



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Alberta's Economic Future

Lobbyists Act Review

Monday, September 13, 2021
11 a.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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* substitution for Miranda Rosin

** substitution for Roger Reid

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Monday, September 13, 2021

[Mr. Neudorf in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning. I would like to call the meeting to order. Welcome to members and staff in attendance for this meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future. My name is Nathan Neudorf, and I'm the MLA for Lethbridge-East and the chair of this committee. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, starting to my right.

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

Mr. Smith: Mark Smith, MLA, Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Walker: Jordan Walker, MLA for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Bilous: Deron Bilous, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Koenig: Good morning. I'm Trafton Koenig with the Parliamentary Counsel office.

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

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

The Chair: Thank you. Just for simplicity, those online, I'll just introduce you. We have MLA Searle Turton. We have MLA Nicole Goehring. We have MLA Glenn van Dijken, MLA Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, MLA Janis Irwin, MLA Drew Barnes, and MLA Thomas Dang. We also have Michael Kulicki from the clerk's office.

I would like to note for the record the following substitutions: Mr. Turton for Mr. Reid and Mr. Smith for Ms Rosin.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. I would note for members that masks should be worn in the committee room except for when you are speaking, and members are also encouraged to leave an appropriate amount of physical distance around the table. Thank you for complying already.

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First up, approval of the agenda. Can we have someone? Mr. Walker. It is moved by Mr. Walker that the agenda for the September 13, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adopted as distributed and as revised. All in favour? Online all in favour? Online anyone opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried. Thank you.

Approval of the minutes for October 21, 2020. We have the minutes for the October 21, 2020, meeting of the committee. Are there any errors or omissions to note? Seeing none, would a member please move? Mr. Rowswell, thank you. It is moved by Mr. Rowswell that the minutes of the October 21, 2020, meeting of the

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adopted as circulated. In the room all in favour? Online all in favour? Thank you. Anyone online opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried.

Now item 4, review of the Lobbyists Act, (a) mandate, Government Motion 86. Hon. members, on June 15, 2021, the Legislative Assembly passed Government Motion 86, which referred the Lobbyists Act to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future for review pursuant to section 21 of the act. Section 21 of the act requires that a special committee of the Legislative Assembly comprehensively review the act every five years and submit to the Assembly within one year of beginning the review a report which includes any amendments recommended by the committee. Government Motion 86 named the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future to be the special committee responsible for this review. The last review of the act commenced in 2016. Today's meeting starts the clock on the year in which this committee must complete the review.

Are there any questions from committee members in regard to the committee's mandate? Anyone online have any questions at this time?

Hearing none, we'll move on to item (b) decision items and (i) technical briefings. As committee members may recall from similar reviews of 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 is administered by the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General. The Ethics Commissioner of Alberta or their authorized representative is the registrar of the Alberta lobbyist registry. Ms Lara Draper, general counsel to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, is a designated registrar pursuant to section 11(2) of the act. At this time I would like to open the floor to a discussion as to whether the committee would like to invite technical briefings in relation to the Lobbyists Act.

Mr. Bilous.

Mr. Bilous: Can I actually move a motion or put a motion to the committee?

The Chair: I believe that is acceptable at this time.

Mr. Bilous: I'd like to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the office of the Ethics Commissioner and the lobbyist registrar and officials from Alberta Justice and Solicitor General to each provide a briefing on the Lobbyists Act, lobbyist regulation, and lobbyist registry as well as attend committee meetings and participate when requested to provide technical expertise, and request that these officials work in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly staff as required to support the committee during its review of the Lobbyists Act.

The Chair: Is there any discussion that we would like to open on this motion?

Mr. Smith: Could you put that on the board?

The Chair: For those members online we are placing this up on the screen. It will be with you momentarily as it's typed in. Is there any wish to discuss the motion put forward?

Mr. Bilous.

Mr. Bilous: The only piece I'll add is that I believe that this was done in the past, that the committee has received technical briefings from those three different entities, just to ensure that all members of the committee are up to speed on all different facets of this act or acts.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Bilous. I believe that is very much in agreement with our understanding as well.

There it is. I'll let members read that one more time for themselves, and then I have one more invitation for anyone wishing to speak on this motion.

Now that everybody's had the ability to read the motion as put forward, I'll ask one more time if there's any wish to discuss this motion.

Mr. Smith: Outside of a couple of spelling and typing errors there, it seems like it's pretty much standard and par for the course for where we want to go.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I'm sure those will be corrected and everybody can consider that. I'm very glad that the clerk was typing and not myself; otherwise, it would be much longer and have many more spelling mistakes.

