta. This process has involved numerous consultations and recently, in March 2018, the Government of Alberta suspended the creation of caribou protection plans and requested additional assistance from the Government of Canada to identify the socio-economic impacts of such plans.

This resolution speaks directly to the concerns of rural municipalities and the creation conservation areas to protect caribou. Since the province has suspended this process in favour of a greater understanding of the impacts that future restrictions on development may have on local communities, this resolution is assigned a status **Accepted in Principle**.

## Resolution 3-17F

### Municipal Action on Caribou Recovery Planning

County of Northern Lights

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: AAMDC**

WHEREAS provincial recovery and action plans for species at risk appear to be developed and fully implemented in isolation; independently from directly impacted stakeholders, communities and other levels of governments; and

WHEREAS provincial and territorial range plans for the recovery of boreal woodland caribou were due to the Government of Canada by October 2017; demonstrating a clear legal commitment for habitat protection in order to avoid legal action; and

WHEREAS the May 2016 recommendations report, entitled *Setting Alberta on the Path to Caribou Recovery* was accepted by the Government of Alberta; and included the permanent protection of 1.8 million hectares of land in northwestern Alberta for boreal woodland caribou recovery; and

WHEREAS the 2016 report's recommendations of permanent protected areas for woodland caribou recovery simply follow forestry management unit (FMU) boundaries, with little consideration for existing and future energy dispositions, other mineral exploration, and inter-jurisdictional infrastructure; with an apparent disregard for comprehensive land-use planning and regional growth as provided for with the Land-use Framework; and

WHEREAS the local communities of rural Alberta are willing to participate in measures to enable the recovery of local caribou populations and to enhance the natural environment, in conjunction with ensuring the existing and future economies of rural regions continue to prosper today and for future generations to come; and

WHEREAS municipalities across Canada have expressed concern regarding the socio-economic impacts of protecting and/or sterilization of land to support caribou range planning, as required by the *Species at Risk Act*; and

WHEREAS challenges and priorities related to caribou range planning spill beyond municipal and provincial/territorial boundaries;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties proactively lead inter-jurisdictional municipal level caribou population recovery planning across Western Canada.**

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

RMA has not undertaken inter-jurisdictional municipal level caribou population recovery across western Canada. RMA has, however, advocated member concerns on this issue and in March 2018, the Government of Alberta suspended the creation of caribou protection plans and requested additional assistance from the Government of Canada to identify the socio-economic impacts of such plans. RMA considers this an important step to recognize RMA member concerns.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 4-17F

### Water Act Approvals for Municipal Projects on Municipal Land

County of Stettler

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS Alberta municipalities continue to facilitate growth and promote economic development that requires construction activity including road construction on municipal right of ways or construction of municipal projects on municipal land; and

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks, under the *Water Act*, requires approvals for all road construction and/or municipal projects on municipal property or right of ways; and

WHEREAS the required approvals are resulting in long delays on many projects requiring these approvals; and

WHEREAS roadways often require burrow pits (dugouts) that retain water better in drought conditions and many road ditch structures develop wetland environments;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to relax the requirement for formal approvals on all road construction on municipal right of ways less than 40 metres wide and consider alternate strategies for protecting water resources.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Alberta Environment and Parks**

Albertans care deeply about their water resources and support the government's efforts to effectively manage Alberta's water.

We are aware of municipal concerns related to road construction and maintenance in wetlands, and have made process improvements and put additional resources in place to expedite the application process for routine, low-impact activities. Alberta Environment and Parks must apply a fair and equitable process in managing new and existing *Water Act* applications in the system. We hold municipalities to the same standard we hold all applicants, including other provincial government departments.

We are targeting further process improvements through the development of Wetland Codes of Practice for low-impact activities. Municipalities are encouraged to work with regional approvals staff through pre-approval meetings to ensure they are aware of application requirements and submit complete applications to streamline the approvals process.

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

Though the response from the Government of Alberta recognizes the challenges faced by municipalities who are subject to relatively short construction seasons and extensive infrastructure networks, the response does not indicate any change in process or regulation to the extent outlined in the resolution. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 5-17F

### Alberta Energy Regulator – Amendment to Transfer Approval Process

Camrose County

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Energy, Alberta Energy Regulator**

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta are governed by the *Municipal Government Act*, established by the Government of Alberta; and

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta are dependent on property tax revenues to provide essential municipal services; and

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta are responsible to collect and forward the education requisition to Alberta Education; and

WHEREAS property taxes remain the main source of revenue for municipalities, as provincial and federal transfers are diminishing, while the downloading and offloading of services and programs continues; and

WHEREAS the ability of a municipality to recover linear property tax arrears is affected by provincial acts and regulations established by Alberta Energy under which the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) authorizes transfers; and

WHEREAS the AER does not currently have the power to impose conditions on license transfers relating to unpaid municipal taxes; and

WHEREAS the current legislation has limited the recourse available to a municipality to recover tax arrears owed from oil and gas companies;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) requests the Government of Alberta amend the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), and other provincial legislation, regulations and policies, including AER Directive 006: Licensee Liability Rating (LLR) Program and Licence Transfer Process to:**

- broaden the tax recovery power of municipalities to collect linear property taxes, Alberta housing foundation requisitions and Alberta school requisitions owing on oil and gas operations, and
- provide the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) the ability to include municipal tax compliance as part of the specified list of AER requirements before license transfers will be considered;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC request that Alberta Energy direct the AER that prior to refunding any security deposits, check with all municipalities in which the company requesting the refund had leases in, to ensure property taxes are current.**

#### *Government Response*

#### ► **Alberta Municipal Affairs**

The Government of Alberta (GOA) recognizes the non-collection of property taxes has become more problematic in the current economic environment. The GOA also recognizes this situation will likely continue as the economy recovers. The *Municipal Government Act* has provisions for municipalities to collect such debts; however, the GOA acknowledges that these methods can be difficult to implement.

In response, the GOA launched the Provincial Education Requisition Credit program. This program will provide municipalities with an education property tax credit equal to the uncollectable education property taxes on delinquent oil and gas properties, upon approval of a qualifying application. The first application deadline was earlier this year.

Changes to the Minister's Guidelines enables well and pipeline assessments to be reduced to zero under specific conditions, which are: being on the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) Debtor Registry, the AER Insolvency List (with a receivership or bankruptcy status), and having not produced for the 12 months prior to October 31.

#### ► **Alberta Energy**

The GOA is currently reviewing the management of historic, current, and future liabilities associated with oil and gas wells and facilities. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties participated in engagement sessions held last summer as part of the review. Alberta Energy, Alberta Environment and Parks, and the AER are actively looking for ways to make sure we are addressing full life cycle management of energy development and reducing the number of inactive wells and facilities. This input will be considered in recommendations being developed to improve the liability management system.

The GOA adheres to the polluter-pays principle. It is the expectation of Albertans and of this government that industry should continue covering the costs related to cleaning up and decommissioning oil wells and associated infrastructure. The GOA is committed to ensuring the liabilities associated with the full life cycle of energy development are managed appropriately and that Albertans and the environment are protected.

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

RMA appreciates the recognition and the multiple steps being taken by the Government of Alberta to address the challenges faced by municipalities as a result of oil and gas operators who have not paid property taxes. At this moment, however, there has been only limited improvements for municipalities through the Provincial Education Requisition Credit (PERC) program which only applies to the education property tax portion of the unpaid linear oil and gas property taxes. Until the amendments listed in the resolution are made, or more substantial improvements to the overall liability management system are provided, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.



## Resolution 6-17F

### Financial Support from AAMDC for Appeal of Virginia Hills/Dolomite Decision

Northern Sunrise County

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: AAMDC**

WHEREAS the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta ruled in favour of the Applicant on their motion to have the status of secured creditor as described in Section 304 of the *Municipal Government Act* in cases of insolvency of linear property to be superseded by the requirements of the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* and indebtedness to municipal taxing authorities be listed as unsecured debt; and

WHEREAS Northern Sunrise County (NSC) is a municipal taxing authority of linear properties controlled and owned by Virginia Hills Oil Corp. and Dolomite Energy Inc.; and

WHEREAS the law firm of Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer (RMRF) identified valid considerations on which this ruling could be challenged; and

WHEREAS RMRF invited NSC to stand as the appellant of this decision and NSC has so agreed; and

WHEREAS NSC has borne the cost of \$4,191 to date to initiate this appeal and RMRF estimates costs will run to \$30,000 to completion of the process; and

WHEREAS the implications of this decision would potentially affect all Alberta municipalities that have linear assessment; and

WHEREAS as per Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) policy (FIN-2007-07-2: AAMDC Involvement in Member Legal Matters), an endorsed resolution is required to support member legal appeals that have been heard by a Provincial or Federal Court;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, through financial resources, support Northern Sunrise County in the legal fees associated with this appeal in an act of solidarity as the overruling of this case is imperative for all municipalities that are owed taxes and outstanding penalties from insolvent organization.**

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

Through RMA's *Involvement in Member Legal Matters* policy, RMA provided financial support to Northern Sunrise County to appeal the court ruling referenced in this resolution. As such, this resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted**.

## Resolution 8-17F

### Provincial Communications Plan for Farm Workplace Legislation

Sturgeon County

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Labour**

WHEREAS the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* received Royal Assent on December 11, 2015; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta subsequently established technical working groups to provide recommendations on how employment standards, occupational health and safety, and labour relations should be applied to the agriculture sector, with the intent of influencing the *Fair and Family-Friendly Workplace Act*; and

WHEREAS the *Fair and Family-Friendly Workplace Act* received Royal Assent on June 7, 2017; and

WHEREAS it is generally understood that both acts and any associated regulations will impact the agricultural industry; and

WHEREAS a detailed understanding of these impacts, and any associated changes required of agricultural producers and stakeholders is necessary to ensure compliance given the scope of the new legislation; and

WHEREAS without a thorough understanding of farmworker legislation, agriculture producers and workers are challenged to understand how their businesses, families, and livelihoods are impacted; and

WHEREAS agriculture is an integral part of Alberta's economy and Albertans' way of life and misinformation and lack of certainty regarding legislative requirements make it challenging to make informed business decisions;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta develop and implement a communications plan to advise Alberta's agriculture sector of actual and intended changes regarding workplace legislation, with the outcome of establishing increased awareness and effective change management.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has no comments on this resolution as Alberta Labour is leading the communication rollout for farm workplace legislation.

##### ► **Alberta Labour**

Alberta Labour is supportive of the main principles in Resolution 8-17F in keeping farm and ranch stakeholders informed and aware of changes related to occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation.

It is a priority for our government that our stakeholders have time to understand and engage with the reports generated by the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). Consultations conducted with stakeholders in the agricultural community through TWGs included both employer and employee representatives and was a first step in involving agriculture producers and workers who may be challenged to understand how their businesses, families, and livelihoods may be affected by this legislation. The reports, including an easy-to-read summary document of the recommendations, are available at [www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch.aspx).

We continue to ensure that farmers and ranchers have ample time and support to provide their feedback on the reports of the TWGs. To further that goal, we extended the deadline for stakeholders to provide feedback to February 28, 2017.

If the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) or any constituent members would like assistance in understanding the TWG recommendations, current OHS Code requirements, or further explanation of the consultation process, please contact AL through the dedicated farm and ranch email at [farmandranch@gov.ab.ca](mailto:farmandranch@gov.ab.ca) or the OHS Contact Centre at 1 866-415-8690.

We have heard the AAMDC's request and will continue to communicate and work with the agricultural sector as we move forward to ensure they are aware of our government's direction, and to offer assistance in updating their members. In regard to Employment Standards, we have developed educational resources specific to the farm and ranch sector, including posters and brochures, online webinars and extensive information on the government's website.

We are working closely with stakeholder representatives to share both the employment standards and OHS information resources with farmers and ranchers in Alberta. We will continue to listen to concerns raised, communicate with stakeholders, and provide certainty and clarity as we maintain safe, fair, and healthy workplaces in our province.

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The Government of Alberta response indicates that over the past two years, information on changes to farm and ranch workplace legislation, as well as opportunities for stakeholder input into such changes, have occurred through multiple means and have been based on an intent to raise both awareness and understanding of the changes among employers and employees in the farm and ranch sector.

While the response demonstrates the range of information-sharing that has occurred, it does not reference a current or future communications plan for ensuring effective change management, which is a central request in the resolution. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part** and RMA will follow-up with Alberta Labour regarding the development of a communications plan.

## Resolution 9-17F

### AAMDC Refusal to Engage in Exploratory Discussion to Merge with AUMA

MD of Willow Creek

*Carried*

#### ► **Advocacy Target: AAMDC**

WHEREAS the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) has provided a clear and constant voice for rural Alberta for over 90 years; and

WHEREAS the AAMDC exists to provide a slate of member services for rural Alberta, including but not limited to advocacy, elected officials education, insurance management, networking, research, risk management, and a trade division; and

WHEREAS the Board of the AAMDC is comprised of democratically elected rural representatives who have been given a clear mandate, from its membership, to provide a strong voice to advance the ideals, values and concerns of rural municipalities that would otherwise be lost; and

WHEREAS a merger with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) would result in lost representation, lost autonomy, lost influence with senior levels of government and the eventual amalgamation of rural municipalities with 266 urban municipalities, looking to obtain the lucrative trade division of AAMDC;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) refuse to enter into any discussions with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) that would result in any attempt to merge the AAMDC with AUMA.**

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The AUMA is a valued partner for RMA, and collaborating to create a unified municipal voice on issues of mutual importance is an effective advocacy approach. However, RMA respects its members' direction that an independent rural municipal voice is needed in Alberta, and is committed to continuing to serve that role. This resolution is deemed **Accepted**.

## Resolution 10-17F

### Provincial Industry-led Methane Flaring Strategy

MD of Greenview

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Energy, Alberta Environment and Parks**

WHEREAS the Alberta Climate Leadership Plan states “Alberta will reduce methane emissions from oil and gas operations by 45% by 2025;” and

WHEREAS these new regulations may cause increased costs and layoffs of oil and gas personnel along with the closure of many marginal wells; and

WHEREAS this initiative may negatively affect municipal linear assessments, machinery and equipment assessments and add to the orphan well list;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Government of Alberta to permit an industry-led approach to a reduction in methane emissions.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Alberta Energy**

The climate change impact of methane is significant—25 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. Taking action to reduce significant emissions is a cost effective way to address climate change concerns. The Government of Alberta (GOA) is committed to reducing methane emissions in the oil and gas sector by 45 per cent from 2014 levels by 2025—at the lowest possible cost to industry. This will be achieved in the most economically efficient manner possible, while maintaining industry competitiveness.

Alberta Energy (AE) and the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) continue to work on draft emissions reduction requirements. Government and the AER have been working with stakeholders from industry, environmental organizations, and academia to develop the plan to achieve emissions reduction targets. In developing draft directives, balanced consideration has been given to industry’s recommendations, and stakeholders are continuing to be engaged through the Methane Reduction Oversight Committee. There are a number of industry representatives on the committee, including the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Explorers and Producers Association of Canada, Canadian Natural, Cenovus, Shell, Husky, Imperial Oil and Encana. These companies have made valuable contributions by providing technical expertise on actions that could be taken to reduce methane emissions, while maintaining the competitiveness of the oil and gas industry.

Like industry, government understands the importance of a made-in-Alberta approach to meet the emissions reduction commitment. Alberta is resolved to maintain the regulatory lead on the file by ensuring provincial requirements meet the federal emissions reduction required by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The federal government has made clear its intention to regulate methane

emissions to meet a methane reduction target similar to Alberta's. Given that fact, it is necessary to work together to ensure that Alberta can meet its commitment with regulations held and administered in Alberta. Discussions are underway with federal counterparts to meet desired outcomes in a way that addresses Alberta's unique operating conditions. Additionally, it is important Alberta is able to demonstrate our oil and gas industry's environmental leadership. Ensuring this requires that Alberta advances a credible and verifiable approach to meeting emissions reduction obligations. Alberta cannot have this threatened by proposing a suite of regulatory actions that fails to meet the emissions reduction commitment.

