
Annual report Red tape reduction 2019–2020

Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction



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Message from Associate Minister



For the first time in Alberta's history, our province has made red tape reduction a top priority.

Done right, it will boost our economy, get Albertans back to work and make life better in our province. We need this now, more than ever.

I am very pleased to be able to present our first annual red tape reduction report, a legislative requirement, but more importantly a promise to be open and transparent about our progress. We have made significant steps during our first year and completed initiatives across all of government.

In January 2020, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) awarded Alberta's government with a B minus in its 2019 report card. This is our highest grade ever and a big jump from the previous years of failing grades. I look forward to working with CFIB again in the new year, as we once again declare Red Tape Reduction Awareness Week. We will not rest until we move to a grade of A, because that means Albertans will be able to get back to work.

This report provides an overview of cross-government progress towards:

- Getting out of the way of our job creators to foster economic growth.
- Digital transformation; bringing government into the 21st century.
- Reducing costs and saving time for everyday Albertans.

It provides examples of recent projects that have improved access to government, saved time and money for businesses, or leveraged innovation to improve service delivery. Included is a measure of all the regulatory requirements that exist in Alberta as of June 30, 2020, and the reduction we have achieved. The baseline count will provide us the target of where we need to be at the end of this four-year term. We are committed to cutting red tape by 33 per cent, and we will not rest until we reach that goal.

Red tape reduction aims to identify, reduce and eliminate processes that cause regulatory and administrative burdens for all Albertans. This work is undertaken with the goal of implementing change that promotes job creation, innovation and competitiveness; facilitates a strong and attractive investment climate in Alberta; and preserves and promotes public safety.

We are just getting started, but I'm pleased to present to you what we have done so far.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Hunter'.

Grant Hunter

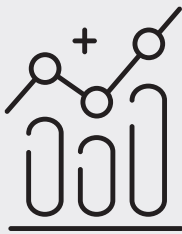
Associate Minister for Red Tape Reduction

No one likes red tape. It deprives Albertans of precious time and money. By cutting red tape, we are decluttering the lives of our job creators and innovators so they can continue to do what they do best—create jobs and boost the economy.

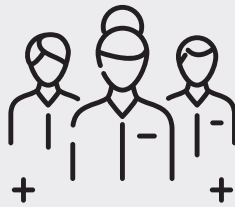
Grant Hunter, Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction



Red tape reduction success



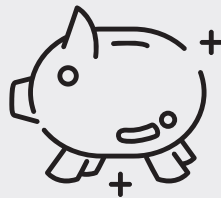
Increased investment



Job creation



Improved service delivery



Saved time and money



Reduced costs

Regulatory burden and red tape

Regulatory burden is the combined impact of obligations imposed by government rules and regulations that require compliance from citizens, businesses and organizations in Alberta. While government regulation is necessary to protect public health, safety and security, ensure fiscal or environmental accountability, or achieve other public policy goals, excessive regulation can lead to red tape—stifling business growth and resulting in lost time and money due to complying with regulatory or administrative requirements.

Red tape may be present if one or more of the following exist:

- over-regulation
- inefficient administrative processes
- inflexible enforcement
- inequitable or unfair regulation
- cross-jurisdictional misalignment

Red tape is prevalent at all levels of government and all red tape has the same impact: it chases away investment that could have produced jobs. An example is the federal Bill C-69, which changes how major infrastructure projects are reviewed and approved in Canada, layering on overregulated review processes, and making it extremely difficult to approve major projects, such as pipelines that will benefit Albertans and Canadians.

The CFIB estimated that regulation from all levels of government cost Canadian businesses \$36 billion in 2017, with red tape accounting for \$10 billion of that total. Red tape hits small businesses particularly hard. In 2017, businesses with fewer than five employees spent 178 hours per employee complying with government regulations, while those with 100 or more employees only spent 20 hours per employee (CFIB, *The Cost of Government Regulation on Canadian Businesses*, Jan. 2018).

A recent report from Canada's Economic Strategy Tables concluded that inefficiency stifles innovation, makes things more expensive, drives away investment and slows down projects, ultimately eroding trust between governments and industry.

That same report points to Norway as a country with the best practices for fast tracking projects for regulatory approval when certain criteria are met, and to New Zealand for streamlining regulations and regularly reviewing their regulatory regime for performance (Canada's Economic Strategy Tables, *The Innovation and Competitiveness Imperative: Seizing Opportunities for Growth*, Sept. 2018).

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Outcome-based regulation focuses on achieving a measurable result, while process-based regulation layers on assessment and control processes that must be undertaken, documented and audited.
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We know that long government processes, even if they are efficient, do not always equal better protection for Albertans, which is why we are moving to an outcome-based approach to regulating as opposed to a process-based approach. Long and inefficient government approval processes have been a particular challenge for some of Alberta's major sectors. In 2019, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) estimated that Alberta oil sands projects proposed between 2015 and 2019 experienced delays in Cabinet approval of 30 to 329 days (median delay of 211.7 days), the costs of which ranged between \$0.8 million to \$25.5 million (median cost of \$4 million).

Approvals under the *Water Act*, which supports the conservation and management of water in Alberta by establishing requirements for responsible water use, is an example of good regulation that causes red tape in the form of unintended consequences, in this case, for municipalities. Before the construction of a road or bridge can begin, Alberta municipalities must receive government approval under the *Water Act*, which can take months or years. This makes it difficult for municipalities to hire and retain contractors in advance of the project, introduces uncertainty into long-term capital planning and compromises the ability of municipalities' to adequately support local job creation and economic activity.

Alberta's government has taken action to address these challenges, while also continuing to preserve public safety and security, a cornerstone of the government's commitment to Albertans.



Reducing Alberta's regulatory burden

The baseline count

Definition

Between October 2019 and February 2020, all ministries counted the number of regulatory requirements that existed as of May 1, 2019, in their statutes, regulations, policies and forms. A regulatory requirement is any action that a citizen, business or government must take to access government services or programs, carry out business or pursue legislated privileges. The resulting inventory of regulatory requirements represents the Government of Alberta's baseline count, which is a key benchmark used to quantify the regulatory burden imposed on citizens, job creators and other stakeholders. Reduction of the baseline count is used to measure the government's progress towards implementing the platform commitment to cut red tape by one-third.

As a whole, Alberta's government has a baseline count of 670,977 regulatory requirements (Alberta Health Services' baseline count is still underway and is expected to be completed in spring 2021).

Progress to Date

Between May 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, the government has reduced a total of 52,470 requirements and added 10,932 requirements related to the implementation of platform commitments, for a resulting net reduction of 41,538 requirements, or 6.19 per cent against the baseline.

Once the entire one-third reduction target has been achieved, the government will implement a 'one-in / one-out' rule requiring ministries to identify at least one offsetting regulation for every new regulation created.

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Reducing Alberta's regulatory burden
The baseline count

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670,977

5 to 1

Reduction to added
regulation ratio

6.19%

Net reduction against
the baseline

52,470

Total requirements
reduced

Red tape reduction initiatives

Alberta's government has completed hundreds of red tape reduction initiatives between June 2019 and June 2020. More than half are supported by public engagement through the Cut Red Tape website, what we heard from industry panels, stakeholder submissions and delivering on platform commitments. This report highlights 69 initiatives, some of which aim to make life easier for all Albertans, while others directly result in cost savings. Current efforts have produced more than \$476 million in savings for Alberta's job creators and government.

Getting out of the way of our job creators to foster economic growth

Now more than ever, it's important for government to clear the way of unnecessary burdens placed on our job creators. The following examples from the past year demonstrate how cutting red tape helps the private sector create jobs and drive economic growth in Alberta.

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Now more than ever, it's important for government to clear the way of unnecessary burdens placed on our job creators.

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Employment Standards and Labour Relations Code amendments

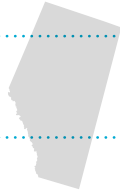
Legislative amendments to the *Employment Standards Code* and *Labour Relations Code* are designed to reduce regulatory burden on employers.

The *Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act* supports economic recovery and gets Albertans back to work. The Act provides employees and employers with clearer and more transparent rules promoting fairness and productivity, including more clarity about rest periods and temporary layoff notices. This legislation could save job creators an estimated \$100 million per year by reducing red tape from daily operations—helping them keep their doors open—and providing jobs for hard-working Albertans.

Alberta Construction Association applauds the Government of Alberta for introducing greater flexibility and reduced red tape in averaging agreements, hours of work, and temporary layoffs. Changes to these employment standards support seasonal, remote, project-based construction jobs, while maintaining fairness in the workplace.

Frederick Vine, Chairman, Alberta Construction Association

Red tape reduction efforts:
more than \$476 million saved so far.



