



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Alberta's Economic Future

Lobbyists Act Review
Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction
Amendment Act, 2026, Review

Wednesday, May 27, 2026
9 a.m.

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Second Session**

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC), Chair
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP), Deputy Chair

Arcand-Paul, Brooks, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)*
Boparai, Parmeet Singh, Calgary-Falconridge (NDP)
Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
Elmeligi, Sarah, Banff-Kananaskis (NDP)
Hoyle, Rhiannon, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC)
Wright, Justin, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)

* substitution for Sarah Elmeligi

Also in Attendance

Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)

Bill 208 Sponsor

Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)

Support Staff

Shannon Dean, KC	Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Law Clerk
Vani Govindarajan	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of Parliamentary Services
Nancy Robert	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> and Committees
Abdul Bhurgri	Research Officer
Rachel McGraw	Research Officer
Warren Huffman	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
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Wednesday, May 27, 2026

[Mr. Wiebe in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Ron Wiebe, the MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti and chair of this committee. I'd like to ask that the members joining us at the committee table introduce themselves for the record. We'll begin to my right, which I don't see anybody, so we'll go over to the left side of the table.

Member Hoyle: Good morning. I'm MLA Rhiannon Hoyle for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dach: Morning. Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung and deputy chair of this committee.

Mr. Bhurgri: Good morning. Abdul Aziz Bhurgri, research officer.

Mr. Koenig: Trafton Koenig, Law Clerk.

Ms Robert: Good morning. Nancy Robert, clerk of *Journals* and committees.

Mr. Roth: Good morning. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you, all.

Now we'd like to go online. To those joining us online: please unmute your mic and turn your cameras on and introduce yourselves as I call your name. Member Chantelle de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Good morning, Chair. MLA Chantelle de Jonge for Chestermere-Strathmore.

The Chair: Member Eric Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Good morning, everyone. Eric Bouchard, MLA for Calgary-Lougheed.

The Chair: Member Jason Stephan.

Mr. Stephan: Present.

The Chair: Member Garth Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: MLA Garth Rowswell, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

The Chair: And Member van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: MLA van Dijken, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

The Chair: Thank you, all.

For the record I will note the following substitution: Member Arcand-Paul for Member Elmeligi.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard* staff. Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and videostream and transcripts of the meeting can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website. Those participating by videoconferencing are encouraged to please turn on your camera while speaking and mute your microphone when not speaking. Members participating virtually who wish to be placed on the speakers list are asked to e-mail or message the committee clerk, and members in the room are asked to please signal the chair.

Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of this meeting.

Today's meeting starts the clock on the one-year timeline in which this committee must complete and review – my apologies.

Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda? If not, I would like someone to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future approve the proposed agenda as distributed for its May 27, 2026, meeting. Mr. Dach. All in favour? Any opposed? Online, all in favour? Any opposed? That's carried.

Next we will have the draft minutes of our February 28, 2024, meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, I would like a member to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future approve the minutes as distributed or as amended if it's the meeting held on February 28, 2024. Any discussion? All in favour? Oh, Member Hoyle.

Member Hoyle: Moved it. Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry.

All in favour? Online? Any opposed? That is carried.

Hon. members, on April 23, 2026, the Legislative Assembly passed Government Motion 38, which referred the Lobbyists Act to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future for review pursuant to section 21 of the legislative act. Section 21 of the act requires that a special committee of the Legislative Assembly comprehensively review the act every five years and submit a report to the Assembly within one year of beginning the review which includes any amendments, recommendations by the committee. Government Motion 38 named the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future to be the special committee responsible for the review. The last review of the act commenced in 2021. Today's meeting starts the clock on the one-year timeline in which the committee must complete the review.

Are there any questions from the committee members in regard to the committee's mandate? Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Yeah. Mr. Chair, when you say, "Complete the review," does that mean final report prepared and ready to send to the Legislature?

The Chair: When it's tabled, yes.

Can I get the Member for Calgary-Falconridge to introduce himself.

Member Boparai: Parmeet Singh Boparai, MLA, Calgary-Falconridge.

The Chair: Thank you.

Committee members may be aware that in similar reviews of the statutes it is common to commence the process by calling for technical briefings from the ministry and other entities that are responsible for administering the act. The Lobbyists Act falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. The Ethics Commissioner of Alberta or his authorized representative is the Alberta lobbyist registrar who administers and enforces the Lobbyists Act. Mr. Josh de Groot, general counsel to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, is the designated registrar in accordance with section 11(2) of the act.

