RMA
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES *of* ALBERTA

Bill 50: *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025*

– RMA Analysis

April 2025

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Bill 50 – Overview

Bill 50: *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* was introduced to the Legislative Assembly on April 8, 2025. The Bill proposes a wide range of changes to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), the *Local Authorities Elections Act* (LAEA), the *New Home Buyer Protection Act* (NHBPA), and the *Safety Codes Act* (SCA).

Bill 50 makes changes that impact rural municipalities in varied and significant ways. Changes to the MGA completely restructure the intermunicipal collaboration framework (ICF) process to narrow the scope of the services that can be included in ICFs, as well as expectations or requirements for use of data and joint input into service levels and capital costs for intermunicipal services. It also makes major changes to municipal governance by eliminating codes of conduct, empowering the Minister to standardize council meeting procedures, greatly increasing chief administrative officer (CAO) reporting requirements to council, and ensuring that official administrators have greater access to council meetings and municipal information.

The changes made by Bill 50 to the other Acts are significant as well. Most notably for the LAEA are changes that further entrench the existence of political parties in the campaigning and election process, as well as changes to campaign finance rules that entrench a financial advantage for party-affiliated candidates. NHBPA changes increase the scope of new home warranty requirements and make it more difficult for owner-builders to receive an exemption. This may be positive for those purchasing a new home from a developer but could create additional challenges for those building their own home, especially in rural areas. Changes to the SCA allow the Minister to seek advice from the Safety Codes Council regarding the building or construction of a new home, the requirements applicable to a home warranty insurance contract, and the licensing requirements applicable to a residential builder. SCA amendments also require appointees to the Safety Codes Council to have experience with home warranty coverage under the NHBPA.

How to Use this Document

This document is intended to provide members with an overview and analysis of the most significant changes made in Bill 50. It does not include every change made in Bill 50. Members seeking clarity or analysis on a Bill 50 change not included in the document are encouraged to contact RMA's Policy and Advocacy Department.

Each legislative change included in the document features an overview of the previous status, the amended status, and a summary and/or analysis. Note that in some cases, the previous status and amended status uses the direct language from the applicable Act and Bill 50. In other cases, if the direct language is too long or would require references to other sections of the Act to contextualize, summary language is used.

The summary/analysis section is based on RMA's interpretation of how the change will be implemented/operationalized and how it is likely to impact RMA members. In some cases, when impacts are not yet known or likely to be neutral or insignificant, the section primarily serves as a summary or explanation. In other cases, when the change is likely to significantly impact RMA members (positively or negatively) or relates to an existing RMA position, analysis is provided.

Changes to the Municipal Government Act

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs)

Definition of "Mandatory Service", S. 708.26

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
There was no existing definition of mandatory services that must be contemplated in the ICF Process.	S. 708.26(1) is amended by adding the following after clause (b): "mandatory service" means a mandatory service referred to in section 708.29(1.1).	The new definition defines a **"**mandatory service" as transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste, emergency services, and recreation. The addition of this list of mandatory services has the effect of requiring that parties to an ICF discuss these services as part of the ICF development process. It does not require that these services are delivered through an ICF if the parties agree that it is not required.

ICF Agreement, S. 708.28

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 708.28(1) Municipalities that have common boundaries must create a framework with each other by April 1, 2020, unless they are members of the same growth management board.	S. 708.28(1)(1.1) Subject to subsections (1.2) and (1.3), subsection (1) does not apply to municipal districts with common boundaries if they determine and agree that they do not require a framework.	Under the proposed amendment, rural municipalities (counties and municipal districts) that share a municipal boundary will have the option to opt out of an ICF given: ◆ The decision to opt out is mutually agreed upon ◆ Municipalities review all existing agreements prior to determining and agreeing that an ICF is not necessary ◆ Municipalities send a council resolution to the Minister ◆ Municipalities publish the decision for the public ◆ Either rural municipality may revoke its agreement to forgo an ICF with its neighbouring rural municipality by writing, at any time. When this occurs, the rural municipalities have one year to develop an ICF.

ICF Planning and Implementation Requirements, S. 708.29 and 708.33

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 708.29(1) A framework must describe the services to be provided under it that benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities that are parties to the framework.	Addition of s. 708.29(0.1)(a), which states "costs for intermunicipal services" means operating, capital and other non-operating costs required to deliver the services.	While RMA has advocated for greater clarity and definition of critical terms used in the ICF process (such as "service" and "intermunicipal") it is unclear how this amendment will provide meaningful guidance as to what may be a reasonable cost linked to service delivery for the purposes of an ICF. From RMA's perspective, operating, capital, and non-operating costs would appear to include virtually any cost incurred by a municipality. While other changes to ICF requirements may off-set the risk of the use of such a broad definition in this area, RMA foresees situations in which municipalities may attempt to allocate general administrative or governance costs to a specific service using this definition, which is likely to add complexity to negotiations and does not align with the spirit and purpose of ICFs, which is to support collaboration linked to direct delivery of intermunicipal services.
	S. 708.29(0.1) (b) "third-party services" means services provided by a third party that is (i) a corporation independent from the municipalities to whom the services are provided, and (ii) the only services provider authorized under an enactment to provide the services it provides in or to the municipalities that are parties to a framework.	The amendment provides a definition for "third-party services", which specifies that for the purpose of an ICF, a "third-party service" is one for which a third-party is legislatively required to provide it. RMA's understanding is that this would apply to services such as libraries, policing, post offices, and others that involve a requirement that an outside entity is involved in service delivery. It is RMA's understanding that this definition would not apply to cases in which a municipality makes a local decision to contract a service to a third-party (such as solid waste collection). RMA is also seeking further clarity on how this provision would apply to policing. While the *Police Act* mandates a prescriptive list of policing service delivery mechanisms, it does not mandate that policing be provided by a third-party, and several municipalities in the province have chosen to form their own municipal police service. Because for many municipalities, policing costs are fixed based on an external formula (police funding model) and it is impractical for the majority of municipalities in the province to form a municipal police service, RMA is seeking clarity on how this provision impacts policing costs. This definition is relevant in relation to s. 708.29 (1.2), which specifically states that third-party services cannot be included in ICFs and ensures municipalities are not drawn into negotiations over services they do not fully control, helping to maintain the integrity and purpose of the ICF process in supporting collaboration among municipalities.

