



RMA
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES
of ALBERTA

2024 Resolution Status Update

Volume 2

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2024 Resolution Status Update - Volume 2

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Introduction

The Resolution Status Update is divided into two sections.

- ◆ **Section 1** provides detailed information on the government response to the spring 2024 resolutions and includes the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Board of Directors’ reaction to the response as well as anticipated follow up.
- ◆ **Section 2** updates members by reporting on all active resolutions, grouped by advocacy area.

Definition of Terms

Following endorsement by RMA members, resolutions are sent to the appropriate level of government for response. Once a response is received, RMA labels the resolution with one of five indicators which determines the status of that resolution. The intention of providing a status for each resolution is to evaluate whether the government response meets the intent of the resolution. The status is not intended to reflect RMA’s advocacy efforts on a resolution.

Below are the descriptions of all resolution ranking statuses.

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Accepted	Meets RMA criteria as outlined in a) the resolution and b) as per the expectations of the Board of Directors.
Accepted in Principle	The development addresses that action is being taken to meet the intent of the resolution, but further action is required.
Accepted in Part	Some resolutions include multiple ‘asks’ in the operative clause. This status indicates that one of the ‘asks’ has been met while others require further action.
Intent Not Met	The intent of the resolution has not been met as outlined in the resolution or the current developments do not meet the approval of the Board of Directors.
Incomplete Information	RMA has not received enough information to assign a status. Further follow-up is required for RMA to make an informed decision on how to proceed.

Section 1: Government Responses to Spring 2024 Resolutions

RMA recently received responses to the resolutions adopted at the spring 2024 convention from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada. The following table provides an overview of the initial assessment to resolutions following the response. **RMA emphasizes that this table only reflects the initial response received from the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada and that advocacy efforts on all resolutions are in progress.**

Reactions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION NAME	STATUS
1-24S	Declining Fire Department Services Across Rural Alberta	Intent Not Met
2-24S	Water Apportionment Performance	Intent Not Met
3-24S	Continued Support for Regional Economic Development Alliances	Intent Not Met
4-24S	Maintaining Non-Partisan Municipal Elections	Intent Not Met
5-24S	Legislation Consultation with Municipalities	Intent Not Met
6-24S	Interim Funding for Lost Oil and Gas Revenue	Intent Not Met
7-24S	Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services	Intent Not Met
8-24S	Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter	Intent Not Met
ER1-24S	Government Support for Physician Assistants	Accepted in Part
ER2-24S	Municipal Taxes Misrepresented as Municipal Franchise Fees	Intent Not Met
ER3-24S	Opposition to Federal Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate	Incomplete Information

Resolution 1-24S

Declining Fire Department Services Across Rural Alberta

Smoky Lake County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services, Emergency Preparedness Canada**

WHEREAS the state of declining fire department services across rural Alberta is detrimental to all Albertans living or visiting outside of large urban centers; and

WHEREAS provincial Fire Services Training Program funding increases are necessary for rural firefighter training; and

WHEREAS the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) current volunteer firefighter tax credit of \$3,000 is inadequate and the CRA's definition of "volunteer firefighter" is obsolete; and

WHEREAS businesses that employ volunteer firefighters do not currently receive a tax credit for doing so; and

WHEREAS the Fire Underwriter's Survey assigns "Front Line" status to firefighting apparatus and equipment used in both urban and rural communities for 15 years; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada's former Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) for fire/emergency training and equipment is no longer available;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to collaborate with the Government of Canada and Fire Underwriters Survey to assist municipalities to retain fire services by recruiting firefighters and addressing the declining fire department services across rural Alberta.

Government Response

Alberta Municipal Affairs

In Alberta, municipalities are responsible for ensuring their fire service is meeting the needs of the community, determining service levels, and providing incentives to volunteers in their communities. Albertans are encouraged to work with their local municipality and share their concerns about the need for a strong volunteer fire service in their community.

Fire Services Training Program

The Fire Services Training Program (FSTP) grant provides \$500,000 of supplemental training funding to municipalities (including municipal corporations and regional services commissions), Metis Settlements, and First Nations fire service personnel in Alberta, which can be used to enhance training opportunities and consequently, improved safety for fire services and the public.

The FSTP grant assists local authorities in:

- improving fire service competencies and skills based on local levels of service;

- mitigating local risks and responding effectively and safely to emergencies; and
- enabling specialized training that supports specific local needs.

Municipal Affairs proactively engages with stakeholders, including the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association to solicit feedback and input on opportunities for program improvement and optimal alignment with stakeholder needs.

Fire Service Review

Over the past few years, fire service stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the delivery of fire service programs and the role of the Fire Commissioner. Municipal Affairs is currently undertaking a Fire Service Review which will provide the opportunity to gather feedback and information on local needs and enable government to develop solutions to improve the fire service in the province.

The Fire Service Review is focused on the role and mandate of the Fire Commissioner, provincial legislation and training standards, recognition for the fire service, specifically to clarify the role of the province in recognizing the service of firefighters, and the management of wildland fires outside the Forest Protection Area.

The first phase of the review is complete. This included informal engagements completed by the assistant fire commissioner beginning in December 2023. The second phase of the review is underway and includes formal engagement with stakeholders, including representatives from municipalities, Indigenous communities, and municipal fire services, through a third-party consultant.

Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services

Public Safety and Emergency Services has no additional information to provide.

Emergency Preparedness Canada

As we know, disasters are increasing in frequency and severity across Canada as a result of several factors, including climate change. We are seeing longer fire seasons and drier forest conditions, which are contributing to the intensity and size of wildland fire events, and wildland-urban interface fires are an increasing concern. 90% of Canada's forests are owned and managed by Provinces and Territories, who are primarily responsible for wildland fire management and wildfire suppression, as well as broader forest management.

As the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, I take seriously the threat that all hazards, including fires and wildfires, pose to communities, infrastructure, industry, and health.

In Canada, emergency management is a shared responsibility across all sectors of society, including all orders of government, Indigenous Peoples, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens. The Government of Canada largely assumes a national coordination role of emergency management policy and programs in an effort to support Provinces and Territories. In this respect, the Government of Canada has made several recent and significant strategic investments in fire resilience.

Budget 2022 earmarked \$523 million to procure new firefighting equipment, train 1000 additional wildland firefighters, and develop and deliver a wildfire monitoring satellite system. Additionally, in 2022 the Government of Canada announced \$285 million over five years to launch a Wildfire Resilient Futures Initiative.

This proposal includes new investments to expand FireSmart™ Canada, as well as activities to fill foundational gaps in wildland fire knowledge and drive innovation in wildland fire management, and establish a Centre of Excellence for Wildland Fire Innovation and Resilience to help transform wildland fire management in Canada and around the world.

Budget 2024 is investing \$800,000 towards the International Association of Fire Fighters to help build wildfire fighting capacity and enhance training best practices, with a focus on the wildland-urban interface. Moreover, the Income Tax Act will be amended to double the Volunteer Firefighters Tax Credit and the Search and Rescue Volunteers Tax Credit from \$3000 to \$6000 for 2024 and subsequent tax years.

Canada's wildland fire management community is also working to advance proactive steps to prepare for wildland fires and to reduce risks before they occur. With our Canadian Council of Forest Minister's (CCFM) Provincial and Territorial partners, we are working on developing our country's first Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy, to mobilize whole-of-society action on wildland fire resilience. This will allow Canadians to be aware, engaged, prepared, and actively participate in wildland fire reduction and to accept wildland fire where appropriate. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be publicly released in June 2024.

Through Natural Resources Canada, the Federal Government also provides the largest combined financial support for the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC), which is the Federal Government's mechanism for supporting wildfire response capacity and the expansion of prevention and mitigation activities across Canada (e.g., the home of FireSmart Canada).

We acknowledge that reducing risk and being prepared to respond to and recover from disaster, including fires, is a whole-of-society commitment. The Government of Canada remains committed to working closely with Provincial and Territorial government officials, and exploring all options to enhance our ability to keep Canadian communities safe.

Recognizing that the Government of Canada lead for wildland fire management is Natural Resources Canada, I am copying my colleague, the Honorable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, for his awareness.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

To this point, not all target ministries have provided responses to the resolution. The responses received to this point describe several positive actions being taken to better prepare for and manage wildfires across Canada. In particular, the RMA appreciates funding for wildland firefighter equipment, training, and the doubling of the fire fighter tax credit. The response does not, however, address the resolution's request for the Government of Alberta to collaborate with the Fire Underwriters Survey. Other areas the response does not address include challenges to volunteer firefighter recruitment generally or refer to any initiatives regarding the Fire Underwriters Survey. RMA sits on a fire fighter attraction and retention committee organized by the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association and will continue to seek tools to attract and retain rural firefighters through this committee.

RMA is also aware of a fire service review currently being undertaken by Alberta Municipal Affairs and is hopeful that it may address some of the issues identified in the resolution. RMA is unaware when the review will be completed.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to await responses from other federal and provincial ministries.

Resolution 2-24S

Water Apportionment Performance

MD of Taber

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS Schedule A of the 1969 Master Agreement on Apportionment (the Agreement) governs the apportionment of water on the South Saskatchewan River between Alberta and Saskatchewan; and

WHEREAS the Agreement requires that Alberta shall permit a quantity equal to one half of the natural flow of the River to flow into Saskatchewan during each calendar year; and

WHEREAS the Agreement allows Alberta to divert or store or consume a minimum of 2,100,000 acre feet out of the flow of the South Saskatchewan River even though its share for the year is less than that volume, provided that the actual flow of the River at the common boundary of the provinces is not less than 1,500 cubic feet per second at any time; and

WHEREAS Alberta has permitted more than 50% of the natural flow of the South Saskatchewan River to flow to Saskatchewan every year since 1969; and

WHEREAS the rate of flow on the South Saskatchewan River in Alberta is regulated by infrastructure including diversions, dams and reservoirs owned and operated by the Government of Alberta; and

WHEREAS drought conditions prevalent within the South Saskatchewan River basin in 2023 which are likely to persist in 2024 have resulted in water shortages within the basin; and

WHEREAS in times of severe drought it is vital to optimize water retention and storage;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure that, to the extent physically practical, Alberta retains its share of the natural flow of the South Saskatchewan River in 2024 and in future years when Alberta is able to divert, store, or consume its full share of the natural flow.

Government Response

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

The Government of Alberta agrees with the resolution. We currently manage storage infrastructure and water licensing systems to make the most out of our water supplies and minimize risk during periods of short supply. The South Saskatchewan River Basin is already home to a network of reservoirs and other water uses that contribute to using Alberta's share of water under the transboundary water Master

Agreement on Apportionment. The government is actively looking at opportunities to increase our water storage capacity and optimize our water uses.

My mandate includes reviewing Alberta's water management strategy to increase the availability of water, while maintaining the highest standards of conservation and treatment. As part of this review, Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) is looking at new tools to manage water more effectively to maximize the amount of water available on the Alberta side, including modernizing Alberta's water licensing system and assessing opportunities for additional water storage. To review the Mandate Letter, please visit open.alberta.ca and search for "Mandate Letter – Environment and Protected Areas."

In addition to the feasibility study underway assessing potential options on the Bow River upstream of Calgary, the Government of Alberta is undertaking dam and reservoir feasibility studies on the Red Deer River near Ardley, and on the Bow River near Eyremore. If these projects proceed, the reservoirs will provide the ability to capture and retain a larger portion of Alberta's share of the water. Later this year, we will commence a provincewide review of other water storage opportunities to help guide future assessments and reservoir feasibility studies. I understand Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) is working with irrigation districts and other partners to expand off-stream water storage at Chin and Snake Lake reservoirs, as well as assessing new storage opportunities, such as the Deadhorse Coulee Reservoir.

EPA and AGI are evaluating our water infrastructure operating procedures at government-owned dams in the South Saskatchewan River Basin to optimize retention of Alberta's share of the water, while ensuring all licensing requirements related to those operations are met.

EPA, in collaboration with AGI, will continue to work closely with major water users, such as the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and the province's irrigation districts, on water storage infrastructure and management strategies to help maximize the amount of water available to support Alberta's communities, economy, and environment.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

While the Government of Alberta response outlines a variety of initiatives that are or will be carried out to increase water supply, none reference the specific measures described in Resolution 2-24S which call for the government to increase its share of the South Saskatchewan River flow according to the terms of the 1969 Master Agreement. Rather than the methods listed in the government response, RMA members seek to increase water supply by retaining a greater share of the river flow particularly at government owned dams, reservoirs and other related infrastructure. Given that the government response does not make any commitments towards increasing water retention on the South Saskatchewan River specific to the methods outlined in this resolution, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to seek further opportunities for advocacy.

Recently, the Government of Alberta began engagements on new policies, regulatory tools and potential amendments to the *Water Act* to improve water availability. Although transboundary water management and water restrictions at government owned infrastructure were not specifically outlined as within the engagement scope, one of the engagement goals is to enhance water conservation, efficiency and productivity through changes to policies, programs, regulations and approaches to meet this goal. The feedback period is from Oct 31, 2024 to January 24, 2025. RMA will examine opportunities to further progress on Resolution 2-24S through this engagement process and other initiatives.

Resolution 3-24S

Continued Support for Regional Economic Development Alliances

County of Painthearth

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Jobs, Economy and Trade, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance**

WHEREAS pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, the purposes of a municipality are to “provide good government, foster the economic development of the municipality, to provide services, facilities or other things that, [...] are necessary or desirable for all or part of a municipality; and, to develop and maintain safe and viable communities”; and

WHEREAS for over 20 years, the Government of Alberta has embraced a partnership with Alberta’s municipalities to plan and undertake regional economic development initiatives of mutual interest; and

WHEREAS the success of this partnership made Alberta a leader in the delivery of regional economic development; and

WHEREAS Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) have been in operation for over 20 years as a supplementary asset to municipal economic development service delivery; and

WHEREAS REDAs are especially important to offset cost-constraints and limited budget capacity for both small urban and rural communities; and

WHEREAS through a focused strategy, an innovative solution can be implemented to budget long-term, consistent funding for REDAs to support their continued role in supporting overall provincial economic growth;

THEREFORE, BE IT BE RESOLVED that Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that a memorandum of understanding be held, in committee, between the Government of Alberta (GOA), Alberta’s municipalities, RMA, ABmunis, and existing Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) to redevelop a clear purpose and program structure for the REDAs, inclusive of a stable, long-term, collaborative approach to funding the same; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the GOA provide continuous, stable funding to existing REDAs to support a combined budget of \$125,000/year in operational funding and \$100,000/year in project funding, until a memorandum of re-organization is complete and enacted.

Government Response

Alberta Jobs, Economy, and Trade

While no written response has been provided by the Government of Alberta on resolution 3-24S, RMA met with the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade (JET) to discuss the resolution in April 2024. During the meeting, the Minister reiterated that no further operational funding will be provided for REDAs after 2027. The Ministry instead prefers to reconceptualize the expectations and structure of REDAs to be more self-sustaining to account for a perceived lack of performance. Rather than a funding

allocation approach, The Ministry of JET prefers for municipalities to increase their investment and contribution efforts towards REDAs, with a key goal of raising regional revenue and value through further local collaboration. The Ministry also reiterated the many economic development grants available to REDAs to help offset funding deficits.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

RMA members place significant value on Rural Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) as an ongoing source of economic development knowledge, capacity and strategy that reflects the needs of specific regions. By their nature, REDAs are not well-suited to rely on a series of project specific grants, as their role is not specific to individual projects. From RMA's perspective, this decision is essentially downloading the costs of supporting REDAs from the Government of Alberta to municipalities, which will likely face a decision: to increase the funding they already contribute to REDAs or lose their REDA completely. Unfortunately, the smallest, lowest-capacity municipalities that most rely on REDAs will be least able to increase their contribution.

In Summer 2024 RMA, along with other rural economic development stakeholders, met with the Premier to discuss RMA's ongoing and continued support for REDAs. The Premier reiterated the government's plan to eliminate the current allocation-based REDA funding. And instead require REDAs to seek full operating funding from municipalities or other sources, and compete for project-based economic development funding. RMA has heard from a number of members that REDAs and economic development in general remains an important priority. RMA received funding from the Government of Alberta to create a Rural Economic Development Toolkit that could assist members with no or minimal economic development staff capacity. This will be released later in 2025.

