

# RMA Fall 2022 Submitted Resolutions

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Acceptance of Order Paper
- 3) Resolution Session

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|---------------|--|
| <b>1-22F</b>  | <b>Volunteer Firefighters as Medical First Responders</b> <i>(Ponoka County)</i>   |
| <b>2-22F</b>  | <b>Laboratory and X-Ray Technologists Training for Rural Healthcare</b> <i>(Mountain View County)</i>  |
| <b>3-22F</b>  | <b>Provide for a Uniform Method of Auditing and Enforcing Compliance with Community Aggregate Payment Levy Bylaws</b> <i>(Stettler County)</i> |
| <b>4-22F</b>  | <b>Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation</b> <i>(Athabasca County)</i>  |
| <b>5-22F</b>  | <b>Fertilizer Emission Reduction Target Impacts</b> <i>(MD of Taber)</i>   |
| <b>6-22F</b>  | <b>Financial Burden of Emergency Service Response on Crown Lands</b> <i>(MD of Bighorn)</i>  |
| <b>7-22F</b>  | <b>Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Reform</b> <i>(Brazeau County)</i>   |
| <b>8-22F</b>  | <b>Rural Mental Health Advocacy</b> <i>(Yellowhead County)</i>   |
| <b>9-22F</b>  | <b>Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements</b> <i>(Mountain View County and Foothills County)</i>                                    |
| <b>10-22F</b> | <b>Sustainability of Small Rural Schools</b> <i>(Northern Sunrise County)</i>  |
| <b>11-22F</b> | <b>Disparity in Electricity Distribution and Transmission Rates</b> <i>(County of Grande Prairie)</i>  |
| <b>12-22F</b> | <b>Restore Grants-in-Lieu of Taxes for Public Housing Management Authorities</b> <i>(Big Lakes County)</i>                                     |
| <b>13-22F</b> | <b>Enhanced Wetland Replacement Program</b> <i>(Smoky Lake County)</i>   |
| <b>14-22F</b> | <b>Third Party Inspections for Gravel Pit Reclamation</b> <i>(Stettler County)</i>   |
| <b>15-22F</b> | <b>Completion of Alberta's Remaining Land-use Framework Regional Plans</b> <i>(Smoky Lake County)</i>  |
| <b>16-22F</b> | <b>Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for Agriculture Under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act</b> <i>(Parkland County)</i>            |
| <b>17-22F</b> | <b>Government Funding for Nurse Practitioners</b> <i>(Beaver County)</i>   |
| <b>18-22F</b> | <b>Regulations for Motorists Passing School Buses with Amber Lights Flashing</b> <i>(Clearwater County)</i>                                    |
| <b>19-22F</b> | <b>Portion of Funding from Public Lands Camping Pass Directed to Municipalities</b> <i>(Clearwater County)</i>                                 |
| <b>20-22F</b> | <b>Lost Road Closure Files</b> <i>(Smoky Lake County)</i>  |
| <b>21-22F</b> | <b>Loss of Agricultural Land to Renewable Energy Projects</b> <i>(Mountain View County)</i>  |
| <b>22-22F</b> | <b>Increased Resources for Commercial Vehicle Enforcement</b> <i>(Stettler County)</i>   |

**23-22F      Small Scale Generation Regulation - Interconnection Challenges** *(MD of Taber)*

**24-22F      Improved Crop Insurance for Market Gardens** *(Red Deer County)*

- 4) Vote on Emergent Resolutions
- 5) Closing of Resolution Session

## **Volunteer Firefighters as Medical First Responders**

Ponoka County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS public health is a provincial responsibility, and **emergency medical services** (EMS) and ambulance response are the authority of **Alberta Health Services** (AHS) and its contractors; and

WHEREAS AHS centralized and assumed responsibility for EMS from municipalities and at that time promised no degradation of EMS services in rural communities; and

WHEREAS many municipalities operate a fire service utilizing volunteer firefighters or paid on-call firefighters who participate in the Medical First Response program but are not trained paramedics; and

WHEREAS these volunteers often serve as first responders in the absence or delay of Emergency Medical Technicians and paramedics within their service area; and

WHEREAS AHS has, through its ambulance and paramedic processes and policies, significantly reduced the services provided to rural Alberta; and

WHEREAS as a result, ambulance personnel are not always available to attend as first responders thereby leaving that responsibility to the volunteer firefighters; and

WHEREAS many volunteer firefighters are experiencing an increasing level of stress or burnout and reduced capacity to respond because of these additional duties; and

WHEREAS many jurisdictions, due to unbudgeted rising costs, may need to contemplate reducing service levels to no longer respond to medical assist calls, even though it places its own residents in further jeopardy;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to compensate municipalities that operate a fire service with volunteers or employees that are qualified as Medical First Responders in instances when those volunteers or employees respond to emergencies due to the absence or delay of provincial emergency medical technicians and paramedics in their service area.**

### **Member Background**

Ambulance services have deteriorated considerably in the past several years. Specifically, this year (to date) our firefighters have been first on scene for medical assist calls 23 times and in 15 of them the wait time exceeded 20 minutes before an ambulance arrived. During that period, responding firefighters are often placed in a compromising position. If this continues, we fear that we may lose excellent personnel and, equally troubling, will have serious difficulty recruiting new members.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Laboratory and X-Ray Technologists Training for Rural Healthcare**

Mountain View County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS all disciplines of healthcare in Alberta are experiencing shortages of qualified professionals and rural areas are experiencing even greater shortages than urban sites; and

WHEREAS rural healthcare facilities require a wider, multi-discipline skill set known as **Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist** (CLXT) than those that are required in conventional urban settings; and

WHEREAS CLXT skill sets are mandatory for rural healthcare locations, and inadequate numbers of students are being trained at the **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology** (NAIT) to meet the need in rural Alberta; and

WHEREAS NAIT is the only institution offering this training in Alberta, with a capacity of forty students per year and has indicated that they have the capacity within their infrastructure to increase by an additional twenty students if they have the clinical sites to support student training and/or a viable option of simulation training that will allow for the increase in students; and

WHEREAS NAIT has also advised that they are committed to exploring ways to increase their CLXT intake; and

WHEREAS the Alberta 2030 vision is focused on the post-secondary system and being highly responsive to labour market needs;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to immediately expand the number of seats available to train Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist (CLXT) for rural Alberta by increasing the number of seats for CLXT training at NAIT by twenty seats and explore means by which an additional twenty seat capacity can be created at NAIT or another Alberta Institution.**

### **Member Background**

The Alberta landscape is dotted with many small rural hospitals. Although small, they are mighty, and provide an essential service to all Albertans. Often remote, these facilities offer a buffer between injury and sickness and the chronically overcrowded big city emergency rooms. Many rural hospitals offer minor surgeries, obstetrics, pre and post operative care, palliative, and long-term care, all helping to take the pressure off the city hospitals. While allowing this also allows local citizens to receive quality health care close to home and family.

One discipline of particular serious concern is the combined Lab and X-ray Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist (CLXT). This part of our hospital's team is vital in assisting with efficient diagnosis and treatment; and is essential to keeping a rural emergency room open. These combined skills are specific and mandatory to rural hospitals, and staff shortages in this discipline are apparent across the province. Rural hospitals are often limited to the number of staff they can hire due to budgetary constraints and therefore in many cases cannot afford to hire both a position for lab and for x-ray as separate personnel. The combined CLXT provides a cost-effective way to fill multiple positions with a single staff member.

The Government of Alberta Health Services website includes the following statement:

"Combined laboratory and x-ray technologists play a critically important role in the diagnosis, disease prevention and public health surveillance. They are responsible for collecting, preparing and analyzing patient samples, providing general patient care and taking blood. They conduct medical laboratory tests and administer electrocardiograms. They are also responsible for general radiography exams (X-ray). Combined laboratory and x-ray technologists are responsible to perform site specific manual and automated approved laboratory procedures, diagnostic imaging exams and related duties, following established standards and practices defined by the ACCLXT (Alberta College of Combined Laboratory and X-ray Technicians), CPSA (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta) and HPA (Health Professions Act)."

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) is the only institution providing this specialized program offering forty (40) seats annually. Increasing those seat numbers, from forty to eighty would significantly address the current demand in rural Alberta. NAIT currently has twenty new seats and thereafter increasing NAIT's capacity and/or adding another institution with capability to offer this training may be enough to meet current demand. Currently NAIT receives 500 applications for the program, interviewing 200 people for each intake of the 40 seats. This demonstrates that the demand for the current program is very high and filling additional seats would not be an issue.

Access to health facilities and trained health care professionals in our rural areas is essential to the sustainability and economic growth of our province as a whole. Skill specific training, in adequate numbers, is necessary to foster growth and sustainability in rural Alberta. The request for the Government of Alberta to fund additional post-secondary seats for CLXT training aligns well with the already developed Alberta 2030 vision:

- Alberta's world-class post-secondary system will equip Albertans with the skills, knowledge and competencies they need to succeed in their lifelong pursuits
- The system will be highly responsive to labour market needs and through innovative programming and excellence in research, contribute to the betterment of an innovative and prosperous Alberta

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Provide for a Uniform Method of Auditing and Enforcing Compliance with Community Aggregate Payment Levy Bylaws**

Stettler County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS many rural municipalities have enacted a **Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL)** bylaw to provide for the collection of revenues on the basis of aggregate removed from lands within the municipality; and

WHEREAS the CAPL quantities are self-reported by aggregate producers; and

WHEREAS the CAPL Regulation does not provide a framework or mechanism to audit reported shipments; and

WHEREAS municipalities are required to implement their own auditing process which may differ greatly between jurisdictions, resulting in confusion for aggregate producers;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta for a change to the Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) Regulation to explicitly define a mechanism or framework for how municipalities should audit CAPL shipment reports and define standardized penalties when aggregate producers fail to meet their obligations under the CAPL Regulation and related municipal bylaws;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta to consider noncompliance with CAPL bylaws when contemplating company applications, renewals, and reporting for Class 1 gravel pits.**

### **Member Background**

The tools afforded to municipalities to enforce the Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) bylaw are cumbersome and ineffective. Some municipalities have implemented an audit process, relying on their broad authority under section 542 of the *Municipal Government Act*. However, this requires involving the Courts when the municipality is met with an uncooperative producer.

An amendment to the CAPL Regulation could provide for a uniform framework, establishing clear expectations for producers operating in multiple jurisdictions, and prescribed enforcement fines and actions could result in more efficient prosecution and a reduction of court time required.

Introducing processes to allow Alberta Environment and Parks to consider delinquency in complying with CAPL bylaws would provide an additional opportunity for enforcement. A search of the RMA resolution database revealed no past advocacy on the issue of auditing CAPL reports or enforcing penalties.

Stakeholders which may have a vested interest primarily include aggregate producers and the Alberta Sand and Gravel Association. The standardization of systems utilized by CAPL bylaws would provide a benefit to stakeholders by introducing consistency across jurisdictions.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation

Athabasca County

Endorsed by District 3

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

WHEREAS rural municipalities have recently experienced reductions in revenue and financial support from the Government of Alberta, including changes to or eliminations of linear assessment, **well drilling equipment tax** (WDET), grants in place of taxes, and reductions to program funding; and

WHEREAS rural municipalities have recently absorbed increased expenditures due to the downloading of provincial costs; and

WHEREAS rural municipalities have forgone considerable revenues from the WDET and non-payment of taxes by the energy sector, while shouldering increasing costs attributed to infrastructure strain and the administrative burden resulting from increased exploration and development activities; and

WHEREAS the global markets for oil and gas have improved significantly since the Government of Alberta introduced measures to increase oil and gas investment in the province, including the elimination of the WDET and a three-year property tax holiday on newly drilled wells; and

WHEREAS implementation of the WDET does not increase the financial burden on the Government of Alberta, but signals the importance of strong reciprocal relationships between municipalities and industry partners;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta reintroduce a Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation to restore municipal revenue streams that assist with recovering costs for maintenance of public infrastructure from active industry participants.**

### Member Background

Under Division 6 of Part 10 of the *Municipal Government Act*, Section 388 allows for municipal councils to pass a bylaw imposing a well drilling equipment tax (WDET) to be assessed on the equipment used to drill a well for which a license is required under the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act*.

Calculation of the tax is controlled through the Minister of Municipal Affairs by a regulation made under Section 390 of the MGA. This regulation allows municipalities to collect a one-time the WDET from companies based on the depth of wells drilled.

Alberta Regulation 218/2014 outlined annual the WDET rates calculated by well depths, with progressive taxation tiers, and increasing corresponding taxes in subsequent taxation years of the regulation.

Alberta Regulation 293/2020 came into force December 2020, repealing Well Drilling Equipment Tax Rate Regulation AR 218/2014 and setting the tax under Division 6 of Part 10 at \$0. This measure was part of a larger provincial government strategy to encourage investment in oil and gas developments during an economic slowdown.

As outlined in the 2018 Rural Economic Study available on the RMA site, the oil and gas sector contribute significantly to the GDP, capital investment and employment in rural Alberta. Additionally, benchmark prices between \$70 and \$85 per barrel in U.S. dollars forecasted over the last few years were expected to support moderate growth in investment in the oil and gas sector across the province (<https://rmaalberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/The-Economic-Contribution-of-Rural-Alberta-AAMDC-FINAL-.pdf>). By the middle of 2021, the WTI US per barrel price of oil has hovered at or above the \$70/bbl mark and the resulting well drilling activity in the province is noticeable.

According to information published by the Government of Alberta, the number of wells drilled in the province over the last five years has been as follows:

- 2018: 4,173 wells drilled

- 2019: 3,069 wells drilled
- 2020: 2,338 wells drilled
- 2021: 5,503 wells drilled

The number of licensed wells drilled in Athabasca County is as follows:

- 2018: 1 well drilled
- 2019: 4 wells drilled
- 2020: 11 wells drilled
- 2021: 54 wells drilled

Assuming that the WDET is assessed at the last regulated rate, the 54 wells drilled would have resulted in more than \$430,000 in income to Athabasca County in 2021. Wells drilled in 2021 were on average just under 2500m deep, this works out to about \$8,000 in taxes per well drilled lost in revenue.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.



