

August 13, 2026
Mr. Ron Wiebe, MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future
c/o Committee Clerk, 3rd Floor, 9820 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 1E7
Sent via: AEFCommittee.Admin@assembly.ab.ca

Re: Lobbyists Act Review

Dear Mr. Wiebe:

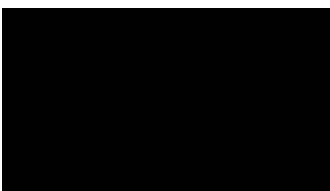
The Nonprofit Chamber [NPC] is pleased to provide this submission to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future, relating to the mandatory five-year review of the Alberta Lobbyists Act.

When the Lobbyists Act was first introduced in 2007, Alberta's nonprofit sector raised significant concerns about the impact the legislation would have on the sector, leading to the current exemption for public benefit nonprofits. That exemption has been upheld through each subsequent reviews of the Act in 2011, 2017, and 2022. We respectfully request that it once again be maintained in this review.

The points outlined in this submission in support of maintaining the exemption for public benefit nonprofits remain as true and significant as they were in 2007. Removing the exemption would run counter to this government's ongoing commitment to reducing red tape, place a new and unnecessary administrative burden on Service Alberta and thousands of Alberta's nonprofit organizations, and risk diverting critical resources and expertise away from the communities these organizations serve. The sections that follow set our reasoning in detail.

1. The current test applied to the exemption of whether an organization exists for public or private benefit remains appropriate.

The Lobbyists Act exists to balance open access to government with transparency about who is seeking to influence it. Citizen concern is greatest where influence over government officials results in private benefit, rather than public benefit. The distinction between private and public benefit organizations was at the heart of the decision to exempt public benefit organizations when the Lobbyists Act was first introduced. There is a fundamental difference between lobbying government for a policy change that supports the public benefit, such as the advocacy that has helped secure sustained provincial investment in food security and lobbying around commercial interest (private benefit). If we continue to accept the principle distinguishing these



two groups, it is not necessary to remove the exemption. It remains a simple and effective policy solution – one that allows public benefit organizations to help inform policy in the public interest, without diverting registrar and compliance resources toward monitoring low-risk activity.

2. The exemption for public benefit nonprofits reduces governmental red tape.

Over the past year, the government has advanced several priorities to reduce red tape for both businesses and government departments alike; removing this exemption would reverse that progress. There are currently more than 28,000 nonprofits in Alberta, many of which are exempt under this Act. Requiring each one to register would substantially increase the registration burden alone, with tens of thousands of currently exempt nonprofits newly obligated to register and meet ongoing tracking and reporting requirements. Removing the exemption would also require those organizations to build the internal capacity to comply. It would further require government to provide ongoing oversight of tracking and reporting for thousands of newly-registered organizations – a significant and recurring administrative cost, not a one-time expense. This creates new red tape burdens for both the department enforcing the Act and the organizations it would newly capture.

3. Removing the exemption would divert limited human resources in community-based organizations from the delivery of essential programs and services.

Many public benefit organizations help deliver services and programming to the public on behalf of government. These organizations already operate with limited resources, a challenge compounded by volatility at every level of the economy: political uncertainty and separation discourse in Alberta, ongoing trade and tariff disruption at the national level, and local economies where demand for services has increased as municipalities take on greater service delivery responsibilities. Together, these pressures have driven more Albertans to rely on nonprofit services, while straining the sector's funding stability and its capacity to meet growing demand. When an organization approaches government to shape policy that benefits the public, time spent filing registration paperwork and meeting tracking and reporting requirements is time diverted from the research, programming, and community support that justify their lobbying in the first place. Many of these organizations remain under-resourced and lack the capacity to absorb additional administrative burden without reducing the services they provide – 68% of respondents from NPC's 2025 State of the Sector report identified their ability to meet demand for services as already challenging.

4. The exemption allows the government to benefit from the valuable and considered public policy input from public benefit nonprofits.

Public benefit nonprofits bring their front-line knowledge, experiences, and expertise to government to help shape policy. Removing the exemption could confuse, burden, and alter the working relationship between public benefit nonprofits - more than half of whom rely entirely on volunteers to carry out their work - and government, contributing to an advocacy chill, where boards of directors, cautious of violating unfamiliar registration requirements, choose to pull back from advocacy altogether rather than risk non-compliance. This would deprive policymakers of the ground-level expertise and perspective that nonprofits and charities are uniquely positioned to offer.

The case for removing the exemption for public benefit nonprofits has not been demonstrated. No evidence has been presented that Albertans view the current exemption as a problem, while the risk of removing it are clear: unnecessary red tape for government, diverted resources for organizations delivering essential public services, and a chilling effect on the valuable policy input nonprofits provide. In the absence of a compelling rationale for change, we urge the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future to recommend that the Lobbyists Act maintain the existing exemption for the Alberta nonprofits working in the public interest and for public benefit.

Thank you for your consideration. We are available, at your convenience, to respond to any questions you may have regarding this submission. We would also be pleased to appear before committee. For any further discussion or inquiries, I can be reached at

[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Angie Gélinas
The Nonprofit Chamber President & CEO