

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

Monday, June 29, 2026
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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP), Deputy Chair

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services
Katie Fooks, Assistant Deputy Minister, Primary and Preventative Health Care

9 a.m. Monday, June 29, 2026

[Mr. Wiebe in the chair]

The Chair: Well, 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, MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti and chair of the committee. I'd like to ask the members and those joining the committee at the table to introduce themselves for the record. We will begin to my right.

Mr. Stephan: Jason Stephan, MLA, Red Deer-South.

Mr. van Dijken: Good morning. Glenn van Dijken, the MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Mr. Dach: Good morning. Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung, deputy chair.

Ms Steenbergen: Good morning. Christina Steenbergen, LAO communications.

Dr. McGraw: Good morning. Rachel McGraw, research officer.

Mr. Koenig: Trafton Koenig, office of Parliamentary Counsel.

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

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

The Chair: We would now like those joining us online to please unmute and turn your cameras on and introduce yourselves as I call your names. Member Hoyle.

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

The Chair: Member Petrovic.

Mrs. Petrovic: Chelsae Petrovic, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod.

The Chair: Member Rowswell.

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

The Chair: Member Yao.

Mr. Yao: Tany Yao, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

The Chair: Member Elmeligi.

Dr. Elmeligi: Good morning. Sarah Elmeligi, MLA, Banff-Kananaskis.

The Chair: Member de Jonge.

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

The Chair: And Member Boparai.

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

The Chair: Thank you.

For the record I'd like to note the following substitutions: Mr. Rowswell for the hon. Mr. Wright.

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 cameras while speaking and mute your microphones 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 the meeting.

We would like to now go to the approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda? Member Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. Thank you very much. I'd like to make a motion that the draft agenda be amended by renumbering agenda item 4 as 5 and agenda item 5 as 4 and then agenda item 5(a)(i) as 5(a)(ii) and agenda item 5(a)(ii) as 5(a)(i). This is just to accommodate people's schedules. MLA Petrovic would like to go first, and the others are to accommodate the people's schedules, so that's the logic behind it.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Member Rowswell.

Is the committee in favour of allowing Mr. Rowswell to move this motion, or is there any opposed? We'd like to call a vote now. Those in favour in the room, please say aye. Online, please say aye. Any opposed in the room and online? That motion is carried.

Now you can move the motion, Mr. Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: Okay. Sorry about that. Moved that

> the draft agenda be amended by renumbering (a) agenda item 4 as 5, (b) agenda item 5 as 4, and (c) agenda item 5(a)(i) as 5(a)(ii), and (d) agenda item 5(a)(ii) as 5(a)(i).

The Chair: All right. Thank you. It is up on the screen now. Is that your motion, Mr. Rowswell?

Mr. Rowswell: Yes, it is.

The Chair: All right. Having heard the motion, is there any debate? Seeing none, I would now call for a motion to vote. For those online and in the room, please say aye. All right. Any opposed in the room or online?

> That motion is carried.

Now we'd like to approve the agenda as amended for the June 29, 2026, meeting.

Mr. van Dijken: I'll make that motion.

The Chair: Mr. van Dijken moves. All in favour? Online? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

Next we have the draft minutes for our May 27, 2026, meeting. Are there any errors or omissions? If not, would a member like to move that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future approve the minutes as distributed?

Mr. Stephan: I so move.

The Chair: Mr. Stephan. Any discussion? I'll call the vote. All in favour in the room and online? Any opposed in the room or online? That motion is carried.

Next we're at agenda item 4, now, to review Bill 208, the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026. We have a presentation from hon. Member Petrovic from Livingstone-Macleod. Hon. members, at our meeting on May 27, 2026, the committee invited Mrs. Chelsae Petrovic, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod, who sponsored Bill 208, the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, to provide the presentation on the bill.

Mrs. Petrovic – excuse me.

Mr. Dach. Sorry.

Mr. Dach: Sorry to interrupt. Just a procedural question. You could have finished that. My question is: should somebody online wish to ask a question, is it necessary to e-mail the clerk, or may one just raise their hand virtually to notify?

The Chair: Ideally, as I stated earlier in the meeting, it's e-mailing the clerk or chat.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. Sorry to interrupt.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Mrs. Petrovic, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation, and we will then open the floor to questions from the committee members. Mrs. Petrovic, go ahead.

Mrs. Petrovic: Well, good morning, everyone, Chair. Thank you, guys, for accommodating my schedule. I apologize that I can't be there in person. I'm in the deep south of Alberta right now. I don't know what the Wi-Fi connection is, as I'm not in my home office, so please interrupt if it gets a little bit dicey.

I'm here today to speak to Bill 208, the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, and to explain why I made the decision to refer this legislation to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future for further review. This bill seeks to ban single-use flavoured vaping products as a measure to reduce youth vaping in Alberta, but let me be clear. Vaping in Alberta is not a symbolic issue. It's not theoretical, and it's not isolated to a number of young people. Youth vaping is a serious and growing public health concern in our province, and here in Alberta the numbers are deeply concerning.

Recent data shows that as many as 1 in 3 young people in Alberta are now vaping. Over a relatively short period of time youth vaping in Alberta nearly doubled, from 19 per cent in 2013 to 35 per cent in 2020. While some progress has been made in recent years, prevalence remains significant. In the most recent school-based data almost 15 per cent of Alberta students in grades 7 to 12 reported vaping in just the past 30 days. Remember, even at that reduced level that still represents thousands of Alberta students regularly using nicotine products. These numbers reflect use, not experimentation but ongoing behaviour.

9:10

When we combine that with national data from Heart and Stroke, the urgency becomes even clearer. They report that nearly half of vape users in Canada are youth or young adults and that Canada has some of the highest youth vaping rates in the world, including over 1 in 4 grade 12 students vaping. It's not a fringe issue. It's widespread among youth, and it's leading to severe addiction. Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances available. Evidence shows that young people can develop signs of dependency very quickly, even before daily use begins. Among Canadian youth who vape daily, 60 per cent have already tried and failed to quit, demonstrating how quickly that dependence can take hold.

We also know that this use begins early. Research shows the average age of initiation is under 16 years old, right in the middle of our critical brain development. The effects of nicotine on the developing brain are significant. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm areas responsible for attention, memory, learning, mood regulation, and impulse control. Alberta Health Services also reminds us that the brain continues developing until the approximate age of 25, making youth particularly vulnerable to these harms. These are not abstract risks. They directly impact student success, emotional regulation, and long-term health outcomes, and we're seeing those impacts play out in real time in our classrooms.

Members, we also must consider how these products are being used. Research shows that youth vaping is frequently habitual and highly social. Nearly all of youth report both using and sharing devices with peers, demonstrating that access is often peer driven rather than retail driven. We must pay close attention to what is driving that initial uptake. Flavours are a key factor. Data shows that over 90 per cent of youth who vape begin with flavoured products and continue to use them. These products are designed to appeal: bright colours, sweet flavours, sleek designs. Low price points and disposable formats make them even more accessible by removing barriers to experimentation. These are not neutral characteristics; they're part of the problem.

At the same time, we must acknowledge a broader reality. Despite declining cigarette smoking rates – only 1.7 per cent of Alberta youth report smoking cigarettes today – we are seeing nicotine re-emerge in new forms through vaping. The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated, but urgency must be matched with thoughtful, evidence-based policy-making. While the objective is clear, reducing youth vaping, the pathway to achieving it must truly be effective.

Bill 208 proposes a ban on single-use flavoured vaping products. This is a significant policy decision with wide-ranging implications. The critical point is this. We must ensure that any action we take actually reduces youth use, not simply just shifts behaviour. We know that youth primarily access these products socially. We know enforcement challenges exist, and we know unintended consequences can emerge when policy does not align with real-world behaviour.

We must also consider the impact on Alberta businesses, particularly those that are compliant and operating responsibly. I want to make this point very clear. My objective is not to punish or shut down responsible small businesses. Across Alberta there are retailers who follow the rules, who verify age appropriately, and who take their responsibility seriously. There's little to no evidence to suggest that the majority of these law-abiding business owners are selling to youth. That matters because if the problem is primarily socially driven, driven by peer sharing and normalization, then we might design policy that disproportionately targets compliant retailers while failing to address the root cause. If we're not thoughtful, we risk creating unintended consequences.

There's growing evidence that overly restrictive bans can push consumers towards illegal or unregulated markets. We're already seeing this in some jurisdictions where many users report continuing to purchase restricted products through informal or illegal channels, including online sources, and that presents real risks for our youth. Illegal markets are unregulated, products are not tested, age verification is absent, and youth may actually face greater exposure and harm, not less. We have seen similar patterns already in tobacco. In Canada the contraband tobacco market can represent up to 29 per cent of total consumption in some regions with known links to organized crime. That's not an outcome that Bill 208 wants to replicate.

