

December 8, 2020

Agricultural Service Board of Alberta

SENT VIA EMAIL: Agricultural Service Board Chairs

Dear Agricultural Service Boards:

RE: Sustainable Funding for the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee

As you may be aware, the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee has experienced a number of recent changes that has exemplified the necessity for a sustainable funding model to be identified. As such, I am writing to you today to engage Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs) to consider the proposal for the Committee's operational funding to be funded directly by municipalities. The Committee's members individual expenses will still be funded by the members individual municipality. It is my hope that the following information can provide you the history of the Committee, value that the Committee brings to your local producers and the Agricultural industry in it's entirety, and outline of our proposal to secure a sustainable funding model that will allow the Committee to continue to work for your municipality.

The Provincial ASB Program underwent an extensive review in 2004 with a recommendation to establish a committee to meet with the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (AF) on an annual basis to review the responses to the resolutions brought forward at the annual ASB Provincial Conference and discuss other matters of concern to ASBs. As a result, the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Provincial Committee was formed in 2005. The 2019 results of the ASB Grant Program Review further echoed the need for advocacy of issues affecting ASBs and agriculture.

The Committee had been meeting at least annually with the Minister since 2005 and is now in a position of trying to re-establish it's role as a valuable resource to AF regarding matters impacting agriculture. To do so, the Committee has undertaken an initiative to identify proactive ways to fulfill their role and purpose. As per the current Term of Reference:

The purpose of the ASB Provincial Committee is to achieve a collective voice for Agricultural Service Boards across Alberta that would facilitate and represent both the diversity and commonalities of ASBs. Through this collective voice, additional objectives can be achieved such as: better information and stronger communication back to ASBs about current issues and government policy direction and a regional representative voice that AF may call upon for input during policy or program review and development.



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Some of these recent initiatives of the Committee were the introduction of new tools and strategies to accomplish the Committee's objectives including the development of the agriculturalserviceboards.com website, creation of position statements and increased participation at meetings to increase advocacy efforts. These are outlined in more detail for your information below.

With the recent changes to the Government of Alberta websites, much of the Agricultural Service Board documents were removed and content lost. The ASB Provincial Committee created a website to house documents and has been using this platform to highlight current issues and meetings with government agencies. The website also hosts the various agricultural policies from ASBs in Alberta and minutes from the ASB Provincial Committee meetings. It is the intent of the Committee to ensure this website becomes a valuable tool for ASBs.

Position Statements are a tool used by Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) to communicate a position on a topic utilizing resolutions to create an opinion and raise awareness on the issue. To maintain consistency, the ASB Provincial Committee has begun drafting position statements that includes the resolutions as the background on the issue but also includes current government policy and emerging issues to ensure they remain relevant. The intent of adopting these other tools is to create another mechanism to advocate issues brought forward through resolutions. Position statements can be used in Minister meeting, press releases and tools for municipalities for advocacy.

The adoption of virtual meetings has increased the frequency of the ASB Provincial Committee meetings and decreased their costs. Historically the ASB committee has relied on administrative support from ASB program staff, however, realignment in the Ministry of Agriculture has eroded that support. In 2016 the ASB program secured a grant to pay for a part time Executive Assistant position. The Committee relies on the Executive Assistant for meetings, resolutions responses, develop/administer the website and are an integral part of the success and sustainability of the Committee.

Considering the current state of realignment in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, with the reduction in the ASB program staff and cuts to the ASB Grant funding calls into question the likelihood of securing future funding. Historically, funds for the Committee have been raised through the revenue generated from the Provincial ASB Committee and the Executive Assistant has been funded through a grant from the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, which will expire March 2022.



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Taking into consideration the increased role of advocacy, necessity to engage multiple ministries through the resolution process, the current political and economic climate and the continued support for ASB Provincial Committee activities, the Committee is looking at options outside of what traditionally would have come from the Ministry. The Committee will still pursue Grant funding but feels that securing an alternative source of funds would be prudent to ensure long term sustainability of the Committee and ability to continue with the mandate established by its members. As such, a proposal to collect a nominal flat fee from each ASB with the Provincial Conference registration will be tabled at the Provincial Conference for the membership to vote.

Proposed for consideration is the following tiered funding proposal:

Year	Amount per ASB	Total Funds Raised
2022	\$ 375.00	\$ 25,875.00
2023*	\$ 500.00	\$ 34,500.00
2024*	\$ 600.00	\$ 41,400.00
2025*	\$ 600.00	\$ 41,400.00

*Funding requirements would be adjusted pending successful 2022 grant application

The funding secured for the Executive Assistant and ASB Provincial Committee is administered through the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF). It is proposed that fees would be collected by AAAF. The amendments to the Provincial Rules of Procedure are being proposed to allow for the collection of fees and to annually set the fees a year prior to their collection. It is my hope that the above information provides an overview of the challenges faced by the Committee and the value that it continues to provide to ASB's across the Province. I am available to provide clarity on any of the information provided above and hope to have your support for a predictable, sustainable funding model for the Provincial ASB Committee to allow our continued efforts into the future.

Sincerely,

Corey Beck



Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
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Chair, Provincial ASB Committee

Website: www.agriculturalserviceboards.com

CC: Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen