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Resolution 12-24F

Accountability in the Establishment of an Independent Agency Police Service in Alberta

**Date:**

November 2024

Expiry Date:

December 2027

Current Status:

Intent Not Met

Sponsors:

County of Northern Lights, Thorhild County

District:

3 – Pembina River, 4 – Northern

Year:

2024

Convention:

Fall

Category:

Community Services

Status:

Intent Not Met

Vote Results:

Carried

Preamble:

WHEREAS the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) has been clear in its opposition to the creation of an Alberta Provincial Police Service; and

WHEREAS RMA has formally requested that rural municipalities be consulted on proposed Police Act changes and the future of policing in Alberta; and

WHEREAS the regulation implementing the current Police Funding Model, introduced by the Government of Alberta in 2020, is due to expire at the end of 2024; and

WHEREAS an independent agency police service may be created by the Government of Alberta through unilateral amendments to the Police Act that were not considered by municipalities or key stakeholders prior to their introduction and adoption; and

WHEREAS while an independent agency police service may provide supportive functions to existing Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), municipal, or Indigenous and First Nations Police Services, no consultation was provided to any such existing agency, thereby not accounting for cost, personnel, or other service impacts; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has confirmed and committed to the RCMP's role in providing contract policing until the end of current contract agreements in 2032 and beyond for all interested contract partners, as communicated to all provincial ministers of Public Safety in Spring 2024;

Operative Clause:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta advocate that the Government of Alberta provide a public itemized costing of any independent agency police service, complete with a detailing of costs borne by municipalities through the existing or a future Police Funding Model facilitated by the Government of Alberta;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Alberta not introduce an independent agency police service prior to substantive consultation and meaningful significant majority support from municipalities and Albertans-at-large.

Introduced on March 13, 2024, Bill 11, the Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 amends the Police Act to create an independent agency police service (IAPS) and oversight board (OB). Of concern to all Alberta municipalities is the ability granted through the legislation for Alberta's Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services to launch an IAPS in any area of the province without significant mechanisms for the involvement and consideration of local leadership.

Details such as a timeline, full consideration of the scope or mandate, governance and oversight, municipal engagement, recruitment and retention, detailed costs, deployment and more regarding the implementation of an IAPS are not currently available to municipalities and Albertans. The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services has stated that the intention of the legislation is for IAPS officers to take on "police-like functions" that are currently carried out by the Alberta Sheriffs and to support the Alberta RCMP, municipal police services, and First Nations police services. However, the inclusion of the IAPS through this legislation in the Police Act means that any possible IAPS officer is of the same legislative position as other police officers in Alberta. This is contrary to expanding the role of the Alberta Sheriffs, as Sheriffs are granted authorities under the existing Peace Officer Act. With the next iteration of the Police Funding Model due to be implemented for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, these considerations must be duly examined prior to any future changes in the costs levied to municipalities for their public safety services, and prior to any further advancement toward the establishment of any IAPS.

Municipalities and public safety partners such as the Alberta Sheriffs, the Alberta RCMP, or municipal police agencies like the Edmonton Police Service or Calgary Police Service were not consulted on this legislation. Without the fulsome consultation and involvement of key stakeholders and local leaders throughout the bill's development, the legislation does not comprehensively consider the impact it will have on any municipality that is under the jurisdiction of a possible IAPS. The Rural Municipalities of Alberta have formally expressed opposition to the launch of an Alberta Provincial Police Service and

changes made to the Police Act without due consultation, per resolution 4-22S and resolution 2-21S. The consideration of this Bill without due consultation with municipalities adds to the amount of legislative changes, programs, and other initiatives implemented unilaterally by the Government without recognizing municipalities' role in governance and the advancement of their communities' interests.

RMA Background:

4-22S: Continued Support for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Alberta

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Municipalities of Alberta request that the Government of Alberta not create an Alberta Provincial Police Service.

Click here (<https://rmalberta.com/resolutions/4-22s-continued-support-for-the-royal-canadian-mounted-police-in-alberta/>) to view the full resolution.

Government Response:

Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services

In regard to resolution 12-24F, which requests accountability in the establishment of an Independent Agency Police Service, the new independent agency would perform policing functions currently carried out by and planned for peace officers in the Alberta sheriffs, who have taken on more police-like roles over the past several decades. As such, it is prudent to improve civilian oversight by creating a dedicated police service. This change to having policing roles carried out by police officers under the authority of the Police Act, rather than being conducted by peace officers under the Peace Officer Act and aligns with best practices for police work and would result in more transparency and accountability for the public.

It is important to note that this legislation does not create a provincial police service to replace the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Rather, this new independent agency would strengthen the current policing model and augment the efforts of Alberta's police services, whether the RCMP, First Nations police services, or municipal police services.

This legislation also established the Independent Police Agency Police Service Oversight Board, ensuring that when this agency is established, it will have the same civilian oversight, police governance, and accountability mechanisms as all other police services in Alberta, including relevant provisions in the Police Act, the Police Service Regulation, and the Alberta Provincial Policing

Standards.
Development:

Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Service's response did not commit to or directly oppose the resolution. For example, the resolution requested an independent police service should not be created without majority public approval. Despite a lack of public support, the ministry's response outlines their commitment to create a dedicated provincial police service that would exist alongside the RCMP. Their response did not commit to provide a detailed costing list for an independent police service. With the introduction of Bill 49, which creates an independent police agency without a detailed cost analysis, RMA will continue to monitor the implementation of the bill and advocate accordingly.

This resolution is assigned a status of **Intent Not Met**.

Provincial Ministries:

Public Safety and Emergency Services

Provincial Boards and Organizations:

None reported.

Federal Ministries and Bodies:

None reported.

Internal Notes:

None reported.