There are also behavioural risks that are deeply concerning, and we must also recognize the economic reality. Flavoured products represent a significant portion of the vaping market, in some cases as much as 90 per cent of sales, meaning sweeping restrictions could have substantial impacts on small and medium-sized businesses across Alberta. If we're not careful, we risk harming legitimate business while doing little to disrupt the social pathway to which you actually access these products. This is precisely why I believe this bill had to go to committee.

My intention is not to delay action but to strengthen it, to ensure we are targeting the right problem in the right way, to ensure we're protecting people while also being mindful of economic realities, and to ensure the final policy strikes the right balance: protecting youth from addiction and harm, addressing the real source of access and normalization, preventing the growth of illicit and unsafe markets, and supporting responsible Alberta business.

Through this committee I'm hoping we can ask some critical questions. Will banning single-use flavoured vapes meaningfully reduce youth vaping in Alberta? How will this policy affect what is happening in our schools? Are enforcement mechanisms practical and sufficient? What unintended consequences might emerge, and how will this impact communities and small businesses across our province?

Members, when we're dealing with addiction, brain development, and the well-being of young people, we cannot afford to get this wrong. Strong legislation is built through consultation, evidence, and careful analysis, not haste. Referring this bill to this committee was not stepping back; it was a way of ensuring we move forward in a way that is responsible, effective, and grounded in Alberta's reality. Albertans expect us to protect young people, but they also expect us to get policy right, and I'm hoping that sending this to committee is the approach that does both of those.

Thank you, Chair. I don't need 10 minutes of everyone's time, so I'm happy to take questions as we go.

The Chair: Yeah. Thank you, Mrs. Petrovic, for your presentation.

We will now open the floor for questions, and Member Elmeligi is first on the list. Go ahead.

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, MLA Petrovic, for that great presentation. You actually answered some of my questions in your presentation, but I do think that the reason why we're in committee is because we need to kind of dive a little bit deeper into some of this stuff. I'm not about to speak for the other members around the table, but I think we can all agree that youth consuming nicotine is bad and we need to stop that. I know that we also all have stories of when we were younger and experimenting with nicotine. I don't need to get into my personal stories, but yes, of course.

I appreciate you acknowledging the impacts to businesses because I have heard from some businesses that are very concerned about, you know, being a law-abiding business and not selling to youth through a vape store but how a lot of the access of youth to vapes is through places like gas stations that maybe are not checking IDs as regularly because they sell a lot of other things. One of the ideas that came forward was this idea of creating a licence or some kind of regulatory mechanism that would enable a business to even sell vaping products to make sure that those law-abiding businesses that aren't selling to minors are able to continue to do so. So I'm still struggling a little bit to make sure that we have the data that shows that this ban on flavours is going to lead to the outcome that we want it to.

But I think my first question that I'd like to start with is: why was the bill referred to committee, and who was consulted on the original drafting? And then if you could speak to this, like, outcome piece of: is this the right bill to achieve the outcome that we need?

Mrs. Petrovic: Yeah. Absolutely. In all fairness I was sort of hoping you were going to go into some of your youth stories because that always makes for a good time first thing in the morning, but . . .

Dr. Elmeligi: Oh, like the note from your mother to go to the gas station and get a pack of smokes?

Mrs. Petrovic: Oh, that was before my time. I missed the joys of the '80s. I've heard many stories about that, though.

Dr. Elmeligi: It's ridiculous.

9:20

Mrs. Petrovic: Yeah.

I can just say, according to Heart and Stroke, that they actually did a study, and they are stating that it's – and I'm just pulling it up – about 83 per cent of Albertans. Let me get this number correct. I'm not in my home office. I'm in a conference table in another community, so I apologize. All of my notes are just kind of scattered on a table in front of me.

When we look at it, it says that 83 per cent of Albertans support restricting the use and sale of flavoured vapes and additives that are attractive to kids and youth in vape products such as sweet, candy, fruit, dessert, and mint, menthol flavours. This is sort of where this comes in, that a lot of Albertans are looking for some stronger regulations behind flavoured vapes.

As I've gone around, I've talked to many business owners. I've talked to cardiologists, respirologists, pediatricians, Heart and Stroke, Canadian Cancer Society. I've done quite a few consultations when it comes to what this could potentially look like. As you can imagine, with a private member's bill you don't necessarily have the large team behind you that you do in a ministry, so when looking at some of these, we looked at just the single-use flavoured vapes as a way to try and stop that social use.

Maybe it's older friends, older peers that are getting these to the youth. When we look at legitimate, law-abiding vape shops, I don't believe that youth are going in and buying from these very responsible owners. I've met with some of the responsible owners as well, and they've told me all of the precautions that they put in place. They actually go above and beyond, where their employees, if they're ever caught selling to anyone under the age of 18: instant dismissal. There's no question about it. They ID everyone under the age of 40. They don't allow kids to loiter outside. If there are people coming inside and it looks and is perceived that this person is buying for the youth that are outside, they will not sell to them. And then on top of that, there's additional training that they have made their employees go through, similar to AGLC when operating a liquor store. I've seen these business owners, very responsible business owners, put in a lot [not recorded] these in the hands of the youth. I very, very much appreciate that, and this is not meant to target them.

This bill is meant to start having that conversation of what youth vaping looks like here in Alberta, so I'm really hoping through committee that we can go and we can have responsible business owners come in and talk about their experience. I hate to say this online because I know the media will take it and blow up with it, but maybe it is looking at convenience stores and not having a flavoured vape sold within convenience stores and you do need to go into that specialty shop with that training, making sure that there are additional safeguards in place.

That's why we wanted to refer to committee, to look at the experts on both sides. We all know that youth vaping is a problem. I don't think there's anyone here that can disagree that it's not a problem, but it's: how do we address it appropriately? That's sort of why we sent it here to committee. When we look at the legislative process, I don't think that, having this on the grounds of the floor, we were necessarily going to be able to have that other consultation that was needed.

I hope that answers some of your questions. Yeah. The bill is not to target those really good business owners. The bill is to start to look at ways to decrease youth vaping but do it in a responsible manner so we're not creating an illicit market or any of those types of avenues.

Dr. Elmeligi: Yeah. Thank you. That is helpful.

You know, I think what's kind of a little bit different is that – like, I don't want to get into the Legislature debate of the contents of the bill, but at the same time in committee we are here to kind of discuss the contents of the bill and if it will be effective. So I do like the idea of including more businesses in the consultation and presentation to committee. I think that when we start talking about the health impacts of vaping on youth, the data is very clear, right? We know that nicotine is an addictive substance, and we know that youth who consume it run higher risks of all kinds of health issues in the long run, just like everybody else who consumes nicotine. It is a challenge in our society for lots of different ways.

What I really want to emphasize is that we have a broad consultation, including businesses who are specialized in selling vaping products, because I do think there is a difference in how businesses who are specialized in selling these products operate in comparison to other businesses that sell these products in amongst thousands of other things that they sell every day. So I'm happy to hear that you're open to the details of how we might have something like that reflected in the legislation.

I just really, again, want to emphasize that we need to be a hundred per cent sure – or maybe not. We can never be a hundred per cent sure of anything, so forget that. We need to be fairly certain based on data and evidence that reducing access to flavours will reduce youth consumption of vape products. Flavours were not available when I was a kid growing up, but there were still plenty of youth who smoked. So one of the things I'm curious about is: do we have evidence or is there a way that somebody has been able to prove with data that access to flavoured vape products has increased youth consumption of nicotine in comparison to when I was a kid and vapes were not even an option?

Mrs. Petrovic: Yeah. Well, I think that when we look at the data – this is an anecdotal story. I was at my daughter's school, and I've seen as young as 10-, 11-, 12-year-olds vaping. As you can imagine, I am that crazy parent that never wants my child to vape. With a health care background I never want it, and I looked at my daughter and said, "How young are people vaping?" and she said, "A lot of my friends are." I panicked and I said, "Is there anything that as a mom I can do to get you to make sure that you never vape?" and she said, "You have told me all of the risks associated with it. You have threatened me within an inch of my life if I ever vape. You've done all of the things as a mom that you were supposed to do," and she said, "But, Mom, there's probably a good chance that I'm going to try it because it smells delicious, and everyone says that it tastes delicious, so why wouldn't I?" And all I thought was: okay; as a parent what do I do? Then I went and asked her: "If there was no vaping and it didn't taste good, if it was just a cigarette, if it tasted gross, smelled gross, would you do it?" She's like: "Oh, no. That's absolutely disgusting."

When we look at vaping, since there is no, I guess – if there's a choice of cotton candy or a cigarette-flavoured vape, like, I think common sense is going to show us that we're picking the cotton candy or the fruit-flavoured vape over the one that smells like an ashtray. So it would be really difficult to have that definitive evidence to say: if vaping wasn't delicious tasting and smelling, would youth be going after it and would they just be vaping gross, the ashtray vape? I think that the study that you're looking for doesn't exist because there isn't a vape that tastes like ashtray. I don't know any other way to say it. That's just the blunt way to put it.

But when we look at studies, it does show that a lot of them are vaping for the fruit flavour. In 2021 fruit was the most popular vape in Canada with 65 per cent of 15- to 19-year-olds using that. That's a study that shows that that's what they're using. And then 57 per cent amongst 20 to – my apologies. I knew it. I'm in the middle of nowhere, so I apologize. I think when we look at traditional cigarette flavours like mint and menthol, we're only looking at about 12 per cent between 15- to 19-year-olds. So I think the exact study that you're looking for is nonexistent, but I think when you put the common sense value into it of what we're actually targeting, I think that there is the value in it.

Also, like you said, I am very much open to other suggestions. Like, the way that the bill is worded is not a ride or die for me, but I do want to have that conversation of: is there a responsible way that we can go and reduce these? Is there a way to look at this bill and do it all responsibly? I don't want to go and, you know, put 200 businesses out of business in Alberta and actually it doesn't solve any of the problems because now we have an illicit market and we're shipping it online. So yeah, how the bill is exactly worded isn't necessarily a ride or die for me. It is very much that conversation and seeing if there is a responsible way to go about this and ensuring that any decision that's made or any recommendation that is made, the unintended consequences aren't significantly larger than the problem that we're currently in.

9:30

That's where I'm really hoping – you guys are very smart individuals, and we have a very broad consultation that we can do through this. That's kind of why I really wanted it to go to committee to be able to have all of these discussions.

Dr. Elmeligi: Yeah. Thank you. This is helpful. Might I suggest to the committee . . .

The Chair: Member Elmeligi, we're going to open it up for other questions from other members.

Next is Member van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member Petrovic, for putting this forward as a discussion starter and having the flexibility to allow the committee to review the work that you've already done but then to also reach out for more information and consultation. You did highlight both health outcomes as a priority but also recognizing that there are potential economic impacts, and you talked about impacts to communities and businesses. You also talked about having thoughtful, evidence-based decisions made, taking into consideration unintended consequences, essentially trying to find the right balance. You know, trying to address the right problem in the right way I think is the way you put it.

I guess my question to you is: how would you see it for the committee? How should the committee weigh these considerations when assessing the overall effectiveness of a proposed ban, the balance between health objectives and economic impacts? How do you see that balancing out?

Mrs. Petrovic: Yeah. Well, absolutely. Thank you for that question. I think that it's ensuring that there is balance. As I've met with business owners and seeing if there is – I guess it's that consultation process, like when I've chatted with pediatricians, cardiologists, respirologists, Heart and Stroke and we look at that overarching problem and seeing that this is largely also a social issue. Like, a lot of these youth potentially are not walking into the local vape store and getting it. A lot of these vape owners very much understand what it means to have a good reputation in these communities. They understand what it means to run a legitimate business, and they understand the consequences if they are to sell to youth. Not everywhere follows that same process. Not everyone has that same training. I believe that Dr. Elmeligi – and I apologize; I'm so terrible with pronunciation – said it as well. You know, if you're maybe a massive convenience store and you're selling all of the things to all of the people, are those checks and balances in place as they are in other areas?

I think when we look – and I'm hoping the committee will – at the health implications of these, is there a way to partner with the schools? I was just at a graduation where a parent made a joke about how all of the kids used to vape in the bathrooms of the schools. Of course, my heart, like, set off with that. Is there a way that we can partner with the schools when we're addressing vaping, especially knowing the behaviours that it causes and the health implications? Is there a way that we can partner with starting to educate these youth that vaping is not just puffing on flavour? It is a serious health implication as it is with smoking.

If you go to the government of Canada website, you can even see that they say: we don't know what vaping is going to do to you. The health outcomes of vaping are significant, and we don't even know. We don't even know it all. It's like smoking in the 1930s. It was the cool thing to do, and then as it progressed, we could see the significant health implications. So I'm hoping that this committee can look at: what are these serious health implications? How do we balance that with getting them out of the hands of youth? How do we balance that with ensuring that our businesses aren't going under?

Just throwing out ideas, perhaps it is that if you are to sell vaping products, you have to take courses like they do with AGLC and selling liquor. Perhaps it is only vape shops, as we do with cannabis stores, that it is a specialty shop to ensure that all of those are being followed. So that's what I'm really hoping, that the committee is going to be able to look at both sides to see that this is a serious health implication. It comes with alcohol as well. Like, we know that, you know, 12-year-olds definitely shouldn't be drinking vodka, so we've put all of these regulatory things into place to try our best to ensure that they're not getting their hands on these. I'm hoping that we can have that same striking balance with this.

I hope that answers your question. I said a lot of words, so I'm hoping that that helps.

Mr. van Dijken: Yes. Thank you. That's helpful.

The Chair: Thank you, Member Petrovic, for your answers.

Are there any further questions? Member Elmeligi? I see Member de Jonge's hand up. Go ahead, Member de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you so much, Chair, and thank you, MLA Petrovic, for coming in front of the committee this morning and for your presentation. I thought it was really insightful and, you know, very introspective on the legislation; well, more so the issue that you're trying to address and the ways that you're hoping to tackle this very serious problem of youth vaping.

You mentioned risk of unintended consequences, including illicit markets. I do share this concern, as we've discussed, and so do my constituents, so I'm hoping you can share a bit with us today. What safeguards should the committee consider to better understand or mitigate those risks and, to your very well-articulated point, actually and meaningfully reduce youth use and not just shift behaviour and very importantly, which Member Elmeligi has really articulated well, not shut down responsible business owners and employers in our communities?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Petrovic: Well, thank you, MLA de Jonge. Yeah. When we look at some of these illicit markets right now, it's actually – I think when we look at illicit markets in Alberta, I think when we look at all of the products that you can get online that are not exactly the greatest, we can see that you can order marijuana online and it can come right to your door. I'm pretty sure there are websites, and I don't frequent these websites a lot. I'm sorry; I'm not well versed in the illegal cigarette, vaping, marijuana trade of Alberta. I'm sort of happy I can't answer this as appropriately as I think you're hoping me to. But I think when we look at all of these and looking at how we can ship to places, it's: how do you balance it?

Like, first, how are these children paying for this illicit market online? Are they using mom and dad's credit card? Are they buying those disposable credit cards? I don't know how they're accessing this online. [Not recorded] . . . try myself, but I don't know if I have any interest in buying illegal products online either. I think that's the only way I can put it, but I do think that this is something that does need to be looked at. What does that illicit market look at? You know, if you guys are looking at it for vapes, why not look at it for marijuana? One time I saw someone purchase marijuana online and it looked like a bag of cereal, and I know that if that was in my house, there would be some serious problems. There were no warning labels or anything on it. So when we look at that kind of a market, it's very worrisome.

I'm even hoping through Bill 208 that we can have a broader discussion across the country of: what does flavoured vaping look like across the country? I've seen some other provinces that just went and shut down, banned flavoured vaping instantly, and within the year every single vape shop, responsible business owner was all out of business, and it actually just caused more harm. So as we look at it as a whole, you know, coast to coast across our country, is there a way that this can start that discussion, too, with our federal counterparts and our other provinces of: how do we combat that illicit market?

I don't think we're ever going to be able to stop an illicit market, as we can see with many of the other areas, with, you know, fentanyl and all of the other gamut of drugs that you can get out there through the illicit way. I do think that this is something that does need to be talked about, and it does need to be looked at in an appropriate manner. I don't know if that necessarily answers your question. I wish I had more information on it, but, like I said, I'm not frequenting illegal online sourcing sites. It's not something I do in my spare time.

9:40

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms de Jonge: Thanks.

The Chair: Go ahead, Member de Jonge. Do you have a further question?

Ms de Jonge: Yeah. Just a quick follow-up. Thank you so much, MLA Petrovic. I think everyone on the committee, including all our responsible business owners in Alberta, can agree that we want to prevent youth access to vaping products. It's just, you know: how do we do this, and how do we ensure that we're not propping up illicit markets? How do we ensure that we're not unfairly hurting responsible business owners or preventing legal adult use of these products, right? So I think it's really the how here that we need to discuss, and I do really appreciate you having this discussion with the committee this morning.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Member de Jonge and Member Petrovic.

Are there any further questions? Member Elmeligi, do you have a further question?

Dr. Elmeligi: Yes, I do. Thank you, Chair. A couple of things I just wanted to suggest. MLA Petrovic has cited multiple data points and data sources. I think it'd be really helpful if those reports that you're quoting from could be shared with the committee, so uploaded to the committee shared website. That would be very helpful.

I also think, and this kind of leads into what you were just talking about, MLA Petrovic, that this is an issue across the nation, and I'm very curious to see what other provinces or the federal government have done legislatively and what the outcomes of their legislation have been. So if there is some kind of multijurisdictional analysis that could also be uploaded to the committee website, that would be helpful.

And then my final thought is that maybe – obviously, I don't expect any MLAs to participate in an illicit market to gain information. That feels like a really bad thing for any of us to do. But if it is an illicit market which we know does exist, I'm sure that the RCMP and municipal police services have been investigating. So maybe we need to invite somebody from law enforcement services to also come to the committee and share some information about the illicit market so that we can make sure that we're making the decision that will lead to the outcome that we want, which is ultimately less youth vaping.

Forever nicotine – doesn't matter what it tastes like – is a thing of rebellion, right? Like, kids have been smoking since cigarettes were invented, no matter how many parents threatened them within an inch of their lives or told them how bad it was, it's always been happening. And I can speak for my daughters. I told them up and down not to be consuming vape products, and they both ended up doing that at different times and whatever.

You're correct; like, anecdotally it did start with flavoured products, so I hear you, but I also really want to make sure that we are not basing legislation on what our kids have done or what our kids' friends have done but what the data is telling us across the country. We really need to be sure to eliminate personal bias in this conversation because it's way too easy to start talking about our own families, and then that's not everybody. That is a sample size of one. So I'd love for some of that information to be shared with the committee on our website, and I think we need to invite some law enforcement to present to committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Petrovic: That's definitely a better way than me trying to scour through illicit markets and try and find some research. I appreciate you guys understanding that I actually don't know how to source any of this illegally. So thank you for that understanding.

Chair, I'm happy to upload or to pass this on. Is there a date that you guys are hoping for? Or what would the next steps be for some of that?

The Chair: Yeah. Member Petrovic, if you could just upload or contact the committee clerk and sort through that.

Mrs. Petrovic: Through the boss.

The Chair: Through the boss. Exactly.

Are there any further questions for Member Petrovic, or have you got another comment?

Mrs. Petrovic: I have one more question. I was just looking to see, so I can thoughtfully get all – if you guys could see the table in front of me, you would understand that there is a lot of information. Is there a timeline that you guys are looking to have some of this information passed on to the committee clerk, or in just a timely fashion, sometime in the next few months?

The Chair: Just reach out to the committee clerk, and you can figure out a timeline with the clerk if that works for you.

Mrs. Petrovic: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. No further questions for Member Petrovic?

Thank you for your presentation, and thank you for all the questions. As we know, this is a very – I'm not sure if you knew that this topic was going to be of, you know, so much interest as it has already garnered today, and we look forward to further discussion. So thank you for your presentation, and enjoy the rest of your day.

All right. At our May 27, 2026, meeting the committee invited officials from the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services to provide a technical briefing in regard to the committee's review of Bill 208. I will now call on Ms Katie Fooks, assistant deputy minister of primary and preventative health care division of Primary and Preventative Health Services, to provide that briefing. Ms Fooks, you have 10 minutes to provide your briefing, and we will open the floor to questions after that. Ms Fooks, you can join the table.

Ms Fooks: Good morning, and thank you very much for the invite to provide a technical briefing. If we could please go to slide 2, I'll give a quick overview of the briefing. The intent today is to go over the current legislative framework as well as into the details of the changes in Bill 208.

If we could go to slide 3, please. This bill is proposing measures to reduce the appeal and accessibility of vaping products to youth by addressing restrictions on single-use, disposable, flavoured vaping products only directly in the bill.

And then we can skip right down to slide 5, please. Some key considerations for the legislation and the legislative framework today: protecting young people from nicotine addiction is a key objective of Alberta's current tobacco and vaping reduction strategy, which was released in 2024. The appeal of flavoured vaping products contributes to elevated rates of youth vaping, which does undermine Alberta's tobacco and vaping reduction efforts across the province.

Another flag is just that the current version of the bill does require the ministry to begin a review of the act on July 31, 2026. We do complete a review of the act and current measures every five years under the legislation. The intent of that review is to assess current policy, engage stakeholders, and get a better understanding of whether or not current measures in the legislation are working as intended.

Slide 6, please. Our current legislative framework for this bill. In order to ban any type of flavoured products for vaping right now under the legislative framework, what you would have to do is

actually designate those flavours in the regulation. Currently under the legislation if a minister would want to ban a flavour, you would add those flavours to the regulation in order to ban them. There aren't currently any flavours banned in the legislation today. Once a flavour is added to that regulation and designated as prohibited, restrictions apply across all types of products, so both single-use as well as rechargeable products. Then, as I mentioned, none of the ministers have yet exercised this authority to ban any flavoured products under the legislation or regulation.

Down to slide 7, please. The proposed amendments in Bill 208. Really, what they do is add in a definition of flavoured vaping products which allows for the ban of single-use vaping products that are flavoured directly in the bill rather than adding a ban or a list of flavours to the regulation. So it would ban those single-use flavoured vaping products directly in the bill rather than just adding them into the legislation and listing the flavours there. It does allow to further look at banning other flavoured products in the regulation if desired as well, but the act-level amendments would be enough to ban those single-use products.

9:50

On to slide 8, please. Some analysis on the changes. The amendments would create different rules for single-use and refillable vaping products, which currently are not in the legislation. If there's a future desire to look at banning refillable products as well, that would require additional either legislative or regulatory changes. This creates different sets of rules for products that may pose similar health risks.

A little bit on jurisdictional scans. The governments of Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Nunavut have restricted flavoured vaping products, limiting availability to only tobacco flavours. And then B.C. and Saskatchewan have restricted the sale of flavoured vaping products to specialty vape product stores. The federal government has also articulated an intention to remove flavoured vaping e-liquids, but regulations have not yet come forward on that.

On to slide 9, please. Bill 208 has generated stakeholder interest. Advocacy groups generally are supportive of reducing the uptake for youth vaping products and youth vaping use, and then industry and some small businesses have raised concerns just regarding potential business impacts of the additional regulations and restrictions.

On the economic side, just flagging that Budget 2026 did project $51 million in revenue from provincial vaping tax across all products, but we don't have that breakdown of what that would be for single-use versus refillable vaping products.

And then the department does have a near-term opportunity to review the act, engage with stakeholders, and consider changes to the legislation in the long term.

Thank you. That concludes my presentation.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Fooks. Thank you for your presentation.

Before we go to any questions, I'd like to ask Member Haji to introduce himself for the record.

Mr. Haji: Sharif Haji, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

The Chair: Thank you, and thank you for your briefing.

Are there any questions for Ms Fooks right now? I'll open the floor to questions. Member Dach, go ahead.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. I just had a quick question. During your presentation – and thank you for it, Ms Fooks – it occurred to me that there may have been an opportunity in the upcoming mandated review of the main act, that you mentioned, to actually address exactly what Bill 208 proposes to do. Is that not the case?

Ms Fooks: That would be the case. Generally when we undertake a review of not just this act but any legislation, the intent is to look at all the measures in an act and ensure that they are still meeting the current framework of what's happening on the ground and that the legislative framework is doing what it's intended to do. So there could be an opportunity to also review what's intended in Bill 208 at that time.

Mr. Dach: A quick follow-up. I'm just wondering, given that this committee is meeting to discuss these issues and restrict the flavoured single-use vaping products, would you see this committee's work as a duplication or perhaps an intersecting set on this upcoming mandated review?

Ms Fooks: Thank you for the question. I could see some intersections between the review. I think more information and consideration is always helpful when looking at such important issues.

Mr. Dach: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for the questions and the answers.

Member van Dijken, you're up next.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your presentation. I guess, following up on MLA Dach's questions with regard to the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act review, my understanding is that it hasn't started. Or has it started?

Ms Fooks: No. Correct, it has not started yet, but it needs to begin by the end of July.

Mr. van Dijken: It begins by the end of July. What is the timeline that it's expected to be completed?

Ms Fooks: Usually for these types of reviews what the department does is that we bring forward some options just for internal consideration on the details of the review and timelines for that to be implemented. They usually do take anywhere from six months to a year just due to stakeholder engagement and thorough consideration of how measures are working. We also usually engage with counterparts in other provinces and territories on measures that they've reviewed and put in place.

