RMA Fall 2025 Submitted Resolutions

1) Call to Order
2) Resolution Session

1-25F **Funding for Protein Programs in Alberta Food Banks – Support for Livestock Processing Fees** *(MD of Taber)*

2-25F **Quasi-Judicial Decisions and Inter-agency Communication** *(MD of Willow Creek)*

3-25F **Review and Increase of Voting Threshold for RMA Resolutions** (*Sturgeon County)*

4-25F **Amendment to Food and Drug Regulations to Enable Regulated On-Farm Sale of Unpasteurized Dairy Products** *(MD of Greenview)*

5-25F **Increasing Funding for Alberta's Libraries** *(County of Grande Prairie)*

6-25F **Increased Enforcement in Rural Alberta to Deter Rural Crime** *(Clearwater County)*

7-25F **Virtual Option for RMA Spring Convention** *(MD of Willow Creek)*

8-25F **Sustainable Fee Model for Alberta Registry Agents to Protect Rural Service Access** *(Flagstaff County)*

9-25F **Recognition of "Historical Hamlets" to Enable Provincial Funding Eligibility** *(Cardston County)*

3) Vote on Emergent Resolutions
4) Closing of Resolution Session

Resolution 1-25F
Funding for Protein Programs in Alberta Food Banks – Support for Livestock Processing Fees
MD of Taber

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS food insecurity continues to rise across Alberta, with food banks experiencing record demand for nutritious and protein-rich food options; and

WHEREAS livestock producers in Alberta have demonstrated a willingness to donate animals to food banks, but the high cost of processing livestock into consumable protein (e.g., ground beef or pork) remains a significant barrier; and

WHEREAS programs such as Project Protein by the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge have demonstrated the success of livestock donation models when processing costs are subsidized; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has previously supported such initiatives through the Community Initiatives Program and other grant mechanisms; and

WHEREAS Food Banks Alberta provides operational grants to member food banks, but current funding is insufficient to consistently cover livestock processing costs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to establish a dedicated and sustainable funding stream to support the processing of donated livestock for food banks, thereby enhancing access to high-quality protein for food-insecure Albertans;

FUTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta work in partnership with Food Banks Alberta, local food banks, and the livestock industry to expand and formalize programs like Project Protein, ensuring that processing costs are not a barrier to livestock donations.

Member Background

Protein is one of the most requested but least donated food items at food banks. Alberta's agricultural sector, particularly livestock producers, has shown strong community spirit by donating animals to food banks. However, the cost of processing these animals—estimated at approximately $500 per head of cattle and $200 per pig (Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge, 2018)—often falls on the food banks, which are already stretched thin.

For example, in 2014, the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge launched Project Protein with funding from the Alberta Community Initiatives Program. This pilot program processed 130 animals and provided over 39,000 pounds of ground meat to food-insecure families, exceeding expectations. Although the pilot was successful, grant funding has since been depleted, and food banks now rely on limited donations or must absorb processing costs themselves.

Food Banks Alberta offers grants for operational needs, including food purchasing and equipment, but there is no dedicated provincial or federal funding stream specifically for livestock processing. A formalized and well-funded program would allow food banks to accept more livestock donations, reduce waste, and provide essential protein to families in need.

RMA Background

19-24F: Exemption from Food Banks Canada's Standard of Excellence and Accreditation Requirements for Small and/or Rural Local Food Banks

> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate the Government of Alberta to add further exemptions to the Standards of Excellence established by Food Banks Canada for small, rural food banks similar to the exemption to northern and Indigenous food banks.
>
> Click here to view the full resolution.