The RMA has assigned this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for government to contribute to REDAs in a manner that reflects their ongoing regional economic development support role.

Resolution 4-24S

Maintaining Non-Partisan Municipal Elections

Northern Sunrise County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS municipal elections in Alberta have been predominantly free from political party influence; and

WHEREAS this non-partisan structure has afforded local elected officials the autonomy to debate and vote on municipal issues based on the best interests of their community; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is considering formalizing political parties at the municipal level; and

WHEREAS formalizing political parties at the municipal level would restrict individual elected officials from independently pursuing the best interests of the municipality but instead bind them by the ideology of the political party they represent; and

WHEREAS the current *Local Authorities Elections Act* does not explicitly restrict political party influence in local elections.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to refrain from formalizing partisan politics in local government elections;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to amend the *Local Authorities Elections Act* (LAEA) to prohibit partisanship from infiltrating local elections or politics in any way including political party endorsements of local candidates, donations directly or indirectly from political parties to local candidates, or by way of any other influence.

Government Response

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Bill 20: the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, amends the *Local Authorities Election Act* to allow for the creation of municipal political parties. This is intended to provide transparency for electors to select candidates who identify with a local political party platform. It will also establish rules for political party registration, candidate endorsement, financial contributions, and financial disclosures through a regulation. The regulation will be completed in fall 2024.

Municipal political parties cannot be affiliated with a provincial or federal political party, and candidates may choose to run independently without affiliation to a political party. For the next general elections in October 2025, political parties will be limited to the cities of Calgary and Edmonton.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta's response indicates that political parties at the municipal level will proceed as planned, despite RMA's advocacy and widespread public disapproval of the change. While political

parties are being trialed in Calgary and Edmonton for the 2025 election, they may be expanded in the future to encompass other municipalities as well.

Two regulations related to municipal parties were released in fall 2024: the *Local Political Parties and Slates Regulation* (LPPSR), and the *Expense Limits Regulation* (ELR).

- ◆ The LPPSR allows local political parties and slates to register and be listed on municipal election ballots in Edmonton and Calgary for the October 2025 election. The regulation for local political parties and slates provides rules for their registration, operation and financial administration, similar to existing rules that govern local candidates and provincial political parties. Local political parties and slates will not be permitted to have formal affiliation with a provincial or federal political party, may not have a name or acronym that resembles a provincial or federal political party.
- ◆ The ELR creates expense limits for local candidates and third-party advertisers across Alberta, while introducing similar limits for local political parties in Edmonton and Calgary. The regulations specify expense limits during both the year of the election as well as non-election years. These new limits tie campaign expense limits to municipal populations and automatically adjust with changes in population over time.

Unfortunately, the LPPSR appears to allow party-affiliated candidates to incur expenses to a limit equal to non-party affiliated candidates, while also allowing parties to collect campaign funds on behalf of candidates. Although the LPPSR does link the amount of campaign funds a party may collect to the number of party-affiliated candidates running in a municipality, it does not require those collected funds to be distributed evenly among candidates. This may allow parties to run many candidates to increase their overall campaign fund collection limit, and use the funds collected on a smaller number of “star” or high priority candidates.

As for the ELR, RMA’s main focus for expense limits was that they were not tied strictly to population as the costs of campaigning in rural communities are driven by unique factors linked to the distance between residences. RMA is concerned that candidates and parties have separate, and apparently cumulative expense limits, as this creates an un-level financial playing field among candidates.

RMA will continue to advocate against political parties in municipal politics, but as the provincial government is unwilling to change their position on them at this time, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 5-24S

Legislation Consultation with Municipalities

Big Lakes County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs**

WHEREAS past decisions of the Government of Alberta (GOA) have negatively affected municipal financial planning and budgeting when prior consultation has not occurred; and

WHEREAS it is critical for the GOA to sufficiently inform municipalities of any legislation, regulation or administrative action that could decrease revenues or increase expenditures; and

WHEREAS all orders of government serve the same taxpayer; and

WHEREAS several provinces and territories have passed legislation requiring consultation with municipalities in advance of any policy change that may have a fiscal impact on municipalities; and

WHEREAS prior consultation is a procedural matter and would not in any way bind the GOA to act upon recommendations put forward by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and ABMunis; and

WHEREAS meaningful municipal consultation would enhance the decision-making process and prevent unintended consequences of legislative changes;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to include the following statement:

Requirement to notify

(1) The Minister shall notify the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) and Alberta Municipalities (ABMunis) at least one year prior to the effective date of any legislation, regulation or administrative action undertaken by or on behalf of the Government of Alberta that would have the effect of decreasing the revenue received by the membership of RMA and ABMunis or increasing the required expenditures of the membership of RMA and ABMunis.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply with respect to any legislation, regulation or administrative action applying to the Province generally and not specifically to municipalities.

Government Response

Alberta Municipal Affairs

The Government of Alberta recognizes that municipalities prepare annual budgets, and use revenues to deliver infrastructure, services, and programs to Albertans. The government remains committed to consulting with RMA and working together to ensure that the needs of Albertans are being met.

This has been demonstrated by engagement with municipal associations on the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) program and formula. The engagement gathered feedback from municipal

associations about proposed changes to the LGFF funding formula as well as alignment of municipal and provincial funding priorities.

The Government of Alberta values RMA's input and will continue to engage and communicate with RMA as much as possible and prior to the effective date of legislation, regulation, or administrative changes that may decrease municipal revenues or increase expenditures, but there is no plan to commit to specific timelines or proceed with this type of legislation at this time.

The Government of Alberta recognizes municipalities and their associations as critical partners in building Alberta's communities, providing for our economic future, and promoting the province's prosperity. As a best practice, the province identifies and works with impacted stakeholders to inform options for potential legislative and regulatory change.

This goes beyond notification and invites stakeholder perspectives to inform potential policy and legislative changes. The Government of Alberta may provide support and change management resources to key stakeholders to help with implementing any changes or new requirements. Municipal Affairs will continue to advocate for the inclusion of municipalities in engagement processes across government, where municipalities are potentially impacted stakeholders, and act as a liaison to connect and coordinate provincial requests for municipal engagement with municipalities and their associations.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

While the Government of Alberta regularly engages RMA on policy changes, including those with fiscal impacts on municipalities, RMA has observed a trend of shorter timeframes for input and multiple concurrent engagements, which combine to strain RMA and member capacity, and make it more difficult for RMA and other stakeholders to understand possible fiscal impacts of policy changes. The GOA's response makes it clear that they have no intent to proceed with any of the amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* proposed by this resolution.

As a result, this resolution has been assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. However, RMA will continue to advocate for amendments to the MGA to provide earlier notification to municipal associations of legislative changes impacting municipalities' revenue.

Resolution 6-24S

Interim Funding for Lost Oil and Gas Revenue

Clearwater County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Energy and Minerals**

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta initiated a three-year property tax holiday on new wells and pipelines, eliminated the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET) and implemented a 35% assessment reduction for shallow gas wells and pipelines and additional depreciation adjustments for lower-producing wells; and

WHEREAS these incentives were introduced as temporary measures to support oil and gas industry needs, boost the industry's competitiveness, and incentivize investment; and

WHEREAS municipalities experienced three years of reduced revenue because of these temporary measures resulting in decreased service levels, increased tax rates for residential, non-residential, and agricultural properties and increased risks to sustainable revenue-sharing agreements between rural and urban municipalities; and

WHEREAS municipalities have absorbed provincial downloads associated with policing, affordable housing, and other provincial services, in addition to losses in oil and gas revenue, based on the need to help the oil and gas industry and the province address fiscal challenges; and

WHEREAS the *Municipal Government Act* allows for municipal councils to pass a bylaw imposing a WDET to be assessed on the equipment used to drill a well for which a license is required under the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act*; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has communicated there are no plans to reinstate the WDET and that the assessment reduction and additional depreciation adjustments are to continue until regulated assessment models for wells are updated; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta requires municipalities to budget up to five years in advance; and

WHEREAS unpredictable industry property tax incentives make long-term municipal budgeting extremely difficult;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to reinstate the Well Drilling Equipment Tax and eliminate the thirty-five percent (35%) assessment reduction and additional depreciation adjustments for lower-producing wells.

Government Response

Alberta Municipal Affairs

Government has no plans to reinstate the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET). The 35 percent assessment reduction for shallow gas wells and pipelines, and additional depreciation for lower-producing wells, will remain in place until updated assessment models for regulated industrial property can be implemented in the next few years.

While government appreciates concerns about the reduced ability of municipalities to generate revenue because of the elimination of the WDET, it also recognizes that a careful balance is required to create favourable conditions for ensuring municipalities are appropriately funded to deliver services, while fostering conditions to support industry viability and employment. Any increase in drilling activity encouraged by the permanent removal of the WDET will provide additional economic benefits to Alberta communities. Municipalities will benefit from the future taxable assessment of new wells and any other related assessable infrastructure put in place at the well site. Additionally, municipalities may have other options, such as entering into road-use agreements, to address direct costs associated with the use of municipal services and deterioration of roads resulting from drilling projects. Maintaining a stable and strong oil and gas industry continues to benefit communities across Alberta through job creation and economic activity.

The Assessment Model Review process has restarted, with an engagement plan based on input from stakeholders, including representation from the RMA. Rural municipalities have been encouraged to provide their input through Rural Municipalities of Alberta as this process progresses.

In recognition of the many cost pressures facing municipalities, the Alberta government doubled the funding available through the Municipal Sustainability Initiative Operating program from \$30 million to \$60 million in Budget 2023 and this increased funding level is continued under the Local Government Fiscal Framework Operating program in 2024.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The Government of Alberta response indicated no intent to reinstate the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET), and that the economic benefits resulting from increased drilling, such as increased number of assessable structures and properties and a stronger economy stemming from a strong oil and gas sector should make up the difference for lost municipal tax revenue. The GOA's response advises municipalities to rely on other avenues, such as road-use agreements, to make up for the lack of WDET funding going to municipal infrastructure. RMA's Below the Drill campaign showed that from 2021 to 2023, rural municipalities lost approximately \$92 million in WDET revenue. To RMA's knowledge, no data or analysis has been provided linking the removal of the WDET to an increase in drilling activity.

As it relates to the 35% assessment reduction, the GOA's response signals their intent to remove the assessment reduction once the Assessment Model Review is completed and implemented, but it will remain in place for the time being.

Despite RMA's advocacy through the Below the Drill campaign and other approaches, the GOA's responses indicate no intent to revisit either policy decision, both of which subsidize the oil and gas industry on the backs of rural municipalities. As a result, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 7-24S

Establishing a Provincial Level of Service for Emergency Social Services

County of Grande Prairie

Carried

► Advocacy Target: Alberta Seniors Community and Social Services, Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services

WHEREAS there is currently no provincial level of service for emergency social services support when municipalities host individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters; and

WHEREAS host municipalities each set a level of service for emergency social services resulting in significant inconsistency among host municipalities; and

WHEREAS there have been inconsistent answers from the Government of Alberta regarding what emergency social services costs are eligible for cost recovery, resulting in host municipalities absorbing expenses that have later been deemed ineligible for cost recovery; and

WHEREAS there were a record number of community evacuations in Alberta in 2023 and the frequency, severity, and duration of emergency evacuations is increasing.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta create a provincial level of service for emergency social services as a framework for municipalities to use when providing support to individuals from outside of their jurisdiction during emergencies or disasters;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services include schedules that indicate services that are considered basic survival needs, and which services are discretionary; with identification of what costs are eligible for cost recovery;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed provincial level of service for emergency social services acknowledge that the host municipality is providing a fee for service and that they will directly invoice the home jurisdiction, or the Government of Alberta and will not be required to apply for Disaster Recovery Program funding to recover their costs.

Government Response

RMA has not yet received a government response to this resolution.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

RMA is disappointed not to have received a response from the Government of Alberta to this point. As RMA is not aware of any actions the Government of Alberta has taken to create a provincial level of service for emergency social services, or provide any cost schedules that define basic survival needs that can be paid/reimbursed on a fee for service basis outside of the Disaster Recovery Program, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA is in the early stages of undertaking its own research to determine how a provincial level of service standard could be developed.

The Government of Alberta's Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework was developed in 2016. To RMA's knowledge, the framework has not been updated. A 10-year update could include these enhanced provisions around basic survival needs and host municipality reimbursement called for in this resolution.

Resolution 8-24S

Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter

Wetaskiwin County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Rural Economic Development Canada, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development Canada**

WHEREAS Bill S-270 is introducing an Act for the prohibition of exporting live horses for slaughter and Bill C-355 is introducing the Prohibition of the Export of Horses by Air for Slaughter Act; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is proposing new legislation and changes to three Acts that will dramatically impact the industry of raising draft horses by imposing fines of \$50,000 and up to six months imprisonment for a summary conviction or \$250,000 and up to two years imprisonment for an indictment for transporting horses by air for slaughter; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is regularly seeking new trade partners and opportunities; and

WHEREAS restrictions on export of live horses for slaughter will shut down an existing market with products already leaving Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not conducted or completed a scientific study as to the impact of transporting draft horses overseas by air on draft horses; and

WHEREAS there are approximately 12,000 to 13,000 draft mares, studs, and foals in Canada that are currently being raised for this market; and

WHEREAS numerous western Canadian slaughter facilities for horses have ceased operations and are not purchasing animals to be processed at their facility; and

WHEREAS producers do not have a local market to distribute their product, but have an already established market globally;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta collaborate with the Government of Alberta and Alberta's Agricultural Service Boards to oppose federal legislation restricting the export of live horses for slaughter.

Government Response

Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation

Thank you for your April 11, 2024 letter regarding Resolution 8-24S: Support for the Export of Live Horses for Slaughter. As Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, I am pleased to respond.

Federal Bill S-270, Horse Protection Act (now inactive), and Bill C-355, the Prohibition of the Export of Horses by Air for Slaughter Act, are designed to ban the export of live horses for slaughter.

These concerns fall under regulatory requirements for the live export of animals, which are already addressed under the federal Health of Animals Act and Regulations. This federal act and its regulations are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Veterinary inspectors employed by the

CFIA are present for each air shipment to certify the export adheres to federal requirements, that horses are fit to travel and that the process is carried out humanely.

The live horse export industry averages \$11 million annually in Alberta. Since early 2022, The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) has been in contact with federal counterparts to outline the economic and animal welfare implications of banning live horse export. AGI is actively monitoring the bills' progress and working to ensure the federal government understands the impacts of any policy change to Alberta.

Thank you again for sharing the RMA Spring 2024 resolution.

Ministry of Rural Economic Development (Federal)

On behalf of the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, thank you for your correspondence of April 11, 2024.

Issues related to the live export of horses fall under the purview of the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food. We have therefore taken the liberty of forwarding your correspondence to their offices for consideration.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The response from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation indicates an acknowledgment of the issues related to the export of live horses for slaughter but does not include clear commitments to make progress on the issues specific to the requests of the resolution.

Bill C-355 is still undergoing debate, as of January 2025, is at second reading in the Senate and will progress to third reading with amendments. Many of the amendments follow a structure similar to that of section 19 of the *Health of Animals Act* with restrictions specific to the export of live horses rather than animals in general. Overall, the amendments add further restrictions and prohibitions on the export of live horses for slaughter by air.

The Bouvry Exports Ltd. meat-packing facility has since had its license reinstated effective April 8, 2022. Additionally, Bill S-270 a similar bill that proposes regulations and restrictions on the export of live horses for slaughter by air, has been inactive since March 2024. Despite these positive developments, Bill C-355 may still reach royal assent, causing a significant impact to the industry of live horses for slaughter, including wasted revenue from unusable livestock and related unintended consequences of animals set loose or euthanized. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for the loosening of restrictions and prohibitions of the export of live horses for slaughter.

