



Red Tape Reduction Annual Report 2022-23



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Message from the minister



I am pleased to present the 2022-23 Red Tape Reduction Annual Report, which details our government's success in reducing red tape to make life better for Albertans and Alberta businesses.

Government is continuing to reduce the regulatory and administrative barriers that get in the way of investment, economic growth, and job creation that cost Albertans time and money. Since 2019, we have implemented more than 675 red tape reduction initiatives to eliminate duplication, improve efficiencies, and deliver services to Albertans more effectively. At the same time, we have saved Albertans, Alberta businesses, and government more than \$2.75 billion.

We currently hold the top spot across Canada with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) for reducing red tape, and as we close in on our one third reduction commitment, we are more committed than ever to keep the momentum going and continue to be a national leader in regulatory excellence.

Alberta's success in reducing red tape has not only come from streamlining existing regulation and administrative requirements, but also by developing new regulation that applies the lightest touch, focusing on outcomes not rules. This allows us to improve regulatory oversight while maintaining important health, safety, and environmental protections for Albertans.

Ultimately, many of the ideas to reduce red tape come directly from Albertans, and the province's business and industry experts, who continue to draw our attention to the regulatory barriers and administrative burdens that are getting in their way. Their feedback and recommendations will continue to inform government's efforts to reduce costs, and enable us to deliver services in more innovative and effective ways.

Red tape reduction has become a part of how government does business, as we continue to focus on improvements in services, programs, and government's regulatory oversight, allowing us to be as efficient, accessible, and responsive as possible to Albertans.

Honourable Dale Nally
Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction

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Executive summary

In 2019, government made a commitment to reduce red tape – the regulatory barriers and administrative burden that impact Albertans and Alberta businesses – by one third. Since then, an intensive cross-government effort has allowed us to reduce this red tape in many aspects that impact Albertans' daily lives and improve service delivery, while ensuring we maintain important protections in health, safety, and the environment.

Government is committed to regulating in a way that focuses on outcomes, providing greater flexibility in how we get there. For every regulatory requirement added in the last four years, four have been eliminated, resulting in a cumulative red tape reduction total of nearly 33 per cent and counting.

This report highlights the key red tape reduction successes of the fourth reporting year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) and the progress of red tape reduction government-wide. Since the last report, the work of red tape reduction has moved into the new Ministry of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, reflecting the permanency of this work within government and our commitment to continuous improvement.

This success included important changes to 14 pieces of legislation, across nine ministries. Some of these legislative changes have supported improvements to make life easier for Albertans, such as enabling the electronic registration of vehicles, while others have helped drive the province's economic growth, such as speeding up regulatory approvals to enable investment in our primary industries such as oil and gas, agriculture, and forestry.

While we have done a significant amount of work to reduce the existing regulatory and administrative burden, government continues to look forward. We will ensure the ability of Albertans, and Alberta business and industry, to connect directly with government on their recommendations to reduce red tape through formal stakeholder engagement and the red tape reduction inbox on our Cutting Red Tape webpage: <https://www.alberta.ca/cut-red-tape>. These recommendations continue to inform important changes to allow for more efficient and effective legislation, regulations, policies, and forms, while driving innovation.



Reducing costs and saving time for Albertans

The Government of Alberta is continuing to modernize services to reduce the red tape that costs Albertans time and money and to make our province the best place to live, invest, and do business. Albertans expect government programs and services to be efficient, effective, and easy to navigate. This has been accomplished through many initiatives including lowering costs for new drivers and allowing legal matters to be dealt with more easily. Government continues to improve the way we deliver services.

Cutting costs for Alberta's drivers

Key Highlights:

- The elimination of the advanced road test for Class 5 and Class 6 drivers is saving Albertans time and money while providing an incentive to practice safe driving behaviours.
- 500,000 drivers who had fulfilled the Graduated Drivers License (GDL) conditions as of April 1, 2023, were automatically exited from the GDL program to a full Class 5 or Class 6 driver's licence. This saved approximately \$154 per driver or \$77 million for Alberta drivers.

The GDL program was introduced in Alberta in 2003 to provide new Class 5 and Class 6 drivers with the support, skills and experience they need to safely operate on the road.

Under the GDL program, these new drivers are issued a restricted licence for a period of two years. As of April 1, 2023, drivers automatically exit the GDL program providing the driver has no traffic violations in the last 12 months of their probationary period. This includes convictions for impaired driving and dangerous driving.