Resolution 2-25F
Quasi-Judicial Decisions and Inter-agency Communication
MD of Willow Creek

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS quasi-judicial boards such as the Natural Resource Conservation Board (NRCB) and the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) are established under various acts and are granted specific decision-making powers; and

WHEREAS the *Natural Resources Conservation Act* and the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* delegate the enforcement of approval conditions in quasi-judicial decisions to other government ministries, yet these conditions are often not enforced; and

WHEREAS this fragmented approach has led to instances in which:

- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA) is not notified of approvals issued by the NRCB, even as applicants are required to contact the AEPA for *Water Act* approvals.
- The AUC does not review transmission line or substation locations during electrical generation project approvals, instead postponing consultations on transmission matters with agencies such as AEPA, Alberta Transportation, and municipalities until after deciding on the generation application.
- Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors was unaware that the NRCB had approved a confined feeding operation that did not have suitable access due to restricted weight bridges.
- Alberta Indigenous Relations was not notified of AUC decisions affecting traditional land use, undermining consultation obligations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta implement a formalized inter-agency communication protocol to ensure that conditions outlined in decisions by quasi-judicial agencies are promptly and directly communicated to responsible government ministries for enforcement and oversight.

Member Background

The creation of quasi-independent agencies has been viewed differently by various stakeholders. Critics argue that these organizations permit government officials to circumvent numerous legal requirements which typically govern public administration, potentially diminishing public oversight and accountability associated with traditional public agencies. Conversely, advocates assert that such entities streamline administrative processes by reducing bureaucratic obstacles and facilitating decision-making based on independently established criteria, free from political influence—whether actual or perceived. Given the significance of various development approval decisions prevailing critiques of these quasi-judicial agencies may be particularly relevant.

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) functions as an arms-length, quasi-independent agency within the Government of Alberta and reports directly to the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas. Established in 1991 under the *Natural Resources Conservation Act*, the NRCB is responsible for determining the public interest regarding proposed natural resource projects. In 2002, the NRCB assumed additional regulatory authority over Alberta's confined feeding operations pursuant to the *Agricultural Operations Practices Act*.

The *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*, passed in 2008, led to the dissolution of the Energy and Utilities Board and the formation of two separate regulatory bodies: the Alberta Utilities Commission, which oversees the utilities sector, and the Energy Resources Conservation Board—now referred to as the Alberta Energy Regulator—which governs the oil and gas industry.

RMA Background

5-23F: Municipal Involvement in Quasi-Judicial Agencies

> 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.
>
> Click here to view the full resolution.

Resolution 3-25F
Review and Increase of Voting Threshold for RMA Resolutions
Sturgeon County

Endorsed by District 3

WHEREAS the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) currently requires a three-fifths (60%) majority for member resolutions to be endorsed, as outlined in RMA policy GOV-04: RMA Resolution Process; and

WHEREAS the 60% threshold was implemented based on a 2021 Board Governance Review Committee recommendation, with 77.7% of members voting in favour of the change; and

WHEREAS comparative analysis with other provincial municipal associations reveals a wide variation in voting thresholds, ranging from simple majority (50% +1) to a two-thirds (67%) majority; and

WHEREAS RMA does not currently differentiate its advocacy prioritization based on the level of support a resolution receives (e.g., resolutions passed by 60% are treated equally to those passed by 99%); and

WHEREAS data analysis from recent RMA conventions indicates that increasing the voting threshold would result in fewer endorsed resolutions; and

WHEREAS fewer endorsed resolutions would allow RMA to focus its advocacy efforts on issues with broader member consensus and strategic importance; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) increase the voting threshold for the adoption of resolutions from 60% to 75%; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMA conduct a comprehensive review of its current advocacy reporting practices and develop recommendations to improve transparency and enhance information sharing on its advocacy efforts with the RMA membership.

Member Background

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) currently endorses resolutions passed by a 60% voting threshold, a standard adopted in 2021 following a recommendation from RMA's Board Governance Review Committee, which was subsequently endorsed by members. RMA treats all endorsed resolutions equally in terms of advocacy focus, regardless of the margin of support, meaning a resolution with 60.1% support is given the same advocacy focus as a resolution with 99% support.

