

16 August 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

Re: Lobbyists Act Review

Dear Mr. Wiebe:

The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the mandatory review of Alberta's *Lobbyists Act*. ECVO works to strengthen Edmonton's nonprofit and charitable sector and support organizations that deliver services in communities across the city.

ECVO recommends maintaining the current nonprofit exemption under the Lobbyists Act.

ECVO supports transparency and accountability in government decision-making. Regulation, however, should target demonstrated risk. We are not aware of evidence that the nonprofit exemption is being misused or that it has created a material gap in the transparency framework. Without evidence of a problem, there is no clear rationale for creating a broader registration and reporting regime.

The existing exemption is targeted

The current exemption is not a blanket exemption for every organization incorporated on a nonprofit basis. It does not apply to organizations established to serve management, union, or professional interests, or to nonprofit associations whose membership is primarily made up of profit-seeking enterprises or their representatives. This preserves transparency where organized commercial and professional interests are involved.

At the same time, the exemption recognizes that voluntary organizations often engage government as part of their community service and policy work. They provide front-line service-delivery knowledge, local data, and practical information about how provincial decisions are working on the ground. Government benefits from receiving this information directly from organizations that work with Albertans every day.

Removing the exemption would create unnecessary red tape

Alberta's nonprofit sector includes approximately 26,000 organizations. About 58% are entirely volunteer-led, and another 21% have fewer than five employees. These



organizations generally lack government relations teams, legal counsel, or dedicated administrative staff.

For a volunteer-led organization or one with only a handful of employees, interpreting lobbying rules, tracking staff and volunteer time, and maintaining ongoing reports would draw limited capacity away from programs, services, and community work. It could also make boards and volunteers more cautious about engaging with elected officials and public servants, particularly when that engagement is occasional, ultimately reducing the community knowledge and front-line perspectives available to government when making policy decisions.

The result could be an inequity in who is able and willing to participate in public policy discussions. Larger, better-resourced organizations may be able to absorb these requirements, while smaller, grassroots and community-based organizations may simply choose not to engage. Those are often precisely the organizations closest to community and the voices government most needs to hear.

Removing the exemption would also increase administrative work for government. Expanding the registry to include a significantly larger number of organizations would require additional guidance, registration review, monitoring, and compliance activity. Government should not create those costs unless it has identified a clear transparency gap. In the absence of evidence that the current exemption is being misused or creating a material transparency gap, ECVO sees no public-policy rationale for imposing new regulatory requirements on thousands of public-benefit organizations.

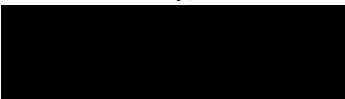
Recommendation

Maintaining the exemption does not displace any financial accountability requirements tied to public funding, and it does not shield industry or professional associations from the *Lobbyists Act*. It preserves a targeted transparency regime while avoiding unnecessary red tape and compliance costs for small community organizations and government.

For these reasons, ECVO recommends that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future maintain the current nonprofit exemption under Alberta's *Lobbyists Act*.

Thank you for considering ECVO's submission. ECVO would welcome the opportunity to provide further information or participate in additional discussion with the Committee.

Sincerely,



Gemma Dunn
Executive Director
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