## Fertilizer Emission Reduction Target Impacts

MD of Taber

*Endorsed by District 1*

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WHEREAS In December 2020, the Government of Canada set a national fertilizer emissions reduction target of 30% by 2030; and

WHEREAS fertilizer is a critical input for crop production, and reducing fertilizer use will impact yields and future yield gains across the country; and

WHEREAS according to a report published by Fertilizer Canada, a 30% rate reduction model is estimated to result in a loss of \$10.4 billion in canola, corn, and spring wheat crop production by 2030; and

WHEREAS significant production loss will have detrimental effects on Canada's ability to fill domestic processing and export capacities which will affect the overall Canadian Agri-food economy; and

WHEREAS the success of the Canadian agriculture sector depends heavily on the ability to export; and, in 2021, Canada exported approximately \$82.2 billion in agriculture and food products; and

WHEREAS Canada is the fifth-largest exporter of Agri-food in the world, exporting to over 200 countries; and

WHEREAS a significant reduction in crop production will have an adverse effect on the global supply of food; and

WHEREAS emission reduction targets should be based on emissions per unit of crop produced to maintain growing agricultural exports, as focusing on absolute emissions from the sector will have severe consequences to the competitiveness of agricultural operators and the fertilizer industry; and

WHEREAS Canadian farmers have been and are currently implementing sustainable practices to mitigate fertilizer emissions; and

WHEREAS through collaboration with specialists/agronomists, crop outputs are maximized using the smallest amount of input, new equipment and technology are invested in to mitigate product waste and scheduling crop rotations appropriately, and biodiversity is utilized to promote soil health and produce livestock feed; and

WHEREAS the implementation of Fertilizer Canada's 4R Nutrient Stewardship has the ability to balance farmer, industry and government goals to improve on-farm economics, crop productivity and fertilizer efficiency, while benefiting the environment by focusing on the 4R principles – "Right Source, Right Time, Right Rate and Right Place;" and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has indicated that it will collaborate with fertilizer manufacturers, agricultural operators, and provinces/territories to develop an approach that will meet the 30% reduction target, and to date, there has been no announced approach and no known viable alternatives to synthetic fertilizers;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Canada either cancel the 30% fertilizer emissions reduction target or ensure that said target remains voluntary.**

### Member Background

In December 2020, the Government of Canada released a plan to reduce emissions from fertilizer by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030, stating that Canadian agriculture, specifically synthetic fertilizer use, is responsible for approximately 10% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

The MD of Taber is concerned with how this data was collected, measured, and accounted for. Without obtaining data at an individual farm level, it is unlikely that the measurement of emissions related to the

use of fertilizer is accurate. Furthermore, there has been no clear indication of how the 30% reduction rate was calculated and the information that it was based on. There is a direct need for accurate benchmark data, fertilizer-use data, and emissions data before creating a realistic reduction target.

Reducing fertilizer use will result in significant production loss which will directly contribute to a decrease in financial gains, global food supply availability and Canada's domestic processing/exporting capacities. This target has the potential to negatively impact agricultural operators within rural communities throughout the Country.

The Municipal District of Taber is concerned that the Government of Canada has failed to consider the current practices that Canadian Farmers are (and have been) using to reduce fertilizer use, nor are these practices being accounted for in the current reduction target calculations and considerations.

### **Supporting Documentation**

- 1) Fertilizer Canada > Stewardship > Emissions Reduction Initiative  
<https://fertilizercanada.ca/our-focus/stewardship/emissions-reduction-initiative/>
- 2) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en>

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Financial Burden of Emergency Service Response on Crown Lands**

MD of Bighorn

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS many municipalities provide emergency services that respond to motor vehicle collisions, recreational accidents, and medical/traumatic injuries on Crown lands; and

WHEREAS in rural Alberta the vast majority of calls for emergency service are for visitors recreating in the Calgary Forest Area and associated Crown lands; and

WHEREAS emergency service accessing remote areas results in increased apparatus costs, increased repair costs, exposure to dangerous response conditions, and extensive response times leaving rural communities without adequate response protection; and

WHEREAS rural communities bear the financial burden of providing the same level of service to all Albertans within their municipal boundaries;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta develop a fee for service/compensation schedule for emergency services dispatched to respond to calls on Crown land.**

### **Member Background**

The northern section of the Calgary Forest Area (CFA) falls within the Municipal District of Bighorn. The area lays east of the Banff National Park and is popular for camping, off highway vehicle (OHV) trails, shooting, fishing, hunting, hiking, mountain climbing, general recreation and sightseeing.

Municipal District of Bighorn statistics for responses to Crown lands from 2017 to present:

- Bow Valley Provincial Park – 11
- Bow Valley Wildlands Park – 16
- Ghost Reservoir Recreation Area – 14
- Kananaskis ID – 17
- Provincial Crown lands – 43
- MD (Includes Hwy 40/940/579/TransAlta Rd/Grotto Pond/Yamnuska Day Use Area/ACC) – 39

There is no compensation from the Government of Alberta for medical distress calls, search and rescue, or OHV accidents. The financial burden associated with emergency response services on Crown lands falls on the MD.

Conversations held with elected officials in other rural municipalities have confirmed that they also carry the additional financial burden of responding for various emergency calls for service in their adjacent Crown lands. Rural leaders are frustrated with the province's lack of financial support for the provision of emergency responses on Crown lands.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Reform**

Brazeau County

*Endorsed by District 3*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has legislated **intermunicipal collaboration frameworks** (ICFs) in part 17.2 of the ***Municipal Government Act*** (MGA); and

WHEREAS ICFs are intended to support collaboration between bordering municipalities to ensure shared planning, delivery, and funding of inter-municipal services; and

WHEREAS municipalities that cannot create an ICF by the required date must refer matters of disagreement to an arbitrator; and

WHEREAS the scope and definition of municipal services are not clearly defined within the MGA leading to significant utilization of arbitrators; and

WHEREAS municipalities that reported difficulties and, in turn, unfair arbitration rulings related to the ICF process attributed unsatisfactory outcomes to the ambiguities associated with the scope of services and quantifying verifiable service costs; and

WHEREAS arbitrators do not have the appropriate data and, in some cases, the appropriate knowledge base regarding municipal governance to make informed decisions concerning ICF rulings; and

WHEREAS arbitration rulings can have unintended, detrimental financial impacts on municipalities hindering their operations and services to ratepayers;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta amend the *Municipal Government Act* to define “municipal services” for the purpose of intermunicipal collaboration frameworks and mandate that municipalities present verifiable costs to justify cost sharing for the aforementioned defined core municipal services.**

**Member Background**

# Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Reform



Reeve Bart Guyon, October 3, 2022

# Overview: Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks

- Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) are mandated by the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, part 17.2.
- ICFs intend to:
  1. Provide for integrated and strategic planning, delivery and funding of intermunicipal services;
  2. Allocate scarce resources efficiently in providing local services; and
  3. Ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit residents.
- Potential re-opening of the MGA this fall provides us with an opportunity to amend part 17.2

# The Current State

- Under the current framework, ICFs must:
  1. Describe the services that benefit residents;
  2. Identify which municipality is responsible for providing said services;
  3. Outline how the services will be delivered and funded; and
  4. Include a process for resolving disputes that occur while the framework is in effect.
- Issues impacting the current framework:
  - a. No definitional clarity to define **what** constitutes an intermunicipal service
  - b. No mechanism to ensure costs are justifiable and verifiable
- **Outcome:** *Leads to significant inconsistencies and cost overruns/uncertainties in mandated arbitration settlements*

# The Call to Action

- To form an advocacy coalition consisting primarily of rural municipalities to ensure:
  1. Intermunicipal services are clearly defined within the *Municipal Government Act* in relation to ICFs; and
    - I. Limit scope
    - II. Mitigate unbudgeted cost overruns
  2. Enshrine a mechanism to ensure costs are verifiable when composing ICFs
- Proposed short-term deliverables:
  1. Co-sign correspondence to outline proposed issues and future/amended framework;
  2. Meet with the Department of Municipal Affairs as a collective;
  3. Present resolution at the upcoming fall RMA Convention;
  4. Meet with the Minister of Municipal Affairs



## **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Rural Mental Health Advocacy**

Yellowhead County

*Endorsed by District 3*

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WHEREAS rural Alberta is under-served by mental health professionals, and the need for qualified, comprehensive, and accessible mental health services are desperately needed throughout Alberta; and

WHEREAS despite promises made by successive provincial and federal governments to improve mental health services for all Albertans, rural Alberta continues to be underserved without any substantive change; and

WHEREAS the need for readily available and quality mental health services is growing continuously, as can be seen by growing homeless populations, increasing drug dependency, correlated increases in property crimes, overloaded law enforcement, and judicial systems; and

WHEREAS there is currently no eligibility for the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program for provisional psychologists and psychologists who are members of the Alberta Psychologist Association; and

WHEREAS currently professional counsellors registered with the Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association with practices located in rural Alberta do not qualify for the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program; and

WHEREAS currently in Alberta there are no minimum standards or governing body for practicing counsellors; and

WHEREAS the Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta has been petitioning the Government of Alberta to regulate professional counsellors practicing in Alberta by establishing a College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta; and

WHEREAS regulating counsellors holds them to professional standards and subjects them to a disciplinary process should these standards be breached, thereby ensuring vulnerable Albertans are not exposed to potentially harmful or poor-quality services; and

WHEREAS due to the lack of a regulating body, qualified professional counsellors are often not recognized by employee assistance programs for reimbursement; and

WHEREAS many rural Albertans are required to travel long distances and pay out of pocket for counselling services, making the service difficult or impossible to attain for many individuals;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta advocate to the Government of Canada to add provisional psychologists, psychologists, and registered counsellors with the Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association to the list of qualifying professions for the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness program, provided that their professional practices are located within a designated under-served rural or remote community within Alberta;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA urges the Government of Alberta to work in conjunction with the Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta to create a regulatory body that would be responsible for developing, maintaining, and enforcing regulations, standards of practice, and codes of ethics to protect the public in the Province of Alberta.**

### **Member Background**

Over the past number of years, all levels of government have acknowledged the growing need for mental health services. While there have been some attempts at improving mental health services across Alberta, none of these efforts have contributed significantly to improving rural Albertans' access to services compared to our urban neighbours.

While recognizing that health services are the domain of the provincial and federal governments, it is incumbent upon local municipal governments to hear our residents' requests for help, recognize the need for action, and advocate to senior government levels. In the past municipal governments across Alberta advocated for increased numbers of rural doctors, and in response, a Student Loan Forgiveness initiative was created.

Only health professionals, such as nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, registered psychiatric nurse, family doctors, family physicians, and family medicine residents practicing in designated under-served rural or remote communities, qualify for the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program.

In an effort to increase mental health services in rural and remote portions of Alberta, we would encourage the Government of Alberta to consider advocating to the Government of Canada to add provisional psychologists, psychologists, and professional counsellors registered with CCPA to the list of professions that qualify for the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program. This benefit would encourage these professionals to consider rural Alberta locations for their practices.

The Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (ACTA) has been working to create a regulatory body to govern counselling therapy, much the same as The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) regulates doctors in Alberta. However, the province advised ACTA in September 2021 that the College of Counselling Therapy of Alberta (CCTA) was no longer a priority for the government.

This is concerning as it leaves no regulation as to who can market themselves as a counselling therapist, as well as no minimum standards or practices for those that choose to provide counselling therapy. Further, it leaves vulnerable Albertans exposed to potentially harmful or poor-quality services and impacts how insurance providers and employee assistance programs view counselling therapy in Alberta. This can also mean residents must travel long distances to receive these services in larger city centers. This is impractical and expensive and can lead to someone failing to obtain needed therapy. Without a regulatory body, anyone may present themselves as a counselling therapist as there are no professional standards to subject them to nor any disciplinary process for unsafe practices. Further, these added non-professionals distort the numbers, which may cause inappropriate estimations of accurate counselling services available to residents.

We would encourage the Government of Alberta to expedite working with the ACTA to create a governing body for counselling therapists in Alberta for the service and protection of all Albertans.

[Apply for Canada Student Loan Forgiveness for Family Doctors and Nurses - Eligibility - Canada.ca](#)

[The Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta \(acta-alberta.ca\)](#)

[Homepage CCPA - Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(ccpa-accp.ca\)](#)

## **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements**

Mountain View County and Foothills County

*Endorsed by District 1 and District 2*

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WHEREAS the **Government of Alberta** (GOA), in line with the Government of Canada, have a mandate to transition to a low carbon economy; and

WHEREAS renewable energy has been determined to be one way to transition to a low carbon economy; and

WHEREAS increased development of renewable energy sources including wind, solar and geothermal energy projects is occurring throughout Alberta; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Utilities Commission is solely responsible for approvals of renewable energy projects on private lands; and

WHEREAS in June 2018, the GOA amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation to include renewable energy operations under the definition of specified land activities; and

WHEREAS the Conservation and Reclamation Directive for Renewable Energy Operations outlines an operator's obligation to reclaim specified land to equivalent capability; and

WHEREAS this obligation is intended to ensure renewable energy projects are properly reclaimed upon their decommissioning; and

WHEREAS the directive does not include a requirement to submit reclamation security; and

WHEREAS Section 619 of the *Municipal Government Act* states: that "a licence, permit, approval, or other authorization granted by the Natural Resources Conservation Board, Energy Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Energy and Utility Board or Alberta Utilities Commission prevails over municipal authority;"

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta implement a mandated collection of adequate securities for future reclamation of renewable energy projects on private lands, either by requiring renewable energy project proponents to post a reclamation surety bond as a condition of any renewable energy project approvals or by other means;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the amount of the required securities be calculated based on data-driven projections of actual reclamation costs to protect municipalities and residents of Alberta from incurring costs associated with the decommissioning of all renewable energy projects.**

### **Member Background**

As solar and wind farms become more prevalent within the province, there is a vital missing element within the current Conservation and Reclamation Directive for Renewable Energy Operations. There is no bond or other mechanism required of project proponents to protect landowners, municipalities and the residents of Alberta from incurring costs associated with reclamation of lands to their initial state.

Private landowners in rural Alberta are being approached to enter into Letters of Intent (LOI) with renewable energy companies for land rental rates (\$600-\$800/acre) that far exceed what agriculture producers can pay or generate per acre from agriculture pursuits. The concern is that there appears to be no support for landowners to guide them through the contract process to ensure they:

- 1) Are aware that the private landowner is ultimately responsible for any and all reclamation costs that will be incurred in future

- 2) Landowners can and should include reclamation securities or guarantees of reclamation being covered by the operator of the renewable energy facility as part of land lease agreements.

Investors/developers in renewable energy projects may be from out of country or become insolvent and there is no recourse to pursue legal action for the eventual clean up and restoration once these projects reach their end of life. The cost will then fall to the landowner or to the municipality.

Under section 619 of the MGA, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) approval of renewable energy projects prevails over municipal authority. Municipalities have no authority or opportunity to support private landowners with respect to renewable energy projects.

The frustration on reclamation of renewable energy projects is that the AUC is the approving authority, under the Alberta Energy, however the reclamation legislation is under **Alberta Environment and Parks** (AEP). In trying to sort out responsibilities, we have been passed between these ministries, with no provincial department wanting to take on the task of reviewing the requirements for reclamation securities.