Resolution ER1-24S

Government Support for Physician Assistants

County of Warner

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Health, Alberta Advanced Education**

WHEREAS the Minister of Health’s mandate includes “continuing to improve emergency medical services response times, decrease surgical backlogs, and cut emergency room wait times,” “supporting primary care as the foundation of our health care system by assessing alternative models of care,” and “working to address rural health challenges such as access to health care professions”; and

WHEREAS the Alberta Health Charter includes the expectation to “have access to team-based primary care services”; and

WHEREAS one of the guiding principles in the Alberta *Health Act* is “that Albertans have reasonable access to timely and appropriate care, including primary care”; and

WHEREAS additional Physician Assistant positions would increase resources to primary care teams across Alberta in a timely and cost-effective manner;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate that the Government of Alberta assist physicians to standardize the scope of practice for Physician Assistants employed in rural Alberta care settings to ensure they can be co-located with supervising physicians and have comprehensive medical directives;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT RMA advocate that the Government of Alberta allocate funding to post-secondary institutions for the development of Physician Assistant educational programs;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT RMA advocate that the Government of Alberta increase funding for rural Physician Assistant positions.

Government Response

Alberta Advanced Education

Through Budget 2024, Alberta's government continues to invest in the Alberta at Work initiative to develop a highly skilled workforce, attract talent to the province, and encourage all Albertans to participate in the labour market.

I am pleased to let you know that Advanced Education recently funded an increase of over 3,900 seats in post-secondary programs in health care across the province through the Targeted Enrolment Expansion initiative. This funding is intended to encourage students to enter critical health care professions, including nurses, medical laboratory professionals, paramedics, and physician assistants. Many of these seats were funded at institutions located in rural communities and are likely to result in more rural health care professionals.

Regarding physician assistant programming, I am excited to share that Advanced Education recently approved the University of Calgary's new Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program, which will welcome its first students in August 2024. Advanced Education is investing \$6.8 million over the next three years to add 20 new seats per year to the program. The University of Calgary will manage the program's delivery, including designating where students will complete their clinical placements.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

It is important for Albertans to have access to healthcare close to home. A variety of healthcare providers, including Physician Assistants, have the scope of practice and training to contribute to the provision of comprehensive primary care.

Physician Assistants became a regulated profession in Alberta and have been able to practice in the province since 2021. They are regulated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), who also regulate physicians. Joint regulation may be ideal to standardize Physician Assistant and Physician scopes of practice, promote information sharing and resources, and the ability for Physician Assistants to work collaboratively as part of a care team with a Physician, medical direction and appropriate supervision. According to the CPSA, Physician Assistants do not bill Alberta Health, but are paid by their group or Primary Care Network. As a result, Physician Assistants and Physicians have standardized scopes of practice. However, the CPSA and Alberta Health Services are responsible for privileging, or granting Physician Assistants and Physicians permission to perform certain skills and procedures in a facility.

In March 2024 the Government of Alberta announced the creation of the first training program for Physician Assistants in Alberta at the University of Calgary. This two-year training program will welcome its first class of 20 students in August 2024. Program enrollment will grow by 20 students per year over the next three years.

Prior to this announcement, 53 Physician Assistants worked in the province. The profession was regulated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta in 2013. The RMA expects this announcement to have a positive and significant impact on the number of Physician Assistants who practice in the province. Program entry requirements dictate that “prior client-facing health experiences,” which may suggest any physician assistants will not be new healthcare workers, but healthcare workers with a new skill set and capacity.

While this is an extremely positive step taken by the Government of Alberta, it does not address the full scope of resolution ER1-24S. For example, Physician Assistants must work in an interdisciplinary team as they are required to be supervised by a Physician. RMA is not aware of a program requirement that the University of Calgary Physician Assistant program reserve any of the training seats for rural applicants.

Given the partial fulfillment of this resolutions asks, the RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**. RMA will continue to advocate for the increased presence of Physician Assistants in rural comprehensive practice and will monitor the new program.

Resolution ER2-24S

Municipal Taxes Misrepresented as Municipal Franchise Fees

Leduc County

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Affordability and Utilities**

WHEREAS several public utility companies, including those that deliver electricity and natural gas services, provide distribution service throughout the province; and

WHEREAS these companies may have an agreement in place with a municipality where a municipality may grant the exclusive right to a utility distribution company to provide services to the municipality through a franchise agreement; and

WHEREAS in such cases, the municipality charges the distribution company a franchise fee for the exclusive right to serve utilities; and

WHEREAS the charges listed in franchise agreements are referred to as local access fees or municipal franchise fees on customer invoices; and

WHEREAS if a franchise agreement is in place, the franchise fees are collected by the retailer on behalf of the distributor, who then forwards the funds to the municipality; and

WHEREAS the provisions and requirements of franchise fees are found in section 45 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA); and

WHEREAS some utility companies list a municipal franchise fee on invoices even when a franchise agreement is not in place; and

WHEREAS in many such cases, the fees listed as “municipal franchise fees” correspond to the allocation of municipal taxes paid by the utility company; and

WHEREAS this has the affect of misrepresenting municipal taxes as municipal franchise fees;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta require all public utility providers, including those delivering electricity and gas, to list all fees and charges implemented by the distributor accurately, including municipal taxes and municipal franchise fees.

Government Response

Alberta Municipal Affairs

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) allows municipalities to charge companies a fee to use municipal property to provide electricity to consumers, which the companies can then recover on customers' electricity bills.

The MGA does not specify how municipal fees or charges under these agreements are to be disclosed when billing utility consumers and each company determines this on its own and in conjunction with standards set under the *Electric Utilities Act*.

Alberta Affordability and Utilities

The *Billing Regulation* under the *Electric Utilities Act* (EUA) and the *Natural Gas Billing Regulation* under the *Gas Utilities Act* (GUA) establish the minimum content required to be included in a customer's bill as separate line items. To support transparency under these regulations, franchise fees must be included on a customer's bill and must also include the name of the municipality that will receive the fee. Some retailers and regulated rate providers separate the municipal franchise fees and municipal taxes into two separate line items, while others bundle them into one line item. The retailers and regulated rate providers can decide how they present their bills, so long as it meets the minimum content required under the *Billing Regulation* and *Natural Gas Billing Regulation*.

Government has been reviewing franchise fees and its enabling legislation to ensure that Albertans have access to an affordable utility system. On May 16, 2024, Royal Assent was granted to Bill 19 (*Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024*), which amends sections of the *Electric Utilities Act* and *Gas Utilities Act* to ensure that the Alberta Utilities Commission has stronger regulatory oversight on how these municipal fees are calculated and applied, ensuring Alberta ratepayer's best interests are protected. Government is not currently considering any changes to the minimum required content required on a bill.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

Municipal Affairs' response fails to address any of the requests in the resolution, largely because the *Municipal Government Act* lacks any details or specifications about how municipal franchise fees should be displayed on a consumer's utility bill; it only provides the authority to charge franchise fees.

Municipal Affairs essentially passes responsibility to the Ministry of Affordability and Utilities (AU), whose response is equally underwhelming. AU states that as long as the utility company or retailer meets the minimum requirements under s. 4 of the *Natural Gas Billing Regulation*, Alta Reg 185/2003, it is up to the retailer whether they choose to display the municipal taxes and franchise fees separately or as one single line item.

Neither ministry is considering any legislative amendments to the minimum content requirements for utility bills or any further steps to ensure the bills provide the correct details in a clear and transparent manner. Therefore, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will continue to advocate for amendments to ensure municipal taxes are not misrepresented on ratepayers' utility bills.

Resolution ER3-24S

Opposition to Federal Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate

County of Newell

Carried

► **Advocacy Target: Rural Economic Development Canada, Energy and Natural Resources Canada**

WHEREAS concerns have been raised about the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of current Government of Canada energy and emission reduction measures in various regions; and

WHEREAS flawed assumptions in current Government of Canada analyses may lead to misleading conclusions about the benefits of energy and emission reduction policies; and

WHEREAS in December 2023, the Government of Canada introduced the final version of the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate regulation for all of Canada, under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA); and

WHEREAS the ZEV mandate imposes requirements on the sellers of light duty vehicles to meet specified thresholds for ZEV sales, restricts the sale of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and includes penalties for non-compliance; and

WHEREAS the ZEV mandate is expected to have unequal impacts on various subpopulations within Canada, disproportionately impacting low-income households and households in rural and northern communities; and

WHEREAS the ZEV mandate assumes that demand for ZEVs will displace the demand for ICE vehicles, impacting the vehicle preferences and choices of Canadians; and

WHEREAS estimates indicate that Canada should be able to meet the 2035 100 percent ZEV mandate for about 270,000 passenger cars (only 18% of the market) but will be unlikely to meet the 2035 ZEV mandate for the remaining 1,240,000 (82%) light duty vehicles (pickup trucks, vans and SUVs/crossovers); and

WHEREAS the gap between light duty vehicle demand and forecasted ZEV light duty vehicle supply will cause severe market disruptions; and

WHEREAS global emissions from international sources may overshadow domestic emission reductions, rendering certain climate goals and carbon dioxide reduction measures ineffective and economically burdensome; and

WHEREAS Alberta's rural economy heavily relies on exporting primary and value-added agriculture commodities, essential for sustaining its economic growth and contributing significantly to the national economy; and

WHEREAS maintaining cost competitiveness is crucial for Alberta's exports to remain successful in international markets, where price sensitivity often determines purchasing decisions; and

WHEREAS the proposed ZEV mandate, unlike measures implemented by many of Alberta's key trading partners, may increase production costs for rural industries, potentially jeopardizing their competitiveness and leading to adverse economic impacts; and

WHEREAS rural municipalities in Alberta recognize the importance of addressing environmental risks but are concerned about the potential impacts of the ZEV mandate on rural residents and businesses;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) register its opposition to the federal zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate in its current form;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and to the Government of Canada (GOC) to reconsider and revise the ZEV mandate to address the unique challenges faced by rural communities and develop a more flexible, market-based approach that removes the 100 percent ZEV requirement.

Government Response

Ministry of Rural Economic Development (Federal)

Issues related to the opposition of Canada's zero emission vehicle mandate fall under the purview of the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We have therefore taken the liberty of forwarding your correspondence to their offices for consideration.

RMA Reaction and Follow-up

The proposed ZEV mandate was reportedly developed as a result of extensive public consultation from several thousand stakeholder respondents. However, the submission period lasted from Dec 10, 2021 to January 21, 2022 (extended from January 14, 2022), indicating an unreasonably short timeline for many types of stakeholders to submit their feedback. RMA did not provide input and it is unclear whether rural Alberta municipalities were able to provide input when the mandate was in development.

RMA will continue to follow up with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and other relevant agencies for a formal response. Until then, this resolution is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**.

Section 2: Resolution Status Update

The following table is a summary of RMA’s current resolutions excluding the resolutions adopted in spring 2024, which are detailed in Section 1, and fall 2024, which are still awaiting government responses. Recent developments on the resolutions are detailed below in the corresponding categories, and readers are reminded that although resolution statuses may remain unchanged, work on each resolution is ongoing. Each resolution has a three-year lifespan to reflect the nature of shifting government policy development and timelines associated with legislative changes and implementation.

Resolutions at a Glance

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
AGRICULTURE		
8-23S	Provincial Review of Agribusiness and Agritourism	Intent Not Met
5-22F	Fertilizer Emission Reduction Target Impacts	Accepted
24-22F	Improved Crop Insurance for Market Gardens	Accepted in Principle
3-22S	Attraction and Retention of Veterinarians to Rural Veterinary Practice	Accepted in Principle
BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY		
5-23S	Access to Mobile Wireless (Cellular) Services	Incomplete Information
COMMUNITY SERVICES		
4-23F	Provincial Downloading of Operating Costs for Deteriorating Provincially Owned Housing	Intent Not Met
9-23F	Review of Affordable Housing Funding Programs	Intent Not Met
20-23F	Post-COVID Bridging Support for Small and Medium Community Facilities and Agricultural Societies	Accepted in Part
10-23S	Victim Services Delivery Model	Intent Not Met
12-23S	Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations	Intent Not Met
15-23S	Capital Funding Support for Housing Management Bodies	Intent Not Met
10-22F	Sustainability of Small Rural Schools	Intent Not Met

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
EMERGENCY SERVICES		
3-23F	Minimum Standards for Adequate Ambulance Services in Rural Alberta	Intent Not Met
9-23S	Rural Fixed Wing Medivac Services	Intent Not Met
1-22F	Volunteer Firefighters as Medical First Responders	Intent Not Met
6-22F	Financial Burden of Emergency Service Response on Crown Lands	Intent Not Met
7-22S	Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) Report Funding	Accepted
ENERGY		
14-23S	Hydrogen Industry Support	Accepted
9-22F	Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements	Accepted in Principle
11-22F	Disparity in Electricity Distribution and Transmission Rates	Intent Not Met
21-22F	Loss of Agricultural Land to Renewable Energy Projects	Accepted in Principle
23-22F	Small Scale Generation Regulation – Interconnection Challenges	Intent Not Met
ER1-22S	Alberta Energy Regulator Action to Require Oil and Gas Companies to Pay Municipal Property Taxes	Intent Not Met
ENVIRONMENT		
6-23F	Expediting the Implementation of an Alberta Flood Regulation	Intent Not Met
7-23F	Strategy for Management of Wildland Fires Outside Forest Protection Area	Intent Not Met
13-22F	Enhanced Wetland Replacement Program	Accepted in Principle
14-22F	Third Party Inspections for Gravel Pit Reclamation	Intent Not Met
16-22F	Exemption of Natural Gas and Propane for Agriculture Under the <i>Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act</i>	Intent Not Met
19-22F	Portion of Funding from Public Lands Camping Pass Directed to Municipalities	Intent Not Met
2-22S	Negative Impact of Carbon Tax on Rural Albertans	Accepted in Part

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
HEALTH AND SENIORS		
10-23F	Enhancing Home Care Services for Rural Residents in Alberta	Accepted in Principle
17-23F	Sustainable Community Hospice Funding Model	Intent Not Met
6-23S	Rural Access to Supports for Addictions, Homelessness and Mental Health	Intent Not Met
2-22F	Laboratory and X-Ray Technologists Training for Rural Healthcare	Intent Not Met
8-22F	Rural Mental Health Advocacy	Accepted in Part
12-22F	Restore Grants-in-Lieu of Taxes for Public Housing Management Authorities	Accepted in Part
17-22F	Government Funding For Nurse Practitioners	Accepted in Principle
MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE		
2-23F	Amendments to the Municipal Government Act – Section 619	Intent Not Met
12-23F	Growth Management Board Voluntary Membership	Accepted
ER1-23F	Limiting Third-party Services in ICF Agreements	Intent Not Met
1-23S	Enhanced Support for Receiving Municipalities in Dissolutions	Intent Not Met
3-22F	Provide for a Uniform Method of Auditing and Enforcing Compliance with Community Aggregate Payment Levy Bylaws	Intent Not Met
4-22F	Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation	Intent Not Met
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
5-23F	Municipal Involvement in Quasi-Judicial Agencies	Accepted in Part
11-23F	Compensation Resulting from Regulatory Changes	Incomplete Information
16-23S	Applied Research Associations Funding	Accepted
13-23S	Municipal Access to Open Data	Accepted in Part
7-23S	Revision of the <i>Alberta Land Stewardship Act</i> to provide for an Expiration Date in Conservation Easement Agreements	Incomplete Information
7-22F	Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Reform	Intent Not Met

#	RESOLUTION TITLE	STATUS
<i>POLICING AND RURAL CRIME</i>		
8-23F	Implementation of Provincial Police Advisory Board	Intent Not Met
4-22S	Continued Support for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Alberta	Intent Not Met
11-23S	Reforming the Bail System to Address Rural Crime	Intent Not Met
<i>TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</i>		
1-23F	Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program Funding	Intent Not Met
14-23F	Provincial High-Load Corridor Protection	Intent Not Met
15-23F	Province-Wide Regulations for E-Scooters and Miniature Personal Electric Vehicles	Intent Not Met
2-23S	Provincial Funding Stream for Non-Residential Infrastructure	Intent Not Met
3-23S	Amendments to the National Building Code	Accepted in Part
18-22F	Regulations for Motorists Passing School Buses with Amber Lights Flashing	Intent Not Met
20-22F	Lost Road Closure Files	Accepted in Part
8-22S	Reversing Changes to Aerodrome Standards Implemented by Transport Canada	Intent Not Met
<i>OTHER</i>		
16-23F	Federal-Provincial Partnership to Counter the United States Inflation Reduction Act	Intent Not Met
19-23F	Government of Alberta Ministry Changes	Incomplete Information
4-23S	Strategic Direction for the RMA	Accepted
6-22S	Responsiveness of Service Delivery by Quasi-independent Agencies in Alberta	Accepted in Part
17-23S	Negative Impact of Bill C-21 on Albertans	Intent Not Met
19-23S	Non-Profit Exemption from Federal Fuel Charge	Incomplete Information

AGRICULTURE

Resolution 8-23S

Provincial Review of Agribusiness and Agritourism

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request the Government of Alberta to undertake a joint provincial/municipal review of agribusiness and agritourism operations that includes considerations related to sector promotion and incentivization, municipal/provincial regulatory alignments, potential transitional building code or taxation options for operators, and other matters to help clarify and align the responsible growth of these value-added sectors in Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Alberta Municipal Affairs response indicates a willingness to work with RMA, rural municipalities, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance the province’s agribusiness and agritourism sectors. The response also outlines several existing municipal tools and assessment/tax policies intended to support the agriculture sector.