Premier Jason Kenney and Associate Minister Grant Hunter receive red tape report card grade from Laura Jones, Vice-President, Canadian Federation of Independent Business.



Associate Minister Grant Hunter accepts Golden Scissors Award from Laura Jones, Vice-President, and Annie Dormuth, Director of Provincial Affairs, Alberta, of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for progress in cutting red tape.

Oil Sands Conservation Act

Alberta Energy removed the redundant requirement for Cabinet approval of oil sands schemes or operations above 2,000 barrels per day production capacity prior to approval by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER). The amendments eliminate unnecessary delays in the oil sands approval process. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) estimates this will save between \$0.8 million and \$25.5 million.

The oil and natural gas industry continuously strives to improve performance and efficiency and we are happy to see the province of Alberta committed to this goal as well through red tape reduction. Streamlining project applications and approval timelines will support industry's recovery and job creation efforts, while providing greater certainty to attract investment back to the sector.

Tim McMillan, President and CEO, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction

The Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) system came into force on January 1, 2020, replacing the Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation (CCIR). The province estimates that TIER will achieve similar emissions reductions as the CCIR, but will save Alberta's job creators an estimated \$300 million annually relative to the previous provincial regulatory system.

TIER also includes provisions that allow tens of thousands of smaller conventional oil and gas facilities to voluntarily enter the regulatory system. This helps to achieve emissions reductions, while protecting the conventional oil and gas industry from the federal carbon tax.

Developing and implementing the *Farm Freedom and Safety Act*

Following extensive consultation to address the unique needs of the Alberta farm and ranch sector, Labour and Immigration developed the *Farm Freedom and Safety Act*. Provisions in the Act offer the farm and ranch sector greater flexibility, enhanced red tape reduction of undue regulatory burden and complexity, and less prescriptive language.

This enables farm businesses to become more cost-competitive and improves the sector's ability to create jobs and attract skilled workers through better wages.



Associate Minister Grant Hunter joins Minister Devin Dreeshen as they announce the introduction of the *Farm Freedom and Safety Act*.

Specifically, these amendments:

- Allowed employers to have choice when it comes to workplace insurance.
- Removed the applicability of the *Labour Relations Code* to farm and ranch operations.
- Recognized that a farm is unlike other businesses, and that farmers and ranchers require flexibility in meeting employment standards.
- Included nursery, greenhouse, mushroom and sod operations in the definition of farm and ranch for employment standards, giving them more flexibility.

Farmers asked for these changes to give us the flexibility to run our businesses and build a program collectively that works for everybody. This government has really listened to and responded to our concerns. Modern farms are highly safety-conscious operations and we take care of our farm workers like they are family.

Rhonda Mulligan, Tri M Farms

In terms of the overall shape of the industry, consultation has been a critical feature of the new government for Bill 6 and the *Farm Freedom and Safety Act*. We didn't have that under the previous government in 2015 when those changes were rolled out. We are very encouraged and optimistic about the future shape of farm safety legislation in Alberta.

Tom Steve, General Manager, Alberta Wheat and Barley Commission

Eliminating outdated permits

These limits had not been updated in nearly 20 years.

The Commercial Vehicle Dimension and Weight Regulation specifies the legal size, weight and configuration limits for commercial vehicles on Alberta roads. These limits had not been updated in nearly 20 years and do not reflect modern vehicle configurations and equipment.

As a result, commercial drivers in Alberta had to obtain permits for standard equipment that is allowed in most other jurisdictions, including wildlife bumpers, aerodynamic devices and wide load signs. Alberta Transportation routinely grants these permits for standard equipment when they are requested.

Alberta Transportation updated the regulation to eliminate more than 15,000 outdated provincial commercial carrier permits without affecting safety on Alberta roads.

We applaud the Alberta government for the reduction of red tape policies impacting carriers like Rosenau, who bring innovative solutions to lessen the environmental footprint while improving on-road safety and efficiency. These changes are welcome and deliver consistency between provincial and municipal roadways, creating an environment of effective trade corridors for the industry driving the Alberta economy.

Jude Groves, Director, Safety & Training with Rosenau Transport Ltd.

Trucking is an essential service, and demand is growing as commerce shifts online. The safe and efficient movement of goods across our province is critical to Alberta's economic recovery. These changes reflect the types of innovation that are driving the future of the transportation industry. Ensuring regulations keep pace with advances in technology, training, and standard business practices makes the commercial trucking industry more resilient and more efficient.

Chris Nash, President, Alberta Motor Transport Association

The Government of Alberta's bold decision to eliminate more than 10,000 commercial carrier permits effective January 1, 2021 not only supports the trucking industry, who has been such an integral part of keeping our country moving during the pandemic, but also contributes to Alberta's broader goals on sustainability and emission reduction. We appreciate their attentiveness to this issue and applaud them for moving these regulatory changes forward. Alberta truckers will be at a disadvantage without this change to eliminate barriers to a new generation of wide-base tires.

Andrew Mutch, President, Michelin North America (Canada) Inc.

Oil and gas equipment safety verification

Oil and gas companies prefer to internally manage the risks associated with some non-pressurized legacy oil and gas equipment in an effort to save time and money, while adhering to the intent of prescriptive code requirements.

The Government of Alberta is satisfied that the industry has acceptable quality assurance programs in place to manage the risks associated with the equipment in question.

A variance to the Gas Code Regulation was issued to provide an additional option for oil and gas companies to meet code requirements. They can now use a professional engineer to verify the safety of their equipment using the professional association's authentication standards.

This change maintains safety standards, while reducing considerable time and cost that industry estimates to be up to \$20 million initially, and then \$2.5 million annually.

CAPP supports action that reduces red tape while maintaining the industry's high health, safety, and environment standards. Red tape reduction efforts such as this can result in significant efficiencies and cost savings, which is appreciated by industry in these challenging times and increases Alberta's attractiveness to investors in the future.

Tim McMillan, President and CEO, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Proponent guide to First Nations and Métis settlement consultation procedures

Industry proponents wanting to develop public lands needed more clarity and a streamlined process to help them understand their role when they have a legal duty to consult Indigenous communities. Alberta's government cut unneeded requirements in the consultation process, making it more cost-effective to run and efficient for proponents and Indigenous communities alike. This will improve the consultation process on thousands of submissions for natural resource development activities each year.

The updated guide to support the process helps in these ways:

- Explains the application process in a more straightforward way, so industry and Indigenous communities have more certainty about moving development projects forward.
- Improves the information that industry proponents include in natural resource development applications and reduces errors in those applications. This change saves time and money.
- Ensures the Aboriginal Consultation Office can better respond to industry needs, while increasing the number of applications they process.
- Moves proposed projects to the development phase more quickly.

The updated guide was responsive to about 50 per cent of total red tape reduction submissions for Indigenous Relations.

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Indigenous Relations was very proud to lead all ministries in red tape reduction.
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Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction Grant Hunter presents Indigenous Relations Minister Rick Wilson an award for being the first department to reduce red tape by one-third.

Indigenous Relations always tries to improve how we consult with Indigenous communities on Crown land developments that could negatively affect their Treaty rights or harvesting activities. For us, finding ways to cut red tape has made the process more clear for industry, Indigenous communities and even within government. Indigenous Relations was very proud to lead all ministries in Red Tape Reduction. That hard work pays off in better communications and faster development approvals that keep people in Alberta working.

Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations

These changes should help make consultation more efficient. We believe it will also help us be better prepared when working with Indigenous Peoples on important matters such as treaty or Aboriginal rights and harvesting and cultural practices. We want a process that benefits everyone.

Al Reid, Executive Vice-President, Stakeholder Engagement, Safety, Legal & General Counsel, Cenovus Energy Inc.

Liquor modernization

Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) made the following changes to modernize liquor laws:

- Changed the calculation for the small manufacturer threshold for spirits from total hectolitres of production to a calculation based on litres of absolute alcohol. This change supports manufacturers in producing different lines of spirits up to a threshold, while maintaining their designation as small manufacturers.
- Amended AGLC policy to enable manufacturers to blend or flavour products in any ratio. The requirement for a maximum 20 per cent allowance of blended or flavoured product for Alberta liquor manufacturers was removed. This policy change provides manufacturers with new revenue streams and accommodates more latitude in producing innovative products. It also puts them in a better position to respond to market trends.
- Select day-use area picnic sites now permit liquor consumption from 11:00a.m. to 9:00p.m.
- Created a new provision enabling restaurants and bars (Class A licensees) to sell liquor for consumption off the licensed premises.
- Amended policies to allow small liquor manufacturers to sell their products at a wider range of artisan markets.
- Amended policies to enable restaurants and bars to sell liquor on patios not directly attached to the licensed premises.
- Rescinded the May long weekend liquor ban at eight provincial parks.