Prior to April 1, 2023, drivers in the GDL program were required to take an advanced road test to exit the program. In the previous five years, only 35 per cent of Albertans in the GDL program attempted the advanced road test due to the inconvenience and cost associated with the test. The remaining 65 per cent of Albertans chose to remain in the GDL.

To enhance the knowledge of drivers and ensure safety on our roadways, the basic road test, which remains a requirement to obtain a Class 5 or Class 6 GDL licence, was enhanced to include multiple elements of the advanced road test.

After completing the basic road test, drivers in the GDL program are required to complete a 24-month probationary period; however, this period can be reduced by up to six months if the driver successfully completes an approved Class 5 or Class 6 driver training course.

With elements from the advanced road included in the basic road test, along with the probationary period, new Class 5 and Class 6 drivers are incentivized to practice safe driving everyday.

Alberta joins Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec as the only Canadian provinces that do not require a second road test.

Saving Albertans time and money on civil disputes

As part of the Government of Alberta's long-term strategy to make the civil claims process simpler and more cost effective, key changes were made to the *Provincial Court Act* in fall 2022 to allow Albertans to file civil claims of up to \$100,000 in the Alberta Court of Justice, starting August 1, 2023.

Previously, the court would only hear cases of up to \$50,000 in value, creating a backlog in the Court of King's Bench.

This change means that Albertans can bring more claims to the Alberta Court of Justice, resulting in more timely and cost-effective resolutions, using simplified and user-friendly processes. The Alberta Court of Justice allows Albertans to represent themselves more effectively, and without the need to hire a lawyer, reducing expenses for those who wish to take advantage of this option.

Simplifying the transfer of trust assets

Key Highlights:

- Albertans can now transfer assets directly from one trustee to a replacement trustee, without the need for oversight by the court.

Alberta's *Trustee Act* outlines how trustees (individuals who administer property in a trust) must carry out their duties in the best interest of the trust's beneficiaries. A trust can include any type of asset, such as cash, securities, real estate, and life insurance policies.

Previously, in instances where a trust ceased to have a trustee, trust assets were temporarily transferred to the Court of King's Bench. This added administrative burden for the Court—which had to manage these assets until a replacement trustee was named—and for the replacement trustee, who would have to recover these assets from the court prior to beginning their duties.

Amendments to the *Trustee Act* made in 2022 streamline the process of transferring these assets by allowing it to be done directly to a replacement trustee without the need for court involvement. This change reduces burden on the court by eliminating paperwork related to the temporary transfer of assets, while allowing the continuity of the trust even during trustee transitions. These changes also save beneficiaries time and legal costs associated with court applications and asset movement.

A healthcare worker, likely a nurse, is shown in profile, wearing a blue surgical mask and blue nitrile gloves. She is focused on adjusting an IV drip chamber, which is part of an IV stand with two clear plastic bags of fluid. The background is a soft-focus clinical setting. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Improving health services for Albertans

Alberta's government is committed to delivering a world class health care system and ensuring patients are a priority by providing appropriate supports and services to meet Albertans' health care needs. Enhancing our province's health care system to ensure that Albertans can access the care they need, when and where they need it, will include leveraging modern technologies and services like online support to make the health care system easier to navigate.

Connect Care and MyHealth Records are two examples of initiatives that are helping to streamline communication of health care information for patients and their health care providers. These two initiatives also serve as a place to store patient information for readily accessible data that moves with Albertans throughout the province, eliminating patchwork-style record keeping and empowering citizens to access and monitor their own health care records.

In collaboration with stakeholders, government is also working to modernize the health care system to make it more efficient. This work starts with establishing four new provincial organizations dedicated to delivering acute care, primary care, continuing care, and mental health and addiction services. The reorganized system will support increased accountability, while providing Albertans with timely access to care, no matter where they live in the province. Refocusing the health care system will give frontline health care workers the right space to properly care for Albertans without red tape bogging them down.

Reducing red tape and improving patient care

Key Highlights:

- Reduced burdensome administrative requirements by more than 36 per cent.
- Less time spent on administration frees up time to support improved health outcomes for Albertans.