Based on discussions with AEP, there is very little appetite from the Government of Alberta to interfere with private landowners and private companies with respect to renewable energy projects. However, history has indicated that without any government oversight on ensuring companies are held accountable to final reclamation, issues like brownfield and orphan wells will arise. These ultimately become the burden of the taxpayer when all the money is extracted from the development and there is nothing left over to pay for the reclamation.

AEP already has similar requirements in place regarding the reclamation of gravel pits on private lands, as well as the oversight of the Natural Resources Conservation Board regarding confined feeding operations on private lands. Precedent has been set that the government can collect securities for reclamation if the development holds public interest. Development of renewable energy can be argued as having an extreme impact on public interest, both in development of energy as well as reducing our carbon emissions.

When the Government of Alberta amended the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation in June 2018 to include renewable energy operations under the definition of specified land activities, they did not include securities for reclamation, nor did they include it in the Conservation and Reclamation Directive for Renewable Energy Operations released in September of 2018.

Other countries in Europe have experienced massive clean up at the cost of their taxpayers. To date, there is no fee in place to ensure the financial costs for reclamation would be the responsibility of the developer, especially if their head office were out of country or if they were to become insolvent. The directive only requires that reclamation must occur.

A bond or similar tool could be further enhanced by implementing a recycling fee program similar to that used for tires and other programs currently in operation. The Alberta Utilities Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development could also discourage the use of productive farmland for renewable energy projects and look for lands with poor soil quality and agricultural suitability for these projects.

If green energy is to be truly green, it is imperative that we be proactive in protecting our lands for future generations and not repeat the same scenarios being experienced by the Orphan Well Association, where cleanup is born by the province at the taxpayer's expense.

## **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

**Sustainability of Small Rural Schools**

Northern Sunrise County

*Endorsed by District 4*

WHEREAS access to good quality education is vital for the youth of Alberta no matter where they live; and

WHEREAS recent changes in provincial grant funding to schools has not been effective in addressing the challenges of adequately funding rural and remote schools, particularly those with low enrollments; and

WHEREAS it is difficult to secure qualified professionals to deliver services in more remote areas of the province and there is an expectation for higher pay in remote locations; and

WHEREAS some rural school divisions must supply teacher housing in remote schools to attract teachers to come to their communities; and

WHEREAS large geographic areas make it much more costly to provide operational supports for education in areas such as mental health, transportation services, and facility operations; and

WHEREAS student transportation costs are constantly increasing in recent years; and

WHEREAS requiring students to travel long distances to school reduces time available for learning, extra-curricular, and non-school activities; and

WHEREAS because of distances and remote locations, it is very expensive to acquire replacement parts for repairing and maintaining school buildings and school bus fleets; and

WHEREAS many operational costs to maintain facilities associated with contracting services such as waste removal, snow removal, grounds maintenance, and building maintenance have much higher rates in rural and remote communities in the province; and

WHEREAS large increases in insurance costs over the past three years (such costs have doubled in some school districts) has further strained the operational budgets of rural schools; and

WHEREAS schools in northern parts of the province face higher utility costs associated with colder weather, longer heating seasons, and delivery costs for the utility; and

WHEREAS the federal carbon tax has added operational costs for facilities and transportation areas for school divisions;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta engage with rural school boards and rural municipalities to develop solutions to support the sustainability of small rural schools.**

**Member Background:**

Many rural areas have seen population decreases over the past 20 years. The utilization rate of many rural schools has decreased significantly. With changes to the funding formula in recent years, schools with low enrollment rates receive less operational funding even though operational costs continue to rise. In the Peace River School Division, plant operations and maintenance funding decreased based on the recently introduced Rural Small Schools Grant funding formula, which is based on the utilization rate of the schools:

Year	Plant operations/maintenance funding
2020-21	\$3,644,348
2021-22	\$3,305,551
2022-23	\$3,358,517

In the same timeframe, there has been a 30% increase in the cost of janitorial supplies and significant cost increases in other areas. The total cost of services, contracts, and supplies for 10 months in the 2021-2022 year (Sept – June) are already 6% (\$823,176) higher than the total for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Facing funding shortfalls, rural school divisions are forced to cut services and close schools. In some cases, it is not feasible to close a school because of distances students would need to travel to the next

closest school. Communities are often devastated when their local school is closed. For example, the Nampa Public School in the Village of Nampa, within the borders of Northern Sunrise County, is being threatened with closure as the enrolment is nearing the threshold where it is not financially viable to keep the school open. If this school would close, the domino effect this would have on residents and businesses could eventually lead to the Village no longer being viable.

#### *Carbon Tax:*

Since the federal carbon tax was implemented in 2018, it has added operational costs for facilities and transportation areas for school divisions without any additional funding provided or any rebates available. On April 1, 2022, the carbon tax increased to \$50 per ton. At the current rate, carbon tax will cost the Peace River School Division over \$200,000 in additional operating costs for the 2022-2023 school year.

The carbon tax will continue to increase in the coming years to a price of \$170 per ton by 2030. It is estimated that this will add \$680,000 in operational costs per year for PRSD by 2030. Without receiving additional funding or a rebate for carbon tax, school divisions will find it very difficult to continue to operate. This begs the question – if farmers raising crops are partially exempt from carbon taxes, why aren't schools exempt? Is not the raising of our children of even more importance than raising crops?

#### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Disparity in Electricity Distribution and Transmission Rates**

County of Grande Prairie

*Endorsed by District 4*

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WHEREAS Alberta's electricity transmission and distribution system is facilitated by various service areas, serviced by different companies, resulting in a disparity in pricing; and

WHEREAS electricity prices, which are regulated by the Alberta Utilities Commission for residential, farm, and commercial customers, are extraordinarily high in some service areas; and

WHEREAS in 2021, the average residential customer with 7200 kWh of consumption paid between \$239.28 (ENMAX) and \$339.72 (ATCO) per year in transmission charges; and

WHEREAS in 2021, the average residential customer with 7200 kWh of consumption paid between \$308.40 (ENMAX) and \$1,007.16 (ATCO) in distribution charges; and

WHEREAS the costs of transmission and distribution impact both purchased and solar energy, resulting in economic challenges to micro-generation;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to adopt a new electricity pricing model for transmission and distribution that eliminates the disparity in pricing across Alberta.**

### **Member Background**

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) reviews the costs of electricity delivery in the province, and ensures all charges are fair and reasonable. However, there is an unfair disparity in electricity delivery charges across the Alberta; namely, in transmission and distribution.

Transmission charges are typically between 14% and 20% of a customer's total bill and cover the cost of moving electric energy to utility substation transformer from generating facilities through transmission lines. This charge is based on how much electricity has been used.

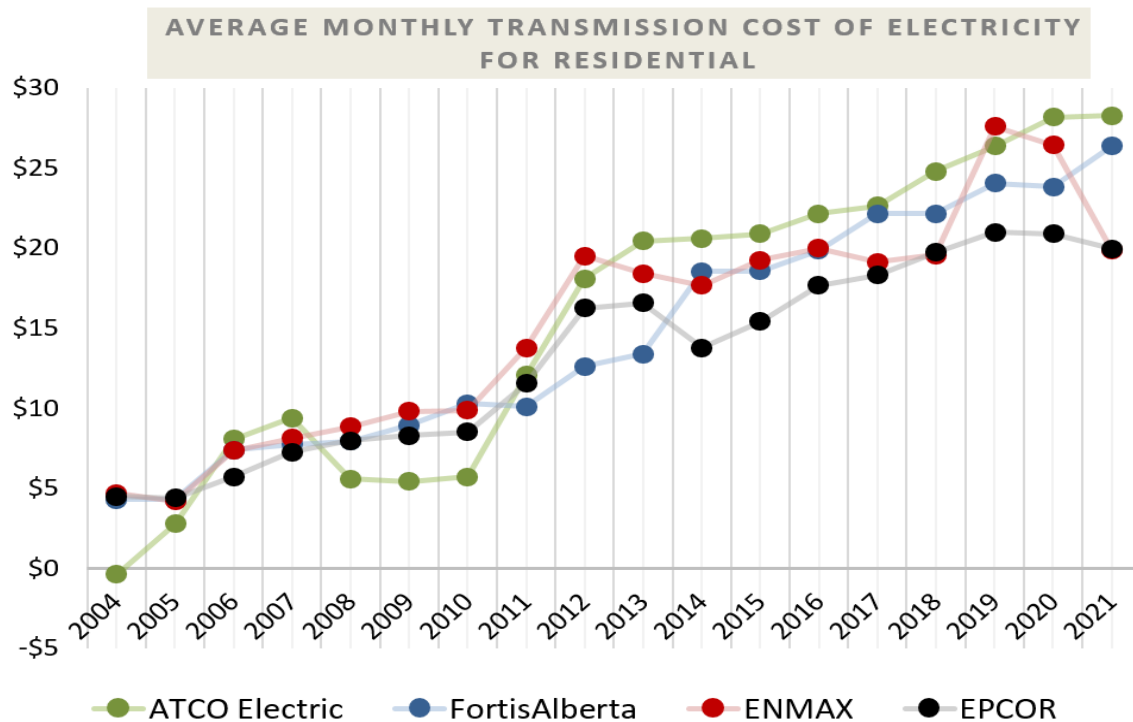
Distribution costs are typically between 22% and 47% of a customer's total bill and cover the cost of moving electric energy to the customer's needs from substation transformers to local lines. One kilometer of distribution line will service many more customers in urban centres than in a large, sparsely populated areas. In some parts of the province, transmission and distribution charges make up nearly 70% of customers' electricity bills.

Business and residential customers endure economic penalties based on geographical and population density disadvantages in large areas of the province. This advantage can be as high as three to one, as seen in the charts below. British Columbia and Saskatchewan have successfully built and operated transmission and distribution systems which more evenly distribute delivery service costs.

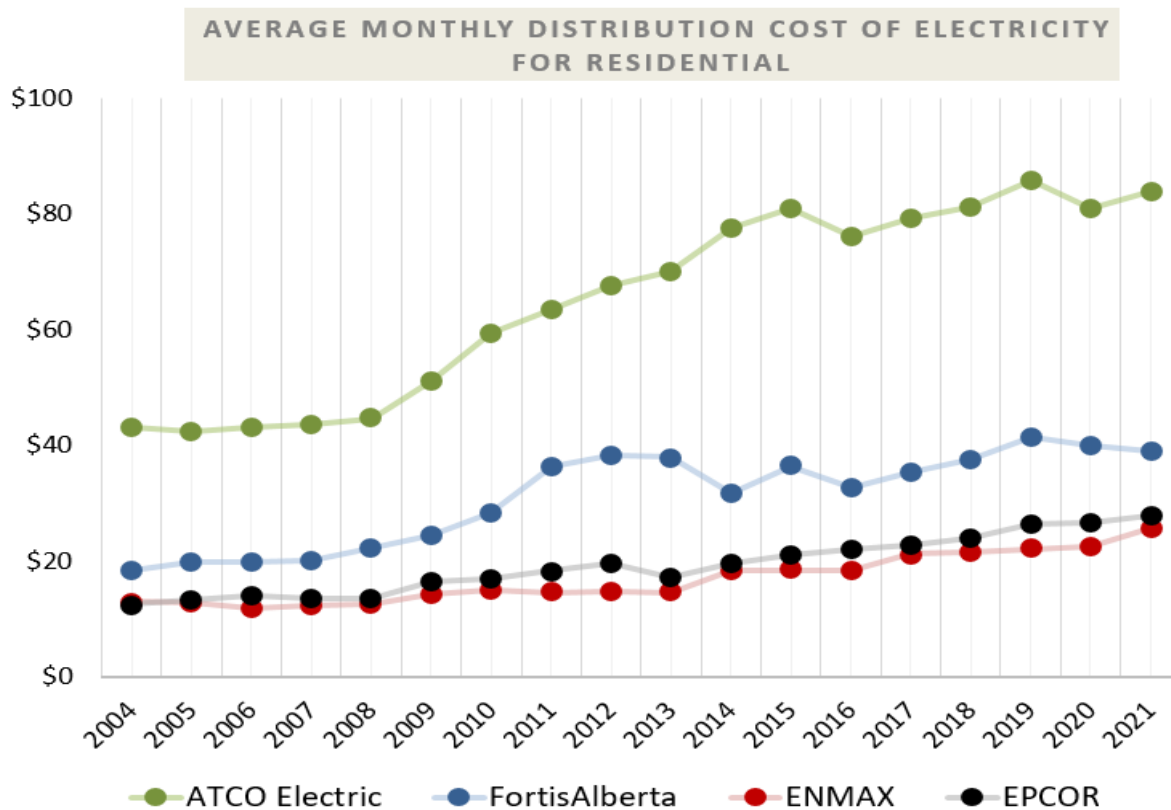
In Saskatchewan, all cities, towns, and villages pay a set rate for transmission and distribution. All rural areas pay a marginally higher rate. In British Columbia, all electricity costs including transmission and distribution are equalized across the entire province.

As the electrical grid for Alberta operates as a single entity, it would be reasonable to distribute costs equally across the province. Alberta's model disadvantages communities at the border between service providers. In doing so, it minimizes competitiveness to attract businesses in Alberta outside of urban centers. Continual increases in transmission and distribution rates, in areas already experiencing a disparity, result increased energy poverty for many Albertans.





Source: Compiled by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate based on data provided by the Alberta Utilities Commission and Alberta Electric System Operator



Source: Compiled by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate based on data provided by the Alberta Utilities Commission and Alberta Electric System Operator

#### 7-19F: Utility Distribution Rates in Rural Communities and Public Facilities

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) requests the Government of Alberta review regulatory requirements relating to transmission and distribution rates of utility companies;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA requests the Government of Alberta review the requirement that public facilities are charged commercial rates and bills based on peak demand.

[Click here](#) to view the full resolution.

## **Restore Grants-in-Lieu of Taxes for Public Housing Management Authorities**

Big Lakes County

*Endorsed by District 4*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta eliminated grants-in-lieu of taxes for seniors' apartments and family housing units operated by public housing management bodies in 2015; and

WHEREAS prior to 2015, municipalities utilized these grants-in-lieu of taxes to help offset the cost of services that are provided to all citizens and property in the municipality including seniors' apartments and family housing units; and

WHEREAS since 2015, municipalities have lost approximately \$16 million in revenues every year; and

WHEREAS municipalities have no choice but to off-set that revenue loss by increasing property taxes from an already strained property tax system to maintain current service levels; and

WHEREAS section 362 of the *Municipal Government Act* exempts any interest held by the Crown in right of Alberta from property taxation; and

WHEREAS section 20 of the ***Alberta Housing Act*** (AHA) states that the **Alberta Social Housing Corporation** (ASHC) is an agent of the Crown in right of Alberta; and

WHEREAS section 27(1) of the AHA provides that the ASHC may each year pay to any municipality within which any of the ASHC's real property is situated a grant not exceeding the amount that would be recoverable by the municipality if the property were subject to the property taxes of the municipality for that year; and

WHEREAS section 27(2) of the AHA states that no municipality is entitled as of right to a grant under this section; and

WHEREAS the majority of revenue that is raised by a municipality to cover the cost of its operations is from property taxes and any reduction in revenues must be borne by the other property taxpayers of the municipality;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to increase funding towards the Rent Assistance Benefit program; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta to reinstate grants in-lieu-of taxes for housing units operated by public housing management bodies; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta to revise the *Alberta Housing Act* by replacing "may" with "shall" in section 27(1) and by deleting section 27(2).**

### **Member Background**

As part of the 2015 Budget, the Government of Alberta eliminated municipal grants paid to housing management bodies to off-set property tax costs.

