



Red Tape Reduction Annual Report 2020-2021

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“We committed to cutting red tape by one-third, and thanks to the ideas and advice of Albertans, we are more than halfway to reaching that goal. With more than \$1.2 billion saved already, we’re saving Albertans and their businesses time and money while driving Alberta’s economic recovery.”

Honourable Tanya Fir

Message from the Associate Minister



I am pleased to present the Red Tape Reduction Annual Report, which highlights the progress made towards removing unnecessary regulatory burden across government.

Removing needless red tape saves time, money and resources while still protecting the environment, keeping Albertans safe and healthy, and upholding fiscal accountability. Our government is committed to make it easier for people to get the government services they need and reduce the regulatory burden on job creators to encourage investment, boost Alberta's competitiveness, and get more Albertans back to work.

To ensure the transparency of the efforts of our government toward these objectives, we passed the *Red Tape Reduction Act* in 2019 that requires public reporting on red tape reduction strategies and initiatives. This report is a direct consequence of that legislation and highlights our progress in meeting the objectives we set out to achieve when we formed government. Regulatory modernization and red tape reduction, along with other initiatives such as the Job Creation Tax Cut, establishes Alberta as one of the most attractive places to do business in North America.

Alberta's government committed to cutting red tape by one-third, and we are more than halfway to reaching that goal. As of July 1, 2021, we have completed hundreds of red tape reduction initiatives and eliminated more than 17 per cent of Alberta's unnecessary regulatory requirements. Our efforts were recognized at the national level by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), which gave Alberta an "A" in its most recent annual report card for government efficiency. This is our highest grade ever. Alberta was also recognized as the most improved province in the country.

Even as we dealt with COVID-19, the downturn of the energy sector and a global economic recession, our government continued to make progress on our plan for jobs, investment and economic recovery. The pandemic reaffirmed the importance of reducing red tape and removing barriers for Albertans. We acted swiftly to introduce virtual doctor visits, allow liquor manufacturers to produce hand sanitizer and made many other legislation changes to keep Albertans safe and support economic recovery. Looking ahead, I will continue to work with industry panels and Albertans to identify regulatory barriers that may be preventing our economic recovery and growth, and intend to bring forward legislative reform that reduces and eliminates unnecessary red tape in the province.

By keeping taxes low, cutting red tape and acting on Alberta's Recovery Plan, the government is reducing needless red tape to further enhance Alberta's competitiveness, which will drive new investment and growth across the economy without compromising safety or environmental protections.

[Original signed by]

Honourable Tanya Fir

Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction

October 29, 2021

Executive Overview

Alberta's many advantages have made it ideal as a place to invest, do business, raise a family and find employment that supports the highest quality of life. The abundance of natural resources that have been a cornerstone of the province's economic success and development continue to underpin much of the province's prosperity. Alberta is taking bold steps to ensure ongoing economic dynamism that builds on its natural advantages while diversifying our economy.

The province has developed world-class education and health systems, offers a comparatively low cost of living, and has two vibrant and dynamic major cities along with a strong rural economy. Initiatives such as the Job Creation Tax Cut have made Alberta one of the most tax competitive jurisdictions in North America.

Alberta's government is committed to eliminating overregulation that imposes an unnecessary burden on Albertans and businesses, and we continue to review new and existing requirements for their necessity and effectiveness. Removing unnecessary regulations that increase the burden on job creators, or make it more difficult for Albertans to access services, plays a key role in protecting Alberta's advantage as a destination for investment, families and jobs.

Government is driven by the principle of "regulate only if we must," which means getting out of the way of our job creators by removing inefficient processes and prescriptive requirements and focusing instead on the outcomes that our requirements intend to achieve. Significant strides have been made in the use of outcome-based and risk-based approaches to regulation to address not simply "what" government regulates but "how" it regulates.

Alberta has also taken the lead in reducing barriers to free trade in Canada. After removing 21 party-specific exceptions to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, Alberta has only six remaining exceptions – the lowest number of any party to the CFTA. We continue to actively encourage the federal government and other provinces and territories to follow Alberta's lead and reduce their party-specific exceptions, creating a more open, transparent and competitive marketplace.

This report highlights some of the key successes in the second reporting year (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021) that have enhanced this competitive advantage and demonstrates our progress towards achieving government's commitment to cut red tape by one-third by the end of fiscal year 2022-23. This year's report also includes a focus on government's collective success in supporting Albertans and Alberta businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, and driving Alberta's economic recovery.

The achievements in this report form a key part of efforts articulated in Alberta's Recovery Plan, released in June 2020, which outlined the strategy to balance targeted government spending on infrastructure with strong incentives for private sector growth. The pandemic, and the resulting economic and social challenges, have only reaffirmed the importance of continuing to reduce red tape to streamline and modernize government service delivery and ensure job creators do not face unnecessary barriers to growth.

Between May 1, 2019 and June 30, 2021, government has reduced a total of 118,676 (or 17.8 per cent) of its regulatory requirements, saving Alberta's job creators and government an estimated \$1.2 billion.

The work of reducing red tape is supported by an industry-driven approach, informed by nine Red Tape Reduction Industry Panels, that includes representation from industry leaders across Alberta's key economic sectors: oil and gas; chemical manufacturing; forestry; tourism and hospitality; agriculture; non-profit; construction; small business; and industrial manufacturing. As of June 2021, 200 of the Panels' collective recommendations to eliminate red tape have been addressed, and we continue rely on their expertise to identify regulatory barriers that may be getting in the way of Alberta's economic growth and recovery.

