

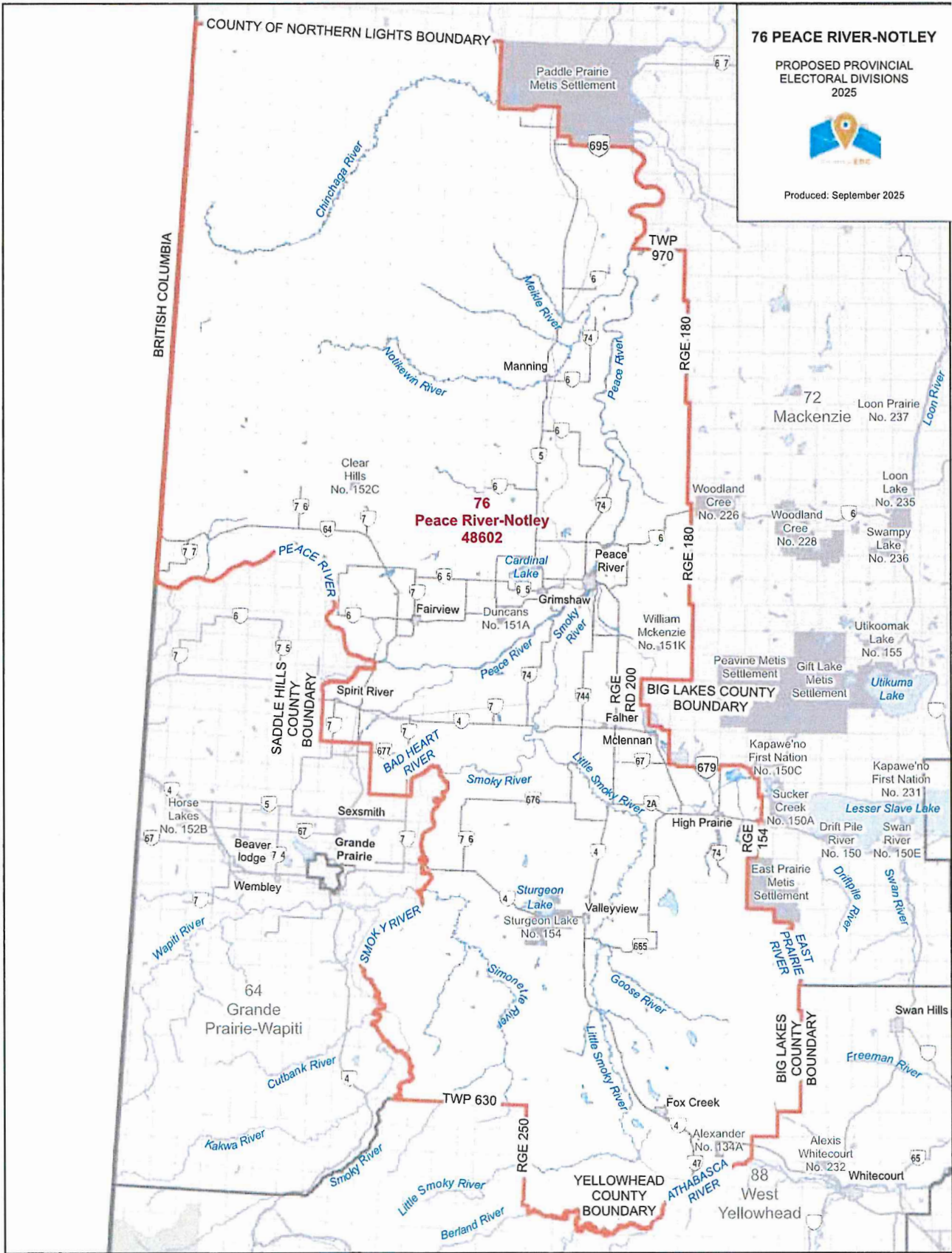
Peace River-Notley [Central Peace-Notley and Peace River]

It is recommended that the boundaries of the electoral division of Peace River-Notley be as shown on Map 76, resulting in a population of 48,602. This electoral division represents the Peace River corridor in the northwest of the province.