Since 2019, Alberta Health, together with Alberta Health Services (AHS), has embraced the government's commitment to reduce red tape by one third without negatively impacting patient care. Today, we have reduced the unnecessary administrative burdens that slow down health care delivery by over 36 per cent. These efforts have been a vital contribution to the success of the government's red tape reduction commitment.

Notably, this success was achieved while the health care sector faced the most significant pandemic in the past century and unprecedented pressures. Moving forward, the government is continuing to look for ways to make the health care system more efficient and effective for health care workers and patients – ensuring Albertans receive the care they need, when they need it.

The following highlights are some of the many successful red tape reduction initiatives implemented to sustain the ongoing excellence of Alberta's health care system.

Expanding Connect Care and MyHealth records

Albertans often move from place to place to pursue career opportunities, to further education and skills training, and to be closer to family. This can lead to gaps in record keeping, as Albertans receive health care from different providers in various locations – requiring them to provide their health histories to each health care provider. This also means that health care providers may be missing key information needed to make the best decisions for their patients, adding administrative burden as they seek previous records.

To address this challenge, and make sure that every patient receives the best care possible, regardless of their location, the government introduced Connect Care and MyHealth Records.

Connect Care is a centralized health information system for services received in AHS facilities that gives health care providers a central access point to patient information and provides patients with virtual access to their health information. It includes useful information for both providers and patients, including medication alerts, treatment suggestions, visit summaries, and health history, to inform the best possible treatment plans.

Since 2022, Connect Care has been introduced in a staged approach, and as of May 2023, nearly all AHS health care providers across the province have access to it, ensuring patients receive consistent, continuous care no matter where they are in the province. As a central access point, health care providers no longer need to spend time and resources seeking out a patient's medical history.

Similarly, MyHealth Records is a separate online portal that offers Albertans secure and convenient access to their health information—including medications, lab test results, diagnostic imaging reports, and immunizations. This means that Albertans can immediately access and manage their own health information and they no longer have to request paper records from their health care providers.

Over the past year, the number of registered users of MyHealth Records has grown from 1.25 million in March 2022, to nearly 1.5 million at the end of March 2023. This means that nearly a third of Albertans are benefitting from these services and can access their online medical records. This steady growth in users demonstrates that more Albertans are experiencing the value of the portal, including reduced administrative burden and out-of-pocket expenses, by eliminating the effort and cost associated with having to request paper copies of records from health care providers.

Improving the regulatory framework

In Alberta, many health care workers are accountable to professional bodies, known as regulatory colleges, for their conduct and standards of their work. These professional bodies determine what qualifications health care workers require and can also address public concerns.

In March 2023, changes to the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) strengthened and streamlined the governance framework for regulated health professionals. Changes included streamlining the language in the HPA to remove duplication and making the related regulations more consistent between health care professions. The HPA will also help to ensure regulated health professionals maintain competency in an ongoing way.

The government also created a new regulation under the HPA, the Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation, which sets out all the procedures different health care workers are qualified to perform in a single place. Previously, these procedures were defined across many different regulations.

These changes to the HPA make the legislation governing health care workers' professions easier to understand and more transparent for Albertans, who have a right to know that they are receiving care from qualified, accountable professionals.

Streamlining mental health and addiction care

Key Highlights:

- Albertans can more consistently access high quality mental health services, regardless of their location.

Historically, the delivery of mental health and addiction services in Alberta has been fragmented – with regional offices often providing different services depending on the location – rather than centrally through a single department.

To support Albertans in accessing the same quality of mental health and addictions care throughout the province, and to make the delivery of services more efficient, AHS has combined all mental health and addiction functions and services into a single, centralized program – the existing AHS Provincial Addiction and Mental Health program. This reduced overlap between departments, generating administrative efficiencies and promoting accountability, while ensuring that the delivery of mental health and addiction services is consistent to Albertans. In the future, this centralization will make it easier for the government to develop and implement new, modern, and effective mental health and addiction services that support Albertans in their recovery.

Improving primary health care

Alberta's government recognizes the importance of primary health care in supporting Albertans' overall health needs. Primary health care providers assist Albertans through every stage of life and include family doctors, nurse practitioners, and specialists in preventative care and chronic disease management.

However, primary health care providers are often bogged down in administrative tasks; for example, completing third party insurance forms, which impacts their ability to provide the care Albertans need.

To address this, the government is working with the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) to implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through a working group that focuses on improving primary health care to allow physicians to spend more time with patients and ensuring Albertans have consistent access to care.