These changes provide small liquor manufacturers, retailers, bars and restaurants more flexibility and opportunities to grow their businesses and create jobs. They also give responsible Albertans more options when choosing to purchase or consume alcohol.

We have been working with AGLC and its industry partners to cut red tape and allow for business development in the province. There is great work being done and we will continue to drive forward on improvements. These changes are increasing innovation in the industry, while continuing to maintain a socially responsible regulatory environment.

Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance

Our members are pleased to see more improvements and look forward to continuing to work in cooperation with AGLC and the province on Alberta's ongoing modernization of liquor laws. This is why Alberta got top marks in our Raise the Bar Report.

Mark von Schellwitz, Vice-President, Western Canada, Restaurants Canada

Looking forward to the Regulatory Assurance Framework

A well functioning regulatory system is key to the province's economic success. Alberta Environment and Parks has launched a major project to fully transform Alberta's environmental regulatory system. This transformation will address application backlogs, increase efficiency and transparency, and support economic development.

By 2022, a fully transformed environmental regulatory system will be fair and predictable, and will use common sense to safeguard Alberta's air, land, water and biodiversity. It will inspire investor confidence that sustainable activity on Alberta's land base will not be bogged down by unnecessary red tape.

Key elements of Alberta's environmental regulatory system transformation include:

- Shifting from a rules-based system to an outcomes and risk-based approach.
- Ensuring environmental outcomes are met in real time, instead of trying to minimize environmental risk in the application stage.
- A digital application system that clearly outlines application requirements and prevents submission of incomplete applications, enables application tracking, and provides government with a date to compare against service standards.

Our pursuit of regulatory excellence reflects the need for modernized and streamlined improvements to project application processes, monitoring, compliance and closure to better serve Albertans, our environment and our economy.

Digital transformation; bringing government into the 21st century

Accessing government services should be easy.

We're working hard to cut red tape in order to deliver services efficiently and in ways that are modern and convenient. The following examples show our progress on this over the last year.

Streamlining child care subsidy application

Alberta's government launched a new user-friendly online childcare subsidy application that can be accessed easily on any computer, tablet or smartphone. The application is user friendly, eliminates paper submissions and reduces emails and phone calls. It also allows staff to focus on supporting children and families, and spend less time processing paperwork and managing the previous system's commonly occurring technical issues.

For example, in 2018 Children's Services received more than 95,000 paper submissions and documents, and fielded an estimated 87,000 calls from parents needing support and assistance with the old application system or with their paper application.

Overall, replacing paper forms and phone calls with an up-to-date, easy-to-use online system will save Alberta taxpayers approximately \$1.1 million per year.



Associate Minister Grant Hunter joins Minister Rebecca Schulz and Edmonton parents to launch the new online childcare subsidy application.

Workers' Compensation Board electronic funds transfer

During COVID-19, the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) took the opportunity to reintroduce a number of paperless options to clients, worked with key groups to reduce their reliance on paper and developed processes to share information virtually. This approach offers many benefits including clients getting timely information and WCB reducing its environmental and financial impact.

An early but important step in this plan was to encourage workers and health care providers to sign up for electronic funds transfer rather than receiving a cheque. From March 1, 2020, to July 28, 2020, more than 5,682 new workers and 476 providers signed up for direct deposit, allowing them to get their money quicker, while reducing WCB's printing and mail load by over 50,000 cheques per year.

These changes are projected to save the WCB more than \$320,000 annually.

Electronic loan process for Alberta student loan agreements

Every year, about 100,000 students apply for Alberta student loans, 40,000 of whom are new and are required to sign loan agreements. The Alberta government's new electronic loan process means students won't have to fill out paper agreements and take them to a Canada Post office to be validated, signed and mailed-in for processing. It will also save about \$400,000 in tax dollars each year.

Alberta Students Executive Council supports the move to a modern advanced education system. The shift to an online application process will increase access and reduce the administrative burden placed on students as they apply for Alberta student loans.

Emmanuel Barker, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, Alberta Students Executive Council

Electronic pink cards

The Superintendent of Insurance now recognizes electronic proof of insurance, in addition to physical pink cards. For the 69 insurers who actively write automobile insurance policies in Alberta, the pink card was often the only piece of paper that an insurer was required to send by mail.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this helped insurers to provide necessary documents to their clients in a timely manner, without running the potential risks associated with fully staffing a mail room.



Associate Minister Grant Hunter announces a red tape reduction initiative with Celyeste Power, Western Insurance Bureau of Canada, Rob Jesso, Alberta Motor Association Insurance Company and George Hodgson, Insurance Brokers Association of Alberta.

Reducing costs and saving time for everyday Albertans

Making life easier for Albertans is a key focus of red tape reduction.

We are looking at numerous government programs and services to make sure they're as efficient as possible. We are also looking at non-government agencies that serve Albertans to make sure they aren't weighed down by red tape. Below are some of the highlights from the past year.

Changing from annual to multi-year grant funding

Granting ministries have transitioned from single-year grant agreements to multi-year agreements, reducing administrative workloads and stabilizing funding. This reduces paperwork, allowing organizations to focus on delivering programs and services, rather than grant administration and reporting.

New K to 12 education funding model

Alberta Education updated the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education funding model for the first time in 15 years to improve funding and accountability, and to help Albertans feel confident that the education system is meeting the needs of students. In the fall of 2019, the province met with all public, separate, charter and Francophone school authorities, along with other education partners, to discuss improvements in the way funding flows to school authorities. Overall, school authorities wanted more predictability in their funding so they could better plan for each school year, more flexibility in how they spend provincial dollars based on their own needs in their communities, and reductions in provincial red tape.

The new K to 12 education funding model:

- Streamlines operations and directs more dollars to each school authority. In the 2020-21 school year, every single division will see an increase in operational funding.
- Simplifies the number of grants from 36 to 15 to give more flexibility to school authorities to determine how best to invest taxpayer dollars.
- Standardizes administrative and governance spending to maximize dollars for classrooms.
- Allows more flexibility in how school authorities spend provincial dollars based on their school and community needs.

The updated K to 12 education funding model has resulted in a reduction of over 1,000 regulatory requirements, and positively impacts more than 200 authorities in over 2,000 schools across the province.

We appreciate that the government considered input from the education system as they developed the new funding model. This new model will reduce some of the red tape associated with accessing certain grants. It will also give school boards the ability to better predict the amount of funding they will receive in future years within the new, simplified model.

Rod Steeves, 2019-20 President, Association of School Business Officials of Alberta

The reduction of red tape afforded by the new funding model has helped reduce the complexity and workload involved in providing extensive and repetitious data, which in turn, allows our teachers to focus on what is most important—our students.

Mary Martin, Board Chair, Calgary Catholic School District

Assignment of benefit project – improving coordination with employment insurance

In the past year, Community and Social Services implemented a new pilot project in the Northeast Region to simplify the Assignment of Benefits process by eliminating the duplication of benefits between Income Support and Employment Insurance. The reduction of workload complexity will lead to time savings for both Albertans and government staff. This change will also have a positive impact on the amount of recovered funds, as regular points of error will be eliminated. A provincial roll-out of the project is planned for 2020-21.

Looking forward to the Justice Transformation Initiative (JTI)

Alberta is adopting a new approach to deal with first-time impaired drivers and many other regulatory contraventions. With the passage of Bill 21, the *Provincial Administrative Procedures Act*, Alberta has created a process that can free up critical justice resources, improve our ability to regulate priority concerns and improve accessibility and ease of use for all Albertans. This model allows for streamlined administrative penalties to be issued for matters that do not require criminal arrest, trials or potential incarceration.

For matters best dealt with by fines and other regulatory consequences, these new penalties are a proven alternative to the criminal model. To adjudicate disputes of these penalties, a new branch called SafeRoads Alberta has been created to resolve all disputes of impaired and traffic-related administrative penalties within 30 days of their issuance. Phase 1 of JTI will divert most first-time impaired drivers away from the criminal system and instead apply some of the strongest regulatory consequences found anywhere in Canada.

This approach has been proven to save lives in British Columbia, while at the same time reducing the impact of impaired driving on their justice system. The new model is also fully modernized, replacing personal appearances in Alberta's courthouses with a new, simple, fast and fair online process that can be accessed 24/7 and without specialized assistance. The initiative will lower the amount of impaired driving offences entering the criminal justice system by an estimated 75 per cent. It will also reduce police investigation and document time, and lower wait times for reviews of these matters from over five months before the Alberta Transportation Safety Board to 30 days with SafeRoads Alberta.

Mitigating red tape during COVID-19

Alberta's government took action to simplify processes and accelerate supports that assist Alberta businesses through the COVID-19 health crisis and into the economic recovery and relaunch phases.

