

RMA Fall 2023 Submitted Resolutions

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

- 1-23F Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program Funding (*Thorhild County*)
- 2-23F Amendments to the *Municipal Government Act – Section 619* (*MD of Willow Creek*)
- 3-23F Minimum Standards for Adequate Ambulance Services in Rural Alberta (*MD of Taber*)
- 4-23F Provincial Downloading of Operating Costs for Deteriorating Provincially Owned Housing (*Northern Sunrise County*)
- 5-23F Municipal Involvement in Quasi-Judicial Agencies (*Leduc County*)
- 6-23F Expediting the Implementation of an Alberta Flood Regulation (*Woodlands County*)
- 7-23F Strategy for Management of Wildland Fires Outside Forest Protection Areas (*Parkland County*)
- 8-23F Implementation of Provincial Police Advisory Board (*Clearwater County*)
- 9-23F Review of Affordable Housing Funding Programs (*Wheatland County*)
- 10-23F Enhancing Home Care Services for Rural Residents in Alberta (*Wheatland County*)
- 11-23F Compensation Resulting from Regulatory Changes (*MD of Willow Creek*)
- 12-23F Growth Management Board Voluntary Membership (*Foothills County*)
- 13-23F Advancing Carbon Credit Utilization (*MD of Fairview*)
- 14-23F Provincial High-load Corridor Protection (*Leduc County*)
- 15-23F Province-Wide Regulations on E-scooters and Miniature Personal Electric Vehicles (*Strathcona County*)
- 16-23F Federal-Provincial Partnership to Counter the United States *Inflation Reduction Act* (*Westlock County*)
- 17-23F Sustainable Community Hospice Funding Model (*Clearwater County*)
- 18-23F Bee Package Imports and the Control of Varroa Mites (*Beaver County*)
- 19-23F Government of Alberta Ministry Changes (*MD of Peace*)
- 20-23F Post-COVID Bridging Support for Small and Medium Community Facilities and Agricultural Societies (*Smoky Lake County*)

21-23F **Engineering Accountability** (*County of Northern Lights*)

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

Resolution 1-23F

Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program Funding

Thorhild County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS municipally-maintained roads and bridges are vital for the transportation of goods and services related to the continuation of Alberta’s strong economy; and

WHEREAS Alberta continues to experience growth requiring constant improvement and new construction of aging municipally-controlled bridges; and

WHEREAS the cost to construct or replace roads and bridges form a significant portion of rural municipal infrastructure deficits, ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million per kilometer of road or bridge structure; and

WHEREAS the Local Road Bridge Program stream of the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program may be utilized to upgrade municipal bridges;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to substantially increase the funding available for the Local Road Bridge Program stream in the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program.

Member Background

Rural roads and bridges are not only vital to local communities but serve as important arteries to help Alberta’s economy grow by connecting natural resources to national and international transportation corridors. Rural municipalities manage the majority of Alberta’s roads (77% or 173,226km) and bridges/culverts (61% or 8,468 km). At a cost of between \$500,000 and \$1 million to construct one kilometer of road and a similar cost to construct a bridge or culvert, the costs of managing transportation infrastructure form a significant portion of rural municipal expenses. Many of these bridges are currently beyond their useful life.

Resource roads, local road bridges and community airports are critical to the viability of rural communities and Alberta’s industrial and resource development. The Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) provides rural municipalities with a dedicated funding source for this infrastructure and should remain adequately funded and accessible to rural municipalities. While the 2023-2024 provincial budget included a modest increase in the STIP program from \$35 to \$43 million, it still falls well short of the need for rural bridge and infrastructure funding. The Local Road Bridge Program stream of the STIP grant program averaged \$15.5 million in the previous two years.

Many rural municipalities work to properly monitor the age and condition of infrastructure and develop a long-term asset management plan for maintenance and replacement. To support continued long-term asset management practices and necessary infrastructure investment, appropriate provincial funding to enable rural municipalities to continue to manage and maintain infrastructure that supports the transportation network that keep Alberta’s economy and people moving. Given Alberta’s recent economic growth and the role of rural roads and bridges in supporting resource industries, STIP funding should be increased so that municipalities can continue to care for the majority of Alberta’s infrastructure, without increasing the financial burden on rural areas.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 2-23F

Amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* – Section 619

MD of Willow Creek

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) requires the preparation and adoption of planning documents such as intermunicipal development plans, municipal development plans, land use bylaws and area structure plans to ensure orderly, economical and beneficial development and use of land, unless specifically exempted; and

WHEREAS section 619(1) of the MGA allows a license, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) or Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) to prevail over municipal statutory plans, land use bylaws, development authority, and more; and

WHEREAS section 619(2) of the MGA mandates municipalities to approve development applications consistent with licenses or authorizations granted by provincial boards like the NRCB, ERCB, AER, AEUB, or AUC, thereby limiting municipal authority in land use decisions; and

WHEREAS there is no legislative requirement for the NRCB, ERCB, AER, AEUB and AUC to consider municipal land use planning bylaws put in place for the protection of productive agricultural land when these agencies approve confined feeding operations, electrical generation or transmission projects; and

WHEREAS section 8 of the South Saskatchewan Implementation Plan for Agriculture requires municipalities to delineate primary agricultural areas, curb the fragmentation and premature conservation of agricultural lands, guide non-agricultural development to suitable areas and minimize conflicts between intensive agricultural operations and incompatible land uses;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to amend Section 619 of the *Municipal Government Act* to state that decisions made by provincial regulators in granting licenses, permits, approvals and other authorizations under their jurisdiction must be consistent with municipal statutory land use planning related to the protection of productive agricultural lands, impacts on municipal infrastructure, existing land uses, and other possible local project impacts.

Member Background

Application approval processes for licenses, permits, approvals or other authorizations related to large scale development projects through the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) and Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) are regulated by specific rules and directives. For instance, the current approval process for the AUC reviews the social, economic, and environmental impacts of facility projects for power plants, substations, transmission lines, industrial system designations, hydro developments, and gas utility pipelines to determine if approval of a project is in the public interest.

The application includes a requirement to “summarize consultation with local jurisdictions (e.g., municipal districts, counties),” as part of the participant involvement program. According to the AUC this early consultation “may (but is not guaranteed to) lead to greater influence on project planning and what is submitted to the AUC for approval.” Formal submissions of outstanding concerns will be heard, understood, and considered; however, it is up to the AUC to decide whether to hold a hearing on the application(s). The AUC must hold a hearing if a concerned person can demonstrate that they have rights that may be directly or adversely affected by the AUC’s decision on the application. It is the purview of the AUC to issue a written decision of approval, denial, or approval with conditions. Therefore,

while municipal input is possible, the potential of the applicator or the AUC to disregard municipal input if considered irrelevant by their standards is unacceptable.

The other quasi-judicial agencies have similar processes. Application processes for pipelines, wells, processing plants and facilities, bitumen upgraders, oil sands mines, and coal mines are filed with the AER. Generally, the process requires a participant involvement program including the municipalities. While the potential for input exists, the municipality is treated like other stakeholders and not valued as holding local expertise. The NRCB approves natural resource projects and confined feedlot operations. The application process for natural resource projects includes a notice of application to invite public submissions. On the other hand, the confined feedlot operations applications fall under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA), which states that an approval officer must consider whether the application is consistent with municipal development plan land use provisions and must deny the application unless a variance may be granted. A requirement for consistency would reduce dissonance between the agencies and existing municipal statutory land use plans.

Previous efforts on the parts of municipalities, agricultural service boards, and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) have not garnered enough traction to precipitate further provision for municipal input and the preservation of productive agricultural lands. RMA has formed the RMA Committee on Quasi-Judicial Agencies (QJAC), which has engaged with RMA members, provincial quasi-judicial agencies, and other stakeholders. In addition, an RMA research report examining the concept of “public interest” and the role that Alberta’s quasi-judicial agencies have in upholding the public interest in relation to the industries they regulate is expected to be completed in Fall 2023. This report should provide RMA with evidence, analyses, and recommendations to continue to advocate for changes to section 619. This an effort to ensure municipal plans and local expertise is accepted and integrated, particularly as it relates to protecting agricultural land use, and to uphold municipal responsibility to comply with the South Saskatchewan Implementation Plan for Agriculture, *Weed Control Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, *Agricultural Pests Act*, and *Municipal Government Act* to direct weed and pest control, soil and water conservation programs, and to provide safe and viable communities.

RMA Background

9-22F: Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements

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.

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

21-22F: Loss of Agricultural Land to 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.

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

6-22S: Responsiveness of Service Delivery by Quasi-independent Agencies in Alberta

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta review the continued use of unelected, quasi-independent agencies for the administration and delivery of essential public services, with the results of the review published for public examination.

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

7-20F: Amendments to Municipal Government Act Section 619

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to amend Section 619 of the Municipal Government Act to clearly state that the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Energy Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or the Alberta Utilities Commission must consider municipal statutory land use planning related to the protection of productive agricultural lands when making decisions on licenses, permits, approvals and other authorizations under their jurisdiction.

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

Resolution 3-23F

Minimum Standards for Adequate Ambulance Services in Rural Alberta

MD of Taber

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta maintains responsibility for delivering emergency medical services (EMS); and

WHEREAS all Albertans deserve the same level of service and access to ambulance services; and

WHEREAS Alberta Health Services (AHS) has established varied target EMS response times, including 12 minutes for metro and urban areas, 15 minutes for communities with more than 3,000 residents, 40 minutes for rural communities under 3,000 residents, and 90 minutes for remote communities; and

WHEREAS rural Alberta communities, located outside urban areas and with populations fewer than 3,000, do not receive direct ambulance resources, including both personnel and equipment, under AHS service delivery, and

WHEREAS this lack of direct resources presents a significant risk of inadequate service provision; and

WHEREAS rural Alberta communities, outside of urban areas with populations less than 3,000, and that rely on volunteer services, face unique challenges in meeting minimum requirements and commitments essential to medical response; and

WHEREAS rural Alberta communities, outside of urban areas with populations less than 3,000, and that rely on volunteer services, find that ongoing training requirements and related costs become a significant impediment to retaining volunteers; and

WHEREAS the response time target for a life-threatening event is eight minutes for 50 percent of calls and 12 minutes for 90 percent of calls;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services ensure every area of Alberta has available ambulances with qualified emergency personnel, capable of providing response times that ensure lifesaving measures.