Mr. van Dijken: If I may, Chair, I guess that leads me to believe that the review would encompass Bill 208 as part of that, possibly. It'll be a topic of discussion, I would think, in the review. Do you see where this bill could align with the review or diverge from the intent of the review, and how would we best move forward with that?

Ms Fooks: Thank you for the question. I think the issues under consideration in the bill would be things that would likely be looked at in a review just because, as flavoured vaping products are mentioned in the bill, there would be a review of vaping products and their impact and whether or not measures are currently working. So I would see some alignment there.

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any further questions? Member Stephan.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Chair. You had mentioned that some jurisdictions have banned flavoured vaping products. Do we have any reports on how that has – in terms of the grey market, illegal market, in terms of filling the gap. If the vast majority of vaping consumption is by flavoured products, as I understand or have been told, how much of the grey market now has filled in that market demand in the jurisdictions where they've sought to ban the flavoured products? I'd actually be interested in that.

I understand that marijuana is about 80-20 right now in terms of legal versus illegal. My understanding is that it was higher originally, but the pricing has kind of become more comparable so there's that 80-20 split between legal and illegal. Here we'd have something where the legal market would not have that product whereas the illegal market would have that product that isn't available legally, so in those jurisdictions how has it gone? I'd be interested.

Ms Fooks: Thank you for the question. I don't have those numbers or that information in front of me just on how it's gone in those areas, but that would very likely be something we would consider looking through just the review of our act and if our measures are currently working and what other provinces and territories have done.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Are there any further questions for Ms Fooks? Go ahead, Member.

Mr. Haji: Yeah. A quick question. Just to follow up with Member Stephan's question, those jurisdictions that have banned flavours: do you have an idea of which ones have a disposable ban and which ones don't have a disposable ban?

Ms Fooks: That is a good question. Give me one moment. I have some follow-up information in front of me, and I just want to see if it's included. I don't have that level of detail with me.

Chair, I'm not sure on the appropriate procedure, if any follow-up information is usually submitted.

The Chair: You can follow up with the committee clerk and get that information to him. Thank you.

Ms Fooks: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: If there are no further questions, I thank Ms Fooks for her time today. You are excused.

Ms Fooks: Thank you.

The Chair: Hon. members, as was the case or will be with the Lobbyists Act, the committee may wish to consider inviting officials from the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services to provide ongoing technical support to the committee in relation to our review of Bill 208.

I will now open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions in relation to this matter. Member van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Chair, I see that we have a standard motion that's been proposed to be introduced, and I would move that

> in support of the committee's review of Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services (a) to provide technical assistance as requested to the Legislative Assembly Office and (b) to attend meetings of the committee at the request of the chair to provide technical expertise to the committee.

10:00

The Chair: Thank you. Your motion is up on the screen. Is that your motion, Member van Dijken?

Mr. van Dijken: Yes, I would so move.

The Chair: Do you want any further discussion and do you want to talk to your motion?

Mr. van Dijken: It's standard practice for the committee to get assistance from expertise outside of the committee, so I think this would be in order for next steps for the committee's work.

The Chair: Okay.

I see Member Rowswell with his hand up. Member Rowswell, go ahead.

Mr. Rowswell: There we go. Okay. Yeah. You know, Bill 208 is important, and combatting vaping is very important. It deserves the full attention of the committee, but we are also doing the Lobbyists Act, and I think it'd be good if we do one at a time and do it in succession of each other. The Lobbyists Act: we have a year to get that done, so I would suggest that we do it in succession instead of concurrently, and we can totally focus on the item that we're dealing with at the time. Given that, I would like to adjourn debate on this motion.

The Chair: So you've moved to adjourn debate. I'll call the question. All in favour of adjourning debate on the motion that's before us? And online? Any opposed in the room and online? That motion is carried.

Okay. At this time I would like to open the floor to comments, questions, or motions regarding research requests from the committee in relation to our review of Bill 208.

Member Dach, go ahead.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to make a motion regarding research requests, and that motion would be, should I have your permission to proceed . . .

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that

> in support of the committee's review of Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a crossjurisdictional analysis of similar, existing, or proposed legislation in select jurisdictions.

The Chair: Thank you for your motion.

Mr. Rowswell, I see your hand up. Before that, Mr. Dach, do you want to speak to your motion?

Mr. Dach: Yeah. I want to speak a little bit to what I may mean by select jurisdictions. When we talk about that, we want to be maybe specific in including the following items such as other provinces and territories in Canada; federally, Canada itself; and then other jurisdictions which have similarities to us, particularly with respect to this restrictive legislation, such as Australia and New Zealand and possibly other jurisdictions such as U.S. states or the United States itself, the U.K. or European Union or individual European countries. I know it's a broad base, but I'm sure research services will decide upon the direct, appropriate connection that these different jurisdictions might have. They've done a pretty good job of it in the past.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach.

I see Mr. Rowswell's hand up. Did you have a question or comment?

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. For the same reason I think we have the LAO and the research group focus on one item at a time, it would be beneficial for us to give the full attention to each of these in succession. Given that, I would move that

> we adjourn debate on this motion.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, all in favour of adjourning debate in the room?

Mr. Dach: I don't quite understand the rationale for this. Pardon me?

The Chair: There's no debate.

Mr. Dach: Okay.

The Chair: So all in favour in the room of adjourning debate? And online? Any opposed in the room? Online, any opposed?

> That motion is carried.

The committee may wish to consider that, as was the case in a review of the Lobbyists Act, the Legislative Assembly Office has been tasked with compiling 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 a future meeting. 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 to review.

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to make a motion.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Dach: I 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 Bill 208, Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026, and distribute it to committee members for their review.

The Chair: Your motion is up on the screen. Is that your motion, Mr. Dach?

Mr. Dach: Yes, it is, Chair.

The Chair: Do you want to speak to it?

Mr. Dach: Certainly. It's a standard motion, standard practice for this committee to make this request to have a draft list of stakeholders prepared for our review, and I think it would be unusual to divert from this practice.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

I see Member Rowswell with his hand up.

Mr. Rowswell: Yeah. Thank you very much. That's a great idea and I think that's a good thing, but I think we should deal with that in succession and deal with that after we've dealt with the Lobbyists Act, so I would move that

> we adjourn debate.

The Chair: Having heard the motion to adjourn debate, all in favour in the room and online? Any opposed online and in the room?

> That motion is carried.

Okay. We are now on item 5, the review of the Lobbyists Act. Hon. members, at our May 27, 2026, meeting the committee invited officials from the Ministry of Justice and Alberta's lobbyist registrar to provide technical briefings in relation to the Lobbyists Act. At this time I would like to call on – before I continue, Member Elmeligi, you have your hand up. Go ahead.

Dr. Elmeligi: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just seeking clarity here on why every single one of the motions that have been brought forward around Bill 208 have been adjourned from debate. I'm curious as to why, because I thought we were here to discuss Bill 208. While I can agree with MLA Rowswell's intention to look at these bills in succession, I think that we can chew gum and walk at the same time, and we could have thorough discussions on both Bill 208 and the lobbying act. I believe that's what we were called into committee to do, so I'm curious, now that these motions have passed to adjourn debate on all of the motions that have been proposed, does that mean that we are no longer discussing Bill 208 in this meeting or in future meetings? How long will those motions to adjourn debate stand?

10:10

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Member Elmeligi, for your comments. Those motions are not up for debate. However, they are just delayed on 208. They will come back at a future date. When Bill 208 comes back up, it'll be the first thing on the agenda.

Dr. Elmeligi: But we don't have a time frame on when that will be, Chair?

The Chair: It'll be at the next meeting, at the call of the chair.

Dr. Elmeligi: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll go back to the Lobbyists Act. I'll start from the top. Hon. members, at our May 27, 2026, meeting the committee invited officials from the Ministry of Justice and the Alberta lobbyist registrar to provide technical briefings in relation to the Lobbyists Act. At this time I would like to call on Ms Joan Neatby, with the Ministry of Justice, and Mr. Josh de Groot, the registrar of Alberta lobbyist registry, to provide their briefings to the committee. You each have 10 minutes to provide your briefings, then we will open the floor to questions from the committee. You may approach the table.

Ms Neatby: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the committee. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a technical briefing on the Lobbyists Act. My intent today is to provide you with a high-level understanding of Alberta's act and how it fits within the Canadian context. I understand that Mr. de Groot will also present, and he'll go into somewhat more detail than I will.

