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Resolution 1-26S

**Urgent Reforms to Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA)**

County of Minburn

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Health Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) was originally created in 1997 through the consolidation of federal food safety, animal health, and plant health inspection services drawn from multiple federal departments, including Agriculture and AgriFood Canada and Health Canada; and

**WHEREAS** in 2013 the CFIA was formally integrated into the Ministry of Health; and

**WHEREAS** the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) was established in 1995 through the transfer of responsibility for administering the *Pest Control Products Act* from the Minister of Agriculture and AgriFood to the Minister of Health, thereby consolidating federal pesticide regulation within Health Canada from its earlier placement under Agriculture and AgriFood Canada; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has proposed amendments to Part XV of the Health of Animals Regulations (Identification and Traceability), expanding species coverage and requiring enhanced movement reporting, premises identification, and digitized record keeping; and

**WHEREAS** the stated objective of these amendments is improved disease control and outbreak response; however, producers have raised concerns about increased workload, cost, administrative burden, and limited on-farm practicality, particularly in the absence of evidence demonstrating deficiencies in the current traceability system; and

**WHEREAS** case studies from Agricultural Service Boards, including poultry and cervid sectors, highlight how delays and inflexibility in CFIA decision-making, particularly regarding depopulation, cause significant business disruption, stress for producers and workers, and adverse animal welfare outcomes; and

**WHEREAS** the financial implications of the proposed legislation on small agricultural producers remain unquantified, creating uncertainty around potential losses such as diminished revenue, delayed or reduced investment, and broader impacts on the long-term sustainability of rural economies; and

**WHEREAS** without a clear economic assessment, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed regulatory framework will support growth, reduce administrative burden, and maintain the strength of Alberta's meat production sector and its local value chain capacity; and

**WHEREAS** the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Pesticides Management has found that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and, by extension, CFIA often lack the mechanisms necessary to meaningfully incorporate industry feedback into regulatory outcomes, resulting in responses that acknowledge concerns but cannot always lead to substantive changes;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) urge the Government of Canada (GOC) to implement urgent reforms to the mandates, processes, and accountability structures of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), including providing both agencies with the legal authority to meaningfully consider and respond to feedback from producers, industry stakeholders, and Canadians;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request that the GOC relocate CFIA and PMRA from Health Canada back under Agriculture and AgriFood Canada to restore alignment with agricultural needs, improve responsiveness to on-farm realities, and require the agencies to consider business impacts, animal welfare, scientific evidence, and practical implementation challenges in all regulatory decisions.**

### **Member Background**

The County of Minburn No. 27 opposes the proposed CFIA traceability amendments due to the significant regulatory burden they would place on agricultural organizations, agricultural fairs, exhibitions, and small producers, limiting their ability to market livestock and promote agriculture in rural Alberta.

While the CFIA has worked for years to modernize traceability, the effectiveness of any system depends on producer trust and practical, cost effective regulations. The current proposal will disproportionately affect small and mixed operations, discourage participation in community agriculture events, accelerate farm consolidation, and undermine rural resilience. Increased reporting requirements would risk inaccurate data, greater enforcement conflict, and weakened collaboration between regulators and producers. It remains unclear what gaps these amendments aim to address, given Canada's longstanding record of strong animal health and market access, including decades of Foot-and-mouth Disease and Bovine Tuberculosis free status. Agricultural producers already shoulder major regulatory costs; Alberta beef producers alone have spent an estimated \$190 million on RFID tags since 2006 without corresponding market benefits. These pressures have contributed to a 28% decline in Alberta's cow herd and the loss of many family run operations.

The proposed changes would add goats and farmed cervids to traceability requirements, mandate event reporting (movement, death), shorten reporting timelines to seven days, and require provincial premises identification. Despite the CFIA referencing engagement since 2013, meaningful input was collected only during a single 90day consultation in 2023, which yielded just 778 submissions nationwide, far from representative of Canada's livestock sector. The early 2026 implementation timeline further highlights the inadequacy of the consultation and risks creating substantial administrative burden and red tape.

A more responsive, science based, and accountable regulatory framework is needed to support agricultural producers, protect rural economies, and ensure the long term sustainability of Canada's agricultural sector.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 2-26S

### **Changes to Provincial Bridge and Culvert Classification**

MD of Bonnyville

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors*

**WHEREAS** the Government of Alberta appears to be the only jurisdiction in Canada that defines a 1500-3000 mm culvert as a bridge structure; and

**WHEREAS** most Canadian jurisdictions define a bridge structure as having a span of 3000 mm; and

**WHEREAS** replacing a bridge structure is significantly more costly than replacing a culvert;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta to change its definition of a bridge to match the national practice of defining a culvert spanning 3000mm or more as a bridge structure;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA investigate cost effective bridge replacement and maintenance options for municipalities.**

#### **Member Background**

The Municipal District of Bonnyville (MD) is situated in Northeast Alberta, with a population of approximately 12,900 residents. The region hosts the second largest oil sands deposits in Alberta, contributing significantly to its economic landscape. It is also home to the 4 Wing Cold Lake military base and encompasses the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range, further enhancing its strategic significance. In addition to its economic and strategic value, the M.D. boasts a robust recreational base, featuring numerous beautiful lakes and campgrounds that attract visitors and support local tourism.