While RMA has taken great steps to advocate for all resolutions, including doubling the size of their advocacy team, there are still time and resource constraints which impact their ability to fully realize each advocacy opportunity.

Analysis of voting results from 2022 to 2025 (Table 1) indicates that raising the threshold to 75% would reduce the total number of endorsed resolutions but concentrate RMA's efforts on resolutions that have stronger, broader support among members. This change will lead to more strategic and impactful advocacy, while fostering increased member confidence in the RMA resolution process.

Table 1:

RMA Resolutions Analysis (2022-2025) Resolution Pass/Fail Outcomes by Voting Threshold					
Voting Threshold	**Number of Resolutions Passed**	**Number of Resolutions Failed**	**Total Number of Resolutions**	**Pass Percentage**	**Fail Percentage**
90%	25	79	104	24%	76%
80%	67	37	104	64%	36%
75%	84	20	104	81%	19%
70%	92	12	104	88%	12%
65%	100	4	104	96%	4%
60%	104	0	104	100%	0%

Table 1 shows a breakdown of what would occur at each 5% increase in the threshold to gain adoption by RMA. With each 5% increase, the pass percentage reduces compared to the current threshold.

Since Spring 2022, a total of 125 resolutions have been brought forward with 104 being endorsed (Table 2). These resolutions cover a wide range of topics, but each one requires significant effort on behalf of the RMA Board and Administration. RMA's Resolution Process Policy requires that RMA actively advocate on an endorsed resolution for three years.

Table 2:

Overall Analysis of Resolutions Presented at Conferences 2022-2025				
Conference	**Resolutions Presented**	**Passed**	**Defeated**	**% Passed**
Spring 2025	16	11	5	69%
Fall 2024	22	17	5	77%
Spring 2024	12	11	1	92%
Fall 2023	22	19	3	86%
Spring 2023	19	18	1	95%
Fall 2022	24	22	2	92%
Spring 2022	10	7	3	70%

A comparison with other municipal associations (Table 3) across Canada reveals a broad range of voting thresholds, from simple majority to two-thirds, with some organizations using priority ranking systems instead.

Table 3:

Organization	# of Members	Voting Threshold	2024 Outcomes	Notes
Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)	69	60%	28/33 (84%)	
Alberta Municipalities (AB Munis)	265	50% + 1 vote	23/27 resolutions passed (85%)	
Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)	189	Simple majority 50% + 1 vote	189/267 resolutions endorsed (77%)	
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM)	296	51%	37/44 resolutions received (84%)	Proposed resolution to increase the threshold to 2/3 was defeated in 2024
Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association (SUMA)	454	Not specified	11/11 active resolutions (100%)	Resolutions placed into three priority categories (Priority 1, 2, 3) – ranked in terms of urgency/action required.
Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM)	137	2/3 majority - 67%	41/41 passed (100%)	
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)	444	Not specified	Not specified	AMO holds input sessions for members re: advocacy approach to specific policy issues
Union of Municipalities of Quebec	“nearly 400”	Unspecified	Unspecified	

Municipalities of Newfoundland & Labrador	276	Advocacy Committee reviews and provides recommendations.	7/7 (100%)	Resolutions are placed into three priority levels ranked in terms of importance/attention
Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick	60	Simple majority (50% +1)	12/12 (100%)	
Federation of PEI Municipalities	44	2/3 majority (67%)	Unspecified	

RMA's Board of Directors and staff are facing increasing pressures on time and resources. This resolution proposes increasing the voting threshold for resolutions to 75%, allowing for a more strategic and focused approach. This change would provide the association with more time to concentrate on enhancing quality, focus, and strengthening the strategic alignment of RMA's collective advocacy efforts.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 4-25F
Amendment to Food and Drug Regulations to Enable Regulated On-Farm Sale of Unpasteurized Dairy Products
MD of Greenview