Member Background

Municipalities in rural Alberta rely on the Government of Alberta to provide adequate emergency medical services for the health and safety of our residents, in a way that promotes and supports the growth and stability of our province and our local communities.

Providing adequate service involves understanding the needs of each unique community and knowing the interconnectivity between surrounding communities to ensure a stable and sustainable service remains available for our residents. There are communities throughout southern Alberta, such as the Town of Vauxhall and Village of Foremost, served by volunteer ambulance service. These examples represent combined urban and surrounding rural populations that are just under the Alberta Health Services (AHS) rural 3,000 population category and are challenged with trying to maintain adequate ambulance service with success being linked to retaining essential volunteers. Volunteers in today's ambulance service struggle to maintain minimum standards that surround training and increasing demands related to volunteer services.

There is an important role for AHS to play in the provisioning of ambulance service in rural communities that includes supplying equipment, personnel, training, and systems that can support acceptable services delivery province wide.

According to the AHS mandate,¹ the *Regional Health Authorities Act* (RHAA)² charges AHS with responsibility to:

- promote and protect the health of the population in Alberta and work toward the prevention of disease and injury;
- assess on an ongoing basis the health needs of Albertans;
- determine priorities in the provision of health services in Alberta and allocate resources accordingly;
- ensure that reasonable access to quality health services is provided in and through Alberta;
- promote the provision of health services in a manner that is responsive to the needs of individuals and communities and supports the integration of services and facilities in Alberta.

Communities throughout Alberta, large or small, are made up of residents that look to the province in support of their health and safety, and even more so in the event of an emergency. The Government of Alberta has made many improvements over the years, with the exception of committing to provide reliable direct ambulance service to our smaller communities and surrounding areas. These communities are primarily rural and appear to have somewhat fallen between the categories. A review of rural and remote services is needed to identify these gaps in service and ensure that adequate resources and systems are put into in place to support communities now and into the future.

References:

¹ Government of Alberta (2010). *Alberta Health Services – Mandate and Roles*
<https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-ahs-mandate-roles.pdf>

² Government of Alberta (2022). Regional Health Authorities Act, RSA 2000, c. R-10 (RHAA)

RMA Background

1-21F: Emergency Medical Services Capacity and Service Delivery in Rural Alberta

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to immediately consult with municipalities to develop a plan to make urgently needed improvements to the capacity, delivery, and performance of the emergency medical services system.

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

6-22S: Responsiveness of Service Delivery by Quasi-independent Agencies in Alberta

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta review the continued use of unelected, quasi-independent agencies for the administration and delivery of essential public services, with the results of the review published for public examination.

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

Resolution 4-23F

Provincial Downloading of Operating Costs for Deteriorating Provincially Owned Housing

Northern Sunrise County

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS historically, the Government of Alberta has funded provincial housing maintenance and repairs; and

WHEREAS presently, 380 provincially owned housing units are deemed uninhabitable due to disrepair, according to the standards of core housing established by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and

WHEREAS these units will remain vacant until sufficient funding is provided to the housing authorities for their repair; and

WHEREAS the 2021-2022 Ministry of Seniors and Housing report acknowledges that 82% of their housing stock is in fair or poor physical condition; and

WHEREAS 10,750 lodge units, with an average building age exceeding 30 years, have been assigned to housing management bodies (HMBs) for operation; and

WHEREAS these units provide housing to the province's most vulnerable population; and

WHEREAS despite facing escalating costs due to unprecedented inflation, increased supply costs, utilities and carbon taxes, lodge operators have not received an increase in funding since 2018; and

WHEREAS funding allocation is determined by ministerial orders and the passing of the Government of Alberta's budget, rather than being negotiated and secured through contractual agreements; and

WHEREAS this arrangement exposes HMBs to unnecessary financial risk and pressure to deliver programs without a guarantee of resources to operate them;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to retain fiscal responsibility for all provincial housing and to increase the grants provided to housing management bodies for operation and maintenance; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocates to the GOA to ensure that municipalities and ratepayers are not held accountable for absorbing the operating and repair costs of these deteriorating provincially owned buildings.

Member Background

The Alberta Affordable Housing Review Panel released a final report in October 2020 with recommendations that envision more privatization of social housing with the Government of Alberta acting as a funder and regulator rather than an owner and operator of social housing. The report also identifies that the demand for social housing is expected to increase in the future, while also acknowledging that 82% of the province's social housing stock is in need of repair and maintenance.

The province's Affordable Housing Partnership Framework currently does not regulate and ensure that housing units sold to private companies will remain as non-market housing after 20 years and therefore the Government of Alberta is running the risk of eliminating affordable housing units in the future. The demand for housing will continue to rise

and the risk is that municipalities and ratepayers will have to absorb the costs of maintaining and operating social housing for seniors and those in need of housing.

With no additional funding from the Government of Alberta, the burden of increased costs relating to the program falls on all municipalities as municipal requisitions are responsible for funding the operating expenses of the Seniors Lodge program. Municipalities continue to see an annual increase to their requisitions from the housing management bodies (HMBs) in order to operate this program. This downloading of funding from the province to municipalities increases the financial burden, which creates extra pressures to sustain these programs.

Following the capital funding support of HMBs resolution that was passed at the 2023 RMA Spring Convention, a response was received from the Government of Alberta. They refer to a 2023/2024 Seniors Lodge Program Review that will be undertaken and advise the housing providers to “reach out to ministry staff to explore options for essential Capital Maintenance Renewal work”.

[Click here](#) to view the recent Housing Management Body Budget Survey completed in May 2023.

RMA Background

15-23: Capital Funding Support for Housing Management Bodies

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to increase funding to housing management bodies to alleviate the affordability crisis and provide funding for capital upkeep or replacement needed to sustain supportive living at senior lodges.

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

Resolution 5-23F

Municipal Involvement in Quasi-Judicial Agencies

Leduc County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta (GOA) has established a number of arms-length, quasi-judicial agencies, such as the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) and the Natural Resources Conservation Board; and

WHEREAS these quasi-judicial agencies act on behalf of the GOA and make decisions that impact the lives, property and environment of communities throughout Alberta; and

WHEREAS municipalities are not provided the opportunity to meaningfully engage in quasi-judicial agency-led project approval processes, with current engagement opportunities being limited to public hearings; and

WHEREAS quasi-judicial agencies do not respect or balance local considerations when reviewing project approval applications, including municipal land use bylaws, municipal development plans and zoning requirements; and

WHEREAS quasi-judicial boards give more weight to the applicant than the local municipality that is supposed to govern the land use in that area; and

WHEREAS residents do not understand quasi-judicial agency approval processes and often mistakenly go back to the local municipality for project-related information; and

WHEREAS little consideration is given to the accountability of these quasi-judicial agency-approved developments when they reach end of life or go bankrupt; and

WHEREAS recent interim information requirements added to AUC Rule 007, addressing agricultural land, viewsapes, and reclamation in renewable energy project applications are a first step towards better aligning project approvals with rural municipal priorities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta work with the Government of Alberta to ensure coordination and/or consideration between municipal land-use planning processes and bylaws and quasi-judicial agency approval processes, establish more meaningful engagement between local municipalities and quasi-judicial boards and agencies, and ensure legislative mechanisms and processes are put into place to hold agencies and the proponents accountable for reclamation of a site from the onset of a project.

Member Background

The addition of renewable energy developments is a relatively new issue for quasi-judicial boards that make decisions on these development applications. The boards and commissions are constantly striving to learn and improve their decision-making processes and decisions. We appreciate and commend the government, agencies and boards for their openness to hear input from local governments to improve these processes for the betterment of all Albertans that we collectively serve.

Leduc County has had limited positive engagement opportunities with quasi-judicial boards and agencies. In 2022, an applicant applied for a solar panel energy project in the County and approval processes went through the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). The land selected for the solar energy project was located on prime agricultural land. Leduc County recommended the proponent find land more suitable for a solar energy project, which would save the

prime agricultural land for agricultural activities. This feedback was not given proper consideration and the project went ahead as originally intended.

Leduc County's land use bylaw, municipal development plan and other relevant land-use planning documents were ignored throughout the process. Further, many upset residents contacted Leduc County due to dissatisfaction with the project and the land chosen for it. Administration had to repeatedly explain that, while the project was within municipal boundaries, the municipality was not the overriding authority.

Local municipal land use planning processes and bylaws need to be respected and considered. At a minimum, the local municipality needs to be included at the outset of the application process by being notified and given standing in the hearing.

Having one municipal member on the hearing board would balance provincial and municipal interests in the decision making for these developments. If a municipality is not on the hearing panel, then the municipality should be consulted first before residents are consulted. At this point, municipal land use – including the land use bylaw, municipal development plan – should be considered to make sure there is compatible land uses and that the development fits within the local plans.

Consideration also needs to be given when projects fail. Currently, municipalities are accountable for these sites when they fail, which is unfair given that municipalities are not involved in these projects from the onset. If a quasi-judicial agency such as the AUC or Alberta Energy Regulator approves a development, then that agency or company should be responsible and held accountable for the cleanup when a project fails.

Some possible solutions that would ensure meaningful coordination and consideration of municipal land use plans, municipal input and ensure accountability for reclamation may include but are not limited to:

- Having a municipal member on a hearing board to balance provincial and municipal interests in decision making for these developments.
- Using municipal land-use plans and bylaws as the base for decision making on developments.
- Contacting the municipality at the start of the application and case management process to see if the site is conducive to that type of development or if another site would be more suitable.
- Including the municipality at the outset of the application process by being notified and given standing in the hearing.
- Mandating that agencies must obtain input from a municipality before making a decision.

RMA Background

9-22F: Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements

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.

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

21-22F: Loss of Agricultural Land to 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.

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

6-22S: Responsiveness of Service Delivery by Quasi-independent Agencies in Alberta

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta review the continued use of unelected, quasi-independent agencies for the administration and delivery of essential public services, with the results of the review published for public examination.

