



NEWS RELEASE

Official statement from ABmunis President Gandam on Bill 18

April 11, 2024

EDMONTON – *The following statement was issued on behalf of Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) President Tyler Gandam:*

Alberta Municipalities was surprised and disappointed yesterday when the provincial government introduced legislation – Bill 18 – that will restrict or limit municipal-federal agreements and may alter some existing arrangements.

We cannot help but notice that the provincial government has pivoted from its original rationale. Initially, it said the legislation was intended to ensure Alberta receives its fair share of federal funding. Now, its justification is that the legislation will ensure federal funding aligns with provincial priorities.

Yet again, the provincial government did not consult or communicate with our association on legislative changes that, if introduced, would profoundly affect the way municipalities work.

Had it consulted ABmunis or municipalities, we could have suggested ways to improve and streamline agreements between municipalities and the federal government to ensure Alberta gets its fair share of federal funding in a way that respects the priorities of Albertans. The provincial government's communication around Bill 18 has been unclear, leading to confusion among effected entities about whether they should still apply for federal funding that is being offered.

We hope consultations on the regulations with the provincial government stemming from this legislation will be sincere and meaningful. Our members – 265 municipalities of all sizes and locations across Alberta – are desperate to work with the province on matters that affect them, and the more than 85 per cent of Albertans who live in our member communities. We will do everything we can to ensure that the legislation benefits Alberta's communities and Albertans.

Albertans are tired and frustrated with all the inter-jurisdictional squabbling between the provincial and federal governments at a time when communities are facing numerous serious issues – things like inadequate local infrastructure funding, a shortage of affordable housing, sharp increases to cost of living, and a health-care crisis.

The Government of Alberta says these issues will be addressed since it can negotiate more effectively for better funding from the Government of Canada, but how will those funds be distributed? On what basis will each municipality's funding needs be met?

Alberta Municipalities will be keeping a close eye on this proposed legislation. We will have more to say on it once we have heard more from the provincial government on its plans to engage organizations like ours on the development of regulations.

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From the smallest village to the largest city, across every region of the province, Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) represents the communities where over 85% of Albertans live. ABmunis was founded in 1905 to provide urban and rural-region communities with a united voice. Alberta Municipalities now serves more than 260 of Alberta's 334 municipalities making it the province's largest municipal group.

We work with elected and administrative leaders of Alberta's summer villages, villages, town, cities, and specialized municipalities to advocate for solutions to their common issues.

And we help them build resilient and thriving communities by providing valuable services. We use our members' combined purchasing power to negotiate the best possible value and competitive pricing on employee benefits, insurance, energy, and other services needed to run an effective and efficient municipality.

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