

CAO

From: Dylan Bressey <president@abmunis.ca>
Sent: May 29, 2026 9:35 AM
To: CAO
Subject: ABmunis priority issues key messages

Hello,

As we approach the summer BBQ season, I wanted to share with you key messages on our top priorities, with the hope that you can help amplify our collective voice to provincial and federal decision makers as you engage with them at events over the coming months, including at the FCM conference in Edmonton next week. Speaking with one voice will help reinforce the strength of our shared priorities, build credibility with government partners, and ensure our advocacy is clear, consistent, and aligned across every conversation.

The messages below have been crafted by our advocacy team and will be used by our board members to advance our priorities over what we anticipate will be a busy summer of engagement. I also hope they serve as a useful starting point for broader conversations about our shared advocacy priorities and where we can continue to align our efforts in the months ahead. We encourage you to use local examples to showcase the benefit of investing in municipalities. For example, is your municipality struggling to cover the costs of building and maintaining the underground water infrastructure needed to support growth and maintain quality services to existing residents and businesses?

Thanks for your public service and your efforts to draw attention to our shared municipal needs and priorities.

Infrastructure Funding/Property Taxes Reimagined

Key Messages

- Rising costs, increased need for services, and the cumulative impact of provincial decisions are driving up property taxes
- We need to reimagine how schools, municipal services and infrastructure will be paid for in the future so that our communities continue to be an attractive place to live and do business.
- While the province has not increased personal, corporate, or sales taxes, they have increased provincial property taxes by \$1 billion over three years.
- More than any other tax, property taxes are challenging for residents on fixed incomes and for families and businesses facing challenging times.
- Property taxes often create immediate cash flow issues when businesses invest in expansion, while other types of taxes can often be deferred.
- This means that property taxes are the wrong revenue lever to pull as the province seeks to support affordability and economic diversification.
- As part of Alberta Municipalities Property Taxes Reimagined, and as acknowledged in the government's fiscal plan, we need to have a conversation about sustainable fiscal planning in Alberta, and municipal leaders need to be part of finding the solution.

Additional Speaking Points

- Every Alberta government over the last 15 years has decreased its funding to municipal governments and made decisions that have cut revenues and increased costs for municipalities.
- The cost of things that municipalities must buy has substantially increased over that time.
- Water issues that have been in the news recently are just a symptom of a broader issue facing all municipal governments in Alberta – not enough investment in infrastructure.
- Many municipalities also need to build new infrastructure to handle Alberta's rising population.
- All combined, municipalities have to choose between allowing their infrastructure to crumble or drastically raising their property taxes or water rates.

- The province is also increasing its property tax – a 12% increase last year and 15% in 2026, meaning a billion-dollar tax increase over the last three years.
- This is not about one government or one budget cycle. We need a long-term solution.
- ABmunis' Property Taxes Reimagined project helps explain why property taxes are going up and why Alberta needs to talk about how local public services should be paid for in the future.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and Preventive Funding

Key Messages

- ABmunis was very disappointed to not see an increase in FCSS funding in the 2026 Provincial Budget.
- By not investing in locally driven prevention programming, the province is missing a critical opportunity to reduce costs on already stretched systems such as healthcare, emergency services, and policing.
- ABmunis will continue collaborating with partners and the provincial government to find ways to grow this vital funding.

Calls to Action for Members

- Senior provincial officials have indicated a willingness to consider incremental increases to FCSS funding going forward and pursuing this investment will remain a top priority for ABmunis.
- In order to keep the pressure on, ABmunis is asking members to continue to support advocacy to the province. If you are meeting with your local MLA or other provincial leaders, please share the following message:
- ABmunis is disappointed that the 2026 Provincial Budget does not include an increase to FCSS funding.
- Prevention is the foundation of strong communities. FCSS programs help people before they reach crisis – reducing pressure on healthcare, emergency services, and policing.
- Despite nearly one million new Albertans and more than a decade of inflation, FCSS funding has remained essentially flat for 11 years. That gap is no longer sustainable.
- ABmunis is urging the province to increase core FCSS funding to \$162 million and index it annually to population growth and inflation, so prevention services can keep pace with Alberta's needs.

Additional Speaking Points

- By not investing in FCSS, the province is further downloading these costs to municipalities.
- Investing \$245 million in FCSS and wider community support programs in 2024 – municipalities almost doubled their 2015 spending. Often exceeding their required 20 percent commitment.
- Every dollar invested in prevention leads to lower costs in emergency services, policing, and health care. Strong, vibrant Albertan communities depend on preventing people from falling into crisis in the first place.

Federal Housing and Infrastructure Funding/Off-site Levies

Key messages

- Alberta is leading the country in housing starts.
- We need the federal government to support us and not dictate to us.

Additional Speaking Points

- Despite a historically large budget, the federal government has not provided municipalities with the support they need to provide the infrastructure essential to housing development and what funding is provided has strings attached that don't make sense in Alberta.
- The federal government's 'one-size-fits-all' approach risks undermining the very infrastructure that enables new housing in Alberta.
- Our members use off-site levies responsibly and transparently to ensure growth pays for growth.
- The Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) structure for funding supported autonomy and community-led decision-making. ABmunis believes this is a more valuable approach for funding infrastructure in municipalities.

For Provincial Officials

- How can ABmunis and the Province join forces to advocate that the federal government deliver programs that work for Alberta communities?

For Federal Officials

- How can ABmunis partner with the federal government to develop funding streams which work in Alberta?

GST on Franchise fees

Key messages

- This is a tax on a tax. Franchise fees are charged by local governments as a cost-recovery tool. They exist to recoup costs from electrical companies using right-of-ways.
- Ultimately, residents are paying these fees AND the related GST. This affects residents in all
- Alberta municipalities.
- ABmunis' members are seeking to make electricity more affordable for residents by eliminating GST on franchise fees to the benefit of all.

Background

- In March, ABmunis members passed an RFD at our Spring Municipal Leaders Caucus calling for municipal franchise (local access) fees collected by regulated electricity and natural gas distributors to no longer be subject to GST/HST on customer utility bills.

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We respectfully acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional and ancestral territories of many Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We acknowledge that what we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many peoples, presently subject to Treaties 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 and Six Regions of the Métis Nation of Alberta.