I would like to impart a high-level understanding of how Alberta's Lobbyists Act fits within the Canadian context. Alberta's legislation was formed from the same basic principles as lobbying legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. The first principle is that lobbying government is a legitimate activity. The Lobbyists Act and the lobbyist registry are not aimed at prohibiting or limiting lobbying. Stakeholders, organizations, and businesses have the right to communicate with decision-makers and to provide decision-makers with information that highlights their views. There

is an expectation that people will attempt to influence government decisions. This is part of democracy.

The second principle is that lobbying activity must be transparent. It is important that Albertans know who is lobbying, who is being lobbied, and the subject matter of the lobbying. Ultimately, this is aimed at increasing the quality of public policy-making and ensuring decisions are made openly, fairly, and for the public good. In order to achieve this transparency and accountability, lobbying legislation in Canada focuses on the registration of lobbyists.

There are several elements to lobbying legislation. It is necessary to understand each of these elements in order to understand how the legislation works. The act outlines who's a lobbyist and what activity is considered to be lobbying. Only those who are paid to lobby are required to register. Lobbyists are those who are paid to communicate with public office holders in an attempt to influence certain types of decisions made by government and by prescribed provincial entities.

There are two types of lobbyists, those who are hired by a client to lobby and those who lobby on behalf of their organization. Lobbyists who are paid by a client are called consultant lobbyists. In Alberta those who lobby on behalf of their organization are called organization lobbyists. An organization could be a business, trade, industry, or professional organization. It could be a union, a chamber of commerce. It could be an interest group. An organization could be incorporated, unincorporated, a partnership, or a sole proprietorship.

Canadian lobbying legislation requires that lobbyists file returns that include information about their lobbying activity. The rules differ for when consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists are required to file a return. In Alberta a consultant lobbyist is required to file a return in respect of each undertaking to lobby not later than 10 days after entering into the undertaking. Some jurisdictions, including Alberta, require a consultant lobbyist to report when they set up meetings with public office holders or attempt to influence the awarding of a contract.

In Alberta a person who lobbies on behalf of an organization is not considered to be a lobbyist until they, together with other persons in the organization, lobby or have a duty to lobby at least 50 hours annually. If an organization has organization lobbyists, the designated filer of that organization shall file a return within two months after the day on which an individual in that organization becomes an organization lobbyist and within 30 days after the expiration of each six-month period.

All Canadian lobbying legislation uses the term "public office holders" to identify those who are the targets of lobbying activity, the decision-makers. While there are differences between jurisdictions as to who is a public office holder, the legislation applies only when lobbying activity is directed at a public office holder. In Alberta a public office holder includes Members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff, members of cabinet and their staff, individuals appointed to government boards and committees, and employees, officers, and directors of government departments and public agencies.

Many Canadian jurisdictions have adopted the concept that lobbying includes an attempt to influence. Some jurisdictions require reporting all communications with public office holders whether or not there's an attempt to influence. The most common examples of lobbying are attempts to influence decisions about legislation and the formation or alteration of government policies and programs; however, not all communications with public office holders must be reported. For example, an individual making a submission to a public office holder on behalf of an organization concerning the enforcement of any act or regulation with respect to that organization is not considered to be a lobbyist. This is a common exception.

In contrast, an individual paid to make a submission to a public office holder on behalf of an organization concerning development of legislation governing that organization would be considered a lobbyist. This is a common rule. In addition, not all individuals who are paid to communicate in an attempt to influence are required to register. For example, people from various levels of government can communicate with each other and attempt to influence each other's decisions. They will not be required to register provided that they are acting in their official capacity. This is a common exception in Canada to the requirement to register.

There are a few key features of Alberta's legislation. Alberta was one of the first jurisdictions to adopt a prohibition against a dual role. Lobbyists are prohibited from lobbying government and providing paid advice to government on the same subject matter. For example, if a consultant is being paid to give government advice on drug program policies, they cannot also be hired as a lobbyist to influence the minister of health to include a particular drug on the drug benefit list. When it was first adopted, the prohibition meant that an individual could not lobby government and provide paid advice to government on the same subject matter at the same time. This prohibition was expanded so that an individual must choose to either lobby government or provide paid advice to government, and the individual is prohibited from performing both roles even in respect of different subject matters.

In addition, an individual cannot lobby government if their associate holds a contract to provide paid advice to government on the same subject matter. Similarly, an individual cannot enter into a contract to provide paid advice to government if their associate lobbies government on the same subject matter.

Lobbying legislation across Canada contains offence and penalty provisions to aid enforcement. In Alberta the Ethics Commissioner has the authority to impose administrative penalties. This enhances enforcement of the act as there are situations in which administrative penalties may be more effective than the offence and penalty provisions.

As you proceed with your review, you will gain an understanding of the different elements of the act and how they intersect and how they are interrelated. As you consider what recommendations to make for amendments to the act, it will be important to consider the impact that each change may have on the other elements of the act. In addition, when considering legislation from other jurisdictions, it is important to understand that all the elements of their legislation also work together.

In closing, when considering potential amendments, the committee may wish to consider whether the amendments maintain an appropriate balance having regard to the principles at the heart of this legislation. As I've mentioned, lobbying is a legitimate activity, and it can be valuable to government during the decision-making process. The legislation is not meant to constrain communication with public officials. On the contrary, communication with government is necessary in a democracy. At the same time, the legislation provides for transparency.

Thank you.

10:20

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Neatby.

We'll now go to Mr. de Groot for his comments.

Mr. de Groot: Thank you to the chair and the committee for having me today to provide this technical briefing on the Lobbyists Act. I'm going to do my best to stay within the 10 minutes, and I thank my colleague for covering some things that I was going to cover, so I think I can do it.

My name is Josh de Groot. I am the Alberta lobbyist registrar. I'm also the general counsel in the office of the Ethics Commissioner of Alberta. I'm assisted in my lobbyist work by my executive assistant, Effi Kaoukis, who is back at the office right now making sure that all the trains are running on time and that sort of thing. I just want to thank her for the work that she does.

If you could go to the next slide, please. Similar to Ms Neatby, I wanted to highlight the preamble to the act because that really gives the purpose of the act. I think it's important that we focus on this as you go through your review of the act because it can kind of help you see whether the act is still fit for purpose.

Ms Neatby went through kind of the two public interests we're talking about, so I'll quickly skip to the next slide. What is lobbying? Again, lobbying is individuals who are communicating with public office holders in an attempt to influence. That's the basic framework of the definition. Two parts I'd like to highlight there. There has to be a communication, but that doesn't necessarily have to be just a direct communication. It might also be via grassroots communication, which I can talk about more if anyone has a question about that later. Then the second part is the attempt to influence, which, again, Ms Neatby spoke about. Here in Alberta there must be an attempt to influence before the communication becomes lobbying. If you're simply seeking information from a department or anything like that, that's not considered lobbying, but when it tips over to seeking to attempt to influence decisions about legislation or policy or that sort of thing, then we get into lobbying.

If we could go to the next slide, please. Who is a public office holder? Again, we have the definition there of who is a public office holder. You'll see that it's quite broad. It covers elected officials, so many around this table and online; members of Executive Council, so the ministers, their staff; but also many that we would consider, you know, the public servants in the government, so the employees of government departments as well as in what we refer to as prescribed provincial entities, which is roughly synonymous with the agencies, boards, and commissions. It's important to highlight that it's a broad category but this is common across the country, this type of definition.

If we could go to the next slide. As Ms Neatby explained, there are two categories of lobbyists. There are consultant lobbyists and there are organization lobbyists. One thing I'd like to highlight, actually, if we go to the next slide already, is the 50-hour annual organization lobbyist threshold. Consultant lobbyists, as was discussed, must register when they have an undertaking to lobby on behalf of a client regardless of the amount of time lobbying. Organization lobbyists have the 50-hour threshold, so if the collective amount of time that any one or more of the in-house personnel of the organization have spent lobbying or have a duty to spend lobbying and preparing to lobby on behalf of the organization is 50 hours or more in a year. I've given a couple of examples there of when an organization would need to register and when they would not be required to register just so that you can get an idea of who would and would not possibly be in the registry.

If we could go to the next slide, please. There are exemptions, as Ms Neatby highlighted as well. She spoke to the first and the third one there, so I'll highlight the second exemption that I have on the slide there, which is what we call the nonprofit exemption: the employees, directors, and officers of nonprofit organizations – it's a long definition – that are not established to serve management, union, or professional interests and that do not have a majority of members that are profit-seeking enterprises or representatives of profit-seeking enterprises.

Like I said, it's a long definition, but essentially – and I'll maybe harken back to this morning's discussion. The Heart and Stroke Foundation was brought up this morning. They are a charity that would fall into this nonprofit organization exemption, but an industry association would not fall into this exemption. So, again harkening back to this morning, an organization that represents, say, the tobacco industry: even though that organization might be nonprofit itself, because they represent profit-making enterprises, they would be required to register in our registry.

