



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## RMA Response to Municipal Cannabis Transition Program

**Nisku, AB, October 15, 2018** – In response to the Government of Alberta’s recently announced Municipal Cannabis Transition Program (MCTP), the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) expresses continued concern regarding the lack of supports available to Alberta’s rural municipalities to navigate the impending legalization of recreational cannabis. The province has placed significant responsibility on municipalities to develop and enforce bylaws that identify land use restrictions for production facilities, and public consumption rules within municipal boundaries, which will require monitoring and enforcement to protect public health and reduce the risk of exposure for children.

The RMA has advocated that **all municipalities** in Alberta receive a 50 per cent share of federal cannabis excise tax revenues that are distributed from the federal government to the provincial government in order to partially address costs associated with increased planning and enforcement responsibility.

The MCTP provides minimal funding to a limited number of Alberta’s municipalities, not reflecting the challenges that rural and small urban municipalities will have in addressing this issue effectively in their communities.

*“While we understand the legalization of recreational cannabis was a federal decision, adequate provincial sharing of the federal excise tax is needed to ensure that all of Alberta’s municipalities can enforce local bylaws effectively for the health and safety of their residents. The recent announcement provides some support to some larger urban centres; however, rural areas rely on RCMP to monitor and handle criminal activity, not develop and enforce municipal bylaws. The lack of funding through the Municipal Cannabis Transition Program made available to Alberta’s rural and small urban municipalities raises significant concerns as to the effective enforcement of bylaws guiding recreational cannabis use. Proper engagement with Alberta’s municipal associations could have led to more municipal concerns being addressed through the design of this funding program.”*

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