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS the Food and Drug Regulations under the federal *Food and Drug Act* prohibits the sale of raw or unpasteurized milk for human consumption, regardless of producer practices or direct farm to consumer intent; and

WHEREAS this restriction prevents small scale dairy producers, particularly those in rural areas, from legally selling milk and dairy products directly to consumers, despite growing interest in farm-direct food and local agricultural economies; and

WHEREAS Alberta producers can sell other unprocessed farm products, such as eggs, vegetables, and certain meats, under the provincial *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* and *Public Health Act*, with oversight mechanisms including labelling and food safety inspections; and

WHEREAS national surveys report that 2% to 4% of Canadians currently consume raw milk through informal or unregulated channels, indicating consumer interest for local, minimally processed dairy options despite the prohibition; and

WHEREAS regulated models in American jurisdictions such as South Dakota permit raw milk sales directly from farms through licensed systems with requirements for regular microbial testing, clear labelling, refrigeration, and producer recordkeeping; and

WHEREAS introducing a regulated pilot program under federal legislation would allow provinces to assess risks, benefits, and enforcement needs of on farm raw milk sales while supporting economic diversification in rural areas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Canada to amend Division 8 of the Food and Drug Regulations to permit, under specified conditions, the on-farm sale of unpasteurized dairy products directly to informed consumers; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT such legislative amendments allow provinces to develop frameworks that include producer food safety training, product labelling requirements, traceability, on-farm oversight, and the option to pilot direct sale programs in rural municipalities.

Member Background

Under the Food and Drug Regulations, Division 8, raw or unpasteurized milk and cream are prohibited from being sold in Canada for human consumption, regardless of sale method or intended use. This prohibition was introduced in 1991 in response to public health concerns surrounding potential contamination with Escherichia coli, Listeria monocytogenes, and Salmonella, all of which are known to cause serious foodborne illnesses.

While the risk of contamination in raw milk is real, modern food safety practices such as closed milking systems, refrigeration, regular microbial testing, and sanitary inspections have evolved significantly. Several international jurisdictions, including parts of the European Union, permit the sale of raw milk through regulatory frameworks that require producer registration, temperature controls, labelling, testing, and traceability (e.g., Commission Regulation (EU) No 2010/605).

In Alberta, other direct-to-consumer agricultural products, such as meat, eggs and vegetables, are permitted under provincial legislation, including the *Marketing of Agriculture Products Act* and *Public Health Act*. These allow for direct-to-consumer sale under specific conditions, such as safe handling practices, labelling, and licensing, where necessary. However, no equivalent regulatory flexibility exists for dairy products, which limits small-scale producers from participating in the growing market for local, minimally processed foods.

U.S. models provide examples of how raw milk can be safely regulated. For instance, South Dakota permits on-farm sales of raw milk if the producer is licensed and complies with monthly pathogen testing, clear labelling (including "Raw Milk" warning statements), refrigeration requirements, and recordkeeping obligations. These standards form the basis of educational material issued by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to support producer compliance.

A 2023 review by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation concluded that the risks associated with raw milk outweighed the benefits; however, no pilot programs or regulatory pathways were explored to assess these risks under controlled conditions. Meanwhile, consumer interest in locally based food systems continues to grow. National surveys, such as the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity's Public Trust Research, report that more than 60% of Canadians consider buying locally produced food as an important factor in their purchasing decisions.

Raw milk advocacy efforts across Canada have included legal challenges (Affleck v. The Attorney General of Ontario, 2021 ONSC 1108) lobbying campaigns and policy efforts at the municipal and regional level. The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce has identified a notable discrepancy between dairy and other agricultural products that are permitted to be sold directly from farms. The organization's policy calls for the development of a regulatory model in Alberta that would permit the legal sale of raw milk with appropriate safeguards such as food safety training, microbial testing, and labelling. In Quebec, raw milk is permitted for certain types of cheese under Regulation P-29, r.1, but not for fluid consumption. British Columbia and Manitoba have seen limited movement toward raw milk access, with most attempts stalled due to regulatory constraints and public health positions.

For rural municipalities, this issue affects both current and potential small-scale dairy operations. It also intersects with broader rural development goals, such as expanding local food production, supporting farm diversification, and enabling fair market access. Allowing provinces to explore regulated, small-scale pilot programs would provide governments with data on safety, compliance and economic viability without requiring immediate large-scale deregulation.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 5-25F
Increasing Funding for Alberta's Libraries
County of Grande Prairie

Endorsed by District 4

WHEREAS libraries are community hubs that offer free resources, programming, education, and community gathering space, impacting all Albertans; and

WHEREAS residents of rural communities expect and deserve equitable access to high-quality, essential services and facilities such as public libraries; and

WHEREAS libraries' ability to meet both basic and expanding range of needs for Alberta's growing population is increasingly constrained by outdated funding levels; and

WHEREAS the annual Public Library Operating Grant of $5.60 per person has increased by only $0.05 (under one percent) since 2016, while inflation, according to Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index in Alberta, has increased by 29 percent in the same time period; and

WHEREAS if indexed to inflation, funding in 2024 would have been $6.94 per person; and

WHEREAS the per capita funding grant for Alberta's libraries is currently based on 2019 population data. Alberta's population has grown by 15 percent (or over 635,000 people) from 2019 to 2025; and

WHEREAS a funding increase would directly strengthen libraries' ability to address the growing demand for job-seeking and language-learning services; assist newcomers to Alberta; improve digital access (especially for remote and rural Albertans); create opportunities for reconciliation and Indigenous learning; and expand literacy and learning supports for children;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate for the Government of Alberta (GOA) to update the per capita rate for the Public Library Operating Grant to $6.94 per person, which is an increase of $1.34 per person, to reflect inflationary increases.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate for the GOA to commit to indexing the population-based grant using the rate of inflation and the most recent populations statistics of the Alberta Municipal Affairs Population Estimate List.

Member Background
Libraries throughout Alberta, but especially in rural areas, are vital community hubs serving a wide range of community needs through physical and virtual spaces. Libraries serve all segments of their communities with learning programs, community-building events, career and life planning, connections to social support services, access to information, newcomer supports, small business development, civic engagement, and more. With 324 library service points and nearly 100 per cent of the population having access to a public library, a provincial investment in public libraries can benefit all Albertans.

Investing in libraries is integral to helping rural communities thrive. There are 63 libraries located in Alberta's rural municipalities, overseen by 29 rural municipal library boards.[1] Public libraries play an outsized role in small communities, where the library often serves as the only free, public gathering space, especially given the numerous barriers to information and services, such as distance and high costs. Library boards in rural municipalities have additional challenges as they attempt to deliver equitable library service in areas where populations are sparsely distributed and infrastructure costs are high.

The Government of Alberta has highlighted the importance of supporting economic recovery, reducing barriers to public services, supporting new Albertans, and building foundations for a strong future. In addition, as identified in Outcome 2 in the Municipal Affairs: Ministry Business Plan 2024-2027, a key objective of the Government of Alberta is to "provide operating grants and capacity supports to Alberta's public library boards and regional library systems, to ensure Albertans are served by accessible, well-managed, and responsive library services".

Alberta Municipalities (Abmunis) has examined -the population aspects of this resolution in the past, including the 2020 resolution, Current Population Funding for Municipal Public Libraries in Alberta, in which the intent was not met. At the Fall 2024 ABmunis convention, the City of Calgary put the question of per capita funding to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for consideration in budget 2025, and no changes were made.