Alberta's upstream oil and gas industry is part of the socio-economic fabric of the province, and government recognizes the importance of the competitiveness of the energy sector. The GOA granted a five-year carbon levy exemption to support the industry transition to lower methane emissions, which is expected to provide support to industry in the form of avoided costs of approximately \$2.8 billion between 2017 and 2023. Alberta also worked constructively with the federal government to avoid federal requirements that would have meant earlier regulatory impacts, which would have added cost and created immediate investment risks for industry. These have been important measures to maintain and contribute to the competitiveness of Alberta's energy sector.

In addition, by advocating for a delayed implementation timeline for regulation, the GOA has created an opportunity for operators to capitalize on methane reduction actions through the Alberta Carbon Offset System for an extended period of time.

#### ► ***Alberta Environment and Parks***

Alberta Environment and Parks has no further input beyond the response from Alberta Energy.

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

RMA recognizes the significance of methane as a greenhouse gas and the need to reduce methane emissions. RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's response which highlights that the targets outlined by the Government of Alberta will be met in a manner that imposes the lowest cost on industry. RMA is also encouraged that the formulation of the emissions reduction requirements are supported by industry representatives; however, the intent of the resolution requests that an "industry-led approach" be used to develop the methane emissions reduction requirements, which is not considered in the government response. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 12-17F

### Specialized Clinical Counselling and Therapy for Distressed Emergency First Responders

County of St. Paul

Carried

► ***Advocacy Target: Alberta Health, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Community and Social Services***

WHEREAS accidents, emergencies, human conflict, natural disasters, and events where there is the potential for illness, injury, or death occur daily in Alberta; and

WHEREAS emergency first responders are typically found at the scene of accidents, emergencies, human conflict, natural disasters, and events where there is the potential for illness, injury, or death which results in emotionally distressing situations; and

WHEREAS research indicates that emergency first responders are at high risk for depression, anxiety, family dysfunction, negative work-site interactions, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and toxic stress and over time, ongoing toxic stress leads to increased rates of heart disease, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, and other medical illnesses; and

WHEREAS research indicates that the suicide rates for emergency first responders are much higher than the general population; and

WHEREAS emergency first responders are traditionally viewed by the public as emotionally resilient and are expected to always remain calm under pressure, which often creates difficult emotional challenges for emergency first responders experiencing distress; and

WHEREAS emergency first responders, their respective agencies, and municipalities have various methods for debriefing following serious emergency incidents, debriefing is not necessarily sufficient in assisting individuals with managing the emotional and psychological effects of traumatic experiences; and

WHEREAS not all psychiatrist, psychologist or therapist clinicians are skilled and trained at treating emergency first responders; it is crucial that clinicians treating first responders have extensive experience and expertise in the specialized area of treating emergency first responders; and

WHEREAS many small, remote, and rural municipalities do not have specialized clinicians present in their communities; and

WHEREAS it is currently an additional burden placed on many emergency first responders experiencing distress to have to travel long distances to seek treatment; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has demonstrated its prioritization of mental health initiatives through the Valuing Mental Health Report and other various programs and initiatives;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties strongly encourages the Government of Alberta to create and staff a governmental unit capable of providing specialized clinical counselling and therapy for distressed emergency first responders capable of servicing and travelling to all regions of the Province.

### *Government Response*

#### ► **Alberta Health**

The Ministry of Health is working to promote and focus on the mental health of health care practitioners, including paramedics, within the publicly funded health system. Alberta Health can only speak to supports provided for paramedics, as supports for police forces and firefighters are outside the purview of the ministry.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has implemented a Mental Health Task Force made up of frontline paramedics and a Psychological Health and Safety Advisory Committee, with representation from the ministry, the Health Sciences Association of Alberta, ambulance operators (including contracted providers), the Alberta College of Paramedics, and the Workers' Compensation Board.

Measures implemented by AHS include the rollout of a suicide prevention course to all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) supervisors and peer support team members, and the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) program from the Mental Health Commission of Canada to all EMS practitioners in Alberta. AHS has also hired a permanent senior advisor to ensure adequate mental health supports are available to paramedics, and continues to train staff to be trainers of the R2MR resiliency program.

The AHS EMS Psychological Awareness and Wellness Support program provides an accredited facility dog (AFD) to help support EMS providers that have been on challenging calls. AFDs have been shown to have a calming and positive effect on a person's psychological health. They are bred, raised, trained and selected for their temperament. AFDs are skilled in supporting a variety of people, whereas a service dog is dedicated to assisting a specific individual.

AHS is also expanding reintegration training across the province to support psychologically injured paramedics through all stages of their injury, with the goal of helping staff return to work in the safest possible way. By implementing new minimum training requirements to improve the quality of peer support available through the Critical Incident Support Management (CISM) program, AHS staff also have access to crisis support, chaplain services, grief counselling and the Mental Health Helpline to help cope with the challenges of the work environment. All services are available 24/7 and are confidential and free to use.

#### ► **Alberta Municipal Affairs**

For many years, Alberta Municipal Affairs (MA), through the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), has supported the operation and training of emergency responders and local health care providers who provide the CISM. The CISM has traditionally been a regional cohort of multi-disciplinary emergency responders, social service professionals, and mental health professionals.



In recent years, the OFC has worked with and provided funding to the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) to provide CISM training, in conjunction with a contracted registered mental health clinician. The AFCA is holding these regionally based training sessions across the province.

In the wake of the Horse River Fire (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo) in 2016, the OFC has entered into a further Conditional Grant Agreement with the AFCA, for their clinician to provide CISM Operational Stress Injuries (OSI), and Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries (PTSI) supports to fire and other emergency responders who participated in these events.

To support the OFC, the AFCA CISM training, and to co-ordinate the delivery of OSI/CISM programming within the Government of Alberta (GOA), MA will be posting a competition for a two-year temporary Program Services position. This individual's role will be to blend and enhance these and other programs from the emergency responder perspective; strengthen existing relationships and build new ones within the GOA and with external stakeholders and service provider groups; and provide guidance on the development of a permanent and sustainable OSI, PTSI, and a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder prevention and support program for Alberta's emergency responder community.

#### ► ***Alberta Community and Social Services***

Alberta Community and Social Services recognizes the importance of supporting first responders exposed to emotionally distressing situations during emergency events and the need for adequate supports to be available to those requiring services. The ministry supports and will follow the expertise of the responsible agencies for mental health initiatives through their programs.

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The overall Government of Alberta response indicates a wide range of existing preventative and post-incident mental health support systems for emergency first responders, as well as ongoing activities to enhance and broaden such services in the wake of first responders' roles in responding to recent natural disasters in Alberta.

The Alberta Health response indicates a current initiative to deliver regional reintegration training for paramedics suffering psychological injuries with the goal of supporting their return to work. Similarly, the Alberta Municipal Affairs response indicates an effort to improve the coordination and accessibility of multiple separate programs supporting the mental health of first responders. These examples both align with the intent of the resolution, which is to centralize mental health supports for first responders under a single "governmental unit" with the capability to provide such services in all regions of the province.

RMA appreciates the efforts of the Government of Alberta in supporting the mental health of first responders. As the government response reflects elements of the centralized, mobile unit requested in the operative clause, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and RMA will follow up with Alberta Health and Municipal Affairs to determine whether the changes references will meaningfully improve the integration and mobility of first responder mental health support services.

## Resolution 13-17F

### AAMDC Advisory Committee to Support the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in Reviewing Charitable Gaming in Alberta

County of Barrhead

*Carried*

#### ► **Advocacy Target: AAMDC**

WHEREAS there is a great need for charitable organizations to find ways to raise funds to maintain and expand their operations in Alberta for the good of the residents of the Province of Alberta; and

WHEREAS there is a large disparity between the frequency of opportunities available to rural charitable organizations and the funding provided compared with charitable organizations in major urban communities, with an average difference of \$60,000; and

WHEREAS the challenges of rural charitable organizations regarding access to casinos and the distribution of proceeds from casinos has been formally under review since at least 2009 with limited progress; and

WHEREAS the membership of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) approved a resolution at its November 2016 convention urging the Government of Alberta to change Alberta's charitable gaming model so as to provide equity to all charitable organizations in Alberta, by addressing the disparity between the funding provided, and the frequency of opportunities available to charitable organizations in major urban centers compared with those in rural communities, and

WHEREAS although it appears that the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) acknowledges the challenges of rural municipalities associated with accessing funding through casinos, to date, neither Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, nor the AGLC, have indicated any timeline for implementation of any change to Alberta's current charitable gaming model; and

WHEREAS it would be beneficial and expedient to establish a committee consisting of representatives from the AAMDC membership to support the work planned by the AGLC, under the authority of Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, in reviewing the province's current charitable gaming model;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties establish an advisory committee with a mandate to provide a rural perspective in support of the efforts of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission's commitment in moving forward with changes in the charitable gaming funding to treat all organizations equally across the province.**

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

RMA has selected members for the Charitable Gaming Model Committee, with the first meeting scheduled for early May 2018. RMA plans for the Committee to complete its mandate by delivering recommendations to the Government of Alberta in fall 2018. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be re-evaluated based on the committee's progress in developing recommendations.

## Resolution 14-17F

### Cannabis Act

MD of Taber

Carried

#### ► ***Advocacy Target: Health Canada, Alberta Cannabis Secretariat, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General***

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has introduced legislation to legalize cannabis by July 2018 which will permit possession of up to 30 grams of dried cannabis by any person over 18 years of age and up to 5 grams by any person between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age; and

WHEREAS cannabis affects memory, attention, psychomotor function and poses a long term developmental risk to children and youth, an increased risk to the general public through impaired driving, uncertain long term effects to users mental health and public safety concerns related to its illicit production and distribution; and

WHEREAS it known that tobacco related illness is responsible for 37,000 deaths in Canada each year yet little is known regarding the social cost of the legalization of cannabis as it relates to increased health care costs; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has indicated to the Government of Canada that a cautious implementation of legalization of cannabis is necessary to permit the science of law enforcement time to develop in order to support evidence based decision making; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has a role in determining how cannabis will be distributed and consumed and has the legislative ability to address impaired driving, public health, education, taxation, and distribution of cannabis; and

WHEREAS Alberta's municipalities will be responsible for land use and zoning issues related to retail sale and production of cannabis;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate that the Government of Alberta oppose the legalization of cannabis for recreational use in the Province of Alberta until a complete understanding of the implications that the legalization of cannabis will have on the health of individuals and on community safety is publicly available.**

#### ***Government Response***

##### ► ***Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (Alberta Cannabis Secretariat)***

As noted in Resolution 14-17F, the decision to legalize cannabis in Canada was made by the federal government. In April 2017, the Government of Canada introduced legislation to legalize, regulate, and restrict access to cannabis, which is expected to come into force this summer. Under the proposed legislation, provincial and territorial governments were left with the responsibility to establish the distribution and retail systems for cannabis within their respective jurisdictions. If provinces do not act in these areas, then the federal government would operate an online retail system.

In response to the federal government's decision, the Government of Alberta (GOA) developed the Alberta Cannabis Framework (ACF), and introduced legislation to manage how cannabis will be distributed, sold, and consumed within Alberta. The development of the ACF and legislation was guided by the following four policy objectives:

- Keeping cannabis out of the hands of children;
- Promoting safety on roads, in workplaces, and public spaces;
- Protecting public health; and
- Limiting the illicit market for cannabis.

In order to ensure that the views of Albertans were reflected in the development of this approach, the province completed an extensive public engagement which saw over 60,000 individuals participate in two phases of online and in-person engagement. Additionally, the Alberta Cannabis Secretariat met with over 100 organizations through a roundtable process, and worked extensively with Indigenous and municipal partners and organizations, including the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC), to ensure that the impacts of legalized cannabis on Albertans were understood. The feedback obtained throughout this engagement process, along with input from health, law enforcement, and other subject area experts was incorporated into the final ACF, and subsequently led to the passing of Bill 26: *An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis in Alberta*.

Throughout this process, the GOA has been working closely with the federal government to ensure that the priorities and concerns of Albertans are reflected in the development of the overall system for legalized cannabis. Federal, provincial, and territorial officials continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss key areas of concern including issues related to production, taxation, enforcement of impaired driving, and public education and awareness as they specifically relate to cannabis legalization. As chair of the Council of the Federation, Premier Notley wrote to the Prime Minister in December, 2017 to share a report from the Council of the Federation Working Group on cannabis legalization and regulation, which highlighted several areas of ongoing concern among provincial and territorial governments. As legalization approaches, the GOA will continue to work closely with its intergovernmental, municipal, and Indigenous partners to ensure that these concerns are addressed prior to implementation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on this resolution, and we look forward to a continued and productive relationship with AAMDC as we move towards implementing a legal cannabis system in Alberta that protects the health and safety of Albertans and their communities.

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

While RMA appreciates that the Government of Alberta has conducted extensive public engagement, with input from health, law enforcement and other subject area experts to understand the impacts of cannabis legalization, the fact remains that there are significant gaps in academic, government and industry research efforts related to the impacts of legalized cannabis on public health and community safety. RMA acknowledges that there is a stark difference between understanding concerns from stakeholders and understanding actual implications gleaned from empirical research in communities in which cannabis is legalized. RMA recognizes that this issue is not well researched, however, staff have

been actively assisting municipalities in adapting to these changes by providing workshops and information as it becomes available. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to advocate that the Government of Alberta lead social and health impact assessments once cannabis has been legalized.

## Resolution 15-17F

### Stopping the Implementation of Proposed Federal Tax Reforms

Brazeau County

*Carried*

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Finance Canada**

WHEREAS on July 18, 2017, the Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, announced changes to three areas of tax planning carried out by private corporations; and

WHEREAS there has been significant backlash from small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and the agricultural sector across the country; and

WHEREAS the proposed changes create two classes of taxpayers, not achieving the proposed crackdown on tax avoidance the Government of Canada sets out to achieve; and

WHEREAS the proposed changes significantly reduce the ability to income split, which may result in higher taxes for shareholders and current income splitting practices among family members; and

WHEREAS the proposed changes to rules that prevent keeping investment income inside a corporation to take advantage of lower tax rates, in order to more easily invest and grow a healthy business; and

WHEREAS the proposed changes aim to eliminate tax plans that convert dividend income into lower-taxed capital gains;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Canada not to proceed with the proposed federal tax reforms that will negatively impact small to medium enterprises and the agricultural sector.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Finance Canada**

Dear Mr. Kemmere:

On behalf of the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Bill Morneau, thank you for your correspondence of November 28, 2017 regarding the Government of Canada's proposed changes to address tax planning using private corporations.

Since the launch of public consultations on July 18, 2017, Canadians have engaged in an important discussion on proposed measures to address tax planning using private corporations. The Government has listened to and appreciates the feedback of the many Canadians who are helping to get this right. The Government is committed to addressing any unintended consequences of these measures and is focused on supporting Canada's hard-working, middle-class small business owners, while targeting unfair advantages that largely benefit the wealthiest Canadians.

Canadians work hard and should be rewarded for that work with greater opportunities for themselves and their families. Since coming to office, the Government has taken a number of actions that demonstrate its commitment to an economy that works for the middle class and those working hard to join it. As one of its first actions, the Government raised taxes on the wealthiest one percent in order to cut taxes for the middle class, benefitting nine million Canadians. In Budget 2016, the Government replaced the previous child benefit system with the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), which is simpler, more generous, and better targeted to those who need it most.

The Fall Economic Statement, tabled on October 24, 2017, builds on this progress by proposing to:

- Lower the small business tax rate to 10 percent, effective January 1, 2018, and to 9 percent, effective January 1, 2019. For the average small business, this will leave an additional \$1600 per year for entrepreneurs and innovators to reinvest in their business.
- Enhance the Working Income Tax Benefit by \$500 million per year, starting in 2019, to improve the financial security of low-income working Canadians. This is in addition to the increase of \$250 million annually already set to come into effect in that year as part of the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan.
- Strengthen the CCB by increasing the benefit annually, to keep pace with the rising cost of living, as of July 2018 — two years ahead of schedule.