As noted above, maintaining both Peace River electoral divisions in their current forms was not tenable given the cascading consequences in the rest of Alberta. Accordingly, the Commission sought to mostly merge the two electoral divisions in this area to create a single electoral division that represents the Peace Region of the province. Accordingly, this electoral division is drawn from:

- All of the current Central Peace-Notley except Saddle Hills County, which is moved to Grande Prairie-Wapiti, because of its proximity to Grande Prairie and to make Peace River-Notley more geographically manageable;
- All of Peace River, except Mackenzie County and Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, which borders Mackenzie County at the far northeast corner of County of Northern Lights; and
- Territory in Big Lakes County in Lesser Slave Lake that is adjacent to the Peace River corridor, notably areas south and west of a line that can be described as follows: commencing at the intersection of Highway 679 and the western border of Big Lakes County, travelling east until Range Road 155A, southwest until Range Road 155, southeast until Range Road 153, south until Township Road 752A, northeast until Highway 750, south until the northern border of Kapawe'no First Nation, west until Range Road 154, due south until the northern border of East Prairie Metis Settlement, west, then south, then east on the borders of East Prairie Metis Settlement, and south along the East Prairie River until the first time it reaches a southern border of Big Lakes County.

This riding will be a vehicle for effective representation in the Peace Region. Though the population variance is significant, it is well within the statutory and constitutional range and is justified considering the vast geography. Areas of the merged electoral division are connected via road and bear commonalities as part of the Peace Region.



Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission

Member Guide



Introduction

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* requires a review of Alberta's electoral boundaries for provincial elections every four years. The [current review is underway](#), and the Commission must submit a final report to the Legislative Assembly by March 28, 2026.

To this point, the Commission has developed an interim report recommending several changes to Alberta's current electoral map, including many impacting rural municipalities and rural Albertans.

The Commission is currently seeking public feedback on the interim report, both through written submissions and public meetings scheduled throughout January 2026.

How to use this document

This document is intended to support RMA members in participating in the Electoral Boundaries Commission review engagement process.

As Alberta is experiencing rapid growth and shifting demographics, changes to electoral boundaries pose risks to adequate rural representation at the provincial level. For this reason, RMA encourages members to provide written input or participate in meetings to share their current experience in accessing provincial elected officials, as well as the potential impacts that the proposed changes may have at the local level.

It is important to emphasize that the Commission is bound by legislation limiting their ability to make certain significant changes or preserve ridings in the context of overall provincial population growth. This guide will explain the legislative framework in which the Commission has made their recommendations, provide analysis on their consideration of rural representation challenges, and recommend how members can frame their input in a way that balances the importance of making changes to electoral boundaries through a rural lens with the reality that the Commission is bound by specific requirements that limit the options available to them.

Electoral Boundaries Review – An Overview

Review Process

As required by the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, the Electoral Boundaries Commission consists of five members: one chairperson appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, two representatives appointed by the Government, and two members appointed by the Official Opposition.

The Act requires the Commission to undertake two rounds of public reporting: one prior to submitting an interim report to the Speaker, and one following the interim report's public release, as a way to receive public feedback to the interim report recommendations that may inform the final report.

The committee held initial public engagement in spring 2025, which consisted of a combination of in-person and virtual hearings as well as written input. The Commission supplemented input received through written hearings with population and demographic data provided by both Statistics Canada and the Government of Alberta's Office of Statistics and Information.

The Commission's interim report was submitted to the Speaker on October 23, 2025, and released publicly shortly after.

The Commission is currently seeking public input on the interim report through written submissions and public meetings. Written submissions are not required to follow any specific guidelines or structure, but must address recommendations made in the interim report and focus on matters within the Commission's legislative scope. The deadline for written submissions is December 19, 2025.

Public meetings will be held in-person and virtually throughout January 2026. Currently, there is no agenda or details as to how public meetings will proceed. There is an opportunity for individuals or stakeholders to register to make a formal presentation during a public meeting. In-person meetings will be held in Calgary on January 12 and 13, 2026 and in Edmonton on January 19 and 20, 2026. Virtual meetings intended for different regions of the province will be held on January 15 and 16.

Review Scope

As mentioned, the Commission must follow a specific scope and process, as per the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*. This scope limits the factors that the Commission may consider when developing recommendations for changes to electoral boundaries, as well as the variance of the comparative population within electoral districts. This section outlines what is and is not in scope for the Commission's current review.