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

7-20F: Amendments to Municipal Government Act Section 619

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to amend Section 619 of the Municipal Government Act to clearly state that the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Energy Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or the Alberta Utilities Commission must consider municipal statutory land use planning related to the protection of productive agricultural lands when making decisions on licenses, permits, approvals and other authorizations under their jurisdiction.

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

Resolution 6-23F

Expediting the Implementation of an Alberta Flood Regulation

Woodlands County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS several devastating floods have occurred in Alberta in recent years, resulting in significant economic and societal impacts, property damage, and environmental loss; and

WHEREAS long-term flood planning and mitigation strategies, formalized through effective flood regulations, are essential for building resilience against future flood risks and safeguarding Alberta's communities, properties, and natural resources; and

WHEREAS Alberta's existing regulatory framework does not sufficiently address flood prevention and mitigation; and

WHEREAS the *Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act* (the Act) received Royal Assent in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in 2013; and

WHEREAS the Act empowers the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations under multiple Acts to support improved floodway development, land use planning, emergency response, and address other flood-related issues and risks; and

WHEREAS none of the regulation-making powers allowed under the Act have been implemented to this point; and

WHEREAS executing the Act's regulation-making powers would fortify Alberta's defense against future floods; and

WHEREAS the Act seeks a holistic approach to flood management in Alberta, covering prevention, mitigation, emergency response, and recovery; and

WHEREAS the swift implementation of the regulation-making power afforded under the Act would enhance Alberta's resilience to flood risks, by enabling the development of robust floodplain maps, improving land-use planning, ensuring the construction of flood-resilient infrastructure, fostering public awareness and education related to flood risks, and instilling more confidence in flood resiliency among homeowners and businesses;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to develop and implement the regulations allowed under the *Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act*; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the GOA to coordinate an approach among relevant agencies and stakeholders to ensure swift regulation development and implementation, the allocation of sufficient resources and funding for infrastructure and public awareness, and a commitment to regular assessment and refinement of the regulations.

Member Background

In a proactive stance towards responsible development in flood-prone areas, Woodlands County engaged Northwest Hydraulic Consultants Ltd. (NHC) in June 2012. The purpose was to carry out a flood hazard identification study for areas near Whitecourt, encompassing portions of the Athabasca and McLeod Rivers. The study area included a short reach of the Athabasca River, upstream of the Athabasca-McLeod River confluence; the McLeod River, upstream of the confluence; and the Athabasca River, downstream of the confluence. However, the study did not include those areas within and alongside the Town of Whitecourt. The study was subsequently expanded in July 2013 to include

the confluence through the Town of Whitecourt under a separate contract funded by the former ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resources. While Woodlands County shouldered the financial burden for the study within its own boundaries, the combined findings were documented in the final report dated March 26, 2015. It was not until 2023 that the flood hazard identification maps, crafted in 2015, gained official approval from the Government of Alberta (GOA).

During this time the GOA amended the *Municipal Government Act* in December 2013 by enactment of Bill 27, *Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act*, providing for regulation making powers for controlling, regulating or prohibiting any use or development in a floodway; and a provision to exempt floodway development in municipalities with significant development already in a floodway. It has been 10 years and municipalities are still being impacted by the occurrence of floods and experiencing devastation of infrastructure and exorbitant cost to repair that infrastructure. Residents of Woodlands County affected by the flood hazard mapping, especially those owning land parcels identified within a floodway that are now restricted from development, along with owners of parcels in flood fringe areas (who are uncertain about development standards), continue to await clear guidance and assurances on permissible development within the identified flood hazard zones.

Strong flood regulations, coupled with proactive measures, will safeguard our communities, protect our environment, and ensure the long-term sustainability and wellbeing of Alberta.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 7-23F

Strategy for Management of Wildland Fires Outside Forest Protection Area

Parkland County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS Alberta Forestry and Parks is the principal agency responsible for wildfire management in the Forest Protection Area (FPA); and

WHEREAS municipalities located outside the FPA are responsible for the management of wildfires as per Section 7(1) of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act*, including all financial costs of suppression; and

WHEREAS wildfire seasons are growing increasingly longer and more intense, placing a significant strain on provincial and municipal wildfire resources; and

WHEREAS Alberta Forestry and Parks allocates priority to wildfire suppression efforts within the FPA, which can reduce or eliminate the allocation of wildfire suppression resources to regions outside the FPA during active fire seasons; and

WHEREAS wildfire suppression is a resource-intensive activity that requires specialized resources to effectively manage and suppress wildfires;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) engage with the Government of Alberta (GOA), Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis), and the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) to develop a long-term strategy for the resourcing and management of wildland fire events outside the Forest Protection Area (FPA); and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA collaborate with ABmunis, the AFCA, and the GOA to establish a working group consisting of municipal and provincial subject matter experts, elected officials, and senior municipal administrators to develop a long-term strategy for wildfire management outside the FPA.

Member Background

Alberta's wildland fire season is starting earlier, lasting longer, and affecting larger areas of Alberta than we have seen in the past. This increase in wildfire activity has been putting significant strain on Alberta's fire resources, both within and outside Alberta's Forest Protection Area (FPA).

Many municipalities located outside the FPA have seen an increase in wildfire activity, with several non-FPA municipalities experiencing multiple large wildfire events in recent years. While the Ministry of Forestry and Parks is the lead agency responsible for management and suppression of wildfires within the (FPA), Section 7(1) of the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* assigns responsibility for the management and suppression of wildfires outside the FPA to the municipality. Many municipalities outside Alberta's FPA operate with resource and budgetary limitations that impact their ability to sustain long-term action on wildfire events. Managing large wildfire events using paid-on-call or volunteer firefighters is not sustainable and will further contribute to the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges in Alberta's rural fire service.

While Alberta Wildfire will provide mutual aid assistance to non-FPA municipalities, this is based on resource availability as well as current and forecasted fire conditions within the FPA. During periods of high fire activity or danger within the FPA, the availability of critical, specially trained wildfire suppression crew resources can be a challenge. During Alberta's 2023 Wildfire Season, provincial resources were not available to provide the support

needed by municipalities; this includes technical specialists such as fire behaviour analysts as well as access to specialized wildland firefighting unit crews, heavy equipment groups, and incident management and field supervision (division supervisors, task force/strike team leaders) with adequate wildland fire line leadership experience to support safe tactical operations.

In 2022, the Rural Municipalities of Alberta passed resolution 6-22F in relation to the financial burden of providing emergency response services on crown lands. While not directly related, it does connect to the financial impacts of providing emergency response services (including fire suppression) on provincial lands.

In 2023, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association passed resolution 2023-04 to work collaboratively with appropriate government ministries, Alberta Municipalities, and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta to develop a long-term strategy for the management of large wildland fires outside the FPA.

This issue is not one isolated to one singular area of the province, and includes other key stakeholders such as:

- Alberta Wildfire
- FireSmart Alberta
- Alberta Emergency Management Agency
- Alberta Municipalities
- Alberta Fire Chiefs Association
- Stoney Nakoda-Tsuut'ina Tribal Council
- Blackfoot Confederacy
- Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations
- Metis Nation of Alberta

The issue of wildland fire management is a global issue, with extensive research and committee work occurring at the national and international levels to address the problem. There are many relevant sources of supporting information, including:

Canada's overburdened firefighters aren't getting enough support:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-canadas-overburdened-firefighters-arent-getting-enough-support/>

The Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/wfmmc-final-report-09-2023.pdf>

Resilience Strategies for Wildfire:

<https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/resilience-strategies-for-wildfire.pdf>

Roadmap for Wildfire Resilience: How to Get There from Here:

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/how-we-work/policy/wildfire-resilience-policy-roadmap/>

Provincially, there is a definite and time sensitive need to take immediate action. Possible strategies that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Increased funding and support for FireSmart programming across Alberta, including increased accessibility to non-FPA municipalities that have historically faced challenges in accessing FireSmart grant funding opportunities,
- Provincial funding for the establishment and ongoing operation of seasonal wildfire suppression crew resources, operated by non-FPA municipalities in strategic, wildfire prone areas across Alberta,

- The establishment of an advisory committee comprised of key stakeholders to guide the development of a long-term, sustainable strategy to mitigate wildfire risk and support effective management of large wildfires outside the forest protection area.

As wildfire seasons across Alberta grow in length and intensity, they are placing a substantial drain on municipal resources and budgets. Action is necessary to ensure Alberta’s municipalities are well positioned to protect Albertans from the increasing threat of wildfire.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 8-23F

Implementation of Provincial Police Advisory Board

Clearwater County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS the *Police Act* and *Police Amendment Act* provide that small and rural communities served by the RCMP under the Provincial Police Service Agreement will be represented on a provincial board that will make recommendations on province-wide policing priorities; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Interim Police Advisory Board (AIPAB) was created in 2020 to provide recommendations towards the implementation of an operational board to replace the interim board; and

WHEREAS on January 29, 2021, the AIPAB provided the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General with recommendations for the new Provincial Police Advisory Board's recruitment, governance structure and term; and

WHEREAS on December 22, 2021, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General acknowledged the intent to collaborate with AIPAB to establish the board, proposing a governance structure that aligns with a four-year term, consistent with the Police Funding Regulation expiring on March 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS to date, the Government of Alberta has not implemented the operational Provincial Police Advisory Board;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to implement the operational Provincial Police Advisory Board to ensure small and rural communities served by the RCMP under the Provincial Police Service Agreement are equally and fairly represented.

Member Background

The Police Funding Regulation (PFR) under the *Police Act* (PA) requires that every municipality be invoiced for RCMP policing services as per a cost formula described in the Regulation. More recently, changes to the PA came with a commitment from the Government of Alberta to establish measures to enhance police transparency, accountability and civilian involvement and to establish a provincial police advisory board to represent small and rural communities served under the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA).

Subsequently, the PA was amended by the *Police Amendment Act, 2022* (PAA). A key reform under this legislation is for greater collaboration with communities by mandating police to develop community safety plans and report annually on their progress (PAA Section 31(1)).