While the Municipal Affairs response is encouraging, RMA has not received a response from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation. RMA met with the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sport in summer 2024 to promote agritourism, rural tourism and opportunities for collaboration. In October 2024, the Government of Alberta introduced a new AgriStability program to the Agriculture Financial Service Corporation stating it would reduce paperwork and lower producer costs. In December 2024, The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation announced changes to the agri-processing investment tax credit with the intent to simplify the application process and encourage agricultural investment.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

It is notable that the Economic Development in Rural Alberta Plan (EDRAP) includes a new action to “Support Alberta’s rural visitor economy to ensure rural and Indigenous communities are strong and vibrant with opportunities for employment and economic diversification.” While this is encouraging, it is currently unclear if or how this action will be implemented.

Resolution 5-22F

Fertilizer Emission Reduction Target Impacts

Status: Accepted

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

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA continues to request a response from the Government of Canada regarding this resolution. An April 2023 report from the federal Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food came to a similar conclusion and recommended that “the Government of Canada

- ◆ Recognize that Canadian agricultural producers are leading the world in the efficient use of fertilizers and that it not proceed with any mandatory fertilizer emissions reduction policy

that would jeopardize farmers' yields, but instead encourage them to implement best nutrient management practices such as the 4R Program; and

- ◆ Examine opportunities to fund research and development and further innovation in the use of fertilizer in agriculture.”

Additionally, a 2023 study from the Simpson Centre within the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy found that the fertilizer emissions reduction target would hamper Canada's agricultural competitiveness on the global market, as the study found that global prices do not respond to individual countries' climate policy.

As of January 2025 the fertilizer emissions reduction target remains voluntary and the Government of Canada has made no recent announcements related to making it mandatory, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted** and will monitor for updates to the target.

Resolution 24-22F

Improved Crop Insurance for Market Gardens

Status: Accepted In Principle

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Agriculture Financial Services Corporation is engaged with market garden producers to explore crop insurance options. For straight hail insurance, the maximum insurable value has increased to \$19,000 per acre and the maximum size has increased from 30 acres to 60 acres. Additionally, strawberries and cocktail crops have been included in the coverage eligibility and some requirements, such as minimum crop amounts, have been loosened or removed. As details on the cost-shared crop insurance and its cost effectiveness are not yet available, RMA is not able to confirm if the new policies are acceptable to market garden operators. Until this information is finalized, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

Resolution 3-22S

Attraction and Retention of Veterinarians to Rural Veterinary Practice

Status: Accepted In Principle

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) supports attraction and retention actions to reduce veterinary professional shortages, especially in rural Alberta; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA urge the Government of Alberta to improve veterinary education opportunities and officially support the development of new programs at the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine Faculty (UCVM) through actions that include:

- ◆ Development of a rural practitioner stream;
- ◆ Participation of RMA in UCVM programs of outreach to rural municipalities to encourage and support successful rural student admission to UCVM;
- ◆ Development of an online veterinary support program to help support veterinarians in practice, increasing retention of veterinary professionals;

- ◆ Development of a stackable clinical certificate program allowing for certification of foreign trained veterinarians and providing a structured process for career diversification and/or re-entry into the work force after career break; and
- ◆ Participation of RMA in a committee pursuing recruitment of foreign veterinarians from high quality universities to help ensure “a good fit” in rural communities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA work with UCVM to expand the UCVM admissions committee and provide, on an ongoing basis, a selected number of committee members who are located in, and familiar, with rural Alberta needs; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA examine and implement best practices to conduct outreach to recruit veterinary students and retain veterinary professionals who will work and reside in rural Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: In the past year the Government of Alberta has introduced several initiatives that support the intent of the resolution:

- ◆ A new admission process to the University of Calgary’s Veterinary Medicine Faculty, which appears to include a focus on elements outside of academic achievement.
- ◆ A commitment to notable capital and program expansion funding to increase veterinary training seats at the University of Calgary. Budget 2024 forecast \$23 million had been spent on the University of Calgary – Veterinary Medicine Expansion, with \$37 million estimated in 2024-25 to complete the project. Construction began in December 2023.
- ◆ Alberta Immigration and Multiculturalism is playing a larger role in supporting the Alberta Veterinary Medicine Association and international credential recognition for internationally educated veterinarians coming to Alberta.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will monitor how the above changes impact rural veterinary attraction and retention.

BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY

Resolution 5-23S

Access to Mobile Wireless (Cellular) Services

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta engage the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to address the lack of reliable cellular network coverage for mobile wireless (cellular) service.

Developments: This resolution was sent to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). No development statement exists currently as a response has not yet been received. For this reason, Resolution 5-23S is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. Although mobile wireless service provision falls largely under federal purview, the Minister of Technology and Innovation's mandate letter indicates that cellular network coverage across is a priority among the Ministry's policy commitments to Albertans. RMA will continue to advocate on this resolution by seeking out further opportunities for correspondence and input.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Resolution 4-23F

Provincial Downloading of Operating Costs for Deteriorating Provincially Owned Housing

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Since RMA last reported on this resolution the Government of Alberta has not assumed any change in responsibility for affordable housing in the province and RMA members continue to observe discrepancies in the capital maintenance and renewal funds available to government owned affordable housing verses affordable housing that is available to private and/or non-profit owned affordable housing.

RMA has previously participated in the Seniors' Lodge Program Review. RMA's input during the review emphasized that increased cost pressures are impacting Housing Management Body (HMB) operations, and forcing municipalities to take on a larger fiscal burden for seniors housing that impacts their ability to provide other services.

Given the Government of Alberta's unchanged investment in operating and capital costs for these affordable housing units, RMA assigns this resolution as **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for the asks of this resolution as RMA undertakes a research project on affordable housing.

Resolution 9-23F

Review of Affordable Housing Funding Programs

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Based on this and other resolutions, RMA has begun plans to undertake research and release member resources on affordable housing in the coming months. In

December 2024, RMA hosted a Government of Alberta-led webinar on the Affordable Housing Partnership Program and application process to provide members with more insight into this program and opportunity provide the Government of Alberta with an opportunity to hear member concerns.

However, no progress has been made on the first or second operative clauses in the resolution. The Government of Alberta has not undertaken a review of the Affordable Housing Partnership Program application process and a more data-driven approach to funding allocation has not been introduced. As a result of the webinar organized by RMA, the Government of Alberta is exploring how they can more transparently communicate data on seniors lodges.

In relation to the third operative clause, the federal government continues their preparation on a housing design catalog. Permit-ready design packages with “all the necessary drawings, specifications, and documents for...construction and perform(ance)” and cost estimates are expected in early 2025.

Given the lack of action on requests one and two, and the specific request for RMA to advocate to the province rather than the federal government on housing designs, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue. RMA will undertake a review of the application process to better understand areas of improvement and grant selection criteria and continue to monitor Federal Housing developments. RMA will share details on the federal housing catalog when it is available.

Resolution 20-23F

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

Status: Accepted in Part

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: In the past year the Government of Alberta has taken some steps to support the viability of small- and medium-sized community centres and agricultural societies. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation introduced an Agricultural Societies Infrastructure Revitalization Program that provided \$2.5 million in grant funding for major repairs. The next grant round opens in spring 2025 after the 2024-2025 intake closes in February 2025. In summer 2025, the Government of Alberta announced it will fund a study on how the province can support regional agricultural societies. While this funding is appreciated, it does not sufficiently support small and medium sized agricultural societies.

RMA has taken several actions to advocate on this resolution. RMA met with the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) in fall 2024 to discuss their priorities. The AAAS also participated in a panel on rural volunteerism at the Fall 2024 RMA Convention to communicate the needs and values of these societies. RMA’s Rural Volunteerism Report, released in fall 2024, was designed to meet the intent of this resolution more broadly. The County of Barrhead also participated on the rural volunteerism convention panel, and presented the county’s “Community Hall Strategy.”

As the response indicates the Government of Alberta has made financial investments in small and medium community facilities and agricultural societies, but not addressed capacity building, the RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part** and will continue advocacy efforts to ensure that small and medium-sized community centres and agricultural societies get the funding and capacity building support that they need to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resolution 10-23S

Victim Services Delivery Model

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to maintain the current model of victim services program delivery and instead provide direct assistance to the small number of communities that are struggling to operate under the current model and have insufficient services for victims; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta for more consistent funding for the current model and the development of an approach for more consistent regional collaboration and information-sharing within the current model.

DEVELOPMENTS: Despite concerns from RMA and other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta implemented the new regionalized Victim Services Delivery Model in summer 2024.

The previous model allowed local victim services units (VSUs) to address community needs on a case-by-case basis in a way that reflected the local community. Although RMA recognizes that some weaknesses existed in the previous model, these could have been addressed without creating a new centralized model that did not have RMA's or Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association's (APBVSA) support. Furthermore, RMA did not receive a meaningful explanation from the Government of Alberta as to why these changes were required or why the province could not fund the existing model at an adequate level. APBVSA found that the province's 2024-2025 victim services spending, \$36 million, was below victim services spending in the past nine years.

As the creation of this regionalized model directly contradicts the intent of this resolution, and RMA is concerned that the regionalized model does not appropriately fund victim services, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

The RMA has maintained regular contact with APBVSA and shares many of APBVSA's concerns around the zonal model. The RMA maintains that the new regional model cannot support the unique needs of rural communities and will provide inadequate assistance for victims of crime when needed most. Further, RMA is concerned that some members of Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services have shared misleading information about the state of local VSUs and the volunteer, staff, and executive members that support those VSUs. This has been used to foster public support for the transition to a zonal model and does not reflect the actual state of healthy local VSUs. RMA members continue to report that the new model is not meeting local needs and will continue to advocate for VSU model that better serves rural municipalities and rural Albertans.

Resolution 12-23S

Casino Opportunities for Charitable Organizations

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta and Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis to reform Alberta’s charitable gaming model to provide equity to all charitable organizations in Alberta, by addressing the disparity between the funding provided, and the frequency of casino opportunities available to charitable organizations in major urban centers compared with those in rural communities.

DEVELOPMENTS: Since this resolution was passed, the charitable gaming model has remained unchanged. For many years, charitable gaming has been an important advocacy issue for RMA, especially since a resolution was passed that directed RMA to form a charitable gaming committee in 2018. The committee’s final recommendations were as follows:

- ◆ Recommendation 1: Pool a portion of the revenues generated in each region and distribute equally to all regions
- ◆ Recommendation 2: Address inequities associated with the model
- ◆ Recommendation 3: Stakeholders, including the AGLC, RMA and AUMA, should take a collaborative approach to improving the current gaming model
- ◆ Recommendation 4: Regularly Review the Model and Proceed Towards Equality

RMA participated in Alberta Gaming Liquor and Cannabis’ 2021 review of the charitable gaming model and advocated in support of the Camrose casino’s application to relocate from Camrose to Edmonton as a rural supporting casino. In early 2025, RMA will publish a series one-pagers and an updated report on this issue as part of a campaign calling on the Government of Alberta to review and update the model with the specific intent of supporting equity among charitable organizations across the province.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 15-23S

Capital Funding Support for Housing Management Bodies

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA members continue to struggle with insufficient capital maintenance and renewal (CMR) funding, which places a burden on rural municipalities to contribute to costs beyond their legislated requirements, particularly as the Government of Alberta has limited CMR funding to government owned affordable housing units. Recently, the Auditor General released a report that current CMR processes are inadequate to appropriately manage and maintain the condition of government-owned affordable housing. RMA met with staff from the Ministry of Seniors, Community, and Social Services in October 2024 to discuss the government’s 2022-2023 CMR review, which has not been made publicly available. An overview of the recommendations from that review is available on the Government of Alberta website.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** and RMA will continue to advocate for changes to reduce the pressure on rural municipalities to subsidize affordable housing costs.

Resolution 10-22F

Sustainability of Small Rural Schools

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: While the Government of Alberta’s recent changes to capital funding of rural schools is an improvement over the previous approach, there is a need to develop strategies that will reduce the issues faced by rural schools. The development of these strategies will require cooperative work between the province and the municipalities and school boards impacted. In rural communities, schools play a role beyond education; they are often viewed as community hubs and a symbol of a rural community’s resilience.

In May 2024, the Government of Alberta announced a one-time investment of roughly \$1.7 million for education training at the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary that will fund seats for 59 additional students in rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities across the province. The program will be more flexible than existing education programs and support students to remain in their community for much of their education.

The federal government has continued their investment in the National School Food Program and announced funds for after school learning in low income and Indigenous communities.

Although funds and rural training seats are a step in the right direction, these actions do not meet the request to engage with school authorities and rural leaders on how to best leverage schools and support their long-term viability. RMA assigns this resolution the status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for provincial engagement on this issue.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Resolution 3-23F

Minimum Standards for Adequate Ambulance Services in Rural Alberta

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: It is essential that Alberta Health creates a solution that ensures every area of Alberta has available ambulances with qualified emergency personnel, capable of providing response times that ensure lifesaving measures. Although the response from Alberta Health acknowledges the unique needs of EMS in rural and remote areas, there is no clear plan or funding to ensure that there are accessible services available to residents living in rural and remote areas.

AHS' initial response to this resolution referenced the actioning of the 2023-2024 EMS operating plan. Although not publicly reported on to RMA's knowledge, RMA is regularly updated on EMS operating plans through participation on the Alberta EMS Standing Committee. The Ministry of Health created this committee in 2023 to ensure EMS operates as effectively and efficiently as possible. RMA sits on subcommittees regarding air ambulance services, dispatch, and Medical First Response. Prior to this more recent committee, RMA sat on the Alberta EMS Provincial Advisory Committee (AEPAC).

Given this lack of focused action on the resolution intent, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for improved rural EMS service.

Resolution 9-23S

Rural Fixed Wing Medivac Services

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request that the Government of Alberta ensure that air ambulance service providers adhere to their existing contract and restore air ambulance service to the three municipalities that have recently lost this service either by compelling the contractor to subcontract the air ambulance service to a contractor with appropriately skilled pilots; requiring the contractor to train their existing pilots to achieve industry standards, or by providing funding to municipalities to upgrade airports to meet the new standard required for lower skilled pilots; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request that the Government of Alberta compel Alberta Health Services (AHS) to provide any airport slated for discontinuance of any AHS transportation services a detailed analysis of necessary changes (within reason and based on industry standards) required to be made by the airport and a commitment that if those changes are completed, full transportation services will be reinstated.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2023, Alberta Health Services hired a contractor to conduct a review of air ambulance landing sites to assess their suitability for accommodating safe access by fixed wing

air ambulances. This report has not yet been released. Depending on its outcomes, the review may represent a step in the right direction for effected airports to understand their gaps in services and what is needed to ensure they can safely operate as air ambulance landing sites. The RMA was listed as a key stakeholder in this consultation process and staff completed a joint submission on this issue with ABmunis that reiterated the need for all consultation to include impacted members. The submission includes the following key concerns:

- ◆ Efficient access to health services is essential to the health and safety of citizens and should be at the forefront of any decisions made.
- ◆ Any changes to airport standards, air ambulance service delivery, or other areas identified in the report should not proceed without municipal stakeholder engagement.
- ◆ Financial support is necessary for the maintenance and upgrades of airports being used for air ambulance services.
- ◆ Pilots must be adequately trained at an identified municipal airport to ensure capability and safety.