At this time I would like to open the floor for discussion on this matter. Member de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you so much, Chair. Not so much discussion as I'd like to kick things off by moving a motion if I'm able to. I'd like to move that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the Ministry of Justice and the registrar of the

Alberta lobbyist registry to provide a technical briefing as part of its review of the Lobbyists Act at an upcoming meeting of this committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms de Jonge.

Is there any discussion?

If not, I'll call for the question. All in favour in the room? Online? Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

Members, it is also common practice when initiating reviews of this nature to discuss what kinds of research the Legislative Assembly Office may be able to assist the committee clerk with. At this time I would like to call on Ms Nancy Robert, clerk of *Journals* and committees, to speak to the kinds of research the committee may wish to consider requesting. Ms Robert, go ahead.

Ms Robert: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. Good morning again, everybody. I think most of you have been through this type of process before, but I'll just very quickly go over some of the types of research that research services can do for committees when they're reviewing statutes.

One of the initial things committees often ask research to do is to put together a list of proposed stakeholders that the committee may want to consult with, and the committee can certainly do that. Research services would be happy to do that. Research services also, quite typically when a committee is reviewing a statute, will be directed to prepare a crossjurisdictional analysis of similar legislation in select jurisdictions across the country. That is fairly typical. One of the other things that research services often does is that if the committee seeks written feedback from stakeholders or members of the public, research services can be directed to prepare a summary of all of the input that is received. That can be quite beneficial for the committee, to have all the comments and topics organized.

Near the end of the process when committees are deliberating on what kind of recommendations they wish to make, the committee will typically direct research services to prepare what we call an issues and proposals document, which is a four-column table that lays out all of the issues that were raised through all the consultation process and where those issues came from, some context on the issues, just to help the committee organize its deliberations.

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Then, finally, once the deliberations are complete, the committee typically will ask research services to prepare a draft final report, which contains the activity of the committee and all of the consultation that the committee has undertaken and, of course, the recommendations that the committee has agreed to. If there are other research products that the committee wishes to ask for, that's certainly fine. Research services would consider that.

That's probably all I have to say on it, but happy to answer any questions if there are any. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Robert.

Is there any discussion? MLA de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you so much, Chair, and thank you to Ms Robert for providing an overview of the offerings that research services can provide the committee. You know, really appreciate that overview.

Chair, if I'm able, I'd like to start with moving a motion based on the overview we just heard. I'd like to move that

in support of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct the

Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a crossjurisdictional analysis of similar legislation in select jurisdictions.

You know, this will allow the committee to identify areas of improvement within the legislation and is part of that five-year statute statutory review. I'd like to move that motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms de Jonge, for that motion.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Dach: Can I ask MLA de Jonge to explain what precisely she may mean by select jurisdictions? Is she defining the jurisdictions, or does she wish to define which jurisdictions she's seeking?

The Chair: Ms de Jonge, do you have any further comments?

Ms de Jonge: Thank you for the question from the member opposite. I think in past years we've done jurisdictions of other provinces in Canada as well as jurisdictions in the U.S. and the U.K., so that's what I'd like to be considered as part of the statutory review.

The Chair: Ms Robert, do you have any comments to add?

Ms Robert: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah. Typically the reason often-times that these motions say select jurisdictions is that the research team will do a scan and look at what's going to make the most sense, definitely look at jurisdictions across the country. Like, they try to focus on changes to legislation or jurisdictions that have, you know, passed a lobbyists act recently, that type of thing, just to give a really good flavour of the nature of these laws across the country.

We can look at other jurisdictions outside of Canada if that seems to make sense to the committee. If there's, say, a particular lobbyists act or lobbyist-type legislation in another jurisdiction that the committee is interested in, we can certainly do that. Typically, unless we're asked specifically to do that, we will try to stick to the country just because, you know, the entire country runs on a similar system.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Dach: Just a question to Ms Robert: have we typically in this type of crossjurisdictional analysis included the European Union countries?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't believe so for lobbyists. We have for other things, but I don't believe we have for the Lobbyists Act. Abdul will – yeah.

Mr. Dach: Might I move that we do add European Union countries to this list of select jurisdictions? Is that possible? Would that be required as a motion?

The Chair: I'd like to get Mr. Koenig to speak on this, please.