The MD is currently facing significant challenges concerning the renewal of its bridge infrastructure, as numerous bridges are nearing the end of their life cycles. This situation poses a critical challenge in ensuring the sustainability of our infrastructure in a manner that remains financially manageable for our constituents. We are projecting replacement costs to reach tens of millions of dollars in the next decade.

It is important to note that the Government of Alberta is unique in its definition of bridge structures, classifying culverts measuring between 1500mm and 3000mm as bridge structures. In contrast, in most other jurisdictions across Canada, a culvert must be at least 3000mm to be considered a bridge structure. This distinct classification in Alberta adds complexity to our infrastructure planning and management, impacting our approach to maintenance and funding requirements.

By treating existing non-conforming culverts as separate bridge assets, their replacement in Alberta triggers design upgrade requirements that are very costly, engineering intensive, and often require extensive road reconstruction work to accommodate. It is not uncommon that a culvert that would normally cost our internal maintenance crews \$75,000 for replacement “as-built” to cost \$300,000 to \$400,000 once the required engineering and upgrade costs of a bridge replacement are considered. It is

also very common that the road itself needs to be humped over the upgraded culvert to accommodate its new geometry, with engineers speculating on the future design of a road upgrade not yet being considered (culverts are designed for a 50-year service life).

These required upgrading costs are not sustainable and are putting Alberta's municipalities at risk. The MD has a population of over 12,000 and is currently responsible for inspecting and maintaining 120 local road bridge structures, many of which are approaching the end of their lifecycles. These structures are heavily used by industry, and the MD is being forced to consider closing roads due to the significant costs associated with the required bridge culvert upgrades.

[A letter and comparative bridge definitions](#) from Building Information Modeling and OSIM manuals was sent to the Honourable Minister Devin Dreeshen, Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors on December 22, 2025.

### **RMA Background**

#### 1-23F: Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program Funding

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.

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

Resolution 3-26S

**Inclusion of Veterinarians and Animal Health Technicians in the Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Program**

MD of Peace

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Jobs and Families Canada*

**WHEREAS** the Government of Canada has implemented and expanded the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program to attract and retain essential professionals in rural and underserved areas, including family doctors, nurses, and, as of December 31, 2025, a range of additional health and social services professionals such as teachers, early childhood educators, social workers, dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists, midwives, psychologists, personal support workers and physiotherapists; and

**WHEREAS** veterinarians and animal health technicians were not included among these newly eligible occupations; and

**WHEREAS** rural and remote communities face serious workforce challenges, including shortages of veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians, which directly impact animal health, herd productivity, disease surveillance, animal welfare, and the economic stability of agricultural producers; and

**WHEREAS** the exclusion of veterinarians and animal health technicians from this federal incentive means that even though these professionals face high educational debt and are vital to rural economies and food production systems like the beef industry, they do not receive the same targeted federal support that helps reduce student loan burdens or increase recruitment into rural practice; and

**WHEREAS** recruiting and retaining veterinarians and animal health technicians to serve rural producers is essential to timely preventive care, disease management, herd health planning, emergency responses (including foreign animal disease preparedness); and

**WHEREAS** rural practices struggle to compete with urban clinics and corporate employment, especially when debt servicing is a deciding factor for early-career professionals;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Canada to amend the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program to include veterinarians and animal health technicians who commit to practicing in rural, remote, or underserved communities as eligible professions for federal student loan forgiveness benefits;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that this amendment reflect terms comparable to those available for other rural-critical professions (e.g., number of years of service and maximum forgiveness amounts), recognizing that these veterinary professionals are essential to bolstering livestock health services and supporting agricultural sustainability**

**Member Background:**

Recent updates to the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program expanded to several new professions but did not include veterinarians and animal health technicians. Given the labour shortages faced by rural communities and the essential role that veterinarians and animal health technicians contribute towards rural livestock production, this resolution calls for the Government of Canada to help support these important professions by enabling eligibility for the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program. Doing so would in turn support Alberta's agricultural sector and rural livelihoods by resolving labour shortages and promoting retention and incentivization of the veterinarian and animal health technician professions.

#### [Canada Student Loan Forgiveness - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)

With this program the Government of Canada offers Canada Student Loan Forgiveness to borrowers who work in eligible occupations in eligible communities.

#### Eligible occupations

- Family Doctor
- Family Medicine Resident
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Nurse Practitioner
- Registered Nurse
- Registered Psychiatric Nurse
- Registered Practical Nurse
- Dentist (New)
- Dental Hygienist (New)
- Early Childhood Educator (New)
- Midwife (New)
- Personal Support Worker (New)
- Pharmacist (New)
- Physiotherapist (New)
- Psychologist (New)
- Social Worker (New)
- Teacher (New)

New occupations are eligible as of December 31, 2025.