It is important to note that the review may also pose a risk to small municipalities if outcomes include recommendations for airport standards that small municipalities may be unable to meet, particularly without targeted funding support from the Government of Alberta.

The review does not make up for the closure of air ambulance landing sites without consultation and does not restore services and adhere AHS to their existing contracts. There needs to be adequate training of contracted pilots working in these rural areas and the RFP does not account for this.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA awaits the release of the air ambulance landing site review. RMA will continue to advocate for the complete restoration of air ambulance services.

Resolution 1-22F

Volunteer Firefighters as Medical First Responders

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has made several announcements about Medical First Response (MFR) in recent months, including:

- ◆ \$3.75 million in funding for Medical First Response Programs in February 2024, distributed between 200 urban and rural municipalities and Indigenous communities. Of the \$3.75 million, \$1.35 million was designated for supplies, equipment, and training courses, while \$2.5 million was reserved for operational expenses. It appears that these funds are a one-time top up.

- ◆ The introduction of an \$800,000 Medical First Responder Grant Program which will provide grant based funding to develop new MFR programs and build community capacity to effectively respond to medical emergencies.
- ◆ The introduction of a \$600,000 Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Education Grant that will fund EMR training to support EMS in the community.

The latter announcements were made in Fall 2024 as part of the Rural Health Action Plan.

While these funding programs are adjacent to this resolution’s intent, they do not include the introduction of an ongoing “bill per response” system to remunerate fire departments for their MFR costs. RMA is concerned that not only do new funding sources not properly support municipal MFR programs for responding to emergencies within provincial jurisdiction, they incentivize a download by encouraging the expansion of municipal MFR capacity without corresponding operational support. For this reason, RMA assigns this a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 6-22F

Financial Burden of Emergency Service Response on Crown Lands

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The response provided mentions that some aspects of Medical First Response (MFR) is compensated, including training, equipment and supports, however the response does not acknowledge the time taken out of a municipal MFR’s shift to respond to emergencies which are not located within a municipality, but still require emergency assistance. Additionally, not all municipalities participate in the MFR program but may still respond to calls on Crown land due to a lack of available provincial response capacity.

As the response does not indicate that any additional compensation will be provided for calls on Crown Land, RMA assigns this a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 7-22S

Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) Report Funding

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services to proceed with the development and implementation of necessary policy and standard changes towards further critical care integration across the EMS system, including consistently funding a minimum of 50 per cent of an air ambulance provider’s operating costs, as recommended in the Helicopter Emergency Medical Services report.

DEVELOPMENTS: The funding commitment for HALO and HERO from the Government of Alberta is welcome news and meets the intent of the resolution. RMA will continue to monitor the progress of the five-year agreements.

At this time, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

ENERGY

Resolution 14-23S

Hydrogen Industry Support

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to increase their commitment to support and resource current hydrogen initiatives throughout the province so that Alberta and its innovative energy industry partners may become leaders in the developing hydrogen economy.

DEVELOPMENTS: As a result of the increased funding from both the provincial and federal governments, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted** and will continue to monitor forthcoming budgets, programs and commitments that will impact Alberta's hydrogen industry.

Resolution 9-22F

Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements

Status: Accepted in Principle

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;

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: The intent of the resolution is to call on the Government of Alberta to mandate that renewable energy project proponents provide an actual security deposit in the form of a surety bond or similar means. In 2023, the AUC launched an inquiry and engagement process for possible changes to Rule 007, which establishes the renewable energy project approval process. The results of this inquiry were released in early 2024 and were partially used to inform new policy changes announced by the provincial government.

In response to the AUC inquiry, RMA provided the following input into how a renewable energy development and a financial security system should proceed:

- ◆ Ensure accountability for end of life without disincentivizing industry investment;
- ◆ Be easily transferable to ensure accountability remains with the project owner if the project is sold; and
- ◆ Ensure that adequate assets are available to the province to reclaim the land in the event that the owner becomes insolvent or otherwise unable to meet reclamation requirements.
- ◆ Balance between renewable energy demand and agricultural land preservation to minimize economic loss from both industries.

- ◆ Security amounts should be calculated based on the full estimated cost of reclaiming the land to as close to its original state as possible.

While the costs may be assessed on a project-by-project basis, the Government of Alberta or the AUC need to prescribe expectations as to the state in which the land should be returned to. It will also be key that as a project progresses into its life span, regular assessments of what expected decommissioning and reclamation be reviewed.

As the Government of Alberta has the expertise and fiscal capacity to manage the reclamation process, including disbursement of the funds, the RMA believes this responsibility should be assigned to the AUC itself or the government ministry. Individual landowners who may not have the capacity to make informed decisions regarding security requirements should not be responsible for this technical process.

In October 2024, the Government of Alberta launched a specific engagement related to the development of a reclamation regime for renewable energy projects. RMA submitted written input to this engagement and also provided members with an engagement guide to support municipalities seeking to provide their own submissions.

In January 2025, the Government of Alberta announced the development of a regulation to implement reclamation requirements. While the specific regulation is not yet available, RMA views this as a crucial step towards resolving the request in this resolution. RMA is concerned about some announced components of the regulation, including the “dual stream” approach that will allow landowners to continue to hold reclamation securities in place of a provincially-held security. At this point, details as to how the reclamation amount will be calculated, verified, and adjusted are not yet available. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will review the resolution when the reclamation system is implemented.

Resolution 11-22F

Disparity in Electricity Distribution and Transmission Rates

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The initial Government of Alberta response acknowledges that rural areas are facing higher distribution charges than urban areas. While the initial response indicated there is no plan to modify how distribution costs are assigned, the 2023 mandate letter tasks the Minister of Affordability and Utilities with reviewing the electricity pricing system, with the goal of reducing transmission and distribution fees for end users.

In late 2023 Alberta Affordability and Utilities released a public engagement survey related to the Transmission Policy. The engagement focused on how Alberta’s transmission development and approval process can best support affordability, reliability and decarbonization. The RMA’s input into this process emphasized the need for some level of transmission planning that better balances continued freedom for generators to build where they choose while recognizing that projects requiring significant new transmission infrastructure may require higher public investment. This approach should not be prescriptive but rather based on stronger locational

pricing signals to incentivise projects in optimal areas. Further, RMA commented on the need to include climate change discussions within congestion conversations, as severe weather incidents have been impacting the reliability of electricity to rural Alberta in recent weather events and this must be considered as part of the conversation moving forward. Although this approach is not perfect, the RMA sees value in providing input on this approach and ensuring that it meets the needs of rural Alberta.

In October 2024, the Ministry of Affordability and Utilities hosted a webinar to introduce new and potential transmission policy changes after which the ministry launched a very short feedback and input period. The proposed legislative amendments are due to take effect in Spring 2025 and address policy implementations related to topics such as investor incentivization and transmission infrastructure renewal but do not specifically address inequitable transmission/distribution cost discrepancies for rural residents compared to urban residents.

RMA appreciates the Minister of Affordability and Utilities plan to include these issues in the implementation of their mandate and the 2023 engagement. RMA will continue to participate in engagement opportunities related to electricity transmission and distribution in Alberta, and advocate for this resolution. However, until meaningful action and implementation is taken, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 21-22F

Loss of Agricultural Land to Renewable Energy Projects

Status: Accepted in Principle

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2022, RMA formed a member committee to review the mandates of quasi-judicial agencies, as well as if and to what extent they act in the public interest and the role of municipalities in their approval processes. Additionally, in 2023, the AUC launched an inquiry and engagement process for possible changes to Rule 007 and other policy changes related to renewable energy development. For both the quasi-judicial agencies member committee and for the AUC's recent inquiry, RMA provided the following recommendations, among others:

- ◆ The AUC should specifically include a consideration of the land and soil type to the proposed project, as well as other considerations such as current and historical land use, climate and weather trends, drought and flood risk etc. within their project review process.
- ◆ Rural municipalities have a long history of balancing preservation of agricultural land with development and their input should be weighted in the approval process.

In early 2024, the AUC announced new policy changes as a result of the inquiry in its Module A report, which emphasizes an “agriculture-first” approach to renewable energy development. Using the Land Suitability Rating System (LSRS), new renewable energy projects are no longer permitted on Class 1 and 2 lands. This is a promising change indicating that RMA and member feedback has been considered and that the provincial government along with AUC recognize the value in minimizing economic losses to both the agricultural and renewable energy sectors.

However, there is still a lack of clarity regarding how the new regulations will account for nuance in local conditions, considerations of other productive land classes, the presence of irrigation or the implementation of agrivoltaics.

In December 2024, the new Electric Energy Land Use and Visual Assessment Regulation was announced, which seeks to follow the “agriculture-first” approach previously outlined as a priority for the provincial government. According to this regulation, agricultural impact assessments are required for renewable energy proponents as a condition of constructing and operating on high-quality agricultural land. RMA will monitor the impacts of this regulation on members and assess its effectiveness as its implementation progresses.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle**. RMA will review the resolution after the requirements of the regulation are implemented into the project approval process to determine whether the policy achieves a proper “balance,” as per the resolution request.

Resolution 23-22F

Small Scale Generation Regulation – Interconnection Challenges

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Ministry of Affordability and Utilities response recognizes the benefits that small scale power generation brings to communities, through job creation and the preservation of prime agricultural land. The government response explains the approval processes and procedures currently in place are linked to the safe and reliable use of the electricity grid. However, it is not clear whether the exemptions would create unsafe transmission from a generator project under five megawatts.

The Small Scale Generation Regulation was updated in May 2024, but does not address the goals of this resolution. Therefore, the RMA assigns this a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution ER1-22S

Alberta Energy Regulator Action to Require Oil and Gas Companies to Pay Municipal Property Taxes

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) urge the Government of Alberta to direct the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) to amend the directives, policies and other processes (including directives 067 and 088) necessary to require any company regulated by the AER to pay all current and historical municipal property taxes in full as a condition of operating in Alberta; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AER replace its current practice of relying on industry self-reporting of property tax payments by collaborating with the RMA and rural municipalities to develop a system by which rural municipalities can easily share unpaid property tax information with the AER.

DEVELOPMENTS: Some actions have been taken by the provincial government to address the issues presented in this resolution, including the ministerial order issued in March 2023 (O43/2023) which directs the AER to require oil and gas companies to provide proof of full payment of municipal property taxes prior to issuing a new license to a company or allowing a company to sell or purchase and existing licenses. Unfortunately, this order does not meet the intent of the first operative clause in the resolution, which calls for payment of taxes to be “a condition of operating in Alberta.” Under the new requirements, companies are still permitted to operate regardless of their property tax payment status using their existing assets.

In actioning the ministerial order, Alberta Municipal Affairs is working with rural municipalities to gather tax payment data on specific companies, which will then be shared with the AER. Municipal Affairs has developed a formal process in which municipalities can provide updated information quarterly to ensure the AER actions the ministerial order requirements using the most current data. This information-sharing process fulfills the intent of the second operative clause. RMA continues to monitor this issue as the results of the ministerial order are yet to be seen by municipalities.

Despite this progress, it is clear that this problem continues to persist: as of 2023, at least \$251.8 million in cumulative municipal property taxes have gone unpaid by oil and gas companies, according to the results of RMA’s most recent survey. This marks the sixth consecutive year that the RMA conducted the survey and despite the small decrease in total and new outstanding taxes from the previous year, the problem still represents a significant burden on municipalities to maintain infrastructure, provide essential services and ensure the viability of their communities.

In August 2024, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals signed Ministerial Order 96/2024 (MO 96/2024). The new ministerial order provides exemptions to the conditions set out in MO 43/2023 whereby conditions do not apply when a given transferred asset has been designated as an orphan well. This regulation would better prevent producing assets from abandonment and reclamation due to their ownership by a company with tax arrears. Subsequently, instead of assets becoming the responsibility of the OWA, they would more often become the responsibility of the purchasing company. However, this diminishes the effectiveness of MO 43/2023 because the new exemptions allow the transfer of assets with outstanding taxes if these assets are designated as orphans. Furthermore, without the enforcement tool of a ministerial order, it is not clear if there is any mechanism to require the purchasing company to pay tax arrears.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met** . RMA will continue to advocate for payment of taxes to be a condition of operating in Alberta for oil and gas companies, for further accountability for delinquent companies, and for the availability of more tools and powers for municipalities to recover lost revenue from unpaid taxes.

ENVIRONMENT

Resolution 6-23F

Expediting the Implementation of an Alberta Flood Regulation

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Responses from Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Environment and Protected Areas indicate no intention to move forward with a provincial flood regulation at this time.

The *Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act* provides the GOA with the ability to map floodways, restrict floodway development, prepare emergency response plans, and more. Working with municipalities and other stakeholders to enable some or all of these powers through a province-wide regulation under the Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act would ensure that municipalities have the necessary resources available to prepare for and recover from imminent flooding, and reduce risks to developers, property owners, and other stakeholders.

RMA understands that much like any regulatory changes impacting land use and development, implementing a provincial flood regulation comes with risks and potential liabilities for the province. However, continuing to take a sporadic and disjointed approach to discouraging floodway development is even riskier as it contributes to a lack of understanding of risks, rules, etc. by landowners and municipalities. RMA is frustrated by the fact that enabling legislation was passed over 10 years ago, and the Government of Alberta is still unwilling to even engage in an in-depth consultation on how a regulation could be developed in a way to mitigate current gaps in provincial and municipal regulation of development.

The Drought and Flood Protection Program (DFPP), launched in March 2024, provides municipalities with critical funding to implement flood management and prevention projects. However, policy and regulatory changes are also required to ensure municipalities can adequately carry out flood management and fulfill all the asks of this resolution. For this reason, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 7-23F

Strategy for Management of Wildland Fires Outside Forest Protection Area

Status: Accepted in Principle

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; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMA advocate that the GOA allocate additional funding to train more rotary wing pilots in bucketing and strategically place these bucketing resources inside and outside the FPA.

DEVELOPMENTS: In response to this resolution, RMA has formed a wildfire working group (WWG) with representation from RMA member municipalities, ABmunis, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, Alberta Forest Products, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, and Alberta Forestry and Parks. The WWG held five meetings during which members discussed challenges, lessons learned and best practices for wildfire management outside the FPA. The final report, including recommendations, will be finalized and released in early 2025. The report contains various recommendations that are targeted to specific stakeholders and organizations including municipalities and government ministries.

It is also essential that adequate funding is allocated for the training of rotary wing pilots in bucketing, especially in areas outside of FPAs. RMA understands that additional capacity has been obtained for 2024 in the form of five night vision-equipped helicopters that can provide support after sunset.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Principle** and will revisit the status as the working group's work progresses.

Resolution 13-22F

Enhanced Wetland Replacement Program

Status: Accepted in Principle

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response does not address the intent of the resolution: to expand the project eligibility scope of the Wetland Replacement Program (WRP) to include projects that enhance existing wetlands or redevelop constructed wetlands to provide enhanced community benefits. However, the response indicates that these types of projects may be considered under the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP), which is a competitive grant program. WRRP eligible projects specifically include wetland enhancements, as called for by the resolution. Several municipalities have applied and received funding towards wetland and watershed rehabilitation projects from each program.

While the WRP does not fund wetland enhancements, the WRRP does. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Principle**.

Resolution 14-22F

Third Party Inspections for Gravel Pit Reclamation

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that the gravel pit inspection backlog has been reduced due to the hiring of additional inspectors and improved training. The government response also indicates work to expand the Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS) to include applications under the *Public Lands Act*. While this is a positive development, the resolution requests that the Government of Alberta amend the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* to allow the hiring of qualified third-parties to undertake inspections. From RMA’s perspective, this amendment would not undermine or replace the current inspection process, but rather provide another “tool in the toolbox” if the backlog returns in the future.

RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate for the inclusion of this enabling clause in the Act.

Resolution 16-22F

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

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Bill C-234, an act to amend the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, passed third reading in the Senate on December 12, 2023. Although it has yet to receive royal assent, the bill was passed by the Senate with amendments but is yet to be passed as amended by the House of commons. The proposed amendments to the bill seek to remove clauses that would exempt carbon taxes from propane and natural gas used to heat or cool barns and livestock buildings and dry grain – extending the carbon tax exemptions available to farmers on gasoline and diesel. If this bill is passed with the proposed amendments, farmers and ranchers would no longer have such exemptions and would incur additional costs to maintain their livestock and/or crops. This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to look for updates on the status of Bill C-234 and will continue advocating on the issues presented in this resolution.

Resolution 19-22F

Portion of Funding from Public Lands Camping Pass Directed to Municipalities

Status: Intent Not Met

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response acknowledges the impacts of provincial recreation areas on neighboring municipalities yet does not provide a subsequent plan or approach to consider how municipalities can be better supported. Although public lands camping is under provincial jurisdiction, neighbouring municipalities are still obligated to provide emergency assistance within the camping areas. Additionally, municipalities that incur related costs and even provide services within public lands have no specialized tool or fund to off-set these costs. The increase in camping increases the need for other services within the municipality, such as waste management, parking lots, road maintenance, and general support for people accessing public land use areas. These services are not only essential, but promote the area as a safe and well-maintained place to visit and experience. Providing these services is expensive and requires adequate compensation, especially if the camping pass is already implemented.

In 2023, RMA staff met with several municipalities bordering major provincial parks to discuss the importance of offsetting costs of public land camping passes for neighbouring municipalities. More recently, this conversation developed into the formation of the Eastern Slopes Task Force, with seven participating member municipalities. RMA is facilitating the task force and will update members on progress as appropriate. The task force's purpose is to work collaboratively to gather data and examples of the impacts of public land use on Eastern Slopes municipalities, and develop recommendations for how the province can work with impacted municipalities to off-set those costs or take on a larger share of services linked to public land use.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA and the Eastern Slopes Task Force will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 2-22S

Negative Impact of Carbon Tax on Rural Albertans

Status: Accepted in Part

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: While RMA has not yet received a response from the Government of Canada, RMA has completed an economic impact analysis report. The impact analysis has been released on the RMA website, and includes the following key findings related to impacts on rural municipalities:

- ◆ There are two key pathways through which the federal carbon pricing policy is expected to impact rural municipalities in Alberta:
 - Increasing the prices faced by municipalities on goods that are directly and indirectly impacted by the carbon tax such as fuel, heating, and electricity, or indirectly impacted by the carbon tax (i.e., emissions-intensive goods).
 - Influencing the long-term viability of key industries (e.g., oil and gas extraction and processing) that constitute a meaningful portion of a municipality's assessment base, thereby impacting the value of assets available for taxation. Rural municipalities tend to host the majority of heavy industry associated with resource extraction and processing that underpin a considerable portion of the provincial economy.

The report also examines impacts on rural households and includes the following key findings:

- ◆ Direct costs of carbon tax is relatively similar between urban and rural households in Alberta. When revenue recycling is considered, the average household in both urban and rural Alberta is not currently impacted by direct carbon tax payments.
- ◆ Non-price costs of the federal fuel charge, including impacts to households through wage reductions and unemployment, may have a more pronounced impact on rural households as compared to urban households, as rural communities in Alberta host a relatively larger proportion of the province's labour force in carbon-intensive industries.

As RMA has completed the impact report, but not received a response from the Government of Canada regarding the carbon levy on fuel, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**.

HEALTH AND SENIORS

Resolution 10-23F

Enhancing Home Care Services for Rural Residents in Alberta

Status: Accepted in Principle

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the measures being taken for continuing care services across the province. The initiatives proposed for rural Albertans to receive more equitable access to care are a step in the right direction and will be monitored closely.

However, the response from Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services do not acknowledge the unique needs and challenges of people requiring care in rural and remote areas. There are a variety of unmet service needs that are not accounted for in this response, and there is no clear increase in funding for how these needs will be met. While the commitments to programming enhancements are encouraging, and, if properly implemented, should meet the intent of the resolution, RMA plans to monitor their progress in the coming months. RMA assigns this resolution as **Accepted in Principle** and will continue advocacy efforts on this issue.

Resolution 17-23F

Sustainable Community Hospice Funding Model

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Alberta Health Services' response to this resolution showed commitments to enhancing hospice services for communities across the province. However, it did not address the resolution requests for sustainable operational funding for community hospice societies. The creation of a sustainable operational funding model for the provision of hospice services by community hospice societies across the province will ensure that sites are receiving the support that they need to succeed.

In December 2024, RMA released a report titled *End-of-Life Care in Rural Alberta: The Case for a Sustainable Community Hospice Funding Model*, which includes recommendations for the creation of a sustainable community hospice funding model. RMA has shared the report with the ministries of Seniors, Community, and Social Services, and Alberta Health. RMA will continue to advocate on this issue using the data and recommendations in the report as guidance.

RMA is committed to learning more about the transformation of the continuing care system and will continue to report on any updates as a result of this advocacy. RMA assigns this resolution with a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 6-23S

Rural Access to Supports for Addictions, Homelessness and Mental Health

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to provide funding to rural municipalities and community service organizations to address the issues of addiction, homelessness and public safety, and build on the province’s recovery-oriented system of addiction and mental health care at a level similar to the funding provided to Edmonton, Calgary and other large urban centres in late 2022.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta’s (GOA’s) response to this resolution focuses on various existing mental health supports available for Albertans, including those living in rural areas. However, the response does not indicate that the GOA will take any additional efforts to ensure that rural Alberta has the same access to funding for mental health, addiction, and homelessness that was provided to cities such as Edmonton and Calgary in 2022.

In December 2024, the Government of Alberta announced the creation of a new homelessness funding model and an expert panel that will help shape the province’s future approach to combatting homelessness. The new funding model would shift the approach for funding homelessness supports from one in which the Government of Alberta provides funding to designated community-based organizations in Alberta’s seven largest urban centres, which subsequently further distribute funds to local frontline organizations, to a competitive grant-based model through which organizations all over the province may apply if they meet certain eligibility criteria. RMA has questions around the extent to which rural organizations may be able to benefit from this model and will continue to monitor implementation.

As the extent to which this new funding model will support rural addiction, mental health, homeless, and public safety, while building on the province’s recovery oriented system remains unclear, RMA assigns this resolution the status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 2-22F

Laboratory and X-Ray Technologists Training for Rural Healthcare

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The initial government response to this resolution indicated additional funding had been allocated to programs such as nurses and laboratory professionals. However, RMA is not aware of how these seats were allocated and to what extent they were available for rural Albertan students.

Further, Alberta Advanced Education’s response indicates that they have not yet received a proposal for the Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist programs. RMA would like to see

Alberta Advanced Education collaborate with NAIT and other relevant expert stakeholders on how to expand this.

As a result, RMA assigns this a status **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 8-22F

Rural Mental Health Advocacy

Status: Accepted in Part

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta’s (GOA’s) response to this resolution provided insight into several additional mental health supports that have been put into place for rural Alberta, and more recent rural healthcare investments anticipated to extend to mental health. However, the response does not indicate that the GOA will take any advocacy efforts to ensure that provisional psychologists, psychologists and registered counsellors with the CCPA will be included in the loan forgiveness program, provided that their practices is located in an under-served rural or remote community. Allowing these practitioners to participate in the loan forgiveness program is a key recruitment strategy and is detrimental to the health and well being of rural Albertans.

RMA understands that Counselling Therapists are now regulated by the College of Alberta Psychologists as per a government announcement in spring 2024. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**. RMA will continue to monitor concerns around rural mental health and counselling therapists’ regulation.

Resolution 12-22F

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

Status: Accepted in Part

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).

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates a plan to respond to one of the three asks of resolution 12-22F. RMA is pleased to see the commitment to action the 10-year strategy's recommendation to increase rent supports.

In 2024 the Government of Alberta amended the Municipal Government Act to exempt non-profit affordable housing from municipal property taxes and enable the option to offer multi-year residential property tax exemptions. While this change may encourage the development of affordable housing in some communities, it shifts costs onto municipalities and their taxpayers. The Government of Alberta has also provided no indication that they plan to reinstate grants-in-lieu of taxes.

The RMA is actively engaged in advocacy work around affordable housing and will continue to monitor the bill's progression through the legislature and any resulting amendments. As the government's response does not commit to restoring grants in-lieu-of taxes for public housing bodies or addressing specific changes to the Alberta Housing Act, this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**.

Resolution 17-22F

Government Funding For Nurse Practitioners

Status: Accepted In Principle

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has committed to a new salary-based pay system for Nurse Practitioners (NPs), to be launched in early 2024. The model is expected to include payment for a specified number of clinical hours and other commitments, such as caring for a certain number of patients.

NPs who opt into the compensation model will also qualify for caseload support once their patient caseloads are established, as announced in October 2023. The three-year, \$57 million support program will help primary health care providers manage an increasing number of patients. Each provider has the potential to receive up to \$10,000 annually to help support the added administrative work associated with implementing the new model.

RMA staff have collaborated and discussed this issue with the Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta (NPAA) and are pleased with the new funding model for NPs in Alberta.

Due to the continued commitment from the GOA to move towards a salary-based funding model for NPs in Alberta, RMA has assigned this resolution a status of **Accepted In Principle** and will continue to monitor program rollout.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Resolution 2-23F

Amendments to the Municipal Government Act – Section 619

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: Municipal Affairs’ response in late 2023 stated that regulatory entities such as the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) are “encouraged” to consult with municipalities, but did not show any intent to make regulators’ decisions regarding licenses, permits, approvals, and others consistent with municipal statutory land use planning. Since then, no further progress has been made on any amendments to s. 619 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA).

Encouraging rather than legislating consultation with municipalities and adherence to municipalities’ statutory land use planning documents remains an insufficient policy approach, especially when projects or licenses granted by quasi-judicial agencies have significant local impacts; this approach leaves these agencies to determine if, how, and to what extent municipal land use planning documents will be considered during project approval processes. This will contribute to uncertainty for municipalities.

Section 619 of the MGA still insulates quasi-judicial agencies from being accountable to municipalities or even considering municipal planning documents unless they choose to do so, and as there are no plans to amend the section, RMA’s status on this resolution remains as **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 5-23F

Municipal Involvement in Quasi-Judicial Agencies

Status: Accepted in Part

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: : In 2023, RMA formed the Quasi-Judicial Agencies Member Committee (QJAC). QJAC proposed several recommendations to improve the approval processes of the AER, AUC and NRCB. QJAC recommendations related to this resolution include:

- ◆ That the GOA and quasi-judicial agencies work with stakeholders to develop a public interest evaluation framework to assess decision-making and engagement processes.

- ◆ That the GOA and quasi-judicial agencies work together and with stakeholders, including municipalities, to regularly adapt approval processes to industry changes.
- ◆ That both quasi-judicial agencies and applicants play a direct role in initial project engagement processes.
- ◆ That agencies review and redevelop current notification systems to better engage with municipalities at the onset of projects.
- ◆ That the AER and AUC adopt NRCB requirements related to aligning projects with municipal development plans.
- ◆ That municipalities have automatic status as directly affected parties and automatic standing at all hearings.
- ◆ These recommendations align with this resolution and support the need for increased and enhanced collaboration between regulators and municipalities.

Both Alberta Affordability and Utilities and Alberta Municipal Affairs mentioned the ongoing inquiry into renewable energy, which RMA participated in. RMA's input aligned with the ask of this resolution, supporting the need for municipalities to be involved in regulator processes proactively and to be identified as key stakeholders. The submissions made by RMA to the AUC brought together member concerns through resolutions as well as the Quasi-Judicial Agency Committee, which was composed of several RMA members. The inquiry concluded in February 2024 and resulted in several recommendations from the AUC, as well as policy direction from the Government of Alberta. Recommended changes related to this resolution include:

- ◆ Municipal participation rights will be automatically granted and municipalities will be eligible to request cost recovery for participation (AUC commitment).
- ◆ The Commission will undertake a review of Rule 007 related to municipal submission requirements and clarify consultation requirements (AUC commitment).

The AUC engaged on changes to Rule 007 intended to implement the commitments above. This includes the development of a municipal engagement template form that proponents will be required to complete to record and confirm support from municipalities. In October 2024, RMA submitted written input to this engagement and also provided members with an engagement guide to support municipalities seeking to provide their own submissions.

The RMA is pleased to see that securities will now be required for developments following the inquiry. Reclamation securities are necessary to protect the public interest and ensure that industry is held accountable. However, there needs to be certainty that the securities are appropriately funded, especially in the case of landowner held securities. Securities should be calculated according to the estimated expected costs of land reclamation efforts. As such, in order to protect landowners and municipalities, renewable energy projects should not be approved until all provincially determined security requirements are met.

The RMA also appreciates the NRCB's response to the QJAC recommendations, however there is no indication that any additional measures will be taken to ensure that municipalities participation in and contribution to the project review process will be enhanced.

The AER's response, while focused on specific examples of possible changes outlined in the resolution background and not on the actual operative clause of the resolution, implies that the current AER

approval process either already fulfils the requested changes, or that the changes would have unintended consequences for municipalities. This is disappointing as the work of the QJAC and input from specific municipalities indicates that this is not the case. For example, the AER's indication that municipalities are notified of new projects in their boundaries may technically be true, but RMA members have explained that the form of notification and the limited project information included makes it extremely difficult and labour-intensive to determine if a project poses local risks or concerns. RMA and its members are aware of the AER's current processes and are disappointed that there is no initial interest in engaging around how they could be improved.

While RMA is optimistic that the work being undertaken by the AUC will enhance municipal input into the approval process for renewable energy projects, the outcomes are yet to be determined. The RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part** and will continue to advocate for a provincewide shift in collaboration between quasi-judicial agencies and municipalities on project approval processes.

Resolution 12-23F

Growth Management Board Voluntary Membership

Status: Accepted

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 (MGA)*; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that should the GOA fail to abolish GMBs, the RMA advocate to amend the MGA to change the membership in GMBs from mandatory to voluntary.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA members that have been part of growth management boards (GMBs) have had long standing concerns with the impact of GMBs on rural land use planning and service delivery. This included issues with a voting and governance structure that provided urban municipalities with a disproportionate level of control over both regional plans developed by the GMB and local planning decisions made by individual municipalities that are required to align with GMB plans.

In late November 2024, the Minister of Municipal Affairs informed both the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) and the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) that the Government of Alberta would no longer provide funding to either board beginning in the 2025 budget year. In 2024, each board received \$1 million through the Alberta Community Partnership Grant.

The Minister's announcement also indicated that while GMBs would still be a part of land use planning and service delivery in Alberta, municipal membership in GMBs would be voluntary moving forward.

The removal of the mandatory component of GMBs satisfies both asks of this resolution. While the legislative changes announced by Municipal Affairs have not yet been officially made, RMA is comfortable assigning this resolution a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution ER1-23F

Limiting Third-party Services in ICF Agreements

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) that third-party services should not be included in intermunicipal collaboration frameworks (ICFs) and should be left to each ICF negotiation partnership to determine external to the ICF process;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMA advocate to the GOA to limit the funding demands by urban municipalities, particularly when these demands arise from their independent decisions and are based on an assumption that rural municipalities will subsidize a portion of their costs or shortages.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA participated in the ICF engagement process throughout early 2024, making submissions aligned with the findings of our member survey circulated in March 2024. It is disappointing that Municipal Affairs' response last year did not directly address the changes requested in this resolution nor RMA's recommendations.

Municipalities collaborating with one another and with non-municipal entities to deliver certain types of services is a reasonable practice that is not new, and reflects the importance of the non-profit sector in delivering many community services, especially in rural areas.

However, ICFs are not an appropriate tool to facilitate third-party service agreements; by their very nature, ICFs are statutorily required, formal agreements that municipalities are mandated to complete with one another. Adding third parties to ICF negotiations adds another layer of complexity to the process and leads to legitimate questions as to the appropriate scope, level of involvement of the third party, or unintended consequences of requiring third-party involvement in ICF negotiations.

Clarifying that third-party services are better addressed outside of the ICF process will make life easier for both municipalities and non-profit organizations. Amending the legislation to specifically clarify this will eliminate the current ambiguity on this issue, and will help ensure that ICF renegotiations are not derailed by debates around third-party services; instead, negotiations can be focused on direct municipal services.