Mr. Koenig: Sure. If it's helpful, I can provide just a bit of context in terms of, you know, what may be most valuable to the committee. Typically you'd start looking at the most similar jurisdictions first, which are going to be Canadian jurisdictions, likely large jurisdictions in Canada that may have very similar legislation, a similar governance structure to Alberta, because that would likely inform the committee's review most effectively. Then you may look to other similar foreign jurisdictions, potentially the U.K., Australia, New Zealand. One thing that I would just maybe offer to the committee is that when you start looking at jurisdictions that have different systems of law, you know, might be based on a civil code, European Union jurisdictions, U.S., those ones may not have as many direct kind of –

the value in direct comparisons to Alberta's statutory framework: there might not be as much comparison, so the committee may find a little less value in those things.

It's entirely up to the will of the committee what they wish. Maybe what I would suggest as one possible option is that if the committee wants to have a discussion on this point and provide some areas where there could be interest, we can look at those jurisdictions and identify aspects or elements within the law that could be pertinent without doing, like, a mandatory review of systems that really have no relationship to Alberta's governance system, especially with respect to the Lobbyists Act. I mean, it's entirely up to what the committee wants to do, but if there is a certain amount of discretion that's left within the motion, then the LAO and research services can use that discretion to try and identify what is likely to be the most value. If there are things that are missing or further information might be required, then the committee can provide that direction after that report is provided.

The Chair: Thank you, Trafton.
Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. Given that I'm content to leave the motion as is, have Ms Robert use her discretion to make those selections.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach.
Is there any further discussion?
If not, I'll call the question. All in favour in the room? Opposed? Online, all in favour? Any opposed?
That is carried.

Hon. members, as we now have initiated a review of the Lobbyists Act, I would encourage members to consider how they might want to see the committee proceed, who it might wish to hear from and engage. The committee may wish to consider that in previous reviews the Legislative Assembly Office has been tasked to start putting together a list of potential stakeholders that the committee may wish to hear from. If the committee wishes to direct the Legislative Assembly Office to start preparing this list, the committee can of course choose whether to accept or modify it at future meetings.

Ms de Jonge, I see you have a question.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you, Chair. Very eager to move motions this morning, so I appreciate your attentiveness to me raising my hand online and appreciate the suggestion and would like to now move that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a draft list of stakeholders in support of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act and distribute it to committee members for their review.

That's the end of my motion. Again, I appreciate the overview provided by Ms Robert on this and your comments, Chair.
Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms de Jonge, for your motion.
Having heard the motion, is there any discussion?
Then I'll call the question. All in favour in the room? Any opposed? Online, all in favour? Any opposed?
That motion is carried.

We will now head to the next item on our agenda, which is the review of Bill 208, the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026. Hon. members, on April 20, 2026, the Legislative Assembly referred Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future after the bill received first reading in accordance with Standing Order 74.1(1). As outlined in Standing Order 74.2(1), in its consideration of the bill

the committee may conduct public hearings on the subject matter of the bill and report its observations, opinions, and recommendations with respect to the bill to the Assembly. With these types of bill reviews the committee can recommend to the Assembly that the bill proceed, the bill not proceed, the bill proceed with recommendations, or that the bill not proceed but that the committee members have recommendations based on its review.

9:20

I would like to note that there is no deadline provided to the committee in the motion that referred Bill 208 for review. However, it is my hope that the committee will be amenable to completing its work in time to report back to the Assembly when it convenes for the 2026 fall sitting.

Before I continue, are there any questions regarding the general review process I have just outlined? Seeing none.

Similar to the statute reviews that committees have undertaken, the committee may choose to hear technical briefings, receive written submissions and oral presentations, and request research in support of the committee's review. Members may wish to refer to paragraph 3.1.2 of the practical guide to committees, which further elaborates on the general process involved in bill and statute reviews.

Hon. members, when standing or special committees of the Legislative Assembly undertake bill reviews, it is common to invite the bill's sponsor to make presentations to the committee.

At this time I would like to open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions from committee members. Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ever since this bill was tabled in first reading, passed, and then subsequently sent to this committee for review, I've been wondering why. I don't know if it's the time when members from the government side may wish to answer that question, but it seems a little curious. In first reading a private member's bill immediately sent to committee begs the question "Why?" because it is a bit unusual. Ms Robert may confirm that it's not common to have a private member's bill sent to committee immediately after first reading.

Are any of the government members, through you, Chair, willing to publicly state why they thought it important to send this bill to committee rather than deal with it in the normal manner in the Legislature during private members' business?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach.

Is there any one of the government members wishing to speak to that question? Seeing none.

Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: That says a lot.

The Chair: Are there any other comments, questions, or discussion?