Another key reform in the legislation is enhanced civilian governance capabilities with the creation of formal governance bodies for all communities. Large communities served by the RCMP under a Municipal Police Service Agreement are represented by committees or commissions. Small and rural communities served under PPSA are represented by a new operational board, the Provincial Police Advisory Board (PAA Section 28.01).

To prepare for these legislative changes, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General established an interim board in 2020, called the Alberta Police Interim Advisory Board (APIAB) which was made up of members from the Alberta Association of Police Governance, Alberta Municipalities (formerly Alberta Urban Municipalities Association) and Rural Municipalities of Alberta, to represent municipalities served under the PPSA. The APIAB's mandate was to provide a report with recommendations on provincial policing priorities, RCMP 'K' Division multi-year financial plan, and a governance structure and scope for the new operational board by January 31, 2021.

Upon receipt of the completed report, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General indicated the intent for the ministry to work with the AIPAB to implement the operational board within the context of the Minister's governance decisions. As noted in the Minister's correspondence, AR48941, "...the operational board would be in place for a four-year term

to align with the five-year period of the *Police Funding Regulation* (PFR). The interim and operational board were intended to be in place during the same five-year period as the PFR, and to have the board's purpose and existence reviewed along with the police funding model and other PFR provisions prior to the end of the PFR five- year term.”

The PFR is set to expire March 31, 2025, and yet, to date, this intent has not been filled.

While Clearwater County certainly applauds the province’s efforts to date, we strongly encourage the Government of Alberta to move forward with establishing the Provincial Police Advisory Board without delay.

[Click here](#) to view the APIAB report and the Minister’s associated correspondence.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 9-23F

Review of Affordable Housing Funding Programs

Wheatland County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS the current application process for the Affordable Housing Partnership Program requires municipalities to commit significant work and financial resources to unique projects without the assurance of receiving grants; and

WHEREAS municipalities and organizations that are partially funded by municipal requisitions (such as housing management bodies) have the responsibility to ensure the prudent use of funds derived from taxation from municipal ratepayers; and

WHEREAS Alberta's expansive geography presents distinct rural challenges, especially for seniors wishing to age within their communities where family often plays a pivotal caregiving role; and

WHEREAS the unpredictable nature of the application process results in wasted time, resources, and financial commitments, along with frustrated community expectations when grants are not received; and

WHEREAS the current process may hinder municipalities' capability to plan and execute large capital purchases effectively;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to review the application process for the Affordable Housing Partnership Program and any future affordable housing funding programs to minimize financial commitments that municipal applicants are required to make to a project before the grant funding is confirmed; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the GOA to use a data-driven allocation model to determine funding priorities, incorporating a distinct rural-focused stream within this system; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the GOA to create scalable, replicable modular designs for affordable housing projects that could be utilized by housing management bodies for approved projects.

Member Background

In Alberta, municipalities are at the forefront of addressing housing needs, emphasizing the creation of unified communities through various housing initiatives. This includes housing needs for all age groups and often involves collaboration with entities like housing management bodies. Given their central role in delivering housing projects, it is pertinent to acknowledge their partial funding through municipal requisitions, directly derived from municipal taxation.

The Affordable Housing Partnership Program, in its current form, is a “double-edged sword.” While it offers potential avenues for housing solutions, the associated unpredictability of the grant system is a pressing concern. Municipalities often find themselves in a precarious position, forced to earmark resources and navigate bureaucratic complexities, all while operating in a cloud of funding uncertainty.

Projects demand considerable resources and financial investments upfront, without any guarantee of obtaining critical provincial or federal grants. Housing management boards have historically spent funds on repeated business cases and needs assessments that utilize publicly available data. Because the application process requires a detailed budget to be submitted, it requires a housing body to hire numerous professional service consultants including project management, construction management and architectural firms to develop project design and the corresponding budget. The preference of “construction ready” applications further exacerbates the issue.

This approach is fiscally strenuous, forcing municipalities to allocate substantial resources without the certainty of external funding. The uncertainty does not just strain budgets; it also places a cloud over long-term strategic planning for community development.

Another dimension to this challenge is community dynamics. When housing projects are publicized or initiated, they set high community expectations. Any subsequent delay or cancellation of these initiatives due to funding shortfalls can lead to significant community disappointment. The result of this causes an erosion of trust in municipal endeavors, impacting community morale and perception.

The repercussions are often subtly but significantly felt by municipal ratepayers. Their tax contributions form the backbone of these projects, and uncertainties in project fruition place their contributions in a precarious position. For many ratepayers, the local housing projects are more than just infrastructure; they represent hopes for community growth, stability, and prosperity.

A streamlined and predictable grant application process for housing projects in Alberta is paramount. This will not only ensure efficient administrative processes but also foster community trust by reducing uncertainties surrounding project funding and realization. The benefits of such a revision would resonate through the province, offering municipalities a clearer pathway to housing development while aligning with community expectations and fiscal responsibilities.

In light of the pressing need to expand affordable housing options in Alberta, it is imperative that we take a page from the playbook of Premier Peter Lougheed's era of efficient hospital construction. During that time, Alberta saw significant capital investment in healthcare facilities, with a focus on streamlined design that was replicated in about 20 builds across various communities. This standardization facilitated timely approval of construction-ready projects, eliminating the need to expend tax dollars on multiple sets of pre-design, schematic design, design development, and architectural construction documents for each new facility. We are requesting applying similar methodology to affordable housing project construction. Utilizing such a process could not only save millions of dollars per project, but it could also expedite construction timelines and slash bureaucratic red tape surrounding funding allocation. As we consider adopting a similar approach, it is crucial that extensive engagement be conducted to ensure that the new scalable modular designs meet the diverse and evolving needs of Albertans, now and into the future.

In conclusion, by revisiting and refining the Affordable Housing Partnership Program's application process, Alberta can bolster housing initiatives, enhance community trust, and ensure prudent fiscal management across its municipalities. It is a step towards a more stable, transparent, and community-centered housing future.

RMA Background

15-23S: Capital Funding Support for Housing Management Bodies

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to increase funding to housing management bodies to alleviate the affordability crisis and provide funding for capital upkeep or replacement needed to sustain supportive living at senior lodges.

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

12-22F: Restore Grants-in-Lieu of Taxes for Public Housing Management Authorities

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).

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

Resolution 10-23F

Enhancing Home Care Services for Rural Residents in Alberta

Wheatland County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS rural Alberta’s population is aging, and the demand for healthcare services is growing correspondingly; and

WHEREAS rural residents face unique challenges in accessing home care services, including geographical barriers, limited availability of healthcare professionals, and lack of specialized care; and

WHEREAS Alberta Health Services (AHS), through the Resident Assessment Instrument for Home Care (RAI-HC), designates individuals needing home care into one of six categories: acute, rehabilitation, long-term supportive, end of life, maintenance, and wellness; and

WHEREAS home care services may be provided by AHS or contracted providers; and

WHEREAS many Alberta home care patients have unmet care plans and service needs, especially concerning housekeeping, grocery assistance, bathing, and therapies, indicating that more comprehensive services are needed beyond traditional health supports; and

WHEREAS there is an increasing reliance on for-profit providers in Alberta's rural areas, which deviates the standard set for quality of care; and

WHEREAS the current funding model for home care services in rural Alberta is insufficient to meet the needs of the aging population, leading to a gap in healthcare provision and impacting the quality of life;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to enhance home care services for rural residents by increasing funding, improving accessibility, implementing innovative care models such as community-based care tailored for rural settings, and other means.

Member Background

Rural Alberta is witnessing a significant increase in its aging population, resulting in a rising demand for home care services. As this demographic trend continues, the urgency to address the issue becomes inevitable. Rural residents face a distinct set of challenges when accessing these services, such as geographical barriers, a scarcity of healthcare professionals, and a shortage of specialized care.

The foundation of the problem lies in the fact that home care is not entirely insured under the *Canada Health Care Act* (CHA). Depending on the province's commitment, the eligibility for publicly provided home care services varies. In recent history, the annual budget increments for Alberta's home care barely kept pace with inflation or population growth, increasing at a rate of just 1.4% per year. Although the 2023 budget has seen a 15% uplift, a significant portion is directed towards capital projects.

A 2019 MNP report titled *Including Quality of Life for Residents in Facility-Based Care* emphasized the inefficiencies in the current system, pointing out Albertans' prolonged stays in higher levels of care while awaiting transfer to an appropriate care facility. Such inefficiencies result in higher hospitalization rates for conditions treatable outside hospital settings. Much of this challenge arises from a lack of suitable home or community care facilities outside of the primary hospital establishments.

A concerning trend in Alberta is the increasing reliance on for-profit providers, especially in many rural areas. Such providers often prioritize profitability by catering to clients with less complex needs, sidelining communities with high service costs, paying lower wages, resisting unionization, and under-investing in worker training. As a result, seniors, who constitute roughly 70% of home care patients, are often left with compromised care plans that include late or missed appointments and rushed care.

Further emphasizing the gravity of the situation, the MNP Senior's Housing Study of 2021, *Improving Quality of Life for Residents in Facility-Based Continuing Care*, developed an integrated financial model to estimate the cost implications of the current care system. With care spaces anticipated to grow from 69,732 in 2020 to 112,960 by 2030, operating costs could skyrocket to \$1.8 billion annually by 2030, with capital costs reaching \$4.9 billion. Significant savings could be realized by enhancing home care service hours, thereby reducing the dependency on long-term care facilities.

Given the projections, it is evident that the present provincial model for home care services is falling short, especially for rural Alberta. The Rural Health Services Review by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Alberta Division reiterated the necessity for enhanced home care supports for the elderly in these areas. A particularly poignant challenge is the separation of elderly couples due to care requirements, leading to emotional distress during times when familial support is of utmost importance.

Considering the escalating demands, there is a pressing need to revisit and revamp the current model, placing a higher emphasis on home care services. This would allow seniors to remain in their familiar environments, respecting their wishes to age in their homes, while also addressing the heartbreaking issue of couples being separated.