In fall 2024, Municipal Affairs indicated to RMA that amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) pertaining to ICFs are expected to be introduced in spring 2025. If introduced, changes would likely impact municipalities that are either in the process of renegotiating their agreements or are required to do so in the near future based on a specific renegotiation date agreed to in their individual ICF(s), and RMA is hopeful that third-party services will also be addressed. Given that any changes to the legislation would affect the negotiation process and resulting agreements, the Government of Alberta recommends that municipalities that have ICFs with a renegotiation date falling prior to the extended negotiation timeline of spring 2027 attempt to work with their municipal neighbours to reach agreement on delaying this process until spring 2027. This will allow municipalities a reasonable period of time to renegotiate future ICF agreements while ensuring alignment with the anticipated legislative amendments.

Currently, no amendments have been made to the MGA regarding third-party services in ICFs. As a result, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will revisit this resolution when we learn how the potential spring 2025 amendments will impact ICF renegotiations and whether third-party services will still be included in ICFs.

Resolution 1-23S

Enhanced Support for Receiving Municipalities in Dissolutions

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta review the total financial compensation, timelines, process, and other support provided to receiving municipalities to better mitigate and manage the immediate and ongoing impacts resulting from the dissolution or amalgamation process.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA released its *Post-Dissolution Impact Study – Summary Report* in March 2024. The study identified many areas of improvement in terms of how absorbing municipalities can be better supported financially and in terms of administrative and capacity-building support following a dissolution. It also examined possible changes to the viability review process to better consider the potential impacts of dissolution on the absorbing municipality and improve infrastructure and financial data disclosed during the review. The recommendations in the Report are as follows:

Financial Support

- ◆ Recommendation 1: That Municipal Affairs to increase the ACP Infrastructure funding available to absorbing municipalities, with a formula that considers the cost identified in the infrastructure audit and emergency repairs.
- ◆ Recommendation 2: That Municipal Affairs to reinstate ACP Transitional funding to previous levels.
- ◆ Recommendation 3: That Municipal Affairs to provide expanded ACP Transitional funding for an optional dedicated administrative project resource.
- ◆ Recommendation 4: That Municipal Affairs to provide new funding for emergent issues discovered during post-dissolution.
- ◆ Recommendation 5: That Municipal Affairs to explore a ‘tiered’ funding model, with additional funding supports available to municipalities absorbing large, complex dissolutions.

Viability Review and Pre-Dissolution Process

- ◆ Recommendation 6: That Municipal Affairs to provide strict guidelines for Infrastructure Audits to ensure comprehensiveness and to incorporate the absorbing municipality’s infrastructure standards.
- ◆ Recommendation 7: That Municipal Affairs to implement an Official Administrator (Supervisory only) for municipalities that have approved dissolution votes.
- ◆ Recommendation 8: That Municipal Affairs to implement formal participation and code of conduct requirements for municipalities participating in viability reviews.

- ◆ Recommendation 9: That Municipal Affairs to revise the existing workbooks to better enable absorbing municipalities to project potential impacts to them.

Post-Dissolution Process

- ◆ Recommendation 10: That RMA work with Municipal Affairs to implement a guidebook and resource directory for absorbing municipalities to inform them, and provide dedicated staffing resource supports for questions and emergent issues.
- ◆ Recommendation 11: That RMA develop specific resource materials, communities of practice and other supports for absorbing municipalities to support members dealing with dissolution related issues.
- ◆ Recommendation 12: That Municipal Affairs implement a sustainability monitoring and supports program for RMA members deemed ‘at-risk’ of dissolution related sustainability issues.

As no changes to the dissolution process were made in 2024, RMA again assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue based on the recommendations listed above.

Resolution 3-22F

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

Status: Intent Not Met

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciated that the Community Aggregate Payment Levy (CAPL) Regulation was extended until the end of 2024 to allow time for RMA and the ASGA to consult with their respective members, develop recommendations, and ensure that the associations mutually supported amendments to the regulation. While this extension would have prevented the change proposed in the resolution from being formally implemented until the Regulation was next updated, action on the second request in the resolution, for the Government of Alberta to consider non-compliance with CAPL bylaws when reviewing applications related to Class 1 gravel pits, could have been taken on this issue immediately.

As part of an engagement process on possible changes to the CAPL, RMA engaged with members throughout summer 2024 to better understand how the CAPL was working within their communities. As part of the engagement process, RMA advocated for the inclusion of a mandatory auditing framework. In December 2024, the Government of Alberta announced that

the CAPL Regulation would be extended without changes until December 31, 2029. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 4-22F

Well Drilling Equipment Tax Regulation

Status: Intent Not Met

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response references the elimination of the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET) as a relief measure provided to industry in 2020 as an alternative to significant changes to the regulated assessment model that were then under consideration. While this approach may have had merit during the difficult economic period of 2020, it is currently unnecessary and is subsidizing oil and gas companies by removing a revenue source for rural municipalities during a period of record profits for the industry. According to the Alberta Economic Dashboard, the total number of wells drilled in October 2020 (when the WDET was eliminated) was 202, while 844 wells were drilled in February 2024.

The intent of the WDET is to provide rural municipalities with much-needed revenue to offset increased infrastructure strain associated with the drilling of new wells. In some municipalities, drilling is occurring at an extremely rapid pace. The lack of a WDET, combined with the tax holiday on new wells provided by the province at the same time, as resulted in municipalities having virtually no abilities to raise revenue to offset new costs associated with oil and gas industry growth. RMA's Below the Drill campaign showed that from 2021 to 2023, rural municipalities lost approximately \$92 million in WDET revenue. To RMA's knowledge, no data or analysis has been provided linking the removal of the WDET to an increase in drilling activity.

RMA appreciates that the current WDET structure does not consider industry trends such as the level of drilling activity or commodity prices. RMA plans to reach out the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders to discuss the possibility of a new WDET structure in which the implementation of the tax, and potentially the rates charged, are linked to industry economic performance. As the WDET is directly linked to short-term infrastructure impacts associated with new drilling, this approach would allow for a balance between industry and municipal concerns. The Government of Alberta has not reinstated the WDET for 2024, and has not discussed any plans to do so with the RMA.

Therefore, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 11-23F

Compensation Resulting from Regulatory Changes

Status: Incomplete Information

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: A response from government has not yet been received. For this reason, Resolution 11-23F is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. RMA will continue to advocate on this resolution by seeking out further opportunities for correspondence and input.

Resolution 7-23S

Revision of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act to provide for an Expiration Date in Conservation Easement Agreements

Status: Incomplete Information

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta revise the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* to require that an expiration date, not exceeding 40 years, be included in conservation easement agreements to ensure future landowners can influence, and benefit from, land use decisions.

DEVELOPMENTS: Since the Government of Alberta is unable to review the Land Stewardship Act at this time, this resolution is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. RMA will update the resolution status when a response is received.

RMA has engaged with members and stakeholders from various sectors on this issue, including several land stewardship organizations concerned about the impacts that placing an expiration date on easements may have on the protection of land. RMA is hopeful that there will be an opportunity to discuss the resolution request in more detail with government and relevant stakeholders to discuss the benefits and risks of a mandatory expiration date, as well as other possible approaches to balancing land preservation with the reality of changing land uses and land values.

In late 2024, RMA participated in a Government of Alberta engagement on various land conservation tools. During this process, RMA advocated for the allowance of non-permanent conservation easements. The outcomes of this engagement are not yet known.

Resolution 13-23S

Municipal Access to Open Data

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to continue to prioritize increased access to Open data for municipalities.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates an awareness of the need for improved access to Open Data and a commitment to continue to utilize Alberta's Technology and Innovation Strategy to advance this priority. The Ministry also welcomed feedback and specific opportunities from municipalities, which aligns with the RMA's goal of increased communication between levels of government. Furthermore, the 2024-2025 provincial budget allocates \$7.5 million towards the implementation of the Data Strategy, which outlines the government's vision for publicly beneficial open data through the Ministry of Technology and Innovation. Finally, \$10 million is allocated towards addressing data constraints for upcoming unspecified programs. The RMA will engage with members to develop a better understanding of what data municipalities require access to and will use this information to follow up with the Government of Alberta. RMA will monitor the implementation of the Alberta's Technology and Innovation Strategy in regards to open data access. RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted in Part**. The resolution will be revisited moving forward to determine whether municipalities' open data needs have been met through government commitments and initiatives.

Resolution 16-23S

Applied Research Associations Funding

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta provide sustainable operational funding to applied research associations to maintain local, unbiased research and extension services that keep Alberta's agriculture industry innovative and competitive.

DEVELOPMENTS: The government response from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation outlines the overall positive commitments made by the provincial government to address the issues presented in this resolution. The RDAR is expected to continue receiving \$38.5 million in funding according to Budget 2024. However, the most recent budget commitments from 2024 indicate a slight reduction in the funding allocation towards ARAs, From \$4 million to \$3 million annually over the next three years.

As some progress has been made concerning the asks of this resolution, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Accepted** and continues to look for increases in funding and support for Applied Research Associations.

Resolution 7-22F

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

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA request that the Government of Alberta ensure that members of a growth management board are not required to enter into an intermunicipal collaboration framework with each other.

DEVELOPMENTS: In April 2023, the Minister of Municipal Affairs signed Ministerial Order MSD:024/23, which extended the mandatory ICF review period on a one-time basis from five years to seven years from the date in which initial ICFs were finalized. The ministerial order expires March 31, 2027, at which point the timeline for renegotiation will revert to five years as per s. 708.32(1) of the MGA. However, if specific renegotiation timelines are stipulated in agreements, they supersede those established by the Ministerial Order. According to a letter from the Minister, “this extension allows time for the legal appeals to be concluded, the ministry to engage with municipalities on potential legislative amendments to the ICF provisions, and municipal partners to work towards renewing their agreements.”

One of the most common issues identified by RMA members is linked to this specific resolution, which is a lack of scope and clarity over what can be defined as a “service” for the purpose of ICF negotiations. RMA strongly believes that properly defining thresholds or indicators for how municipalities (and arbitrators) can define a service would further streamline the process, reduce conflict, and ensure that both parties come to agreement on commonly defined regional services.

While the extension was a positive step and increased the likelihood that the process could be improved before mandatory renegotiations are required, RMA remained concerned that municipalities may execute early renegotiation clauses within some ICF agreements to attempt to exploit the current flaws in the process outlined in this resolution.

Following a member survey in Spring 2024, RMA submitted input on ICFs on behalf of members. RMA’s input into the process was informed by this resolution, and it made several recommendations, including the following that are relevant to this resolution:

1) Clarify ICF Scope and Purpose:

- ◆ Define criteria or threshold for “services”
- ◆ Define thresholds or other guidance for “intermunicipal”
- ◆ Clarify that third-party services cannot be addressed through ICFs

2) Equitable ICF Process:

- ◆ Implement baseline requirements for data related to service delivery costs and justification for existing service levels, including historical annual service delivery costs

- ◆ Require ICFs to include agreement on both cost-sharing and joint input into service levels, service delivery mechanism, etc. for each service included within the ICF

In fall 2024, Municipal Affairs indicated that amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) pertaining to ICFs are expected to be introduced in spring 2025. If introduced, changes would likely impact municipalities that are either in the process of renegotiating their agreements or are required to do so in the near future based on a specific renegotiation date agreed to in their individual ICF(s). Given that any changes to the legislation would affect the negotiation process and resulting agreements, the Government of Alberta is recommending that municipalities that have ICFs with a renegotiation date falling prior to the extended negotiation timeline of spring 2027, attempt to work with their municipal neighbours to reach agreement on delaying this process until spring 2027. This will allow municipalities a reasonable period of time to renegotiate future ICF agreements while ensuring alignment with the anticipated legislative amendments.

The second operative clause of the resolution requested that the Government of Alberta ensure that municipalities within a growth management board (GMB) are not required to enter into ICFs with one another. While the *Municipal Government Act* already exempted these municipalities from developing ICFs with one another, Alberta Municipalities (ABMunis) members endorsed a resolution calling for mandatory ICFs within GMBs. Rural GMB members were already frustrated by the inequitable voting structures and added red tape associated with GMBs, and RMA supported GMBs being voluntary instead of mandatory. Municipal Affairs announced changes to GMBs in late 2024, including cutting \$1 million in funding to both the Edmonton and Calgary regional boards and shifting GMB membership from mandatory to voluntary under the MGA. Therefore, this may no longer be an issue; however, the changes to GMBs will undoubtedly impact the ICF development process, and the extension to 2027 is key to ensuring ICFs reflect any amendments in the legislation and the potential for decreased GMB membership in 2025 and onwards.

Despite upcoming legislative amendments that will impact the ICF development process, no progress has yet been made on the requests of this resolution; as a result, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, and will re-visit the status in the coming months based on the expected legislative amendments.

POLICING AND RURAL CRIME

Resolution 8-23F

Implementation of Provincial Police Advisory Board

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: The response from Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services (PSES) emphasized the need for a Provincial Police Advisory Board (PPAB) that adequately represents the needs of communities across the province. The Government of Alberta informed RMA in December 2024 that the PPAB will begin in March 2025. It will include representatives from RMA, ABmunis, the Alberta Association of Police Governance, five community representatives, and several Indigenous representatives.

RMA has been part of the Interim Police Advisory Board (IPAB) since it was formed several years ago. One of the primary purposes of the IPAB was to develop a governance and recruitment structure for a permanent board; work which the IPAB completed but which was subsequently rejected by the former Minister. Since then, there has been very little ministry engagement and no recognition of the recommendations that the IPAB has put forward. IPAB will hold its last meeting in early 2025, prior to PPAB's commencement.

In March 2024, RMA prepared a submission for the Government of Alberta's engagement related to developing Police Act regulations to allow for the implementation of the PPAB. Specific input included:

- ◆ The PPAB should provide ongoing input, advice, and recommendations to the Government of Alberta and RCMP on policing in Alberta.
- ◆ The PPAB should collaborate with the Government of Alberta and RCMP to develop annual provincial policing priorities.
- ◆ The PPAB should engage with the Government of Alberta and RCMP to provide input on any policing-related issues that the Board identifies as relevant.
- ◆ The PPAB should not only be designed to represent PPSA municipalities at a provincial level, but it should also serve a capacity-building function by providing advice and support to municipalities and local organizations as to how they can better engage with police at the local level.
- ◆ The PPAB must have clear and enforceable expectations for reporting back to the communities it represents on how local input is integrated into provincewide priority development.
- ◆ The PPAB must be accountable to the municipalities it represents. If a municipality is not being heard or included in PPAB business, it should have an outlet to share this concern and have action taken.

- ◆ The PPAB must be resourced at a level that allows for ongoing, high-quality engagement with the municipalities it represents.
- ◆ Before the PPAB begins its work in collaborating with the RCMP and Government of Alberta on policing-related issues, it must have accountability processes in place, including a process for regularly gathering input from the communities it represents, regularly reporting back to such communities, and a process for communities to share urgent issues, concerns, or recommendations with the PPAB.

RMA's key concern about the PPAB is that a single board may be unable to effectively represent the concerns and priorities of the approximately 300 municipalities that receive policing through Provincial Police Services Agreement. Additionally, PPAB has not provided effective answers about the groups purpose. Given RMA's continued concerns around representation, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will re-evaluate the resolution status when the PPAB is officially operational.

Resolution 11-23S

Reforming the Bail System to Address Rural Crime

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to:

1. **Require that justices receive a complete bail package, that a summary of the details of the arrest circumstances be read before the courts, and that reverse onus situations be identified;**
2. **Increase funding to enable the Edmonton bail office to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week;**
3. **Advocate to the Government of Canada to amend the bail ladder system such that if an accused has not lived up to the conditions of a no cash bail from a previous charge or offence, then a judge must now move forward with a cash bail alternative for this and future offences;**
4. **Direct the Government of Alberta to complete a cross-jurisdictional analysis of other provinces to see how they address bail packages, bail Crown offices, bail ladder systems, and any other issue that may be impacting the increase in catch and release of criminals;**
5. **Create a bail sub-committee composed of municipal and Alberta Justice representatives to examine other bail systems, canvass Albertans on ideas for improving the justice system, and present an annual report with recommendations to the Minister of Justice.**

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta has taken action to make changes to the bail system. Their response to this resolution made it clear that they are advocating for amendments to the bail system from the Government of Canada and Premier Danielle Smith, among many other premiers across the country, have signed a letter advocating for changes to the bail system. Alberta Justice continues to work with and advocate to the Government of Canada for changes to the current bail system. Furthermore, the RMA co-signed a letter with other western Canadian municipal associations calling on the Government of Canada to reform the federal bail system to better address risks associated with repeat offenders.