As the economy grows, the Government will ensure that every Canadian pays their fair share, so that the benefits of that growth can be shared by more than just a wealthy few. Fairness in the tax system allows the Government to keep taxes low, while ensuring the ability to fund programs and services for all Canadians. The Government will move forward to ensure that Canada's competitive corporate income tax rates are not being used by high-income individuals to gain a personal tax advantage through their private corporations, taking into account the feedback received from Canadians on each aspect of the consultation.

### *Income Sprinkling*

Through income sprinkling, high-income individuals can divert corporate income to family members who are subject to lower personal tax rates or who may not be taxable at all. In some cases, someone earning \$300,000 with a spouse and two adult children can use a private corporation to get tax savings that amount to roughly what the average Canadian earns in a year.

Throughout the consultation period, the Government received feedback on the complexity of the proposed measures and potential unintended consequences. The Government also heard that the measures could create uncertainty in relation to how amounts received from a family business would be taxed.

Taking into account the submissions made through the consultation, the Government will move forward with simplified measures to limit income sprinkling using private corporations, while ensuring that the rules do not impact businesses to the extent that there are clear and meaningful contributions by spouses, children and other family members. The simplified income sprinkling measures aim to provide

greater certainty for family members who contribute to a family business. The revised measures are proposed to be effective for the 2018 and subsequent taxation years.

A number of stakeholders also identified potential unintended consequences associated with the proposed measures to address the multiplication of the lifetime capital gains exemption (LCGE). For example, concerns were raised about the potential impact on intergenerational transfers of family businesses. In light of these concerns, the Government will not be moving forward with measures to limit access to the LCGE.

### *Passive Investment*

During the consultation period, the Government heard from business owners that the flexibility afforded from savings accumulated in the corporation is important to their success. Savings may be held within a corporation to finance an upcoming business expansion, to save for a downturn, or to provide greater flexibility to deal with personal circumstances, such as parental leave, sick days or retirement.

At the same time, holding a passive investment portfolio inside a private corporation allows the owners to take advantage of low corporate income tax rates to gain a personal wealth advantage. The low small business rate, for example, can provide an initial advantage of roughly 35 cents on each dollar of corporate income saved, compared to the same investment made outside a corporation. A significant advantage persists after the investment income is paid out of the corporation to its owners.

The Government will move forward with measures to limit tax deferral opportunities related to passive investments, with a focus on high-income individuals who benefit under the current rules from unlimited savings opportunities far beyond the pension, Registered Retirement Savings Plan and Tax-Free Savings Plan limits available to other Canadians. In further developing these measures, the Government will ensure that:

- All past investments and the income earned from those investments will be protected. In other words, the measures will apply only on a go-forward basis.
- Businesses can continue to save for contingencies or future investments in growth.
- A \$50,000 threshold on passive income in a year (equivalent to \$1 million in savings based on a nominal 5-percent rate of return) — an amount that is exceeded by only 3 percent of corporations — is available. These changes will provide business owners with more flexibility to build a cushion of savings for business purposes and to deal with personal circumstances. There will be no tax increase on passive income below this threshold.
- Incentives are maintained, so that Canada's venture capital and angel investors can continue to invest in the next generation of Canadian innovation.

The Government will propose specific measures to limit tax deferral opportunities related to passive investments, and will release draft legislation as part of Budget 2018.

### *Conversion of Income into Capital Gains*



In the consultation paper of July 18, 2017, the Government sought to strengthen the income tax rules to curb tax planning strategies involving the conversion of income into lower-taxed capital gains. The consultation raised issues concerning unintended consequences and potential challenges for intergenerational transfers of businesses, including farms. Given these issues, the Government will not move forward with the proposed changes regarding the conversion of income into capital gains, and the draft legislative proposals released with the consultation, including the proposed effective date of July 18, 2017, will not proceed.

The Government will continue its outreach to farmers, fishers and other business owners to develop proposals to better accommodate intergenerational transfers of businesses while protecting the fairness of the tax system.

### *Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs*

The Government is committed to providing comprehensive and effective support to help businesses grow, invest and create additional good, well-paying jobs. Canada's low corporate taxes and other supports through the tax system encourage new capital investment that make businesses more productive and competitive. Reducing the federal small business tax rate to 9 percent will allow small businesses to retain even more of their earnings to reinvest, supporting the growth of their business and job creation.

Small and medium-sized businesses in Canada also benefit from direct federal program support for scaling up, including access to financing and foreign markets, support for innovation, and services to build entrepreneurial and management capacity. This support is delivered through a number of key federal organizations including:

- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada;
- The National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program;
- Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioner Service;
- Export Development Canada (EDC);
- Regional Development Agencies; and
- The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), which serves 49,000 Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises and has made more than \$29 billion in commitments.

Most recently, the Government is advancing a number of key initiatives that are increasing the availability of financing for businesses. Budget 2017 announced the Government is making available \$400 million through the BDC to increase the availability of late-stage venture capital, through a new initiative called the Venture Capital Catalyst Initiative. Budget 2017 also announced that nearly \$1.4 billion in new financing would be made available through the BDC and EDC to help Canada's clean technology businesses grow and expand. As well, Budget 2017 is making available up to \$950 million for a small number of business-led innovation "superclusters," making it easier for innovators and potential customers to work closely together on research, development and demonstration activities to boost productivity, create jobs and drive economic growth.

Going forward, the Government will ensure that corporations that contribute to job creation and economic growth continue to benefit from a supportive tax environment and other measures aimed at helping them succeed.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Elliot Hughes

Deputy Director — Tax Policy

The Office of the Honourable Bill Morneau — Minister of Finance

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The Government of Canada response indicates that several proposed tax reforms will not be implemented due to concerns expressed by RMA and other stakeholders across Canada. In particular, the response highlights the decision to not proceed with proposed measures to address the multiplication of the lifetime capital gains exemption due to the potential impacts on intergenerational transfers of family businesses, including farms.

The Government of Canada will also not implement changes related to the conversion of income into capital gains due to their potential unintended impacts on small businesses and farms. Additionally, the government of Canada plans to consult farmers, fishers, and other business owners on how to better accommodate intergenerational transfers of businesses while protecting the fairness of the tax system.

While RMA is pleased with the Government of Canada's willingness to re-evaluate these proposed changes, it should be noted that other proposed changes, such as those to address passive investment and its use by high income individuals will persist. As resolution 15-17F is very broad in its direction that all proposed federal tax reforms not be implemented, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and appreciates the Government of Canada's willingness to re-evaluate and not proceed on several aspects of their initial proposal.

## Resolution 18-17F

### Integrate Emergency Social Services into Emergency Management at Provincial Level

County of St. Paul

Carried

► ***Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Community and Social Services, Alberta Health***

WHEREAS the Minister of Municipal Affairs is designated as the Minister responsible for the *Emergency Management Act* as per the *Emergency Management Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter E-6.8, Section 1(h); and

WHEREAS a Director of Emergency Management is appointed by the local authority to prepare and coordinate emergency plans, act as the director of emergency operations on behalf of the emergency management agency, and coordinate all emergency services and other resources used in an emergency [Section 11.2(2)], including emergency social services plans and resources; and

WHEREAS the provision of emergency social services, defined within the Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework as “the supports that meet the basic essential needs of individuals, households, and communities affected by emergencies”, is an integral part of any emergency response because it involves the care of the people affected and cannot be carved out and handled as separate from the overall response; and

WHEREAS emergency social services is housed in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, where the structure of support to local authorities that is currently available through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is being recreated, duplicating efforts and creating confusion for local authorities in how best to communicate with the province on planning, training, and responding to emergencies in a holistic sense; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Emergency Response Plan defines the Provincial Operations Centre as the entity responsible for the coordination of provincial supports to the local authority during an emergency to ensure a common understanding and prioritization of all requests for assistance, as well as to provide a single coordination point for local authorities to access all provincial ministries; and

WHEREAS during the 2013 southern Alberta floods and the 2016 Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo wildfire, the disconnection of emergency social services into a separate provincial ministry (in the case of the 2016 wildfire this was formalized into a separate coordination centre, known as the Provincial Emergency Social Services Emergency Coordination Centre) created communication challenges, confusion around roles and responsibilities, duplication of effort, and introduced a higher administrative burden on the local authority to provide daily updates to two separate provincial entities that were not effectively sharing information;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to consolidate emergency social services and emergency management into a**

single government ministry with a single emergency coordination centre to eliminate duplication and enhance coordination of provincial support to local authorities.

### *Government Response*

#### ▶ ***Alberta Municipal Affairs***

The Government of Alberta (GOA) recognizes the importance of emergency management and Emergency Social Services (ESS), and the need for clarity regarding roles and responsibilities between the province and local authorities. The emergency management legislative framework and the Provincial ESS Framework are intended to support a co-ordinated, provincial approach to emergency management and emergency social services.

The GOA is working to identify how supports to local authorities can be enhanced through its continuous improvement processes, and post incident assessments of disaster responses. As a result of the lessons identified in 2013 and 2016, the Provincial ESS Emergency Co-ordination Center has been moved into the Provincial Operations Center to create seamless and collaborative co-ordination of all ESS assets during large-scale emergencies.

#### ▶ ***Alberta Community and Social Services***

Alberta Community and Social Services has no further input beyond the response from Alberta Municipal Affairs.

#### ▶ ***Alberta Health***

Alberta Health does not have any input for this resolution as it is not within their mandate.

### *RMA Reaction and Follow-up*

The government response indicates that in response to challenges responding to disasters in 2013 and 2016, the Government of Alberta has recently integrated emergency social services into the broader Provincial Operations Centre to better coordinate immediate emergency management with the provision of emergency social services. Based on this response, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

Additionally, RMA is pleased by the Government of Alberta's announcement of integration of Alberta Emergency Alert with a new national emergency alert system, which will further improve the efficiency by which first responders and the public can become aware of emergency situations.

## Resolution 19-17F

### Builder Licensing Program Impacts

County of Paintearth

Carried

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Labour**

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta regulates the residential construction industry through the Alberta Safety Codes program, and the Alberta Building Code; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta further regulates the residential construction industry with the implementation of the *New Home Buyers Protection Act*; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is furthering its attempt at constricting the ability of journeymen carpenters and residential home builders by the proposed implementation of the Builder Licensing Program; and

WHEREAS the municipalities of Alberta ensure conformity to all residential construction regulations by the diligent and competent enforcement and inspections of safety codes officers;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) request that the Government of Alberta delay the implementation of the Builder Licensing Program until such time it can reasonably demonstrate that the impacts of such a program will yield a positive impact on the residential construction industry and its participants;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC request that the Government of Alberta recognize and resolve the negative impacts of the *New Home Buyers Protection Act* on rural Alberta tradesmen, municipalities, and home owners.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Alberta Municipal Affairs**

Home ownership is one of the biggest financial decisions any family will make, and Albertans deserve to have protection and confidence their home is built to a high standard.

Builder licensing is focused on regulating those in the business of being a builder; builder licensing will not impact trades. The builder is responsible for managing the project, including which sub-trades to hire and how much financial risk they will assume. Sub-trades are not covered under builder licensing because they are the responsibility of the builder.

The program was developed in response to Albertans who participated in focus groups and completed an online survey. Seventy-eight per cent of survey respondents were in favour of government exploring options for licensing builders.

This resolution is premised on the idea that residential construction has fewer issues in rural municipalities than urban ones. However, data from our spring 2017 consultation showed that rural

Albertans had a similar level of concern with residential construction as urban Albertans. Only 41.4 per cent of rural Albertans felt satisfied with residential construction compared with 43 per cent in major urban municipalities. The consultation also showed that there was broad support for the program in both rural and urban Alberta and among industry throughout the province with 66 per cent of rural Albertans supporting builder licensing and 60 per cent of residential construction industry members supporting builder licensing.

Alberta Municipal Affairs will continue to monitor and listen to all municipalities with respect to their role in making builder licensing effective. The program will protect consumers by preventing builders with poor track records of safety and consumer protection compliance and bankruptcies from building homes and exposing consumers to undue risk. The program is already having positive impacts for consumers with some poor builders being denied a license. In fact, one such company who had a several outstanding orders went bankrupt shortly after the license denial.

#### ► ***Alberta Labour***

Alberta Labour has no further input beyond the response from Alberta Municipal Affairs.

#### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The Government of Alberta response indicates a positive reception to the builder licensing program and clarifies that the program does not directly apply to trades involved in residential construction. The resolution requests that the builder licensing program be delayed until “it can reasonably demonstrate that the impacts of such a program will yield a positive impact on the residential construction industry and its participants”. Given that it is unclear whether a “positive impact” is resulting from the existing program, and it is implied in the resolution that the initial program was not having a positive impact, RMA assumes that continuing the program in its current format does not meet the intent of this resolution. Additionally, the government response does not include reference to the *New Home Buyers Protection Act*. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution ER1-17F

### Support for Trans Mountain Expansion Project

Parkland County

Carried

► ***Advocacy Target: Alberta Energy, Premier of Alberta, Natural Resources Canada, National Energy Board***

WHEREAS energy and its related products are a significant part of Canada's annual exports which, along with metals and mineral products, represent the single largest positive annual contribution to Canada's balance of trade; and

WHEREAS the National Energy Board (NEB) determined the Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMEP) is in the Canadian public interest; and

WHEREAS the Federal Governor in Council approved of the project application on November 29, 2016; and

WHEREAS the Conference Board of Canada conservatively estimates \$46.7 billion will find its way into government treasuries in the form of taxes and royalties from the TMEP during development and over the first 20 years of operations; and

WHEREAS economic benefits generated during construction and 20 years of operations from the TMEP include:

- \$68.3 billion in additional revenue to Alberta oil producers attributable to Trans Mountain as a result of higher netbacks, over the first 20 years of operations
- \$45 billion GDP effects for Alberta; and

WHEREAS in addition to benefits created by the TMEP, operations of the expanded Trans Mountain Pipeline will generate \$3.3 billion in taxes over 20 years, with Alberta receiving a \$567-million share; and

WHEREAS local and regional property tax payments are estimated to go up by a total of \$3.4 million per year, a 116 per cent increase along the Alberta section of the route; and

WHEREAS the process does not supercede the importance of the individual land rights;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) urge the Government of Alberta to continue to support the Trans Mountain Expansion Project so it can meet its commitments to delivering jobs and economic benefits and meeting its regulatory requirements during the construction and operation of the pipeline;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC urge the Government of Canada to ensure that all regulatory processes that have been recommended for approval by the NEB and subsequently authorized by the Federal Governor in Council are permitted to proceed;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AAMDC urge the Government of Canada to exercise ancillary powers in order to enact the comprehensive regulatory scheme for the Canadian public interest, including the right to timely permitting, thereby enabling the commencement of construction.**

## ***Government Response***

### **► Alberta Energy**

Alberta has, and will continue to be, a strong advocate for safe, modern pipelines. The Trans Mountain Expansion Project is a federally approved project that will allow us to break our land-lock, and is critical for the market diversification of Alberta's oil. If completed, the expansion would result in higher netbacks for oil producers and potentially higher government resource revenues. With initial construction already underway at the Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby, and Kinder Morgan moving forward to acquire the necessary permits in Alberta and British Columbia, we are optimistic we will see shovels in the ground in 2018.

We have been tireless in standing up for Alberta, showing Canadians that our pipelines are safe and something we can be proud of. We will not stop until construction is underway on the

Trans Mountain Expansion Project and Alberta oil is flowing to new markets. We will continue to use every opportunity to support this project whether it be intervening in legal challenges like the Federal Court of Appeal judicial review of the project in October 2017, or participating in regulatory processes like the National Energy Board hearing on Burnaby permitting in December 2017.