In June 2020, Jobs, Economy and Innovation (JEI) launched the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant to ease costs faced by businesses and non-profits as they got back to work. The grant was designed to minimize red tape implications on business. Highlights of this program include:

- Program design and launch within three weeks.
- 75 per cent of applications processed and paid automatically within 10 days.
- Simplified application process requiring minimal input from applicants.
- Since the launch, the program processed more than 14,000 payments, benefitting organizations that employ nearly 136,000 workers.

The Biz Connect service was also launched to support businesses in their safe re-openings. Biz Connect removes layers of approvals to provide accurate information in a timely manner. To date, Biz Connect responded to over 7,500 inquiries, serving as a single point of entry for businesses seeking information.

What we heard

I was pleased to learn of the government's priority to establish a panel to address red tape in the non-profit sector. I look forward to working with a dedicated group that will come up with practical and constructive solutions for community organizations in Alberta. Cutting red tape for non-profits will lead to positive change across our province.

David Mitchell, President and CEO, Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

I am honoured to chair a red tape reduction industry panel. This is a critical time in our province's history to ensure that our regulatory framework is nimble and efficient while meeting the needs of all Albertans. Alberta businesses, industries, charities and non-profits are all facing unprecedented challenges and I look forward to working with the panel members and the government to ensure that Albertans are best positioned to be competitive now and into the future. As someone who has spent my entire career advising entrepreneurs, businesses and organizations of all types, from small towns to big cities, from the north to the south, I am truly excited to be involved in the improvements we can make, together.

Kim Drever, Regional Tax Leader, MNP

Public engagement

As part of the government's commitment to cutting red tape (CutRedTape.alberta.ca) an online submission form and dedicated email (cutredtape@gov.ab.ca) was launched. Using the online submission form or email, Albertans, businesses and organizations can submit ideas to the government. This input has helped government departments set priorities, gather input on areas of highest impact to Albertans, and focus on initiatives that directly respond to public and stakeholder concerns. The Government of Alberta received over 6,300 submissions.

Alberta received over 6,300 submissions.

- The majority of submissions from the public related to speeding up approvals and issues related to social services and supports.
- From industry and business, submissions focused on how to enable economic growth, improve government services through digital transformation and how to save time and money.

Industry-focused engagement

Alberta's government launched nine industry panels to assist in identifying unnecessary red tape in key industries of the economy. The panels include leaders from each sector who have worked to support the government's plan to cut red tape by one-third.

These advisory panels provide input directly to the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction and relevant government departments. Each panel's mandate is to:

- Identify areas of greatest regulatory and administrative burden in the applicable sector, with a focus on changes that will create the most jobs and economic growth.
- Provide ideas and advice for regulatory and administrative streamlining and red tape reduction.
- Provide feedback on proposed government policies, processes and actions.
- Provide feedback on progress updates provided by government regarding implementation efforts.
- Identify sector-government actions related to regulatory and administrative streamlining, potential deregulation opportunities to stimulate economic growth and alternate service delivery models.

To date, the panels have provided approximately 500 recommendations for cutting red tape.

Industry panels continue to meet semi-annually at a minimum with regular reporting to the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

The panels are:

Oil and gas

Tourism and hospitality

Small business

Agriculture, agri-food, and bio-industrial

Forestry

Construction

Chemical manufacturing

Industrial manufacturing

Non-profit

Oil and gas

Panel representatives:

- Canadian Energy Pipeline Association
- Pembina Pipeline Corporation
- The Explorers and Producers Association of Canada
- Petroleum Services Association of Canada
- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
- Repsol
- Perpetual Energy Inc.
- Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors
- Birchcliff Energy

Tourism and hospitality

Panel representatives:

- Alberta Craft Distilleries Association
- Alberta Small Brewers Association
- Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association
- Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association
- Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
- Convenience Industry Council of Canada
- Indigenous Tourism Association Canada/Indigenous Tourism Alberta
- Alberta Charitable Casino Operators
- Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment
- WestJet
- Tourism Industry Association of Alberta
- Pure Canadian Gaming
- Tourism Calgary

Small business

Panel representatives:

- MNP
- Barre Body Studio
- Widnowski's Sausage
- Alberta Indian Investment Corporation
- Business Link
- Fresno Bros.
- Landmark Cinemas
- Jori International
- LSM Group of Companies

Agriculture, agri-food, and bio-industrial

Panel representatives:

- Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association/ Kasko Cattle
- CL Ranches/ Calgary Stampede
- Alberta Food Processors Association
- Alberta Canola Producers Commission
- Alberta Chicken Producers
- Alberta Forage Industry Network
- Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association
- Potato Growers of Alberta
- Alberta Vegetable Growers
- Julie Stitt, Agriculture Consultant

Forestry

Panel representatives:

- Alberta Forest Products Association
- West Fraser
- Tolko Industries
- Woodland Cree First Nation
- Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.
- Boucher Bros Lumber Ltd.
- Vanderwell Contractors Ltd.
- Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.
- Woodlands Spray Lake Saw Millson
- Northland Forest Products Ltd.
- Canfor
- Alberta Newsprint
- Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

Construction

Panel representatives:

- Clark Builders
- Joette Decore, Construction Industry Consultant
- Qualico Group
- Stantec
- Melcor
- PCL
- Fort McKay Group
- Rolling Mix Concrete Ltd. (RMC Group of Companies)
- Catapult Solution Inc. and Sil Industrial Minerals
- Alberta Construction Association
- Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association
- Building Industry Land Development Association Alberta (BILD)
- Construction Owners Association of Alberta

Chemical manufacturing

Panel representatives:

- Resource Diversification Council
- Fertilizer Canada
- Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
- BASF
- CF industries
- Dow Chemical Canada ULC
- INEOS Canada Partnership
- Inter Pipeline Ltd.
- MEGlobal Canada Inc.
- Methanex Corporation
- Nutrien Ltd.
- Nova Chemicals Corporation
- Nautical Energy Ltd
- Northeast Capital Industrial Association

Industrial manufacturing

Panel representatives:

- Universe Machine Corporation
- Collins Steel
- Lethbridge Iron Works
- Draco Industries Inc.
- Alberta Welding Optimization Committee
- Supreme Steel
- Goodfish Lake Business Corp
- Canadian Welding Bureau
- Tenaris
- Edmonton Exchanger
- Concrete Alberta
- Cement Association of Alberta
- Attabotics
- Plainsman Manufacturing
- Argus Machine Co. Ltd.

Non-profit

Panel representatives:

- Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Catholic Social Services
- CUPS
- Calgary Food Bank
- Inclusion Alberta
- YMCA Calgary
- C5
- Mustard Seed
- Aboriginal Counselling Services
- Special Olympics of Alberta

Additional completed red tape reduction initiatives

The following are additional examples of completed red tape reduction initiatives from across the Government of Alberta. While not a comprehensive list, the initiatives below provide context into the breadth of work done by government to reduce red tape in the first year.

Getting out of the way of our job creators to foster economic growth

Alberta Export Expansion Program

The Alberta Export Expansion Program (AEEP) provides funding support to small and medium-sized enterprises, municipalities, industry associations, Indigenous communities and economic development organizations, promoting Alberta exports through outbound international business travel and bringing international buyers to Alberta.

The AEEP was renewed and relaunched in December 2019. As part of the relaunch, the program team reviewed all of AEEP's requirements, assessed the application experience from a client's perspective and took into account public feedback, resulting in a number of changes to reduce red tape.

Three funding streams were consolidated into one, creating a streamlined application process with fewer forms. Unnecessary touchpoints between clients and Jobs, Economy and Innovation (JEI) staff were also eliminated for some funding streams. Direct applications to the program are now allowed. Previously, clients had to work with a JEI intermediary to complete applications. The changes not only reduced administrative burden, but also resulted in faster turnaround times for clients, with the average time from an application's submission to the date of its approval decreasing by 25 per cent.

Annual reporting requirements for clients also changed from a three-year reporting requirement to one follow-up report at the one-year anniversary, requiring 60 per cent less time to comply with reporting requirements. This change reduced the reporting burden placed on the client, while still allowing JEI to collect valuable information to assess the program's impact. Finally, the program removed two requirements that allowed more companies to leverage AEEP to grow their businesses.

Changing the approval level to facilitate more efficient land disposition and borrowing by post-secondary institutions

The Alberta government streamlined the process to dispose of land for post-secondary institutions. *The Post-Secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) stated that post-secondary institutions must obtain an Order in Council (OIC) approval for land disposition and borrowing. Due to the lengthy process to develop and review, an OIC can take upwards of eight months to receive Cabinet approval.

In March 2020, the PSLA was amended to change the approval requirement to a Ministerial Order, rather than an OIC Cabinet approval. This means land disposition timelines improve by approximately two thirds, allowing post-secondary institutions to pursue revenue-generating opportunities (e.g. sale or lease of lands) up to 90 days sooner than with previous disposition requests and government approval timelines.

Code of Practice for powerline works impacting wetlands

A new Code of Practice for power lines impacting wetlands maintains environmental protections and applies a more appropriate level of oversight for low-risk construction activities. This change will allow electricity providers to carry out important work on power lines without costly delays.

A Code of Practice regulates activities under the *Water Act* that would normally require an approval. The code sets out the standards and conditions that must be met to ensure the activity minimizes the disturbance and impact on the environment.

Between releasing the new Code of Practice December 23, 2019, and September 2, 2020, a total of 194 notices were submitted to the Environmental Approval Systems OneStop system, replacing the same number of approvals that typically took several months to process versus the new 14-day turnaround for a notification.

Albertans expect us to ensure that we're protecting the environment while we deliver reliable and affordable energy to their homes, farms and businesses. By streamlining this process, the Code of Practice for Power Lines Impacting Wetlands provides utilities with clarity on our environmental requirements and allows all of us to complete critical power line work in a shorter time frame.

Ed Rihn, Senior Vice-President, AltaLink

Ducks Unlimited Canada has a proud history of working collaboratively with numerous partners, including industry and government, in the development of pragmatic conservation solutions for working landscapes. DUC supports innovative tools like codes of practice that, when applied appropriately, achieve the goals of the Alberta Wetland Policy while maintaining Alberta's economic prosperity.

Ron Maher, Manager of Provincial Operations, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Directive 81: Water Disposal Limits and Reporting Requirements for Thermal In Situ Oil Sands Schemes

This updated directive addresses recycling of water for oil sands thermal in situ projects and encourages the use of alternatives to high-quality, non-saline water sources in a flexible, efficient and cost-effective manner. This results in increased efficiency, consistency and certainty in the reuse of treated wastewater from a third party for hydraulic fracturing purposes.

[This change] removes a significant barrier to greenfield investments, and represents estimated capital cost savings of up to \$200 million per greenfield project. Collectively, existing projects could yield cost savings of up to \$273 million, plus annual incremental savings of approximately \$3.75 million.

Letter from Tim McMillan (CAPP) to AER CEO

Fisheries research licence streamlining pilot

Fisheries studies are often required as part of applications for major developments in Alberta. A research licence, issued by Alberta Environment and Parks, is required to collect, hold or sample crown fish, shellfish, crustaceans or parts of those animals. The Research Licence Pre-Approved Assessment and Salvage (RL-PASS) project issues a streamlined licence to clients in good standing to conduct low-risk-high-volume fisheries projects.

Under the new program, the applicant notifies the department if they meet the conditions of the licence. Previously, applicants had to apply and await a biologist's review (10 days). This results in cost savings for consultants and less required reporting, translating into additional cost savings. In the first two months, over 60 hours of staff time was freed up. Applicants avoided over 300 days of potential wait times, saving them thousands of dollars.

Food Regulation amendment

Changes to the Food Regulation enable the growth of numerous small businesses.

Bed and breakfasts and other small lodging operators are no longer limited to providing only breakfast, and can now serve their guests other meals. Food banks are also able to prepare, cook and serve food on-site, provided they have the necessary facilities and equipment.

Home-based businesses will not require food-handling permits or be subject to inspections for foods that present a low risk for food-borne illness. These are foods that do not require refrigeration and include such items as baked goods, jams/jellies, candies, pickled foods and cereals. High-risk foods and foods containing meat, poultry, seafood and/or raw milk will continue to be prohibited.

The changes to Alberta's Food Regulation maintains standards for food safety, supports Alberta entrepreneurs, adds new jobs and benefits the economy by giving Albertans new opportunities to buy locally produced foods.

Forest management agreements

Changed the authority to allow the minister to enter into a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) without prior approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This will eliminate up to six months in approval time for FMAs, and will support investor confidence in Alberta's forest sector.

Insurance industry qualification equivalencies

The Insurance Agents and Adjusters Regulation, which sets out the educational and examination requirements for agents and adjusters in Alberta, was amended to allow the General Insurance Council to recognize equivalencies from other Canadian jurisdictions.

This amendment enhances labour mobility and provides another avenue to become licensed in Alberta, while still ensuring general insurance agents possess relevant and current knowledge to ensure consumer protection.

Marketing of Agricultural Products Act

Amendments to the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* give agriculture marketing boards and commissions (MBCs) the authority to develop their own bylaws. Now, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry can make and amend MBC plan regulations and initiate plebiscites, rather than going through the Lieutenant Governor in Council. As well, the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council now has the authority to issue directives when required rather than requiring Cabinet approval to do so.

Multi-registry access system

New West Partnership Trade Agreement Multi-Registry Access System Implementation (MRAS) introduced an information data exchange hub that helps enable extra-provincial corporations and limited partnerships to incorporate across the four western provinces. It also resulted in a new Alberta online self-service extra-provincial registration portal.

Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba had separate, duplicative processes for corporations and limited partnerships to complete their extra-provincial business registrations and maintenance filings. On June 27, 2020, the four provinces were the first to implement MRAS: a hub that allows corporate information sharing between the provinces, making extra-provincial registration faster and easier.

Oilwell service rigs

Alberta classifies service rigs as commercial vehicles, meaning they must meet requirements intended for commercial carriers. However, some commercial trucking requirements are not suitable for service rig equipment, since they spend 95 per cent of their time at a work site and only five per cent on the road.

Regulatory changes for service rigs have removed unnecessary red tape without compromising safety by replacing the annual Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program with an inspection every five years, and excluding service rigs from Safety Fitness Certificate requirements applied to commercial carriers.

In January 2020, support vehicles such as equipment trucks, pump tank trucks and the crew trailers were extended the same exemptions as service rigs through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC).

Service rigs and support vehicles will still follow stringent and appropriate safety standards, including valid permits for transport and operation, as well as established Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

On behalf of CAODC members, I would like to thank Minister McIver for his support as this agreement will help get Albertans back to work on service rigs.

Mark Scholz, President and CEO, Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors

Powerline Reclamation Guidelines

Reclamation requirements can be unclear at times and costly to implement. The guidelines, released on May 29, 2020, provide detailed reclamation requirements for transmission lines in order to clarify and streamline the process to obtain reclamation certificates and get regulatory closure for sites. The guidelines replace the Environmental Protection Guidelines for Transmission Lines and aligns with existing regulations, while providing flexible assessment options for cost savings. These changes were requested by the electrical utility industry.

Reducing barriers to internal trade

Intergovernmental Relations collaborated with other ministries and jurisdictions to reduce red tape and barriers to internal trade through the following measures:

CANADA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT EXCEPTIONS BY PROVINCE



- Alberta announced the removal of 21 Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) party-specific exceptions, representing an 80 per cent reduction. Alberta now has the lowest number of exceptions of any of the parties to the agreement. Removing these exceptions helps create a more open, transparent and competitive marketplace. Every action that removes trade barriers stands to improve the economy of Alberta and benefit Albertans.
- Representing Alberta on the Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table (RCT). The RCT was created under the CFTA to reduce barriers to trade, investment, and labour mobility within Canada by reconciling regulatory differences that companies may experience when doing business across provincial and territorial borders.
- Leading Alberta's participation in negotiations to bring financial services and non-medical cannabis under the rules of the CFTA.
- Encouraging other provinces and territories to join the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, the most open and comprehensive trade agreement in Canada, which allows goods, services, capital and workers to move freely across provincial boundaries.

Wood-building construction

Red tape was reduced for builders and developers by allowing the use of tall wood construction with fire-resistant material for up to 12 storeys. While the current Building Code allows the construction of wood buildings up to six storeys in height, the 2020 national code will introduce provisions for wood buildings up to 12 storeys tall. To enable timely code adoption, changes needed to be made to the *Safety Codes Act* to repeal a legislative provision that previously restricted wood construction to six storeys in height.

This allowed Alberta's builders to construct mass-timber buildings up to 12 storeys, at least two construction seasons sooner than they would under the automatic code adoption process of upcoming national code provisions.

In terms of impact on jobs and economy, the Alberta Forest Products Association estimates this change has the potential to create:

- About 60 jobs per construction site and up to 400 jobs per new sawmill and production sites.
- Growth in demand for lumber (for example, 100-million board feet, about \$40-million worth of lumber, is the equivalent to about two mills the size of Boucher Bros Lumber, which is located in Nampa, Alberta).

Changing the building code to allow more wood construction enables Alberta's job creators. Building with local materials supports jobs in resource communities and fosters innovation and investment in value-added processing. Wood construction is sustainable, beautiful, and part of the solution to climate change.

