

June 26, 2020

Government Introduces Proposed Changes to *Local Authorities Election Act*

Bill 29 proposes a wide range of changes to the municipal election process, including several related to campaign financing and third-party advertising

On June 25, the Minister of Municipal Affairs introduced **Bill 29: Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020**. Bill 29 proposes a range of changes to the municipal and school board election process, including several related to campaign contribution limits, third-party advertising, nomination periods, and other areas.

Earlier in 2020, RMA participated in consultations on potential changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA). During the consultations, RMA developed the following principles to guide a fair and effective local authority election process:

- *Principle 1: Inclusive and accessible* – all those meeting eligibility requirements should have reasonable means to participate as candidates, as well as to vote in an election.
- *Principle 2: Fair and equitable* – all candidates should have comparable opportunities to participate in an election, including through campaigning and participating in the nomination process.
- *Principle 3: Transparent and accountable* – all candidates should be required to disclose contributions received to ensure adherence to applicable campaign finance requirements.
- *Principle 4: Nonpartisan and municipally-focused* – the campaigning and election process should be designed in such a way as to ensure that candidates are focused on and accountable to the interests of their municipality as opposed to a political party or broader ideology.

RMA is currently in the process of reviewing Bill 29 based on the principles above and may provide input and proposed amendments to the Government of Alberta prior to the Bill's second reading.

If Bill 29 is passed, RMA will provide members with more information on changes to the LAEA.

RMA is also monitoring **Bill 26: Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 2020** and **Bill 27: Alberta Senate Election Amendment Act, 2020** as both bills could potentially influence whether the upcoming 2021 municipal election process will also be used to facilitate province-wide referendums. RMA, along with AUMA, has shared concerns that using local elections as a space for senate appointments and

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other significant province-wide issues would detract from local issues.

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