If we could go to the next slide, please. Let's talk about the registry itself. We have our website there. There are essentially two sides to the registry. There's where the lobbyist register. They get accounts with us, they go in, and they register their information. It gets submitted to our office, it gets reviewed, and then once we approve it, it goes live, which means that it goes into a searchable database so the public is able to go in and see who is currently lobbying as well as who has in the past lobbied.

If we could go to the next slide. These are the deadlines that lobbyists must meet. This is a bit of repetition, but consultant lobbyists must register within 10 days of agreeing to lobby on behalf of a client. It's not within 10 days of them starting their activities; it's within 10 days of when they come to their agreement with their client. And then organization lobbyists have two months from when they meet that 50-hour threshold to register. Generally within 30 days of any material changes they must report those in the registry. Then on the organization side, every six months they have to file what we call a semiannual renewal just to make sure that their information is remaining up to date.

If we could go to the next slide, please. Schedules 1 and 2 of the act prescribe what the requirements are that must be reported in the registry. I've grouped them into, essentially, three categories. The first is information about the individual lobbyists. You have to list their names in there, typically their position with the organization, and then, in some cases, if they're a former public office holder, so someone that used to be a public office holder in certain positions, you have to report that for two years after you leave that position. You have to report information either about the client or the organization, so there we're talking, you know, legal name, address, parent and subsidiary corporations as well as government funding requested and received. Then the last category would be information about the lobbying activities themselves. That is saying who you're targeting, so which departments or which agencies, boards, or commissions you're targeting with your activities, and what you would like to see as the intended outcome of your lobbying activity.

If we could go to the next slide, please. The act is mostly, as we've talked about, focused on the transparency, the registration aspect, but there are some limitations on activities that lobbyists can undertake. Number one that I've listed there is section 6.1. Consultant lobbyists are prohibited from receiving payment that's contingent on their degree of success in lobbying. Section 6.2 is the prohibited gift section, so lobbyists are not able to both promise or give a public office holder a gift that they would not be able to receive or that would place them in a conflict of interest. And then section 6: Ms Neatby went over that, so I won't go over that again, but that's the dual-role prohibition.

If we go to the next slide. Finally, we have enforcement powers under the act. I should highlight that in practice most of the enforcement we do is informal enforcement. We provide warnings to lobbyists saying: "Hey, you are five days late on this one. Please don't let it happen again." We also provide reminders when, you know, a six-month deadline is coming up, that sort of thing. So mostly it's informal enforcement, but we do have that ability to impose administrative penalties. It's usually two or three a year, not large dollar figures. We're talking typically under $1,000, and that kind of helps us get certain lobbyists who might repeatedly be out of line with the deadlines into line. We can also commence

investigations that result in reports to the Legislature, and then there are also offence provisions, but that would not be enforced by our office.

Next slide, although that's my last slide. Thank you for inviting me here, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

10:30

The Chair: Well, thank you, Ms Neatby and Mr. de Groot, for your presentations.

I will now open the floor to questions from committee members.

Mr. Dach: I had a couple of questions that I think might be interesting to hear the answers to. Just a general question about the process that would start your investigation on a complaint. As you say, there are very few of them, only two to three a year, that result in administrative penalties. Is your process, would you say, complaint based, or would it involve more proactive surveillance which leads to enforcement?

Mr. de Groot: It can be both, and thank you for the question. Section 15 of the act speaks to sort of the threshold that we have to meet before investigating. It says, "the Registrar shall conduct an investigation if the Registrar has reason to believe that an investigation is necessary to ensure compliance," so we can commence an investigation following a complaint. I would assess that to see whether it gives me a reason to believe the investigation is necessary.

There are also times that we will do proactive steps. If something comes to our attention other than through a complaint, we are not required to act just on complaints, so that is just to compare it to my other hat that I wear. The Ethics Commissioner, of course, is a complaint-based system, and I think the reason for that is that a lot of what we're doing is working with deadlines, making sure people are registering by certain deadlines, so a member of the public is likely not going to come to us and say, "Hey, this guy missed his deadline by a certain amount," but we would become aware of that because they're registering late, and then we can take proactive steps.

Mr. Dach: Thank you for that.

A quick follow-up, if I may.

The Chair: You may, sir.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. You mentioned the fact that two to three administrative penalties are assessed per year and that you basically involve yourself in an informal enforcement process. I'm wondering if these informal reminders to be compliant are made public, or are they just sideways communication that never sees the light of day?

Mr. de Groot: Thank you for that question as well. The informal process would not be public, so that is us communicating with the lobbyists and saying, "You've missed this deadline," but it does not become public. I should actually highlight that the details of the administrative penalties themselves don't become public either. In our annual report we report the number of penalties we have assessed and the amount, but we are not able to provide details of who was assessed the penalty.

Mr. Dach: What prohibits you from providing such details publicly? I'm wondering if under Public Accounts those questions could reveal that type of information.

Mr. de Groot: Thank you for that question. My reading of the legislation is – and I would contrast it a bit with the administrative penalties that can be assessed by the Chief Electoral Officer, where he is explicitly given the jurisdiction to make those matters public whereas under our investigation section in our act there are more strict confidentiality provisions.

Mr. Dach: And final follow-up, if I may.

The Chair: One more.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair, for your latitude. I'm asking this question in general, how confident you are. Either individual may respond. How confident are you that all noncompliant activity is being captured by the legislation and through your office? I'm thinking about some difficult situations which would be hard to really monitor the lobbying, quote, unquote, efforts of individuals or groups at certain functions. I'm thinking of the major greatest outdoor show on Earth coming up in Calgary. There's a massive amount of interaction between politicians, elected officials, and members of organizations, businesses who seek to influence them policywise. It's actually advertised as such, an opportunity to mix and mingle in an informal way and then get your views known. So how, indeed, is it possible for you to capture that activity and make sure that there's no noncompliant activity going on in such a type of informal gathering?

Mr. de Groot: Thank you for that question. It's difficult in some ways to answer how confident I am about the things I don't know about. What I would say is that I believe in Alberta we have high compliance, as far as I can tell, with the act. What I would note is, to use, you know, the example of the Calgary Stampede, that we do not have in Alberta a communications registry where each meeting needs to be reported. Provided those lobbyists have listed in their registrations what they are intending to lobby about, then what they speak about at Stampede with public office holders would be compliant because they don't have to come to us after and say: on July 7 I had to register. Yeah. I think that's as much as I can speak to on that.

Thank you.

Mr. Dach: Thank you.

The Chair: Next we have Member Elmeligi on the line. Go ahead with your question.

Dr. Elmeligi: I'll be fast. I'm curious how we enforce lobbying for people who are not registered lobbyists. If somebody isn't a registered lobbyist but is engaging in lobbying activity with an elected official, how are they compelled or incentivized to register as a lobbyist and for those meetings to be reported as well?

Mr. de Groot: Thank you for the question, Member. Again, it comes down to the spectrum of enforcement that we have. We will from time to time become aware of, you know, a certain lobbying activity that's taking place, and we will look in the registry and see: oh, that's not reflected here. It really will depend on the situation, and we have to make an assessment on a case-by-case basis. In some cases we will send a letter to the organization in question, saying, "Just to make sure you're aware, we do have this Lobbyists Act and it appears you may be lobbying, so if that's the case, you likely should register," but depending on the situation it may trigger an investigation if it looks like a more serious situation.

One of the, I think, difficulties we have is not on the consultant lobbyist side but with the 50-hour threshold. It's very difficult for us to assess whether an organization has met that 50-hour threshold. We can ask them to report. You know, "Tell us all of your activity

in the last year and we can see whether that reaches 50 hours," but it is really hard to assess that, so it does become difficult to really determine whether they need to be registered or not. But I would say that we have lots of organizations – I shouldn't say lots. We don't reach out that often, but we'll have organizations we reach out to and they say: "Thank you for letting us know. We looked at it. We think we're only doing about 15, 20 hours a year, but we're going to register just out of the interest of transparency." So we do have that as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. de Groot.

We'll now go to Member Haji for his question.

Mr. Haji: Yeah. Just a quick one. It's a lot of work, as you have alluded to, assessing the 50 hours of individuals as well as consultants and tracking that, and the trick of this work, figuring out, is not simple. I was just wondering in terms of: how do you feel your office is resourced to do the work?

Mr. de Groot: Thank you for that question. Yeah. I think, you know, we added my executive's – well this was before my time, but we brought in an additional staff member about four or five years ago just because the volume of the work was increasing over time. I think if you look back at our annual reports, you'll see that every year there are more registrations that we have to review. I do feel, though, that right now, at least on the lobbyist side of things, we're resourced for the number of registrations and that sort of thing that are coming in. It can be quite busy at times, but I think we're doing okay.