Through this decision, the Government of Alberta is not meeting its obligation to pay a grant-in-lieu of tax on Government of Alberta owned and supported social housing. Affordable housing is an issue that Alberta municipalities have long championed, as it is essential to building vibrant, sustainable, inclusive communities.

Since 2015, this represents approximately \$128 million in costs absorbed by municipalities that are already stressed to address infrastructure deficits in part due to downloading of responsibilities from other levels of government. This decision has forced municipalities to reduce critical municipal services or increase the taxes for other property owners in order to make up the shortfall.

The funding reductions impact nearly 23,000 units owned by the Alberta Social Housing Corporation and over 2,200 units owned by municipalities. The loss of these grants disincentivizes social housing because of the increased costs at a time that public housing is needed most.

**RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## Enhanced Wetland Replacement Program

Smoky Lake County

*Endorsed by District 5*

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WHEREAS wetlands are a vital part of Alberta's ecological landscape and necessary for a sustainable economy and healthy communities; and

WHEREAS the **Wetland Replacement Program** (WRP) aims to re-establish wetlands in partnership with Albertans by providing resources for collaborative restoration projects across the province; and

WHEREAS under the Alberta Wetland Policy, the WRP will offset wetland area lost due to activities on the land; and

WHEREAS a priority of the Alberta Wetland Policy and WRP is to replace wetlands within municipalities and watersheds that have had the highest amount of lost wetland area since 2015, as well as areas of high historical loss; and

WHEREAS the WRP focuses on fostering partnerships with municipalities and non-profits that have a vested interest in wetland replacement; and

WHEREAS the WRP contemplates wetland restoration which includes returning natural/historic area and hydrological functions to a drained, partially drained, or filled-in wetland, and wetland construction, which includes creating a wetland on a site that was historically non-wetland; and

WHEREAS the WRP could become a vehicle to educate Albertans about our natural environments, as well as enhance community wellness, recreation, and tourism opportunities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta engage with the Government of Alberta to simplify and expand the eligibility for projects under the Wetland Replacement Program.**

### Member Background

The Wetland Replacement Program (WRP) aims to re-establish wetlands in partnership with Albertans by providing resources for collaborative restoration projects across the province. Wetlands are a vital part of Alberta's ecological landscape and necessary for a sustainable economy and healthy communities. Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is funding eligible wetland replacement projects and is seeking to establish partnerships with more municipalities and non-profits. AEP is currently working with 11 municipalities and one non-profit to replace wetlands in Alberta.

A priority of the Alberta Wetland Policy and WRP is to replace wetlands within municipalities and watersheds that have had the highest amount of lost wetland area since 2015, as well as areas of high historical loss.

Wetland replacement includes the following activities:

- Wetland Restoration: Returning natural/historic area and functions to a former or degraded wetland.
- Wetland Construction: Creating a wetland on a site that was historically non-wetland.

In 2020, seven wetland replacement projects were funded and completed totaling 158 hectares of restored or new wetland habitat through these successful partnerships, utilizing \$3.7 million of WRP funding.

The WRP is an implementation tool of the Alberta Wetland Policy (AWP). The AWP was developed by Alberta Environment and Parks and stakeholders in 2013 to conserve, restore, protect, and manage Alberta's wetlands in ways that sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society, and economy. [Review the Alberta Wetland Policy here.](#)

Since 2020, Smoky Lake County has put forth several potential project scenarios under the WRP. Several of these would have provided additional storm or wastewater services in addition to their core

function as constructed wetlands. Unfortunately, each have been found to fall outside the scope-of-program.

If the WRP were to be expanded toward a more holistic approach similar to the Canada Natural Infrastructure Fund, the program would likely garner far many more successful projects, thereby achieving the program goals as well as economic development, community wellness, and stewardship.

Link: [Alberta Wetland Policy implementation](#)  
[Alberta Wetland Classification System guide](#)  
[Canada Natural Infrastructure Fund](#)



## RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Third Party Inspections for Gravel Pit Reclamation**

Stettler County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS **Alberta Environment and Parks** (AEP), through legislation, maintains control of all registrations for Class I gravel pits (five hectares or larger); and

WHEREAS AEP, through legislation, maintains responsibility for inspection, compliance and enforcement of reclamation of Class 1 gravel pits; and

WHEREAS the ***Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*** (EPEA) requires applications for reclamation certificates be made to the Director or inspectors; and

WHEREAS the EPEA requires the Minister of Environment and Parks or designated Director to appoint inspectors for the purpose of that Act;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* to allow qualified third parties to conduct inspections and approve reclamation certificate applications for Class I gravel pits.**

### **Member Background**

A viable aggregate industry is a necessary component of a vibrant Alberta economy. The Government of Alberta is responsible for conducting inspections of gravel pits, including those inspections required to confirm end of life reclamation has occurred.

A shortage of inspectors at Alberta Environment and Parks is contributing to considerable wait times for both private and public operators. These delays extend the end of life obligations, increasing costs, especially for sites which are rented.

Under the Alberta Energy Regulator, oil and gas site reclamations can be signed off on by a qualified individual (such as an engineer) which reduces red tape. No such mechanism exists for gravel pits. This resolution would advocate that a similar mechanism be made available for gravel pits.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.



## **Completion of Alberta's Remaining Land-use Framework Regional Plans**

Smoky Lake County

*Endorsed by District 5*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta established the **Land-use Framework** (LUF) in 2008; and

WHEREAS the LUF is intended to provide 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 activities in a sustainable manner through the development of regional land-use plans; 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 planning represents an integrated planning approach that balances economic, environmental, and social considerations, and provide for consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, and the public; and

WHEREAS regional land-use plans developed under the LUF would serve as the 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; and

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

WHEREAS the regional planning process under the LUF has been slowed considerably and Alberta remains without regional plans in areas of significant future development;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta requests that the Government of Alberta resume progress on the remaining regional land-use plans intended to be developed under the Land-use Framework.**

### **Member Background**

The legal basis for regional land-use planning in Alberta was established in October 2009, with the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA). This legislation is intended to plan for the future needs of Albertans and manage growth, while respecting existing property rights.

The Land-use Framework recognizes that municipalities play a major role in regional planning. Municipalities contribute to regional planning which takes the municipal planning concept to a wider geographic area, so that planning responds to local needs and interests as well as regional and provincial ones.

The purpose of regional planning is to support the numerous policies and strategies that guide natural resource development, support economic growth, and protect our environment. Regional plans integrate these policies and strategies at the regional level and provide the policy direction and clarity for decision makers at the federal, provincial, and local levels.

In some cases, more detailed sub-regional planning may be necessary within a region to address a concern or specific issue. These plans go into more depth than a regional plan can and focus on the specifics of the situation.

Municipal governments maintain their responsibility and authority for local land-use planning and development on all lands within their boundaries. This includes the creation of municipal development plans, area structure plans and land-use bylaws. .

Regional Plans, including sub-regional plans, does not rescind land title or freehold mineral rights. Any decisions that may affect private landowners or freehold owners will occur through existing legislation and

processes, and private landowners and freehold owners remain entitled to due process. Private landowners may be entitled to compensation under those laws.

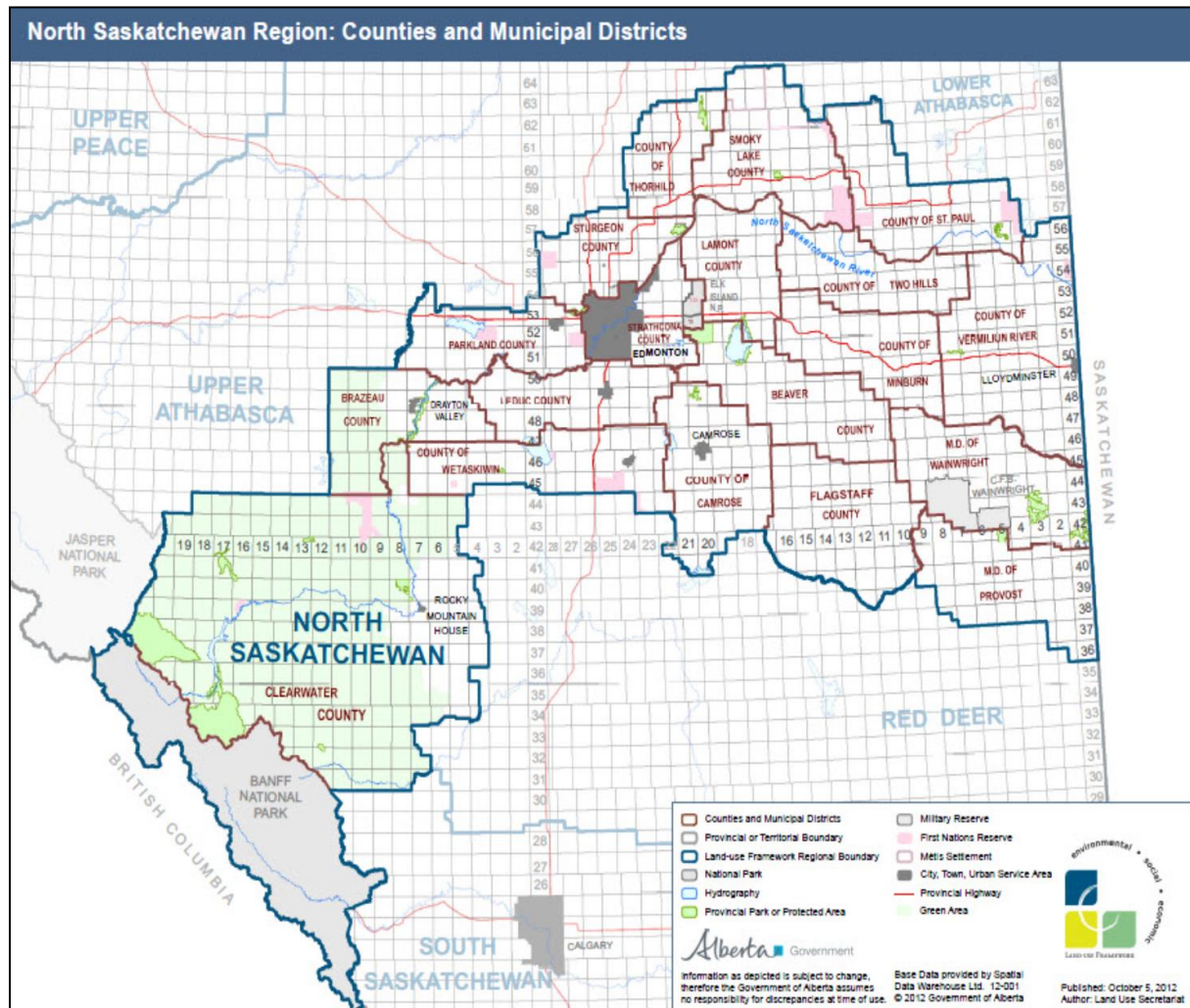
Situated within Treaties 6, 7, 8, and Metis Nation of Alberta Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4, the North Saskatchewan Region is home to a diverse population and a vibrant economy. The Region is bordered by the Alberta-Saskatchewan border to the east, the Alberta-British Columbia border to the west; it peaks at the north boundary of Smoky Lake County and includes Banff National Park. It includes Edmonton and seven other cities. The North Saskatchewan Region is approximately 8,578,088 hectares, which makes it the third largest of the seven regions. Opportunities across the Region have attracted new residents and businesses from across the country and around the world. Industries driving economic activity across the region continue to grow and include energy, agriculture, tourism, forestry, and associated services. See the profile of the North Saskatchewan Region.

A Regional Advisory Council for the North Saskatchewan Region was appointed by Cabinet in 2014 to provide advice to the Government of Alberta on the development of the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan. The council provided 69 recommendations to government in six topic areas. The Government of Alberta has been reviewing the results of Albertans' input on the North Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council's recommendations since Summer 2018 .

Links: Map 1 – [Alberta Land Use Framework Regions](#)  
Map 2 – [North Saskatchewan Region Counties & Districts](#)

## Alberta Land-use Framework Regions





## RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for Agriculture Under the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act***

Parkland County

*Endorsed by District 3*

WHEREAS the federal *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* (GGPPA) applies fuel charges to natural gas and propane used in agriculture operations, with the exception of greenhouses; and

WHEREAS the cost to Canadian farmers as a result of the GGPPA's fuel charges for natural gas and propane are estimated to be \$235 million dollars by 2024; and

WHEREAS the private Member's Bill C-234, *An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, which will provide relief for the fuel charge, was given second reading in the House of Commons; and

WHEREAS federal programs such as the Agricultural Clean Technology Program and tax rebate programs were aimed at providing relief to farmers from the fuel surcharges for natural gas and propane; and

WHEREAS these programs have proven difficult to access and are oversubscribed, or do not cover the actual costs expended by farmers; and

WHEREAS the GGPPA's fuel charges to natural gas and propane place Canadian farmers at a competitive disadvantage in comparison to international competitors who are not subject to fuel charges;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Canada to amend the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* to include natural gas and propane as exempted fuels for agricultural production.**

### **Member Background**

*Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act S.C. 2018, c. 12. s. 186*

Under the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* (GGPPA), adopted on June 21, 2018, the Government of Canada imposed a fuel charge on fossil fuels like gasoline and natural gas that applies in Alberta. The purpose of the GGPPA is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring that carbon pollution pricing applies broadly throughout Canada.

As a result of the repeal of the Alberta carbon levy in May 2019, the Government of Canada implemented the federal fuel charge in Alberta as of January 1, 2020. The GGPPA exempts fuels used in tractors, trucks and other farm machinery from the fuel charge. Natural gas used for activities such as grain dryers and heating barns are not exempt from the fuel charge.

In 2021, the Parliamentary Budget Office estimated that the Government of Canada was collecting fuel charges on natural gas and the propane used in the agricultural sector in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario at the following rates:

2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
\$9 Million	\$47 Million	\$59 Million	\$60 Million	\$60 Million

Through the fuel charge, farmers in the major agricultural production areas of the country will lose \$235 million in revenue from 2020-2021 to 2024-25.