	S. 708.29 (1.1) The content of the framework required under subsection (1) must address the provision of the following mandatory services: (a) transportation; (b) water and wastewater; (c) solid waste; (d) emergency services; (e) recreation.	All ICFs must now address five core service areas: transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste, emergency services, and recreation. This removes ambiguity and focuses ICFs on services that typically involve joint use or impact both parties, reducing the risk of municipalities being drawn into funding services from which their residents derive little or no benefit. It is important to note that this amendment does not require these services to be delivered jointly but does require each to be discussed within the ICF process.
	S. 708.29 (1.2) Municipalities may include additional services in the framework, other than third-party services.	If mutually agreed upon, other services in addition to the five mandated services may be included in an ICF (except for legislated third-party services). The ability to include or exclude additional services by mutual agreement reinforces the principle that intermunicipal collaboration should be based on local context and mutual benefit. This amendment is best understood in conjunction with the amendment made to s. 708.34 related to the scope of arbitration. S. 708.34 now limits arbitration to disagreements on the five mandatory services outlined in the row above. This means that if both involved municipalities do not agree to including a non-mandatory service in an ICF, or the terms by which service delivery responsibilities are shared, there is no recourse for that disagreement to be settled or the non-mandatory service to be included. In practice, this means that a non-mandatory service can only be included in an ICF if both municipalities agree that it is “intermunicipal,” and agree on specific terms.
	S. 708.29 (1.4) Municipalities may establish in a framework a cost calculation model respecting the costs for intermunicipal services.	The introduction of s. 708.29 does not mandate municipalities establish a cost calculation model, but it does signal an expectation that municipalities collaborate to develop a common methodology for measuring service delivery costs as part of the ICF process. While this is a positive step in encouraging municipalities to approach ICF development through a data-supported lens, the legislation does not provide a definition or otherwise clarify as to what a “cost calculation model” is, how it should be used in the process, or the process to be taken if municipalities agree (or disagree) on its use or the correct methodology. For this amendment to lead to an increase in data-informed ICF development, it will be crucial for Municipal Affairs to work with RMA and other stakeholders to emphasize the importance and value of

		using data, as well as capacity and financial supports to assist municipalities in gathering appropriate data related to both costs, current service usage, and service level requirements or expectations.
	S. 708.29(1.5) Each municipality in a framework must disclose to the others any information, data or assumptions it is relying on in arriving at its proposal for a cost calculation model.	The allowance for municipalities to mutually develop cost calculation models, with associated data-sharing requirements, supports more transparent, evidence-based negotiations. S. 708.29(1.5) will be helpful in further creating an expectation that municipalities utilize data during the negotiation process and enhance accountability and transparency in terms of how municipalities are establishing their positions related to shared service delivery. However, it does not address what, if any, recourse is available if a municipality lacks data, uses inaccurate, irrelevant, or poor-quality data, or refuses to acknowledge data provided by the other municipality. The assumed recourse would be to seek arbitration as to the validity and relevance of data, but this may be complex and contentious without some standard or expectation as what level of data is sufficient for negotiations.
	S.708.29(1.7) The capital costs for a new facility providing mandatory services may only be included in a framework if, by a prior agreement, all municipalities that are party to the framework have participated in the design of and decision to construct the facility.	The inclusion of s. 708.29(1.7) is a significant addition to limit the extent to which municipalities that may not host capital assets providing a regional service are expected to contribute to the costs of that capital asset. The initial round of ICF negotiations included some instances of municipalities seeking cost contribution commitments from municipal neighbours on major capital projects that were in early planning stages, or even in a long-term conceptual stage. The addition of this section will ensure that contributing municipalities have the ability to request specific input into new capital projects as a condition of contributing, or to simply decline to contribute to a new capital project. This is an important change to ensure equitability between host and contributing municipalities in terms of long-term capital cost responsibilities.

	S. 708.29(1.8) The prior agreement referred to in subsection (1.7) must contain provisions reflecting that the municipalities have addressed and agreed to the nature of the participation of each municipality in the decision to design and construct the facility.	In relation to the capital costs within an ICF, all parties must agree upon the roles and responsibilities (i.e. the work) that each party undertakes. This is a positive inclusion in conjunction with the section outlined in the row above.
	S. 708.29 (1.91) The Minister may make regulations relating to the inclusion of capital costs in a framework.	It is likely that this amendment is intended to allow the Minister to provide more prescriptive direction on the inclusion of capital costs beyond the inclusion of s. 708.29(1.7) and s. 708.29(1.8). It may also allow for more direction in terms of how capital costs for existing assets are addressed in ICFs. Ideally, RMA supports local decision-making in this area, with the added guidance of the changes to new capital costs, and plans to seek more information on if, when and how the Minister may use this power.
S. 708.33(1) In order to create a framework, the municipalities that are to be parties to the framework must each adopt a bylaw or resolution that contains the framework.	S. 708.33(0.1) In this section, "act in good faith" means to (a) act honestly, respectfully and reasonably, (b) communicate appropriately, (c) share necessary information,	This amendment provides a definition of "act in good faith." The addition of the definition provides clearer expectations for municipal conduct during ICF negotiations. RMA supports this clarity, as it encourages respectful, honest, and informed discussions, which may improve cooperation. However, the broad and subjective nature of terms like "reasonable," "necessary," and "appropriate" may limit enforceability and create challenges in resolving disputes if parties interpret these standards differently.

(3) In creating or reviewing a framework, the municipalities must negotiate in good faith.	(d) meet through authorized representatives, and (e) be willing and prepared to discuss all issues and explain all rationale.	

ICF Arbitration, S. 708.34-43

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 708.34 applied broadly to enable arbitration in situations in which municipalities failed to reach agreement on an ICF under any circumstances.	S. 708.34 narrows the scope of arbitration by specifying that it only applies when the inability to agree is due to a matter involving a mandatory service listed in s. 708.29(1.1): ◆ Transportation ◆ Water and wastewater ◆ Solid waste ◆ Emergency services ◆ Recreation Note that this change is further enabled/operationalized by an amendment to s. 708.35(1).	This amendment helps ensure the process remains a last resort, limited to unresolved mandatory service areas. As addressed above, this also essentially prevents non-mandatory services from being included in ICFs unless the inclusion and terms are mutually agreed upon, as there is no conflict resolution recourse available for non-mandatory services.

S. 708.36(7) An arbitrator must not make an award… (d) that is contrary to an intermunicipal development plan under Part 17 or a growth plan.	S. 708.36(7) An arbitrator must not make an award… (d) that is contrary to an intermunicipal development plan under Part 17 or a growth plan, (d.1) that negates a matter, in relation to the award, that the municipalities have agreed to, unless that matter is beyond the municipalities' jurisdiction, (d.2) that addresses a matter not previously discussed by the municipalities,	Arbitrators and municipalities must keep the arbitration under s. 708.34 to the narrow list of topics that initiated the arbitration, and municipalities may not introduce new matters into the arbitration process not previously contemplated. This limits the scope of the arbitrator's power to issues for which the municipalities are actively at odds. It also prevents municipalities from introducing issues that were not previously discussed during the initial negotiation. This was an issue in some situations during the first round of ICF negotiations.
S. 708.4(1) Where an arbitrator makes an award respecting a framework, the municipalities are bound by the award and must, within 60 days after the date of the award, adopt a framework in accordance with the award.	S. 708.4(1) Where an arbitrator makes an award respecting a framework, (a) the arbitrator must ensure the preparation of the framework that reflects or incorporates the award and submit it to the municipalities within 30 days after the award is finalized, and (b) the municipalities are bound by the award and must, within 60 days after the date the arbitrator submits the framework to the municipalities, adopt the framework in accordance with the award. (1.01) The arbitrator must provide a copy of the award and the framework to the Minister within 30 days after the award is finalized.	The amendment adds additional checkpoints to ensure that the decision rendered by the arbitration has begun to be implemented. Work must be initiated within 30 days of the arbitrator's decision. The municipalities are bound by the decision and must submit a framework that abides by the decision within 60 days after the decision is rendered. The arbitrator must give that decision and the framework that resulted to the minister within 30 days of the framework being finalized. This inclusion of specific timeframes related to the arbitrator's requirements in providing a final decision places a proportional level of accountability on arbitrators to act in a timely manner and allow consistency across the province in terms of the amount of time municipalities have to adopt a framework in alignment with the arbitrator's direction.

There were no previous provisions for the Minister to order a municipality to pay arbitration costs.	S. 708.41(3) If a municipality fails to pay its proportion of the arbitrator's costs, the Minister may order the municipality to pay its proportion of the costs. (4) If the municipality fails to comply with the Minister's order under subsection (3), the Minister may take any measure set out in section 708.43(3) and shall provide reasons to the municipality for taking any of the measures.	The amendment addition allows the Minister to order payment and, failing payment, order any measure necessary to claim the funds. While this amendment makes sense in terms of requiring accountability on the part of involved municipalities, it is disappointing that it was not accompanied by other amendments to how arbitration costs are allocated among involved municipalities. In some cases, municipalities may be reluctant to pay because they view their share of costs as unfair or inequitable. RMA requested changes to s. 708.41 to address how arbitration costs are allocated but this was not addressed in Bill 50.
S. 708.43(2) empowered the Minister to take necessary measures if a municipality failed to comply with an ICF, including the withholding of funds from the municipality.	S. 708.43(2) expands the Minister's authority to address non-compliance with either a framework or an arbitrator's award. The Minister can also act if a municipality fails to adopt a framework that reflects a binding arbitrator's award. New powers include imposing a framework on the municipality that reflects the award. The Minister must now provide reasons for any actions taken under this authority.	The amendments give the Minister enhanced authority to enforce arbitrator-created ICFs, including for mandatory services under s. 708.29(1.1): ◆ Transportation ◆ Water and wastewater ◆ Solid waste ◆ Emergency services ◆ Recreation This ensures that municipalities comply with binding arbitration decisions regarding mandatory services.

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks: RMA Quick Analysis

The majority of Bill 50's changes to the ICF process align with RMA's advocacy positions. RMA's ICF priority areas were focused on clarifying the scope and meaning of "service" and "intermunicipal" to ensure a balance of provincewide consistency and local autonomy in the ICF process. RMA also specifically called for restrictions on the inclusion of legislated third-party services as well as the scope of arbitration. Additionally, RMA called for a requirement that financial contributions to an intermunicipal service should be accompanied by corresponding input into the service delivery method and service level.

While RMA views nearly all the ICF-related changes as positive, significant details as to how many will play out in practice are not yet known. Examples include how increased expectations for data usage will be reflected in practice, and how disputes related to non-mandatory services will be addressed if they impact the ability of municipalities to reach agreement on mandatory services.

RMA also plans to continue to advocate for enhanced funding and capacity-building support from the province related to data-gathering and usage, both related to costs and service levels. Overall, the changes place higher expectations on municipalities as to how they develop ICFs, and without proper support, many municipalities will be at high risk of being unable to develop and utilize quality data.

Codes of Conduct and Meeting Procedures

Meeting Procedures, S. 145

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 145(1) A council may, by bylaw, establish the procedures to be followed by the council. (3) Where a council establishes a council committee or other body, the council may, by bylaw, establish the functions of the committee or body and the procedures to be followed by it.	S. 145(4): The Minister may issue orders that: Establish or amend procedures for council and committee meetings and prohibit certain matters from being included in municipal bylaws. These ministerial orders override municipal bylaws in cases of conflict (S. 145(8)). S. 145(7): Councils can pass bylaws on procedures so long as they don't conflict with ministerial orders or include prohibited matters. S. 145(9-10): Councils cannot regulate conduct or create codes of conduct for councillors or non-councillor committee members via bylaw or resolution. Any such bylaws or resolutions in effect prior to this change are automatically repealed. S. 145(11): Councils must update existing bylaws within 6 months of a ministerial order to comply with it. S. 145(12): These ministerial powers do not apply to boards or other bodies established under the Act that are not council committees.	The new provisions under s. 145 remove the ability of municipalities to develop a procedural bylaw, unless it aligns with ministerial guidelines, as referenced in s. 145(4). This will reduce municipal autonomy and centralize authority over municipal meeting and governance processes at the provincial level, as municipalities' procedural rules are now subject to provincial override. The removal of local authority to govern councillor and committee member conduct marks a significant shift in governance dynamics, especially for municipalities that previously maintained codes of conduct. RMA is hoping to work with Municipal Affairs and other municipal stakeholder associations to inform the development of the Minister's orders under s. 145(4) to ensure they are as flexible as possible and continue to allow municipalities to determine the majority of their own meeting procedures.

Codes of Conduct, S. 146, 153

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 146.1(1) A council must, by bylaw, establish a code of conduct governing the conduct of councillors. (2) A code of conduct under subsection (1) must apply to all councillors equally (3) A council may, by bylaw, establish a code of conduct governing the conduct of members of council committees and other bodies established by the council who are not councillors. S. 153 Councillors have the following duties: (e.1) to adhere to the code of conduct established by the council under section 146.1(1).	Repealed.	Bill 50 proposes the full repeal of council codes of conduct. Specific changes include: ◆ All existing municipal bylaws or resolutions addressing council conduct will be repealed. ◆ All existing complaints, investigations, or sanctions related to conduct will be terminated, except those subject to the judicial process, which remain in the jurisdiction of the courts. RMA has previously advocated for improvements to codes of conduct, rather than their removal. The complete removal of codes of conduct – without a clearly articulated plan for a replacement accountability mechanism – presents some potential risks: ◆ Municipalities will lack enforceable tools to address problematic behaviour by council members, particularly conduct occurring outside of formal council meetings. ◆ There is no interim mechanism for accountability, which is especially concerning given the unknown timeline for the creation of a potential provincial integrity commissioner. ◆ The repeal undermines municipal autonomy and self-governance by removing a mechanism to address internal issues at the local level.

