



April 20, 2018

Hon. Christina Gray, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal  
Alberta Labour Minister  
107 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
Canada T5K 2B6

Issue: Proposed amendments to Alberta’s Lobbyists Act could negatively impact constituency engagement

Dear Minister Gray:

On behalf of the community chambers who represent over 25,000 Albertan employers in the province, the Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) is writing to express our concerns regarding Bill 11: Lobbyists Amendment Act. Specifically, that the proposed changes to the reporting thresholds requiring registration with the Alberta Lobbyist Registration would have unintended consequences not in the public interest.

Reduction of the lobbying time threshold, from 100 to 50 hours, and the inclusion of “preparatory time” and “grassroots communication” as lobbying activities, would dramatically change the reporting requirements for many community-serving organizations. In turn, the proposed requirements would increase administrative burdens on organizations with limited staff resources, including local chambers.

Changes to the reporting requirements may force chambers to limit activities which benefit their local community by connecting government with constituents. Organizing traditional community activities like luncheons with elected officials is one important example. Developing and circulating regular newsletters to local chamber members and community partners is another. Often, at the request of government, these communications include educational content and resources directed at the business audience.

It is essential that government engage with business at the local level. Grassroots communication is critical to that engagement. As such, in amending legislation, it is critical to avoid the creation of red tape that could unnecessarily limit healthy communication activities which support an informed and civically engaged public.

We look forward to meeting with you and the Ethics Commissioner prior to Third Reading of Bill 11 to redress the potential for inhibiting the free flow and quality of communication between government and constituents. At your earliest convenience, please contact me so we can schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Kobly', is written over a large, faint, light-grey watermark of the ACC logo.

Ken Kobly  
President and CEO

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CC: Marguerite Trussler, Q.C., Alberta Ethics Commissioner

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