### *Legislative Support*

In 2021, Conservative Member of Parliament Phillip Lawrence introduced a private Member's bill, Bill C-206: *An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, to exempt natural gas and propane used in farming operations from the carbon tax. Note: these fuels are already exempt for greenhouse operations.

Bill C-206 passed third reading in the House of Commons on June 23, 2021, and in the Senate, it passed first reading before the Senate recessed for summer break. Because the bill had not passed all three readings in the Senate, the bill died when the federal election was called.

In February 2022, Conservative Member of Parliament Ben Lobb reintroduced legislation exempting propane and natural gas from the carbon tax for farmers. Bill C-234: *An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, passed first and second readings in the House of Commons in Spring 2022 and was sent to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in June 2022. For this legislation to become law, the House of Commons must pass a third reading and the Senate must pass it into law. The Liberal Members of Parliament have consistently voted against the legislation.

#### *Funding Relief for Farmers*

As part of the federal budget for the year 2021, the Government of Canada announced that it would return a portion of the proceeds from the price on pollution directly to farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario beginning in 2021-22. It is estimated farmers would receive \$100 million in the first year. The tax rebate is not based on the carbon tax paid, instead is rebated based on expenses incurred. The tax rebate does not cover the costs paid by farmers.

Budget 2021 also committed \$50 million for the purchase of more efficient grain dryers for farmers across Canada under the Agricultural Clean Technology program. There were no funding programs to assist other uses of natural gas and propane such as heat for barns.

The Agricultural Clean Technology program was closed in the fall of 2021 due to oversubscription.

#### *Advocacy*

Recently, the Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee passed resolution 5-22: *Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for Agriculture Under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, advocating for the Government of Canada to remove the carbon tax from fuel used in agriculture production. The response from the Government of Canada to the resolution was insufficient. The Government of Canada reiterated their position that the tax rebate program will cover the carbon tax farmers are paying, which does not cover the cost of the tax.

#### *Sources*

##### Government of Canada

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2018/10/backgrounder-targeted-relief-for-farmers-and-fishers-and-residents-of-rural-and-remote-communities.html>

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agricultural-programs-and-services/agricultural-clean-technology-program-adoption-stream/applicant-guide#a1.4>

<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/p2-en.html#313>

##### Parliamentary Budget Office

<https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/legislative-costing-notes--notes-evaluation- cout-mesure-legislative/LEG-2021-049-M--bill-c-206-extension-exemption- qualifying-farming-fuel-to-marketable-natural-gas-propane--projet-loi-c-206- elargissement-exemption-qui-applique-au-combustible-agricole-admissible- inclure-gaz-naturel-commercialisable-propane>

#### **RMA Background**

##### **2-22S: Negative Impact of Carbon Tax on Rural Albertans**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) conduct a rural impact analysis on the federal carbon pollution pricing system to determine how the system is

negatively impacting rural Albertans and rural municipalities and share the analysis with the governments of Alberta and Canada; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Government of Canada for the amendment to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act to halt carbon tax increases on fuel.

[Click here](#) to view the full resolution.

## **Government Funding For Nurse Practitioners**

Beaver County

*Endorsed by District 5*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is responsible for the delivery of medical services to Albertans; and

WHEREAS there is a shortage of physicians in the province, particularly in rural Alberta; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta established the Rural Physician Action Plan in 1991 to support practicing rural physicians; and

WHEREAS the Rural Physician Action Plan met with limited success, and rural Alberta municipalities continue to struggle with the attraction and retention of physicians; and

WHEREAS Alberta has more than 800 licensed nurse practitioners, with 30 to 100 new graduates annually; and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners are health care professionals with training to provide essential health care services; and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners are completely independent health care professionals who could work in urgent care facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community clinics, primary care offices, and hospitals; and

WHEREAS most of Alberta's nurse practitioners work in hospitals due to lack of a salary-based funding model which would compensate them fairly and equitably, and enable the establishment of independent practices throughout Alberta; and

WHEREAS adequate Government of Alberta funding for nurse practitioners will alleviate the shortage of physicians and expand the reach of health care to rural Albertans of all ages;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to establish a salary-based funding model that will fairly and equitably compensate nurse practitioners for work in rural local care facilities and rural independent clinics.**

### **Member Background**

Rural Albertans continue to experience significant challenges to health care accessibility. The number of family physicians has dropped 0.9% between April 2019/March 2020 and April 2020/March 2021 despite an increase in Alberta's population. A 2022 survey conducted by the Alberta Medical Association indicates that 34% of Albertans do not currently have a family physician.

One solution to this issue is care provided by nurse practitioners.

Nurse practitioners are health care professionals educated at the Master's or PhD level. They are qualified to provide essential health care services such as primary care, outpatient clinic-based care, or hospital care, very similar to the care that a family doctor provides.

Nurse practitioners offer a wide range of services which include ordering and reading x-rays, tests, and laboratory results, performing exams and diagnosing problems, providing or ordering treatments, prescribing medications, providing follow-up care and education, and referring to specialists. They are independent and require no outside supervision of their practice.

Across Canada, nurse practitioners work in hospitals (35%), community health facilities (36%), and nursing homes (4%). The other 24% are educators, researchers, have returned to registered nursing roles, or are employed in private practices. Three million Canadians receive primary care from nurse practitioners and based on a study conducted by the Canadian Nurses Association in 2012, nurse



practitioners have contributed to a 20% reduction in emergency department admissions from long-term care, and a 55% reduction in the use of multiple medications.

In Alberta, provincial funding to nurse practitioners working outside the hospital system flows through primary care networks (PCNs). PCN positions are historically underpaid and have limits placed on the number of patients who can be seen. The Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta submitted a proposal to the Government of Alberta in 2021, suggesting a salary-based model in which nurse practitioners are paid directly by the Government of Alberta. Compared to a per-patient funding model, a salary-based model would enable nurse practitioners to provide a thorough, holistic approach to a patient's health-care needs.

Due to the frequent leadership changes in government, the proposal has not moved forward.

Supporting Documentation:

Alberta Medical Association PatientsFirst.ca survey findings (2022)

Alberta Government website ([open.alberta.ca](https://open.alberta.ca))

Canadian Nurses Association survey (2012)

Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta website

# Alberta Medical Association PatientsFirst.ca Survey Findings

Issue 1: August 2022

## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this first report on data gathered from our website [PatientsFirst.ca](https://PatientsFirst.ca). Like all surveys, it is a snapshot in time. We will report again in the months ahead as more Albertans participate and the data evolves.

**Thank you to everyone who has supported this important work** by sharing their health care experience with the AMA.

## Executive Summary

On May 16, 2022, the Alberta Medical Association launched a survey on PatientsFirst.ca to learn about the ways in which Albertans are waiting for health care. The goal was to offer Albertans an opportunity to voice their concerns and personal challenges regarding the health care system. We seek to understand how the health care deficit impacts Albertans so that the AMA can advocate for change where it is most needed and work with system partners to build a better health care system.

This report provides a high-level summary of quantitative data collected. It also provides interpretations of research findings from open-ended survey responses. Specifically, this study investigates observations from Alberta residents regarding medical wait times, access to care and personal experiences related to health care in the province.

As of release date for this report, we have collected over 8,000 responses from Albertans. While respondents live in all corners of the province and come from different backgrounds with distinct lived experiences, all participants are experiencing significant health care delays that severely impact their quality of life and well-being.

Themes that emerge from the collected data include *frustration over extended wait times, concerns related to personal and family well-being, health-related anxiety, lack of access to care in rural locales and a decidedly negative view toward the health care system in the province.*

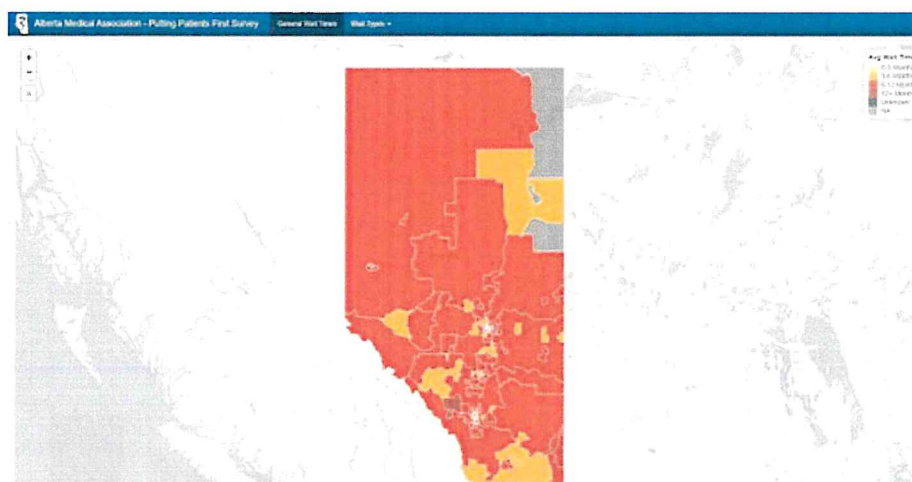
Physicians, government, Alberta Health Services and many other parties have a role in seeking solutions to what patients have described through this survey. We hope that bringing forward the voice of patients in this way will help guide the way forward, together.

## By the Numbers

High level provincial statistics appear below. This is a self-selecting sample of people who chose to participate. We do not claim that results are statistically generalizable to the entire population, but they are important to understand since they are drawn from individuals who

came forward because they are waiting for care. Our intent is to compile experiences from a wide variety of Albertans in order to shine light on the challenges we all face. The results are persuasive and will become more so as they evolve with the participation of more Albertans in the months ahead.

For regional insights on patients waiting for care, [maps are available](#). We are displaying results based on the first three characters in an Alberta postal code, e.g., TOE. Some samples are very small, but it is interesting to note the distribution of issues across regions. Use the 'Wait Types' drop-down menu to view the different kinds of wait categories.



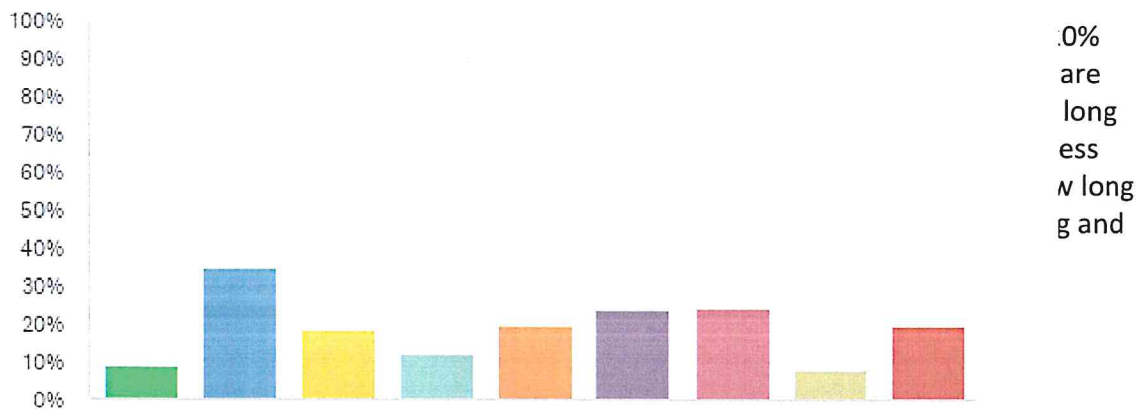
### Provincial results

Over 97.2% of respondents indicated some form of deficit in their personal health care. Rural Albertans reported a higher rate of a health care deficit with longer wait times than urban areas for all types of services.

Noteworthy data include an overwhelming 40% who are waiting for a medical procedure or test; over 35% who are waiting for a health appointment; 34% who do not currently have a family doctor; and nearly 30% who are waiting for a referral to see a specialist or other health professional.

## What are you waiting for?

Don't have a family doctor	34.5%
Waiting for a surgical procedure	24.2%
Waiting for a specialist appointment	23.9%
Waiting for a referral to see a specialist	19.7%
Waiting for diagnostic testing	18.3%
Waiting for a medical appointment	12.3%
Can't get in to see family doctor	9.2%
Waiting for a referral to see a psychiatrist or mental health professional	8.2%
Waiting for an unspecified type of care not mentioned above	19.6%



Wait Time	Can't get in to see a family doctor	Can't find a family doctor	Diagnostic testing	Medical appointment	Referral to a specialist	Specialist appointment	Surgical procedure	Referral to a psychiatrist or mental health professional	Other	Waiting for a referral to see a specialist
Over a year				12%		32%		22.1%		18.5%
Between 6-12 months				8.5%		16.7%		15.8%		13.3%
Between 3-6 months				7.6%		9.3%		13.2%		14.7%
Between 0-3 months				6.4%		3.1%		7.8%		7.2%
A few weeks				4.1%		1.3%		2.6%		3.5%
Up to a week				0.9%		0.22%		0%		0.6%
A few days				0.6%		0%		0%		0%
Unknown				52.2%		28.9%		28%		31.2%
Other				7.9%		8.6%		10.4%		11%

Wait Time	Waiting for diagnostic testing	Waiting for a medical appointment	Can't get in to see a family doctor	Waiting for a referral to see a psychiatrist or mental health program
Over a year	17.9%	10.9%	6.4%	22%



Between 6-12 months	9.8%	10.9%	5.3%	12.1%
Between 3-6 months	14.5%	12.6%	7.4%	9.9%
Between 0-3 months	14.7%	16.1%	22.3%	9.9%
A few weeks	11%	12.6%	24.4%	4.3%
Up to a week	1.7%	2.9%	5%	0%
A few days	1.5%	1.7%	2.1%	0%
Unknown	22.3%	22.4%	15.4%	34.7%
Other	6.7%	9.8%	11.7%	7.1%

### In Their Own Words

Numbers tell a certain story. Equally powerful are the anecdotes that participants shared. This qualitative data, generated through open-ended survey questions, provided nuanced perspectives.