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta have also addressed the inflation issue in the past, including through Resolution 11-16S, Resolution 14-14F, and Resolution 11-08F. Since this time, the population has increased in many municipalities in Alberta, partly due to the "Alberta is Calling" campaign, which, together with inflationary pressures, is impacting public libraries' capacity to deliver an acceptable level of service. The Public Libraries Service Branch instituted a base operating grant to provide base funding that is less variable for slight population fluctuations that can occur in smaller municipalities.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

[1] Estimates extracted from https://www.alberta.ca/public-library-statistics

Resolution 6-25F

Increased Enforcement in Rural Alberta to Deter Rural Crime

Clearwater County

Endorsed by District 2

WHEREAS crime in rural Alberta continues to proliferate communities and impact the lives of residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS rural Alberta residents continue to be concerned about their personal safety due to escalating levels and severity of property crime; and

WHEREAS rural municipalities all share in the cost of policing in the province, through user-pay based system outlined in the Police Funding Model (PFM) Regulation, and as reflected in their respective municipal requisitions; and

WHEREAS provincial policing entities, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), appear to lack the support for the required resources to patrol (deter), respond to and investigate reported rural crimes;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta develop and implement additional strategies and initiatives to prevent rural crime by expanding policing detachment services in smaller, rural and remote areas.

Member Background

This proposed resolution would support a continued provincial focus on increasing policing capacity overall and the implementation of more crime deterrence programs and initiatives, considering that municipalities partly share in the cost of this service provision.

Previous RMA Resolution 2-18S - – Combatting Rural Crime provides extensive background related to rural crime increases in the province whereby the impacts to both individuals and businesses, particularly concerning property crime, are highlighted throughout. Although some initiatives have been implemented following the endorsement of resolution 2-18S in Spring 2018, including the *Rural Crime Action Plan*, theft-related crimes and associated public risks continue to occur at an unacceptable level. **RMA Background**

15-24F: Member Committee to Understand the Criminal Justice System

> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta create a member committee to examine and understand the challenges of addressing rural crime and improve RMA members' collective knowledge of how the criminal justice system works;
>
> FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the committee develop recommended solutions and advocacy approaches for criminal justice systems changes that will support safe rural communities.
> Click here to view the full resolution.

Resolution 7-25F

Virtual Option for RMA Spring Convention

MD of Willow Creek

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the Rural Municipalities of Alberta currently hosts two conventions each year, one in the spring and one in the fall at the Edmonton Convention Centre; and

WHEREAS conventions are becoming increasingly costly for RMA members, with expenses approaching $3000 per person per convention for many municipalities, which includes hotel, registration, mileage and other expenses; and

WHEREAS offering a virtual attendance option for the spring convention would enable the continued involvement of elected officials and municipal staff in convention activities such as information sharing and learning, ministerial forums and resolution sessions at a considerably reduced costs to taxpayers; and

WHEREAS facilitating a virtual option would not affect existing RMA contracts with the Edmonton Convention Centre

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta amend the convention process to offer virtual attendance at the spring RMA convention annually.

Member Background

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta have been conducting two conventions annually since its inception.

The tax burden is increasing on individual ratepayers, and most municipalities are seeking ways to alleviate tax increases by reducing administrative costs to continue to provide a consistent level of service despite inflationary pressures.

While there is value in networking, resolution sessions and ministerial forums, the relevance of many events and activities related to the convention is becoming increasingly difficult to justify financially.

Public scrutiny of these types of events and the spending associated with them is increasing. The M.D. of Willow Creek spent approximately $3000 per person to attend the 2024 Fall Conference including: $861 for conference registration, $1,400 for hotels, $650 for mileage and approximately $100 in miscellaneous expenses including parking and meals. Annual costs that approach $50,000 for Council and certain staff to attend two conventions is not justifiable.

In-person meetings with government ministers is highly restricted during the RMA conventions, which limits the opportunity for municipalities to connect with government officials, requiring many to travel to Edmonton at times other than during a convention to meet in person.