Number of Electoral Districts

Section 13 of the Act requires the Commission to divide the province into 89 electoral districts. Prior to this amendment to the Act in 2024, previous commissions (since 2009) were required to divide the province into 87 electoral districts. The Commission is not permitted to recommend a model that would result in fewer or more than 89 electoral districts.

Relevant Considerations

Unlike section 13, which is prescriptive in terms of the number of electoral districts required, section 14 includes the following factors that the Commission **may** take into consideration when developing the 89 electoral districts:

- ◆ Sparsity, density and rate of growth of the population
- ◆ Communities of interest, including municipalities, regional and rural communities, Indian reserves and Metis settlements
- ◆ Geographical features
- ◆ The availability and means of communication and transportation between various parts of Alberta
- ◆ The desirability of understandable and clear boundaries
- ◆ Any other factors the Commission considers appropriate

The Act does not include any description or explanation of the factors, and while the interim report references the various factors in relation to some electoral districts, it does not include specific explanation or criteria as to how each informed the overall approach to developing the electoral districts.

Population Variance

Section 15(1) of the Act requires that the population of an electoral district be no more than 25% above or below the average population of the 89 electoral districts based on the population data that the Commission is required to use (see p. 15 of the interim report for an explanation on population methodology). Section 15(2) allows an exception to this requirement; in a maximum of four ridings, the population may be as much as 50% below the average population if at least three of the following five criteria are met:

- ◆ The area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 20 000 square kilometres or the total surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15 000 square kilometres.
- ◆ The distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of the proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres.
- ◆ There is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 8000 people.
- ◆ The area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Metis settlement.
- ◆ The proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the Province of Alberta.

The Commission is not required to utilize the exception allowed under 15(2) when developing the electoral districts.

Effective Representation

In addition to the factors that the Commission may consider, section 14 of the Act mandates that the Commission **must** consider “the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.” Section 3 of the *Charter* states the following:

Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

As is discussed in more detail in the following section, the interim report dives into the concept of effective representation, including its legal interpretation, differences between its meaning and influence on electoral districting in Canada and the United States, and, most significantly for RMA members and rural Albertans, that effective representation does not equate to an equal population in all electoral districts, but rather that districts are structured in consideration of sparsity, size, and other factors listed in section 14.

Interim Report

The key purpose of the Commission's interim report is to provide a description and rationale for each of the 89 proposed electoral districts. The interim report also includes an explanation of the Commission's review process, including data used, analytical process, and the nature and purpose of initial public input.

Public Input and Commission Response

Public opinion on the proper way to determine electoral boundaries was varied. Many participants advocated for a "parity-based" model in which the population of all electoral districts is identical, based on the concept that each vote should carry an equal weight to the greatest extent possible. The Commission's response to this was to acknowledge that while this model of perfect parity may be theoretically ideal, it is practically impossible, and in a province such as Alberta, with diverse landscapes, population density, cultures and histories, forcing election parity would result in significant inequity in terms of how individuals are represented between elections. The Commission also explained that while strict parity is common in the United States, it has never been applied in an Alberta or Canadian context, and that existing legal decisions support the concept that voter equity is actually tied to varied electoral district sizes, as long as these variances are justified and reasonable in the context of the characteristics of the jurisdiction and the guiding legislation.

The Commission also received significant input from those concerned that boundary changes would erode rural representation by shifting a larger proportion of electoral districts to urban centres (particularly Edmonton and Calgary). Rural participants emphasized that sparseness and large geography must be a driving factor in limiting the geographic size of rural electoral divisions (even if this results in proportionally lower than average populations in each district), and that technology in rural areas is not always reliable, not always accessible, and not a substitute for reasonable direct access to an elected representative. Input in this area also emphasized that rural MLAs represent Indigenous and First Nations reserves and communities, a responsibility not shared by urban MLAs. The economic contributions of rural Alberta were also cited as requiring proper "representation."