In addition, Alberta will continue to press the federal government to promote and defend this approved pipeline. Construction of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project means more markets for our energy resources—something that benefits both Albertans and Canadians.

### **► National Energy Board**

Dear Mr. Kemmere:

Thank you for your letter dated 28 November 2017, and your interest in the National Energy Board's (NEB or Board's) oversight of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project (the project).

Your letter and the AAMDC resolution relates to the progress and timeliness of regulatory permitting for the project, and concerns raised by some municipalities along the route of the project. As related matters are before the Board for decision, we are unable to comment on your resolution.

You may follow the Board's proceedings for the project on the NEB website at this location: <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/pplctnflng/mjrpp/trnsmntnpxpnsn/index-eng.html>. The Board's regulatory filings are also available at: <https://apps.neb-one.gc.ca/REGDOCS/Home/Index>.

Public safety and the protection of the environment is of paramount importance to the NEB. The NEB will hold Trans Mountain accountable for its performance during the construction and operation of this project, including full compliance with all regulatory requirements and commitments.

Thank you again for your interest in the National Energy Board.

Yours sincerely,



Sandy Lapointe  
Executive Vice-President, Regulatory

### ***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

The Government of Alberta has been a strong supporter of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project, and has worked to ensure Alberta's natural resources meet tidewater. Based on both the Government of Alberta's response to this resolution and recent comments from the Premier of Alberta and other provincial ministers, RMA is satisfied that the Government of Alberta is sufficiently supportive of this project.

The National Energy Board (NEB) response indicates that because the matters referenced in the resolution are currently before the NEB for decision, the NEB is unable to provide comment. Additionally, RMA has not yet received a response to this resolution from Natural Resources Canada.

The National Energy Board (NEB) response indicates that because the matters referenced in the resolution are currently before the NEB for decision, the NEB is unable to provide comment. Additionally, RMA is awaiting a response from Natural Resources Canada.

Given that the Government of Alberta's support of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project meets the intent of the first operative clause of the resolution, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue at the federal level.

## Resolution ER2-17F

### Continued Provincial Funding Support for Agriculture Service Boards and Agricultural Societies

County of St. Paul

*Carried*

#### ► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

WHEREAS Alberta Treasury Board and Finance has been reviewing program funding including the funding provided to agricultural service boards and agricultural societies; and

WHEREAS there have been significant delays in the dispersing of agriculture service board and agriculture society funding, which has caused significant stress and anxiety to agricultural societies and municipalities across Alberta; and

WHEREAS agricultural societies and municipalities benefit from long-term, stable financial commitments from the Government of Alberta; and

WHEREAS agricultural societies provide significant economic benefits to their local communities and the Albertan economy; and

WHEREAS agricultural service board funding is used to address and mitigate challenges related to weeds, pests, invasive species, soil erosion, and other important environmental issues that risk jeopardizing farmers, producers, and the agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS agricultural societies and municipalities are limited in their ability to raise revenues; and

WHEREAS there has been no commitment to the continuation of the agriculture service boards and agricultural societies funding programs beyond 2017-2018; and

WHEREAS the agricultural service board and agricultural society funding is derived from the Alberta Lottery Fund;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties strongly encourage the continued financial support through the Alberta Lottery program or a similar program for agriculture service boards and agricultural societies beyond 2017-2018.**

#### *Government Response*

##### ► **Alberta Treasury Board and Finance**

Our government will continue to protect the programs and services that Albertans rely on, while carefully and prudently finding savings. More details will be available in Budget 2018-19. Agriculture Service Boards and Agricultural Societies are the cornerstone of many rural communities in Alberta. Both groups help ensure sustainable agriculture and a vibrant rural Alberta.

As we continue budget deliberations, our government wants to recognize and thank the members of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties for their continued advocacy of the Agriculture Service Boards and Agricultural Societies.

► ***Alberta Agriculture and Forestry***

The 2017 grant payments to Agriculture Service Boards (municipal governments) and Agricultural Societies (not-for-profit organizations) were delayed due to uncertainties around in-year savings. Although eventually paid in full, the delay has caused a heightened awareness about potential budget cuts to these groups. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has received letters of support and media attention urging the preservation of the current level of funding to these organizations. A future reduction in funding to Agriculture Service Boards and Agricultural Societies would be perceived as negative. The 283 Agricultural Societies contribute to the quality of life and economic activity in rural Alberta through operating community buildings and agricultural programming

Moving forward, we will continue to take a thoughtful approach to budget decisions as we work to address the current fiscal challenges. We will look for opportunities to find efficiencies, while focusing resources on important core programs and services for Albertans. At this point, final decisions on future budget allocations have not been made.

***RMA Reaction and Follow-up***

As announced at the RMA 2018 Spring Convention, agriculture service boards and agricultural societies will see a three-year funding commitment starting in the provincial budget 2018-19. The budget allotted for 2018-19 is very similar to funding levels in previous years. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

## Resolution ER3-17F

### Effective Representation for Rural Albertans in Alberta's Legislative Assembly

AAMDC Executive Resolution

Carried

► ***Advocacy Target: Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Members of Alberta's Legislative Assembly***

WHEREAS the Alberta Electoral Boundary Commission (AEBC) submitted their final report for review and adoption by the Alberta Legislature on October 19, 2017, which recommends consolidating electoral boundaries in rural areas of the province that will result in three fewer seats in rural Alberta; and

WHEREAS Alberta's population has increased by 14.8% (or 553,500 people) since the last electoral boundary review in 2010. Based on the latest average constituency size of 46,803, this is the equivalent to 11.8 new constituencies; and

WHEREAS the AEBC has been tasked with reviewing Alberta's electoral boundaries in accordance with legal precedent and specifically, Supreme Court of Canada's case Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.), [1991] 2 SCR 158 which states, "purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se, but the right to 'effective representation' "; and

WHEREAS effective representation is impacted by many factors, including the relative weight of individual votes, the geographic characteristics of the constituency, the accessibility of the elected official to the electorate, the diversity of "communities" within the constituency, and others; and

WHEREAS the future sustainability of rural Alberta is contingent on the ability of rural residents to be effectively represented in Alberta's legislative assembly; and

WHEREAS the consolidation of seats in already geographically large rural constituencies will further compromise the effective representation for rural Albertans within the impacted constituencies, as well as weaken the overall rural perspective within the Alberta Legislature; and

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties has concluded that the right to "effective representation" has not been satisfied by the final recommendations of the Alberta Electoral Boundary Commission;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta amend section 13 of the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* to establish up to three new electoral divisions to accommodate the need for effective representation of Alberta's growing urban population, while not sacrificing current rural representation; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) urge the Government of Alberta to prioritize effective representation for rural Alberta by not approving a reduction in the number of constituencies in rural Alberta; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC request the Government of Alberta to not implement the Alberta Electoral Boundary Commission's final recommendations until the following principles are prioritized:

- That geographic size limitations, local variations in population density, and accessibility of MLAs be prioritized as a determining factor in developing electoral boundaries; and
- Constituencies structure should be maintained to combine urban and rural areas to include a balance of urban and rural populations to reflect the urban-rural connectedness and dependency that exists on the ground for Alberta's regions; and
- To the extent possible, no ridings fracture rural municipalities into multiple constituencies.

### *Government Response*

#### ► *Alberta Justice and Solicitor General*

The *Electoral Divisions Act* was amended in December 2017 to reflect the Legislative Assembly's resolution respecting electoral divisions. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) resolutions relating to the total number of rural electoral divisions and adoption of new criteria could be considered when the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* is next amended.

It is reasonable to anticipate that, in future, the government of the day will take into account several factors when determining whether to change the number of electoral divisions. The government may agree that the total number of electoral divisions should increase from 87 to 90, as recommended by the AAMDC and that the applicable criteria should be reviewed; however, it is important to note that the current criteria were adopted following thorough consideration of the Supreme Court of Canada and Alberta Court of Appeal Reference cases.

The Legislative Assembly could consider adopting budgetary changes that could assist members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) in larger electoral divisions. For example, the commission suggested that one of the mechanisms for addressing rural concerns regarding voter access to their MLA would be to establish satellite offices in larger electoral divisions. The commission noted that constituents could be encouraged to access their MLA by making an appointment or making contact by telephone or email in preference to the traditional expectation that rural MLAs be readily available to their constituents at political and social events held across the electoral division.

### *RMA Reaction and Follow-up*

The government response to the resolution indicates that no additional changes were made or will be made to electoral boundaries and that the changes were codified in legislation in December 2017. As such, the resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to advocate for effective rural representation in future reviews of Alberta's electoral boundaries, and work with urban MLAs to ensure issues important to rural Albertans are understood and acted upon in Alberta's legislature.

## Section 2: Advocacy Report Card

The following table is a summary of RMA's current resolutions excluding the resolutions adopted in fall 2017, which are detailed in Section 1. Recent developments on the resolutions are detailed below in the corresponding categories, and readers are reminded that although resolution statuses may remain unchanged, work on each resolution is ongoing. Each resolution has a three-year lifespan to reflect the nature of shifting government policy development and timelines associated with legislative changes and implementation.

### Resolutions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>		
7-17S	Eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Prevalent in Bison Within and Surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park	Intent Not Met
5-16S	Agricultural Opportunity Fund for Agricultural Research and Forage Associations	Intent Not Met
10-16S	Genetically Modified Alfalfa	Intent Not Met
7-15F	Agriculture Plastics Recycling	Intent Not Met
15-15F	Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases	Intent Not Met
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>		
3-17S	National Broadband Strategy	Accepted in Part
10-17S	Modernization of Alberta Registry Agents	Accepted in Part
11-16F	Stakeholder Participation in the Future of the Alberta SuperNet	Intent Not Met
22-16F	Security of Canada Post Community and Super Mailboxes	Accepted in Principle
11-16S	Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems	Accepted
21-15F	Minimum Wage Increase	Intent Not Met
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
12-16S	Provincial Funding for School Resource Officers	Intent Not Met

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
<b>EMERGENCY SERVICES</b>		
12-16F	Wildland Fire Fighting Costs	Intent Not Met
18-16F	Provincial Responsibility for Fire Costs on Occupied Public Lands	Intent Not Met
8-16S	Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance Services	Intent Not Met
<b>ENERGY</b>		
5-17S	Secure Access to Natural Gas Pipelines	Intent Not Met
5-16F	Continued Operation of Coal-fired Power Generation Plants	Intent Not Met
13-16F	Northern Gateway Pipelines Support	Intent Not Met
19-16F	Support for Multi-Stakeholder Task Force to Explore Value-Added Oil and Gas Opportunities	Accepted in Principle
ER2-16S	Support for the Energy East Pipeline Project	Accepted
24-15F	Alternative Energy Source – Solar Power	Accepted
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>		
1-17S	Carbon Levy Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for All Food Production Uses	Intent Not Met
6-17S	Addendum to the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>	Incomplete Information
9-17S	Legal Opinion for Species at Risk Proposed Policies	Accepted in Principle
1-16F	Alberta Environment Approvals for Construction Projects	Accepted in Principle
2-16F	Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy	Intent Not Met
6-16F	Carbon Levy Exemption on Natural Gas and Propane Used for Agricultural Operations	Intent Not Met
15-16F	Species at Risk and the Need for an Overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment	Accepted in Principle
7-16S	Wildlife Damage Compensation Program	Accepted in Principle

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
12-15F	Survey Requirements for Recreation Lease Renewals	Intent Not Met
16-15F	<i>Species at Risk Act</i> (SARA)	Incomplete Information
<b>HEALTH &amp; SENIORS</b>		
ER1-16S	Rural Physician Action Plan Funding	Accepted
10-15F	Maintenance of Funding for Seniors' Lodging	Accepted in Part
<b>INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES</b>		
10-16F	Funding Model for Sand and Aggregate Pit Reclamation	Intent Not Met
14-16F	Conservation and Reclamation of Class 1 Gravel Pits	Accepted in Principle
11-15F	Provincial Support for Municipal Aggregate Acquisition	Intent Not Met
17-15F	Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate Amendment	Accepted in Principle
<b>MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE</b>		
2-17S	Amendments to Section 348 of the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Intent Not Met
4-17S	Collection of Outstanding Taxes for Education Requisitions From the Province of Alberta	Accepted
8-17S	Oldman River Regional Services Commission Regional Planning Funding	Intent Not Met
3-16F	Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment	Intent Not Met
4-16F	Centralized Industrial Assessment	Intent Not Met
17-16F	Capital Region Board Mandate Expansion	Intent Not Met
23-16F	List of Municipal Electors	Accepted in Principle
1-16S	Preservation of Linear Assessment for Rural Municipalities	Accepted
2-16S	Notice Period for Adjustments to Linear Assessment Modifiers	Intent Not Met



#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
3-16S	Recovery of Linear Property, Commercial Property, and Education Requisition Tax Arrears	Accepted in Part
1-15F	Continued Provincial Funding Support for Municipalities	Accepted in Principle
4-15F	AAMDC Participation in City Charters Discussion	Intent Not Met
5-15F	Recovery of Linear Property Tax Arrears	Accepted in Part
13-15F	Non-Profit Housing Organizations Borrowing from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority	Intent Not Met
22-15F	Amendments to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> Regarding Joint and Several Liability	Intent Not Met
<b>PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>		
6-15F	Re-introduction of Bill 204 to Address the Matter of Adverse Possession	Accepted in Principle
9-15F	Referrals on the Sales of Public Lands	Intent Not Met
19-15F	Amendment to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> to Provide for the Dedication of Environmental Reserves in Specific Cases	Intent Not Met
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		
11-17S	Review of Standard Practices for Installation of High Tension Cable Barriers on Two-Lane Provincial Highways	Intent Not Met
7-16F	Vegetation Management on Alberta Provincial Highways	Accepted in Part
16-16F	Support for Continuation of Crude Oil Tanker Activity Along the Northern Coast of British Columbia	Intent Not Met
6-16S	Creating a Residential Exemption to Roadside Development Permits	Intent Not Met
2-15F	Enhanced Funding for Roads, Highways and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities	Accepted
3-15F	Local Road Bridge Opt-Outs Under <i>Navigation Protection Act</i>	Accepted
8-15F	Land Acquisition Process for Crown Land	Intent Not Met
20-15F	Capital Funding for Community Airports	Accepted

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
23-15F	Alberta Transportation Highway Signage	Accepted in Principle
<b>WATER</b>		
There are no active resolutions related to this issue.		
<b>OTHER</b>		
8-16F	Resolution Process – Frequency of Similar or Duplicate Resolutions	Accepted
20-16F	Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations	Accepted in Principle
ER1-16F	Save Vegreville’s Case Processing Centre	Intent Not Met
4-16S	Improving Oversight of Delegate Legislation	Intent Not Met

## AGRICULTURE

### Resolution 7-17S

#### Eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Prevalent in Bison Within and Surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties supports the depopulation of diseased bison as the only effective tool to successfully eradicate the threat of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis from within and surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and Parks Canada to develop an effective measurable plan to successfully eradicate all diseased bison from within and surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park in order to prevent further disease outbreaks province-wide; that would inevitably have adverse effects for the national, provincial and local domestic cattle and beef industries.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** This resolution specifically calls for the depopulation of diseased bison to eradicate the threat of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis in the Wood Buffalo National Park area; however, responses from the provincial and federal governments do not indicate support for this level of action. Both the provincial and federal governments do indicate that continued effort is needed to understand the risk of transmission, and note that this will involve consultation and engagement with multiple stakeholders.