The ramifications of this issue extend beyond the immediate need for enhanced care. Stakeholders, ranging from healthcare providers to senior advocacy groups and families, are deeply affected. Rural municipalities, in particular, are feeling the pressure as they fund housing management bodies in their regions. A failure to innovate could place a heavier burden on municipal resources. However, by proactively addressing these challenges, not only can seniors receive better care, but potential financial savings could also benefit municipal ratepayers.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 11-23F

Compensation Resulting from Regulatory Changes

MD of Willow Creek

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the *Historical Resources Act* states that “the property in all archaeological resources and paleontological resources within Alberta is vested in the Crown in right of Alberta”; and

WHEREAS adoption of legislation by the Government of Alberta can impact private property rights and may increase certain costs related to developing natural resources on private property; and

WHEREAS changes to the *Historical Resources Act* by the Government of Alberta have resulted in increased costs to private property owners who wish to develop gravel aggregate resources; and

WHEREAS the legislation and policy changes made to the *Historical Resources Act* were made without widespread public consultation or knowledge, and

WHEREAS the legislation and policy changes within the revised *Historical Resources Act* resulted in the establishment of a Historic Resource Value Designations applicable to all public and private lands in Alberta; and

WHEREAS the designation of lands as having high historic resource value imposes on property owners unforeseen costs and substantial financial risks for projects requiring Historical Resources Impact Assessments and approval from Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women; and

WHEREAS expanding existing gravel pits beyond five hectares may necessitate *Historical Resource Act* approval, incurring significant costs for landowners through mandated Historical Resources Impact Assessments, even with prior disturbances in the immediate expansion area; and

WHEREAS the additional costs resulting from the requirements under the revised *Historical Resources Act* have, in some cases, made the expansion of the gravel pit financially unviable; and

WHEREAS the Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights made six recommendations pertaining to its mandate including “That the Government [of Alberta] develop a comprehensive compensation structure by which owners of real property are compensated if regulatory changes result in the removal of reasonable uses of real property”; and

WHEREAS Part 5, Section 50 (1) of the *Historical Resources Act* states, that “The Minister may authorize the payment of compensation in accordance with the regulations to any person who has suffered loss as the result of the application of this Act”;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to implement a mechanism that will require a review of all existing and future legislation to determine negative financial impacts to private property; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request the GOA to implement recommendation six from the Special Committee on Real Property Rights, and that private property owners impacted by the changes to the *Historical Resources Act* be compensated.

Member Background

The Historical Resources Management Branch (HRMB) of Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women administers matters related to historical resources including archeological resources in Alberta.

Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women Land Use Procedures Bulletin for Surface Materials *Historical Resources Act* (HRA) Compliance Section B requires that applicants must apply for *Historical Resource Act* approval for all proposed surface materials developments over 5.0 hectares in size. At the ministry's discretion, a Historical Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA) may be required.

For surface material operations five hectares or larger on public land or Class 1 pits as defined in the Code of Practice for Pits on private land applicants must apply for HRA approval through Alberta Culture's online permitting and approval system for ALL proposed surface materials developments over five hectares in size. Development activities cannot proceed until HRA approval has been obtained.

At the Government of Alberta's discretion, activities that are targeted for lands that will, or are likely to, contain significant historic resource sites MAY require the conduct of HRIA prior to the onset of development activities.

A copy of the *Historical Resources Act* approval document must be included with the Conservation and Reclamation Business Plan that is submitted to Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. This plan is mandatory for registration of a gravel pit under the Code of Practice.

In 2021, during the application stage to expand an existing gravel pit, the Municipal District of Willow Creek undertook an archaeology survey as part of a Stage 1 Historical Resources Impact Mitigation review which is a requirement of the HRIA. This was completed by the developer at a cost of \$22,889.

During the review of the lands upon where the existing gravel pit was located it was determined that the 'Listing of Historical Resources' index described the land as having Historic Resources Value (HRV) of five. Given that lands with an HRV of five are considered to have "high potential" but do not contain known historic resource sites, there is a requirement to seek HRA approval/clearance. However, Section 31 of the *Historical Resources Act* requires that anyone who discovers a historic resource during the course of development must notify Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women for direction on the most appropriate action.

Through the HRIA a historical resource site was newly discovered consisting of heated stones and stone chips. It was determined that additional archaeological work would be required which would consist of excavation of an area approximately 80m² with work expected to take approximately 14 days. The cost for this work was expected to be \$139,941.51. Following the completion of the required field work an interim report would be issued summarizing the results of the HRIM fieldwork which would be provided to the HRMB that would guide their regulatory review of the gravel pit expansion application and provide the basis for the regulatory response which may include a *Historical Resources Act* approval or alternatively the issuance of a Stage 2 Historical Resources Impact Mitigation study which would require an unknown amount of additional archaeology work at an unknown additional cost. This results in a considerable risk to the landowner.

The Historical Resources Management Branch Schedule requirements states "depending on the results of the Stage 1 investigation, Stage 2 investigation may be required." This caveat is intended by the HRMB to reserve the possibility that during the required fieldwork materials may be found that warrant additional work however this placed a significant and unknown risk to the municipality and the landowner in terms of cost and as such the expansion of the application to expand the gravel pit did not proceed.

As a result of the requirements of the Historical Resource Management Branch substantial costs already spent by the Municipal District and the landowner on the application process were lost and more significantly scarce gravel resources immediately adjacent to a working gravel pit have been permanently sterilized from future development and use.

In June 2022, the Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights made six recommendations pertaining to its mandate including recommendation six: “That the Government develop a comprehensive compensation structure by which owners of real property are compensated if regulatory changes result in the removal of reasonable uses of real property.” In this case, the private landowner has lost an estimated \$250,000 in revenue as the aggregate cannot be mined without completing the \$139,941.51 HRIA. Depending on the HRIA’s findings there may be a requirement to complete more assessments. Furthermore, as a result of the Act, the municipality’s service delivery cost to the community has increased as aggregates now need to be hauled further from alternative gravel pits to service the local roads.

Historical Resource Value (HRV)

- HRV 1: contains a World Heritage site or a site designated under the HRA as a Provincial Historic Resource
- HRV 2: deactivated (formerly used to designate a Registered Historic Resource **(eliminated in 2019 as part of the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act)**)
- HRV 3: contains a significant historic resource that will likely require avoidance
- HRV 4: contains a historic resource that may require avoidance
- HRV 5: high potential to contain a historic resource

Maps of Southern Region: [Listing of Historic Resources \(alberta.ca\)](#)

Blue areas on the map indicate a Historical Resource Value of 5 which results in a requirement for approval from the Alberta Government on surface materials developments over 5 hectares. This process holds the potential for Alberta Culture to order additional work as a condition of its approval at the landowner’s cost.

Note that the HRV 5 follows every river, stream or major coulee feature in southern Alberta: an area where gravel resources are prominently found.

Historical Resource Impact Assessment Process: <https://www.alberta.ca/historic-resource-impact-assessment.aspx>

If an activity is likely to result in the alteration of, damage to or destruction of a historic resource, the person or company undertaking the activity may be required by the province to:

- conduct a Historic Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA)
- submit a report of the HRIA results
- avoid any historic resources endangered by activity
- mitigate potential impacts by undertaking comprehensive studies
- [document historic structures](#)
- [consult with First Nations](#)

Project-specific requirements are issued in response to a [Historic Resources Application](#), but all assessments must comply with some standard conditions.

See the following Standard Conditions document for details: [Standard Conditions under the Historical Resources Act](#)

Alberta Historic Resources Management Branch – Listing of Historic Resources (Map): [Listing of Historic Resources \(alberta.ca\)](#)

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 12-23F

Growth Management Board Voluntary Membership

Foothills County

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has mandated growth management boards (GMBs) in the Edmonton and Calgary metropolitan regions; and

WHEREAS the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) states that the purpose of a GMB is to provide for integrated and strategic planning for future growth in municipalities; and

WHEREAS the MGA states that Alberta's municipalities, governed by democratically elected officials, are empowered to provide responsible and accountable local governance; and

WHEREAS under the MGA, rural municipalities have equal rights to make land use decisions and pursue economic development; and

WHEREAS mandatory GMBs introduce a fourth level of unelected government, creating significant additional layers of bureaucracy which cause delays and impede economic development, investment opportunities, and job creation; and

WHEREAS mandatory GMBs use a double-majority governance structure and are empowered to overrule decisions made by democratically elected municipal governments; and

WHEREAS the Edmonton- and Calgary-region GMBs diminish local government autonomy and provide little or no value to residents of member municipalities, particularly rural residents, whose democratic rights are greatly reduced as a result of the GMBs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the Government of Alberta (GOA) remove mandatory growth management boards (GMBs) from the *Municipal Government Act*; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should the GOA fail to abolish GMBs, the RMA advocate to amend the MGA (and the Calgary and Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulations) to change the membership in GMBs from mandatory to voluntary.

Member Background

Section 708.011 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) mandates GMBs for the Edmonton and Calgary regions. The purpose of GMBs is to provide for integrated and strategic planning for future growth in municipalities through regional Growth Plans. The current Regional Growth Plans and Regional Evaluation Frameworks (REFs) require that new statutory plans in member municipalities be approved by the GMB in order to come into effect.

The mandatory nature of the GMBs, coupled with the weighted urban vote at the board table, ensures that urban municipalities can control future development in rural Alberta. There is no requirement to ensure that the rural objections are heard as they can simply be outvoted. The GMBs have approved regional growth plans despite the rural objection to these plans. Now the GMBs are implementing these plans, regardless of the continued objection of the rural municipalities.

If the membership of GMBs was made voluntary, municipalities would participate of their own volition. The GMBs would then have to ensure that their work provides value to all participants in the region. Currently both GMBs are planning to

requisition member municipalities for funds to run their operations and pay consultants for their project work. When the rural municipalities vote to not support a project moving forward, they are overruled by the urban municipalities at the board table. Now the rural municipalities will be forced to pay for the projects that they did not wish to undertake. This governance imbalance allows a GMB to pursue policies and directions that are in the best interests of cities, at the expense of the surrounding rural municipalities.