The Commission spent significant space in the interim report discussing the importance of maintaining rural representation, as well as the challenges of doing so within the constraints of the Act. They repeatedly referenced the practical challenges that MLAs face in representing large rural areas, and acknowledge that expanding rural ridings even more would exacerbate this, and could risk undermining effective representation. They also acknowledged that not all rural areas are uniform, and effective representation is further informed by factors such as history, community interest, transportation routes, and others. While the Commission clearly showed an understanding of why rural representation matters, it is less clear whether they fully exercised their available powers to ensure rural Albertans were adequately represented. It should be noted that the Commission also heard significant input from northern Alberta MLAs and residents, and viewed the issues of sparseness and travel challenges as even more acute in these regions, due to both the vast size, as well as the limited infrastructure and shadow populations.

The Commission also heard from rural MLAs and constituents that although challenges associated with distance and travel are not an issue in urban areas, increasingly dense, diverse, and fast-growing urban electoral districts present unique representation challenges not found in rural areas. While it is unclear if and how the Commission directly considered such urban-specific challenges, the much more rapid

population growth in Edmonton and Calgary resulted in each city receiving one of the two new electoral districts.

The Commission also received significant input that was more local or regional in nature, and focused on how electoral boundaries should intersect with municipal boundaries, rivers, highways, etc.

Significant Recommendations

The Commission's primary task is to review and, if they deem it necessary as per the legislation, update the boundaries of the 87 existing electoral districts in Alberta, and add two additional districts. It is beyond the scope of this document to summarize the changes proposed to every electoral district. Some of the most notable proposed changes include:

- ◆ Assign one each of the new electoral districts to Edmonton and Calgary.
- ◆ Reduce the number of electoral districts in what the Commission termed the "rural central-west of the province" from six to five (by removing Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre), as a means to increase the number of electoral districts in the Airdrie-Cochrane area from two to three.
- ◆ Reduce the number of electoral districts in northern Alberta from seven to six.
- ◆ Make significant boundary changes in rural areas between Calgary and the U.S. border, particularly in relation to the Cardston-Siksika riding.
- ◆ Increase the number of hybrid electoral districts (inclusive of both urban and rural communities) from 18 to 23.
- ◆ Expand the use of hybrid electoral districts to include parts of Edmonton and Calgary.

Note that many individual rural and hybrid ridings have had boundaries adjusted, or in some cases have been merged. Based on RMA's analysis, nearly all individual changes relate in some way to the high-level adjustments listed above and discussed in detail in the interim report.

Member Participation

Importance of Member Involvement

The Commission’s responsibility is to update Alberta’s electoral boundaries to ensure that every Albertan has effective representation in the provincial government, taking into consideration how the term has been defined in Canada through the Courts, as well as Alberta’s geographic and social diversity.

The Commission has stated in the interim report that their work “is to create a province-wide political blueprint. Not all the rooms are the same size—but the proposed foundation is solid. This is necessary for the house of democracy we call Alberta.” At this point in the review process, it is crucial that RMA members and rural residents share their perspective on whether the Commission has properly “sized their room” by applying a local lens to the Commission’s decisions made in the electoral districts that overlap with their municipal boundaries. It is highly unlikely that the Commission will revisit their full suite of work in relation to high-level arguments about rural representation; they have heard these arguments repeatedly throughout the first engagement, and reference them heavily in the interim report. What will matter to the Commission at this point, and what has the greatest likelihood to result in changes to the interim report, is input from individuals or stakeholders (such as municipalities) related to concerns or feedback with individual electoral districts.

Ways to Participate

Written Submission

- ◆ Deadline: December 19, 2025
- ◆ How to submit: Complete the online form or upload a separate submission by [clicking here](#).
- ◆ There does not appear to be any rules or limitations on the length, format, or focus of written submissions.

Public Meeting

- ◆ Dates and locations:
 - ◇ Calgary (in-person)
 - January 12, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, 5:30pm – 8:30pm
 - January 13, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm
 - January 14, 9:00am – 12:30pm
 - ◇ Northern Alberta (virtual)
 - January 15, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm
 - ◇ South and Central Alberta (virtual)
 - January 15, 5:30pm – 8:30pm
 - January 16, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm
 - ◇ Edmonton (in-person)
 - January 19, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, 5:30pm – 8:30pm
 - ◇ January 20, 9:00am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, 5:30pm – 8:30pm
- ◆ For more information or to register, [click here](#).
 - ◇ To request an opportunity to present at a public meeting, [click here](#).