Immediately, this MOU working group will focus the government and AMA's efforts on cutting red tape, developing a new family physician compensation model that encourages comprehensive primary care, and modernizing how primary care is governed to allow physicians to spend more time with patients and less on paperwork. To better understand administrative obstacles physicians and other health care workers face, the government will meet with representatives of the sector in a series of engagement sessions in 2024.

In tandem with this, the government has established a task force that includes representation from the AMA and other key stakeholders to recommend a new payment model for family physicians that encourages comprehensive primary care, identifies ways to reduce administrative burden, and recommends other short-term stabilization measures. Other commitments include allocating \$57 million over three years to help primary care physicians see more patients – supporting Alberta's ongoing population growth.

Both the MOU and the task force are focused on making it easier for primary health care providers to do their important work – supporting the health of Albertans – rather than administrative tasks. Ultimately, this go-forward approach will ensure that Albertans and their families have access to the high-quality and integrated health care they need.

Moving forward

The government knows there is more work to do to ensure Albertans continue to receive high-quality and consistent health care in every region of the province. That is why government continues to look for ways to drive efficiencies in health care delivery by cutting red tape where possible without impacting patient safety. The government will continue to engage health care professionals like physicians, nurses, and others to ask them what needs to change so they can do what they do best – keep Albertans healthy.

The background image shows two construction workers on a job site. They are wearing white hard hats and high-visibility yellow safety vests over plaid shirts. One worker is holding a large sheet of paper, likely blueprints, and they appear to be in a discussion. The background is a blurred construction site with wooden framing and structural elements.

Improving government programs and services

Alberta's government remains committed to making sure its programs and services are easy to access and navigate. From improving the permit approval process to facilitate development, to simplifying application requirements, to driving innovation in the cannabis and gaming industries, we are developing new user-friendly virtual platforms and improving existing ones, ensuring that Albertans continue to receive the best service possible.

Improving access to disability supports

The Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program provides funding and counselling supports for parents of children with disabilities. During the pandemic, the number of FSCD applications increased by 96 per cent, leading to longer waiting periods for families seeking support. Along with the increased demand, 33 per cent of applications were submitted without the necessary information and supporting documents.

To address the increased need for funding supports, and to help Albertans in need by providing improved guidance on completing applications, a new online portal was launched in July 2023. This replaced the previous method of submitting paper applications to the FSCD office, speeding up the review and approval process.

By allowing applicants to check their program eligibility, provide supporting documentation, and save their application and return to it later to make any changes, the new online portal provides faster supports to those in need. The portal also provides links to a helpline that applicants can access in preparing their FSCD application.

The portal was developed with input from members of the FSCD Provincial Parent Advisory Committee and representatives from Inclusion Alberta, Autism Alberta, and Autism Calgary. Albertans can be confident that the new online portal will not only reduce approval times and support the submission of more complete applications, but was created with the interests of families in mind.

Land Titles Office successfully eliminates backlog

Key Highlights

- December 2023: Document registration turnaround times were reduced from 84 business days to the normal 10-12 business days, successfully eliminating the backlog.
- \$340 million in economic activity is processed through Alberta Land Titles each day.

The Land Titles Office provides a vital service for Albertans, guaranteeing legal ownership and document registrations. In spring 2021, the number of documents submitted to the Land Titles Office increased by 86 per cent due to Alberta's growing population and economy. Unlike previous spring volume surges, this turned out to be a sustained increase that resulted in a two-year backlog in processing applications.

To tackle the delays, the Government of Alberta increased funding and staffing hours, streamlined registration processes, and made strategic improvements. These improvements included reducing processing times by proactively returning inadequate land title applications and training new staff faster to process applications. The successful elimination of the two-year backlog marks a significant milestone, and supports the province's economic growth.

To ensure another backlog does not arise, government is investing nearly \$60 million over three years to replace Land Titles' outdated systems and improve service delivery. Currently, many of these systems are paper based and ill-equipped to respond to changing market conditions. This modernization project will move the primarily paper-based registration function to digital formats. In addition, the Land Titles Office is continuing to streamline registration and policy procedures and improve training.

Reducing red tape for oil service rig operators

Key Highlights:

- Reducing the reporting burden on oil and gas service rig operators, while maintaining safety.