Providing an option for virtual attendance at the spring convention would assist in alleviating the financial burden associated with conference attendance, provide council members who are livestock producers an opportunity to participate during the busy spring season and address the growing public frustration with unnecessary government spending.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 8-25F

Sustainable Fee Model for Alberta Registry Agents to Protect Rural Service Access

Flagstaff County

Endorsed by District 5

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta regulates the registry industry through the Registry Agents' Regulation by capping the fee amounts for the largest-volume services provided by Alberta registry agents; and

WHEREAS most of these fees have not been adjusted since 2005; and

WHEREAS Alberta registry agents offer essential professional, personalized, and secure over-the-counter and online services to clients near their homes, a fact of significant importance to aging rural Alberta clients with distance-restricted driver's licenses and/or without the ability to use the internet; and

WHEREAS the closure of ten rural registry agents since 2021 has negatively impacted accessibility to government services in rural Alberta, as well as local economic growth, employment, and rural sustainability; and

WHEREAS rural registry offices, particularly those that service smaller populations, typically operate at a loss compared to urban based registry offices as demonstrated by an independent analysis by KPMG in 2010 that shows that a registry agent operating in locations that serve populations fewer than 500 loses $4,000 annually by providing registry services; and WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has a responsibility to ensure access to essential government services for all residents, regardless of geographic location; and

WHEREAS the sustainability of rural registry agents is critical to maintaining service delivery, supporting rural economic stability, and upholding the Government of Alberta's service commitments; and

WHEREAS without a sustainable fee model, rural registry agents face increasing risk of closure;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to recognize the vital role of Alberta registry agents in the delivery of essential government services to all Albertans, particularly in rural communities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta recognize the positive impact of registry agents in rural Alberta communities, through the implementation of a fair and equitable fee model that reflects cost of living, inflation, and minimum wage increases.

Member Background:

Alberta registry agents are the authorized delivery channel for over 200 products and services on behalf of five Government of Alberta Ministries: Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, Justice, Hospital and Surgical Health Services, Treasury Board and Finance, and Transportation and Economic Corridors. There are 197 Alberta Association of Registry Agents (AARA) member agents in 137 Alberta communities — 75% of which are in rural or small urban jurisdictions.

Importance to Albertans: Serving 137 communities across the province, the registry agent network ensures most Albertans have access to government services close to home through a network that employs nearly 1,500 people. Registry staff are qualified, trained, and certified to meet high customer expectations. Registry agents have continued to invest in the industry to meet new technology requirements, population growth, etc. The industry is prepared to and needs to continue to modernize and expand online services to keep pace with market, economic, and political conditions.

Albertans themselves value access to in-person registry services. In a survey completed on behalf of the AARA, 92% of respondents indicated it was important to have access to government services in their communities and over 90% of Albertans felt that it would have a negative impact on their communities if their local registry agent were to close.

Importance to Independent Registry Agents: A healthy registry agent network is best positioned to serve the diverse needs of all Albertans. A sense of financial stability with long- term assurance of sustainability underpins agents' ability to make solid business decisions.

While registry agents received a fee increase in 2020 on 13 services, they have not received a much-needed capped fee increase on most other services in 20 years. This limits agents from keeping pace with cost-of-living increases, hiring experienced staff, and threatens the ability for rural registry agents to keep their doors open.

Furthermore, rural registry offices, particularly those that service smaller populations, typically operate at a loss compared to urban based registry offices as demonstrated by an independent analysis by KPMG in 2010 that shows that a registry agent operating in locations that serve populations fewer than 500 loses $4,000 annually by providing registry services.

Importance to the AARA: The AARA provides important member services that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the registry agent network and, by doing so, improves service to all Albertans.

Importance to Service Alberta: Having a secure, healthy private online network to be the delivery of Government Services in each community is key to the ease of access for Albertans. The health of the registry agent network is threatened if registries are kept out of online service delivery and cannot earn revenue from these high-volume services.