RMA’s Involvement

RMA plans to make a written submission responding to the interim report with a focus on clarifying the extent to which the Commission exercised their ability to consider factors such as sparsity and travel distances, as well as s. 15(2) powers to exceed population variances. RMA has also requested to make a presentation at an in-person meeting in January to share similar input.

Participating Strategically

As mentioned, the input with the highest likelihood of influencing the Commission’s work at this point is that focused on specific ridings. As such, rural municipalities are well-positioned to provide compelling input as to why the proposed electoral boundaries overlapping with their municipality require change.

The questions below will assist members in determining the local/regional impact of the Commission’s proposed changes, and framing input that is likely to resonate with the Commission based on their mandate and the legislative restrictions on their scope. The more of the questions below that your municipality can answer “yes” to, the more likely the Commission will seriously consider your input, and potentially amend their initial recommendations.

Is the Commission proposing changes to electoral boundaries overlapping your municipality?

The Commission has made no changes to nine districts electoral districts, and in their words, “changes to many others are modest.” While members that may not be locally impacted by change but are still concerned about broader impacts on effective representation in rural Alberta are encouraged to make a submission, those that are directly impacted are most likely to influence the Commission’s work at this point.

To determine whether electoral districts overlapping with your municipality are proposed for change, view page 40 of the interim report, which provides an overview of the Commission’s rationale for change in all 89 electoral districts. The maps for proposed districts and all of Alberta are in Appendix G of the interim report or [available here](#).

Are the changes significant in terms of the population included within the electoral district?

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* permits the Commission to establish electoral divisions with a population up to 25% above or below the provincial per-riding average (54,929). In the interim report, the Commission states an intent to utilize this ability when required to recognize the challenges of representation in sparsely populated rural areas. If your municipality overlaps one or more ridings that have been modified or expanded to significantly increase the riding’s total population, particularly if population growth in the area has been minor, emphasizing this change and its impact on the effective representation of those in the new riding will likely resonate with this Commission.

Some examples of major changes in comparison to the 2017 recommendations include:

2017 riding	Population	2025 riding (proposed)	Population
Central Peace-Notley	28,993	Peace River-Notley	48,602
Lesser Slave Lake	27,818	Slave Lake-Westlock-Athabasca	46,076
Peace River	39,974	Peace River-Notley	48,602
Taber-Warner	42,625	Cardston-Taber-Warner	54,933

The table above is not exhaustive but provides some examples of significant change in rural areas. Members are encouraged to compare the population table beginning on page 108 of the interim report with the list of electoral division populations on page 59 of the [2017 Commission report](#) to understand changes impacting their municipality.

It should also be noted that the Commission has chosen to utilize their “s. 15(2) powers” to exceed the 25% population variance threshold for only one electoral district (Mackenzie), despite having the ability

to utilize this power for up to four electoral districts. If your municipality is located far from a large population centre and intersects with a provincial border, there may be value in recommending further use of s. 15(2), or at minimum requesting clarity from the Commission on whether they considered this power in your region. However, note that the requirements for utilizing s. 15(2) powers are narrow, as explained on page 4 of this document.

Are the changes significant in terms of the geographic size of the electoral district?

There is no requirement or threshold in the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* as to the geographic size or area of an electoral district. Similarly, the interim report does not directly compare or otherwise address the specific area of various districts. However, the Commission does acknowledge that the large areas that define many rural districts present significant challenges for both MLAs and constituents, including an acknowledgement that “many urban challenges can be overcome by hiring additional staff. Travel distances in rural areas cannot be solved in the same manner.”

Neither the 2025 nor the 2017 reports include a list of the area of electoral districts. However, anyone familiar with a given region can determine whether the electoral district size has changed significantly by comparing the maps included in each review. Additionally, if the Commission significantly alters the boundary of an electoral division, they will generally explain the extent and rationale of the change in the interim report.

Do the changes place some or all of your municipality in a “hybrid riding?”

“Hybrid ridings,” which are electoral divisions that include communities with both urban and rural characteristics, are more heavily utilized in the proposed electoral boundaries than in the previous structure. Specifically, the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* was amended to allow hybrid ridings that include Edmonton and Calgary; such ridings were previously only permitted outside the two large cities. The Commission explains that in Alberta, Courts have confirmed hybrid ridings as a reasonable means of supporting effective representation, particularly in a context of a growing and urbanizing population.