Of the hundreds of red tape reduction (RTR) initiatives completed between July 2020 and June 2021, this report highlights 30 of the most impactful, representing our ongoing commitment to securing Alberta's future as an economic destination of choice.

Progress on Government’s Commitments to Red Tape Reduction

| Commitment | Status |
|---|--|
| Pass a <i>Red Tape Reduction Act</i> to measure, report, and reduce the province’s regulatory decisions to be made. | The <i>Red Tape Reduction Act</i> was passed by Alberta’s Legislative Assembly in June 2019. |
| Appoint a Minister for Red Tape Reduction to lead the (Red Tape Reduction) Action Plan and meet the one-third reduction target. | In April 2019, government created the Associate Ministry of Red Tape Reduction within Treasury Board and Finance. The Honourable Tanya Fir is the current Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction. |
| Form industry panels to help the Associate Minister identify unnecessary red tape in every sector of Alberta’s economy. | Nine industry panels covering Alberta’s key economic sectors were established in 2019, which continue to inform Alberta’s red tape reduction efforts. |
| Implement a “One-In / One-Out” rule requiring ministries to identify at least one offsetting regulation for every new regulation created. | An offset requirement that ensures the regulatory burden does not increase will be implemented once the one-third reduction in red tape is achieved. |
| Create a Red Tape Challenge Website at StopRedTape.ca to replicate the United Kingdom’s successful Red Tape Challenge by crowdsourcing input from businesses, organisations, and the public on which regulations should be improved, kept, or scrapped. | The Alberta government’s public-facing web portal is located at www.alberta.ca/cut-red-tape.aspx and allows for direct input from Albertans, businesses and organizations on improvements to the province’s existing regulatory approach. |
| Cut red tape within government to allow the public sector to focus on serving Albertans. | Among the efforts to enhance service delivery, government has delegated approval authority for a number of regulatory changes from Cabinet decisions to Ministerial level. This enables government to act more quickly, providing Albertans with improved access to the services they rely on most. |
| Move from a process to outcome-based regulatory approach. | Significant progress has been made to remove unnecessary and overly prescriptive regulatory requirements in favour of a focus on the required outcome, such as the implementation of the Digital Regulatory Assurance System for environmental approvals and streamlining child care licensing as part of Child Care Transformation. |
| Fight for an end to interprovincial barriers to free trade. | Alberta has the lowest number of trade exceptions (six) under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and is ranked first by the Montreal Economic Institute in the Internal Trade Provincial Leadership Index. |
| A United Conservative government will cut red tape by one-third to reduce costs, encouraging new and existing businesses to get Albertans back to work. | Since the beginning of this mandate, regulatory requirements across government have been reduced by 17.8 per cent, well on the way to a one-third reduction by 2023, saving Albertans at least \$1.2 billion. |



COVID-19 Response

The pandemic created unprecedented challenges for Albertans, particularly business owners, who had to adapt quickly to comply with necessary public health and safety measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. Alberta's government took swift action to protect lives and livelihoods, making government services more accessible, and reducing red tape to support businesses to stay open and operate safely.

Many of the initiatives undertaken by government in response to the pandemic have since been made permanent, decreasing the costs of doing business, speeding up approvals, and providing more options for Albertans to access goods and services safely and more conveniently.

Virtual Meetings

In Spring 2020, during the first State of Public Health Emergency in Alberta due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Alberta suspended the requirements for organizations to hold in person meetings in the interest of public safety. Previously, provincial legislation required organizations such as businesses, non-profits, societies, condominium corporations and cooperatives to meet and vote in person when conducting their regular business.

When the suspension ended in August 2020, many organizations wanted to continue to be able to meet and vote safely and more efficiently without meeting in person, but found their bylaws did not allow it. Alberta's legislation also did not reflect the advent of technology that allows organizations to meet virtually, send electronic meeting notices or conduct votes electronically.

By passing the *Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act*, the Government of Alberta modernized its legislation, allowing organizations to conduct these activities remotely using digital technology, if their bylaws do not prohibit it. The changes provide thousands of organizations the flexibility to make their meeting bylaws work best for their membership.

MyHealth Records

In response to the pandemic, the Government of Alberta expanded the availability of health services through MyHealth Records, the online portal that allows Albertans to safely and securely access their health records without having to request their information from multiple health care providers. This included providing immediate access to COVID-19 lab test results for adults and parents/guardians of minors tested for COVID-19, and extending the timeline for verifying their account from 10 days to 30 days.

Government also added virtual care services, allowing patients and health care providers to safely connect online through secure messaging and video visits, while improving access to health care services for Albertans in rural and remote communities.

Municipal Stimulus Program

As part of Alberta's Recovery Plan, the Alberta government announced the Municipal Stimulus Program (MSP) in June 2020 to deliver \$500 million in infrastructure capital to municipal governments and Metis Settlements to contribute to local economic growth and recovery. The MSP boosts municipal infrastructure funding by almost 30 per cent, creating an estimated 2,500 jobs in 2020 and 2021. Municipalities must use the funding for roads, bridges, water and wastewater systems, public transit or recreation projects.

As a condition of receiving funding, municipalities are required to report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs on their progress in reducing red tape to make it easier to start a new business, streamline processes for permit approvals, and attract new investment and/or tourism.

In September 2021, Municipal Affairs released the [2020 Municipal Red Tape Reduction Report](#), which outlines municipal actions to reduce red tape and encourage private sector investment in their communities. The report highlights multiple examples of high-impact RTR efforts undertaken by Alberta municipalities in 2020, such as the City of Leduc's software changes that now allow the municipality to review development and building permits at the same time, or the 50 per cent reduction in business license fees by the City of Edmonton. Other key successes included streamlining business licensing processes, making application forms and payments available online, and eliminating redundant municipal requirements.

It is expected that municipalities will continue to pursue activities that encourage local investment, boost their competitiveness, and get more Albertans back to work in their communities.

"Alberta's Municipal Stimulus Program (MSP) created new opportunities for communities to invest in infrastructure projects like bridges, water systems and public transit while creating employment and economic activity during the COVID-19 disruption. Alberta municipalities are leaders in red tape reduction, allowing businesses to create economic growth and those same municipalities look forward to sharing and partnering with the provincial government to remove unnecessary barriers for businesses to thrive across our province."

Angela Duncan, AUMA Interim President

Modernizing Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Regulations

Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) continues to make significant progress in reducing red tape for businesses, charitable organizations and Albertans.

In late 2020, in response to the necessary public health restrictions, AGLC made changes to existing liquor policies to allow:

- restaurants and bars to sell liquor and mixed drinks with takeout and delivery orders;
- retail liquor stores to host virtual tastings; and
- liquor manufacturers to offer complimentary sealed liquor samples for consumption at home.

These changes supported more than 5,300 bars and restaurants and over 1,500 liquor stores by providing opportunities for additional sources of revenue, helping more of them to stay in business during the pandemic and keep Albertans employed.

In January, Alberta received the CFIB's Golden Scissors award for expanding revenue and consumer choice opportunities by changing existing rules to allow alcohol to be sold for take-out and delivery and expanding outdoor patio spaces.

In addition, AGLC amended their gaming policies to allow licensed charities— such as food banks, community leagues and charitable sporting groups— to sell raffle tickets online, helping these organizations to reach a larger audience and increase proceeds. AGLC also launched PlayAlberta.ca, the only provincially-regulated online gaming website offered in Alberta, allowing money otherwise spent on illegal offshore gaming websites to be kept in the province and used for the benefit of Albertans either through government programs or the services provided by the non-profit sector.



Associate Minister Tanya Fir (left), MLA Nathan Neudorf (centre) and Minister Adriana LaGrange (right) join the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce.



Economic Recovery

Alberta's government continues to deliver on its promise to cut red tape and make it as easy as possible for businesses to form, operate, create jobs and drive Alberta's economy forward. At the beginning of 2020, Alberta faced the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the deepest global economic contraction since the Great Depression and an unprecedented collapse in oil prices. While the effects of the pandemic have created unprecedented challenges for businesses, Alberta has continued to reduce red tape to remove unnecessary burden and make life easier for job creators and Albertans.

The Government of Alberta's actions to reduce red tape are helping to create a globally competitive business environment and attract investment in Alberta's core industries and emerging sectors, which is key to our economic recovery. In June 2020, government released Alberta's Recovery Plan, which outlined sector strategies for growth in key economic sectors while doubling down on the government's commitment to reduce red tape, making Alberta one of the best places in the world to invest and do business. Reducing red tape also supports economic recovery through direct cost savings to industry that will stimulate investment and create new private sector jobs for Albertans.

Energy Sector Initiatives

The energy sector remains vitally important to Alberta and to the country, which is why government has taken action to remove red tape as part of Alberta's Recovery Plan. Reducing red tape in the energy sector allows companies in Alberta's largest economic sector to spend more time and money growing their businesses and creating jobs, making Alberta a destination of choice for investment.

Alberta has made aggressive efforts to eliminate burdensome regulations facing the energy sector to get Alberta's economy moving, leading to nearly \$1 billion in anticipated cost savings in the energy industry by 2022-23, including nearly \$713 million in savings identified in 2020-21 and \$273 million identified in 2019-20. This has been achieved without compromising environmental protections or safety measures within the industry.

In response to recommendations of the Oil and Gas Industry Panel to expedite the clean up of abandoned oil and gas wells, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) made changes to Directive 020: Well Abandonment to allow lower-risk oil and gas wells developed together to be abandoned together, if there is no risk to the public or the environment. This will shrink the inventory of inactive and orphaned wells, while ensuring more timely restoration of land to its original state, and prevent backlogs in site clean up.

This change is estimated to save upwards of \$584 million for industry by shifting to an outcome-based approach that is more efficient, and reduces the number of wells that need to be abandoned separately, while ensuring that robust health and safety protections remain in place.

As reported in the 2019-2020 Red Tape Reduction Annual Report, the Alberta Energy Regulator also updated the directive for Water Disposal Limits and Reporting Requirements for Thermal In Situ Oil Sands Schemes, which could yield collective costs savings of up to \$273 million for existing projects according to an estimate from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP).

A number of other initiatives have reduced regulatory burden and improved regulatory certainty for the energy industry, while supporting an outcome-based approach, including:

- Simplifying processes for oil sands lease holders by reducing the requirements for renewing or converting their leases, and removing an unnecessary step in new oil sands approvals. These changes will save companies time and resources, and reduce land disturbance.
- Streamlining requirements for the oil and gas industry's venting and flaring, which removed obsolete and duplicate requirements. This change results in less administrative burden for industry in its reporting to government.
- Creating a royalty rate for helium, allowing Alberta to become more competitive in attracting helium producers to the province.
- Lowering the deposit amount new electricity retailers need to pay, reducing the barrier to entry to the retail electricity market and paving the way for greater consumer choice and competition.

"The Alberta energy sector is the most important industry in the country. It employs hundreds of thousands of workers that develop the cleanest energy anywhere in the world. The Alberta Government's focus on red tape reduction is critical for the industry's ability to create jobs and attract capital. By making approval processes for projects more efficient, energy service contractors can hire more Albertans while operating under a strong regulatory system the public can trust. As the global demand for energy increases, Alberta is well positioned to be the world's choice for responsible energy resources."

Mark A. Scholz,
President & CEO, Canadian Association of Energy Contractors

Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas

In response to recommendations from the Oil and Gas Industry Panel to address the significant increase in water use demand for oil and gas operators, the Government of Alberta implemented a new Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations that provides direction for water use in major upstream oil and gas operations. The new policy encourages the energy industry to minimize the use of fresh water while promoting the increased use of alternative sources such as saline water, wastewater and deeper groundwater. This preserves fresh water resources and provides operators with more options for water sources used for hydraulic fracturing.

Ultimately, the new policy enables greater flexibility for operators to collaborate and share water infrastructure, leading to reduced duplication of infrastructure between operators and decreasing truck traffic through communities. This not only saves operators money that can be re-invested into other activities that support economic growth, but it reduces the environmental impact and disturbance footprint for hydraulic fracturing operations. The energy sector is the largest sector in Alberta's economy, and common sense changes like these support economic recovery by giving job creators more flexibility to operate in ways that are more efficient and environmentally sustainable.



Tristan Goodman, Explorers and Producers Association of Canada (left), Associate Minister Tanya Fir (center) and Tim McMillan, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (right) pose for a photo after participating in the Oil and Gas Industry panel meeting.

Canadian Agricultural Partnership Modernization

To support economic recovery in the agriculture sector, Alberta's government streamlined the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) grant programs and processes. Decreasing the number of programs, required forms and supporting documentation from applicants and introducing service standards to reduce application processing times will make it easier and faster for producers and food manufacturers to access funds, and enable businesses to more easily create jobs and inject money into the provincial economy.

In Alberta, the CAP represents a federal-provincial investment of \$406 million in strategic programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector. In 2020-21, the program awarded 989 grants that helped stimulate a total private sector investment of \$150 million and supported the creation of more than 750 jobs in the agriculture and agri-food processing sector.

Meat Inspection

Government amended the Meat Inspection Regulation, which outlines required operational and inspection procedures for meat facilities, to allow Alberta's livestock producers to sell an animal directly from the farm to consumers and have it slaughtered on-site for personal consumption. Additionally, provincially licensed meat facilities can now salvage and sell meat by-products for other uses such as pet food. Removing these unnecessary prohibitions against direct sales supports livestock producers by providing increased access to new markets, enhanced sale opportunities, and cost-savings—while maintaining food safety and offering consumers more choice and access to local meat.

Reducing Regulatory Burden for Job Creators

In order to support economic recovery, the Government of Alberta has reformed occupational health and safety legislation to enable innovation and competitiveness, while removing overly prescriptive requirements for businesses.

The *Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020* amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to simplify language and remove unnecessary barriers for job creators without reducing workers' safety, rights or protections. This included providing flexible requirements for health and safety committees and representatives, allowing employers to tailor the committees in ways that better fit their worksites.

The *Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020* also reversed costly changes made to the workers' compensation system in 2018 to ensure the long-term viability of the program. Approximately \$2.25 million per year will be saved by employers in the workers' compensation system by transitioning fairness reviews, appeals advisory services and medical panels from the Fair Practices Office and Medical Panels Office to other organizations, such as the Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation.

Streamlining Condominium Development

To support economic recovery in the construction and housing sectors and encourage new condominium development, in December 2020 the Alberta government amended the *New Home Buyer Protection Act* to remove the requirement for builders to complete a Building Assessment Report (BAR) for newly constructed condominiums.

BARs provided little value to condominium boards and owners, as they duplicated requirements already addressed by the *Safety Codes Act* and the *Condominium Properties Act*. Eliminating these reports will save Alberta builders and homebuyers \$2.7 million per year in costs associated with duplicate reporting on condominium development and construction. These savings also support new development by reducing overall construction costs for developers, which in turn lowers costs to new condo buyers. Removing the need to complete this report for new condominiums does not change the building's warranty coverage and high safety standards are still ensured through permits, inspections and safety codes.

Municipal Government Act

In December 2020, the Government of Alberta amended the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) as part of the *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2)* to make it easier for residential developers to move their projects forward, stimulating investment and job creation in the construction industry.

These changes created the ability for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to set firm timelines for subdivision and development in larger municipalities, where appropriate and necessary, to prevent delays and ensure residential construction projects are completed on time. The changes also removed the ability of municipalities to take additional reserve land beyond the standard amount, creating greater certainty for developers. Additionally, the amendments improve transparency by requiring municipalities to publish the information used in the calculation of off-site levies (fees paid by developers to help cover the cost of necessary infrastructure outside the project site).

Commercial Carrier Permit Reductions

On January 1, 2021 Alberta Transportation updated the Commercial Vehicle Dimension and Weight Regulation, which specifies the legal size, weight and configuration limits for commercial vehicles on Alberta roads.

By modernizing the regulation to eliminate unnecessary and outdated carrier permits and requirements, and reflect modern vehicle configurations and equipment, commercial drivers in Alberta no longer have to obtain permits for equipment that is typically allowed in most other jurisdictions.

These changes, recommended by both the Forestry and the Agriculture, Food, and Bio-Industrial Industry Panels eliminated roughly 10,000 unnecessary permits required each year, making it easier to do business in Alberta. These changes also support economic recovery by saving administrative time and approximately \$336,000 annually, while ensuring the continued safe and efficient movement of goods across the province, helping to drive economic growth for both the transportation and commercial industries.

Historical Resource Impact Assessments

To speed up project approvals while continuing to protect Alberta's valuable historic resources, the Government of Alberta established a new Historic Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA) process. All major industrial projects in Alberta—from construction to oil sands operations—are required to complete an HRIA prior to development to ensure the protection of archaeological sites, paleontological sites, historic buildings, and Indigenous traditional use sites.

After extensive engagement with industry stakeholders and the Oil and Gas Industry Panel, government implemented the streamlined HRIA approval process that employs an outcome-based approach, which provides a comprehensive overview of historic resource concerns for large projects all at once. The previous process required developers of industrial projects to submit separate HRIA approval applications for every individual component within a large project. The new approach achieves the outcomes of protecting historical resources without requiring redundant approvals, allowing developers to start construction sooner and get Albertans back to work.



Associate Minister Tanya Fir shares some of the work being done by Alberta's government to cut red tape at a Leduc, Nisku and Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce event.

Alberta Innovates – Enterprise Grant Management System

The Government of Alberta is accelerating research, innovation and entrepreneurship to help drive economic recovery and diversification in Alberta. Alberta Innovates plays a key part in achieving these objectives by providing funding, advice, connections, technical expertise and applied research services to stimulate and grow research and innovation across Alberta. In 2020-21, Alberta Innovates standardized its applications forms to make them more user-friendly by simplifying and eliminating non-essential questions, and allowing this suite of standardized application questions to be used across Alberta Innovates programs. This work was undertaken in conjunction with the implementation of an enterprise grants management system, which includes an application and reporting portal that improves the user-friendliness and transparency of the grant process for Alberta Innovates clients.

Taken together, these changes have cut the administrative burden for the innovation sector, enabling easier access to \$150 million in annual funding, while allowing Alberta entrepreneurs and researchers to spend less time on paperwork and more time on developing innovative solutions that can drive economic growth and recovery.



Improved Service Delivery

Alberta's world-class education and health systems, strong communities and high quality public services, coupled with the comparatively low cost of living, make the province an ideal place to invest and to raise a family. The Government of Alberta continues to reduce red tape to improve service delivery that supports Albertans in their daily lives by reducing regulatory and administrative burdens faced when trying to access government services.

While responding to the immediate challenges presented by the pandemic, government also continued to enhance frontline service delivery and access for Alberta's most vulnerable. Government took action to reduce reporting requirements for service providers, allowing them to spend more time serving Albertans; streamline rules to make services such as child care and adoption easier to navigate; and remove barriers for Indigenous Albertans to access their Treaty rights.

Licence Plate Stickers

Alberta has modernized the delivery of vehicle registry services by eliminating the use of licence plate stickers that mark the month and year of vehicle registration. In place of these redundant and outdated expiry stickers, in Fall 2021 Alberta will transition to high-definition reflective licence plates that are more easily scanned by automated licence plate readers, assisting law enforcement agencies using this technology to validate licence plate registration at roadside.

The move to reflective licence plates will save government about \$1.2 million per year in costs previously spent on printing, shipping and storing expiry stickers for the more than 5.5 million vehicles registered in Alberta. This common-sense change cuts red tape, aligns Alberta with other Canadian provinces, and saves taxpayers money.

Christmas Trees

In November 2020, Alberta's government removed the \$5 fee for harvesting up to three Christmas trees from Crown land for personal use. Eliminating the fee saves Albertans almost \$100,000 and make it easier for individuals to get their own Christmas trees and firewood from Alberta's 87 million acres of forested land.

In order to harvest wood for personal use from Crown land, Albertans must obtain a Personal Use Forest Products Permit. Permits can be obtained online, and ensure preservation of our forests for generations to come by keeping track of the number of trees being harvested, outlining rules to be followed and ensuring that public harvesting is done safely.

Streamlined Processes for Service Providers

To improve service delivery for vulnerable Albertans, the Alberta government streamlined contracts, grants and reporting requirements for service providers across social service ministries, such as Children's Services and Community and Social Services. These changes enable service providers to focus more effort on providing high quality services to clients rather than filling out redundant forms, applications, and reports, a key theme from the Non-Profit Industry Panel.

For example, the Government of Alberta has saved time for service providers by moving from one-year to multi-year contracts and grants for Child Advocacy Centres, organizations that provide services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and organizations that provide support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Government has also reduced reporting requirements for women's shelters, sexual assault centres, and Family and Community Support Services. These organizations can now focus on providing services rather than spending time on lengthy applications and reports.

The Government of Alberta also introduced five-year funding agreements for the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) to provide stable core funding, resulting in less administrative burden and increased capacity for the IAAW to deliver programs and services for Indigenous women.

Child Care Transformation

The new *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and associated regulation came into force on February 1, 2021, addressing the need to update outdated regulations governing child care operators. The new legislative and regulatory framework reduces administrative burden on child care business owners, operators and staff by simplifying reporting and other requirements, while creating a more flexible approach to child care programs. Key changes include reducing paperwork required for licensing, giving licensed programs more flexibility to provide care to children of different ages, allowing more flexible staff to child ratios, providing increased access to outdoor spaces, and supporting digital record keeping.