Code of Conduct and Meeting Procedures: RMA Quick Analysis

The decision to completely eliminate codes of conduct is significant. While this decision will likely be viewed as a positive by some councils and councillors and a negative by others, it removes any formal accountability mechanism related councillor conduct outside of meetings and limits the ability of municipal staff and the public to raise concerns with the conduct of a councillor. RMA's existing position was that the code of conduct process included significant weaknesses and required improvements related to the investigation and sanctioning process; however, RMA did not advocate for nor expect codes of conduct to be eliminated completely.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs has stated an intent to engage with municipal stakeholders on the possible creation of a provincial integrity commissioner to play a yet-to-be-determined role related to council governance and conduct issues. While this may in the long run enhance the quality of municipal governance, nothing is known about the timing of the engagement process, the likelihood of such a body actually being created, responsibility for costs associated with such a body, or what (if any) internal municipal processes will replace codes of conduct as a local tool to identify and direct governance or conduct concerns to an integrity commissioner. While RMA sees pros and cons to codes of conduct, integrity commissioners, and moving forward with no specific council conduct accountability mechanism, the current approach is quite confusing in that it suggests that there is merit to some sort of accountability regime but leaves municipalities with no available process immediately before and (likely) immediately following an election, when it could be argued the risk of council conduct issues may be highest.

The change to empower the Minister to develop procedural orders that must be applied in all municipalities is, according to Municipal Affairs staff, intended to partially off-set the elimination of codes of conduct by allowing the Minister to mandate certain complaint or dispute resolution processes within council meetings. RMA is concerned with this approach for two reasons:

- This change makes it further unclear why codes of conduct were removed. If the Minister sees a need to prescribe processes in municipal councils to address council conduct, why not just maintain codes of conduct, perhaps with a narrower scope?
- Unlike codes of conduct, which were mandatory for all municipalities to have but could be customized based on local priorities, the change to S. 145 allows the Minister to undermine local autonomy by requiring municipalities to follow very specific meeting processes, even if they are not well-suited to their council structure or dynamics.

RMA expects that the Government of Alberta will engage with municipal stakeholders on changes to meeting procedures. This will be crucial to ensure any ministerial orders are as narrow and unobtrusive as possible.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Accountability

CAO Provisions, S. 205 and 206

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 205(2) Every council must appoint one or more persons to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the position of chief administrative officer. (3) If more than one person is appointed, the council must by bylaw determine how the powers, duties and functions of the position of chief administrative officer are to be carried out.	S. 205(2) Every council must appoint one person to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the position of chief administrative officer. (3) Repealed.	This amendment creates a consistent, singular CAO role in all municipalities across the province.
No previous provision.	S. 206(1.1) A council may not pass a bylaw that varies the requirement of a majority referred to in subsection (1). (1.2) Any provision in a bylaw that varies the requirement of a majority referred to in subsection (1) is repealed on the coming into force of subsection (1.1).	S. 206 addresses the appointment, suspension, and revocation of a CAO by majority vote. The amendments cement a majority vote requirement for appointment, suspension, or revocation of the person in the CAO position.

Use of Natural Person Powers, S. 208

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
No previous provision.	S. 208(3) The chief administrative officer must report to council in writing within 72 hours after the chief administrative officer exercises the municipality's natural person powers under S. 202(1).	RMA has heard several concerns from member municipalities regarding the potential implications of the proposed changes: ◆ The concept of "natural person powers" is broad, encompassing most day-to-day administrative activities (e.g., hiring, contracts, legal settlements, and others). ◆ Requiring a written report to council within 72 hours for each exercise of these powers would significantly increase administrative burdens and blur the lines between governance and operations. ◆ There is a risk of increasing political interference in administrative processes linked to the increased reporting. ◆ It is unclear how this provision would be enforced, or whether non-compliance could be grounds for dismissal "for cause." Importantly, RMA is not aware of any other jurisdiction with similar reporting requirements tied to natural person powers, suggesting this provision is both novel and untested in the municipal governance context. Further, the interplay between the requirement in s. 208.1(1) for CAOs to share responses to individual councillor information requests with council within 72 hours and the natural person power notification rule is unclear and could result in redundant or conflicting obligations.

CAO Duty to Provide Information to Councillors, S. 208.1

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
No previous provision.	S. 208.1(1) …where a councillor requests information from the chief administrative officer or designate, the information must be provided as soon as is practicable. S. 208.1(2) Where the requested information is personal or confidential information, the chief administrative officer designate may refuse to provide the information. S. 208.1(3) Where the chief administrative officer or designate provides information to a councillor, the information must be provided to all other councillors within 72 hours of the information being provided to the councillor. S. 208.1 (4) The chief administrative officer or designate must provide reasons to all councillors for refusing to provide the information requested under subsection (1).	Councillors are already authorized to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the CAO or designate under s. 153(d) of the MGA. This amendment requires the CAO or designate to provide that information to a councillor, unless it involves personal or confidential details that cannot legally be shared. Any information shared must also be given to the rest of council within 72 hours. The CAO must provide reasons to all councillors if specific information cannot be shared. Under the amendments, the Minister can create regulations regarding how the information is provided, and additional factors for determining whether to refuse a request. It is unclear as to the meaning of some of the conditions in s. 208.1(2) that the CAO or designate must consider when determining whether to share confidential information. In particular, the addition of s. 208.1(2)(d), which states that the CAO/designate may consider “any other relevant factor” risks creating confusion among administration and council and may pose a liability risks to the CAO/designate if they inadvertently do not consider a “relevant factor” and share personal information that they should not.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Accountability: RMA Quick Analysis

The changes related to CAO reporting requirements appear to be based on a perceived need for CAOs to provide a broader scope of information to councils in a more streamlined manner. While there is no question that mutual accountability, transparency, and sharing of information is crucial to a strong council-administration relationship, some of the changes made in this area are extremely broad and present a risk of creating unrealistic reporting expectations and an administrative burden on CAOs.