While hybrid ridings have been present in some parts of Alberta for decades, the Commission’s consideration of expanded use drew significant public opposition. According to the Commission, opposition was primarily based on the concept that urban and rural residents have distinct perspectives and priorities, and combining those into one electoral district will erode both voices. It is also notable that some participants, particularly those located in existing hybrid ridings, expressed support for the concept to balance the complex and sometimes overlapping perspectives of urban/rural boundary areas.

Appendix F of the interim report defines “hybrid electoral divisions” and provides a list of both current and proposed. The number of hybrid ridings would increase from 18 to 23, which would include three involving Calgary and two involving Edmonton.

Given the Commission’s emphasis on discussing the risks and benefits of hybrid ridings and justifying their expanded use, it is likely that municipalities or other stakeholders that have land included in a hybrid riding and provide input related to its impacts on effective representation will resonate with the Commission. It is important to note that due to the legislative rules guiding the Commission’s work, it would be very difficult, or even impossible to significantly reduce or eliminate the number of hybrid ridings without increasing the number of urban-only ridings and decreasing the number of rural-only ridings. Despite this, specific local concerns with individual hybrid ridings may spur the Commission to reconsider, particularly for the new hybrid ridings including Edmonton or Calgary.

Do the changes divide your municipality among more electoral divisions than they were previously within?

The Commission makes multiple references to the importance of aligning electoral district boundaries with municipal boundaries as much as possible, and in limiting the number of electoral districts overlapping with a single municipality. If your municipality already has a disproportionately high number of overlapping electoral districts, or the proposed changes will increase the number of electoral districts overlapping your municipality, a clear explanation of the local challenges this presents, both for the municipality and for individual constituents, is likely to resonate with the Commission.

Do the changes result in boundaries that do not align with local community groupings, a major transportation route, or other significant geographic feature?

The Commission has acknowledged that defining rural electoral boundaries is challenging as there are often significant connections or similarities among small urban municipalities and hamlets scattered across large rural areas that may not be evident based on a map, but would justify containing them within the same riding. Similarly, they acknowledge that natural features such as rivers or mountains may serve as informal local boundaries that should inform electoral divisions. Thirdly, roadways or major transportation corridors often unite communities that may not be in especially close geographic proximity, but may interact closely in terms of economic development, community events, etc.

If you are aware of such features in your municipality or general region that are not reflected in electoral boundaries, there is value in explaining the connection, the relevance to the community, and the risks of not aligning electoral boundaries to match. This issue is likely most visible in the Commission's proposal to divide many northern communities that are strongly linked to one another into separate electoral divisions through the decision to reduce the number of northern electoral divisions from seven to six. However, there are likely other instances of current boundaries being ill-suited to local community connections, or proposed changes exacerbating existing issues.

Key Takeaways for an Effective Submission

Regardless of whether and to what extent your municipality can answer "yes" and provide examples to the above questions, RMA encourages all members to review the interim report through a local and broader rural lens and provide input to the Commission. General themes that all submissions should emphasize are:

Effective representation

This concept has guided the Commission's work more than any other (based on the interim report). While "effective representation" has a strong legal foundation, it is based on the idea that "effective" does not mean "identical." All ridings should not have an identical population, area, or character, because this does not reflect Alberta's diversity in all three areas. Forming your input in relation to whether the proposed structure reflects effective representation for the residents of your municipality will be integral to whether it informs changes from the Commission. Pages 6-14 of the interim report discuss effective representation in detail.

Focus on local

The interim report details the challenges that the Commission faced in properly considering the various factors informing electoral boundaries within their legislative scope. As such, it is unlikely that general calls to increase the number of rural ridings will have an impact at this point in the process. The key to

influencing the Commission's remaining work will be to rely on local examples to call for changes to specific electoral divisions or regions.

Provide ideas or solutions

Similar to above, general calls for more representation in a given municipality are unlikely to be taken seriously by the Commission. However, using local expertise to provide specific ways that rural representation can be enhanced may be just the type of support the Commission is looking for. This could be as simple as recommending a specific boundary be shifted to better align with a geographic feature, municipal boundary, or to unite two connected communities within a single electoral district.