Janis Simpkins, Senior Vice-President, Alberta Forest Products Association

Removal of Fusarium from Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation

Removing Fusarium from the Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation has aligned Alberta with best practices from other provinces. This change supports the competitiveness of Alberta seed growers and cereal producers by providing enhanced access to new seed varieties, allowing the transport of fusarium-infested seed. This deregulation also supports additional research opportunities that will deliver outcomes more closely aligned with the province's growing conditions and crop health.

Eliminating the regulation of *Fusarium graminearum* (Fg) will give farmers improved access to competitive genetics, and better reflects the reality that farmers face in many regions. The Alberta Wheat Commission supports Minister Dreeshen's decision to remove this regulatory barrier in accordance with a 2017 AWC resolution calling for the removal of Fg from the Alberta Agricultural Pest Act. AWC has been dedicated to working with our partners for a continued emphasis on extension and education of best management practices, surveillance and monitoring, and research and development. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions have launched a go-to web-platform with Fg resources for farmers at managefhb.ca.

Todd Hames, Chair, Alberta Wheat Commission

Repeal of Chapter 2 of the Air Monitoring Directive

The repeal of Chapter 2 of the Air Monitoring Directive (AMD) on December 10, 2019, eliminated redundancy with other reporting requirements for airsheds and reduced administration burden for internal staff. Airsheds are no longer required to submit and update a comprehensive air monitoring plan. This change will result in cost savings of \$14,500 for each of the eight airsheds that were required to adhere to Chapter 2.

Residence spacing for combustors/incinerators

Residence setback requirements were revised to allow combustors or incinerators to be deployed within 500 metres of residences at new heavy oil sites as of January 2020. This change provides flexibility to industry and unlocks new activity at heavy oil sites that were otherwise uneconomic due to the conservation requirements and lack of pipeline access. It also helps industry reduce a facility's methane emissions footprint.

Simplifying access to business lending

The Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) made enhancements to its lending management platforms to make it easier and faster for agricultural producers to apply for and receive loans. This enabled AFSC to introduce a quick loan option for up to \$100,000 for existing insurance clients and \$150,000 for existing lending clients, providing loan authorizations in roughly 20 minutes compared to the previous average approval time of approximately seven hours. A total of 155 loans were processed for producers utilizing the quick loan option, saving an estimated total of 930 hours.

AFSC revitalized the Express Processing Option for farm loans up to \$3 million, reducing turnaround time from several days to as little as one day. These processing options provide clients with quicker access to business capital and reduce costs for AFSC. From April 1, 2019, through March 31, 2020, AFSC approved \$543.7 million for 1,563 farmers and agribusinesses in new lending support across all loan programs, which is expected to fuel economic growth and job creation.

Streamlined rules for workplace health and safety committees

In December 2019, Alberta's government introduced new rules designed to reduce administrative burdens for job creators, uphold workers' rights to participate in workplace health and safety committees, and support a consistent health and safety culture across organizations.

Rather than being required at each work site, committees and representatives are only required for each employer. For example, a school division will require only one committee rather than having a committee at each school in the division.

In addition, while government-approved training is mandatory for work site health and safety committee co-chairs and worker representatives, the number of training courses was reduced from two to one, reducing repetitive content and time spent away from work. These new requirements saved government an estimated \$360,000.

Survey and mapping on renewals and reclamation

Eliminating the requirement of a survey plan at the time of reclamation saves significant cost to the stakeholders. Additionally, eliminating the requirements of a 'statutory declaration' by a surveyor results in cost savings to industries dependent on provincial Crown land. In the case of low risk dispositions amendments, compiled information from the previous surveys in lieu of full surveys was introduced to save costs of the field survey operations for reclamation applications.

The changes provided clarification that a new survey plan is not required for the reclamation application, and that renewal applications no longer require an applicant to prove that the activities are within the boundaries of the disposition. The changes also created a new type of compiled survey plan to facilitate partial reclamation and partial assignment. These changes ensure lower survey costs, better asset management and greater security tenure.

Tax Exempt Fuel User (TEFU) certificates

Treasury Board and Finance eliminated the requirement for registrants to renew their TEFU certificate, which allows them to purchase marked fuel. This means TEFU certificates no longer expire, and newly granted certificates will not have an expiry date on them. Additionally, existing registrants are not required to re-apply or renew in order to receive a new certificate, and their TEFU number will remain the same.

As of April 30, 2020, 8,435 entities were not required to reapply, freeing up time to focus on other business priorities.

Wildlife renewable protocols

Bird Migration Survey and Post Construction Monitoring protocols were developed in order to increase clarity and decrease review timelines associated with bird surveying, monitoring and reporting requirements for wind energy projects under the Wildlife Directives. These protocols help applicants identify appropriate wildlife surveys in utilizing established protocols and necessary survey information that enable reviewers to adequately assess the risk of a project to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The protocols ensure efficient use of surveyor time and more efficient project development, as redoing surveys could lead to major project development delays. Additionally, less time is required by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) referral biologists as survey expectations are clearly outlined in the protocol documents, reducing meetings between proponents and AEP staff.

These protocols were available as of January 2020, and have been accessed around 400 times each, indicating a high interest from proponents.

Digital transformation; bringing government into the 21st century

Alberta Innovates – enterprise grants management system

Alberta Innovates (AI) provides funding, advice, connections, technical expertise and applied research services to stimulate and grow research and innovation across Alberta. It distributes more than \$150 million annually to support provincial research and the innovation system through a broad spectrum of funding opportunities. As a main program delivery agency for economic development in Alberta, AI's effort to reduce red tape and streamline client experience will result in quicker access to job creating opportunities.

In response to stakeholder feedback, the agency began the phased implementation of a new enterprise grants management system in April 2020, which provides a streamlined application experience for clients. The new system also includes standardized application questions to further improve the application process. The simplified suite of application questions will be used across all AI programs, with standardized questions currently being used by 20 AI grant programs.

Initial client feedback on the new system shows nearly 82 per cent of applicants are highly satisfied with the application process, with more than 50 per cent of those applicants rating their experience as excellent. Comments from applicants have identified the system to be user-friendly, easy to navigate, and a significant improvement relative to AI's previous application processes. On a routine basis through the application forms, applicants are also providing constructive feedback that will allow AI to review and continuously improve the process and standardized questions.

AlbertaRELM improvements: Introduction of the AlbertaRELM app and virtual WiN card

In April 2020, the AlbertaRELM app was updated to allow hunters and anglers to carry their hunting and sportfishing licences digitally, and to carry digital copies of the Hunting and Sportfishing Regulations with them in the field. Previously, these were only available in printed form.

Also in April 2020, a new virtual wildlife identification number (WiN) card was introduced. This card is provided for a one-time fee, never requires renewal and can be carried on a smartphone. Previously, the WiN card had to be renewed and paid for every five years and was only available as a printed card.

Auto renewal of sportfishing licences

Effective April 1, 2020, clients purchasing their 2020 sportfishing licences have the option of subscribing to automatically renew their 2021 licence. The added function is expected to improve client service satisfaction, increase overall participation, increase overall revenue and increase compliance by reducing the number of anglers who may forget to purchase their new annual sportfishing licence.

To date, over 18,000 anglers have subscribed to the auto renewal function.

Developed online applications for special event permits, school events and discharge permits for Alberta Parks.

Alberta Environment and Parks updated the Parks Special Events Directive and provided an all-digital and online submission process for members of the public to apply for permits to host weddings, sporting, educational and community events in provincial parks.

Previously, members of the public had to contact individual park offices to obtain information about special events and to submit a permit application. This often required multiple email exchanges or phone calls. A variety of different application forms and contact methods were in use in different locations across the province. The standardized online permit application form simplifies the process and improves clarity and convenience for applicants. It also reduces the amount of administrative work done by staff.

Additionally, hunters in some Alberta Parks locations were required to attend in-person training sessions. These sessions have now been replaced by online orientation packages for each of the Alberta Parks sites where hunting is permissible.

The online special events permit application went live on August 29, 2019, and the online permit application for discharge permit went live on June 3, 2020.

Digital innovation through traffic ticket payments

The Alberta government's traffic ticket digital service was created to improve online traffic ticket searches and provide enhanced online payment and resolution options for citizens. The service will allow Albertans to use cell phones to scan the barcode on the ticket and receive options to pay immediately, request additional time to pay, submit reasons supporting a reduction in penalty, and request a trial. Albertans will no longer need to come in person to the courthouse and wait to see a prosecutor or justice to request a reduction or time to pay. Also, the addition of barcodes to all handwritten violation tickets will streamline the processes for court staff and justice partners by increasing the speed and accuracy of data entry, providing more efficient service to Albertans.

Electronic communications in workplace pension plans

In June 2020, Alberta's government amended the Employment Pensions Plan Regulation to clarify that any record that is required or permitted under the *Employment Pension Plans Act* can be provided in an electronic format.