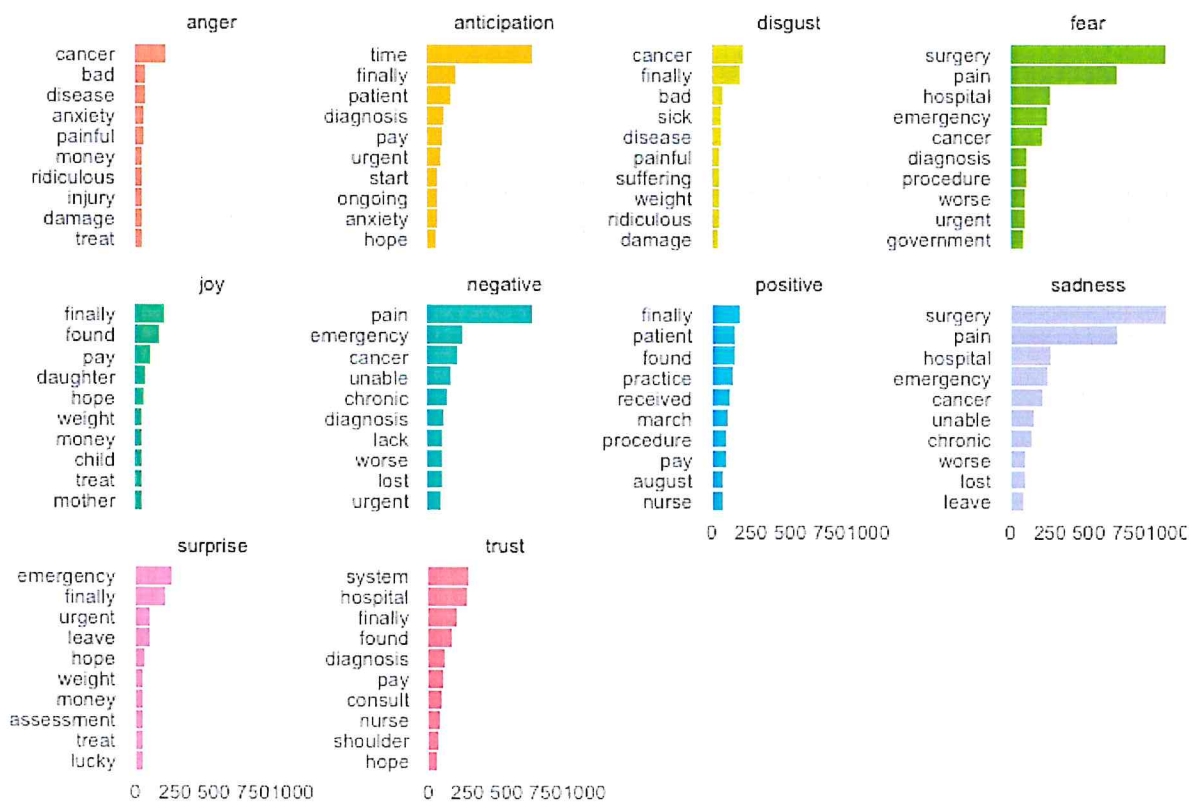
To analyze the flood of different experiences, we took counts of sentiment and word frequency derived from the full population of survey responses. Additionally, an in-depth thematic analysis was conducted on a random sample of 1,000 open-ended responses to assess the prevalence of high-level themes.

## Sentiment Analysis

To assess broad attitudes toward health care and medical experiences across the province, our survey prompted respondents to voluntarily share their health care deficit stories. From the collected data, we performed sentiment analysis of the text-based data<sup>1</sup>.

Results of this analysis in figure 1 illustrate the dominant trends. Here we find that negative sentiments outweigh positive sentiments, and language related to feelings such as “fear,” “sadness,” and “anticipation” are the most frequently used terms. In comparison, positive language related to “trust” and “joy” is used less frequently.

**Figure 1. Health Care Deficit Story – Sentiment Analysis**



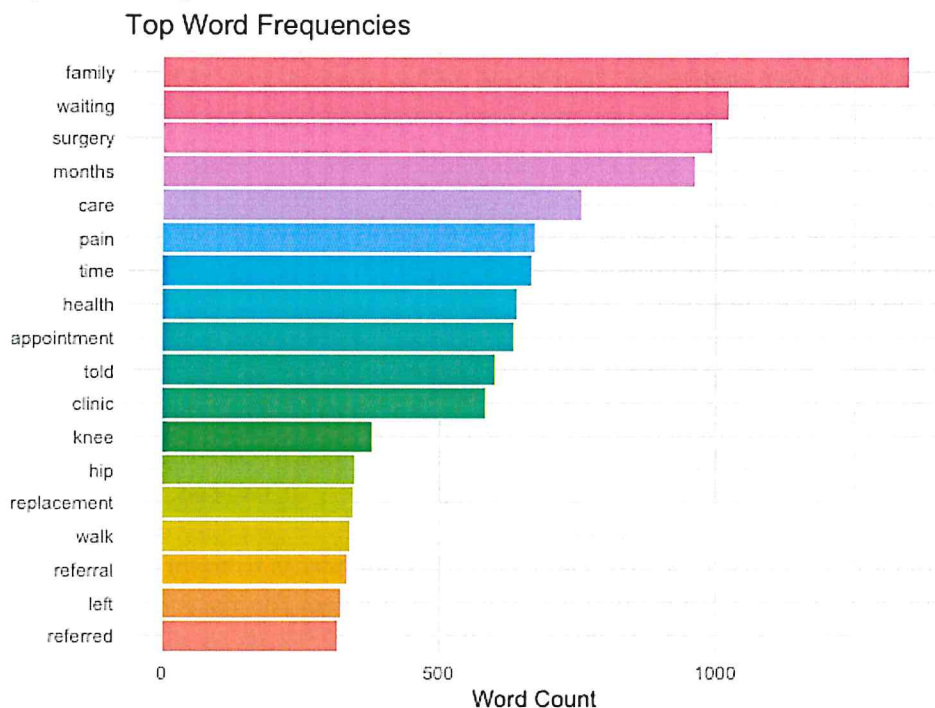
**AMA Patients First Survey - Deficit Story Sentiment Analysis**

<sup>1</sup> This analysis was conducted using R open-source statistical software with National Research Council (NRC) Word-Emotion association sentiment dictionaries. Words were aggregated and compared based on underlying associated feelings.

## Frequency Counts

Frequency counts of words contained within the open-ended response were used to rank certain concepts within overarching themes. For example, in figure 2, the word 'family' stands out as the most-used word in the body of responses, followed by concepts related to acute medical care. Prominent words and concepts reflect a keen focus of responses on the issues associated with waiting for a family physician, concerns about family members' access to care, and anxiety over receiving treatment for specific ailments (specialist care). Combined with the sentiment scoring metrics above, these frequency counts indicate the key overarching trends in the qualitative data.

**Figure 2. Top Word Frequencies**



## In-Depth Themes and Insights

Open-ended responses from the PatientsFirst.ca survey provide insights into the experiences of Albertans related to existing health care deficits. When prompted to share unique experiences with Alberta's health care system, over 50% of respondents shared their personal health care deficit stories. Below, we explore in more detail some of the frequent themes.

### *Frustration over extended wait times*



All respondents indicate frustration and discouragement regarding extended wait times to access doctors, health care treatment, tests and surgery. Many reveal existing chronic and acute illnesses and conditions that have been left untreated for extended periods, leading to severe discomfort, pain and suffering. *"I'm waiting and waiting and getting sicker and sicker"* and *"Wait times mean there is constant pain"* are quotes from respondents that effectively describe how many feel about the consequences of lacking access to care.

Untreated health concerns that respondents repeatedly mention include, notably, hip replacements, knee surgeries and other mobility issues, for example: *"There's been delay after delay for knee surgery, my mobility is getting worse, and I soon may need a walker"*; *"I live in constant pain waiting for hip replacement"*; *"It should not take 6-8 weeks to get an ultrasound... I experienced a great deal of pain and discomfort due to the long wait."*

Of the 34% of all respondents who do not have a family doctor, many express the frustration they feel: *"I'm frustrated, depressed, beat down and so much more"*; *"My husband and I both are seniors, and we do not have access to a family doctor and have not had one in about ten years."*

Respondents also indicate uncertainty and a lack of clarity about how long they will have to wait to find a doctor, access treatment, tests or surgeries. Some have said they simply do not know what the wait time will be.

#### ***Concerns related to personal and family well being***

Many respondents express concern related to personal and family well-being. Some express worry about their elderly parents not having access to the health care they need to get by: *"My mom is in pain and shouldn't have to wait so long for surgery. It's so sad."*

Many parents are worried about their children and about access to mental health services and programs for their children, for example: *"I waited over a year for a psychiatry referral to treat depression caused by my daughter's illnesses"*; *"My daughter waits six months between psych appointments even though her meds aren't stable, and her depression is disabling...there is no access to pain clinics or specialists"*; *"It is so disheartening for us and my son as we don't know how to help him not get further behind in school and be able to stay with his peers."*

#### ***Health-related anxiety***

Respondents indicate feelings of anxiety around not having access to care for themselves and their families. One respondent described the impact of not having access to care as: *"agonizing, and the stress has certainly had a huge impact on MY health as a parent."*

Several respondents indicate fear and anxiety around the retirement of their family doctors and their inability to find a new one. *“My family GP, who my family and I have had since 1992, retired in 2020. I cannot find a family doctor who will see me.”*

Some also noted the long distance needed to travel to access care and the challenge this presents for those who are vulnerable and elderly.

### ***Lost confidence in the medical system***

The [PatientsFirst.ca](https://patientsfirst.ca) survey reveals that Albertans have lost their confidence in the health care system. For many this includes the ability of doctors to get them the care they need or that they have previously received. Some comments point to lack of resources combined with higher volumes of patients and pervasive burnout, all of which are gripping health professionals across the country. Many patients express feeling like a number, not a person.

As one respondent noted succinctly: *“It’s a waiting game for so many tests, limited to what your doctor has time to talk to you about in an appointment, long waits in the ER, short staffing in hospitals and undervalued employees, high burn out of staff.”*

Many seniors express distress regarding their challenges in accessing the essential care they rely on to do everyday tasks, for example: *“I am 71 years old. My days are spent struggling to do the basics”; “In this day and age, a senior should not have to wait an extended period of time to get a few minutes with a doctor to get a prescription renewed.”*

### ***A decidedly negative view toward health care in the province.***

The [PatientsFirst.ca](https://patientsfirst.ca) survey suggests there are severe challenges facing Albertans regarding health care accessibility and delivery. A vast majority of respondents express a negative view toward health care in Alberta, calling it *“terrible,” “mismanaged,” “a complete failure,” “shattered,”* and *“broken long before COVID.”* Most indicate that health care in Alberta is not accessible and that they aren’t getting the tests, treatment or health services they need to reduce or relieve pain, get better and have a good quality of life.

### **Text Word Cloud**





Table 3.8  
Number of Physicians by Specialty  
Within Alberta Health Services Geographic Zones  
for the Service Year April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021<sup>(1)(4)</sup>

Physicians by Specialty	Number of Physicians			
	All Zones <sup>(2)</sup>	Calgary Zone	Edmonton Zone	All Other Zones
Anaesthesiology	454	215	195	70
Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery	27	7	20	
Dermatology	61	37	25	10
Emergency Medicine	199	120	81	21
General/Family Physicians (GP/FPs) O.A.?	5,371	2,714	2,198	1,902
General Surgery	221	86	95	96
Internal Medicine	906	438	474	319
Neurology	88	42	44	30
Neurosurgery	6	2	4	
Obstetrics-Gynaecology	253	121	108	74
Ophthalmology	139	67	59	35
Orthopaedic Surgery	185	98	76	69
Otolaryngology	76	32	35	17
Paediatrics	412	254	132	74
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	69	27	42	6
Plastic Surgery	71	40	28	15
Psychiatry	589	300	302	174
Urology	64	26	29	37
All Specialists (except GP/FPs, Pathologists and Radiologists) <sup>(3)</sup>	3,824	1,913	1,752	1,050
<b>Total: All Physicians (except Pathologists and Radiologists)<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>9,195</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>2,952</b>

*Note: This table reflects fee-for-service data only.*

*(1) This report reflects discrete counts of physicians by specialty within each zone, where the physician payment was greater than zero within the zone.*

*(2) The number of physicians reported for All Zones represents the actual number of physicians with payments greater than zero at the Alberta level and does not represent the sum of physicians reported for the zones since physicians may provide health services in multiple zones and would be double counted.*

*(3) Excludes pathology and radiology specialists because billings for more than one physician may be included under one physician billing number.*

*(4) A blank cell represents a zero value.*

Table 3.8  
Number of Physicians by Specialty  
Within Alberta Health Services Geographic Zones  
for the Service Year April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020<sup>(1)(4)</sup>

Physicians by Specialty	Number of Physicians			
	All Zones <sup>(2)</sup>	Calgary Zone	Edmonton Zone	All Other Zones
Anaesthesiology	473	205	215	84
Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery	27	7	20	
Dermatology	60	38	19	8
Emergency Medicine	193	115	76	18
General/Family Physicians (GP/FPs) 32.7	5,418	2,684	2,167	1,917
General Surgery	220	83	102	91
Internal Medicine	931	440	480	281
Neurology	85	34	45	30
Neurosurgery	11	2	9	
Obstetrics-Gynaecology	258	119	115	78
Ophthalmology	140	63	62	30
Orthopaedic Surgery	189	99	68	67
Otolaryngology	76	30	34	19
Paediatrics	402	235	136	76
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	67	25	40	6
Plastic Surgery	71	41	24	14
Psychiatry	587	286	305	142
Urology	63	25	27	21
All Specialists (except GP/FPs, Pathologists and Radiologists) <sup>(3)</sup>	3,859	1,849	1,781	965
<b>Total: All Physicians (except Pathologists and Radiologists)<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>9,277</b>	<b>4,533</b>	<b>3,948</b>	<b>2,882</b>

Note: This table reflects fee-for-service data only.

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(3) Excludes pathology and radiology specialists because billings for more than one physician may be included under one physician billing number.

(4) A blank cell represents a zero value.

Table 3.8  
Number of Physicians by Specialty  
Within Alberta Health Services Geographic Zones  
for the Service Year April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019<sup>(1)(4)</sup>

Physicians by Specialty	Number of Physicians			
	All Zones <sup>(2)</sup>	Calgary Zone	Edmonton Zone	All Other Zones
Anaesthesiology	458	200	209	86
Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery	26	8	19	
Dermatology	58	33	21	7
Emergency Medicine	180	109	71	19
General/Family Physicians (GP/FPs)	5,268	2,619	2,137	1,852
General Surgery	211	81	91	85
Internal Medicine	874	396	465	275
Neurology	80	31	38	32
Neurosurgery	9	2	7	
Obstetrics-Gynaecology	253	121	112	75
Ophthalmology	136	65	62	29
Orthopaedic Surgery	191	98	71	67
Otolaryngology	73	29	33	18
Paediatrics	387	224	127	79
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	53	21	29	9
Plastic Surgery	73	43	25	14
Psychiatry	576	284	287	149
Urology	60	25	25	19
All Specialists (except GP/FPs, Pathologists and Radiologists) <sup>(3)</sup>	3,699	1,771	1,692	963
<b>Total: All Physicians (except Pathologists and Radiologists) <sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>8,967</b>	<b>4,390</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>2,815</b>

Note: This table reflects fee-for-service data only.

(1) This report reflects discrete counts of physicians by specialty within each zone, where the physician payment was greater than zero within the zone.

