



# Petition to the Minister

Information for Albertans, elected officials  
and municipal officers



The contents of this publication are intended to provide general information. Readers should not rely on the contents of this document to the exclusion of independent legal advice.

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Petition to the Minister – Information for Albertans, elected officials and municipal officers | Municipal Affairs

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## Introduction

The intent of this document is to identify those areas of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* relating to petitions, and to supplement and explain specific sections or applications of the *MGA*.

**This is not a legal document.** It is only a brief summary of the petitioning requirements. **Do not** base your decisions on this summary alone, but use it in conjunction with the appropriate legislation.

You are urged to obtain an office consolidation of the *MGA* including amendments, prior to initiating a petition. Copies of the *MGA* and *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* can be obtained from the King's Printer bookstore.

King's Printer Bookstore  
Suite 700, Park Plaza Building  
10611 – 98 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2P7  
Phone: 780-427-4952  
Fax: 780-452-0668  
Email: [kings-printer@gov.ab.ca](mailto:kings-printer@gov.ab.ca)  
Website: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx>

This document is only a guide to legislation. Consult your solicitor for advice on specific situations.

## Definitions

Elector	means a person who is eligible to vote in an elections as defined in section 1 of the <i>MGA</i> and sections 1 and 12 of the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> .
<i>LAEA</i>	refers to the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> , and amendments thereto.
Minister	means the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
<i>MGA</i>	refers to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> and amendments thereto.
Petition	is a formal request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs signed by a required number of electors.
Petitioner	is an elector as defined in section 1 of the <i>MGA</i> and sections 1 and 12 of the <i>LAEA</i> who signs a petition.
Reviewer	a person appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs to carry out the duties of a chief administrative officer with respect to the petition.
Summer Village residence	means a parcel of land having at least one building the whole or any part of which was designed or intended for, or is used as, a residence by one person or as a shared residence by two or more persons, whether on a permanent, seasonal or occasional basis. For the purpose of the definition of "summer village residence", "building" includes a manufactured home, mobile home, modular home or travel trailer, but does not include a tent.
"The Act" or "Act"	refers to the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> .
Witness	means an adult person who claims that they were personally present and saw the signatory sign their name on the petition.

## Protection of Personal Information

Personal information contained in a petition must not be disclosed to anyone except the reviewer and the reviewer's delegates, and must not be used for any purpose other than validating the petition. See section 226.2 of the *MGA*.

The minimal disclosure that occurs during the collection of signatures is not considered to be a breach of privacy.

Every page of a petition must contain an identical statement outlining the above information.

## What is a Petition

A petition, within the context of this document and the *MGA*, is a formal request to those in authority for an action to be taken.

## Who may Petition

Only the electors of a municipality are eligible to be petitioners for most purposes. See section 222 of the *MGA*. Please refer to sections 12, 47, and 48 of the *LAEA* to determine eligibility.

## What can be Petitioned

The *MGA* provides for petitions to the Minister on three specific matters. The Minister can be petitioned for change the status of a municipality, to undertake a viability review, or for an inspection into the affairs of the municipality. See sections 93, 130, and 571 of the *MGA*.

## Number of Petitioners Required

The minimum number of petitioners required varies in relation to the purpose and nature of the petition.

<b>MGA Section</b>	<b>Purpose of Petition</b>	<b>Population Requirement</b>
Section 93	Request a change of municipal status (petitioning for a status change to a hamlet is not permitted. See section 130.)	The majority of electors in the municipality.
Section 130	Request a viability review for a municipality.	Electors numbering at least 30% of the municipality's population or, in the case of a summer village, **electors of the summer village equal to at least 50% of the number of summer village residences.
Section 571	Request an inspection of a municipality	Electors numbering at least 20% of the municipality's population or, in the case of a summer village, **electors of the summer village equal to at least 30% of the number of summer village residences.

\*\*Summer village residence is defined at the beginning of this document. Do not include buildings or parts of buildings used other than for residential purposes. The total number of summer village residences can be found on the Municipal Affairs website, on the statistical information page for each summer village.

Elector is defined in sections 12 and 47 of the *LAEA*.

## General Requirements

The general requirements for a petition are contained in section 224 of the *MGA*. Each page of the petition must contain an identical statement of the purpose of the petition. The wording of a petition is very important. It is recommended that legal or professional assistance be obtained to draft a petition statement. Each page must also contain an identical statement on the protection of personal information.

The petition must include, for each petitioner:

- the printed surname and printed given names or initials of the petitioner;
- the signature of the petitioner;
- the street address of the petitioner (a "Rural Route" or "Post Office Box" is not sufficient), or the legal description of the land on which the petitioner lives;
- the petitioner's telephone number or email address, if any; and
- the date on which the petitioner signs the petition.

A sample petition format is attached as Appendix C.

The signature of an adult witness must be included next to each petitioner's signature. Each witness must also take an affidavit that, to the best of the witness's knowledge, the signatures witnessed are those of the petitioner's entitled to sign a petition.

## Role of a Petition Witness

As a witness to the petitioner's signature, it is your responsibility to determine that each person signing the petition is eligible to do so. This requires you to determine, at a minimum, that the petitioner is an eligible voter as described in sections 12 and 47 of the *LAEA*.