Until such time that a formal consultation process is initialized to develop a strategy to address the eradication of diseased bison from the Wood Buffalo National Park area that would prevent further outbreaks, this resolution holds a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### Resolution 5-16S

#### Agricultural Opportunity Fund for Agricultural Research and Forage Associations

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request Alberta Agriculture and Forestry reinstate the 2014 Agricultural Opportunity Fund increase that was allocated for the agricultural research and forage associations.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response is somewhat unclear as it indicates that AOF funding was rescinded to \$1.95 million in 2015/16 but was supplemented with “special funding” to provide a total of \$3.95 million. Budget 2018-19 does not include any reference to the Agricultural Opportunity Fund, nor any reference to funding provided for agricultural research and forage associations. This resolution continues to hold a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 10-16S

### Genetically Modified Alfalfa

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency work with Alberta's agricultural service boards, marketing groups, Forage Genetics Canada and other relevant stakeholders to prevent the introduction of genetically modified/engineered alfalfa to the province of Alberta until there is a marketplace and consumer acceptance in Alberta's export markets including China, Japan, the European Union, and the Middle East.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta deferred responsibility on this issue to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). In response to this resolution, the CFIA indicates that environmental safety assessments take into account the potential of the plant to become an agriculture weed or to be invasive of natural habitats; the potential consequences of gene flow to other plants; the potential to increase the activity of a plant pest; and the potential impact on non-target organisms and biodiversity.

CFIA notes that Roundup Ready (RR) (glyphosate tolerant) alfalfa was authorized in 2005, and alfalfa with reduced lignin was authorized in 2014 after undergoing safety assessments by the CFIA and Health Canada. The response from CFIA also explains that before varieties of alfalfa can be fully commercialized in Canada, they are subject to variety registration to ensure that varieties sold meet the definition of a variety and are accurately represented in the market; facilitate the seed certification process; provide tracking and tracing in commercial channels; and help ensure varietal identity and purity in the market. Proceeding with variety registration is a business decision that rests with the applicant.

In 2013, five RR alfalfa varieties were registered in Canada and in 2016, an alfalfa variety with both the glyphosate tolerance and reduced lignin traits was registered. Once a GM crop has been authorized for environmental release and obtained other appropriate regulatory approvals, including variety registration where applicable, it is considered to be like any other commodity crop.

The CFIA response emphasizes that the Government of Canada believes that the industry itself is best positioned to make decisions regarding plans to commercialize GM alfalfa in Canada and to implement stewardship programs to facilitate the coexistence of GM alfalfa with conventional types. Further, the response emphasizes that the Government of Canada believes that producers should have choice in selecting the agricultural practices, products and technologies that offer them the most benefits, both economic and environmental.

As the response from CFIA does not express any interest in preventing the introduction of genetically modified or engineered alfalfa, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 7-15F

### Agriculture Plastics Recycling

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Parks develop a recycling program to provide for the collection and recycling of agricultural plastics in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA believes that a coordinated, province-wide approach to end of life management for agriculture plastics is the most effective means of limiting the amount of agriculture plastics that end up in landfills. Currently, some rural municipalities have provided recycling options for this material, but due to its large size and limited recycling options, these programs are beyond the capacity of most municipalities.

RMA has made progress with Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry in emphasizing the need for an agriculture plastics program and anticipates that discussions will continue moving in a positive direction.

RMA has been collaborating with other municipal associations, agriculture industry partners, RMA members, and recycling organizations in Alberta to explore options used in other provinces as part of the Agriculture Plastics Recycling Group (APRG). This group has developed a white paper on agriculture plastics and is currently assessing options and formulating positions that will be communicated to the Government of Alberta. RMA will also continue to identify opportunities for alignment of recycling programs in other provinces.

Until a coordinated recycling program is developed, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to work with other stakeholders and advocate for the formation of a program to enable the recycling of agriculture plastics.

## Resolution 15-15F

### Management of Farm Development and Agricultural Leases

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Environment and Parks transfer the management of farm development leases and agricultural leases to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates that no consideration is being given to transferring management of farm development leases from Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF), mainly due to the fact that it would necessitate a significant shift in government structure and existing legislation.

While RMA appreciates these administrative challenges, the current AEP responsibility is viewed as insufficient by RMA members, as the agricultural expertise is not housed in AEP. While the short-term administrative difficulties of such a shift may be significant, RMA believes that the

long-term benefits of the shift would be significant for agricultural producers and rural municipalities. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Resolution 3-17S

#### National Broadband Strategy

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) request that the governments of Alberta and Canada declare broadband an essential service; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC request that the governments of Alberta and Canada provide direct funding and support to rural, remote and northern communities to ensure affordable access to, or the development of, high speed (100 Mbps and faster) community network infrastructure; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC urge the Government of Canada to develop a national broadband strategy; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that rural municipalities, internet service providers, education and health professionals, public safety organizations, and research and economic development authorities be actively involved in preparing the National Broadband Strategy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates broad support of the resolution's call for increased action on the part of government and industry in enhancing rural broadband availability and quality. RMA is pleased with the direction that the Government of Alberta has taken to this point in prioritizing rural final mile connectivity in their development of a new operating agreement. The Government of Alberta is currently in the process of developing a rural broadband strategy, and has convened an inter-ministerial working group to do so. In early 2018, RMA assisted Service Alberta in promoting a survey to members to gather baseline information on rural broadband service delivery. Unfortunately, RMA has received no indication that it, or any member municipalities, will be invited to participate in the working group.

At the federal level, RMA is pleased with the 2016 Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) that declared broadband as a basic telecommunications service, which is the telecommunications equivalent of an essential service, and empowers the CRTC to implement programs, policies, regulations and initiatives to improve broadband in underserved areas. One such initiative being undertaken in relation to the basic service declaration is a \$750 million fund to enhance broadband in rural areas, to be funded by industry. RMA has submitted input to the CRTC on how the fund should be structured, and the CRTC is expected to release these details by mid-2018. A second aspect of the CRTC's declaration of broadband as a basic service was to increase the threshold for underserved areas from those with service below 5mbps download / 1mbps upload to 50mbps download / 10mbps upload. In

their 2018 budget, the Government of Canada also announced that \$100 million over five years has been dedicated to the Strategic Innovation Fund, will mainly be used to advanced low earth orbit satellite technology to improve broadband service in rural and remote communities.

Despite the positive progress made recently by the provincial and federal governments related to enhancing rural broadband, RMA is unaware of any federal initiative to develop a national broadband strategy. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part** due to the federal declaration of broadband as a basic telecommunications service, which meets the intent of part of the resolution.

## Resolution 10-17S

### Modernization of Alberta Registry Agents

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta recognize the vital role of Alberta registry agents in the delivery of essential government services to all Albertans; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Government of Alberta recognize the positive impact in rural Alberta communities, and work to strengthen their partnership with the Association of Alberta Registry Agents and local municipalities by:

- **Supporting the modernization of the registry agent industry;**
- **Expanding existing online services directly to Albertans through registry agents; and**
- **Ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural registry agents, including a fair and equitable fee model.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response includes recognition of the vital role that registry agents play in supporting the quality of life of Albertans.

RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's prioritization of maintaining access to in-person registry services during any modernization process. In a March 2018 meeting with RMA, the Minister of Service Alberta explained that from the Government of Alberta's perspective, the resolution's request to allow specific registry agents to provide online services was impractical and would lead to prohibitively high registry fees. According to the Minister, the current system in which online services are centrally managed by the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Association of Registry Agents is the system best-suited to support the sustainability of independent registry agents in providing in-person services, while keeping registry fees manageable for Albertans.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.



## Resolution 11-16F

### Stakeholder Participation in the Future of the Alberta SuperNet

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to establish a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to participate in a review of the existing agreement which expires on June 30, 2018 and make recommendations for the new agreement that would be effective July 1, 2018.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates that they are not able to form a formal multi-stakeholder working group to inform the development of a new SuperNet operating agreement, mainly due to time constraints and the pace at which the process is moving. RMA appreciates the willingness with which Service Alberta has shared information related to the new operating agreement, as well as the consideration that Service Alberta has shown for the importance of improving rural broadband access. RMA hopes that this recognition is reflected in the new operating agreement. Despite the positive relationship that RMA has with Service Alberta related to the SuperNet, it is disappointing that a working group that more directly integrates the perspectives of individual rural municipalities cannot be formed to better inform the process. This resolution is assigned the status of **Intent Not Met**, although RMA looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Service Alberta on this matter.

## Resolution 22-16F

### Security of Canada Post Community and Super Mailboxes

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Canada Post work to increase efforts to enhance the security of community and super mailboxes including siting them in open and plainly visible locations in consultation with municipalities, increasing their ability to resist break-in attempts, and implementing a strategy to reduce illegal access and theft of mail from Community and Super Mailboxes.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Canada Post's response indicates an intent to take action on relocating mailboxes, installing new, more secure mailboxes, and retrofitting existing mail boxes to increase their security and resistance to break-ins and tampering. The response also provides examples of current community engagement actions being taken by Canada Post to work with local law enforcement in Alberta.

RMA is pleased with the planned activities and will follow up with Canada Post in the future to confirm that they are completed and to determine their effectiveness in preventing mail theft. At this point, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

## Resolution 11-16S

### Provincial Funding for Municipal Public Libraries and Regional Library Systems

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta increase its funding for public libraries and regional library systems.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates an increase to library funding in the previous budget year as well as a smaller increase in the 2016/17 budget targeted to improve library services to on-reserve and on-settlement Indigenous populations at public libraries. While this contribution is appreciated, its specific nature may not address broader operating challenges faced by rural libraries and regional library systems.

The Budget 2017 Capital Plan includes \$11 million dedicated to enhance Alberta's regional library system. This capital contribution was unfortunately not repeated in the 2018 Alberta budget, although operational support for libraries was maintained at a similar level to 2017. As a result of the 2017 capital funding influx, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted** and will continue to be reviewed in future provincial budgets.

## Resolution 21-15F

### Minimum Wage Increase

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to reconsider its intention to increase the minimum wage in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates a willingness to consider and attempt to mitigate negative economic impacts that a minimum wage increase may have on businesses and public-sector employers such as municipalities, it has recently passed the regulation that will schedule additional increases in the minimum wage that will rise to \$15/h by October 1, 2018. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA seeks to work with Alberta Labour to ensure that the increase does not negatively impact municipalities and businesses in rural Alberta.

## EDUCATION

### Resolution 12-16S

#### Provincial Funding for School Resource Officers

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to provide dedicated funding for school resource officers in rural area schools for the benefit of families and communities.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates that providing school resource officers is a local school board decision for which existing provincial funding can be used. While RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's commitment to supporting local autonomy in relation to decisions on how provincial funding resources are allocated, rural school boards often struggle to fund core services and therefore, rely on cooperative agreements to provide school resource officers. Dedicated provincial funding would support the consistent presence of school resource officers in schools of all sizes across the province, and ultimately make for safer and more inclusive schools. As no dedicated funding was provided in Budget 2017 to support school resource officers in rural areas, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

### Resolution 12-16F

#### Wildland Fire Fighting Costs

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to enter into mutual aid agreements with municipalities outside of the Forest Protection Area that do not involve a fee for service for provincially-controlled and paid-for wildland fire fighting resources.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government response highlights two important programs that municipalities have outside of the Fire Protection Area (FPA) but does indicate that the Minister is not obligated to reimburse costs to municipalities when they incur firefighting related costs from wildfires. Though Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreements may be widespread and the government response indicated that it is standard practice for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to reimburse for wildfire suppression costs outside the FPA, RMA staff have interpreted the intent of the resolution to guarantee that the Government of Alberta enter into mutual aid agreements with municipalities to ensure all costs are properly reimbursed. Though there are programs to support the costs associated with wildfire suppression, the government response does not meet this intent and therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### Resolution 18-16F

#### Provincial Responsibility for Fire Costs on Occupied Public Lands

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend Section 8 of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* by including occupied public lands to enable the reimbursement of firefighting costs on those lands.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that because existing mechanisms allow municipalities to apply for partial reimbursement of wildfire suppression costs on occupied lands through the Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program, a change to the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* is not necessary. RMA is concerned that this program does not guarantee municipalities reimbursement, and only reimburses up to 75% of their costs. As the resolution requests an amendment to the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* to provide municipalities with assurances that they will have these costs reimbursed, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 8-16S

### Provincial Funding for Regional Air Ambulance Services

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta provide funds to local and regionally operated emergency response air ambulance services at the same ratio as Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) funding.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response and continued inequity in funding for these services fails to address the request for equitable funding ratios between STARS and other air ambulance services, as STARS receives funding from the Government of Alberta sufficient to cover 20% of its operating costs, while other air ambulance providers such as HALO are compensated only based on individual dispatches, and rely on municipal contributions and private donations to cover ongoing operating expenses. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## ENERGY

### Resolution 5-17S

#### Secure Access to Natural Gas Pipelines

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, in conjunction with the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops and Gas Alberta, request the governments of Canada and Alberta to develop legislation and provide financial assistance to maintain certainty of access to natural gas pipelines for rural municipalities and gas co-ops in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA recognizes the on-going funding to support the Rural Gas Program and although the Government of Alberta has challenged Gas Alberta and the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops to identify alternative funding options on the decommissioning of transmission pipelines, the response lacks commitments of additional funding or legislative changes. As such, the resolution is deemed **Intent Not Met**.

### Resolution 5-16F

#### Continued Operation of Coal-fired Power Generation Plants

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests the Government of Alberta to allow the continued operation of coal fired power generation plants while encouraging the coal industry and the electricity producers to explore alternate methods of utilizing coal for power generation and alternate uses for coal.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The response from the Government of Alberta indicates that the transition away from coal fired power generation will continue forward as outlined in the Alberta Climate Leadership Plan. Though electricity generating companies are exploring the opportunity to convert existing coal fired units to natural gas, the extent to which this occurs is unclear and ultimately up to the electricity generating companies to decide. Even if this does occur, it is unclear how this will impact those communities that currently rely on coal fired electricity generation for employment and the tax base. Although the phase out of these facilities will continue over the next 12 years and impact will not be fully known until after that time. In the interim, the Coal Community Transition Fund has been created to support 12 projects in 17 communities across the province. The total funding is approximately \$5 million and will cover projects such as: strategic planning, tourism development, feasibility studies, and work to expand agribusiness, transportation, and high-tech industries. However, the Government of Alberta's response does not satisfy the intent of the resolution and therefore, it has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 13-16F

### Northern Gateway Pipelines Support

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Government of Canada in support of the Northern Gateway Project and market access; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations to request that the Government of Canada conduct new consultations with Indigenous communities along the pipeline route prior to approving or denying the Northern Gateway Project; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations emphasizing the local, provincial, and national benefits that the Northern Gateway Project would provide and encourage support for the Project to be shared publicly.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's response to this resolution, particularly their recognition of the importance of pipelines to support market access for Alberta's oil and gas industry. Unfortunately, as the government response indicates, the Government of Canada exercised their jurisdiction and directed the National Energy Board to dismiss the Northern Gateway Pipeline project application. Although the Government of Alberta's response is appreciated and an encouraging sign for future collaborative advocacy efforts related to market access, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** due to the Government of Canada's decision.

## Resolution 19-16F

### Support for Multi-Stakeholder Task Force to explore Value-Added Oil and Gas Opportunities

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to create a multi-stakeholder task force composed of representatives from industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous communities, municipal government, the provincial government and the public no later than April 1, 2017 to make recommendations on how to grow and enhance value-added development in the oil and gas sector.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates a strong interest in prioritizing value-added opportunities associated with Alberta's energy sector. As it relates to the intent of the resolution, the formation of the Energy Diversification Advisory Committee (EDAC) appears to be an encouraging step towards embracing a multi-stakeholder approach to diversifying Alberta's oil energy industry. Through a report titled *Diversification, Not Decline: Adapting to the new energy reality*, the committee provided 36 recommendations to the Government of Alberta

in the fall of 2017. Subsequently the Government of Alberta accepted the advice and proceeded to introduce Bill 1: The *Energy Diversification Act* to the Legislature on March 8, 2018. The Act outlines support for partial upgrading technologies to help attain more value from energy sources, the second round of the Petrochemicals Diversification Program, and petrochemical feedstock infrastructure.

For this reason, RMA has assigned this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

## **Resolution ER2-16S**

### **Support for the Energy East Pipeline Project**

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties demonstrate their support for the Energy East pipeline and inform the National Energy Board of this support;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties collaborate with the Government of Alberta and other municipal associations to emphasize the local, provincial, and national benefits that the Energy East pipeline would provide.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA and the Government of Alberta supported the Energy East Pipeline through various channels. For example, the RMA brought this issue to the attention of municipal counterparts in other provinces as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Government of Alberta has also been an advocate of greater market access. In October 2017, TransCanada Corporation announced it would no longer be proceeding with its proposed Energy East Pipeline. Although the Energy East Pipeline is not proceeding forward, the RMA has fulfilled the intent of this resolution and will continue to advocate for greater market access for Alberta's resources. This resolution is assigned the status of **Accepted**.

## **Resolution 24-15F**

### **Alternative Energy Source – Solar Power**

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to provide initiatives in the way of subsidies or grants for solar energy technologies, and provide attractive micro generation rates to promote the transition from using fossil fuels to solar energy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The initiatives outlined in the Government of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and those highlighted in the response to this resolution indicate a willingness from the province to develop policies and initiatives that will encourage municipalities to be leaders in solar power generation. Particularly encouraging is the commitment to funding allocated through the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC). In March 2018, the Government of Alberta



announced it is supporting municipalities by investing \$54 million in funding from the Climate Leadership Plan to the MCCAC, which supports expanded available funding under the existing Alberta Municipal Solar Program. One program area that was noted is small-scale generation, which will likely support the Government of Alberta's release of an updated version of the *Micro-Generation Regulation* in early 2017. The regulation also made generation from renewable technologies easier to install. Though not specific to municipalities, the province also released the Growing Forward 2 Program which funding towards solar photovoltaics on Alberta farms. This enables producers to conserve non-renewable fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions, ultimately reducing the environmental footprint of Alberta's agriculture industry.

Energy Efficiency Alberta (EEA) was launched in January 2017, and will provide programs and funding to support transition to solar energy. The EEA announced a residential and commercial solar program that was made available in 2017 and provides rebates for the installation of solar photovoltaics systems.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Resolution 1-17S

#### Carbon Levy Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for All Food Production Uses

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties appeal to the Government of Alberta to provide carbon levy exemption certificates for the use of natural gas and propane for all food production uses.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Though it is positive that the Government of Alberta has indicated in its response that multiple ministries and the Alberta Climate Change Office are exploring alternative solutions to address concerns regarding the carbon levy that have been identified by the RMA, there is no indication that exemption certificates will be issued as requested in this resolution. The RMA's Climate Change Advisory Committee recognized the benefit that Alberta's agricultural lands serves as a carbon sink, and supports the need for continued advocacy for an exemption from the carbon levy on natural gas and propane used for food production. Due to the lack of commitment by the Government of Alberta in moving this forward, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. The RMA will continue to work with the government and monitor any resulting develops related to this issue.

### Resolution 6-17S

#### Addendum to the Species at Risk Act

*Status: Incomplete Information*

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**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to request the Government of Canada to amend the *Species at Risk Act* to include an addition to Section 64 of the Act to be entered as 64 (1)(c), to read as follows:

“The Minister(s), before implementing any order, plan, program, or designation that affects any proprietary interest in lands, held by title or leased, by any individual, corporation or entity other than government, shall enter into an agreement to establish the compensation for the loss of interest in those lands including relative legal expenses, or the loss of productivity of those lands, and for greater certainty, no order, plan, program, or designation shall be in force until the agreement is ratified by all parties involved.”; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that Government of Alberta reaffirm to the Government of Canada that any action, program, plan, order, or designation contrived by the federal government that affects any lands or properties that are not within the proprietary responsibility of the Government of Canada as set out in Schedule Three of the *Constitution Act 1867*, will have no force or effect and considered ultra-vires to the Supreme Law of Canada as referenced by Section 92.13 *Constitution Act 1867* and assuredly, Section 52 of the *Constitution Act 1983*.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** To date, there have been no amendments to the *Species at Risk Act* according to public record, in addition to no response from the Government of Canada on this resolution. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. The RMA will continue to follow-up on this issue.

## Resolution 9-17S

### Legal Opinion for Species at Risk Proposed Policies

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) seek a legal opinion on the proposed *Species at Risk Act* policies to determine what effect that the proposed policies will have on municipal operations and the rights and freedoms of rural landowners;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that if the legal opinion determines that the proposed *Species at Risk Act* policies will negatively impact rural landowners, that the AAMDC proceed with further action to work with the provincial and federal government on these proposed policies to demonstrate the social and economic impacts of policy implementation on the rural landscape.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** To fulfill the first part of this resolution, the RMA hired MLT Aikins to provide a legal opinion on the proposed *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) policies. The legal response identifies impacts for municipalities and rural landowners in regard to the policies, and RMA members should be aware of the implications some policies may have in regard to land-use planning and infrastructure project decisions. The legal response in its entirety is available on the RMA website.

The second part of the resolution addresses the socio-economic approaches to policy implementation. Recently, the Government of Alberta has delayed development of caribou range plans to further understand the socio-economic implications of such plans. Though it is unclear if this is emblematic of broader change within the province's processes, it is a recognition of the importance of understanding the impacts of SARA policies on local communities.

As the general intent of the resolution has been met, it has been assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and the RMA will continue to advocate on the importance of a socio-economic approach to policy implementation, as identified in the legal analysis.

## Resolution 1-16F

### Alberta Environment and Parks Approvals for Construction Projects

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests that consideration be given to safety concerns related to delayed environmental approval processing

and supports the creation of a process for municipalities to receive timely approvals from Alberta Environment and Parks with regard to construction projects.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response acknowledges the challenges that municipalities are facing in receiving timely approvals of works related to wetlands. The RMA is encouraged that Alberta Environment and Parks has identified this as a problem and is in the process of developing an updated regulatory process for road works impacting wetlands which will balance provincial and municipal needs regarding regulatory compliance and timeliness. The Government of Alberta has indicated that an Alberta Wetland Construction Directive and Alberta Wetland Construction Guide are forthcoming but have been delayed as of April 2018. The RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will monitor progress made.

## Resolution 2-16F

### Exemption of Municipalities from Carbon Levy

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to exempt all municipalities in Alberta from the carbon levy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that municipalities will not be provided an exemption from the carbon levy. Although the RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's willingness to collaborate with municipalities to ensure that programs provided through Energy Efficiency Alberta and other bodies provide benefits to municipalities, there is still a concern that imposing the levy on municipalities will force an increase in municipal taxes and fees to maintain levels of service. The RMA's Climate Change Advisory Committee supported the need for a municipal exemption from the carbon levy, and as such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

In 2018, the Government of Alberta announced a \$54 million grant to the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre to assist municipalities in climate change mitigation and adaptation programs and strategies.

## Resolution 6-16F

### Carbon Levy Exemption on Natural Gas and Propane Used for Agricultural Operations

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act* to exempt farming operations from the carbon levy on natural gas and propane.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that natural gas and propane used for agricultural purposes will not be exempted from carbon levy payments. The RMA appreciates the exemptions applied to marked gasoline and diesel for agricultural use, as well as other current and future tools implemented by the Government of Alberta to assist agriculture

producers in balancing energy efficiency with operational viability. However, as the response does not indicate a willingness to meet the intent of the resolution, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. The RMA's Climate Change Advisory Committee explored the impacts of the carbon levy on the agriculture industry and identified the need for continued advocacy for an exemption from the carbon levy on natural gas and propane used for food production. Advocacy on this issue will continue.

## **Resolution 15-16F**

### **Species at Risk and the Need for an Overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties works with the Government of Alberta in a timely fashion, to complete an overall Socio-Economic Impact Assessment based on all the species at risk recovery plans and retention plans currently affecting the operations of all industries in the Province of Alberta, including but not limited to oil and gas, forestry, agriculture, tourism and mineral exploration.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response summarizes the work done to date to develop strategies to comply with the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) as it impacts Alberta's caribou population, and acknowledges that socio-economic impacts of habitat protection formed a component of the recovery planning process. In March 2018, the Government of Alberta delayed the development of caribou range plans to further understand the socio-economic implications of such plans. Though it is unclear if this is emblematic of broader change within the province's processes, it is a recognition of the importance of understanding the impacts of SARA policies on local communities. A socio-economic study of caribou recovery plans is currently underway. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the RMA will continue to monitor the development of the socio-economic study.

## **Resolution 7-16S**

### **Wildlife Damage Compensation Program**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) requests Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, and all other relevant government ministries to review the current staffing situation, program administration, budgets and funding source of the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program to ensure its effectiveness; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC request the Government of Alberta to compensate producers for confirmed cases of wildlife predation when livestock are missing and wolves, bears or cougars have been observed in area.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates that Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is aware of the weaknesses of the current Wildlife Predator Compensation Program

identified in the resolution and are undertaking a program review to address issues related to funding and to proving wildlife predation. The review will involve the participation of other ministries involved in administering the Program. A recently released *Rancher's Guide to Predator Attacks on Livestock*.

AEP has noted recent successes in reducing wolf predation of cattle on a provincial grazing reserve highlights the value of cooperation with stakeholders and that continued work with the Alberta Beef Producers, grazing reserves, the Waterton Biosphere Association will ensue. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the RMA will continue to monitor the issue.

## Resolution 12-15F

### Survey Requirements for Recreation Lease Renewals

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to remove the requirement for municipalities to provide surveys of provincially owned land in order to renew recreational leases and to streamline the process for renewing recreational leases for municipalities.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The RMA appreciates that that Alberta Environment and Parks will examine ways to reduce the costs of recreation lease surveys. However, the resolution requests a change to the legislation that requires the lease holder or applicant to pay for a survey. As the government has not expressed interest in reviewing this legislative requirement, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will continue to be advocated on by the RMA.

## Resolution 16-15F

### Species at Risk Act (SARA)

*Status: Incomplete Information*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties facilitate a round table discussion with representation from the federal Environment Minister and provincial Environment Minister to rebuild the current *Species at Risk Act* to improve it in a way that seeks a balanced and cooperative approach (economic, environmental, and social) to species protection that focuses on ecosystem protection; limiting impact on agriculture, industry, rural development, and land use in Alberta.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates a willingness to work with the RMA and the federal government to take a collaborative approach to aligning species at risk protection with the need to address social and economic impacts. This is encouraging and will be followed up on by the RMA. The RMA also provided input into the draft Species at Risk Act (SARA) policies that were released in 2016, noting that a balanced approach to protect species and their

habitats needs to be considered to consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of these efforts.

Until a formal response from the Government of Canada is received, this resolution holds a status of **Incomplete Information**. The RMA is continuing advocacy efforts at the provincial and federal levels to move this issue forward.

## HEALTH AND SENIORS

### Resolution ER1-16S

#### Rural Physician Action Plan Funding

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate that the Government of Alberta maintain the current provincial funding which is being provided to the Rural Physician Action Plan / Health Workforce for Alberta initiative.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that RPAP will continue to be funded by Alberta Health and will continue to serve its mandate to the benefit for rural Albertans. This message is consistent with information received by the RMA through other advocacy avenues and the RMA would like to thank the RMA members for their direct advocacy on this issue as well.

In addition to the continuation of RPAP, Alberta Health has indicated that, as part of the RPAP review, the mandate of RPAP may be expanded to include other health professionals to ensure the full suite of health care professionals are available in rural communities. The RMA welcomes this tentative step and will take all additional opportunities to engage with Alberta Health on this issue.

In 2017, RPAP was renamed the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) and assigned an expanded mandate to support the recruitment and retention of all health professions in rural Alberta. Additionally, the RMA was offered, and accepted, an opportunity to serve on the RhPAP Board of Directors.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

### Resolution 10-15F

#### Maintenance of Provincial Funding for Seniors' Lodging

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to return to review and finalize its review of the seniors lodge program, including increasing funding to the lodge program and removing or increasing its funding cap.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** This resolution has two purposes: to request the Government of Alberta to review and finalize the seniors lodge program review, and to increase funding to the seniors lodge program. As the program review has been provided to Alberta Seniors and Housing for finalization, the first request in the resolution has been met. However, the government's response gave no indication of any imminent plan to increase funding to the seniors lodge program, though funding levels for seniors housing in general saw an increase in the 2016-17 budget from \$177 million to \$324 million. This increase came largely through additional assistance to the Alberta Social Housing Corporation which provides affordable housing for both



seniors and non-seniors. Budget 2017-18 budget saw a decrease of funding to the Alberta Social Housing Corporation to \$262 million. Of this \$262 million, however, \$100 million is dedicated to seniors housing.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**.

## INDUSTRY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

### Resolution 10-16F

#### Funding Model for Sand and Aggregate Pit Reclamation

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties encourage the Government of Alberta, in reviewing the *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation*, to explore opportunities to allocate a portion of future provincial funds received from the levy towards reclamation of orphaned and abandoned sites, should the current levy amount be adjusted to reflect current conditions and should provincial legislation be revised to better enforce the reclamation of gravel pits.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The RMA is pleased by the Government of Alberta's willingness to improve aggregate management and regulations through the release of the revised *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation*. However, the government has not addressed the possibility of increasing provincial funding to municipalities to address reclamation of abandoned pits. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the RMA will continue to advocate on the need for funding to support reclamation of abandoned and orphaned pits.

### Resolution 4-16F

#### Conservation and Reclamation of Class 1 Gravel Pits

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta amend the *Code of Practice for Pits* to:

1. include an obligation for timely progressive reclamation including obligation deadlines that are enforceable; and
2. ensure securities reflect liability and provide sufficient incentive for progressive reclamation; and
3. ensure municipal land use and development approvals are obtained prior to the Province issuing pit registrations or accepting changes to existing pit registrations;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta maintain inspection and enforce compliance with the *Conservation and Reclamation Regulations* and the *Code of Practice for Pits*; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend the *Code of Practice for Pits* to put into place enforceable reclamation requirements for gravel pits established prior to August 15, 1978 so as to enhance the quality of life and opportunities for rural residents.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The RMA appreciates the opportunity to be involved with other stakeholders through the engagement sessions offered by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to discuss pit reclamation and compliance requirements in early 2017. Recognizing that AEP will be drafting revisions to improve Alberta's pits program to address compliance and regulatory issues, the RMA assigns this resolution as a status of **Accepted in Principle** pending the results of this review. This resolution will continue to support RMA's advocacy efforts as revisions to the Code for Practice for Pits are undertaken. This resolution status will be reviewed as additional information becomes available.

## Resolution 11-15F

### Provincial Support for Municipal Aggregate Acquisition

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to use its existing tools, statutes, and regulations to deal with disputes between municipalities sourcing aggregate and other Crown lessees to expedite municipal aggregate exploration.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** While the RMA appreciates the commitment made by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to review regulatory programs for sand and gravel pits it does not address the resolution request to better utilize existing policy and regulatory tools to protect municipal aggregate needs.

The Government of Alberta's *Alberta Aggregate (Sand and Gravel) Allocation Directive for Commercial Use on Public Land*, and a new Aggregate Land Request Process, which has been effective as of September 1, 2017 indicates this issue is on the government's radar. The Directive outlines how aggregate resources will be allocated on public land and notes that the highest priority for allocation includes aggregate needed for public works such as public roads and projects constructed and maintained by or on behalf of the province or municipality. Provincial ministries and municipalities can submit aggregate requests, supported by aggregate requirements for the next ten years, which will be reviewed by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP). Provincial agencies and municipalities will be expected to share their aggregate requirements with AEP, other municipalities and provincial agencies who are working in a specific area. This information will be used to develop a strategy to address the immediate and medium term needs for the broader aggregate public works in the specific area.