RMA is especially unclear on the practical application of s. 208(3), requiring the CAO to continually report on any use of natural person powers. The MGA (s. 1(f)) defines "natural person powers" as "the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person." While most analysis and summary of Bill 50 to this point has equated natural person powers with actions such as signing contracts and hiring or firing employees, the MGA definition is sufficiently broad that the change could be interpreted as requiring CAOs to report on every single action, task, decision, or conversation they undertake. A broad interpretation such as this would make the requirement virtually impossible to fulfill, and even a narrower interpretation focused on more formal and impactful actions would be onerous; in discussions with several CAOs on this issue, RMA has heard anecdotal estimates that CAOs exercise natural person powers between 20 and 100 times a day. In addition to the practical challenges this change would present, the lack of detail as to what is mean by "report" in s. 208(3) is likely to cause additional confusion. Take, for example, a situation in which a CAO hires a new employee. Some would interpret the change as simply requiring the CAO to report that they hired an employee, while others could interpret it as requiring that council be informed of the employee's name, position, salary, resume, interview evaluation, etc. RMA assumes this is not the intent, but it is a valid interpretation as written.

RMA supports ongoing engagement between Municipal Affairs and municipal stakeholders, including municipal administrator associations, to assess and seek improvements to the council-CAO relationship. In some cases, this could include legislative changes to enhance CAO accountability and transparency. Unfortunately, to RMA's knowledge, the changes in this area in Bill 50 were not based on such consultation and pose a high risk of creating more confusion, red tape, and conflict in some municipalities. At minimum, they will likely increase the workload of CAOs and provide an unclear benefit to councils.

Authority of Official Administrators

Expansion of Rights and Responsibilities of Official Administrators, S. 575(2)

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 575(2) So long as the appointment of an official administrator under this section continues, (a) no bylaw or resolution that authorizes the municipality to incur a liability or to dispose of its money or property has any effect until the bylaw or resolution has been approved in writing by the official administrator, and (b) the official administrator may at any time within 30 days after the passing of any bylaw or resolution disallow it, and the bylaw or resolution so disallowed becomes and is deemed to have always been void.	S. 575(2)(c) the official administrator (i) must be notified by council of any regularly scheduled or special council meetings, (ii) may be present during all meetings of council that are closed to the public except where matters subject to legal privilege are being discussed, (iii) may direct the municipality to provide a copy of any records, except records subject to legal privilege, in the municipality's possession to the official administrator within the time specified by the official administrator, and (iv) must sign or authorize agreements, cheques and other negotiable instruments of the municipality or council in addition to the person signing or authorizing those agreements, cheques and other negotiable instruments under section 213(4).	The amendments dictate an official administrator: ◆ Must be notified of any council meetings ◆ May be present for any meeting of council that is closed to the public except in cases of legal privilege ◆ Is authorized to direct the municipality to provide a copy of any records, except records that are subject to legal privilege ◆ Must sign or authorize agreements, cheques, and other negotiable instruments of the municipality in addition to the person authorizing An official administrator is typically appointed in situations where a municipality is facing significant governance or other challenges. Expanding the administrator's existing powers to ensure they have adequate access to – and involvement in – council meetings and have an expanded role in administrative and financial matters, will ensure they can more effectively support continued municipal governance and operations.

Authority of Official Administrators: RMA Quick Analysis

RMA generally agrees with the Bill 50 changes related to the authority of official administrators. RMA's recent post-dissolution impacts study included a recommendation for an automatic appointment of an official administrator (in a supervisory role) for situations in which municipalities have been voted to dissolve, but prior to the actual date of dissolution. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure the council does not make any material financial decisions that will negatively impact the financial state of the absorbing municipality. While Bill 50 does not make the appointment of an official administrator mandatory in such cases, the expansion of the information to be shared with official administrators and their presence at meetings will ensure they are able to exercise their role more effectively when they are appointed in such situations.

Regulation Making Authority

Defining “Public Interest” and “Policy of Government”, S. 179.2 and S. 603.02

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
No previous provision.	S. 179.2 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations defining “public interest” for the purposes of this Division.	This new provision links to s. 179.1, added through Bill 20 in 2024. S. 179.1 empowers Cabinet to direct a vote to dismiss a councillor if they deem the dismissal to be in the “public interest”. The section does not define “public interest”, allowing the Minister to update the definition through regulation. While Municipal Affairs has indicated that they do not plan to utilize this regulation-making power in the near future, the threat remains, and RMA continues to be opposed to the inclusion of this Cabinet power as it is an infringement on local autonomy. RMA’s original 2024 analysis of s. 179.1 stated, in part, the following: “This change allows the Government of Alberta to wield a constant ‘hammer’ over councillors that speak out against provincial policy, or potentially that disagree with their council colleagues on issues with provincial significance.”
No previous provision.	S. 603.02 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations defining “policy of the Government” for the purposes of section 603.01(e).	This new provision links to s. 603.01, added through 2024’s Bill 20. S. 603.01 empowers Cabinet to order a municipality to amend or repeal a bylaw for several reasons, including if, in Cabinet’s opinion, the bylaw does not align with a “policy of the Government.” This provision would allow the Minister to develop a regulation to define “policy of the Government.” Municipal Affairs has indicated that they intend to develop a regulation under s. 603.02 in the near future. However, RMA continues to oppose the initial inclusion of s. 603.01, as it undermines municipal autonomy. RMA’s original 2024 analysis of s. 603.02 stated, in part, the following: “S. 603.01 challenges local autonomy and municipal decision-making, and provincial intervention could create significant issues for rural municipalities if left unchecked. Giving the province the power to change or repeal bylaws that they disagree with is contrary to the grassroots, conservative, anti-red tape values that this provincial government claims to stand for; based on the RMA’s interpretation, the clause allowing repeal based on misalignment with ‘provincial policy’ allows for exactly this.”

Regulation Making Authority: RMA Quick Analysis

RMA remains opposed to the Bill 20 addition of Cabinet powers that could force a vote to remove councillors and to unilaterally repeal and amend bylaws. The fact that these powers were inserted into the MGA before defining the circumstances in which they could be used is troubling in itself. RMA is also concerned that the most impactful and complex definitions will be developed through regulation, which undermines the democratic process that should be reviewed to develop or amend such contentious terms. While defining “public interest” and “policy of the Government” may have the effect of limiting when Cabinet can exercise these provisions, an overly broad definition in the regulation would allow for significant government over-reach. RMA continues to question the need for these powers, as well as the inclusion of these “catch-all” clauses associated with each, especially when both sections of the Act already include a more specific list of circumstances in which the powers can be exercised by Cabinet.

Changes to the Local Authorities Election Act

Voting, Recounts, Withdrawal, and Campaign Finances

Candidate Withdrawal, S. 32

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 32(1) A person nominated as a candidate may withdraw as a candidate at any time during the nomination period. (2) At any time within 24 hours after the close of the nomination period, if more than the required number of candidates for any particular office are nominated, any person so nominated may withdraw as a candidate for the office for which the candidate was nominated by filing with the returning officer a withdrawal in writing.	S. 32 An individual nominated as a candidate may, at any time during the nomination period or within 24 hours after the close of the nomination period, withdraw as a candidate for the office for which the candidate was nominated by filing a withdrawal in writing with the returning officer.	The amendment removes the legislative requirement that there be more than the required number of candidates for any particular office to permit a party to withdraw as a candidate. This would also, presumably, remove the requirement that there be a minimum number of candidates to hold an election (assuming the number is above 1). RMA is unclear as to the problem this amendment is intended to address. It would appear that this change could cause new challenges by allowing candidates to withdraw after nomination closes even if it results in fewer than the required number of candidates running. RMA's interpretation of this change is that it would allow a candidate to withdraw even if they are the only person running for a position. If this is the case, it is unclear whether the returning officer would be permitted to reopen nominations under s. 31(1).

Voting, S. 48.1, 49, 78, and 84.1

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
No previous provision.	S. 48.1(1) This section applies to an election held in 2025 or 2026 in a local jurisdiction in the same area as the Municipality of Jasper.	The provisions in s. 48.1 lay out the scheme for permitting displaced Jasper residents to vote or be nominated in the upcoming municipal election in October. The individual must have been a resident of Jasper prior to July 22, 2024, and provide a statement that they are still displaced because of the 2024 wildfires, and that they intend to return to Jasper as soon as reasonably practical. The individual must also meet the proof of elector eligibility requirements outlined in s. 53.03.
S. 49(8) No candidate, official agent or scrutineer shall take a photograph or make a copy of the permanent electors register.	S. 49(7.1) Only a returning officer may use a permanent electors register and only as it relates to the exercise of a power or performance of a duty of a returning officer under this Act. (8) For greater certainty, a candidate, official agent or scrutineer shall not access or use the permanent electors register, including, without limitation, taking a photograph or making a copy of the register.	The amendments are made in line with the creation of the "permanent electors register", the catalog of registered voters in Alberta. The addition restricts the power of officers to those listed under the LAEA. The amendment changes the language of s. 49(8) to explicitly include new designations and emphasizes the restriction of sharing or possessing personal information. This is an important amendment to protect the privacy of voters and ensure that candidates cannot use the register to contact or access the personal information of voters.

No previous provision.	S. 49.1 A municipality that prepares a permanent electors register in accordance with s. 49 must, on request, provide a copy of the permanent electors register to another elected authority in the same area.	This permits the sharing of voter data with elected officials/authorities within the municipality. The LAEA defines "elected authority" as a municipality or school board, so this is presumably intended to allow those entities to share voter registry information. It is unclear why the new section uses the term "area," as this seems unnecessarily broad and could be interpreted by some as allowing sharing across municipal boundaries.
S. 78(1) The deputy, at the request of an elector who is unable to vote in the usual manner, shall mark the vote of that elector on the elector's ballot in the manner directed by that elector, and shall immediately deposit the ballot in the ballot box.	S. 78(1) The deputy, at the request of an elector who is unable to vote in the manner prescribed by this Act and, if an elector assistance terminal is available, who does not elect to vote by that means, shall mark the vote of that elector on the elector's ballot in the manner directed by that elector, and shall immediately deposit the ballot in the ballot box.	The amended section contemplates the voting process inclusive of an elector who uses or could use an elector assistance terminal when available.
No previous provision.	S. 84.1 Enables the use of "elector assistance terminals" in the LAEA. The amendment allows for the use of a device that allows individuals with disabilities to more effectively and privately register their vote.	It remains with the municipality to pass a bylaw permitting the taking of votes through this method. If a bylaw is passed, the terminal must allow for an independent vote, must not be connected to any network, must create a paper ballot to be cast, allow the vote to be verified before it is cast, and does not enable the choice to be known to election officers. RMA supports the intent of this amendment. However, it is currently unclear to RMA whether these terminals are widely available, the types of terminals that may be available, as well as the cost of purchasing and operating. RMA expects that the Government of Alberta would support municipalities in procuring terminals that meet the specific requirements outlined in s. 84.1 to ensure equitable access to voting across the province.

Recounts, S. 98

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 98 previously allowed a returning officer to conduct a recount if there were reasonable grounds to suspect an error in the vote count, including questionable ballots, administrative or technical errors, or close results. A mandatory recount was triggered if the vote margin was within 0.5% under specific conditions and a qualified candidate applied within 44 hours after polls closed. The process included notification of affected parties, a manual count of ballots, and re-sealing of the ballot box. The recount had to be completed before official results were declared or within 96 hours for bylaws or questions.	S. 98 maintains similar criteria for when a returning officer may or must conduct a recount but splits the recount process into clearer sections. Recounts may occur if there are reasonable concerns over the count, administrative error, or potentially outcome-altering ballot issues, with applications required within 44 hours. Recounts are mandatory when the vote margin is within 0.5% and requested by an eligible candidate within 72 hours of results being posted. The recount procedure is detailed, requiring 12 hours' notice to affected parties, manual counting, and proper resealing of the ballot materials.	The amendments clarify and streamline recount procedures while retaining core principles. Applicants must still demonstrate reasonable belief of an inaccurate count, and recounts remain dependent on how close the vote margin is and/or the presence of errors. The amendment clearly separates discretionary and mandatory recounts and extends the recount request window for close results from 44 to 72 hours. Deadlines for completing recounts remain in place.

Political Party Campaign Finances (Specific to Edmonton and Calgary), S. 147

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 147.1 defined "campaign expense" strictly as expenses or non-monetary contributions used to directly promote or oppose a candidate during the campaign period. A "candidate" was an individual either nominated or intending to be nominated for municipal election. "Contribution" referred to money, property, or services given to benefit a campaign without fair compensation, excluding volunteer services. Contributions were valued at fair market rate, and if sold below that rate, the discount counted as a contribution. Prohibited organizations, like school boards, could not contribute.	S. 147.1 expands "campaign expense" to include expenses by local political parties or slates in addition to individual candidates. The definition of "candidate" and "contribution" is updated to reflect this broader scope, now applying to both candidates and local political parties. A new term, "endorsed candidate," is introduced to recognize those officially backed by political parties. The valuation of non-monetary contributions and rules for discounted services remain consistent but now apply to both candidates and political parties. School boards are still considered prohibited organizations.	The amendments broaden the framework of election finance by formally recognizing local political parties and their role in campaign spending and contributions. The definition of "contribution" shifts subtly in legal nuance: by replacing "for the benefit of" with "in respect of," the amended legislation may loosen restrictions on how donated resources are used, potentially allowing spending on uses loosely related to the campaign. Introducing "endorsed candidate" aligns with the formalization of political parties at the municipal level, signaling a shift toward more party-based local elections. RMA plans to undertake further analysis on this change. However, any amendment that provides a party-affiliated candidate with a financial advantage over a non-party-affiliated candidate undermines election fairness. One of RMA's primary concerns with the introduction of political parties in Edmonton and Calgary – and potentially province-wide in future elections – is that it would result in inequities related to financial capacity and resource-sharing among candidates. If candidates choose to align with a party, they should do so based on common views or priorities, not because it will provide them with a financial or resource advantage.
S. 147.13(2) Every candidate and every person acting on behalf of a candidate shall make every reasonable effort to advise prospective contributors of the provisions of this Part relating to contributions.	S. 147.13(2) A candidate, a local political party and a person acting on behalf of a candidate or a local political party shall make every reasonable effort to advise prospective contributors of the provisions of this Part relating to contributions.	The amendment addresses the responsibility of contributors. The substitution in the opening sentence expands the application of S. 147.13 from candidates and their election team to that of the candidate, their election team, and their local political party. They are now mutually responsible for ensuring that any individual contribution is within the set limit. This amendment also further entrenches the presence of local political parties in the Act.

No previous provision.	S. 147.25 allows unrestricted transfers of money, real property, goods, services, or campaign-related debt between a local political party and one of its endorsed candidates. These transfers are explicitly excluded from being classified as contributions or campaign expenses under the Act. However, all transfers must be recorded with details of the source and amount and included in the required disclosure statements for both the candidate and the party. Any monetary transfers must be deposited into the candidate's campaign account.	The amendment introduces a significant shift by permitting unlimited financial and non-financial transfers between local parties and their candidates, which are not treated as campaign contributions or expenses. While transparency is maintained through mandatory disclosure, the exclusion from traditional financial reporting categories may obscure the true scale of campaign financing. While RMA noted above a need to undertake further analysis on changes to s. 147.1 to determine its impact on the advantages afforded to party-affiliate candidates, the inclusion of s. 147.25 appears much clearer and more concerning from a candidate equity perspective. Based on RMA's interpretation, this section would allow political parties to distribute financial resources to candidates that they have collected at the party level. The use of the term "between" indicates that candidates may transfer collected candidate contributions to the party, which may subsequently transfer them to other candidates. This would appear to open a massive loophole in which a party could run a large number of candidates as a means to collect campaign contributions, which could then be funneled through the party to a small number of "star" or high-priority candidates, affording them virtually unlimited financial resources. RMA plans to undertake further analysis on this change to confirm this interpretation. If correct, this creates a massive "unlevel playing field" between party-affiliated and non-party-affiliated candidates.

Voting, Recounts, Withdrawal, and Campaign Finances: RMA Quick Analysis

While some of the changes made to the LAEA appear focused on better clarifying existing processes (recount changes) or addressing gaps in previous changes (allowance of elector assistance terminals as an exception to previous Bill 20 ban on electronic vote tabulators), others in relation to the likely expansion of political parties to all municipalities in 2029 are highly concerning. While the decision to permanently instill political parties is officially expected to be based on the outcomes of piloting political parties in Calgary and Edmonton, based on the further amendments being made to the LAEA to contemplate political parties, it appears likely to move forward.

RMA's initial input to Municipal Affairs in relation to political parties emphasized the importance of ensuring a candidate does not receive an unfair financial advantage through affiliating with a party. Specifically, RMA stated the following:

> No candidate should receive a financial benefit (in the form of increased contribution or expense limits) from running under a party banner. For example, if three candidates from the same party run in a municipality, they should not be permitted to pool or combine their expense limits; expenses must be tracked for each individual candidate. Parties should also be expressly prohibited from pooling expense limits across municipalities. Not doing so could allow a party to run "dummy" candidates in a non-priority municipality and transfer their expense limit space to candidates in high-priority municipalities.
>
> In addition to not allowing candidates within parties to pool expense limits, parties themselves should not have a separate expense limit beyond individual candidates. Presumably, one advantage of parties would be procuring campaign materials (signs, etc.) at a lower price for individual candidates. While this is reasonable, parties cannot be permitted to incur direct campaign-related expenses on behalf of their candidates that are not captured under an individual candidate's campaign expenses.

Unfortunately, the changes in Bill 50 appear to allow for the opposite of what was proposed by RMA. There is a significant risk that this amendment will permanently change the "local" nature of municipal elections moving forward, even in small and rural municipalities (if political parties proceed provincewide) and could have impacts well beyond the campaign and election process itself by creating financial "arms races" among parties and leaving party-affiliated councillors beholden to large donors when making council decisions.

Changes to the New Home Buyers Protection Act

Warranty Coverage and Process Amendments

Coverage, Exemption, and Appeals, S. 3, 7, and 17

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 3 of the New Home Buyers Protection Act (NHBPA) required that new homes be registered and covered by a home warranty insurance contract before construction began, unless exempted by the Registrar under specific conditions such as undue hardship. It also required warranty coverage to be in place before a home could be sold during or after construction. Coverage start dates varied based on ownership and construction type. Builders had to offer optional additional coverage, and sellers needed to disclose warranty details to prospective buyers.	S. 3 maintains the requirement for registration and warranty coverage but tightens the process for exemptions. Owner-builders may still be authorized to build without coverage, but a caveat must now be registered against the title, making the lack of coverage publicly visible. Key provisions from the Land Titles Act no longer apply to these caveats, which can only be removed through specific legal mechanisms. The exemption for undue hardship has been repealed, strengthening enforcement of warranty requirements and increasing transparency.	The amendments centralize and reinforce warranty requirements by eliminating subjective exemptions and introducing clear title registration requirements. The Registrar has expanded authority to impose conditions on owner-builders and register caveats against uninsured builds which should provide the public notice of risk. This may improve buyer protection by ensuring home warranty status is visible and regulated. Builders may be able to seek exemptions from these requirements for undue or financial hardship; this may allow builders to continue with their build uninsured. RMA does plan to undertake further analysis to understand if and how these changes will impact owner-builders as well as projects in rural or isolated areas where procuring home building services is already difficult. RMA has previous resolutions seeking clearer exemptions for warranties in cases where they will cause undue hardship or in which owners have clearly stated a preference to proceed without a warranty. While these changes may increase certainty for owners interested in a warranty, they may limit autonomy for those that are not.