#### Eligible communities

As of November 6, 2024, the definition of an eligible community has changed. For the purposes of loan forgiveness, it is defined as:

- A rural area,
- A population centre with no more than 30,000

#### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 4-26S

## **Electoral Boundary Redistribution to Protect Effective Representation in Rural Alberta**

County of Northern Lights

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Premier's Office, Alberta Municipal Affairs*

**WHEREAS** the Government of Alberta has formed an Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) to review and propose changes to provincial electoral boundaries to reflect population growth; and

**WHEREAS** the EBC released an interim report in December 2025 with proposed changes to Alberta's provincial electoral boundaries; and

**WHEREAS** following engagement related to the interim report, the EBC is expected to submit a final report to Cabinet in late March 2026; and

**WHEREAS** rural constituencies across Alberta are characterized by large geographic areas, dispersed populations, and significant travel distances, creating unique challenges for effective political representation; and

**WHEREAS** the EBC's interim report has acknowledged that equal population does not necessarily mean equal representation, and that voter parity must be addressed in a nuanced way that reflects local and geographic realities; and

**WHEREAS** despite this acknowledgment from the EBC, the interim report treated population variance thresholds that could support effective rural representation as a last resort rather than as a legitimate tool to support rural and remote representation; and

**WHEREAS** many rural constituencies already encompass exceptionally large geographic areas, creating substantial travel demands for MLAs and limiting their capacity for regular, in-person engagement with constituents, municipal councils, and Indigenous communities; and

**WHEREAS** further enlarging or consolidating rural constituencies, especially in northern and other remote areas, would significantly increase travel burdens and further reduce accessibility to elected representatives; and

**WHEREAS** urban MLAs benefit from compact ridings, proximity to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and reduced travel time, creating inequitable levels of effective representation and access to MLAs for rural residents; and

**WHEREAS** the creation or expansion of hybrid ridings may prioritize population consistency over the practical ability of an MLA to effectively represent communities with divergent rural, small urban, and urban interests; and

**WHEREAS** many small urban municipalities in Alberta identify closely with surrounding rural regions and rely on shared service areas, transportation corridors, and regional governance, and proposed boundary changes may negatively affect their access to effective representation;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to reject any electoral boundary redistribution that further enlarges or consolidates rural constituencies, where such changes would undermine effective representation and accessibility; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA advocate to the GOA to make greater and more appropriate use of permitted population variance provisions where justified by geography, travel burden, and local conditions, to preserve effective rural and remote representation; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA emphasize to the GOA that geographic size, travel burden, dispersed population, and constituency accessibility must be weighted as critical factors, alongside population parity, when determining provincial electoral boundaries; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA request the GOA and the Electoral Boundaries Commission to reconsider the use and expansion of hybrid ridings where they compromise the ability of MLAs to effectively represent rural, small urban, and urban communities with distinct interests.**

### **Member Background**

The Government of Alberta is undertaking a redistribution of provincial electoral boundaries to address population growth, particularly in Alberta's urban and suburban centres. While population parity is an important democratic principle, rural constituencies across Alberta face unique challenges related to geographic size, dispersed populations, long travel distances, weather conditions, and access to services.

RMA has recognized that effective representation in rural Alberta cannot be achieved solely through population equality, and that voter parity must be addressed in a more nuanced way that reflects local, geographic, and practical realities. However, recent approaches to redistribution have not fully reflected this principle in practice.

Rural ridings across Alberta—including northern, west-central, and other remote regions—already cover vast territories. Further consolidation or enlargement risks reducing effective, on-the-ground representation and increasing barriers to access for residents, municipalities, and Indigenous communities.

There remain opportunities to address population growth in urban areas without eliminating or consolidating rural ridings, while remaining within constitutionally and statutorily permitted population variance thresholds. A balanced approach that adds capacity in urban centres while preserving rural geographic integrity would better support effective representation for all Albertans.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 5-26S

### **Funding to Clean up Contaminated and Derelict Properties**

County of Vermilion River

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Energy and Minerals*

**WHEREAS** there are numerous contaminated and derelict properties throughout Alberta which are left abandoned by property owners each year, often accompanied by unpaid property taxes; and

**WHEREAS** contaminated and derelict properties negatively affect property owners and municipalities; and

**WHEREAS** previous grant funding from the Government of Alberta was not adequate to remediate properties and is no longer available; and

**WHEREAS** applicable acts and regulations do not properly distinguish between current owners and original polluters, and further do not completely prevent the original polluter from evading their remediation responsibilities; and

**WHEREAS** municipalities face the dilemma of either seizing these properties through unpaid taxes and therefore inheriting the liability; or allowing the continued contamination of lands and accumulation of unpaid taxes;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to review relevant legislation to enable the differentiation between current and former owners with respect to liability for contaminated properties; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the GOA to reinstate an adequately funded grant program to facilitate the remediation of contaminated properties.**

#### **Member Background**

Annually, the County of Vermilion River has property owners who refuse to clean up contaminated and derelict properties and often do not pay taxes on these properties. Alberta Environment and Protected Areas has issued environmental protection orders but property owners are either not cleaning the properties up or cannot be found. This is an issue that is not only present in the County of Vermilion River but is widespread in rural Alberta, causing many municipalities to unnecessarily incur costs, liabilities and contaminated and derelict properties.

#### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 6-26S

### **Municipal Involvement in Regulatory Processes**

Big Lakes County

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Alberta Affordability and Utilities, Alberta Energy and Minerals, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Natural Resources Conservation Board*

**WHEREAS** the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) is responsible for approving confined feeding operation (CFO) applications in Alberta; and

**WHEREAS** the NRCB approval process does not allow for municipalities to create or implement land use bylaws that restrict, prevent, or prohibit confined feeding operations; and

**WHEREAS** The NRCB consults affected municipalities during the approval process only if the application affects the municipal land use bylaw or municipal development plan; and

**WHEREAS** The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) both allow unsatisfactory levels of municipal involvement in project developments and approvals; and

**WHEREAS** such developments may place undue pressure and strain on the impacted municipality's resources, infrastructure, environment, and community relationships; and

**WHEREAS** comments provided by the municipalities during the approval process are often deemed insignificant, passed onto another ministry, and not adequately addressed prior to project approval;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate for the Government of Alberta (GOA) to mandate the Natural Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Utilities Commission, and Alberta Energy Regulator to incorporate into their application approval processes involvement of the municipality where the proposed operation will occur;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that RMA advocates to the GOA to allow for municipalities to address, restrict, and/or create variances for confined feeding operations within their respective land use bylaws and municipal development plans.

### **Member Background**

Municipal involvement in proposed projects or developments that receive approvals through provincially delegated quasi-judicial agencies is of little significance to the overall approval process. The lack of municipal involvement creates undue strain on the resources, infrastructure, and local environment of the affected municipality. Without prior notification, the municipality is often unprepared for potential consequences of proposed projects. These approvals often receive community backlash which the municipality is unable to address as they were not involved in the approval process in a meaningful or significant way. This impacts community relations and fosters potential hostility between the public, the municipality, and the respective quasi-judicial agency. Notification systems of the quasi-judicial agencies are lacking; depending on the project, municipalities may not be notified of the activity at any point during the approval process, or notification is given on a short timeline with the

municipality unable to form an appropriate or comprehensive response within the given timeframe. Should the municipality put forth concerns or comments, these may often be left unanswered with the approval still moving forward.

In the instance of approvals for the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), the municipality is unable to include any provisions in their Land Use Bylaw which may impact or prohibit the development of NRCB-approved projects. When projects are proposed, the respective municipality is asked to provide comment on if the development aligns with the Land Use Bylaw. Should the municipality provide comment, they are often left unaddressed or delegated to another ministry within the provincial government. During this time, the approval is moved forward without answers for the municipality's comments or concerns. Due to limited staffing, negative consequences of the development are often left unaddressed, and the complaints fall to the municipality that has no ability to rectify or address the issue. This process is mirrored in many quasi-judicial agencies, leaving the municipality in a difficult position across various development types proposed within their municipal boundaries.

### **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 7-26S

**Remove Reference to Growth Management Boards from the Municipal Government Act**

Foothills County

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Municipal Affairs*

**WHEREAS** the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) currently includes provisions under Part 17.1 enabling the establishment of growth management boards (GMBs); and

**WHEREAS** in 2025, the Government of Alberta (GOA) discontinued funding of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) and Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB); and

**WHEREAS** the CMRB and EMRB voted to cease operations; and

**WHEREAS** in 2025, the GOA repealed regulations establishing the CMRB and the EMRB; and

**WHEREAS** intermunicipal development plans (IDPs) and intermunicipal collaboration frameworks (ICFs) are mandated in the MGA to address planning and shared services among municipalities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend the *Municipal Government Act* to repeal all references to growth management boards.**

**Member Background**

The regulations governing the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB), Alta Reg 190/2017 as amended and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB), Alta Reg 189/2017 as amended were repealed effective April 30, 2025, under Alta Reg 42/2025 and 41/2025 respectively. Additionally, the Minister of Municipal Affairs issued Ministerial Orders No. MSD:016/25 and MSD:017/25 rescinding the Growth Plan and Regional Evaluation Framework for each region (EMRB MSD:064/22 and CMRB MSD:064/22). The regulations came into effect following the province's announcement that funding of regional board operations would cease.