The flexibility introduced through this amendment impacts more than 600 active pension plans registered in Alberta and could apply to more than 570,000 members that participate in those plans. The use of electronic records and communications is expected to have tangible benefits in the administration of a workplace pension plan. For example, annual member statements can be emailed directly to active and retired pension plan members, rather than being sent by regular mail.

Not only could this amendment result in a reduction of postage costs, but it's more reflective of the active lifestyles of Albertans who may be able to more readily access information online from anywhere in the world, rather than waiting for a paper statement to be delivered to a home mailing address.

Electronic signatures

In order to reduce the necessity for taxpayers and tax preparers to meet in person, Treasury Board and Finance is now recognizing electronic signatures for all prescribed tax forms.

This supports increased ease of electronic interaction and reduces the need to send paper copies of prescribed forms to Treasury Board and Finance.

Enabled the use of Debit Visa and Debit MasterCard to pay for campsite registrations

Alberta Environment and Parks enabled the use of Debit Visa and Debit MasterCard to pay for campsite reservations online and by phone. This provides an additional payment method for individuals without a credit card, allowing more people to be able to book campsites. Previously, a credit card was required to reserve a campsite online or by phone. This change came into effect on February 20, 2020.

Enhancing access to supports and services

Community and Social Services is developing a number of mechanisms to enhance access to supports and services. During the fiscal year, the ministry began testing the use of video conferencing to enable Albertans to meet remotely with Alberta Supports and program staff when a face-to-face interaction is required.

Virtual access minimizes the need for Albertans to travel, reduces barriers and improves access to supports and services. Alberta Supports helps Albertans across the province access a wide range of government social programs and services on behalf of Community and Social Services, Seniors and Housing, Justice and Solicitor General, Advanced Education, Children's Services, Labour and Immigration, and Health.

E-transfers for community initiatives program

The Community Initiatives Program Project-Based grant stream was set up as part of the COVID-19 emergency response phase to support economic recovery and build social connections. E-transfers were set up for Community Grant Programs in 2019-20 to allow community-based organizations to receive their funding within a week, down from an average wait of 100 days when funds were received by cheque through the mail.

Subsequent intakes of this grant program will be able to continue to benefit from this faster receipt of much needed funds.

Occupational health and safety and employment standards portals project

Labour and Immigration continues to improve its efficiency by providing an online mechanism for stakeholders to effectively communicate with department staff.

The “Portals Project” produced eight new online portals to allow Albertans and job creators to submit applications or report situations related to legislative requirements on Employment Standards (ES) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS).

The online systems help streamline application and reports by:

- Storing user data to reduce the required fields.
- Combining similar or related forms into one.
- Automatically pre-screening to make sure the form the applicant is submitting matches their need, and
- referring users to other agencies when necessary.

The project has made government more efficient by automatically transferring data into the compliance management system, reducing the time spent on manual data entry by government employees. Staff have saved on average 360 hours of administrative time per portal per year. By enhancing the public’s access to OHS and ES services, department staff can spend more time on front-line services for Albertans.

Online document submissions for streamlined applications

Alberta’s government has made it easier for seniors to access benefit programs. The Seniors Financial Assistance Online Services can now be accessed using a verified MyAlberta Digital ID for document submission and online loan repayments. Senior Financial Assistance programs are more accessible by enabling additional ways to submit applications, claims and supporting documents. As of November 1, 2019, a new online tool has allowed seniors to safely and securely upload scanned documents, such as application forms, banking information and other documents relevant to obtaining financial assistance. Previously, these documents had to be mailed, faxed or dropped off in person. Moving the process online also frees up resources for organizations that serve seniors. For the 2019-20 fiscal year, 7,500 documents were uploaded through the online uploader.

We’re very excited about this improvement – it’s been a long time coming. We’re happy to see this reduction of red tape in our sector. The ability to submit documents in an electronic format will dramatically impact senior wait times for reimbursement and decrease the time and efforts of staff submitting claims on their behalf.

Lynn Smid, Director, Family and Community Support Services, Town of St. Paul.

Online emergency payments

The Provincial Emergency Social Services program adopted the use of online emergency payments, instead of issuing debit cards, to get funds to evacuees quicker. This enables evacuees to apply online and receive one-time emergency funding via e-transfer to assist with costs associated with being away from their primary home due to an evacuation order during a disaster.

This was put to use in May 2019, when more than 11,000 residents were evacuated under a mandatory order due to wildfires in northwest Alberta. Evacuees were able to apply online for emergency assistance using their MyAlberta Digital ID, which ensured emergency funding could be received within 24 hours by e-transfer or pre-loaded debit cards. Approximately \$21.6 million went to evacuees to cover short-term financial needs during the northwest Alberta wildfires evacuation.

Online loan repayment

By partnering with financial institutions, Alberta's government enabled online loan repayments for the Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program (SHARP) and the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program (SPTDP) in November 2019. Before this change, the only method of repaying a loan was by cheque. For the 2019-20 fiscal year, 250 loan repayments (partial or full) were made through the online banking tool for SHARP and SPTDP.

Providing online loan repayments is more convenient, less costly and faster for Albertans, compared to writing and mailing a cheque.

Improving access to financial benefits and loan repayment is an important step towards reducing the barriers that seniors experience when navigating systems and supports. As technology adoption rates for older adults increase, improved online service delivery helps to ensure that seniors access services efficiently, freeing up resources to support seniors who require hands-on support applying for benefits. We look forward to continued work with government to ensure that older Albertans can efficiently and effectively access the supports they need, when they need them.

Karen McDonald, Executive Director, Sage Seniors Association

Case Connect

Case Connect is a mobile application that enables child intervention workers to work remotely, and is part of a larger initiative to move to paperless workflows. No other jurisdiction in Canada has implemented a mobile system for this purpose. It streamlines work by reducing data entry and duplication, as well as enhancing information accessibility through storage of electronic records.

Using Case Connect allows caseworkers to spend more time providing direct service delivery to families. By making it easier for caseworkers to complete their work, Case Connect offers the potential for reduced overtime, stress and sick days across the workforce.

Additional benefits of Case Connect include a reduced likelihood of information/privacy breaches, as well as improved overall service delivery allowing the government to be more efficient, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars.

Sub-division and designated industrial property appeals

The Municipal Government Board established an alternative process to help lower the volume of costly sub-division and designated industrial property appeal hearings. A formal pre-hearing telephone conference is a quicker, more cost-effective and less intimidating process that often eliminates the need to conduct a hearing.

Reducing costs and saving time for Albertans and non-profits

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) improvements

A number of changes have been made to how AISH is administered to make the program more fair, efficient and transparent.

- AISH recipients who are seeking Legal Aid coverage are immediately qualified without having to fill out financial eligibility forms. This reduces burden on applicants with disabilities and mental health challenges having to produce income statements to prove eligibility.
- AISH recipients are now automatically enrolled into Seniors Financial Assistance (SFA) programs, including Alberta Seniors Benefit Program, upon turning 65 years old. This streamlined process ensures a seamless transition between programs for Albertans while reducing workloads on front-end staff. The change eliminates the application process so AISH recipients do not have to provide the same information to different Government of Alberta programs. It also helps reduce the burden on caregivers, AISH recipients and senior-serving organizations, and ensures uninterrupted provincial benefits for AISH clients as they transition to seniors programs. Since this change was implemented, more than 1,500 seniors transitioning from AISH have benefited. There are 64,000 AISH recipients and 44 per cent are age 50 or older, and they will benefit by the time saved through auto-enrolment to SFA programs when they turn 65 years of age.

Additionally, Community and Social Services streamlined and simplified processes for accepting and processing AISH applications, and informing applicants about the status of their eligibility. This includes simplifying the application process, improving efficiency and reducing administrative burden.

Ground Ambulance Regulations

The amended Ground Ambulance Regulations help to ensure that rural Albertans have timely and appropriate access to emergency medical services. Regulations have been updated to reflect current and emerging best practices in the delivery of patient-centered emergency medical services. In addition to physicians, other regulated health professionals, such as nurse practitioners and specialized physicians, will be able to provide real-time medical advice to paramedics. Also, more types of vehicles are now allowed for patient care and transport, so that ambulances are available when they're really needed.

Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation

Regulatory amendments have expanded the scope of practice for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in five key areas, including administering blood or blood products. This change is part of our promise to strengthen the health system, create efficiencies, and deliver better results for Albertans. When LPNs work to their full scope of practice, they will provide timely, high quality care to Albertans, giving doctors or registered nurses time to focus on other, more complex patients.

Municipal Disaster Recovery Program application process

Municipal Affairs upgraded its Municipal Disaster Recovery Program application form to collect more information up-front, allowing eligible municipalities to receive funding more quickly.

In previous years, municipalities applied for disaster financial assistance using a limited form that required staff to obtain additional information from communities through numerous discussions before funding could be disbursed.