These changes allow for an increase in the amount of time operators are able to spend supporting children and increasing access to affordable, high-quality child care, while enabling more parents to be able to re-enter the workforce and continue to support their families.

Adoptions

The Government of Alberta amended legislation and associated regulations to improve access to adoption information for adult adoptees, birth parents and siblings, increase accountability for adoption agencies, and make the adoption process easier for families.

On January 1, 2021, amendments to the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* came into effect that allow for more open, consistent and transparent access to adoption information that allows families to connect and understand their family histories. This includes allowing the release of additional identifying biological background information to adult adoptees and their birth siblings, removing restrictions that made it difficult for Albertans to connect with their biological relatives if they so choose. Amendments also improve the disclosure of serious hereditary medical conditions, ensuring adopted persons have family medical information that could be lifesaving.

Amendments to the Adoption Regulation allow a licensed adoption agency to advertise profiles of prospective adoptive parents to birth families online, while protecting privacy of all parties. These changes give prospective parents a new way to share information with birth families, protect privacy, and ensure Albertans have the information they need to make the best choice for them as they navigate the adoption process.

“Both prospective adoptive parents and birth parents need to know they are in safe hands with the adoption agency they choose to represent them. These changes will help make sure Albertans have the information they need to make the best choice for them.”

Sheryl Proulx, Executive Director, Adoption Options

Elimination of the Alberta Indian Tax Exemption (AITE) Card

After engaging with First Nations leaders, government has discontinued the Alberta Indian Tax Exemption (AITE) card effective October 4, 2021. Alberta joins the other provinces in requiring only the federal Certificate of Indian Status card as identification to receive applicable tax exemptions on purchases of tobacco, fuel and accommodations on-reserve.

This responds to concerns from First Nations communities around the duplication and red tape for Indigenous peoples associated with having to apply for, and maintain, both a federal and provincial card and removes an extra layer of bureaucracy for over 100,000 Indigenous people in Alberta with Indian status, while providing improved access to Treaty rights.

“We are grateful to Minister Wilson and the Alberta government for eliminating the AITE card. We felt the old card was discriminatory and we are thankful to have an ally in the province. This upholds our treaty rights and we appreciate this step forward.”

Ken Alook, Member of Council, Bigstone Cree Nation



Digital Transformation

Moving the delivery of government programs and services online greatly improves interactions between government and citizens, saving Albertans time and effort and amplifying Alberta's advantage as a place to live and raise families. Going paperless is a global trend that makes accessing services more convenient, reduces wait times for businesses and citizens, and saves taxpayers money.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to provide Albertans with continued access to services by moving them online was greater than ever. Alberta's government responded to the challenge with digital solutions that reduced red tape and allowed Albertans and Alberta businesses to access government services quickly and safely – be it environmental approvals, processing Workers Compensation Board claims, or consulting with Indigenous communities.

The Government of Alberta remains committed to further reducing unnecessary paperwork and expediting processing times by moving more programs and services online while continuing to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of information.

Regulatory Transformation Project

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is undertaking a Regulatory Transformation Project (RTP) to reduce red tape by streamlining lengthy environmental approval processing times, and addressing application backlogs. The RTP is expected to address a number of issues identified by stakeholders—including multiple Industry Panels—around applications delays, inconsistent applications of policies and rules, and slow decision timelines.

The key component of the RTP is the creation of an integrated online system called the Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS), which will shift industry away from multiple independent and outdated information systems to one single, consolidated digital system for regulatory applications, approvals, and long-term environmental monitoring—saving industry time and money, while ensuring Alberta’s high environmental standards are maintained.

Ultimately, the DRAS improves the user experience with clear instructions and tracking of an application’s activity, making processes faster and more predictable. This modernization will help the Alberta government become a world-class regulator, increase stakeholder confidence, and help economic recovery. The first DRAS module launched in June 2021 for approvals under the *Water Act* and will be followed by sand and gravel approvals in Fall 2021, with a fully transformed environmental regulatory system by 2023 that will include grazing dispositions and *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* approvals.

Aboriginal Consultation Office (ACO) Digital Service

The ACO Digital Service is a new online system that helps reduce processing steps and timelines for consulting with Indigenous communities on industry projects that may adversely impact their continued exercise of constitutionally-protected Treaty rights and traditional land uses. The digital platform allows all participants in the consultation process (industry proponents, ACO staff, and First Nations and Métis representatives) to easily manage and view regulatory consultation file information online, and provides details on the administrative steps, submission standards, and requirements of the consultation process.

By creating a more efficient consultation process that reduces the amount of time required to submit an application by approximately 80 per cent, this digital platform will allow industry applicants and Indigenous communities to spend more time on substantive aspects of consultation, improving participation in the consultation process overall.

By March 2022, the ACO Digital Service is expected to reduce the number of applications with missing information by 50 per cent, cutting administrative costs to the Government of Alberta by an estimated \$1 million and resulting in millions of dollars of savings for industry and Indigenous communities.

Ultimately, the system will strengthen relations with Indigenous communities, increase investor confidence and contribute to economic recovery and job creation.

MyWCB App

All employers covered by the *Workers' Compensation Act* must maintain an account with Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and pay premiums to help fund the workers' compensation system, protecting employers and workers against the impacts of workplace accidents and injuries. In December 2020, the Workers' Compensation Board launched the new MyWCB employer app to help businesses check the balance on their accounts, make payments, update payroll, and change to a monthly payment installment plan by signing up for pre-authorized debit. In 2020, WCB processed over 3.6 million transactions with notices delivered electronically rather than by mail, saving over \$2 million in postage costs for WCB-Alberta.