The RMA participated in engagement sessions offered by AEP to discuss pit reclamation and compliance requirements in 2017, and emphasized the need for a provincial strategy to support the allocation of aggregate resources. Though there has been progress made to clarify access on public lands, until such time that tools are in place to support effective municipal aggregate exploration and a process to address disputes between municipalities and other Crown lessees, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 17-15F

### Community Aggregate Payment Levy Rate Amendment

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to renew the *Community Aggregate Payment Levy Regulation* and to update the maximum levy rate to reflect inflation and the increased cost of infrastructure upgrading and maintenance.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta underwent a review of the Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) regulation alongside other regulations as part of the Municipal Government Act Review process in 2016. The CAPL maximum rate was increased to \$0.40 per tonne of sand and gravel. Though this increased rate may not fully reflect the cost of infrastructure upgrading and maintenance, and inflation, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** to recognize the rate increase.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

### Resolution 2-17S

Amendments to Section 348 of the *Municipal Government Act*

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta amend Section 348 of the *Municipal Government Act* to reflect that no Crown lending institutions be allowed to take priority over any claims due to the municipality.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA members have been facing considerable challenges collecting unpaid taxes from property owners. These efforts are further frustrated by the hierarchy of claims that places municipalities at a significant disadvantage to collect unpaid property taxes against other liabilities that the property owner possesses. As indicated in the response from Alberta Municipal Affairs, amendments to Section 348 are not being considered and therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### Resolution 4-17S

Collection of Outstanding Taxes for Education Requisitions From the Province of Alberta

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta develop new tools or utilize existing mechanisms to ensure that municipalities that are unable to collect education property taxes through the tax recovery process be exempted from forwarding those uncollectible tax amounts to Alberta Education, or have the uncollectible amount refunded.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In fall 2017, the Government of Alberta announced the Provincial Education Requisition Credit (PERC) program, under which municipalities who have no choice but to remit requisitions to the Government of Alberta for unpaid education property taxes on linear oil and gas properties may apply to receive a credit equivalent to the amount of the requisition. PERC is funded through the Alberta School Foundation Fund's net asset fund.

At this point, PERC extends to the 2019 tax year, and is capped at \$10 million per year. As of March 2018, 37 applications had been processed and approximately \$3 million of credits had been issued.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**, and the RMA will continue to work with the Government of Alberta to support the long-term viability of the PERC program and develop other mechanisms to address unpaid linear property taxes.

## Resolution 8-17S

### Oldman River Regional Services Commission Regional Planning Funding

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that the Government of Alberta provide long term, provincial funding to all municipalities for regional planning activities in a similar fashion to the Calgary Regional Partnership and the Capital Region Board.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** This resolution requests “long term, provincial funding to all municipalities for regional planning activities in a similar fashion to the Calgary Regional Partnership and the Capital Region Board”, but as outlined in the response provided from Alberta Municipal Affairs, funding offered through the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) grant is not provided to meet the operational delivery of municipal services. ACP funding is instead provided to the Growth Management Boards (GMBs) to meet their legislated mandate. Though funding was provided to the Oldman River Regional Services Commission along with other regional planning service providers in 2017, this funding is not long term.

Given the differences between the GMBs and other planning bodies in the province, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons but given the lack of additional funding provided to regional planning organizations such as the ORRSC, this resolution is identified as **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 3-16F

### Implementation of the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to delay or repeal the establishment of the Centralized Industrial Property Authority and the creation of the Provincial Assessor until such time as the appropriate studies, pilot projects, and consultation with all effected property owners has been completed and analyzed so the effectiveness of such a policy may be fully understood;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties call upon the Government of Alberta to consult with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Assessors Association in order to answer the numerous procedural, policy and legal questions which arise from the decision to create the Centralized Industrial Property Authority under the newly created position of Provincial Assessor.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to delay or repeal the process of transitioning to centralized assessment for designated industrial property. The response indicates that the Government of Alberta received sufficient feedback in favor of the move to centralized assessment during previous MGA consultation opportunities to warrant the decisions being final. RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta’s willingness

to share as much information as possible with municipalities related to procedural changes, and to take into consideration municipal input on the draft list of industrial properties designated as “major plants,” but this does not address the intent of the resolution.

In an effort to support a successful transition to a centralized industrial property system, Alberta Municipal Affairs has implemented an interim hybrid model in which municipalities will be contracted to continue to assess industrial properties on behalf of the provincial assessor. While the RMA appreciates this approach, a preferred alternative may be to maintain this contractual arrangement permanently, as it allows municipal assessors to utilize their local knowledge with increased provincial oversight of the assessment process. In 2018, the province is requisitioning about \$5.8 million in designated industrial (DI) property taxes from designated industrial property owners, through a separate tax rate applied to every DI property owner’s municipal tax notice.

RMA and several RMA members have been involved in the planning of the transition to centralized industrial property assessment with the intent to minimize the disturbance to municipalities and assessors. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## **Resolution 4-16F**

### **Centralized Industrial Assessment**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to leave the responsibility of industrial assessment with municipal governments and to provide local assessors with updated manuals and regulations required to perform the services they currently provide to municipalities for industrial assessment.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response does not indicate a willingness to leave the assessment of industrial property as the responsibility of municipal assessors. RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta’s willingness to share as much information as possible with municipalities related to procedural changes associated with centralization, but this does not address the intent of the resolution.

In an effort to support a successful transition to a centralized industrial property system, Alberta Municipal Affairs has implemented a interim hybrid model in which municipalities will be contracted to continue to assess industrial properties on behalf of the provincial assessor. While RMA appreciates this approach, a preferred alternative may be to maintain this contractual arrangement permanently, as it allows municipal assessors to utilize their local knowledge with increased provincial oversight of the assessment process.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## Resolution 17-16F

### Capital Region Board Mandate Expansion

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to direct the Capital Region Board to preserve their current mandate as any mandate expansion beyond that mandate becomes governance that interferes with the governance of local elected officials and their roles.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that the Edmonton region's growth management board as established under the revised *Municipal Government Act* will likely exist with a broadened scope that includes service delivery, infrastructure, environmental issues, and economic prosperity. However, the response does not address the role that a potentially expanded GMB will have on the governance functions of individual municipalities that participate in it.

In October 2017, the Government of Alberta enacted the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation* under the *Municipal Government Act*. The regulation renamed the Capital Region Board as the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB). The regulation also broadened the EMRB's mandate from a focus on enabling responsible regional growth to include the following (see the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation*, s. 3(1)(a-f) for the complete mandate):

- Develop policies regarding the coordination of regional infrastructure investment and service delivery
- Promote the economic well-being and competitiveness of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region

To fulfill their expanded mandate, the EMRB is required to do the following (see the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation*, s. 3(2)(a-e) for the specific mechanisms by which the EMRB shall fulfill its mandate):

- Prepare a growth plan
- Prepare a servicing plan
- Develop and implement policies for the sharing of costs for regional projects of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

Based on the expansion of the EMRB's mandate to include service delivery and economic development, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.



## Resolution 23-16F

### List of Municipal Electors

*Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend the *Local Authorities Election Act* to provide municipalities a practical and economical option to use a list of electors for proof of elector eligibility.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** As outlined in the Government’s response, municipalities have the ability to prepare a list of electors and may work with the Chief Electoral Office to prepare that list. However, due to requirements for enumerating electors, the extent to which this is considered a ‘practical’ and ‘economical’ option is dependent on each individual municipality and their local capacity. Alberta is the only province in Canada where enumeration is required for the development of a list of electors, and one of only two where the use of lists of electors is not legislated.

Therefore, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and RMA will advocate for the need for the Government of Alberta to support greater use of elector lists during the next review of the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

## Resolution 1-16S

### Preservation of Linear Assessment for Rural Municipalities

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties continue to request the Government of Alberta to cease any consideration to redistribute linear taxation in any form, and allow rural municipalities the opportunity to continue to build partnerships with their urban neighbours that support services for all Alberta residents.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that the proposed *Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA)* does not include any changes to the distribution of municipal taxes. Under the proposed legislation, municipalities will continue to collect taxes on property types within their jurisdiction, including linear property. Any sharing of municipal tax revenues will take place through mandatory intermunicipal collaboration frameworks developed locally among neighbouring municipalities. This approach has been confirmed with the requirement for intermunicipal collaboration frameworks and intermunicipal development plans under the amended *Municipal Government Act*. As such, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

## Resolution 2-16S

### Notice Period for Adjustments to Linear Assessment Modifiers

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta provide municipalities with notice of any adjustments to its linear assessment modifiers well in advance of municipal budgeting processes.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response indicates an understanding of the concern with the timing of assessment modifier adjustments and is willing to expedite notice of such changes when possible. However, the response gives no commitment to formally changing the provincial process for determining and communicating these adjustments. In light of the extremely late notice of the Government of Alberta's decision to freeze 2018 assessment year modifiers, which impacted the budgeting processes of many municipalities, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. The RMA hopes that this late notification is a one-time occurrence linked to the decision to review the modifier system, and has advocated that sufficient notice be provided in future years.

## Resolution 3-16S

### Recovery of Linear Property, Commercial Property, and Education Requisition Tax Arrears

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) request the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), and other provincial legislation to broaden the tax recovery power of municipalities to collect linear property taxes by granting a lien in favour of the municipality as follows:

A lien equivalent to that granted to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) by s. 103 of the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act* (OGCA) that being: "on the debtor's interest in any well, facilities, and pipelines, land or interests in land, including mines and minerals, equipment and petroleum substances" and the power to garnish funds owed to the debtor;

A lien which ranks in priority (or equivalent) to the lien granted in favour of the AER by s. 103(2) of the OGCA;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC requests the Government of Canada to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to recognize municipal linear property taxes and other municipal non-property taxes as a secured interest in priority to other unsecured interests;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC request the Government of Alberta to provide a credit reimbursement to compensate for the education property taxes that become uncollectable due to linear and commercial property bankruptcy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In 2016, Alberta Municipal Affairs had convened an inter-ministry working group consisting of representatives from Municipal Affairs, Energy, Treasury Board and Finance, Education, and the AER. The purpose of this working group was to address the concerns identified in resolution 3-16S and resolution 5-15F. More specifically, the working group explored how the suite of tools available to municipalities to recover unpaid linear property taxes could be expanded, as well as possible legislative or regulatory solutions to relieve or exempt municipalities from paying provincial education property tax requisitions on linear properties in which the municipality has not been able to gather tax revenues from the property owner.

Early in 2017, the working group completed their research and Government of Alberta staff internally developed options for the Minister of Municipal Affairs based on the working group's findings. In fall 2017, the Government of Alberta announced the Provincial Education Requisition Credit (PERC) program, under which municipalities who have no choice but to remit requisitions to the Government of Alberta for unpaid education property taxes on linear oil and gas properties, may apply to receive a credit equivalent to the amount of the requisition. PERC is funded through the Alberta School Foundation Fund's net asset fund.

At this point, PERC extends to the 2019 tax year, and is capped at \$10 million per year. As of March 2018, 37 applications had been processed and approximately \$3 million of credits had been issued. The creation of PERC meets the request in the third operative clause of this resolution.

The Government of Alberta has not amended the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to broaden the tax recovery powers of municipalities, and municipal powers to seize assets to account for unpaid linear property taxes continues to rank lower in priority than that of the AER and other organizations.

Similarly, RMA has received no indication from the Government of Canada of a willingness to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to place municipal interests above other non-secured interests.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part** and will continue to advocate on all aspects of this resolution.

## Resolution 1-15F

### Continued Provincial Funding Support for Municipalities

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate for continued financial support to municipalities through the continuation of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative or similar program beyond 2018.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In the 2018 provincial budget, the Government of Alberta commits to maintaining a stable level of funding until the scheduled completion of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) in the 2021-22 budget year. Additionally, the Government of

Alberta has committed to replacing the MSI with permanent, legislated municipal funding upon the conclusion of MSI in the 2021-22 budget year based on sharing of provincial revenues. This new program will be developed collaboratively between the Government of Alberta, the RMA, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and other partners. The RMA is hopeful that this funding program will ensure that municipalities receive a consistent portion of provincial revenues each year.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and will be re-evaluated as the work of planning for post-MSI municipal funding continues.

## **Resolution 4-15F**

### **AAMDC Participation in City Charter Discussions**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta invites participation of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties in city charter discussions.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta has committed to working with Edmonton and Calgary to develop city charters that reflect their unique needs as metropolitan areas. RMA has supported this process with the understanding that any additional tools or powers allotted to the two metropolitan areas would not come at the cost of the local autonomy of the neighboring rural municipalities.

RMA believes that the development of city charters and the unique powers and responsibilities they will afford Edmonton and Calgary will impact surrounding municipalities in ways not anticipated by the cities and the Government of Alberta. The impacts of decision-making and planning within one municipality regularly spills across municipal boundaries, and the implementation of city charters will be no exception.

RMA has taken the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed City Charter Regulations released in the summer of 2017. There are a number of additional powers and tools presented in the regulation that RMA feels should be expanded to all municipalities in Alberta.

Other than this action, RMA has not been involved in the city charter discussions, and assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## **Resolution 5-15F**

### **Recovery of Linear Property Tax Arrears**

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) requests the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, and other provincial legislation to broaden the tax recovery power of municipalities to collect linear property taxes by granting a lien in favour of the municipality as follows:**

- a) A lien equivalent to that granted to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) by s. 103 of the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act* (OGCA) that being: “on the debtor’s interest in any well, facilities, and pipelines, land or interests in land, including mines and minerals, equipment and petroleum substances” and the power to garnish funds owed to the debtor;
- b) A lien which ranks in priority (or equivalent) to the lien granted in favour of the AER by s. 103(2) of the OGCA; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC requests the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to request the Government of Canada to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to recognize municipal linear property taxes and other municipal non-property taxes as a secured interest in priority to other unsecured interests;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the AAMDC request the Province of Alberta to provide a credit reimbursement to compensate for the Education Property Taxes that becomes uncollectable due to linear property bankruptcy.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In 2016, Alberta Municipal Affairs had convened an inter-ministry working group consisting of representatives from Municipal Affairs, Energy, Treasury Board and Finance, Education, and the AER. The purpose of this working group was to address the concerns identified in resolution 3-16S and resolution 5-15F. More specifically, the working group explored how the suite of tools available to municipalities to recover unpaid linear property taxes could be expanded, as well as possible legislative or regulatory solutions to relieve or exempt municipalities from paying provincial education property tax requisitions on linear properties in which the municipality has not been able to gather tax revenues from the property owner.

Early in 2017, the working group completed their research and Government of Alberta staff internally developed options for the Minister of Municipal Affairs based on the working group’s findings. In fall 2017, the Government of Alberta announced the Provincial Education Requisition Credit (PERC) program, under which municipalities who have no choice but to remit requisitions to the Government of Alberta for unpaid education property taxes on linear oil and gas properties, may apply to receive a credit equivalent to the amount of the requisition. PERC is funded through the Alberta School Foundation Fund’s net asset fund.

At this point, PERC extends to the 2019 tax year, and is capped at \$10 million per year. As of March 2018, 37 applications had been processed and approximately \$3 million of credits had been issued. The creation of PERC meets the request in the third operative clause of this resolution.

The Government of Alberta has not amended the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to broaden the tax recovery powers of municipalities, and municipal powers to seize assets to account for unpaid linear property taxes continues to rank lower in priority than that of the AER and other organizations.

Similarly, RMA has received no indication from the Government of Canada of a willingness to amend the federal *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to place municipal interests above other non-secured interests.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part** and will continue to advocate on all aspects of this resolution.

