

Red Tape Reduction

The Government of Alberta has identified red tape reduction as a major priority to support economic development and attract investment. Municipal governments provide front line services to Albertans on a daily basis. As a result, municipalities interact with various pieces of provincial and federal legislation, giving them unique experience with the regulatory process, including areas of red tape. While certain industry groups view municipalities as sources of red tape, RMA members continue to facilitate economic development through appropriate and streamlined mechanisms. Municipalities also experience red tape challenges related to provincial reporting requirements, accessing funding, and other areas of municipal administration.

What is RMA's position on the importance of having a municipal perspective in red tape reduction?

- ◆ Municipalities are in the unique position of being both an order of government and interacting with provincial and federal regulations in their daily operations. Because of this, municipalities can be perceived as a source of regulatory challenges for industry, and also face red tape challenges from provincial and federal requirements related to how they must operate.
- ◆ As local decision makers, municipalities are experienced in balancing local regulatory requirements with the need to support economic development through transparent and efficient processes.

What financial considerations do rural municipalities have with respect to red tape reduction?

- ◆ Reducing red tape in provincial regulations must not lead to a download of responsibility to municipalities.
- ◆ Delays in municipal projects such as road construction due to long approval timelines can increase costs and cause issues in the municipal budgeting process.
- ◆ Any red tape reduction initiatives that reduce municipal autonomy and/or increase the administrative burden on municipalities should not be considered without data-driven evidence as to how they will contribute to job creation and economic growth.

What collaborative relationships are essential to rural municipalities in red tape reduction?

- ◆ Red tape reduction should not come at the expense of municipalities; it is necessary for RMA to work with the Government of Alberta to advocate for red tape reduction that does not have unintended financial or administrative consequences.

What current red tape reduction issues are impacting rural Alberta?

Centralized Assessment

- ◆ While centralizing assessment may appear to reduce administrative burden for municipalities, in practice it has increased red tape for municipalities when there is a disagreement on the value assessed by the Centralized Industrial Property Assessment process.
- ◆ Accurate, objective assessments are critical to supporting planning and cost certainty for both municipalities and industry. A centralized assessment model must include assurances that the frequency and quality of assessments will be maintained.

Municipal Land Use Planning

- ◆ Planning and development are core municipal functions. Each municipality has a fundamental interest in land-use planning within their own and neighbouring communities. Municipalities are mandated as the agent of land use planning, as designated by the *Municipal Government Act*.
- ◆ Municipalities across Alberta have an interest in supporting economic development, but must balance growth with local impacts of new development on land use, the environment, infrastructure, existing businesses and residents, and other factors.
- ◆ Municipal planning tools such as off-site levies, land reserves, statutory plans and local appeal boards, and others are crucial to ensuring that new development proceeds responsibly and can be properly supported through municipal infrastructure and services.

Environmental Approvals

- ◆ In aligning activities with the Alberta Wetland Policy, rural municipalities are experiencing delayed approvals resulting in increased costs and incomplete infrastructure projects, which impacts the safety of residents. Improvements need to be made to ensure that Water Act approvals in alignment with the Alberta Wetland Policy can be received in a timely fashion.
- ◆ Road and bridge maintenance with minimal impact should not require the same approval process as new construction.

Contact

Warren Noga
Policy Advisor
warren@RMAlberta.com