Oil and gas service rigs spend 95 per cent of their operating time stationary and are typically moved only short distances. Given the short time service rigs spend on highways, it is inefficient for their operators to have to fill out and maintain daily logs meant for commercial highway vehicles.

To address this issue, the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2019 to optimize the movement of service rigs between the provinces. Shortly after, Alberta and Saskatchewan submitted a joint application to Transport Canada for service rig operators to be exempt from the requirement to fill out the daily logs.

Continuous advocacy by the two provinces resulted in the federal government granting this exemption under the *Motor Vehicle Transport Act* on September 14, 2022, meaning operators no longer have to complete daily logs or have a certified electronic logging device.

This exemption applies in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia, optimizing the movement of service rigs between provinces and reducing paperwork for rig operators without compromising public safety. Service rigs continue to be subject to robust safety checks that verify valid permits, regular inspections, and all occupational health and safety requirements.

Modernizing highway planning and development

Key Highlights:

- The Roadside Planning and Application Tracking Hub (RPATH) increases efficiencies for highway development.

Securing the required permits and approvals for highway developments previously posed significant challenges for Albertans and small businesses. Applicants were required to fill out numerous paper forms for various offices that often requested the same information, such as the applicant's name, address, and phone number.

In May 2022, the Government of Alberta introduced RPATH, an online portal for the necessary permit applications (related to subdivision referrals, highway developments, highway access, utilities, and other related permit), which can be accessed by members of the public, municipalities, and utility companies.

The RPATH portal allows applicants to submit and monitor applications online, replacing email and paper forms. Users can also submit multiple applications simultaneously, access approved permit documents, and receive status updates. Meanwhile, basic information like age, address, and phone number is stored, eliminating redundant data entry.

Since the introduction of RPATH, wait times for permits have decreased by 40-60 per cent, depending on the specific project and type of application. Ultimately, this new portal enhances transparency, expedites approval processes, and provides greater certainty for applicants.

Easier access to workers' compensation

Key Highlights:

- Firefighters who fought the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire can now access Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) benefits more quickly and easily.

To honour the risk and sacrifice made during the 2016 wildfires, a provision has been included in WCB legislation to streamline access to WCB benefits for both full-time and part-time firefighters employed by municipalities or Metis Settlements.

Normally, firefighters diagnosed with cancer must have been on the job for a specific period before their cancer is presumed to be work-related and allows them to be eligible for workers' compensation benefits.

The legislative change simplifies the compensation process for eligible firefighters who responded to the 2016 wildfire and later develop a cancer type specified by the WCB Regulation. Regardless of the length of their service, as long as they meet eligibility criteria, the law presumes that their cancer is work-related. This update eliminates the previously required extensive documentation, making it easier for firefighters to access compensation without the burden of proving qualification.

Access to WCB benefits for all firefighters was also simplified by amending the Firefighters' Primary Site Cancer Regulation to include pancreatic, thyroid, mesothelioma, and soft tissue sarcoma to the list of cancers eligible for presumption and reducing the exposure period requirement for colorectal cancer from 20 years to 15 years. These changes reduce red tape for firefighters diagnosed with these cancers when accessing WCB benefits.

Simplifying cannabis and gaming industry applications

Key Highlights:

- Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) has simplified application processes for the cannabis and gambling industry.

A responsive and efficient regulatory process is necessary to support the evolving landscape of the cannabis and gaming industry.

Traditionally, applying for licenses, registrations, or approvals by existing licensed, registered, or approved companies, as well as new applicants in the cannabis and gaming industry, was characterized by extensive paperwork and detailed financial history requirements.

In March 2023, the AGLC recognized the need for greater efficiencies and made significant improvements to the licensing and approval process for these industries. Disclosure forms that were originally complex and lengthy were simplified, easing the burden for businesses, especially those new to the industry.

The requirement for financial disclosure was also streamlined, with the need for only one year of financial data instead of three. This change particularly benefits smaller or newer businesses that might not have extensive financial records.

Additionally, the focus of personal disclosures was updated to prioritize only essential information, making the process more straightforward and less overwhelming for applicants. These improvements to the application process have made it quicker and clearer, offering particular advantages to new businesses or those looking to expand in the cannabis and gaming sector.

Optimizing foreign credential assessment

Key Highlights:

- Verifying the foreign credentials of job seekers has become more streamlined and accessible.