### **Resolution 13-15F**

#### **Non-Profit Housing Organizations Borrowing from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to allow housing foundations and other provincial and local non-profit affordable housing organizations to directly borrow from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority without impacting a local authority's borrowing capacity.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response does not indicate any willingness to consider the possibility of allowing non-profit housing authorities to borrow directly from ACFA, which is the request made in the resolution. Under the current framework, municipalities are unnecessarily included in the borrowing process for non-profit housing authorities, causing unnecessary administrative burdens, liability risk, and impacts to municipal borrowing limits. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

### **Resolution 22-15F**

#### **Amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* Regarding Joint and Several Liability**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to reflect one of the following regimes:

- a) a system of pure proportionate liability; or
- b) limit joint and several liability to only certain types of losses; or
- c) limit joint and several liability to defendants whose fault exceeds a specified threshold or;
- d) eliminate joint and several liability where the plaintiff is contributory negligent.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** In Bill 21: *Modernized Municipal Government Act*, no changes were made to joint and several liability. When addressed to the province through Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Municipal Affairs indicated that this issue would be best addressed through Alberta Justice and Solicitor General but there has been no indication of further progress on this issue. This resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Resolution 6-15F

#### Re-introduction of Bill 204 to Address the Matter of Adverse Possession

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requests the Government of Alberta to place legislation before the Assembly, to amend the *Land Titles Act* to prevent the acquisition of lands acquired by adverse possession.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA is encouraged by Service Alberta's response, which supports the resolution and the need to eliminate the concept of adverse possession from the *Land Titles Act*. Further encouraging is a recent government motion calling for the abolishment of adverse possession in Alberta. The motion was unanimously approved by the all-party Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship, and recommends that the government act to eliminate adverse possession in Alberta.

Building on the Standing Committee's recommendation, MLA Richard Gottfried (Calgary-Fish Creek), re-introduced Bill 204 in the spring 2018 session of the Alberta Legislature. Bill 204 passed first reading on April 5, 2018. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and RMA will monitor Bill 204 as it proceeds through the legislative process.

### Resolution 9-15F

#### Referrals on the Sale of Public Lands

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to ensure that municipalities receive full compensation from the Government of Alberta, which would include proceeds from the sale of said public lands, in order to provide the required infrastructure to those said lands.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response makes no reference to the issue of costs incurred by municipalities to service previous Crown land that is purchased through public auction and developed. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

## Resolution 19-15F

### Amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* for the Dedication of Environmental Reserves in Specific Cases

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the **Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties** advocate to the **Minister of Municipal Affairs** to amend **Section 663** of the *Municipal Government Act* by the following addition:

- (e) except when, in the case of when one lot is to be created from a quarter section of land or land is to be subdivided into lots of 16.0 hectares or more and is to be used only for agricultural purposes, the land to be subdivided is adjacent to the bed and shore of a water body where the municipality has adopted by bylaw a statutory plan that identifies the future development adjacent to the bed and shore of the water body for the purpose of providing public access, in which case the subdivision authority may require environmental reserve dedication pursuant to Section 664(1)(c)(ii)."

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The revisions to the *Municipal Government Act* do not include this specific wording nor the intent of the language. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.



## TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Resolution 11-17S

#### Review of Standard Practices for Installation of High Tension Cable Barriers on Two-Lane Provincial Highways

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to review Alberta Transportation's Standard Practices for installation of High Tension Cable Barriers (HTCBs) on two-lane provincial highways to ensure Alberta has the safest possible highways.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta's response includes information detailing design options to ensure that HTCBs on two-lane highways are as safe as possible and do not impact snow removal or oversized vehicle travel on such highways. However, the resolution requests Alberta Transportation to review the current practices, which the response does not indicate a willingness to undertake.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and the RMA will continue to advocate on this issue.

### Resolution 7-16F

#### Vegetation Management on Alberta Provincial Highways

*Status: Accepted in Part*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to restore funding for summer maintenance programs for its vegetation management (weed control and mowing) along provincial highways; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to deliver a more effective maintenance program for vegetation management (weed control and mowing) along one, two and three digit highways in the province, which includes the herbicide application and other measures to control noxious weeds, prohibited noxious weeds and any unsafe vegetation on the full right of way; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request Alberta Transportation give the option in all districts of the province to enter into service agreements with municipalities for weed control.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates a plan to resume full vegetation management practices along provincial highways in the summer of 2017. This response meets the first "ask" of the resolution, which is to restore previous vegetation management funding.

The second “ask” in the resolution calls for not only the return of funding, but an improved vegetation management program compared to that previously utilized prior to the reduction in funding. At this point the Government of Alberta response indicates only a return to previous levels, and therefore does not meet the resolution’s second “ask.”

The third “ask” in the resolution calls for Alberta Transportation to enter service agreements with municipalities for the actual delivery of vegetation management. The Government of Alberta response indicates that this option will be considered, and may move forward based on further analysis of capacity and standards. In March 2018, the Minister of Transportation indicated that municipalities would be eligible to bid on maintenance contracts for provincial highways. RMA is encouraged by this and will follow up with Alberta Transportation in the future.

As the Government of Alberta response meets part of the resolution’s intent, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**, and will continue advocating on it in the future.

## **Resolution 16-16F**

### **Support for Continuation of Crude Oil Tanker Activity Along the Northern Coast of British Columbia**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties advocate to the Government of Canada expressing support for continued tanker activity along the northern coast of British Columbia.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** Shortly after RMA’s Fall 2016 Convention, during which this resolution was endorsed, the Government of Canada formally announced that they would introduce legislation to establish a moratorium on tanker traffic along B.C.’s north coast. According to the Government of Canada’s website, “the moratorium will cover the Great Bear Rainforest/Great Bear Sea area: an area from the Alaska/B.C. border down to the point on B.C.’s mainland adjacent to the northern tip of Vancouver Island, and this includes Haida Gwaii. The new legislation will prohibit oil tankers carrying crude oil or persistent oil products as cargo from entering or leaving ports and marine installations in this area.”

Due to the this announcement, RMA elected not to submit formal correspondence to the Government of Canada calling for the continuation of tanker traffic in the area, as the Government of Canada made it clear that the matter was closed and a decision had been reached. Earlier in 2016, RMA provided input to the Government of Canada on this issue by responding to this question that the Government of Canada posed to stakeholders:

*What do you believe are the most important issues the Government should address in its plan to formalize a crude oil tanker moratorium?*

RMA’s response was as follows:

*Placing a moratorium on any transportation mode or route is a drastic decision and should not be made without intensive analysis of local and national implications, projected future transportation needs and opportunities, and potential changes in technology that may render the moratorium unnecessary. Based on the discussion material that Transport Canada has shared with stakeholders, it is difficult to know the extent or level of analysis that has been undertaken to his point.*

*The AAMDC understands the importance of considering and mitigating local environmental impacts of tanker traffic on BC's north coast. However, such a significant decision must consider both local issues and upstream/indirect issues that may be caused by a moratorium. While the intent of a moratorium is to protect a relatively localized ecosystem, the potential social and economic impacts may spread much farther. For example, the tanker moratorium effectively eliminates the development of Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline from Bruderheim, Alberta to Kitimat, BC. For rural Alberta, the development of a pipeline to move crude oil from Alberta to a port facility for tanker transport to foreign markets is very important for the long-term sustainability of the oil and gas industry. While the moratorium is not directly related to the sustainability of the industry, it should not be placed into effect without considering the long-term impacts it may have on the industry. The formalization of a moratorium should be accompanied by a commitment from the Government of Canada to approve and facilitate the development of an alternative pipeline corridor from Alberta to a coastal port facility.*

This input was provided prior to the submission or endorsement of resolution 16-16F, as the RMA Board of Directors identified the potential tanker moratorium and the associated consultations as an emerging issue worthy of RMA input.

Due to the moratorium, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## **Resolution 6-16S**

### **Creating a Residential Exemption to Roadside Developments**

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to amend legislation and/or regulations, including the *Highway Development Act* and the *Highway Development and Protection Regulations*, to exempt the erection of fences, primary single family residences and associated residential property upgrades such as accessory buildings, under 200 square feet, and pools in subdivisions that have already been approved by Alberta Transportation from requiring roadside development permits in residential multi parcel subdivisions that have received Alberta Transportation approval at subdivision stage.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response indicates that the need for roadside development permits on parcels of land that have already been approved at the subdivision stage is necessary to ensure Alberta Transportation is apprised of development in the proximity of

roads that may otherwise not be adequately communicated due to requirements in existing legislation. While RMA appreciates Alberta Transportation's willingness to attempt to streamline the permitting process, the unwillingness of the Ministry to consider an exemption results in this resolution being assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## **Resolution 2-15F**

### **Enhance Funding for Roads, Highways and Local Bridges in Rural Municipalities**

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to increase and accelerate funding for rural road and highway construction and maintenance;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the maintenance and reconstruction of local bridges in the 2016 provincial budget, and sustain this funding in future budgets.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA is pleased by the Government of Alberta's commitment to restore Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) funding in the 2017-18 budget year, as well as their targeted STIP funding for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budget years. The inclusion of a Local Road Bridge Program and the Resource Road Program sub-components within the STIP meets the intent of request for increased rural road funding in this resolution.

Additionally, the Government of Alberta's 2017-18 Capital Plan identifies a steady projected increase in annual capital funding for provincial roads and bridges, from \$450 million in 2017-18, culminating at \$588 million in 2020-21. While this funding is not specifically targeted towards rural roads and highways, it is likely that rural funding will see a proportional increase as well.

The RMA is concerned that funding for STIP has decreased to \$26 million for the 2018-19 budget from the \$35 million budgeted for 2017-18 and \$85 million forecast during this same timeframe. While the decrease in funding from last year is a disappointment, the RMA acknowledges the initial reinstatement of these funds and that their continuation is positive. As such this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

## **Resolution 3-15F**

### **Local Road Bridge Opt-Outs Under *Navigation Protection Act***

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties support the Government of Alberta's request to opt all existing local road bridges built prior to April 1, 2014 out of the Navigation Protection Act;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that Alberta Transportation allow ninety days from the endorsement of this resolution for municipalities not wishing to have their local road bridges opted out of the Navigation Protection Act to communicate this request to Alberta Transportation.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with the Government of Alberta in ensuring bridges managed by RMA members complied with the new *Navigation Protection Act*. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

RMA is concerned with the federal government's review of changes made to the *Navigation Protection Act* and whether these will have impacts on municipalities. In early 2018, Bill C-69 (*An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*) received first reading at the federal level. Bill C-69 proposes significant changes to the *Navigation Protection Act*, including broadening the criteria to identify a water body as "navigable." The RMA will be monitoring the progress of this Bill and the potential impacts it may have on bridges opted out of the existing *Navigation Protection Act* as per this resolution.

## **Resolution 8-15F**

### Land Acquisition Process for Crown Land

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to transfer care and control of all Crown lands required for construction of public roadways to the municipality at no charge and with no other consultations required.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The government response indicates that revenue gathered through the sale of public lands is not accessible to municipalities for the purposes of road-building. This is somewhat unrelated to the purpose of the resolution, which is to provide municipalities with Crown land at no charge when it is needed to acquire rights of way to build or expand municipal roads. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**, and RMA will advocate to Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment and Parks on this issue.

## **Resolution 20-15F**

### Capital Funding for Community Airports

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding for the Community Airport Program to a level that reflects the needs of municipalities to implement necessary and timely capital upgrades for community-owned public-use airports.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The return of the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) in the 2017-18 budget year has allocated a \$2 million for the Community Airport Program (CAP). During the process of redesigning STIP, the Government of Alberta consulted with both urban and rural

municipalities to determine priority infrastructure types for funding. Rural municipalities that participated in the survey indicated that a relatively small proportion of overall STIP funding (approximately 10%) should be directed towards CAP. The \$2 million allocated in 2017-18 is roughly aligned with this input. While this is slightly less than the amounts suggested in the survey, it is reasonably similar, particularly considering the high level of funding needed for roads and bridges which is also addressed in other STIP components. RMA is also pleased that eligibility criteria under CAP has been expanded to include lighting.

Given that the 2018-19 budget for STIP has decreased from the projected \$35 million to \$26 million, the RMA is concerned about the overall funding decrease for STIP and how this may impact funding allocated to CAP. The RMA will monitor the impact to CAP as details become available. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

## **Resolution 23-15F**

### **Alberta Transportation Highway Signage**

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Transportation enforce third party sign regulations within the development control zone; FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request that Alberta Transportation provide all municipalities with the sole authority to permit and regulate electronic signs that are within the Alberta Transportation development control zone.**

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response to this resolution indicates that there is limited interest in addressing municipal concerns with unlicensed third-party signage within development zones. RMA hopes that the Government of Alberta reviews these regulations to ensure they properly balance the interests of businesses, municipalities and road users and would look forward to participating in such a process. At a recent meeting with RMA, the Minister of Transportation committed to examining the issue in more detail and following up with RMA on possible solutions.

In April 2018, RMA and Alberta Transportation staff met to discuss the highway signage issue further. RMA and Alberta Transportation plan to collaborate in developing solutions to this issue in the spring of 2018. Based on this commitment from Alberta Transportation, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**, and the RMA looks forward to collaborating on the issue with Alberta Transportation.

## **WATER**

There are no active resolutions specifically focused on this topic.

## OTHER

### Resolution 8-16F

#### Resolution Process – Frequency of Similar or Duplicate Resolutions

*Status: Accepted*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Association of Alberta Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) Board of Directors review the AAMDC Resolution Process Policy with the objective of limiting the frequency in which resolutions that duplicate previously endorsed resolutions or deal with subject matter recently addressed through endorsed resolution are presented to the convention floor.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** RMA initiated a thorough review of the RMA Resolution Process Policy in the spring of 2017 which involved engagement with the RMA's resolutions committee, members, board of directors, and parliamentarian. Based on input received, the policy has been amended and includes clarification on the process the Resolutions Committee can use to address the frequency of similar or duplicate resolutions being brought forward. The RMA Board of Directors approved the revised policy in summer 2017. The revised policy was shared with members notifying of the key changes, and is being implemented effective immediately. As the policy reflects the request outlined in this resolution, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

### Resolution 20-16F

#### Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations

*Status: Accepted in Principle*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the Government of Alberta to change Alberta's charitable gaming model so as to provide equity to all charitable organizations in Alberta, by addressing the disparity between the funding provided, and the frequency of opportunities available to charitable organizations in major urban centers compared with those in rural communities.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) response indicates an acknowledgement that the current charitable gaming model is disadvantageous to charities operating in rural Alberta. RMA is pleased that the AGLC is planning to revise the current model and hopes to be a part of the process. As of early 2018, this review has not yet occurred. The RMA is currently in the process of forming a member committee to develop recommendations on how the model could be improved as per resolution 13-17F. As such, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will be re-evaluated based on the outcomes of the RMA committee and when the review of the current model begins.



## Resolution ER1-16F

### Save Vegreville's Case Processing Center

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties urge the federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship reconsider their decision to close the Case Processing Centre (CPC) in Vegreville.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Canada response provides the rationale under which Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada made the decision to relocate their case processing centre from Vegreville to Edmonton. Unfortunately, the letter does not indicate whether the Government of Canada conducted a local impact analysis on Vegreville and the surrounding rural areas, or whether potential community impacts were considered as a component of their decision-making process. Most importantly, the response does not indicate a willingness to reconsider the final relocation decision.

In 2017, a report commissioned by the Town of Vegreville indicated that as many as 420 people could relocate from Vegreville as a result of the case processing centre closure. In addition to the Town of Vegreville report, the closure decision has drawn concern from oppositions MPs, as well as the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

## Resolution 4-16S

### Improving Oversight of Delegated Legislation

*Status: Intent Not Met*

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to enact a legislative requirement that all delegated legislation including regulations, orders in council, ministerial orders and codes, that are essential to the implementation of new or amending legislation, be submitted for review to the public and the legislature before final reading of the enabling legislation takes place.

**DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of Alberta response is not supportive of expanding the review of delegated legislation to the public and legislature. RMA appreciates the government's willingness to consult on the MGA review and other recent legislation, but as the resolution requests an expansion of current consultation processes, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

# CONTRIBUTORS

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta wishes to thank the Board of Directors members who provided content, input, and advice to this report card:

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Acknowledgements also to RMA staff who worked to produce this report:

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- Wyatt Skovron, Policy Analyst
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