Nearly 6,000 employers have signed up for the MyWCB employer mobile app since it launched, with 96 per cent of current users being associated with small businesses. These employers have made more than 3,100 WCB payments to date through the MyWCB employer app, saving them a trip to the bank or from taking time out of their day to call WCB to make payments, allowing them to focus their time on growing their business instead.

There has also been continued progress on the MyWCB app for workers. In May 2021, WCB released a new electronic injury reporting feature that enables workers to report their injuries to the WCB quickly and easily, allowing them to focus on their recovery. In turn, the WCB can provide even faster access to the treatment supports and wage loss benefits that injured workers need. Since its release, more than 1,000 workers have submitted injury reports through the MyWCB worker mobile app.



Associate Minister Tanya Fir (left) and MLA Joseph Schow (right) visiting the Vulcan Trek Station to meet with tourism operators.

Online Registry Services

On June 27, 2021—in response to recommendations of the Small Business Industry Panel—Alberta expanded the number of registry products available online, no longer requiring Albertans to travel to a registry office. Albertans can now conveniently order specialty licence plates, commercial and farm vehicle registration renewals, in-transit permits, and duplicate vehicle registration certificates online.

Albertans can also conveniently download their vehicle registration certificates and in-transit permits directly through MyAlberta eServices after they have been purchased.

The province is committed to the continued modernization of online government systems and services to eliminate outdated or inefficient processes, including the addition of more online registry services in Fall 2021, such as driver abstracts and vehicle information reports.

Supports for Seniors

In March 2021, Government introduced a Seniors Financial Assistance (SFA) Online Services platform providing a “one-stop shop” for applicants, making it easier and faster for seniors to apply to programs. This fast, easy and secure online application enrolls seniors into the Alberta Seniors Benefit, Special Needs Assistance for Seniors, and Alberta Health’s dental, optical, and prescription drug coverage programs. Approximately 2,600 Albertans have benefited from this digital transformation in the first three months since implementation. Based on uptake to date, seniors will likely continue to increase their usage of online services for seniors.

Government also introduced the Collaborative Online Resource and Education Alberta (CORE) platform in partnership with the community-based seniors serving (CBSS) sector leadership. CORE Alberta is a centralized online hub for CBSS and allied organizations in Alberta. CORE Alberta has been successful in driving efficiency, innovation, and improvement in the flow of information from the Government of Alberta to the CBSS sector, and has benefited Alberta seniors through enhanced community-based service delivery, particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Performance Metrics

Performance Indicator: CFIB Red Tape Rating

| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Alberta grade | F | F | F | B- | A |

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) is a leading advocate for regulatory reform and reducing red tape. Each year, it releases a report card that grades provinces on their RTR performance. In 2021, the CFIB recognized Alberta as the most improved province, increasing Alberta's grade to an "A" for the first time in the 11 year history of the Report Card.

Performance Measure: One-Third Reduction of Regulatory Requirements (by fiscal year)

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| Target | 5% | 12% | 20% | 33% | Net Zero Increase |
| Result | 5% | 15.7 % | | | |

In February 2020, Alberta's government completed a count of all regulatory requirements that existed in its statutes, regulations, policies and forms as of May 1, 2019, in order to establish a baseline to measure its progress in reducing red tape. Government has set cumulative fiscal-year targets of a five per cent reduction in 2019-20, 12 per cent reduction in 2020-21, and 20 per cent reduction in 2021-22, supporting the final reduction target of 33 per cent in 2022-23.

As of the end of fiscal 2020-21, government reported a cumulative reduction of 15.7 per cent of regulatory requirements from the May 1, 2019 baseline, and further reductions were achieved between March 31 and June 30, 2021, for a total reduction of 118,676 regulatory requirements (or 17.8 per cent).

Government remains committed to achieving its target of a 33 per cent reduction by the end of fiscal 2022-23. Once this target has been reached, government will implement an offset requirement that ensures the regulatory burden does not increase once again.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Performance Measure: Direct Cost Savings

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | Cumulative Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| Dollars Saved | \$476 million | \$722 million | \$1.2 Billion |

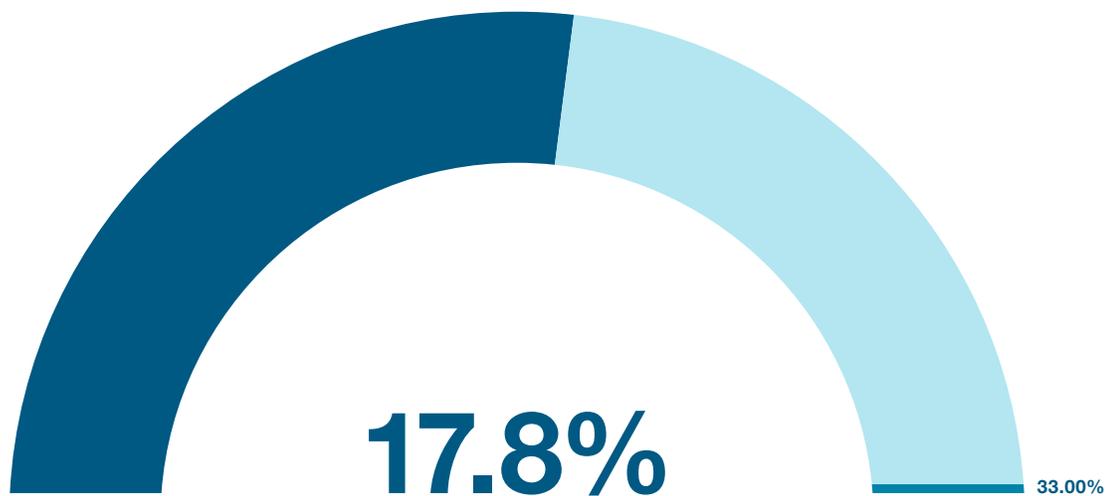
High cost of government regulation is a major form of red tape. Reducing the financial burden of complying with government requirements allows job creators to direct more money to investment and job creation.

To date, government's RTR initiatives have produced at least \$1.2 billion in direct cost savings for Alberta's job creators and government. This includes \$476 million in savings identified in the 2019-2020 RTR Annual Report, and an additional \$722 million in 2020-21. These figures represent conservative estimates, which may be adjusted in future reports, as a more comprehensive approach to measuring cost savings to stakeholders is implemented.

Appendix: Government of Alberta Count of Regulatory Requirements: An Overview

Chart 1.
Overall Reduction Progress (as of June 30, 2021)

As of June 30, 2021, the Government of Alberta has reduced 118,676 regulatory requirements, resulting in a 17.8 per cent reduction from the baseline count of 666,513 regulatory requirements (as of May 1, 2019), which equates to four requirements eliminated for each one added.



666,513
Baseline count

-118,676
Net change

547,837
Current count

-17.8%
Percent change

4:1
Reduction to added ratio

Chart 2.
Baseline Count Composition by Regulatory Instrument

The chart highlights the proportion of regulatory requirements found in each of the four types of regulatory instruments that comprise Alberta’s baseline count (statutes, regulations, policies and forms).

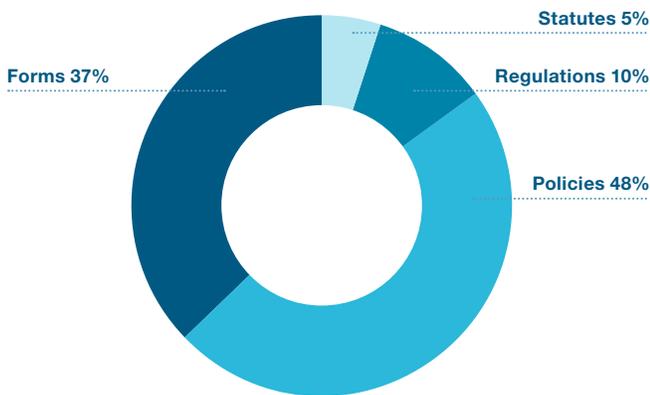
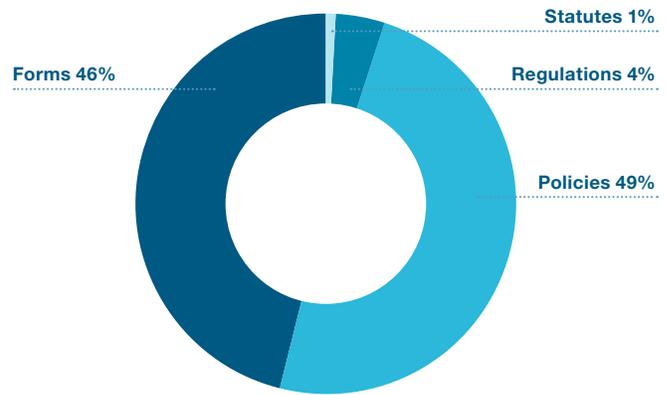


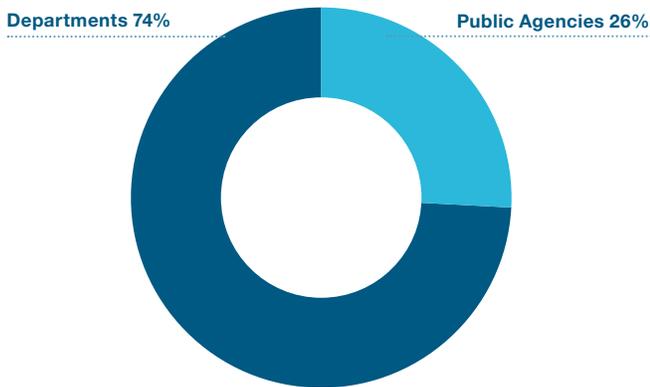
Chart 3.
Regulatory Requirement Reductions by Regulatory Instrument (as of June 30, 2021)

The chart highlights the composition of the Alberta Government’s total reductions by the type of regulatory instrument (statutes, regulations, policies and forms), showing that the majority of reductions (49 per cent) have occurred in policies, followed by forms (46 per cent), regulations (four per cent) and statutes (one per cent), roughly proportionate to their respective share of the baseline count.



**Chart 4.
Baseline Count Composition: Departments and Public Agencies**

Most Government of Alberta ministries consist of the department and public agencies, boards and commissions that report to the Minister. Policies and forms owned by public agencies that fall under the criteria of the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (about 50 per cent of all agencies) are in scope for the baseline count. The chart below highlights the share of the baseline count that belongs to Government of Alberta departments and public agencies, respectively.



**Chart 5.
Regulatory Requirement Reductions: Departments and Public Agencies (as of June 30, 2021)**

The chart highlights the share of the total government reductions achieved by Government of Alberta departments and public agencies, respectively, that are in scope for the baseline count. The data reflects that agencies have slightly outperformed departments, as their share of reductions exceeds their share of the baseline.