The basic requirements of an elector are that the person (section 47(1) of the *LAEA*):

- is at least 18 years old,
- is a Canadian citizen, and
- resides in Alberta and the person's place of residence is located in the local jurisdiction on election day.

As a witness, you must be present and see the person sign the petition document.

The requirements of an elector of a summer village are that (section 12(1)(b) of the *LAEA*):

- the person is eligible to vote under section 47,
- the person is 18, a Canadian citizen and is named on a certificate of title as the person who owns property within the summer village, or
- the person is 18, a Canadian citizen and is the spouse or adult interdependent partner of a person named on a certificate of title as the person who owns property within the summer village.

Again, as a witness, you must be present and see the person sign the petition document.

A final checklist for the witness is attached as Appendix A.

A signed affidavit from each petition witness must be attached to the petition. A sample witness affidavit is attached as Appendix D.

## The Representative of the Petitioners

Upon completion of the collecting signatures, and prior to submission, a signed statement of the Representative of the Petitioners must be attached to the petition. A sample statement of representative of petitioners is included as Appendix E.

The statement must include:

- that the person named in the statement is the representative of the petitioners, and
- that the Minister of Municipal Affairs may direct any inquiries about the petition to the representative.

Be aware that petitioners cannot sign the petition more than 60 days before the petition is filed.

A final checklist for the representative of the petitioners is attached as Appendix B.

## Determining Sufficiency

When a petition is received by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister must designate a person to carry out the duties of a chief administrative officer (reviewer) to determine sufficiency. See section 220 of the *MGA*.

Names cannot be added or removed from a petition once it has been filed with the Minister. See section 225(2) of the *MGA*.

The person the Minister assigns to review the petition must not count any names that do not comply with the requirements for a petition. See section 225(3) of the *MGA*. These include:

- a signature that is not witnessed,
- a signature that is witnessed and no affidavit is attached for that witness signature,
- a signature appears on a page that does not have the same purpose statement as all other pages,
- a petitioner whose printed name is not included or is incorrect,
- a petitioner whose street address or legal description of land is not included or is incorrect,
- if the date of signing is not included,
- when a petition is restricted to certain persons
  - who is not one of those persons, or
  - whose qualification as one of those persons is not, or is incorrectly, described or set out, and
- the names of any petitioners who signed the petition more than 60 days prior to the date the petition was filed with the Minister.

Section 226.2(3) of the *MGA* also requires that each page of the petition contain an identical protection of personal information statements.

See section 225 of the *MGA* for a complete list of requirements for counting petitioners.

Within 45 days of the date when the petition was filed, a declaration is made to the Minister as to whether or not the petition is sufficient. See section 226 of the *MGA*.

## Response to a Petition

The actions requested in a petition directed to the Minister are discretionary and are at the option of the Minister. There is also no timeline for the Minister to make a decision on the action to be taken. All correspondence regarding a petition will be directed to the person designated as the representative of the petitioners.

## Cost of an Inspection

Effective November 2017, Municipal Affairs adopted an Inspection Cost Allocation Policy that charges costs for an inspection back to the municipality. The amount charged back is based on the fiscal capacity of the respective local authority. See section 579 of the *MGA*.

## Additional Information

If you have additional questions after reading the applicable sections of the *MGA*, and reviewing this document, please contact the Municipal Capacity and Sustainability Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs at 780-427-2225, toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 first.

## References for Petitions to the Minister

The following are the relevant sections of the *Municipal Government Act* in regard to petitions:

- 93 petition to the Minister to change the status of a municipality
- 130 petition to the Minister to undertake a viability review
- 219 rules and scope of petitions
- 221 sufficiency requirements for a petition
- 222 who can petition
- 223 the normal number of petitioners required
- 224 requirements for a petition statement, signatures and documents
- 225 counting petitioners to determine sufficiency
- 226 reporting on the sufficiency of a petition
- 226.2 protection of personal information in petitions
- 571 petition the Minister for an inspection into the affairs of a municipality



# Appendices

## Appendix A – Witness Check List

### **Prior to Collecting Signatures**

- Read the relevant sections of the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Local Authorities Election Act*.
- Ensure you have read and understand the Witness Affidavit prior to collecting any signatures. (Appendix D)

### **During the Collection of Signatures**

- Ensure each petitioner signature that you witness is an eligible elector of the municipality by asking if they are:
  - A Canadian citizen, over 18 years of age, and a resident of the municipality, and in the case of a summer village, an owner of the property.
- Ensure that the street address or legal land description is correct.
- Ensure that all information filled in by each petitioner is legible.
- Ensure you personally see the petitioner complete the petition document.

### **After Collecting Signatures**

- Ensure you complete the Witness Affidavit (Appendix D), and that it is properly signed by a Commissioner for Oaths or notary public.

## Appendix B – Representative of Petitioners Check List

- Read the relevant sections of the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Local Authorities Election Act*.
- Be aware of the number of signatures required for the type of petition you are presenting.
- Ensure the Witnesses are aware of their responsibility.