The Government of Alberta's International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS) evaluates and certifies educational credentials of newcomers from other countries and compares them to Canadian education standards. IQAS assessments support job searchers, professional licensure applications, post-secondary education applications, and skilled immigration applications for those looking to settle in Alberta.

Since 2023, the IQAS client portal has undergone a significant upgrade to provide more information related to the acceptance of credentials from foreign institutions. The improved system explicitly and quickly advises clients of whether their credentials are acceptable, saving them time and expense, while reducing the workload for IQAS staff by eliminating the need to inform prospective clients about non-recognition of credentials and reimburse invalid applications.

Overall, the IQAS system upgrade provides a more user-friendly experience, alleviating the administrative burden on both clients and staff.

Updating the Occupational Health & Safety Code

On March 31, 2023, the government introduced an updated Occupational Health and Safety Code (OHS Code) designed to enhance clarity and efficiency for both employers and employees.

An updated and easier-to-understand OHS Code helps employers keep workers healthy and safe and supports Alberta's economy.

The update primarily involved the elimination of outdated, unnecessary, and duplicative regulatory requirements within the OHS Code. This not only simplified the Code, but reduced the administrative burden on employers by making it more straightforward and easier to comply with.

Moreover, the updated OHS Code includes technical improvements in various sections, addressing critical aspects such as standards for first aid kits, responsibilities at work sites, and thresholds for noise exposure. These changes were informed by engagement with employers, workers, and safety professionals, reflecting current best practices and incorporating the latest technologies.

By streamlining administrative and regulatory requirements, the revised OHS Code empowers employers to concentrate on establishing safer and healthier work environments.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand gently touching a green plant in a field. The background is blurred, showing more of the field and a person in a plaid shirt. The overall tone is soft and natural.

Supporting Alberta's agriculture and environmental sustainability

The Alberta Government remains dedicated to supporting the agriculture sector and improving the province's environmental sustainability. By modernizing outdated laws and simplifying processes, government continues to reinforce the province's economic growth and sustainability.

Reducing red tape in Lloydminster

The City of Lloydminster, positioned on the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan, has faced unique challenges owing to its dual-province status, including those related to federal regulations governing interprovincial food trade in Canada, resulting in restrictions on food sales across provincial borders within the city.

This means that businesses such as meat facilities, convenience stores, and grocery stores had to meet federal requirements under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* and be licensed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) if their products cross provincial borders. For Lloydminster, this limited, and even hindered, the movement of products within the city in cases where the provincial border was being crossed, costing businesses time and money.

To address these barriers, the Governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta and the CFIA partnered to launch a two-year pilot program in January 2023 to help food supply businesses navigate the federal requirements hindering food sales across provincial borders within the city, and improve domestic trade.

This pilot enables provincially licensed food businesses to freely sell their products throughout the entirety of Lloydminster without the requirement for a Safe Food for Canadians license or compliance with related regulations. This initiative has not only expanded food markets within the city, but also created fresh revenue streams for businesses in both Alberta and Saskatchewan. Moreover, by eliminating the need for licenses, the program has saved businesses considerable time and millions of dollars in associated costs.

Improving access to wildfire information

Wildfires pose a significant risk to Albertans, and the ability to access accurate and timely information on wildfires is important for public safety and ecological preservation.

Previously, Albertans had limited access to detailed wildfire information, as available resources like the wildfire status map provided very high-level data that made it difficult for residents to stay informed about potential dangers. Further, the process of obtaining fire permits, mandatory for certain burning activities in forest protection areas, often required phone calls or in-person visits to local forest offices.

To improve Albertans' access to critical information, the Alberta Wildfire app was updated in April 2022 to include a new wildfire dashboard. This feature provides up-to-date, detailed information on active wildfires, including the number of fires, their sizes, locations, and suspected causes, all in one centralized location.

In addition, government introduced an online fire permit portal, improving the process for obtaining the necessary permits for burning activities. The simplified permit process makes it easier for residents to follow the necessary legal and safety steps before conducting burning activities, aiding in wildfire prevention.

Ultimately, allowing Albertans to have more immediate access to critical wildfire information better supports them in making informed decisions to protect themselves and their families, particularly during the summer wildfire season, while helping to protect Alberta's vital forest areas.