I will just read this into the record. Moved by MLA Bilous that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the office of the Ethics Commissioner and the lobbyist registrar and officials from Alberta Justice and Solicitor General to each provide a briefing on the Lobbyists Act, lobbyist regulation, and lobbyist registry as well as attend committee meetings and participate when requested to provide technical expertise, and request that these officials work in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly staff as required to support the committee during its review of the Lobbyists Act.

For those in the room, all in favour? Any opposed? Online all in favour? Thank you. Online anyone opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried.

Thank you, Mr. Bilous.

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

Ms Robert.

11:10

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay. I will just give you a brief overview of the type of research services that the Legislative Assembly Office can provide the committee. The Legislative Assembly Office provides nonpartisan research services to the committee, so the committee, not individual members, and we do that throughout the duration of reviews of this kind. Some of the types of research and briefings we prepare are, you know, draft stakeholder lists, summaries of written submissions, crossjurisdictional analysis on lobbyist legislation across the country, and then near the end of the review when you're in your deliberative phase or you've completed your deliberative phase, research services will also, if the committee wishes, assist the committee in preparing the final report with the recommendations to the Assembly. I'm just going to leave it there, but if anyone has any questions, I'd be happy to try to answer them.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Robert.

Do committee members have any comments, questions, or motions to bring to the floor? Mr. Walker.

Mr. Walker: Yeah. Chair, I'd like to move a motion. I think this is so important. Building on the great motion from Member Bilous, on getting the best technical expertise and research expertise briefings possible as we review the Lobbyists Act for the first time

in five years, the motion I'd like to move, Chair, into the record is that

the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future request that research services conduct a crossjurisdictional comparison of all legislation regulating lobbying and lobbyists in Canada to provide to the committee regarding the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act.

Again, I think this will provide very valuable framing information as we move forward with a review of the Lobbyists Act. I know myself I learned so much from comparative jurisdictional analyses, and I know research services has the skills to do that. So that is why. It's also consistent, I believe, with the former NDP administration, where they also had this crossjurisdictional analysis.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Walker.

Mr. Bilous, I did see your hand. I will open the floor for comments if you would like to make any.

Mr. Bilous: No. Other than that we had a similar motion we were going to bring forward, so happy to support Member Walker's motion.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Any online wish to comment on the motion on the floor?

Seeing none, would the clerk please put that motion on the screen? Be it moved by Mr. Walker that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future request that research services conduct a crossjurisdictional comparison of all legislation regulating lobbying and lobbyists in Canada to provide to the committee regarding the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act. All those in the room in favour? Any opposed? All those online in favour?

Mr. Barnes: Excuse me, Chair. Can I make a friendly amendment?

The Chair: Sorry. That is now out of order. We have to finish the voting as we're already in process. I'm sorry.

Ms Goehring: You didn't provide an opportunity to discuss before we voted.

The Chair: Actually, I did. I actually called for it several times. I'm sorry.

So we will continue with the voting online. All those in favour, please say aye. Any online opposed, please say no. Hearing none, that motion is carried.

Now, just for clarification, are there those online who would like to make any comments at this time?

Mr. Barnes: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. If I could, please.

The Chair: Please proceed.

Mr. Barnes: Okay. Thank you. I wanted to make a friendly amendment to include some American, United States, jurisdictions in the legislative analysis as well. Can I make an amendment to make that happen, please?

The Chair: I will ask Mr. Koenig just to respond to that shortly, and we'll see what direction he provides.

Mr. Koenig: Sure. I'm happy to make a comment, and the committee clerk may have some comments as well. Because the motion requesting the crossjurisdictional comparison has passed now, it can't be amended unless the vote is rescinded.

But what, Mr. Barnes, you may want to do is just move an additional motion requesting additional materials from research services. I might just propose that.

The Chair: Clerk, do you have any comments to make? Thank you.

Mr. Barnes, that is probably the more simple option. You could put forward an additional motion if you wanted. I will open that for discussion. Yeah.

Mr. Barnes: I would like to do that, please, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. We will do that.

While we're waiting for that to be typed in, Mr. Koenig.

Mr. Koenig: Yeah. If I'm understanding Mr. Barnes, what you'd like is that it would be to move that "the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a crossjurisdictional review of" and then some specific pieces of legislation that you're thinking of from the U.S. as part of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act.

The Chair: Does that align with what you're seeking to see, MLA Barnes?

Mr. Barnes: Yes, it does. Thank you.

The Chair: Do you have any specific jurisdictions, or how would you like that part worded?

Mr. Barnes: I would just like to ask research to pick, say, you know, 10 American states and highlight what they do.

The Chair: Is that acceptable?