When a petition is received by the CAO, it **must** include:

- Each page of the petition must contain an identical statement of the purpose of the petition (Appendices C and C-V).
- Each page of the petition must contain an identical statement of the protection of personal information on petitions (Appendix C and C-V).
- A completed Witness Affidavit for each witness (Appendix D), properly signed by a Commissioner for Oaths.
- A signed and dated Statement of Representative Petitioners (Appendix E).

## Appendix C – Petition by Electors

The personal information contained in this petition will not be disclosed to anyone except the person appointed as reviewer and the reviewer’s delegates, and will not be used for any purpose other than validating the petition.

Page \_\_\_\_\_

(pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act* and amendments thereto)

To: The Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

The undersigned persons, being electors of the (type of municipality) of (name of municipality), in the Province of Alberta, hereby petition the Minister of Municipal Affairs for/to:

*Accurately state purpose and objectives of Petition in this space.*

**EACH PETITIONER, by signing this petition, certifies that he (or she) is an elector of the (type of municipality) of (name of municipality).**

Printed Name	Signature of Petitioner	Street Address or Legal Land Description	Phone Number or Email Address	I am an elector of this municipality	Date	Signature of Adult Witness
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

### NOTES:

1. This form is a suggested form only and is prepared by Alberta Municipal Affairs for the information and convenience of interested individuals. It has no legislative effect. For certainty, legal advice should be sought when a petition is being considered.
2. Each page of the petition must contain an accurate and identical statement of the purpose and objectives of the petition. As the wording of the petition is critical, legal advice should be obtained.
3. In the absence of a municipal address, specify the legal description of the property on which the petitioner resides (or in the case of a summer village, the legal land description of the property on which the petitioner is on the property’s certificate of title).
4. Each petitioner shall indicate that they are an eligible elector of the municipality by checking this field. An eligible elector is a Canadian citizen, over 18 years of age, and a resident of the municipality. (See Sections 12, 47 and 48 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* for further information.)
5. Each person witnessing a signature on the petition is required to sign an Affidavit that to the best of their belief, the persons whose signatures they witnessed are electors of the municipality. The Affidavit must be included with the petition. See Appendix D.

## Appendix C – II – Petition by Electors for a Viability Review

The personal information contained in this petition will not be disclosed to anyone except the person appointed as reviewer and the reviewer's delegates, and will not be used for any purpose other than validating the petition.

Page \_\_\_\_\_

(pursuant to the [Municipal Government Act](#) and amendments thereto)

**To: The Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs.**

The undersigned persons, being electors of the \_\_\_\_\_, in the Province of Alberta, hereby petition the Minister of Municipal Affairs to initiate a viability review for the \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with Section 130(2) of the [Municipal Government Act](#).

**EACH PETITIONER, by signing this petition, certifies that he or she is a Canadian citizen, over 18 years of age, and a resident of the \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with Sections 12, 47 and 48 of the [Local Authorities Election Act](#) and Section 222 of the [Municipal Government Act](#) of Alberta.**

Printed Name	Signature of Petitioner	Street Address or Legal Land Description	Phone Number or Email Address	I am an elector of this municipality	Date	Signature of Adult Witness
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

**NOTES:**

**\*\* Once a petition has been submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, names of petitioners may not be added or removed from the petition.**

\*\*\* A petition is not considered to be complete unless the following documents are sent together to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: 1) A *Statement of Representative of Petitioners* is signed by the petition representative, 2) an *Affidavit of Witness* form is signed by each witness, and 3) all copies of this form (petition form).

# Appendix D – Witness Affidavit

## AFFIDAVIT

I, (name), pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act* and amendments thereto, of the (type of municipality) of (name of municipality), in the Province of Alberta, MAKE OATH AND SAY:

1. THAT I was personally present and did witness those signatures on the attached petition where I have signed my name as an adult person.
2. THAT to the best of my knowledge the persons whose signatures I have witnessed on this petition are electors of the (name of municipality).
  - a. An eligible elector, at a minimum, is a Canadian citizen, over 18 years of age, and a resident of the municipality. (See Sections 12, 47 and 48 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* for further information.)
  - b. I personally observed each person complete the petition document.

SWORN (or affirmed) before me at \_\_\_\_\_ )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

in the Province of Alberta, \_\_\_\_\_ )

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ )

20\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of person who witnessed  
signatures on the petition)

\_\_\_\_\_  
A Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public in and for the Province  
of Alberta

\*(PRINT OR STAMP NAME HERE)

MY APPOINTMENT EXPIRES \_\_\_\_\_

\*(Must be legibly printed or stamped).

# Appendix E – Statement of Representative of Petitioners

## Statement of Representative of Petitioners

(pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act* and amendments thereto)

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_, of (current address including postal code) \_\_\_\_\_ in the (type of municipality) \_\_\_\_\_ of (name of municipality) \_\_\_\_\_, in the Province of Alberta, state that I represent the petitioners and am the person to whom the Minister of Municipal Affairs may direct any inquiries with regard to the petition. I may be contacted by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ or email at \_\_\_\_\_.

DATED at the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, in the Province of Alberta, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name)

**Note:** Use this as the last page of a Petition.