Rural municipalities fully acknowledge the benefit of working together with our urban neighbours both inter-municipally and regionally. Regional cooperation is important to efficiently provide services to residents in a fair and equitable manner, to responsibly manage land, and to seek opportunities for economic development. There are multiple examples of joint service delivery and intermunicipal planning throughout the province that have achieved success because municipalities were equals in their negotiations and had respect for one another. Under a system where membership in a GMB is mandatory, the weighted urban voting results in there being no need find solutions that work for everyone. The mandatory nature of the GMBs allows the urbans to ignore the rural perspective by simply outvoting it.

At the current time, GMBs are only mandatory for the Calgary and Edmonton regions. However, other areas of the province that are experiencing growth, such as the Red Deer and Grande Prairie areas, could find themselves in a similar position in the future. If this problematic governance structure is not repealed, rural residents in many areas of Alberta could also be forced into overly bureaucratic and undemocratic GMBs which privilege the interests of urban dwellers over rural residents. All municipalities should be deeply concerned as GMBs create regional uncertainty which impacts economic development.

There are multiple tools in the MGA that could be used by municipalities working together to achieve mutually beneficial servicing arrangements, cost sharing, and effective land use planning. These tools include intermunicipal development plans, intermunicipal collaboration frameworks, master shared services agreements, intermunicipal off-site levies, intermunicipal business licensing, and the implementation of a suite of arm's length governance and intermunicipal service delivery models. The oversight of mandatory GMBs pits urban against rural in an expensive, inefficient, and undemocratic governance structure that is detrimental to rural Albertans.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 13-23F

Advancing Carbon Credit Utilization

MD of Fairview

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS there are limited incentives to offset one's carbon footprint, with the main option being loans for home energy efficiency improvements; and

WHEREAS numerous natural assets including trees, grasses, shrubs, bushes, algae, cereal crops, forage crops, fruit, vegetables, and flowers have not been maximized for their potential in carbon capture, which could contribute to a greener environment; and

WHEREAS leveraging these resources can assist municipalities, non-profits, citizens, and provincial/territorial governments in offsetting their carbon footprint expenses;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the governments of Canada and Alberta for the creation of carbon credits/refunds priced equivalently to carbon charges, for all forms of plant life; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA share this resolution with all municipal associations in Canada and invite them to advocate collaboratively on this issue.

Member Background

The price for carbon is rapidly one of the greatest threats against the affordability to operate or survive for municipalities, non-profits, businesses, and Canadians. With no other options available to these entities other than loans to make their buildings more energy efficient or government rebate checks that cover only a fraction of the cost that most pay into the carbon tax, are we really going to make a greener environment for future generations?

The creation of carbon credits for trees, grasses, shrubs, algae, cereal crops, forage crops, fruit, and vegetables-would allow all parties to offset their carbon footprint, lower the cost of living, while enhancing the standard of living through the creation of green spaces instead of concrete jungles.

Furthermore, it would emphasize the symbiotic relationship between humans and the earth and show that Canada, with its vast areas of green spaces, would be carbon neutral without the need to implement more carbon price increases.

RMA Background

19-23S: Non-Profit Exemption from Federal Fuel Charge

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Canada to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act to allow registered non-profit organizations to apply for an exemption certificate from the federal fuel charge; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate for the Government of Canada to meet their previous mandate of support for registered non-profit organizations by allowing them to access a portion of the direct proceeds from the federal fuel charge to fund their increasing operating expenses.

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

16-22F: Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for Agriculture Under the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*

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.

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

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.

Resolution 14-23F

Provincial High-Load Corridor Protection

Leduc County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has designated several provincial highways as high-load corridors; and

WHEREAS high-load corridors have had overhead utility lines raised or buried to accommodate loads up to nine meters high unless otherwise noted; and

WHEREAS high-load corridors allow goods and services to travel quickly and efficiently throughout the province; and

WHEREAS high-load corridors are essential for businesses transporting over-dimensional loads and significantly contribute to the local, regional and provincial economy; and

WHEREAS introducing additional access points to these designated highways can impair their functionality, impede the movement of over-dimensional loads, and result in additional costs to move loads and products throughout the province; and

WHEREAS industries including manufacturing, farming, distribution, energy and natural resources rely on roads that are not restricted by weight and dimensions; and

WHEREAS to continue to grow industry, intensive agriculture, distribution and manufacturing in Alberta, the Government of Alberta must ensure coordinated planning to expand its transportation infrastructure and protect existing high-load and economic corridors;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to collaborate with municipalities to protect and coordinate the provincial high-load corridor network.

Member Background

Alberta has a network of highways designated as “high load corridors.” These highways have had the overhead utility lines raised to accommodate loads up to nine meters high. While the impacted highways are all under provincial jurisdiction, many intersect with municipal roadways. As municipalities continue to grow, there is a risk that municipal needs to access provincial highways, including those designated as high load corridors, may increase, and these new intersections and traffic control infrastructure could result in reduced traffic flow and additional potential risks for oversized loads using the corridors.

Many rural municipalities are home to economic corridors that are integral to new and existing businesses and industries in the province; the protection and coordination of these corridors is a priority. An example is Highway 625 — a designated provincial high-load corridor — runs through Leduc County into the City of Beaumont.

This high-load corridor provides an integral service to businesses in Nisku and the surrounding region. The corridor allows businesses to move over-dimensional and heavy loads quickly and efficiently in and out of the Nisku Business Park to major industry in the region and province.

The City of Beaumont is currently completing a functional planning study for its forthcoming Innovation Park Area Structure Plan (ASP). Within the ASP is the addition of an access point onto Highway 625. Traffic flow is important to ensure over-dimensional loads are not impeded or delayed as it has a significant economic impact on industry and

regular traffic. The traffic signals and/or infrastructure required to enforce an additional direct access to Highway 625 from the ASP area will add to the incremental degradation of the performance of Highway 625 as an Arterial (Level 2) and high load corridor and would have significant and lasting impacts on the movement of over dimensional loads within the region and interprovincially.

Additional access points onto high-load corridors have significant and lasting impacts on the movement of over dimensional and heavy loads. This also impacts industry in Nisku, Alberta's Industrial Heartland and the provincial energy industry, resulting in additional costs to move loads in and out of Nisku and a slowdown of economic growth in the region.

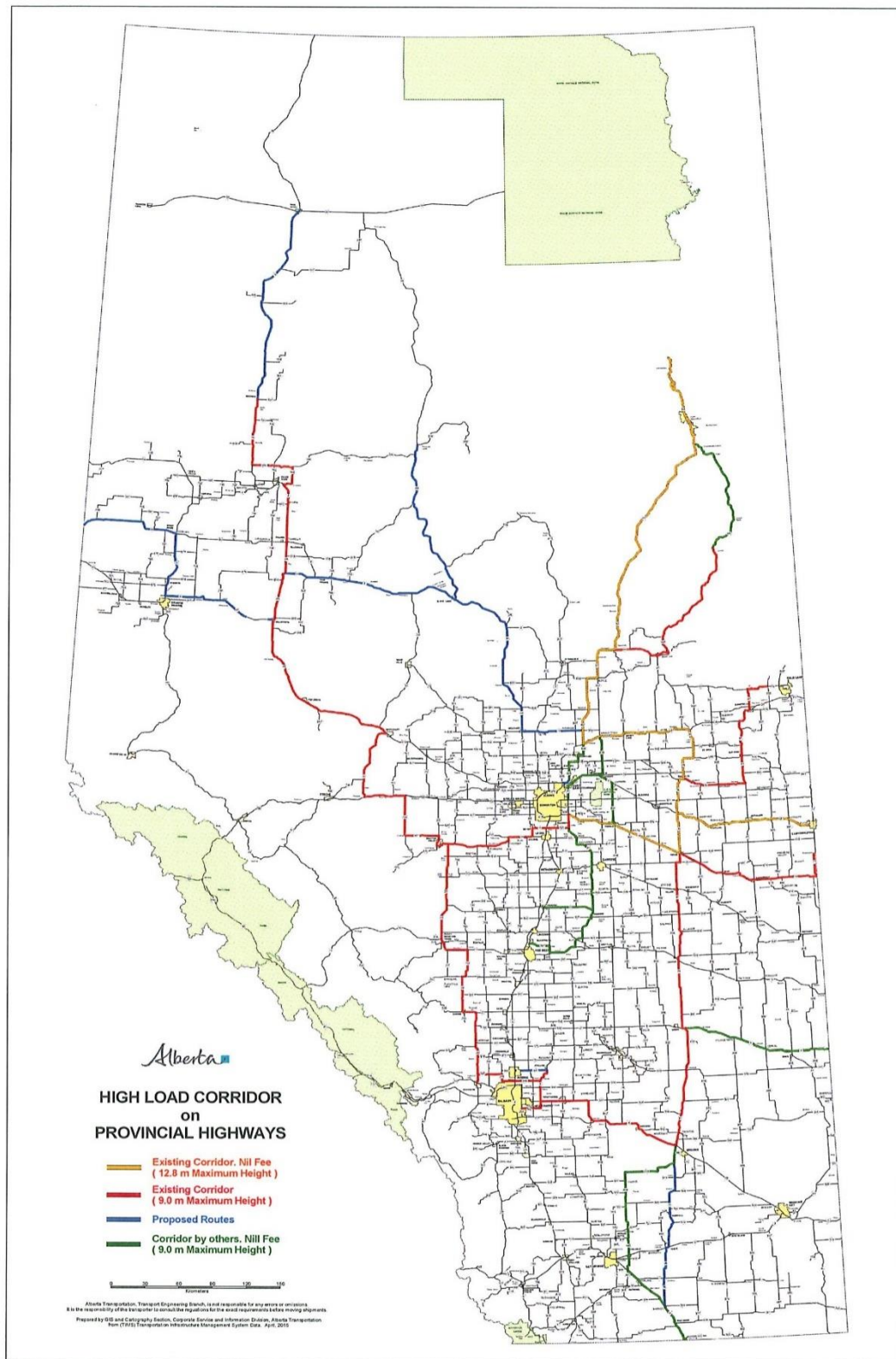
Leduc County and the City of Beaumont have had ongoing discussions about the City of Beaumont's forthcoming Innovation Park ASP, including the impacts an additional access point will have on industrial business in the region.

The Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (IRTMP) was developed by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB). One of the recommendations in the IRTMP was to complete a South Leduc Regional Network Plan to plan the current and future major transportation corridors required between the City of Edmonton and Glen Park Road to accommodate the current and projected demands in the southern quadrant of the metropolitan region, including Edmonton International Airport (YEG) and its cargo hub.

In March 2022, Leduc County, the City of Leduc and the EMRB met with Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors (ATEC) and recommended that the South Leduc Network Plan be prioritized by ATEC. At the time, ATEC shared that work will be starting on the Edmonton Regional Network Study, and the South Leduc Network Plan would be part of that study instead of the IRTMP.

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridor's Edmonton Regional Network Study should include the South Leduc Network Plan, as this would ensure a comprehensive and coordinated transportation plan that would facilitate economic growth in the region.

Attachment: High Load Corridor on Provincial Highways map — Government of Alberta



RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 15-23F

Province-Wide Regulations for E-Scooters and Miniature Personal Electric Vehicles

Strathcona County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS e-scooters and miniature personal electric vehicles are sold and readily available, but currently may only be legally used on private property that is not classified as a highway unless an exemption is in place; and

WHEREAS under the *Alberta Traffic Safety Act* and its regulations, “highways” include sidewalks and any areas, public or private, typically accessible for vehicle passage or parking; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has the authority to modify the *Alberta Traffic Safety Act* and its regulations to establish province wide regulations and requirements that apply to e-scooters and miniature personal electric vehicles; and

WHEREAS shared-use e-scooter vendors can already operate shared-used programs that allow customers to rent and ride e-scooters by applying for an exemption permit under the *Alberta Traffic Safety Act*; and

WHEREAS this option is unavailable to the general public; and

WHEREAS a lack of consistent province-wide regulation of e-scooters and miniature personal electric vehicles has caused the development of varied approaches across municipalities that may serve to confuse the public about acceptable use of e-scooters;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to engage with municipalities and the public to develop consistent province-wide regulations relating to the operation and personal use of e-scooters and miniature personal electric vehicles.

Member Background

Strathcona County is requesting an opportunity to support local citizens and economy through the review and acceptance of certain prohibited personal miniature vehicles, such as electric scooters, electric skateboards, personal transporters such as Segways, hoverboards, and monowheels. Currently, private companies have acquired exemptions to operate rental businesses in several municipalities to facilitate the use of electric scooters under specific parameters.

In recognition of the readily available purchase of these various devices, municipalities and police are experiencing challenges in accommodating a growing demand for this technology. While certainly more of an urban focused issue, the issues remain for rural municipalities, even if to a smaller degree. As municipalities seek green, safe, and cost-effective alternative modes of travel, the acceptance and regulation of such devices will be a valuable and progressive step forward. Given that this review would impact the entire province, RMA, representing Alberta’s rural municipalities, is a natural conduit to lobby the respective government for support on this initiative.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 16-23F

Federal-Provincial Partnership to Counter the United States *Inflation Reduction Act*

Westlock County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS the agriculture sector in Alberta is vital to the provincial and federal economy, contributing to food security, rural development, and employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS the *Inflation Reduction Act* in the United States has introduced significant tax incentives and support programs for American agricultural producers, creating a competitive advantage over their Canadian counterparts; and

WHEREAS the disparity in tax incentives puts Canadian producers at a significant disadvantage, impacting their competitiveness, profitability, and ability to invest in innovation and sustainable practices; and

WHEREAS a joint effort between the governments of Alberta and Canada is necessary to address this disparity and ensure a level playing field for Canadian producers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to initiate meaningful dialogue with the Government of Canada (GOC) to explore opportunities for collaboration and partnerships in addressing the challenges posed by the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) and the competitive advantage it provides to the American agricultural sector; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate for the GOA and the GOC to form a joint task force, including members from the RMA, industry, and agricultural groups, to evaluate the IRA's impact on Canadian producers and recommend policy adjustments to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of Alberta's agricultural sector.

Member Background

The United States government passed the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) on August 16, 2022. The agricultural sector in Alberta, and across the country, has been concerned with the competitive advantage that the IRA provides to American agricultural producers and the agricultural sector relative to its Canadian counterparts. The legislation has provided numerous supports to, and unduly advances the interests of American industry sectors, including the agriculture sector. Through tax incentives and other programs and initiatives, Canadian agricultural producers and the burgeoning agricultural sector is put in a disadvantaged position which threatens the ability of the province and the country to grow and diversify the agricultural sector.

The IRA is poised to provide US\$300-billion worth of tax credits, grants, and loans to fund various programs and initiatives, many targeted to include the agricultural sector. Without counteracting the IRA, the Canadian agriculture sector is at risk. Supports and programs included in the IRA that create a competitive advantage for the U.S. agriculture sector over Canadian interests include:

- \$3.1 billion for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide relief for distressed borrowers with certain Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct and guaranteed loans. The law directs USDA to expedite assistance for those borrowers whose agricultural operations are at financial risk. The IRA provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers who have experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs.

- Approximately \$19.5 billion of IRA funds will support USDA’s conservation programs within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) beginning in fiscal year 2023 and continuing over the following four years. The funds will support agricultural producers by financially incentivizing and rewarding America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners for the critical role their lands play in addressing the climate change.
- Providing production and investment support for biofuels estimated at \$9.4 billion to 2031. Included in this initiative is \$500 million for the Higher Blend Infrastructure Incentive Program at the USDA, the goal of which is to increase the sale and use of higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. The program will provide grants to improve infrastructure for blending, storing, distributing, and supplying biofuels, including higher ethanol and biodiesel blends. This program will provide agricultural producers certainty, stability, and a domestic market for crops including canola which will be used in the production of biofuels.
- Starting in 2025, the Clean Fuel Production Credit, part of the IRA, will offer a significant tax incentive to U.S. producers of clean transportation fuels, including those bound for export. The Biomass-based Diesel Blenders Tax Credit (BTC), included in the IRA, will have a drastic impact on Alberta's agricultural and energy sector. The BTC grants a \$1-per-gallon tax credit to each gallon of biodiesel and renewable diesel blended into the U.S. diesel pool, and through further incentives provides up to \$1.75-per-gallon tax credits.

As of Dec. 31, 2024, the Act switches the existing blender’s credit for biodiesel and renewable diesel into a producer’s credit. Canadian producers, who had access to the blender’s credit when selling biofuels into the U.S. market, will no longer be eligible for the new producer’s credit, as it will only apply to U.S. based production. Further, U.S. producers will be able to collect the credit on fuels destined for export – this is not the case under the existing blender’s credit program. That means heavily subsidized U.S. biodiesel and renewable diesel will likely flow across the border into Canada impacting the Canadian producers and resulting in corporate and personal tax losses for provincial and federal governments. The impact will be significant – not only will Canadians lose access to the American market because they will not be able to compete, but Canadian producers are also to be disadvantaged, since subsidized American product will entering the Canadian marketplace, undercutting Canadian producers.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 17-23F

Sustainable Community Hospice Funding Model

Clearwater County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS the demographic trend in Alberta suggests that, over the next 25 years, the population aged 80 and older will double, potentially constituting up to 7% of Alberta's total population; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes that adopting a palliative care approach upon the diagnosis of life-limiting diseases not only enhances patients' quality of life but also serves as a cost-effective strategy in managing healthcare expenditure; and

WHEREAS community providers, including non-profit hospice societies, are facing a growing demand to deliver palliative end-of-life care (PEOLC); and

WHEREAS the ability to meet the Alberta Health Services (AHS) accepted standard for PEOLC bed capacity is severely limited by the lack of a province-wide, sustainable funding model; and

WHEREAS the AHS Rural Palliative Care In-Home Funding Program can only be used to cover end-of life care received at home and cannot be utilized to cover end-of-life care provided by hospice societies in their facilities; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta's former Palliative End-of-Life Care Grant Fund provided one-time funding and excluded operational costs for hospice societies;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to implement a sustainable operational funding model for the provision of hospice services by community hospice societies across the province.

Member Background

There has been ongoing engagement from the Government of Alberta regarding Palliative End-of-Life Care (PEOLC), highlighting the importance of these supports and services to Albertans. The need to develop the capacity of these community services, especially in rural settings, is clear; the following provincial frameworks and reports are all consistent in that message:

- Government of Alberta – Advancing palliative and end-of-life care in Alberta – Palliative and End-of-Life Care Engagement Final Report November 2021
- Alberta Health Services – Palliative and End of Life Care – Alberta Provincial Framework Addendum 2021
- Alberta Health Services - Palliative and End of Life Care - Alberta Provincial Framework 2014

What remains is the question of continual operational funding for PEOLC hospice community providers.

The Government of Alberta identified the service gaps that exist for PEOLC needs in Alberta in the *Advancing Palliative and End-of-Life Care in Alberta Final Report November 2021*. The report included the following recommendation:

Government, AHS, and their partners, should grow and expand community-based PEOLC services via home and community care programs and facility-based continuing care...Stand-alone hospices face challenges in maintaining sustainable operational budgets and workforce.

The Government of Alberta committed \$20 million over four years to improve PEOLC by shifting from hospital to community-based care; raising awareness of how and when to access PEOLC; developing effective caregiver supports;

and establishing education, training and standards for health professionals. The funds were entirely allocated as of 2022 and were not eligible for hospice societies' operational expenses.

Non-profit hospice societies who are already operating in communities and working towards expanding these important services in Alberta have been left in budget purgatory. They are actively working towards a priority identified by the Government of Alberta, but reliant on fundraising for operational funding.

Correcting the disparity between the funding available to patients who choose to receive PEOLC in-home versus in a hospice suite is an immediate solution that could address these challenges while the economic analysis of reallocating health care financial resources in accordance with the shift from hospital to community-based hospice care is completed.