RMA Background

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 9-25F

Recognition of "Historical Hamlets" to Enable Provincial Funding Eligibility

Cardston County

Endorsed by District 1

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta does not recognize some hamlet settlements as "hamlets" for the purpose of funding water and wastewater projects; and

WHEREAS certain hamlets in Alberta were established prior to 1905, before the Province of Alberta was created; and

WHEREAS these historical communities were founded under unique settlement patterns, including the "Plat of Zion", "Garden lot, or "Agricultural Village" community design, resulting in larger-than-standard residential lots that exceed TEC's current maximum lot size requirement of 1,850 m² (0.457 acres); and

WHEREAS residents in these communities require access to potable water systems that meet Government of Alberta regulations to ensure the health and safety of residents; and

WHEREAS the exclusion of these historical hamlets from the official list of approved hamlets eligible for potable water funding places an undue burden on residents and restricts equitable access to essential infrastructure; and

WHEREAS acknowledging and supporting communities that predate Alberta's provincial status is essential to preserving settlement history and ensuring fair access to provincial programs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to formally recognize hamlets established before 1905 as "historical hamlets"; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta amend its potable water funding eligibility requirements so that all historical hamlets are included, regardless of current lot size standards; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta work with municipalities to secure potable water funding for these historical hamlets in compliance with provincial health and environmental safety standards.

Member Background

Alberta is home to over 430 recognized hamlets, many of which were founded well before Alberta became a province in 1905. These early communities often developed under unique planning traditions that differ from modern subdivision standards.

One notable example is the "Plat of Zion" design, introduced by settlers in the late 1800s. This planning model emphasized wide streets, a central gathering space, and residential lots much larger than today's standards—often one acre or more. As a result, many of Alberta's pre-1905 hamlets have lot sizes that exceed Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors' current potable water funding eligibility threshold of 1,850 m² (0.457 acres);.

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors administers programs such as the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership (AMWWP) and Water for Life (W4L), which provide cost-shared grants to municipalities for water and wastewater infrastructure. To qualify, a hamlet must be recognized by the province and meet certain technical requirements, including minimum numbers of dwellings and maximum lot sizes. While these rules may fit newer, compact communities, they unintentionally exclude historical hamlets that were designed differently and established before Alberta's provincial boundaries were even drawn.

This creates a significant gap:

- Residents in historical hamlets still require potable water systems that meet Alberta Health and Alberta Environment standards.
- Without recognition and eligibility, municipalities cannot access provincial funding to bring infrastructure up to regulatory requirements.
- The financial burden then falls disproportionately on rural municipalities and residents, creating inequity compared to newer communities that automatically qualify.

Cardston County has a few hamlets that do not qualify for funding because of their lot sizes. Three of them are Aetna, Mountain View and Leavitt, all of which were established in the late 1800s. These communities were built on larger lots under the Plat of Zion model, making them ineligible for funding despite being long-standing settlements with clear municipal recognition. Similar challenges exist across Alberta in other pre-1905 hamlets that share unique planning legacies.

Alberta Primary and Preventative Services (formerly Alberta Health) and Alberta Environment and Protected Areas have identified concerns regarding the safety and reliability of water within certain hamlets and have engaged in discussions with Cardston County to address how safe and compliant water sources can be secured. In response, the County has prepared detailed regional waterline plans to deliver potable water to these communities. However, without access to provincial funding, the County is unable to move these projects forward to construction.

Recognizing these historical hamlets and adjusting eligibility criteria would:

- Acknowledge Alberta's settlement history and the communities that helped build the province,
- Provide fair and equitable access to provincial programs, and
- Ensure safe drinking water systems can be delivered to residents in compliance with provincial health and environmental regulations.

RMA Background

9-25S: Water and Wastewater System Funding

> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate for the Government of Alberta to restore Water for Life Program (WFLP) funding levels and expand WFLP eligibility to include water and wastewater distribution system replacements and maintenance.
>
> Click here to view the full resolution.