Mr. Koenig: What I might suggest is referring to relevant U.S. legislation just because it's hard to predict what will be relevant or what would be useful for the committee, so relevant legislation from the United States applicable to the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act, and then research services can use their discretion to identify the ones that are going to be the most valuable to members. I would propose that. Of course, if you want exactly 10, I mean, that's fine as well.

The Chair: Did you hear that, MLA Barnes? Would you be amenable to it being worded as relevant as opposed to a specific number?

Mr. Barnes: Yes, I would. That was good advice. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Barnes. We will put that on the screen.

I did like to note that the deputy chair, MLA Goehring, would like to have a comment if she still would like to contribute.

Ms Goehring: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a friendly request that we have debate after the motion is online so that everybody that's kind of viewing online has an opportunity to read it. I appreciate a hundred per cent that you asked for debate, but when we can't see it, it's sometimes a little bit difficult. So just a request. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Goehring. We will endeavour to do so, and we will do that at this time.

First, before we proceed to the debate, I just wanted to confirm the language for MLA Barnes: be it moved by MLA Barnes that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a crossjurisdictional review of

relevant lobbyists legislation from the United States as part of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act.

MLA Barnes, does this meet your expectation?

Mr. Barnes: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I will open the floor to any debate or discussion on this. I see Mr. Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. I think that that's a good suggestion and that it never hurts to see what other jurisdictions are doing regardless of where they're from. So I would support that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rowswell.

Anyone online would like to discuss?

Seeing none, I will go to Mr. Bilous and then to Mr. Walker.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering if I could make a friendly amendment to this motion to include as well the U.K. Parliament, so looking at U.K. legislation because they're obviously part of the Commonwealth and could be more closely aligned with some Canadian lobbyist registration acts.

The Chair: Thank you. We will consider the friendly amendment.

Mr. Walker, would you like to speak?

Mr. Walker: Yeah. Thank you, Chair, and I thank MLA Barnes for his thoughtful amendment here as well for all the comments made from my colleagues.

I just would like to hear, Chair, from research services that they have the capacity to add all of this comparative jurisdictional analysis. We have a year time frame. I am open to this. My background is in comparative international relations, so I could geek out on this all year, but I just want to make sure they have the bandwidth. I want to hear from them on this.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Walker.

I will go to Ms Robert to comment. Maybe, Ms Robert, if you would hold on for a second.

Does that friendly amendment moved by Mr. Bilous meet your expectations? Thank you very much for that.

Ms Robert to comment.

11:20

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Walker, yes. Research services works at the request of the committee, and we have undertaken crossjurisdictional research on legislation outside of the country before. Given that we've got a bit of time here, yes, that will not be a problem.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Anyone else online wishing to discuss either the motion or the amendment to the motion?

Hearing none, first we will move the amendment by Mr. Bilous on the motion, that it be amended by

adding "and the United Kingdom" after "the United States."

In the room all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Online all those in favour, please say aye. Any online opposed, please say no.

That amendment is carried.

Now back to the motion as amended. Moved by Mr. Barnes that – sorry. I see a hand up by Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make sure we're really clear so that when I talk to research services they'll know what we're doing. In terms of the U.S. we're talking probably about

state legislation, but in terms of the U.K. I believe what Mr. Bilous said was the U.K. Parliament, so are we talking about Westminster? Is that the intent?

The Chair: I believe that's the intent in room. Anyone online wishing to comment? Hearing none, I believe that's the understanding.

We will move forward. Moved by Mr. Barnes that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to prepare a crossjurisdictional review of relevant lobbyist legislation from the United States and the United Kingdom as part of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act.

All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Online, all those in favour, please say aye. Online, anyone opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Thank you. Is there any other discussion of research pertaining to the committee's review that they would wish to speak about at this time?

Mr. Bilous: I'm going to propose another motion. This may seem redundant, but just to ensure that it is covered off, I'd like to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future enable research services to work with the lobbyist registrar in compiling resources for the committee's review.

I know that's something that Nancy laid out, that that's one of the services that they've offered. They did this in 2011 for the committee at the time and again in 2016.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bilous. We will have the clerk put that up momentarily.

It is moved by Mr. Bilous that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future enable research services to work with the lobbyist registrar in compiling resources for the committee's review.

Anybody wishing to speak to the motion in the room or online?

Mr. Rowswell: Can I just ask: what other things would that be relative to what we've already passed, do you think? Like, what issues would that cover that aren't covered with what we've got?

Mr. Bilous: Yeah. My understanding is that what was explained at the front end was just things that the committee could direct research services to do. That was one of their offerings, and now it's just codifying it, so to speak.

