

Impacts of Bill 20 - Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act

ABmunis has analyzed Bill 20 and found it to be rushed and badly flawed, with little thought given to its long-term ramifications. Here are some of Bill 20's many pitfalls ABmunis has identified.

Bill 20 will:

- Increase divisiveness within council and communities instead of encouraging collaborative decision-making to solve the future challenges those communities face.
- Prioritize the interests of the provincial cabinet over the interests of the local residents.
- Increase the influence of corporations and unions in local government through political donations to local candidates, which will drown out the interests of everyday Albertans who cannot afford to donate large sums of money to political campaigns.
- Create tax inequities between individuals and corporations as it relates to donations to municipal candidates.
- Give power to the provincial cabinet to remove a councillor without clear criteria, which creates an environment where councillors will become more accountable to provincial government leaders rather than their local residents.
- Increase costs for property taxpayers by forcing a manual count of election results instead of allowing the use of proven and more cost-effective electronic equipment.
- Increase costs for property taxpayers by forcing local governments to prepare and regularly maintain a permanent electors register.
- Allow councillors to claim that they have a perceived conflict of interest, thereby avoiding making politically challenging decisions in council.
- Remove the ability of a council to determine what studies are needed for each type of development. Without the power to ask developers for that information, local governments will be forced to fund those studies and pass the cost onto all existing residents instead of the new development paying for it.
- Fail to address the fundamental flaws of the current recall rules, which have destabilized the local political environment.
- Fail to give municipalities the option to require candidates to file financial disclosures prior to election day.
- Lead to unforeseen consequences because of the short window in which that Bill 20 was developed without full input from municipal governments.
- Force small municipalities to conduct online public hearings on planning and development despite a lack of high-speed internet in many small communities. This will increase costs for property taxpayers

by forcing small municipalities to purchase equipment that will enable residents to participate in public hearings through an online format.

Background

- In fall 2023, the Government of Alberta conducted an online survey on a wide scope of issues related to the *Local Authorities Election Act* and *Municipal Government Act*.
- On April 25, 2024, the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 20, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act.
 - [Bill 20](#)
 - [Government of Alberta's Summary Sheet on Bill 20](#) – April 25, 2024
- On April 29, 2024, ABmunis hosted a [media conference](#) to respond to proposals in Bill 20.
- On May 2, 2024, Minister McIver [announced](#) that the province will introduce amendments to clarify aspects of Bill 20 based on concerns raised.
- On May 3, 2024, ABmunis published a [preliminary analysis report](#) on Bill 20.
- On May 8, 2024, ABmunis hosted webinar for municipalities and sought member input on ABmunis' position on Bill 20. Based on a webinar poll, 76 per cent of members want Bill 20 to be rescinded and 8 per cent don't have an opinion yet.
- As of May 9, 2024, Bill 20 is at second reading.
- The spring legislative session is scheduled to end May 30, 2024.

ABmunis' Resources and News Releases on Bill 20

- Visit ABmunis' [Keep Local Elections Local](#) webpage to access our analysis, videos, and resources.
- [April 25, 2024](#) news release
- [April 29, 2024](#) news release
- [May 8, 2024](#) news release