(2) The number of physicians reported for All Zones represents the actual number of physicians with payments greater than zero at the Alberta level and does not represent the sum of physicians reported for the zones since physicians may provide health services in multiple zones and would be double counted.

(3) Excludes pathology and radiology specialists because billings for more than one physician may be included under one physician billing number.







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	NURSE	FAMILY PHYSICIAN
Act as most responsible provider	✓	✓
Order X-rays and act on results	✓	✓
Order blood work and act on results	✓	✓
Prescribe medications	✓	✓
Prescribe narcotics	✓	✓
Prescribe Methadone/Suboxone	✓	✓
Manage chronic conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes	✓	✓
Perform procedures such as stitches, casts, specialized injections, mole removal, etc.	✓	✓
Order/perform screening tests such as pap smears, prostate exams, etc.	✓	✓
Refer to specialists	✓	✓
Drivers Medical	✓	✓
Disability forms	✓	✓
WCB injuries	✓	✓

If there are complex health problems or something beyond the knowledge, skills or abilities of a Nurse Practitioner, they have a responsibility to ensure that the appropriate specialist or health care provider is consulted. Nurse Practitioners want each patient to get the best care possible, and in some instances that may mean transfer of care to a physician. In other care models, the Nurse Practitioner may care for a patient in a care team including a physician and/or other health care professionals.



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Units. They can order tests, diagnose problems, provide or order treatments, refer to specialists and provide follow-up or ongoing care. Depending on the setting in which they work, NPs can do everything



Alberta NP Michelle Jeannotte at work in clinic

from check-ups to specialized injections. Some of these abilities include minor surgeries, stitches, casts, intubations, mental health care, inserting IUDs, Medical Assistance in Dying, and much more! Nurse Practitioners can perform comprehensive physicals (check-ups), treat illnesses, screen for health problems, and manage chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, etc. They can monitor the health of babies, children, adults, and the elderly, and treat their illnesses should they get sick.

Nurse practitioners are accountable for their own practice. It is their responsibility to communicate with clients about results and diagnoses, treatment plans, further testing, referral to other health-care professionals if needed, and are responsible for follow-up. Nurse practitioners counsel clients on symptom management, health maintenance, medication management, alternative therapies, rehabilitation strategies and other health programs.


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In Alberta, Nurse Practitioners are Master's or PhD prepared health professionals who provide essential healthcare services such as primary care, outpatient clinic-based care, or hospital care. Nurse practitioners are completely independent health professionals and require no outside supervision of their practice. They bring a wealth of knowledge to provide high-quality care in a variety of settings. Nurse practitioners practice uniquely by viewing health of the whole person, with emphasis on education, communication, and disease prevention. Nurse practitioners work in collaboration with their clients and other health-care providers to provide patient-centred care. They are able to work with clients across the age ranges and throughout the province.

Nurse practitioners strive to limit health care costs as much as possible: working to improve health while saving individuals and our health system money.

Nurse practitioners are responsible for their own practice. They are required to communicate with clients about health findings and diagnoses, further required testing and referral to other health-care professionals, and are responsible for client follow-up. Nurse practitioners work with clients to help manage symptoms, to help clients understand their medications, to consider alternative therapy options, and rehabilitation strategies. Nurse Practitioners work with their clients to help them be as healthy as they can be.

## Why would I want to see a Nurse Practitioner for my health care?

Here are just a few reasons:

- People who see Nurse Practitioners for their health care often have fewer emergency room visits, shorter hospital stays and lower medication costs.
- Nurse Practitioners have been shown to provide safe, comprehensive, and cost-effective health care services equal to family physicians.
- Nurse Practitioners place a significant focus on teaching patients about their health conditions and treatment recommendations. They can often spend more time with patients than other providers.
- Nurse Practitioners listen to patients and strive to understand how their health problems are affecting each aspect of their life.
- Patients of Nurse Practitioners report very high satisfaction with the care they receive.
- Nurse Practitioners can improve access to health care.
- In hospitals, Nurse Practitioners work with specialists and provide additional care to enhance recovery and a return to health. They ensure that all of the patient's medical and nursing needs are being met while in hospital, and can ensure adequate care will be in place after discharge. They are also known for their ability to communicate, teach and counsel patients and families in these settings.

## Do I need a family doctor, too?

Nurse Practitioners are completely independent health professionals who can perform a wide range of services, very similar to the care that a family doctor provides. There is no reason that a Nurse Practitioner cannot be an Albertan's primary care provider. Nurse practitioners order and read x-rays and other tests, order and read laboratory tests, perform procedures (such as) and prescribe medications. In a family physician's office they are able to manage skin lesions, repair injuries, complete pap smears, perform minor surgeries and generally complete all of the tasks which you would expect at a family doctor's office.



## What can Nurse Practitioners do?

The knowledge and skills of a Nurse Practitioner are extensive. They can care from well-babies and families in doctor's offices to critically ill patients in intensive care units. They can order tests, diagnose problems, provide or order treatments, refer to specialists and provide follow-up or ongoing care. Depending on the setting in which they work, NPs can do everything from check-ups to specialized injections. Some of these abilities include minor surgeries, stitches, casts, intubations, mental health care, inserting IUDs, Medical Assistance in Dying, and much more! Nurse Practitioners can perform comprehensive physicals (check-ups), treat illnesses, screen for health problems, and manage chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, etc. They can monitor the health of babies, children, adults, and the elderly, and treat their illnesses should they get sick.

Nurse practitioners are accountable for their own practice. It is their responsibility to communicate with clients about results and diagnoses, treatment plans, further testing, referral to other health-care professionals if needed, and are responsible for follow-up. Nurse practitioners counsel clients on symptom management, health maintenance, medication management, alternative therapies, rehabilitation strategies and other health programs.

## Where do Nurse Practitioners work?

You will find Nurse Practitioners in hospitals, urgent care centers, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, maternity clinics, community clinics, and primary care offices. Nurse Practitioners may at times work in clinics in the community with a team of other health care professionals. Currently, most Alberta NPs work in hospitals because lack of a funding model with the government highly limits where they are able to practice. This lack of a provincial funding model prevents Nurse Practitioners to have their own clinic in the community and is limiting access to Nurse Practitioner care. If you'd love to see more NPs in the community, follow the link to [Get Involved](#) and write to your local MLA. The NPAA is working hard to remove this barrier. Stay tuned!



Alberta NP Michelle Jeannotte at work in clinic

**RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

**Regulations for Motorists Passing School Buses with Amber Lights Flashing**  
Clearwater County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS roads or highways in Alberta are governed by the **Traffic Safety Act** (TSA); and

WHEREAS the Lieutenant Governor in Council may enact regulations related to the rules of the road pursuant to section 112 of the TSA; and

WHEREAS the TSA allows peace officers and police officers to fine drivers that contravene speed regulations in school zones or pass school buses stopped with red lights flashing to drop off or pickup students; and

WHEREAS there are no provincial regulations for drivers overtaking school buses that have stopped with alternating amber lights flashing; and

WHEREAS Alberta Transportation's recommends that "if you pass a school bus that has its alternating amber lights flashing, pass with caution"; and

WHEREAS there are speed regulations for many of the other higher risk areas or activities on roadways, including passing emergency vehicles, passing plow trucks, and driving through construction, playground and school zones;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to enact or amend legislation to address motorists passing school buses with amber lights flashing, and that the legislation include the following:**

- **setting a maximum speed limit of 60km/hour or slower on all roadways when passing school buses, in both directions, with flashing amber lights;**
- **providing regulations for roadside signage for school bus stops on primary highways in Alberta.**

**Member Background**

Motorists need to respect the flashing lights on a school bus, which creates a safety zone for children around the vehicle and are often the children's only defense when they get on or off the bus. Motor vehicle drivers should watch out for alternating flashing amber lights, which means a school bus is slowing to stop where students will either be getting on or off the bus.

According to Transport Canada, school bus travel remains the safest mode of transportation to and from schools. It is 16 times safer than the family car. Maintaining this level of safety requires motorists to do their parts too.

[Alberta Transportation](#) is currently reviewing the 90 km/h speed limit for buses as part of a transportation plan in late 2022. Review changes will not be introduced until the 2022/2023 or 2023/2024 school year.

The Government of Alberta [website on school buses](#) advises the following:

*When school bus lights are flashing:*

*On an undivided highway (not divided by a median), do the following:*

*When you approach a school bus from either direction (from the front or the rear), and it has the alternating amber lights flashing, you must be ready to stop. This is a warning that the alternating red lights are going to begin flashing and the school bus is stopping to allow students to get on or off.*

*If you pass a school bus that has its alternating amber lights flashing, pass with caution.*

*When the school bus stops to let students on or off, its alternating red lights will begin flashing. You will also see a stop sign extended from the left side of the school bus. You must come to a full stop about 20*

*meters (about 4 to 5 car lengths) away from the school bus. This distance allows drivers of other vehicles behind you to see the flashing lights and students crossing the highway.*

*You must remain stopped until the alternating flashing red lights are turned off and the stop sign on the driver's side is no longer extended.*

These rules apply whenever and wherever the school bus lights are activated. Some municipalities have additional rules for school bus operation within their jurisdiction .

Some municipalities have bylaws that do not require school buses to use their alternating flashing lights when stopping. In this case, drivers do not need to stop but should still be cautious and watch for pedestrians when the buses are loading or unloading students.

In 2020, the [Student Transportation Task Force](#) addressed issues facing student transportation services, with the goal to get students to school as safely and efficiently as possible. Student transportation was identified as an item needing further review during meetings with school authorities and charter schools. The task force used the feedback gathered to develop 21 recommendations found in the *Student Transportation Task Force: Report to the Minister*. Alberta Education began implementing the recommendations through a three-phase action plan in May 2021. Panel recommendations include:

- Establishing a working group to address concerns related to entry-level training programs
- Creating audit teams to review school transportation operations
- Ensuring the funding model is sufficient for legislated school transportation requirements
- Exploring current speed limits for school buses
- Working collaboratively with municipalities and law enforcement to ensure there is consistent enforcement of flybys
- Improving awareness and driver education of school bus flybys (refer to situations when a vehicle passes a school bus that has stopped to collect or drop off students.)

#### Phase 1 (May 2021)

Two audit teams to review student transportation operations of up to 15 school divisions. A joint working group will be established between the government and task force members to further discuss student transportation issues.

#### Phase 2 (start by September 2021)

Phase two to focus on enhancing regional cooperation among school divisions. It will also examine a provincial purchasing program for buses, fuel, insurance, and parts.

#### Phase 3 (complete by September 2022)

Phase three focuses on the development of a student transportation-funding model for the 2022/23 or 2023/24 school year. The current legislated student transportation requirements, including eligibility criteria, will be reviewed as part of this work.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Portion of Funding from Public Lands Camping Pass Directed to Municipalities**

Clearwater County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS according to the *Public Lands Amendment Act*, the Government of Alberta is committed to sustainable recreation management that ensures that public land is accessible to all Albertans for personal enjoyment and sustainable outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS as per section 9.1 of the *Public Lands Act*, the Lieutenant Governor in Council can authorize the Minister of Environment and Parks to impose fees relating to the use and occupation of public land including the carrying on of activities on public land; and

WHEREAS Ministerial Order 52/2021 – Public Lands Camping Pass requires a valid “Public Lands Camping Pass” (Camping Pass) for every person entering on and occupying public lands within the pass area for the purpose of camping at a cost of \$30 annually or \$20 for a three-day pass; and

WHEREAS Albertans recognize the benefits from sustainable outdoor recreation and the Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring the costs are shared in a way that is fair for all Albertans; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to using fees collected for recreational uses of public land for purposes related to the maintenance and management of public land and recreation and public safety on public land; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Environment and Parks states that the proceeds from Camping Pass fees will be used to upgrade infrastructure, improve public education, fund conservation officers on the ground, enhance public safety and ensure better environmental and waste management; and

WHEREAS municipal resources such as fire services, peace officers and solid waste services, along with municipal facilities and washrooms are relied upon in support of recreational activities on public lands; and

WHEREAS there is no current funding structure for municipalities to recoup any portion of these municipal services costs associated with camping on public lands; and

WHEREAS local community or volunteer groups, such as search and rescue along with sports, camping and trails management groups are also impacted by recreational activities on public lands; and

WHEREAS there is no direct funding structure for community groups to recoup any portion of additional costs or services associated with the use of public lands; and

WHEREAS municipalities should be consulted for public lands infrastructure upgrades and waste management planning related to Camping Pass funding use, as those plans may directly and indirectly impact municipalities; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) requests that the Government of Alberta provide a portion of the revenue generated from the Public Lands Camping Pass to municipalities with adjacent public lands for the purpose of offsetting additional costs of municipal fire services, peace officers and solid waste services, along with municipal facilities and washrooms associated with recreational use of public lands;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA requests the Government of Alberta establish a program, funded by a portion of the Public Lands Camping Pass funds, for municipalities to be a coordinating agency for local stewardship and community groups impacted by public lands use.**

### **Member Background**

As of June 1, 2021, the [Public Lands Camping Pass](#) (PLCP) is required for random camping on public land along the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains. It extends from Grande Prairie all the way down to Waterton. In the headwaters of the Oldman watershed, the pass applies to both the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ).

Camping pass fees will be reinvested to improve recreation experiences and help conserve and protect Alberta's beautiful landscapes so they can be enjoyed now and into the future. Campers 18 years and older must buy a pass.

- \$20 per person for a 3-day pass
- \$30 per person for an annual pass

A one-time Wildlife Identification Number (WIN) purchase is required to access the system (\$8, but with a \$2 discount if purchased online). Campers will be required to show proof of payment (printed pass or mobile app) to enforcement officers when requested. Non-compliance could result in a fine.

The passes can be purchased:

- Online at [albertarelm.com](http://albertarelm.com)
- Through the [AlbertaRELM mobile app](#)
- At locations that sell fishing and hunting licenses

Unlike the Conservation Pass, the PLCP is sold per person (not per vehicle). Children under 18 are not required to have the pass, and neither are other groups with exemptions such as First Nations people holding a status card. You do not require the PLCP for day trips and/or if you are staying in a campground.

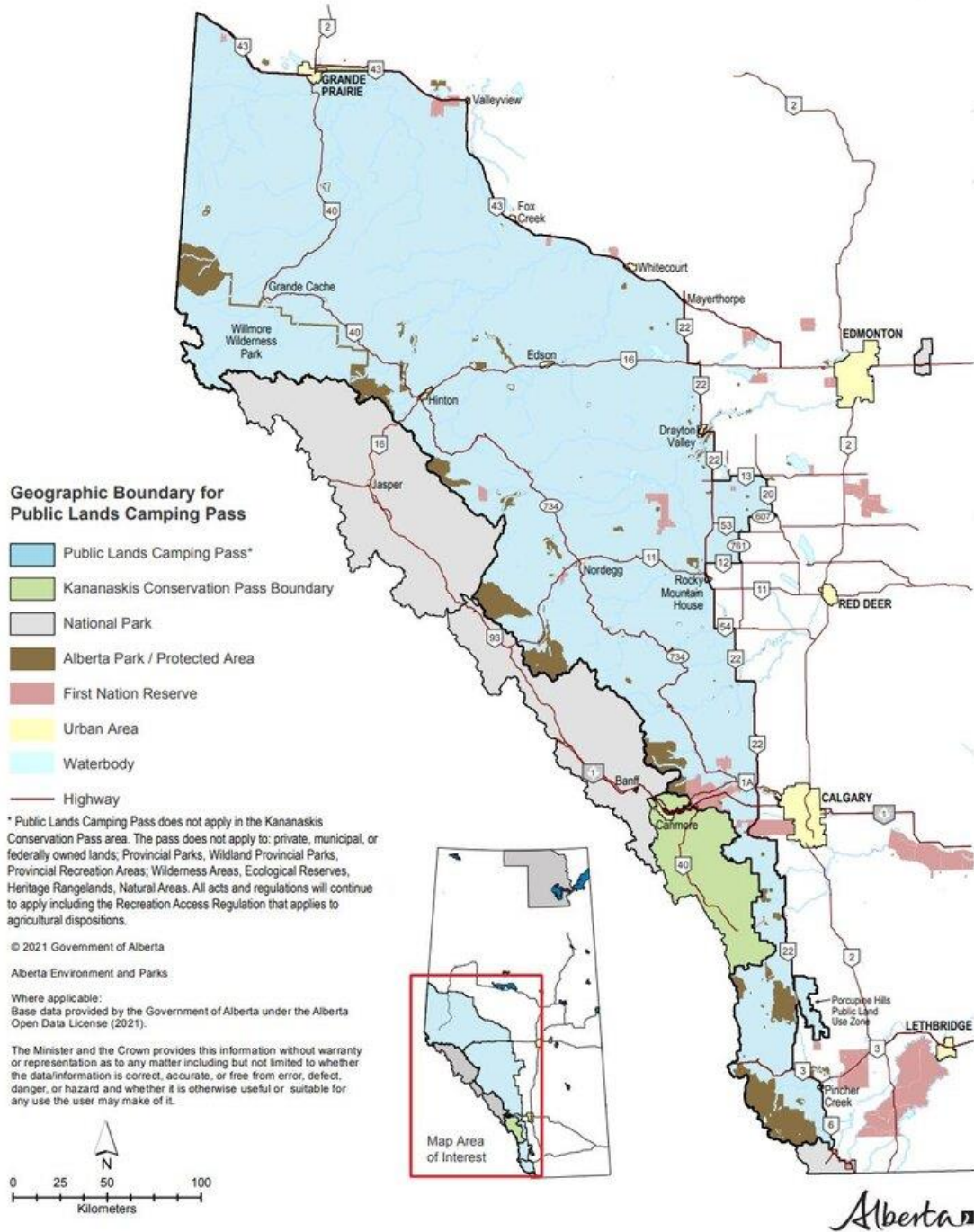
All Acts and regulations are still in place, and campers are responsible for knowing where they are allowed to camp and what passes they need. The Alberta Government has stated that during the initial roll-out of the new pass, campers may be granted a grace period to comply before being fined, to allow Albertans to become familiar with the new system. However, non-compliance could result in a fine once it becomes common knowledge. Campers should be ready to provide proof of payment while camping.

The intent of the pass is to reinvest funds into the region to improve recreation and protect public land for generations to come by improving infrastructure, education, enforcement, public safety, waste management, and conservation initiatives.

[Download the boundary map](#) (PDF, 1MB)



# PUBLIC LANDS CAMPING PASS



## RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## Lost Road Closure Files

Smoky Lake County

*Endorsed by District 5*

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WHEREAS under the ***Municipal Government Act*** (MGA), municipalities in Alberta are responsible for the “direction, control and management of all roads within the municipality”; and

WHEREAS in accordance with section 22 the MGA, no road in a municipality that is subject to the direction, control and management of the municipality may be closed except by bylaw, or where council determines that a road that is described in a surveyed road plan is no longer required for use by the travelling public because an alternate route exists, then by resolution; and

WHEREAS no road may be closed by resolution or by bylaw unless the resolution is approved by the Minister of Transportation, or in the case of a bylaw, before it receives second reading; and

WHEREAS seeking the Minister’s approval is a lengthy process, normally requiring months or even years; and

WHEREAS in accordance with section 188 of the MGA, if a bylaw does not receive its third reading within two years of its first reading, it is deemed to have expired; and

WHEREAS road closure files have previously been lost or misplaced by Alberta Transportation, which requires municipalities to re-start the process;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) requests that the Government of Alberta streamline the Minister of Transportation’s approval processes associated with municipal road closures;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA requests that the Government of Alberta create a digital tracking system that would ensure bylaws or resolutions are not misplaced or lost by Alberta Transportation.**

### **Member Background**

Municipalities frequently entertain requests for the legal or permanent closure of road allowances. Such road closures involve a multi-step process under the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA).

If a municipal council wishes to entertain a road closure, the municipality will typically draft the road closure bylaw. Required information in the bylaw includes a bylaw number, the name of the road authority (municipality), purpose of the closure (create title, disposal (sale), or lease), advertising (including the name of the publication(s) and dates published (see section 606 of the MGA), and a description of the proposed road closure.

A municipal council must give the first reading of the bylaw prior to submitting the signed and dated original bylaw proposing closure to Alberta Transportation for approval. Such an approval process typically takes months or years, as a matter of course.

Upon transmission of bylaws to Alberta Transportation, Smoky Lake County has experienced several of these files “going missing.” The loss is unlikely to be discovered within the allotted two years within which the bylaw is “alive” and before it has automatically expired without having received second and third readings. This necessitates that the process begins over again, having wasted time and money.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Loss of Agricultural Land to Renewable Energy Projects**

Mountain View County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada have a mandate to transition to a low carbon economy; and

WHEREAS renewable energy has been determined to be one way to transition to a low carbon economy; and

WHEREAS renewable energy projects in Alberta have been and continue to be located on productive agricultural lands; and

WHEREAS Alberta's *Renewable Energy Act* has mandated that 30% of electricity generated must come from renewable energy sources by 2030; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Electric System Operator calculates, for 2021, 17% of electricity generation in Alberta comes from renewable energy sources; and

WHEREAS achieving this growth in renewable energy generation by 2030 could result, according to industry calculations, in a further 120,000 acres (187.5 sections) of agricultural land being lost; and

WHEREAS no quantitative studies have been completed in Alberta that calculate the overall effect to the economy from the loss of agricultural land and subsequent food production as the result of renewable energy projects;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to work collaboratively on policy that will find a balance between the development of renewable energy and protection of valuable agriculture lands.**

### **Member Background**

Albertans must ensure that the development of small and large scale renewable energy projects do not come at the price of losing productive agriculture lands. Without oversight as to where these developments may occur, the price of farmland will significantly increase, putting it out of reach for agriculture producers and into the hands of speculators who believe they can profit from the land rental rates being offered by the renewable energy companies.

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) approval process for renewable energy projects on private land currently has little to no regard for the rural municipalities' statutory plans or requirement for consultation with the Municipalities. Rural municipalities have historically been the stewards of long-term land use planning within municipal borders, through municipal development plans, land use bylaws and area structure plans. The creation and update of these plans include significant public consultation with residents, landowners, businesses, and our neighboring municipal partners. Most, if not all rural municipalities are proud to say agriculture producers are valued, and this is reflected in the focus on preservation of agriculture lands in all our statutory documents.

Mountain View County supports the provincial strategy of development of renewable energy and reductions in carbon emissions; however, it is imperative to learn from past mistakes, with the focus being on upfront development of resources with no consideration for the unintended or ignored long-term costs. Since the province retains full authority over land use planning with respect to renewable energy development, we also believe the Government of Alberta should be responsible for implementing policy to protect agriculture lands and find a balance to protect the two most important industries in Alberta: energy and agriculture.

The first step in this process is the collection and analysis of all pertinent data in order to provide a complete picture of the long-term costs and benefits. This cannot be another short-sighted approach to an issue without understanding and calculating the future consequences it brings.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Increased Resources for Commercial Vehicle Enforcement**

Stettler County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has consolidated commercial vehicle enforcement into the Alberta Sheriffs Branch; and

WHEREAS many rural Sheriffs offices are being closed; and

WHEREAS municipalities with community peace officers are seeing an increased burden related to commercial vehicle enforcement due to the lack of provincial commercial vehicle enforcement capacity in rural communities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to allocate more resources toward the Alberta Sheriffs Branch to ensure commercial vehicle enforcement continues in rural and remote communities.**

### **Member Background**

As rural Alberta is the key to Alberta's economy and resource development, protecting rural infrastructure is vital to the economic success of the whole province. The consolidation of the Sheriff and commercial vehicle enforcement branches has reduced resources available for protecting provincial infrastructure. Local community peace officers should not be responsible for protecting provincial infrastructure, but are forced into the role when no other enforcement occurs.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Small Scale Generation Regulation – Interconnection Challenges**

MD of Taber

*Endorsed by District 1*

WHEREAS Alberta's Micro-generation Regulation was implemented in January 2008 to allow individuals to generate electricity for their personal use while providing excess electricity to the grid; and

WHEREAS when the Micro-generation Regulation was passed, the Alberta Utilities Commission implemented Rule 24 to simplify approvals, interconnection and operating agreements between micro-generation customers and wire owners (utility companies); and

WHEREAS due to the effectiveness of Rule 24, the Alberta's micro-generation program has been very successful, resulting in the installation of 8,163 solar energy systems with a combined generation capacity of 122.6 **Megawatt** (MW) as of May 2022; and

WHEREAS the development of utility scale solar projects has greatly accelerated in Alberta with 18 projects totalling 892 MW of generation capacity completed between December 2017 and May 2022; and

WHEREAS the utility scale solar projects under development in Alberta require an average of 2.6 hectares of land per MW of solar generation capacity and average 130.5 hectares per project; and

WHEREAS the rapid pace of development of these projects is resulting in an increasing demand for land that is needed for agricultural production; and

WHEREAS the **Small Scale Generation Regulation** (SSGR) is a regulatory framework established in Alberta for the purpose of facilitating distribution-connected alternative and renewable generation sized to supply electricity to the grid; and

WHEREAS according to the Government of Alberta, the SSGR was created to fill a gap between micro-generation and large utility-scale renewable energy projects, to make it "easier for communities to develop their own renewable energy projects" and to provide a framework for community generation to enable individuals or local organizations to partner on small-scale renewable energy projects such as wind, biomass, hydro or solar that provide community benefits; and

WHEREAS the "community generation" designation within the SSGR includes a requirement to demonstrate the benefits a community receives from generation projects, such as revenues, local jobs, training opportunities, new social programs or new infrastructure; and

WHEREAS there are currently more than 170,000 inactive (suspended, abandoned or orphaned) oil and gas leases in Alberta and these leases occupy more than 133,000 hectares of land that is not available for other purposes;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to apply distribution and transmission connection timelines and study exemptions that are currently provided to micro-generation projects under Alberta Utility Commission Rule 24 to community generation projects under five Megawatts.**

### **Member Background**

In January 2020, the MD of Taber applied for funding through the Municipal Community Generation Challenge, a competitive program of the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC). On February 11, 2020, the MD of Taber received confirmation from the MCCAC that they were successful in their application to test the newly passed Small Scale Generation Regulation (SSGR) to develop two one-Megawatt (MW) distribution connected solar projects on abandoned oil and gas lease sites. The MCCAC provided \$2.1 million dollars to the MD of Taber and their participating project partners to complete this work.

Although there are suggested timelines for electrical distribution companies to provide connection for community generation (CG) projects, those timelines were not respected. Furthermore, the transmission

provider in the area required time consuming and expensive connection studies for any electricity that may have ultimately ended up entering their substations. Through the Alberta micro-generation program, for projects up to five MW in size, the distribution company is required to provide connection within legislated and enforceable timelines. Micro-generation proponents are also exempt from having to undertake and pay for transmission connection studies that are required for the SSGR/CG projects. Since micro-generation and SSGR/CG solar projects of the same size have very similar impacts on power flow within the utility grid, there is no technical reason for the large disparity in the cost of interconnection studies or approval timelines.

This initiative, if implemented successful, identified several objectives:

- Increase distributed solar generation to support seasonal irrigation power requirements
- Conserve land for agriculture
- Accelerate oilfield reclamation
- Energy storage to supplement wind and solar
- Employment and economic diversification
- Generate revenue for the municipality and three irrigation districts

If the Government of Alberta wishes to see broad scale adoption of the SSGR and repurposing of inactive oil and gas leases to solar generation, there must be additional consideration for ease of connection to the distribution and transmission grids.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

## **Improved Crop Insurance for Market Gardens**

Red Deer County

*Endorsed by District 2*

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WHEREAS market gardening is a growing industry producing fresh fruit and vegetables and marketing these crops directly to the consumer; and

WHEREAS market gardens are not able to access cost effective crop insurance to protect their investments; and

WHEREAS the future of market gardens is dependent on stable income;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta for cost effective crop insurance for market gardens.**

### **Member Background**

In the summer of 2022 numerous large storms passed through Alberta. Red Deer County made national news coverage as Highway 2 and the surrounding area was battered by hail, stranding motorists, damaging property and destroying crops. Market gardens were significantly impacted by devastating losses. Market garden producers have begun to reach out to their customers and governments to advocate for improved crop insurance. Crop insurance is available for market gardens; however, they are not eligible for subsidized crop insurance similar to insurance provided to other producers.

Market gardens are eligible for straight hail insurance if they are between one and 30 acres in size and include three or more crops. Crop insurance for market gardens is extremely expensive and some farmers may not qualify due to specific eligibility requirements. This is unlike other types of crop insurance with shared costs which the federal and provincial government contribute to the cost of premiums. Crop insurance with shared costs are typically for commercial grain and oilseed crops.

The lack of crop insurance for market gardens is a deterrent for producers to enter into and stay in the industry. Market gardens have become an important source of local produce. As such, market gardens have become the face of Alberta's agriculture industry in urban communities through their representation and local markets and prevalence in agricultural tourism. As market gardens grow so does the need for expanded subsidization of crop insurance to ensure that producers of all types and sizes can be successful in Alberta and contribute to Alberta's long history of agriculture.

<https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/news/red-deer-county-calls-for-more-insurance-support-for-market-gardeners/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/hailstorm-crop-insurance-1.6546693>

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.