The Chair: Anyone else online wishing to discuss the motion put forward by Mr. Bilous?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question. All those in the room in favour, please say aye. Anyone opposed, please say no. Online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Thank you. Anyone online opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Any other items to be brought forward under this topic for discussion? Mr. Bilous.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this was one of the recommendations, so it's just ensuring that we're clear with legislative services and appreciate all the support they provide the committee. That the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to draft a list of suggestions for a stakeholders list to the committee for the purposes of stakeholder consultations, which the committee will review and edit at the next meeting. This would, I think, help us move along at a good pace as opposed to waiting until a complete list is compiled.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bilous. We will again put that up on the screen. I will read it for those online. Moved by Mr. Bilous that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct research services to draft a list of suggestions for a stakeholders list to the committee for the purposes of stakeholder consultations, which the committee will review and edit at the next meeting.

Any discussion within the room or online? Mr. Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. I think that's a good starting point and gives us something to chew on while we're getting ready for that. I would support that.

The Chair: I will just quickly also loop in the next steps of the review, which this also pertains to, and just read this in for the record.

Hon. members, as we now initiate our review of the Lobbyists Act, I would encourage members to consider the approach they would like to see the committee take in conducting this review. While the committee does not need to make all of its decisions on these matters today, I would encourage members to start thinking about how they might want to see the committee proceed and who it might wish to hear from and engage with, et cetera. This is accomplished in part at least, if not in whole, by the motion put forward by Mr. Bilous, which is why I wanted to read that in there at this time. Thank you very much for that motion. Last call for any discussion on it before we proceed to calling the question.

Hearing none, on the motion as put forward by Mr. Bilous, all those in the room who are in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Online, all those in favour, please say aye. Thank you. Anyone online who is opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Any further items under the last two topics for next steps in the review or any other motions that anyone would like to put forward? Online, any other comments or discussion items that they would wish to see at this time? Thank you.

Hearing none, we will proceed to agenda item 5, which is a different topic, just to be prepared. We can go back, but the next agenda item is moving on to the request to present to the committee by the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta.

Hon. members, the committee received a request from the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta to make a presentation to the committee in relation to their recently released study Alberta's Crown Land Outdoor Recreation Economy: Driving Sustainable Economic Growth, Diversification & Job Creation. The request and additional documentation were received by the committee clerk and were posted on the committee's internal website. At this time I would like to acknowledge and thank the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta for their request and the information they provided. I am sure it is of great interest to the committee members. As we have just received this information last week, the committee may wish to take some additional time to review it before considering whether it wishes to invite the TIAA to present to the committee.

Are there any comments or questions from committee members at this time? Online, are there any comments or questions that you would like to ask? Ms Goehring.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question because my understanding is that they provided a report, and I agree that perhaps some further thought and effort be put into understanding what the tourism industry would like to see. I would ask to confirm that the report has been provided to the chair. If that report could be distributed to the rest of the committee, that would be amazing, and if we could have some sort of timeline for that, that would be great.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Goehring. Yes, I do have a copy of that report, and I would ask the clerk if that would be forwarded to all members of the committee. It's on the internal website, so all committee members do have access to that. Because it was received very close to the time of this meeting, it was my hope that the committee would be willing to table this for next meeting, just so there would be sufficient time to review what is being asked. It is a fairly comprehensive report. I don't have the exact number of pages, but it is significant and may also lead to questions from the committee for one or two relevant ministries. That is my only hope in tabling it for the next meeting, so that all committee members have sufficient time to review the information at hand.

Any other thoughts or a wish for discussion from anybody either online or in the room? Mr. Rowswell.

11:30

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. I would agree that if we can table this, then that would give us all a chance to read it and maybe be a little more productive as to what we want to do.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rowswell.

Anyone online or anyone else wishing to comment?

If there is no other member wishing to speak at this time, it is for the information of the committee that we will put this on the agenda for next meeting to more fully review the request before the committee in relationship to the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta. Thank you, members, for your contributions on that.

We now go to item 6, other business.

Hon. members, before opening the floor for other business, I want to advise committee members that pursuant to Standing Order 52.041(1) for subsequent meetings of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act notice of motions and amendments to proposed motions will be required. As per the usual practice in other committees, a memo will be circulated to all committee members in relation to the type of motions for which notice will be required and the timelines that they and any proposed amendments will need to be received by the committee clerk prior to the meeting they are intended for. That is just information for all those in the committee.

Is there any other business that members wish to discuss at this time, whether in the room or online?

Hearing and seeing none, we will now move to the date of the next meeting. The date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

Now we proceed to adjournment. If there's nothing else for the committee's consideration, I will call for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Smith. It is moved by Mr. Smith that the September 13, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be adjourned. All in favour? Any opposed in the room? Online, all in favour? Online, any opposed? That motion is carried, and this meeting is adjourned.

Thank you, committee members, for your time and attention today. I look forward to seeing you soon.

[The committee adjourned at 11:33 a.m.]