Safeguarding Alberta's beekeeping industry

Alberta is home to the largest beekeeping industry in Canada, responsible for nearly 40 per cent of the overall honeybee population in the country. Safeguarding the health of Alberta's bees from disease outbreaks and pests is essential for the long-term success of the agricultural industry, as healthy bees directly contribute to effective pollination of agricultural crops.

To support and promote this vital industry, government has made it easier for Alberta's beekeeping industry to respond to bee disease outbreaks and reduced administrative burden for beekeepers by streamlining information-keeping requirements.

Amendments to the *Bee Act* and Bee Regulation, included in the *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2023*, broadened the definition of bee disease to include 'pests' and added nine new bee pest and disease species to the Bee Regulation. Additional changes under the *Bee Act* modernized the language and reduced the amount of information required to register with the Provincial Apiculturist as an Alberta beekeeper.

Taken together, these changes make regulations easier for industry to understand and interpret, and allow beekeepers to respond faster to emerging threats and track the spread of bee disease efficiently, saving producers time and money and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Alberta's bee population.

Supporting Alberta's irrigation sector

Irrigation water is essential for Alberta's agricultural industry, and the irrigation storage and distribution system provides water to about 50 rural communities in Alberta. The 11 irrigation districts across Alberta are responsible for conveying and delivering water to irrigators, livestock operations, municipalities, domestic users, industrial and commercial users, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities.

Updates made to the *Irrigation Districts Act*, as part of the *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2023*, provide Alberta's irrigation districts with broader tools to best manage Alberta's water resources, support digital ways of doing business, and remove unnecessary administrative burden on the districts. This includes helping irrigation districts to address unauthorized water use that wastes water resources and negatively impacts supply. Additionally by allowing districts to cease delivery, rather than relying on a lengthy legal process of charging offenders under the Act and obtaining resolution through the courts, districts can now remove parcels with irrigation acres from the district if there has been no water delivery on those parcels and no reasonable prospect of future use.

Changes to the Act also enhanced communication by Alberta's irrigation districts by allowing them to provide specific notices to the public and irrigators electronically via email or posting online rather than in local print media. This makes it easier for districts to serve their users and reduces the costs and resources associated with submitting notices to print media.

Taken together, these changes better empower irrigation districts to address inefficient water usage and allocate resources more effectively, saving them time and money, while helping to protect Alberta's water supply against misuse.



Promoting Alberta's economic growth and diversification

The work of reducing red tape continues to support the expansion and diversification of Alberta's economy by helping organizations to better compete on a global level. By modernizing legislation and programs to encourage investment, Albertans and Alberta businesses can more easily access the supports needed to contribute to economic growth and advancement.

Updating Alberta's Cooperatives Act

Cooperatives are businesses organized by individuals who jointly use services, buy goods, and make collective decisions while sharing profits.

Traditionally, Alberta's cooperatives have operated within a tightly regulated environment, posing challenges to their growth and adaptability. Key changes made to the *Cooperatives Act* in November 2022 were designed to address these challenges by introducing reforms that enhance global talent acquisition and leverage technological advancements.

This includes allowing cooperatives to appoint more directors from outside of Canada, thereby expanding their access to a diverse pool of expertise, while balancing local and international expertise on their boards. This allows cooperatives to better understand and adapt to international markets, giving them a competitive edge.

Additional legislative changes allow cooperatives to conduct electronic voting, hold virtual meetings, and share documents electronically, allowing these organizations to use contemporary business practices that enhance efficiencies. Meanwhile, other updates enable the Act to better align with provincial and federal corporate registry legislation, providing clarity and reducing complexity in legal and regulatory requirements. This allows cooperatives to focus more on their business goals and less on navigating complicated legal processes.

Enhancing the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program

Key Highlights:

- Changes have been made to the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (AAIP) to support immigration and to attract and retain top talent.

Skilled migrants play a vital role in Alberta's economy. The AAIP allows government to nominate applicants for permanent residence, targeting skilled professionals and entrepreneurs globally to help address labor shortages and attract new business owners to the province. In 2023, key enhancements were made to the program to support recruiting talent in high-need areas.

This includes:

- creating a new pathway for health care professionals with a job offer from an Alberta employer to allow for permanent residence;

- reducing the minimum investment required for the Rural Entrepreneur Stream from \$200,000 to \$100,000, enabling more entrepreneurs to establish or acquire businesses in rural Alberta;
- streamlining the AAIP Rural Renewal Stream application process by eliminating the need for an endorsement letter from a settlement agency, empowering rural towns to attract, recruit, and retain newcomers based on local needs;
- participating in the federal Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot, assisting refugees with the required skills and qualifications to immigrate to Alberta through existing economic programs; and
- introducing a dedicated phone line, connecting AAIP staff directly with applicants seeking assistance and information.

