



ALBERTA
HEALTH

Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary - Varsity

MAR 25 2022

AR 197245

Her Worship Cathy Heron
President
Alberta Municipalities
300, 8616 – 51 Ave NW
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6
mayorheron@stalbert.ca

Dear Mayor Heron:

Thank you for your letter to Honourable Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, regarding Alberta Municipalities Resolution 2021.C4: Tobacco Industry Health Cost Recovery Fee. As Minister of Health, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

We have reviewed the following resolution: It is therefore resolved that Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Alberta government to use the *Crown's Right of Recovery Act* to establish a five per cent levy on all Alberta revenues collected by major tobacco manufacturers and importers. Funds collected would be redirected to support effective programs and strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use in Alberta.

The Alberta government appreciates Alberta Municipalities' continued advocacy for safe and healthy communities, and supports measures to reduce harms to Albertans from the use of tobacco. However, our review of this legislation has determined it is not a good fit for the purpose you have suggested. Additional complexities preclude us from using this approach and we will not be pursuing it at this time.

As you are aware, the Government of Alberta's amendments to tobacco control legislation, which are intended to protect youth from the health harms of tobacco and vaping products, came into force on July 31, 2021. The resulting *Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act* and regulation include enforceable restrictions on the possession, promotion, display, sale and use of vaping products, in alignment with tobacco laws. Additionally, the new laws include fines for violations of the new tobacco and vaping rules; prevention of sales of tobacco and vaping products in vending machines and temporary locations; and expansion of the number of smoke-free and vape-free areas, especially at places frequented by children and youth.

In addition to the newly enacted legislation, our government acknowledges that a provincial strategy is required to support Alberta's tobacco and vaping control legislation.

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Creating Tobacco-free Futures: Alberta's Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use was introduced in 2012 and is due to expire in 2022. While our government believes that the recent amendments to the legislative framework will continue to advance our goal of reducing the use of tobacco and vaping products by Albertans, we will be renewing the strategy to support those goals over the coming months. Further, the strategy was introduced before vaping became an issue and before cannabis was legalized in Canada. This renewal process will have an expanded scope to include vaping and cannabis products, will define new outcomes and strategies for tobacco, vaping and cannabis reduction, and will include performance measures to evaluate the success of our initiatives.

Preliminary work is underway to renew the strategy. We are confident it will reflect the current environment and growing evidence regarding harms related to the use of tobacco, vaping and cannabis, and the corresponding importance of reducing their use.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Jason Copping
Minister of Health

cc: Honourable Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Honourable Tyler Shandro, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General