Hon. members, as the committee discussed earlier in relation to the review of the Lobbyists Act, members may benefit from hearing the technical briefing from the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services, which is the ministry that is responsible for administering the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act, which Bill 208 seeks to amend.

I will now open the floor for any comments, questions, or motions regarding technical briefings.

Mr. Rowswell: I'll go with a motion if I could.

The Chair: Mr. Rowswell, you can't because you're not a sub officially.

Mr. Rowswell: Oh, sorry. Yeah. All right.

The Chair: It'll have to be one of your colleagues.

Mr. Rowsell: Okay. Mr. Bouchard?

Mr. Bouchard: I can move a motion.

Mr. Rowsell: Yeah. There you go.

Mr. Bouchard: Absolutely. Can everyone hear me?

The Chair: Go ahead, Member Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Excellent. Thank you. I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite as part of the committee's review of Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, Chelsae Petrovic, hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, to make a presentation as sponsor of the bill at an upcoming meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Any discussion?

I'll call the question. In favour? Online, all in favour? Any opposed? That has carried.

I'd now like Mr. Arcand-Paul to introduce himself for the record.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brooks Arcand-Paul, MLA for Edmonton-West Henday.

The Chair: Welcome to the committee.

Are there any other comments, questions, or motions under this question here?

Mr. Dach: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is it the time now where we might specifically invite individuals who we wish to appear before the committee to make presentations, or is that . . .

The Chair: We're still on technical briefings at this time.

Mr. Dach: All right.

The Chair: Any more discussion?

All right. As the committee previously discussed in relation to the Lobbyists Act, the committee may wish to make a request of the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare research in relation to the review of Bill 208.

I would like to invite Ms Nancy Robert to speak about this matter. Ms Robert, can you please provide some comments.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Very similar to the research offerings that are available that I talked about with respect to the Lobbyists Act, the same would be available for a review of a bill: you know, preparing a draft stakeholder list, if that was the wish of the committee, preparing crossjurisdictional analysis of any similar legislation in select jurisdictions, or even proposed bills on this topic in select jurisdictions.

If the committee is seeking written feedback from the public or from stakeholders, research services can, at the direction of the committee, prepare a summary of that information that's received and, again, an issues and proposals document laying out all of the issues and recommendations to help with the committee's deliberations. Then, finally, research services can prepare a draft final report on the committee's recommendations and other research products that the committee might ask for.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Robert.

Are there any further comments? Any motions?

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chair, I'll put forward a motion.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services to provide a technical briefing as part of its review of Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, at an upcoming meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you for the motion.

Is there any discussion?

If not, I'll call the question. All in favour in the room? Online? Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

Are there any more comments or questions or discussion on this motion? If not, we'll move on.

Hon. members, we have now initiated a review of Bill 208. I would encourage members to consider how they would like to move forward in the process and who they might wish to hear from and engage. The committee may wish to consider that for previous reviews the Legislative Assembly Office has been tasked to compile a list of potential stakeholders that the committee may wish to hear from. If the committee wishes to direct the Legislative Assembly Office to begin preparing this list, the committee can of course choose whether to accept or modify it at future meetings. I will note for the record that the committee has received several requests from interested organizations and individuals who wish to provide feedback in relation to our review of Bill 208. These requests were provided to the committee members for review.

I will now open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions members may wish to bring forward. Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

9:30

Mr. Dach: Just for clarification, should we have individuals who wish to present to the committee and we find they're not on the list, the procedure then would be to inform the clerk to request that those individuals be added to the list, or how does that process move forward?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach. I will ask the table clerk here to comment.

Mr. Roth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the committee were to ask for a draft list of stakeholders, for instance, research services and the Legislative Assembly Office can prepare such a list. If the committee members had particular people that they may want to hear from, certainly just indicating that on the record, they can be added to the draft list, and when the list comes back, the committee can accept or amend that list as it sees fit along the way.

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry. Just to add to what Aaron is saying, basically, if LAO is directed to prepare a draft list, they come back to the committee, present the list, the committee sees the list, and then the committee can decide if they want to change names or add names to the list.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any further discussion or a motion?

Seeing none, are there any other items for discussion at today's meeting?

Seeing none, the date . . . [interjection] Go ahead.

Mr. Rowsell: I don't know if I can speak or not, but were there some more motions that one of the members wanted to move? Member Stephan or anybody? Okay. That's fine.

The Chair: Seeing none, the date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

I would now call for a motion to adjourn. Would any member like to move? Mr. Dach. All in favour? Any opposed? Thank you. That motion is carried.

Thank you, everyone. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:33 a.m.]