RMA staff followed up with Alberta Justice to learn more about the status of bail system reform in Alberta. RMA received a letter on November 16, 2023 that outlines the complexities of the bail

system and the role that the Government of Canada plays pursuant to the *Criminal Code*. While not directly requested in the resolution, the Government of Alberta has made changes to the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service Bail Practice Protocol to provide guidance to Crown prosecutors to seek to detain any accused who is a threat to public safety, especially repeat violent offenders. If a prosecutor agrees to the release of an accused under these circumstances, they must articulate, in writing, how bail conditions are expected to address public safety concerns, including the risk to re-offend. The amendments also remind prosecutors that, for particularly serious offences, detention can be sought even if there is no prior criminal record.

In 2024, the Government of Alberta passed Bill 11, the Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act. Along with creation of an independent agency police service, Bill 11 would invest \$2.8 million dollars into an ankle monitoring program for high risk offenders and relocate the program from private delivery services to Alberta Correctional Services. The new program would provide 24/7 coverage in place of the current 9 to 5 coverage. Without federal law changes, Alberta judges compliance with the new program would be discretionary.

While these efforts and changes fulfill the spirit of this resolution, apart from the second point, the specific asks are not met. For this reason, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to advocate for the Government of Alberta to take further action on this issue at the provincial level and to continue their federal advocacy.

Resolution 4-22S

Continued Support for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Alberta

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta not create an Alberta Provincial Police Service.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response highlights recent funding and staffing increases to address issues related to crime. Additionally, the response provides rationale as to why the Government of Alberta is considering an Alberta Provincial Police Service (APPS). RMA sits on the Alberta Interim Police Advisory Board (AIPAB), ending early in 2025, as the province transitions to a Provincial Police Advisory Board (PPAB) in March 2025. RMA continues to advocate for increased local representation.

Although the Government of Alberta appears to have taken a step back from actively pursuing the APPS, they have made numerous other policing announcements that change policing in the province. In March 2024, the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 11, the *Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act*. Bill 11 enables the creation of a new independent agency police service that would operate alongside local police. The Bill also changes the scope of Alberta Sheriffs and Peace Officers. The government has said that these changes are made to support the RCMP and improve rural response times.

On a related note, the Police Funding Model, which determines municipal financial contributions to policing under the Provincial Police Service Agreement has been extended to spring 2026. RMA awaits details of the promised engagement with rural municipalities.

As the Government of Alberta has not definitively indicated that they will not form an APPS, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**. RMA will continue to oppose the creation of an APPS.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Resolution 1-23F

Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program Funding

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response speaks to the funding allocated and approved projects in 2023 through the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program. In Budget 2024, STIP funding increased slightly from \$43 million to \$43.5 million; however, the STIP program remained heavily oversubscribed throughout 2024, and rural municipalities still need additional funding streams in order to maintain crucial infrastructure.

In 2025, rural infrastructure funding needs will continue to grow. RMA's Infrastructure Deficit Report, released in November 2024, quantified Alberta's overall rural municipal infrastructure deficit at \$17.25 billion. The report projects that the deficit will grow to \$40.71 billion in 2028 based on current provincial funding available for rural municipal infrastructure projects. The report also found that a one-time investment to return the portfolio to good condition would have a return on investment of approximately 3.3 years due to the lower annual maintenance costs required for to maintain the network at an optimal condition level.

STIP funding for 2025 has not yet been set, but RMA does not project that the 2025 Provincial Budget will include any "substantial" increases to STIP funding amounts. As a result, this resolution's status remains as **Intent Not Met** and will be re-evaluated based on 2025 funding allocations.

Resolution 14-23F

Provincial High-Load Corridor Protection

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciated the Ministry of Transportation and Economic Corridors (TEC) response to this resolution and their commitment to the Edmonton Region Network Study (ERNS). While the ERNS is a promising study, there is still a need to review the rest of the province's high load corridors. RMA met with representatives from TEC in 2024 to discuss the continued protection of HLCs, and the Ministry reiterated their plans to continue protecting HLCs. RMA will work with TEC to bolster the communication of our members' local issues with HLCs to government and looks forwards to collaborating on an approach that best serves RMA members.

It is clear that work is being done to meet the intent of this resolution; RMA will continue to work with TEC to ensure progress is being made on this file. However, RMA did not see any significant changes or improvements on the protection of HLCs in 2024, and until results are seen, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 15-23F

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

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's recognition of the need for collaboration with municipalities on updating legislation. The ongoing review of the e-scooter pilot project is a promising start to updating legislation and achieving the desired outcome of this resolution, and RMA will review the report that they are releasing this fall. However, TEC's response stated they would be releasing the findings of their review in Fall 2024; as the findings have not been released and engagements with rural communities have not yet been organized, the RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 2-23S

Provincial Funding Stream for Non-Residential Infrastructure

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta establish a dedicated provincial funding model to enable long-term investment in capital infrastructure to support industrial economic development in rural Alberta.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA members are unique in Alberta and across Canada due to their large size and responsibility for providing municipal infrastructure and services to isolated areas of the province with limited populations but extremely high levels of industrial activity. In other provinces and territories, rural and remote areas typically have a much less active industrial base and the province plays a direct role in providing traditionally local services and infrastructure. For this reason, much of the infrastructure built and managed by Alberta's rural municipalities provides limited benefits to residents, but is hugely important to industries such as oil and gas, forestry, agriculture and renewable energy.

The Government of Alberta's response is disappointing, as it fails to recognize this unique and valuable rural municipal responsibility. RMA members have shared multiple examples of major infrastructure projects designed to attract new industrial development or to service expanding existing development, including water lines, stormwater management upgrades, road and intersection improvements, and even the creation of entire industrial parks, including all utilities, transportation access, etc. While such investments certainly provide local benefits in the form of property tax revenues, the contribution to the province more broadly, as well as neighbouring urban municipalities, is often much greater in the form of income tax revenue, job creation, increased demand for urban residential and commercial development, etc.

While some of the existing programs referenced in the Government of Alberta's response could potentially be used to support rural industry-specific projects, many cannot, and those that can

typically weigh population or benefit to residents heavily in determining allocation. While RMA certainly does not suggest that the Government of Alberta not support municipal projects that support residents, the massive grant funding gap in supporting industry-linked projects not only reflects a lack of understanding of the unique role that Alberta’s rural municipalities play in this area, but also undermines further economic growth in the province by not providing rural municipalities with the grant support they require to meet emerging and evolving industry needs.

RMA is hopeful that this issue will be addressed in future budgets through a combination of enhanced road and bridge funding and an expansion of the eligibility criteria for provincial water/wastewater grants to include water infrastructure specifically supporting industrial developments.

To demonstrate the need for this more directly, RMA released the final report and recommendations in a four-part infrastructure deficit project in November 2024, analyzing the current funding deficits related to rural municipal road, bridge, utility and water/waste water infrastructure. The report quantifies Alberta’s overall rural municipal infrastructure deficit at \$17.25 billion, and projects that the deficit will grow to \$40.71 billion in 2028 based on current provincial funding available for rural municipal infrastructure projects. The report also found that a one-time investment to return the portfolio to good condition would have a return on investment of approximately 3.3 years due to the lower annual maintenance costs required for to maintain the network at an optimal condition level.

As it stands, the Government of Alberta has not announced any dedicated funding streams for non-residential municipal infrastructure; therefore, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met**, but will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 3-23S

Amendments to the National Building Code

Status: Accepted in Part

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to ensure that the proposed changes to incorporate greenhouse gas emissions reduction into the National Building Code consider the negative effects to all Albertans, specifically rural Albertans and their quality of life; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta and the Safety Codes Council to participate in the consultation process related to updating the National Model Codes to ensure that the needs of Albertans are at the forefront; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta to not incorporate net-zero emissions code requirements into the 2025 National Building Code – Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)).

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta’s response indicates the province’s efforts to support a consistent nationwide approach to building codes with a willingness to diverge from national consensus to adopt requirements that meet the needs of Albertans. While this is appreciated, the resolution requests Alberta not adopt net-zero emissions code requirements into building codes, but Alberta has adopted Tier 1 requirements in the 2023 Alberta Edition of the *National Building Code*. No changes were made to the *Code* in 2024 that would satisfy the intent of this resolution.

Because the Government of Alberta has participated in national building code engagements (as requested in the second operative clause of the resolution), this resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part**, and RMA will continue to advocate for more flexibility in building codes related to net zero requirements.

Resolution 18-22F

Regulations for Motorists Passing School Buses with Amber Lights Flashing

Status: Intent Not Met

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta response indicates that there have been issues raised as it relates to school buses and student safety. However, the specific issues raised in this resolution have not been addressed through the Task Force, nor the ministry itself. The response also indicated that any changes made will need to go through a significant review process in order to ensure safety standards are met.

Further, while RMA appreciates that this letter was forwarded to the appropriate staff for consideration, this action is not enough as the resolution specifically calls for setting a maximum speed limit of 60km/hour or slower on all roadways, in both directions, when passing school buses with flashing amber lights or providing regulations for roadside signage for school bus stops on primary highways in Alberta. There have been no further developments from Transportation and Economic Corridors on this resolution. As a result, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 20-22F

Lost Road Closure Files

Status: Accepted in Part

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

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

DEVELOPMENTS: The Government of Alberta's response outlines the Roadside Planning and Application Tracking Hub (RPATH), a program updated in 2022 that is intended to streamline municipal road closure processes. This program includes features which aim to make information more readily available to members.

This resolution asks specifically for the Government of Alberta to streamline application processes for road closure processes and create a digital hub which will track bylaws and resolutions within Alberta Transportation. Although RPATH appears to streamline the process for applications, there is no indication that Alberta Transportation has developed a system to track and store bylaws and resolutions as they relate to municipal road closures. As only one part of this resolution has been addressed, RMA assigns this a status of **Accepted in Part**.

Resolution 8-22S

Reversing Changes to Aerodrome Standards Implemented by Transport Canada

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta requests that the Government of Canada either reverse the newly amended Instrument Approach Procedures to maintain aircraft accessibility to community aerodromes in Alberta, or suspend the new requirements to carry out the necessary studies such as a risk assessment or impact assessment associated with the new standards.

DEVELOPMENTS: Transport Canada’s response indicates that the changes made to aerodrome standards are intended to enhance safety measures at Canadian airports that support instrument approach procedures (IAPs). The changes are also required in order to establish a standard and recognized level of safety for all instrument approaches across Canada.

RMA appreciates Transport Canada’s response. However, the resolution specifically calls for reversing the amendment to the instrument approach procedures or postponing the implementation until an impact assessment can be conducted. Transport Canada’s response indicates no intention to reverse the implemented amendment. Therefore, this resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

To better understand this issue and its impacts on rural airports, RMA has engaged with the Alberta Aviation Council (AAC) and the Canadian Operators and Pilots Association (COPA). These associations are aware of the impacts that these changes will have on local airports, however they are focused on mitigation of the impacts. The AAC and COPA expressed that since the changes fall within international standards, they are unlikely to be reversed or modified and that efforts will be best utilized advocating for mitigation strategies. Specifically, through use of collaboration agreements between airports and providing training and resources to airports. Although mitigation is not the intent of the resolution, RMA plans to support mitigation efforts while continuing to advocate for impact assessments.

OTHER

Resolution 16-23F

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

Status: Intent Not Met

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA appreciates Alberta Jobs, Economy and Trade acknowledging the need to combat the competitive advantage that the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) provides the American agricultural sector. Although initiatives such as the Agri-Processing Investment Tax Credit and the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership were a step in the right direction and promoted the agriculture sector in Alberta, they did not address the specific challenges posed by the IRA. The existing incentive programs and grants referenced in the government response are helpful yet inadequate to counteract the billions of dollars of investment programs and grants enabled by the IRA that are drawing business away from Canada's agricultural sector. There must be intentional and meaningful dialogue between the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada to ensure that every effort possible is made to reduce the competitive advantage that the IRA provides to the agriculture sector in the USA.

Further, it is crucial that the provincial and federal governments commit to creating a task force that will adequately evaluate the IRA's impact on Canadian producers and recommend policy adjustments to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of Alberta's agricultural sector.

No further responses have been received from the federal or provincial government regarding this resolution. As a result, RMA assigns this resolution a status of **Intent Not Met** and will continue to advocate on this issue.

Resolution 19-23F

Government of Alberta Ministry Changes

Status: Incomplete Information

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: A response from government has not yet been received. For this reason, Resolution 19-23F is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**. RMA will continue to advocate on this resolution by seeking further opportunities for correspondence and input.

Resolution 4-23S

Strategic Direction for the RMA

Status: Accepted

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) adopts the Strategic Direction as presented at the Spring 2023 Convention to guide the planning and activities for the organization from 2023 through 2027; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA review the strategic direction next in 2027.

DEVELOPMENTS: This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted**.

Resolution 17-23S

Negative Impact of Bill C-21 on Albertans

Status: Intent Not Met

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Canada to not proceed with any amendment to the *Firearms Act* that will unfairly restrict access to recreational or hunting opportunities for rural Albertans; and

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the Government of Canada to review the classification of what constitutes a “prohibited firearm” to ensure that it balances safety with the access to firearms for rural residents to enjoy recreational activities.

DEVELOPMENTS: This bill was passed on December 15, 2023. RMA continues to advocate for changes specific to the definition of “prohibited firearm.”.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Resolution 19-23S

Non-Profit Exemption from Federal Fuel Charge

Status: Incomplete Information

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: RMA has not received a formal response on this matter, however, staff continues to work with the Government of Canada to ensure a rural voice is at the table when carbon tax exemptions are discussed at the federal level. As RMA has not yet received a formal response, this resolution is assigned a status of **Incomplete Information**.

Resolution 6-22S

Responsiveness of Service Delivery by Quasi-independent Agencies in Alberta

Status: Accepted in Part

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.

DEVELOPMENTS: In 2023, RMA formed the Quasi-Judicial Agencies Member Committee (QJAC) to examine the relationship between quasi-judicial agencies and municipalities in relation to approving provincially-regulated developments. The committee gathered municipal examples and perspectives related to the local impacts of provincially-regulated developments, the lack of consideration of municipal plans and perspectives in the approval process, and how this lack of a local lens impacts the ability of quasi-judicial agencies to make decisions in the public interest. The report features several recommendations which focus on how agencies can better integrate a municipal lens into decision making.

- ◆ That the GOA and quasi-judicial agencies work with stakeholders to develop an approach to integrating land use impact assessments and reclamation requirements into project approvals.
- ◆ That the GOA and quasi-judicial agencies work together and with stakeholders to develop a public interest evaluation framework to assess decision-making and engagement processes.
- ◆ That the GOA and quasi-judicial agencies work together and with stakeholders, including municipalities, to regularly adapt approval processes to industry changes.
- ◆ That both quasi-judicial agencies and applicants play a direct role in initial project engagement processes.
- ◆ That agencies review and redevelop current notification systems to better engage with municipalities at the onset of projects.
- ◆ That the AER, AUC and NRCB collaborate to harmonize their respective engagement and approval processes as much as possible.
- ◆ That the AER and AUC adopt NRCB requirements related to aligning projects with municipal development plans.
- ◆ That municipalities have automatic status as directly affected parties and automatic standing at all hearings.

The QJAC report found several areas of concern which the Government of Alberta and regulators should address. Following the release of RMA's QJAC report, the AUC launched an inquiry of electricity generation and an inquiry on renewable energy approval processes in 2023. Some of the recommendations presented in the QJAC report were considered and implemented:

- ◆ Automatic standing for municipalities in the project approval process.

- ◆ Eligibility of municipalities for cost-recovery linked to approval hearing participation.
- ◆ The creation of a provincially-administered reclamation requirement for end-of-life management of renewable projects.

Although these policy changes are promising and may address some issues related to the AUC's process, there are other quasi-judicial agencies which need to be reviewed to address the lack of municipal perspective into the current processes. This resolution is assigned a status of **Accepted in Part** and RMA will continue to advocate on these issues to ensure all concerns presented in the resolution are addressed.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta wishes to thank the Board of Directors members who provided content, input, and advice to this Resolution Status Update:

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