



## NEWS RELEASE

### ABmunis welcomes court decision on Canmore vacancy tax bylaw

March 16, 2026

**EDMONTON** – Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) welcomes last week’s Alberta Court of Appeal decision which upheld the Town of Canmore’s vacancy tax bylaw. The decision affirms the legal authority of municipalities to make local policy decisions that respond to the unique needs and realities of their communities.

Municipal autonomy is a fundamental principle of effective local governance. Communities across Alberta vary widely in size, geography, demographics, and economic pressures. Municipal councils, which are elected by and accountable to their residents, are best positioned to understand those local circumstances and to develop solutions that reflect community priorities. The court’s ruling reinforces the principle that municipalities have the discretion to act in the public interest within the scope of provincial law.

Like many municipalities across Alberta, Canmore is facing growing demands for infrastructure, programs, and essential services at a time when costs are rising, populations are growing, and government funding has failed to keep pace. Under these circumstances, municipalities have no choice but to explore innovative and responsible ways to generate revenue so they can maintain service levels, support community wellbeing, and invest in long-term sustainability.

Vacancy taxes and similar measures reflect the fiscal responsibility municipalities are exercising to respond to local challenges. These approaches are not taken lightly. They are the result of careful deliberation, public engagement, and a clear understanding of community needs. Revenues generated through municipal taxation pay for the many things residents and visitors rely upon every day, including roads and water systems, emergency services, recreation facilities, and community programs. In Canmore’s case, it’s part of town council’s response to the community’s housing affordability challenges.

We continue to advocate for predictable, sustainable and long-term funding partnerships with both the provincial and federal governments. Municipalities are critical partners in delivering services and supporting economic growth, yet they remain limited in the revenue tools available to them. Until long-term funding gaps are addressed, municipalities must retain the flexibility to responsibly manage their own fiscal frameworks.

This ruling provides clarity for municipalities as they work to build strong, resilient communities for today and the future. We look forward to discussions with the Government of Alberta and other key stakeholders about improving the current fiscal framework to ensure municipalities have adequate revenue tools so they can take care of Albertans in their communities.

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*From the smallest village to the largest city, across every region of the province, Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) represents the communities where over 85% of Albertans live. Founded in 1905, ABmunis now serves 264 of Alberta's 334 municipalities, making it the province's largest municipal group.*

*We work with elected and administrative leaders of Alberta's summer villages, villages, town, cities, and specialized municipalities to advocate for solutions to their common issues. And we help them build resilient and thriving communities by providing valuable services. We use our members' combined purchasing power to negotiate the best possible value and competitive pricing on employee benefits, insurance, energy, and other services needed to run an effective and efficient municipality.*