We're grateful to the Government of Alberta for providing us with Municipal Disaster Recovery Program funding after our recent flooding disaster. This funding will be put to good to use, bringing our infrastructure back to the standard of excellence and safety that our residents expect. Lac La Biche County appreciated the chance to work with a variety of helpful and friendly Municipal Affairs staff, who endeavoured to make the process as simple and easy to understand as possible. We're pleased to see progress being continually made in reducing red tape in government administration.

Mayor Omer Moghrabi, Lac La Biche County

Municipal grant program streamlining

Municipal Affairs implemented changes to several municipal grant programs to simplify administrative procedures and reduce processing times for both municipalities and departmental staff.

This included eliminating the Municipal Sustainability Initiative operating spending plan application form, as well as creating a single application for the Provincial Education Requisition Credit and Designated Industrial Requisition Credit programs. Additionally, designated industrial property requisitions of less than \$1,000 are no longer required to be submitted to the province, saving time and costs associated with administering low value requisitions.

AUMA looks forward to continuing to work with Municipal Affairs to highlight red tape reduction possibilities and the many red tape reduction initiatives municipalities have been diligently implementing for the benefit of their residents and businesses.

Jeff Henwood, Director of Government Relations, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Managing grant applications requires a great deal of time and capacity for municipalities. RMA is pleased that Alberta Municipal Affairs has identified grant applications as an area for red tape reduction, and is prioritizing the need to keep provincial funding flowing to municipalities for critical capital projects through streamlines application processes. In particular, and somewhat unique to Alberta, allowing federal stimulus funding to flow through directly to municipalities has enabled them to continue to provide services and invest in infrastructure needed to support our economy. RMA looks forward to continuing to work with Alberta Municipal Affairs to further reduce red tape in the grant application and distribution process.

Al Kemmere, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta

MyAlberta emergency isolation support system

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Service Alberta developed the MyAlberta Emergency Isolation Support system in just eight days. The system launched on March 25, 2020, and by the close of the program on April 6, 2020, more than \$107 million was distributed to more than 94,000 Albertans. The system offered a fully digital experience, providing a fast, secure and cost-effective way to disburse emergency funds to eligible Albertans, without requiring that they leave their homes to apply for or obtain funds.

Online birth registry

This new online birth registration portal saves time and money by eliminating the need to visit a registry in person to order a birth certificate.

Cutting red tape to enable parents the flexibility to register their child's birth easily online wherever they are is just the beginning of our movement from worst to first in the delivery of online services for Albertans. I only wish my wife and I had this option when we welcomed our son into the world last year.

Nate Glubish, Minister of Service Alberta

Nursing Homes Regulations

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Alberta's government expanded the authority of nurse practitioners (NPs) and other regulated health professionals to expand the care provided to nursing home residents. Operators indicated the temporary changes were making a difference during COVID-19. Given this feedback, government took immediate action and made these changes permanent to ensure residents have quick access to the care they need beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amendments to the Nursing Homes Operation and General Regulations enabled NPs to act as primary care providers in nursing homes, admitting and assessing residents, as well as offering follow-up care. Nursing home residents can now receive prescriptions for Schedule 1 drugs and orders for common diagnostic tests, like X-rays, ultrasounds and CT scans, directly from NPs and other qualified health professionals, according to their scopes of practice and at the discretion of the nursing home operator.

Alberta NPs now have the broadest and most independent scope of practice in Canada and government supports their role as primary care providers in our health system. The amendments reduced red tape and duplication for health professionals, service providers and operators, while also improving nursing home residents' access to primary care. These changes are part of our commitment to make life better for all Albertans, especially seniors and our most vulnerable.

Owner-builder authorizations

Albertans building homes and who applied for owner builder authorizations (OBAs) were facing onerous up-front requirements that created long turnaround times and delays in construction. Specifically, applicants for OBAs were rigorously screened and investigated, requiring numerous calls and interviews with government staff. In most instances, the applicants were approved with no significant issues determined in the screening process.

To address this situation, government eliminated unnecessary and redundant steps of the OBA process and streamlined procedures to allow the review and approval of straightforward applications through a simplified process.

Processing time for OBAs was reduced from 17 days to 11 days. As a result, Albertans building their own homes will be able to begin construction sooner.

Regional services commissions streamlining approvals

Regional services commissions (RSCs) are entities set up by two or more municipalities, First Nations, Métis Settlements or armed forces bases that provide services on a regional basis to clients within the members' boundaries. As part of the government's efforts to reduce red tape, amendments to Part 15.1 of the *Municipal Government Act* reduce the required amount of provincial approvals for RSCs. The changes ensure RSCs are accountable to their member municipal authorities and will operate in a more streamlined manner.

The changes were developed after RSCs, municipalities and municipal associations voiced concerns regarding the timeliness and inefficiencies of the current RSC legislative framework.

To address those inefficiencies, the amendment transitioned RSCs outside of regulation. This eliminated 80 regulations and over 608 regulatory requirements. The operations of Alberta's 75 existing RSCs will continue with minimal impact and, going forward, will govern the services they provide without the need for additional provincial approvals.

Residential Access Modification Program (RAMP) paperwork revision project

Community and Social Services revised RAMP paperwork in 2019-20. Forms, letters and templates were revised to reduce unnecessary time and resources spent by Albertans and RAMP staff. The ministry developed technology and enhanced internal systems to align workflows and enable reporting capabilities.

Simplified reporting for housing management bodies (HMBs)

On January 22, 2020, Seniors and Housing announced the ministry will reduce time consuming administrative tasks required of HMBs. As a result, housing providers can focus more resources on directly serving their clients. Several processes were simplified regarding required submissions, burdensome operational reviews and redundant business planning requirements. The following changes were made for HMB reporting:

- Move from three to five-year cycle for HMB operational reviews.
- Move from quarterly to semi annual reporting for client profile data.
- Fewer reporting requirements in years two and three of HMB three-year business plans.

Housing providers indicated reporting requirements were an administrative burden. By streamlining processes, time spent completing lengthy reports, business plans and audits can now be better spent assisting Albertans in need of affordable housing.

Simplified reporting for HMBs was suggested in a public submission to the cutredtape.alberta.ca website, and also identified as an issue from housing providers. These changes align with the Government of Alberta's commitment to make the affordable housing system more efficient and effective for applicants, tenants and housing providers.

Less time spent on paperwork means we'll have more time to spend with our seniors – listening to them and ensuring we're meeting their housing needs.

We support reductions in red tape, because this will help us further our mission to positively influence seniors' quality of life. Less time spent on paperwork means we'll have more time to spend with our seniors – listening to them and ensuring we're meeting their housing needs.

Raymond Swonek, CEO, GEF Seniors Housing

Streamlining processes for the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Regulation

The process of assuming the role of a guardian or trustee, or asking the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) to take on the role, is time consuming and complex due to forms that need to be reviewed by the Court of Queen's Bench. Lawyers are often engaged to complete these forms on behalf of an Albertan. Each year, there are hundreds of applications submitted to the courts for an order. Preparing these forms is costly– legal fees are approximately \$2,000 to \$5,000, depending on the complexity of the estate of the person(s) involved. Having fewer forms will reduce this administrative burden and legal costs. OPGT is currently submitting changes to the regulations, to make the language more clear and simplify wording. When approved, these new forms will help Albertans understand the nature of the questions being asked, resulting in fewer errors when they submit the forms to court. Fewer errors means more timely court orders for Albertans who need a guardian or trustee.

Wage top-up and professional development funding

Children's Services conducted a comprehensive review of the voluntary Child Care Accreditation program and funding process to look at how to increase efficiencies, and at ways for child care programs to access government funding that supports a trained and qualified workforce. The accreditation program created duplicative and redundant requirements already in place under the *Child Care Licensing Act* and excessive paperwork to access funding.

The Alberta government kept the key elements of the accreditation program, wage top-ups, and professional development funding to continue supporting a high-quality workforce. This resulted in 2,200 child care programs and more than 18,000 staff having equal access to wage top-ups and professional development funding. On average, these changes save more than \$3 million in administrative costs relating to the accreditation process.

These savings have been reinvested into wage top-ups and professional development to support all early childhood educators who work directly with children. The elimination of barriers in the program has led to an 8 per cent reduction in regulatory requirements and allows child care providers to spend more time with children and families, improving overall service delivery.

To ensure the quality of child care is maintained at a high standard, the ministry is conducting a legislative review, informed by a public consultation process, to embed principles of quality and safety directly into the legislation so they are requirements, not optional standards.

In our first year we've made great strides towards becoming the freest, fastest moving economy in North America...but we're not done yet.

No one likes red tape and so it is critical for us to double our efforts to get out of the way of our job creators and every Albertan.

Grant Hunter, Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction

