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July 27, 2026

Ron Wiebe, MLA
 Chair, Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future
 Legislative Assembly of Alberta
 Edmonton, AB

Re: Comprehensive Review of the Lobbyists Act

Dear MLA Wiebe:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback as part of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future review of Alberta's *Lobbyists Act*. The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce appreciates the Committee's commitment to ensuring Alberta's legislative framework remains transparent, effective, and responsive to the evolving realities of stakeholder engagement and public policy development.

The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 900 businesses, organizations, and community partners across Southeast Alberta, serving eight municipalities and spanning approximately 20,000 square kilometers in the region. A core part of our mandate is advocating for policies that support economic growth, investment attraction, workforce development, competitiveness, regulatory efficiency, and strong communities. Through member-approved policy positions, consultation processes, and engagement with elected officials at all levels of government, we provide a collective voice for businesses that may not otherwise have the resources or capacity to engage directly in public policy discussions.

We strongly support the principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct that underpin the *Lobbyists Act*. Public confidence in government decision-making is strengthened when stakeholders' interactions with government are open and appropriately disclosed. At the same time, we believe there are opportunities to modernize the Act to provide greater clarity, reduce unnecessary administrative burden, and encourage broad participation in Alberta's policy-making process.

1. Clarify the Distinction Between Public Interest Advocacy and Commercial Lobbying

Business associations, Chambers of Commerce, industry organizations, charities, and not-for-profit groups often advocate on behalf of broad stakeholder communities rather than pursuing commercial gain for a single client or organization.

We recommend that the Act and supporting guidance more clearly distinguish between:

- Public interest and membership-based advocacy;
- Commercial lobbying activities conducted on behalf of individual clients; and
- Participation in formal government consultations, advisory committees, and stakeholder engagement processes.

Greater clarity would help organizations understand their obligations while ensuring that legitimate public policy engagement is not unintentionally discouraged.

2. Reduce Administrative Burden for Smaller Organizations

Many non-profit organizations, industry associations, and regional Chambers operate with limited staff and resources. As such, we encourage the Committee to consider:

- Simplified registration and reporting processes;
- Reduced duplication where information has not changed;
- Streamlined renewals and updated timelines for reporting, as required reporting in the summer and over a calendar yearend can pose challenges;
- Thresholds or proportional reporting requirements that recognize organizational size and lobbying volume.

Transparency is enhanced when compliance requirements are practical and understandable. Excessive administrative burden can unintentionally divert resources away from member service, economic development initiatives, and policy engagement.

3. Modernize Definitions and Guidance for Contemporary Engagement Practices

Government engagement increasingly occurs through virtual platforms and digital channels. Organizations routinely participate in:

- Virtual meetings and webinars;
- Online consultations;
- Video conferencing;
- Digital stakeholder engagement processes; and
- Coordinated advocacy campaigns.

We recommend updating guidance and definitions to reflect modern communication methods and providing practical examples that help organizations determine what activities require registration and reporting.

4. Expand Education and Compliance Support

In our experience, uncertainty regarding requirements is often a greater challenge than compliance itself. Improved education would support compliance while reducing the risk of inadvertent reporting errors. We encourage additional investment in:

- Plain-language guidance materials;
- Sector-specific educational resources;
- Webinars and outreach sessions;
- Frequently asked questions; and
- Examples tailored to associations, Chambers of Commerce, charities, and economic development organizations.

5. Recognize Coalition and Collaborative Advocacy

Many public policy initiatives are advanced through coalitions, alliances, and collaborative advocacy efforts. Chambers of Commerce regularly work alongside municipal governments, industry associations, economic development organizations, Alberta Chambers of Commerce, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Additional guidance regarding coalition-based advocacy would be beneficial, particularly concerning:

- Registration responsibilities;
- Reporting requirements;
- Shared campaigns; and
- Multi-organization advocacy initiatives.

Conclusion

The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce believes that Alberta benefits when businesses, associations, non-profits, and community organizations are actively engaged in policy development. The *Lobbyists Act* plays an important role in promoting transparency and public confidence, and we support efforts to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

As the Committee undertakes its review, we encourage a balanced approach that strengthens transparency while preserving accessible, meaningful participation in government decision-making. In our view, modernization efforts should focus on three guiding principles:

- Improve clarity;
- Reduce unnecessary administrative burden; and
- Encourage broad public participation in policy discussions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input. We would be pleased to participate in any further discussions regarding the review and would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on these recommendations if helpful to the Committee.

Sincerely,


Lisa Dressler
Executive Director
Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce