



ALBERTA  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

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*Office of the Minister  
Deputy Premier of Alberta  
MLA, Calgary-West*

AR 30075

April 07, 2025

Mr. Tyler Gandam  
President  
Alberta Municipalities  
300, 8618 - 51 Avenue NW  
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6  
[president@abmunis.ca](mailto:president@abmunis.ca)

Dear Mr. Gandam:

Thank you for your letter of October 30, 2024, regarding resolutions sponsored by Alberta Municipalities' members. As Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, which includes the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the Alberta First Responders Radio Communication Systems (AFRRCS), I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

**Resolution B7: AFRRCS Communication Systems Equipment Funding**

Alberta's first responders play a vital role in responding to emergencies and ensuring public safety. Coordinating with and communicating to this audience is at the core of the work that AFRRCS does. Most agencies in the province are now utilizing AFRRCS; however, there are still some organizations that are not using the system. I recognize that some agencies face financial hurdles to participating in AFRRCS, as hardware costs can be a barrier to entry.

The Government of Alberta does not have a grant program specific to support the purchase of AFRRCS equipment; however, this equipment is an eligible expense under the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) capital program guidelines. The LGFF is a funding mechanism that provides local governments with capital infrastructure and operating grant support. The LGFF replaced the Municipal Sustainability Initiative, which was in place from 2007 to 2023.

The cost of a radio is impacted by the features that the first responders require, depending on their duties. All handheld and mobile radio models must successfully pass AFRRCS Permitted Radio testing and be included on the Permitted Radio List. AFRRCS does not endorse any specific product or device.

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The focus of AFRRCS is to ensure Alberta's first responders have the safest, best, and most efficient first responder communications system available by continuously improving one shared radio system; working with vendors and providers to keep pace with emerging technologies; and maintaining solid strategic and collaborative relationships.

AFRRCS has developed and maintains an extensive network of infrastructure including towers, shelters, backup power systems, antennas, repeaters, servers, mobile stations, and various security elements. This infrastructure comes at no cost to communities and first responders; however, agencies are required to procure their own handheld radios, holsters, chargers, lapel microphones, and vehicle kits. Agencies should plan for the initial investment of radios and anticipate subsequent replacement costs, as the lifespan of a device can vary from seven to 10 years with proper maintenance. AFRRCS has established standing offers with manufacturers to reduce costs for agencies.

#### **Resolution B10: Establishing Level of Service for Emergency Social Services**

Following the 2023 and 2024 hazard seasons, the AEMA's Emergency Social Services (ESS) team engaged in discussions with host communities as part of the continuous improvement process. Results illustrated the challenges for communities with different approaches to hosting evacuees. Communities identified that offering different levels of service can result in evacuees moving between host locations seeking additional services, further compounding the challenges of providing consistent supports to evacuees. These discussions also highlighted concerns that changes in ESS cost submission processes over the years have led to host community costs not being fully covered. This is not consistent with how other response costs are managed and has led to understandable confusion.

In response, the AEMA has worked to update the Alberta ESS Framework. This is nearing completion and seeks to provide improved clarity regarding the provision of ESS in Alberta. The AEMA is working closely with local authority ESS leads, through the Emergency Social Services Network of Alberta on updates to the Framework. A standard service level for ESS, including the identification of expected and discretionary services, is proposed in the Framework. Release of the updated Alberta ESS Framework is expected to take place in early 2025.

#### **Resolution B15 – Creation of a Wildfire Prevention Committee**

On behalf my colleague, the Honourable Todd Loewen, Minister of Forestry and Parks, I am pleased to share the following information in response to Resolution B15.

In the Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy (June 2024) the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers identified the path forward to strengthen wildfire resilience across the country. It calls on all sectors of society, including all levels of government, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representatives, industry, non-governmental organizations, academia, and residents of all ages, to work together to strengthen the wildfire resilience of Canadian communities.

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The Ministry of Forestry and Parks is currently developing a provincial Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, which will include a new governance model to guide the on-the-ground implementation of the Strategy in a way that reflects the priorities of Alberta's landscape and communities. The draft Strategy will consider how municipal and industry leaders should be engaged, as suggested in Resolution B15.

Thank you again for writing. Your advocacy and support for your member communities is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Ellis', with a stylized, flowing script.

Honourable Mike Ellis  
Deputy Premier of Alberta  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services

cc: Honourable Todd Loewen  
Minister of Forestry and Parks