No previous provision.	S. 3.01 sets out conditions under which a new home under construction can be sold. A person must not sell or offer to sell a new home unless it has valid home warranty coverage for the protection period, or the seller has obtained both an exemption and written permission from the Registrar. Sellers must also provide buyers with a disclosure notice about the warranty status. Exemptions may be granted by the Registrar in cases of undue or financial hardship. If an exemption is granted, a caveat must be registered on the land title indicating the lack of coverage, which can only be discharged under s. 3.02.	The amendments ensure that owner-builders cannot list or sell new homes without home warranty coverage unless exceptional circumstances apply, and they receive written approval from the Land Titles Office (LTO). While the option for exemptions based on hardship is a necessary flexibility, the lack of a clear definition for "undue hardship" introduces uncertainty and potential overuse or underuse, depending on the Registrar's interpretation. Caveat-related provisions clarify that exemptions are registered separately from standard processes under the *Land Titles Act*.
S. 5(1) Subject to section 6, the Registrar may, on application, issue an authorization, subject to any terms and conditions the Registrar considers appropriate, to an owner builder if the owner builder (a) registers the new home with the Registrar, (b) meets the prescribed criteria, and (c) pays the required fees, if any.	S. 5(1) Subject to section 6, the Registrar may, in accordance with the regulations, if any, issue an authorization, subject to any terms and conditions the Registrar considers appropriate, to an owner builder if the owner builder in respect of a new home (a) registers the new home with the Registrar, (b) meets the prescribed criteria, and (c) pays the required fees, if any.	Section 6 lays out the scenarios in which the LTO may refuse an owner builder their authorization to build a new home. This amendment requires the LTO to comply with regulations affecting the application instead of internal policy decision-making.

S. 17(1) A person (d) whose application under section 3(5) for an exemption from section 3(2) on grounds of undue hardship has been refused,	17(1) A person (d) whose application for an exemption under section 3.01(2) has been refused, (d.1) who is affected by any of the following decisions: (i) the Registrar's refusal to provide the person with the written permission referred to in section 3.01(1)(a)(ii)(B) or 3.1(8); (ii) the Registrar's determination that the exemption under section 3.1(2) or (3) does not apply to the person; (iii) the Registrar's determination under section 8(5)(a) as to whether a building or a portion of a building, or a proposed building or a portion of a proposed building, is a new home to which this Act applies or is exempt from the application of this Act.	Several provisions are now subject to appeal under Section 17 of Part 5 – Appeals. Appeals may now include decisions from the LTO to reject or affirm exemptions on home warranty coverage due to hardship, permission to sell without coverage, restrictions from rental use, designation caveats, approvals to rent out properties, and the application of the Act to proposed buildings.

Warranty Coverage and Process Amendments: RMA Quick Analysis

The recent amendments to the NHBPA significantly restructure the warranty coverage process, with implications for rural municipalities across Alberta. By mandating registered home warranty coverage and restricting exemptions, these changes aim to enhance transparency and consumer protection – particularly through the use of caveats that notify potential buyers of warranty status. For rural and remote communities, however, where access to homebuilders and warranty providers is often limited, the amendments may unintentionally increase barriers to home construction. While the goal of buyer protection is commendable, it must be balanced against the realities of rural development, where flexibility is often necessary.

Owner-builders are now subject to stricter conditions, including expanded authority granted to the Registrar and new registration requirements through the Land Titles Office (LTO). The elimination of subjective exemptions such as those based solely on financial hardship may create challenges for rural residents with limited resources. While exemptions remain possible under the "undue hardship" clause, the lack of clarity around this definition could lead to inconsistent application and uncertainty. The RMA supports further analysis and stakeholder consultation, particularly to assess the long-term impacts on rural housing availability and to ensure that the needs of rural owner-builders are adequately reflected in legislation.

Changes to the Safety Codes Act

Safety Codes Council

Appointments and Duties, S. 16, 18

Previous Status	Amended Status	Summary/Analysis
S. 16(4) The persons appointed to the Council by the Board of Directors must include persons who are experts in fire protection, buildings, barrier-free building design, electrical systems, elevating devices, gas systems, plumbing systems, private sewage disposal systems or pressure equipment. (5) The Board of Directors shall ensure that representatives of municipalities, business, labour and persons with disabilities are appointed to the Council from among the persons described in subsection (4).	S. 16(4) The persons appointed to the Council by the Board of Directors must include (a) persons who are experts in fire protection, buildings, barrier-free building design, electrical systems, elevating devices, gas systems, plumbing systems, private sewage disposal systems or pressure equipment, and (b) persons who are experts in or have experience with new home warranty coverage under the New Home Buyer Protection Act. (5) For the purpose of subsection (4), the Board of Directors shall ensure that (a) representatives of municipalities, business, labour and persons with disabilities are appointed from	Members of the Safety Codes Council include experts in fire protection, buildings, barrier-free building design, electrical systems, elevating devices, gas systems, plumbing systems, private sewage disposal systems or pressure equipment. The amendments stipulate that appointees are now required to have experience with home warranty coverage under the NHBPA, in addition to the previously listed areas. This has the potential to reduce the number of qualified candidates but would promote candidates with more experience in home warranty coverage.

	among the persons described in subsection (4)(a), and (b) representatives of builders, warranty providers, insurers and homeowners are appointed from among the persons described in subsection (4)(b) with respect to the Council's duty to provide advice and recommendations referred to in section 18(d.01).	
No previous provision.	S.18 The Council… (d.01) shall provide advice and recommendations to the Minister responsible for the New Home Buyer Protection Act if a request is made under section 8.01 of that Act.	The amendments allow the Minister to seek advice from the Safety Codes Council regarding the topics listed in s. 8.01 of the NBHPA, including the building or construction of a new home, the requirements applicable to a home warranty insurance contract, and the licensing requirements applicable to a residential builder.

Safety Codes Council: RMA Quick Analysis

Members of the Safety Codes Council include experts in fire protection, buildings, barrier-free building design, electrical systems, elevating devices, gas systems, plumbing systems, private sewage disposal systems or pressure equipment. The amendments stipulate that appointees are now required to have experience with home warranty coverage under the NHBPA, in addition to the previously listed areas. This has the potential to reduce the number of qualified candidates but would promote candidates with more experience in home warranty coverage.

The amendments allow the Minister to seek advice from the Safety Codes Council regarding the building or construction of a new home, the requirements applicable to a home warranty insurance contract, and the licensing requirements applicable to a residential builder.