Collectively, these changes address critical skills gaps in the province, support rural communities, and create enhanced opportunities for Alberta's newcomers, while providing comprehensive support throughout the process.

Improving funding for adult learners

In April 2022, the Foundational Learning Assistance (FLA) program was introduced to better support adult Albertans seeking access to training opportunities that equip them with essential skills for employment in key industries. The FLA program, designed as a successor to the Learner Income Support Program, provides funding for adult learning initiatives focused on upskilling and re-skilling to meet the demands of the labor market.

Eligible adult Albertans can now access funding to cover various expenses including living costs, tuition, books, supplies, transportation, and childcare while participating in approved programs. Notably, the living allowance rate for students has been increased, facilitating easier access to improved funding that covers living expenses during their studies under the FLA program.

Moreover, the FLA program has expanded its reach by approving more providers in Indigenous communities to deliver FLA programming. Administrative enhancements, such as the implementation of a new application system, have significantly reduced the average processing time from six to ten weeks to just one to two weeks.

These administrative and program improvements allow funding support for adult Albertans pursuing educational and skill development opportunities to be more accessible and efficient.

Next Steps for Red Tape Reduction

From the beginning, the success of reducing red tape has largely been driven by the valuable input received from Albertans and Alberta businesses. From the public submissions received through the Cut Red Tape portal, to the nine industry panels that consisted of representatives from the province's key economic sectors, recommendations from Albertans have been critical to informing the work of reducing red tape. In fact, over 200 of the red tape reduction initiatives implemented to date respond directly to ideas from Albertans and Alberta business and industry.

While government has nearly met its commitment to reduce red tape by one third, there is more work to do, and we continue to focus on driving transformational change. This includes renewed and ongoing engagement with Albertans and Alberta business and industry to drive the momentum and generate new ideas for removing regulatory barriers.

As a government, we will continue to improve the regulatory environment, which includes ensuring that the important successes achieved in eliminating unnecessary and burdensome regulatory requirements continues. This will be supported by a commitment to no net increase by offsetting any new requirements that may need to be added to support government's economic, fiscal, and social priorities that make Albertans' lives better.

Red tape reduction is now a fundamental part of how government makes decisions and provides services, and we continue to pursue improvements to make government more efficient, improve the way we deliver programs and services, and save time and money for Albertans and Alberta businesses. This includes an enhanced focus on cross-government efforts to improve permit approval times across government to drive investment and support economic growth; support for better housing affordability; and support for enhanced delivery of health care and less administrative burden, all while continuing to ensure that important health, safety, and environmental protections remain in place.

In 2024 and beyond, government and the public continue to benefit from the successes of cleaning up past overregulation, which includes saving Albertans billions of dollars and many hours of their time. Moving forward, the work of red tape reduction continues to look for ways to make government as accessible and responsive as possible to the people it serves. Maintaining this commitment to regulatory excellence will enable Alberta to continue to thrive into the future.

Measuring our performance

Performance Indicator: Direct Cost Savings

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Dollars Saved	\$476 million	\$722 million	\$900 million	\$650 million	\$2.75 billion

Complying with excessive government regulation and administration can add significant costs for businesses, investors, and the public. Reducing these costs supports government's commitment to making the investments that support the ability of job creators to continue growing their businesses, while improving the way we deliver programs, services, and supports to Albertans.

Since 2019, our government has reduced the regulatory burden, improved government service delivery, and helped drive economic growth, while ensuring the ongoing protection of health, safety, and the environment. More than 675 red tape reduction initiatives have been completed, yielding a cumulative savings of over \$2.75 billion, leading to better access to health services and improved environmental monitoring, while making it easier for Albertans to access the skills and education needed to be successful in today's labour market and into the future.

Performance Indicator: Canadian Federation of Independent Business

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Grade	F	F	F	B-	A	A-	A-

Alberta's success in reducing red tape has been recognized by the CFIB, a leading national advocate for small business and regulatory excellence that publishes an annual report card grading Canadian jurisdictions on their performance. Alberta has been recognized as a top performer three years in a row.