As a result, the CMRB voted to cease its operations as of May 1, 2025, and the EMRB voted to do the same by March 31, 2025. Moving forward, member municipalities are expected to utilize intermunicipal development plans (IDPs) and intermunicipal collaboration frameworks (ICFs) to guide regional growth initiatives and collaborative efforts. This transition signifies a shift towards more localized and intermunicipal approaches to regional planning and development, emphasizing cooperation among municipalities without the overarching regulatory framework previously prescribed by the CMRB and EMRB, effectively protecting local autonomy and enhancing accountability of elected, rather than unelected, levels of government.

Despite these recent developments, Part 17.1 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), which outlines the establishment and operation of growth boards in the province, has yet to be amended to reflect the decision of the Minister to cease funding and repeal establishment of existing growth management boards.

### **RMA Background**

#### 12-23F: Growth Management Board Voluntary Membership

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.

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

#### ER1-23F: Limiting Third-party Services in ICF Agreements

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.

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

Resolution 8-26S

### **Equitable Electricity Distribution Pricing Model**

County of Grande Prairie

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Affordability and Utilities, Alberta Utilities Commission*

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

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

**WHEREAS** in 2024, annual distribution charges paid by the average residential customer with 600kWh of consumption ranged from \$387 (EPCOR service area) to \$1,211 (ATCO service area)<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** 60% of energy demand in the ATCO service area is driven by industrial customers, benefitting the entire province through direct and indirect employment and income taxes;

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

#### **Member Background**

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

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

Business and residential customers endure economic penalties based on geographical and population density disadvantages in large areas of the province. British Columbia and Saskatchewan have successfully built and operated distribution systems which more evenly distribute delivery service costs.

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

As the electrical grid for Alberta operates as a single entity, it would be reasonable to distribute costs equally across the province. Alberta's model disadvantages communities at the border between service providers. In doing so, it minimizes competitiveness to attract businesses in Alberta outside of urban

centers. Continual increases in distribution rates, in areas already experiencing a disparity, result in increased energy poverty for many Albertans.

<sup>1</sup>Utilities Consumer Advocate: Residential Electricity Delivery Charges

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.

Resolution 9-26S

**Access to Liability Insurance for Agritourism Operators**

County of Barrhead

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Alberta Tourism and Sport, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation*

**WHEREAS** the Government of Alberta (GOA) appears to recognize the value of agritourism as demonstrated in recent press releases; and

**WHEREAS** Travel Alberta’s goal is to double Alberta’s tourism economy by 2035 (\$12.74B to \$25B) including through development of new and expanded agritourism experiences; and

**WHEREAS** the “2024 Destination Canada’s Global Traveler Research Program Survey” estimated 2.9 million overseas travelers and 2.5 million US travelers are interested in experiencing rural Alberta over the next two years; and

**WHEREAS** agritourism has the potential to address the growing consumer demand of tourists and has a positive impact on the agriculture industry and both local and provincewide economic development; and

**WHEREAS** Alberta Farm Fresh Producers surveyed its membership and more than 40% of respondents indicated that selling value-added products and providing on-farm experiences could diversify farm income and raise awareness about agriculture among urban residents; and

**WHEREAS** to support responsible agritourism, producers require liability protection through adequate insurance coverage that extends standard farm liability insurance to cover the unique risks associated with welcoming visitors onto a working farm; and

**WHEREAS** agritourism insurance is either not available, very restrictive or available only through elevated premiums that are cost prohibitive, resulting in severely limiting the growth of agritourism in Alberta; and

**WHEREAS** Ontario has implemented the *Growing Agritourism Act*, which provides liability protection for agritourism operators by creating a safer environment for both agritourism operators and visitors through risk awareness;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) request the Government of Alberta to review Ontario’s *Growing Agritourism Act* and assess its relevance to addressing challenges faced by Alberta’s agritourism sector in accessing adequate liability insurance;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA support the GOA in developing an action plan to address barriers in accessing adequate liability insurance for agritourism activities.**

## Member Background

Although definitions of “agritourism” vary, it generally involves opening farm gates to visitors by turning access to agricultural products, services or experiences into tourism products, all while creating supplemental income for producers and celebrating Alberta's agricultural heritage.

Increased agritourism has the potential to contribute to the local and provincial economy and contribute to solving other long-standing rural challenges such as but not limited to the following:

- Rejuvenating rural towns through social and economic benefits by attracting tourists and creating supply-chain networks
- Creating jobs in rural Alberta
- Providing farmers with the opportunity to increase sustainability by diversifying and supplementing their income

Farmers, however, are finding it difficult to obtain appropriate liability insurance for visitors on their farm – whether it is a class of students, or visitors from urban centers or from abroad:

- Most insurance companies do not offer coverage for agritourism and expect the “activity” to stop, or full farm policies have been threatened to be cancelled
- A few insurance companies willing to consider providing insurance coverage, either significantly restrict agritourism activities or substantially increase premiums that make coverage unaffordable
- Many farmers simply operate without the additional coverage which puts them at risk
- To participate in Alberta Open Farm Days, farmers must carry general liability insurance with the province extending a blanket policy for all operators

In 2024, the Government of Ontario approved Bill 186, *Growing Agritourism Act* which:

- Provides liability protection for agritourism operators
- Is expected to create a safer environment for both agritourism operators and visitors through risk awareness
- Encourages farmers to diversify their income through agritourism and contribute to economic development in rural Ontario

RMA Resolution 8-23S: Provincial Review of Agribusiness & Agritourism (passed February 2023) remains active with a status of Intent Not Met. RMA has recently initiated the formation of an Agritourism Working Group with the following mandate:

“Agritourism Strategy Working Group is established to guide the development of a comprehensive provincial strategy that supports the responsible growth, promotion, and regulation of agritourism in Alberta. The Working Group will facilitate collaboration between municipal and provincial stakeholders and identify opportunities to align policy, streamline regulatory frameworks and enhance economic outcomes. This Working Group will assess current challenges and opportunities, recommend strategic actions, and encourage the promotion of agritourism in the province.”

Agritourism Strategy Working group currently focuses on financial and regulatory hurdles; however, it does not address a very important operational need of access to liability insurance.

Furthermore, the Government of Alberta continues to promote agritourism as demonstrated by quotes such as;

“By supporting agricultural-based businesses and operators, we are helping showcase Alberta’s small businesses and farms to the world, while boosting the local economy and creating jobs across the province.” Andrew Boitchenko, Minister of Tourism & Sport ([Oct, 2025](#)).

“Alberta’s farmers and ranchers are some of the best ambassadors for our province. By opening their gates and sharing their stories, they’re helping more people experience the passion, hard work, and pride that define Alberta agriculture. Agri-tourism not only strengthens rural economies, it deepens the connection between consumers and the people who produce their food.” RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture & Irrigation ([Oct, 2025](#)).

Support for this resolution helps ensure agricultural producers have access to adequate liability insurance to responsibly participate in agritourism activities, especially considering the scope of the Agritourism Strategy Working Group. It is important for the Government of Alberta and relevant stakeholders to enable farmers to accept visitors safely and without additional liability.

### **RMA Background**

8-23S: Provincial Review of Agribusiness and Agritourism

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.

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

Resolution 11-26S

**Prioritization of RMA Resolutions to Support Advocacy**

Sturgeon County

*Carried*

*Advocacy Target: RMA*

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**WHEREAS** the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) currently advocates for all resolutions to the same degree; and

**WHEREAS** RMA does not currently prioritize advocacy capacity or effort 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** RMA's Board of Directors and staff have limited time and resources; and

**WHEREAS** prioritizing resolutions would allow RMA to focus advocacy efforts on issues with broader member consensus and strategic importance; and

**WHEREAS** the Government of Alberta has finite resources to provide to municipalities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta develop an advocacy prioritization framework for resolutions and associated advocacy efforts to ensure that advocacy items with broad support and province-wide implications are focused on before localized resolutions or resolutions with lower support.**

**Member Background**

The membership of the RMA endorses resolutions when they are passed by a 60% voting threshold. As RMA has no prioritization framework in place, 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.

Since Spring 2022, a total of 134 resolutions have been brought forward with 113 being endorsed. These resolutions cover a wide range of topics, with some getting limited support due to their more niche nature and others receiving broad support due to their province wide implications. Each resolution requires significant effort on behalf of the RMA Board of Directors and staff, regardless of their scope.

While RMA takes 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.

Several other municipal associations, such as ABmunis, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association, and Municipalities of Newfoundland and Labrador use a prioritization framework of some kind to positive effect.

The development of an advocacy prioritization framework would allow RMA to focus its efforts on key and timely items but still provide a method for members to bring forward items that do not have broader membership support or are more localized in nature.

### **RMA Background**

#### 3-25F: Review of RMA Advocacy Reporting

THEREFORE, 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.

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

Resolution 12-26S

### **Reversal of the Decision to Close Lacombe Research and Development Centre**

Lacombe County

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Treasury Board of Canada*

WHEREAS in January 2026, the Government of Canada announced the closure of seven agricultural research facilities across Canada, including the Lacombe Research and Development Centre (the Centre); and

WHEREAS the Centre has been continuously performing agricultural research to support the economic prosperity of Canadian agricultural producers since 1907; and

WHEREAS the unbiased research performed at the Centre has significantly contributed to the development of Canada's world-renowned livestock, crop, and agri-food production systems; and

WHEREAS the closure will have significant social and economic impacts on employees, families and the community, along with industry partners and research collaborators who rely on the Centre's unique infrastructure, land base, and scientific expertise; and

WHEREAS the closure of the Centre will result in the loss of 119 years of continuous agricultural research data at a time when such research is essential to strengthening national innovation, food security, climate-smart agriculture, and economic independence;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Canada (GOC) to reverse its decision to close the Lacombe Research and Development Centre;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT RMA advocate to the Government of Alberta to support advocacy efforts, including engaging directly with the GOC, the City of Lacombe, and Lacombe County to pursue maintaining federal operations and long-term funding for the Lacombe Research and Development Centre.**

#### **Member Background**

For 119 years, the Lacombe Research and Development Centre (the Centre) has been a cornerstone of Canadian agricultural innovation and public interest research. The Centre currently delivers high-value applied research, including active projects in integrated crop protection, climate-smart agriculture, livestock and crop genetics, production efficiency, and is Canada's only federally operated meat sciences program. Its long-term trials and decades of continuous data cannot be transferred or replicated elsewhere without irreparably damaging national research capacity.