Municipalities must advocate for the allocation of financial resources to these valuable supports and services provided in their communities.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 18-23F

Bee Package Imports and the Control of Varroa Mites

Beaver County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS in 2022, honey producers across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba experienced one of the worst winter kill events in years, with some producers losing up to 90% of their hives; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) currently prohibits the importation of bee packages from the United States, yet allows bee package imports from intercontinental apiaries, including those in South America and New Zealand; and

WHEREAS bee package imports from South America and New Zealand cost up to three times as much as bee packages sourced from the United States; and

WHEREAS since the 1980s, the CFIA has only approved two miticides for the control of Varroa Mites leading to the development of miticide-resistant mites;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to permit honey bee shipments from the United States for the purpose of hive repopulation, to combat the depopulation of Canada’s honey bee hives; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request that the CFIA conduct further research on Varroa Miticide controls and approve a new varroa mite miticide to address the lack of control options available to honey producers.

Member Background

Since the 1980s, the Canadian border has been closed to the importation of honey bee packages. This restriction on bee imports was the result of the increasing Varroa Mite population in the United States at the time. Since then, only queen bees can be imported into Canada as they can be fully checked for mites, viruses, and other pests prior to their shipment.

Although the intention of this import restriction is to protect the Canadian bee industry from Varroa Mites, these mites are already present and established within Canada. Additionally, South America (a source that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency does permit the importation of bees from) also has a well-established Varroa Mite population. Therefore, imports from both locations should be held to the same standard.

Also, since bee packages from the United States are not permitted to be shipped into Canada, packages must be sourced from other localities in order to supplement our bee populations. Most often, these packages are shipped from New Zealand and South America. Due to this increased distance (compared to U.S. shipments), these packages can be up to three times the cost of similar bee packages sourced from the United States.

Another compounding issue with Canada’s bee populations and Varroa Mites is that there is a lack of miticide options for producers. In Canada, there are only two approved Varroa Mite miticides. Although these miticides were once effective management tools, the lack of options for producers has resulted in the development of miticide-resistant mites, resulting in populations spreading through Canada’s beehives. The need for new management tools is crucial to ensuring the longevity of Canada’s bee industry.

The bee industry is not only crucial for honey production but is important to many other aspects of agriculture as well, including helping with the pollination of our orchards, berry farms, vegetables, forages, and canola. Therefore, ensuring the stability and longevity of the bee industry not only aids our honey producers, but supports the health of Canada’s diverse agricultural industry.

Sources:

- <https://academic.oup.com/jee/article/107/6/2030/794425>
- <https://www.ento.vt.edu/the-bee-group-atvt/beekeeping/mites1.html#:~:text=Varroa%20mite%20damage%20was%20observed%20in%20eastern%20and,playing%20an%20important%20role%20in%20colony%20overwintering%20success.>
- <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/horticulture/reports/statistical-overviewcanadian-honey-and-bee-industry-2021>
- [Alberta Beekeepers Report](#)
- [Beary Berry Inc. Concerns](#)

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 19-23F

Government of Alberta Ministry Changes

MD of Peace

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS since 2015, Alberta’s government ministries have undergone 45 organizational modifications resulting in ministry name changes; and

WHEREAS modifications are due to the addition or removal of portfolios or the creation of new ministries; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta’s new Cabinet, announced in October 2022, included name changes to nine existing ministries and the creation of six new ministries; and

WHEREAS in June 2023, seven more ministry name changes occurred, with five ministries having their names altered within eight months of their last modification; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta does not report on the costs of organizational changes or the impacts of such changes on employees or public understanding of government; and

WHEREAS research indicates that rebranding can consume 4-10% of a public sector organization’s budget;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the Government of Alberta (GOA) report on the cost of organizational adjustments such as portfolio shuffles and ministry name changes; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate for the GOA to minimize organizational modifications as much as possible.

Member Background

A summary of key ministry changes in recent years is outlined below.

Jobs, Economy & Trade:

- **Jobs** was part of the Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training & Labour from May 2015 to February 2016. The Jobs portfolio was vacant until it became part of Jobs, Economy & Innovation on August 25, 2020. Then on October 21, 2022, it became part of Jobs, Economy & Northern Development only to be changed to Jobs, Economy & Trade on June 9, 2023.
- **Economy** was part of the Ministry of Jobs, Economy & Innovation from the period of August 25, 2020, to October 21, 2022, when it became part of Jobs, Economy & Northern Development. Then on June 9, 2023, it was again changed to Jobs, Economy & Trade.
- **Trade** was part of the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Tourism for the period April 30, 2019, until August 25, 2020. After that, the Trade portfolio was vacant until October 21, 2022, when it became part of the Trade, Immigration & Multiculturalism Ministry. Eight months later June 9, 2023, Trade became part of the Jobs, Economy & Trade Ministry.

Arts, Culture & the Status of Women:

- **Culture** was part of the Culture & Tourism Ministry from 2014 to 2019. In 2019 the Culture & Tourism Ministry became the Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women Ministry. This lasted until July of 2021 when the Ministry simply became the Ministry of Culture, which lasted until June 9th, 2023, and its current name. Arts and the Status of Women seem to have only become Ministry level portfolios in 2019 as such there is no older history.

Immigration & Multiculturalism:

- **Immigration** was part of the Labour & Immigration Ministry prior to October 21, 2022, when it became part of Trade, Immigration & Multiculturalism. The Ministry of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism existed for eight months until June 9, 2023, when the Ministry simply became Immigration & Multiculturalism.
- **Multiculturalism** was part of the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism & Status of Women for the period of April 30, 2019 – July 7, 2021. After this, it seems to have been vacant until June 9, 2023, when it became part of Immigration & Multiculturalism.

Tourism & Sport:

- **Tourism** was part of the Culture & Tourism Ministry from 2014 to 2019. In 2019 under the UCP Government, the Ministry became the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Tourism, a name that lasted until October of 2022 when it became the Ministry of Forestry, Parks & Tourism. The Forestry, Parks & Tourism Ministry existed until June 9, 2023, when the name changed to Forestry & Parks. The Sport portfolio was only created on June 9th, 2023, as such there is no older history.

Forestry & Parks:

- **Parks** was part of the Ministry of Environment & Parks from 2015 – 2022. In 2022 Parks was combined with Forestry & Tourism to make the Forestry, Parks & Tourism Ministry which was only in existence from Oct 21, 2022 – June 9, 2023.
- **Forestry** was part of the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry from 2015 – 2021. In 2021 Forestry became part of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development Ministry until October 2022 when the Forestry, Parks & Tourism Ministry was created.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 20-23F

Post-COVID Bridging Support for Small and Medium Community Facilities and Agricultural Societies

Smoky Lake County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS the global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many aspects of civic society for more than two years, and continues to reverberate across rural communities, including volunteer organizations; and

WHEREAS small and medium community halls and facilities form a bedrock of the fabric of our rural communities; and

WHEREAS small and medium community halls and facilities serve as gathering places, cultural centers, youth and family hubs, evacuee reception and emergency operations centers; and

WHEREAS small and medium community halls and facilities are confronted with an existential challenge as they seek to rebuild and return to sustainability in a post-COVID world; and

WHEREAS many rural municipalities lack the capacity to single-handedly shoulder the burden of supporting these facilities and groups;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to enhance its capacity-building efforts and financial investments to ensure that small and medium community facilities and agricultural societies remain viable as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Member Background

Many rural municipalities have experienced a significant uptick in the number of operational support requests, as volunteer organizations struggle to return to sustainability in a post-COVID environment.

The Province of Alberta has a critically important bridging role to play in ensuring that the vibrant cultural fabric of our rural communities remains intact and can flourish into the next decades.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 21-23F

Engineering Accountability

County of Northern Lights

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS municipalities across Alberta have faced rising engineering costs for capital projects in recent years; and

WHEREAS municipalities lack mechanisms or powers to ensure engineering firms are accountable for their designs and project supervision work; and

WHEREAS online reviews, ratings and experiences available for many consumer goods and services are not available for engineering firms; and

WHEREAS this lack of a rating or review system for engineering firms forces municipalities to incur significant risk when hiring engineers; and

WHEREAS engineering services are often among the most expensive third-party services used by municipalities; and

WHEREAS engineering firms have considerable leeway and latitude to design infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS municipalities have limited capacity to determine whether engineering designs are sound and cost effective, unless another engineering firm is hired to review them; and

WHEREAS hiring a second engineering firm adds considerable expense to the project and still does not guarantee success; and

WHEREAS many municipalities have experienced questionable engineering practices resulting in excessive expenses with no satisfactory recourse; and

WHEREAS due to the difficulties of recovering expenses for poor-quality engineering services, municipalities often have no choice but to write off such expenses;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) develop a rating system for firms that provide engineering services to municipalities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA seek to collaborate with Alberta Municipalities in the development of the rating system to ensure it meets the needs of all municipalities in Alberta.

Member Background

The County of Northern Lights began the largest project in its history in 2018 which entailed the design and installation of a regional waterline from the Town of Peace River water treatment plant, to the Hamlet of Dixonville, two water truckfills and the conversion of the Dixonville water treatment plant to a distribution only and truckfill facility. The project was approximately 60 km in length and would eventually provide much needed treated water to residents along the line. The project was part of a Water for Life project which saw the Town receive funding for upgrades to their water treatment plant. The waterline itself was the third phase of that funding agreement.

The County used a prequalification process, led by contracted engineers, to ensure competent contractors would construct the project. Throughout the project, engineering fees were increased to provide additional onsite supervision of the project. At the end of the project, following the arbitration clause in the construction project, an arbitrator awarded an additional \$16 million to the contractor, on a contract that was originally bid at \$28.7 million.

The arbitrator stated that the project, as designed, was “unconstructable” causing additional costs to the contractor. The County is now in a legal battle with the engineering group and their subcontractor who both deny any responsibility for the issues on the contract.

The County of Northern Lights believes that a provincial rating system, adopted by all municipalities, would provide more accountability than one adopted by one municipality and engineering firms would be rated on every project based upon previous design failures, legal battles or other matters.

Alberta Transportation has a rating system that is utilized for engineers and a similar rating program could be adopted by municipalities. It is suggested that such a rating would be based upon the experiences of other municipalities rather than technical or qualitative metrics.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.