The federal decision to close this facility will directly impact more than 100 employees and their families, representing an economic and social loss that a small rural community such as Lacombe and Lacombe County cannot reasonably absorb. The Centre is not only scientifically significant, but also a critical

contributor to the identity, sustainability, and economic stability of the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County and surrounding municipalities.

In the context of national priorities—food security, climate resilience, innovation, and domestic research capacity—the closure of this federally operated institution is misaligned with Canada’s stated goals. Investments in agricultural research are investments in national sovereignty and economic independence, particularly during a time of geopolitical uncertainty, global trade disruptions, and emerging agricultural challenges.

Lacombe County, the City of Lacombe and regional stakeholders urge the Government of Canada to pause its decision to close the Lacombe Research and Development Centre. We also ask the Government of Alberta to support local governments in advocating to the Government of Canada for the reconsideration of this decision, recognizing that the closure will have far-reaching consequences for agricultural innovation, food security, rural economic stability, and Canada’s long-term research capacity.

### **RMA Background**

This resolution was originally sponsored by Lacombe County (District 2) and co-sponsored by Northern Sunrise County (District 4). As such, it was presented by Northern Sunrise County at the Spring 2026 District 4 meeting. The RMA Resolutions Policy states that “A sponsoring municipality that is unable to have a resolution submitted to their own district may work with another municipality to co-sponsor the resolution at the other municipality’s district.” Additionally, item C.3 of the policy states that a resolution must be endorsed at a district meeting but does not specify that it must be from the sponsoring municipality’s district.

Resolution 13-26S

### **Controlling Grizzly Bears to Ensure Community Safety**

Cardston County

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Forestry and Parks, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas*

**WHEREAS** southern Alberta continues to experience rising grizzly bear conflicts, including dangerous encounters, livestock depredation, and incursions into residential and agricultural areas; and

**WHEREAS** recent incidents, including a grizzly bear attack on a fisherman near Cardston and increasing reports of bears chasing or bluff-charging workers and landowners, highlight the risk to public safety; and

**WHEREAS** research from the Waterton Biosphere Reserve indicates long-term growth in grizzly bear populations in Bear Management Area 6, creating additional pressure on rural communities;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) to end the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan and implement a Grizzly Bear Management Plan;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the GOA establish a dedicated funding program to support grizzly bear research, conflict-mitigation efforts, and community safety initiatives;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that this dedicated funding program include stable contributions to organizations focused on grizzly bear-related research and management (such as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve) and provide direct or indirect financial assistance to landowners for bear-proofing measures, such as secure grain and feed storage, electric fencing, carcass management, and other proven deterrents;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the RMA advocate to the GOA to implement a regulated grizzly bear hunt administered through a draw system, with the number of available tags determined annually based on population data, conflict trends, and the outcomes of previous seasons, to help maintain an appropriate and sustainable bear population.**

#### **Member Background**

Grizzly bear activity has increased steadily across southern Alberta over the past decade, especially within Bear Management Area 6 (BMA 6), which includes much of the Foothills-Little Bow and surrounding regions. Research presented by the Waterton Biosphere Reserve shows an annual growth rate of roughly four percent since 2007, with the region now supporting the highest grizzly bear

population density in the province. The last comprehensive estimate from 2016 identified 172 bears using the area and 67 resident bears; local observations and ongoing conservation work suggest that numbers have continued to rise since then.

As the population grows, communities in southern Alberta have seen a significant increase in human-bear interactions. Residents, ranchers, and municipal staff have reported bears approaching homes, entering outbuildings, breaking into grain bins, and preying on livestock. Field workers in Cardston County have faced aggressive encounters while performing routine duties, including a recent incident where a summer staff member was chased by a grizzly bear at close range while working near the river in Kimball.

Public safety concerns intensified following a severe attack on a fisherman south of the Town of Cardston in summer of 2025. Similar incidents in nearby jurisdictions have been widely reported, noting a general uptick in dangerous encounters province-wide. These include hikers injured on popular trails, hunters attacked in remote areas, and numerous close calls involving outdoor workers. Media coverage reflects what residents have expressed for years: the frequency and severity of conflicts are increasing, and rural communities feel more vulnerable.

While conservation officers, Fish and Wildlife staff, and the Waterton Biosphere Reserve have made strong efforts to support coexistence through carcass management, attractant control programs, and public education, the demand for intervention continues to grow. Many residents feel uncertain about when they are legally allowed to defend themselves or their livestock, and municipalities have asked for more explicit provincial guidance.

On September 25, 2025, Cardston County and the MD of Pincher Creek [sent a letter](#) to the Minister of Forestry and Parks highlighting these concerns directly, noting the rise in encounters, the pressure placed on rural residents, and the need for stronger provincial direction. The County requested updates to Alberta's grizzly management strategy, increased support for mitigation work, and a clear protocol outlining what actions landowners and authorities can take when bears threaten human safety.

Given these realities, Cardston County and the southern Alberta region are seeking a balanced approach that protects the lives and livelihoods of residents while recognizing the ongoing importance of responsible wildlife management. A targeted, controlled hunt for problem grizzly bears, utilized only in specific situations and in conjunction with continued non-lethal measures, is being proposed as part of a broader strategy to address escalating risks, reduce conflict, and maintain safety for communities and workers who share the landscape with a growing grizzly bear population.

### **RMA Background**

17-24F: Improved Grizzly Bear Management to Ensure Human, Livestock and Wildlife Safety

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate to the Government of Alberta to increase funding for Conservation Officers and problem wildlife specialists to ensure that an updated and properly funded grizzly bear management plan is in place to protect both the public and bears.

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

Resolution ER1-26S

### **Ground Ambulance Request for Proposal Consultation**

County of Stettler

*Carried*

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*Advocacy Target: Alberta Hospital and Surgical Health Care Services*

**WHEREAS** the Emergency Health Services Provincial Health Corporation (EHS PHC) currently contracts with service providers to deliver ground ambulance services across the Province of Alberta; and

**WHEREAS** the existing ground ambulance contracts have undergone multiple extensions, creating uncertainty for municipalities and service providers regarding long-term service stability; and

**WHEREAS** EHS PHC has announced its intention to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for ground ambulance service delivery upon the expiry of the current contract; and

**WHEREAS** municipalities rely on predictable, responsive, and locally informed emergency medical services to ensure public safety and maintain effective integration with local fire departments, first responders, and other emergency services; and

**WHEREAS** changes to contract structure, service delivery models, or provider selection without meaningful municipal consultation risk degrading current service levels and undermining long-standing collaborative relationships between local emergency services and contracted ambulance providers;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocate to the Government of Alberta (GOA) and the Emergency Health Services Provincial Health Corporation (EHS PHC) to ensure that municipalities are fully consulted during the development of the upcoming RFP for ground ambulance services; and**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that RMA urge the GOA and EHS PHC to ensure that the future contractual framework maintains, at minimum, current levels of service, response capacity, and community coverage;**

#### **Member Background**

Ground ambulance service in Alberta is currently delivered through a mix of direct delivery and a network of approximately 30 contracted service providers operating under agreements now administered by the Emergency Health Services Provincial Health Corporation (EHS PHC). These contracts define response capacity, deployment expectations, staffing requirements, fleet standards, and performance reporting obligations. The existing agreements have been extended multiple times, resulting in prolonged reliance on legacy contract structures that no longer reflect current operational pressures, call volumes, or rural service realities.

EHS PHC has announced its intention to issue a new Request for Proposal (RFP) to establish future ground ambulance service contracts once the current agreement expires. While the development of a new contractual framework presents an opportunity to modernize and stabilize service delivery, it also carries significant risk if municipalities are not meaningfully consulted. The development of a new procurement framework represents a significant system redesign event, with the potential to alter

provider selection, deployment models, performance metrics, and integration requirements. Any such changes will directly affect municipal emergency response systems, particularly in rural regions where ambulance availability is already constrained by long travel distances, limited unit redundancy, and increasing off-load delays at regional hospitals.

Municipalities have observed measurable impacts from centralized dispatch, province wide resource pooling, and the escalation of inter-facility transfer demand. These pressures have contributed to reduced local coverage, increased reliance on fire departments for uncompensated medical first response, and extended periods where no ambulance is available within a reasonable response radius. Rural municipalities have repeatedly emphasized that service continuity depends on maintaining strong operational relationships between contracted ambulance providers and local emergency services, including shared training, coordinated incident response, and real time communication during major events.

The County of Stettler, like many rural municipalities, relies on predictable ambulance coverage and close coordination between EMS, rural emergency rooms, fire services, and other first responders. Ensuring that the Government of Alberta and EHS PHC engage rural municipalities during the RFP development process is essential to maintaining current service levels, preserving local integration, and preventing further degradation of rural emergency medical response capacity.

Given the critical importance of ground ambulance services to public safety, municipalities must have a voice in shaping the next generation of service contracts. Ensuring that the Government of Alberta and EHS PHC engage municipalities during the RFP development process will help maintain current service levels, protect local integration, and support the long-term sustainability of emergency medical services in rural Alberta.

### **RMA Background**

RMA has no active resolutions directly related to this issue.