10:40

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you for your questions. I see no further questions. I thank Ms Neatby and Mr. de Groot for your presentations.

During the course of these types of reviews it's typical for the committee to request ongoing technical assistance and support from the ministries and other entities who have responsibility for administering the act to support the committee, especially in the deliberations phase.

I will now open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions regarding this matter. Mr. Stephan.

Mr. Stephan: Oh, yes. I'd like to make a motion, if that's okay, Chair. I move that

> in support of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite officials from the Ministry of Justice and the registrar of the Alberta lobbyist registry (a) to provide technical assistance as requested to the Legislative Assembly Office and (b) to attend meetings of the committee at the request of the chair to provide technical expertise to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stephan, for your motion. It is up on the screen. Is that your motion as you intended it to be?

Mr. Stephan: It looks like it's perfect to the letter.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Do you want to provide any background or any discussion before we open it up?

Mr. Stephan: This is a standard motion, and as we're undertaking our review, their assistance is always appreciated and makes it better for us.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on this motion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour in the room and online, please say aye. Any opposed in the room or online?

That motion is carried.

We can excuse Mr. de Groot and Ms Neatby from the table. Thank you for your presentations.

As the committee members are aware, we are provided with a draft list of stakeholders prepared by the Legislative Assembly Office in relation to the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act. I would like to invite Dr. Rachel McGraw with the Legislative Assembly Office research services to provide an overview of the list. Dr. McGraw.

Dr. McGraw: Thank you, Mr. Chair and to the committee. I'll keep my remarks brief and focused on explaining how research services developed this draft list of proposed stakeholders for the current review of the Lobbyists Act. Research services developed the proposed list of stakeholders by starting from the stakeholder list from the previous review of the act, which occurred in 2021-2022. Research services also considers the act itself while developing the draft list.

Registered lobbyists are the first stakeholders on the current list, and they are those who engage in lobbying of public office holders as defined under the act. Registered lobbyists are subject to the act and must register with the lobbyist registrar, as we've heard today.

Second on the list is the office of the Ethics Commissioner and lobbyist registrar. The Ethics Commissioner administers the act and appoints the lobbyist registrar who administers the lobbyist registry, the publicly available record of lobbyists and their lobbying activity that is established under the act, as we also heard today.

Public office holders are stakeholders 3, 4, and 5 on the draft list, and they are those who can be lobbied under the act. Public office holders include stakeholder 3 on the list, Members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff, including Executive Council and the Premier's and ministers' staff. Stakeholder 4 includes government departments and their employees as well as individuals appointed by ministers to boards, committees, or councils. Stakeholder 5 includes prescribed provincial entities and their employees as defined in the act.

Municipal organizations are sixth on the draft list, and they represent Alberta municipalities which are currently excluded from the application of the act. Stakeholder 7 on the draft list includes advocacy groups, ethics associations, and research institutes, and stakeholder 8 includes academic experts. Stakeholders 7 and 8 may have expert advice to offer the committee during the review. The last stakeholder on the list is voluntary organizations, and they are also excluded from the application of the act unless certain conditions are met that they meet the threshold.

That concludes my overview of the proposed list of stakeholders. I would like to end by reiterating that this is a draft list, and research services is at the committee's service to make changes to the list of stakeholders at the committee's direction.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I welcome any questions or comments the committee may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. McGraw. I would now open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions in relation to the draft list of stakeholders.

Member Stephan.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to move that

> the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future approve the draft stakeholders list as provided.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Member Stephan. Your motion is up on the screen. Is that how you intended it to read as distributed?

Mr. Stephan: Yeah. That would be wonderful.

The Chair: All right. Having seen the motion, having heard the motion, do you want to . . .

Mr. Stephan: I'm moving it.

The Chair: You're moving it. Do you want to speak to it at all?

Mr. Stephan: I thought it was a great summary that was provided, and I agree with it.

The Chair: Okay. All right.
A question, Mr. Dach?

Mr. Dach: Yes, Mr. Chair. I do have some comment with respect to this because I had intended to amend these draft stakeholder lists, to submit a motion to do such a thing, and was hoping to strike out "Members of the Legislative Assembly" as being eligible to be called before the committee since, of course, this committee is made up of MLAs from both sides. We have strong representation of MLAs, and engaging further MLA participation would be superfluous, in my view.

Secondly, I was hoping to strike out, under section 7, "advocacy groups, ethics associations, and research institutes" as we seek to engage with the academic world rather than the advocacy world in listening to commentary on the Lobbyists Act. I know that the motion is before us, so we, I think from my view, should oppose this motion and consider amendments to the draft stakeholder list. That's my submission.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach.
Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, I'll call the question.

Mr. Stephan: Sorry. What are we voting on?

The Chair: On your motion.

Mr. Stephan: Not on the amended?

The Chair: He didn't move an amendment.

Mr. Stephan: Oh, okay. Great.

The Chair: Okay. So the question is: are we all in favour of Mr. Stephan's motion as presented? Please say aye in the room and online. Any opposed in the room or online?

That motion is carried.

Go ahead.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make one tiny point just so everybody is on the same page. With respect to section 5, prescribed provincial entities, we work with the agencies, boards, and the secretariat to make sure we have as current a list as possible. That list is very, very fluid, so we'll do the best we can to make sure we have a current list the day that we send the letter out. I just wanted to make the committee aware of that.

Thank you.

10:50

The Chair: Thank you.
Now that the committee has identified the stakeholders it would like to engage, I would like to open the floor to discussion on how the committee would like to proceed with consulting them and also whether members would like to see public feedback as well. Ordinarily, the first step in such consultations would be to invite written submissions.

Are there any comments, questions, or motions in relation to this agenda item? Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to make a motion. I move that

> the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite written submissions from stakeholders identified in the approved stakeholders list as part of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act, with a submission deadline of 12 p.m. on August 17, 2026.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach. We'll put it up on the screen. Is that your motion?

Mr. Dach: Yes, it is.

The Chair: All right. Are there any further comments or questions?
Do you want to elaborate on your motion?

Mr. Dach: I think it's fairly clear.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Any other comments? If not, I'll call the question. All those in favour in the room and online, please say aye. Any opposed in the room or online? Hearing none,

that motion is carried.

Hon. members, are there any other comments or questions? Go ahead, Member van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: I'd like to propose a motion with regard to written submissions. I move that

> the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a summary of the written submissions received by the committee in relation to its review of the Lobbyists Act.

The Chair: Thank you.
We'll get that up on the screen. There it is. Mr. van Dijken, is that your motion? Yes. Any discussion? Do you want to further elaborate?

Mr. van Dijken: I think it's a standard motion that gives us the assistance. It gives direction to ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office is preparing an analysis or a summary of written submissions as they've been received.

The Chair: Are there any other comments or questions regarding this motion? Seeing none, I'm prepared to ask the question. All in favour in the room and online, please say aye. Any opposed in the room or online?

That motion is carried.

Are there any other comments or questions in relation to this agenda item? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to make a motion, a standard motion that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future (a) direct the Legislative Assembly to prepare a low- to no-cost draft communications plan in support of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act and distribute it to committee members for their review; and (b) authorize the chair and deputy chair to approve the draft communications plan after committee members have had an opportunity to review the draft of that document.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken.

The chair will defer to the table to give an explanation here.

Ms Robert: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thanks, Mr. van Dijken. The motion that was moved and passed with respect to seeking, inviting written submissions only read for stakeholders. It didn't read for members of the public. Therefore, I don't know that the committee will need a communications plan because stakeholders will be given letters. If the committee wants to hear from the public, since it wasn't included in the motion that was passed, I would suggest that the committee, if it wants public feedback, would have to pass perhaps a different motion.

Mr. van Dijken: Point of clarification.

The Chair: Mr. van Dijken, go ahead.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Thank you, Chair. I guess the question is: does the previous motion essentially make it that we're not able to invite the public into discussion?

Ms Robert: Thanks, Mr. Chair. No. It would be a completely separate motion. Just sort of an addition. Rather than doing it as one, you could do it as two. That has happened before.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. van Dijken: So typically we have proposed motions listed before the meeting. I'm going to ask to be able to propose a motion at this time. I think I need unanimous consent to propose a motion.

Ms Robert: Just a majority. You just need permission to move a motion. It's not in order right now, so . . .

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. The motion's been ruled out of order.

Ms Robert: Right.

Mr. van Dijken: It's considered out of order.

Ms Robert: It's just premature. Let's look at it that way.

The Chair: Okay. So we're looking then to move a motion from the floor.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. If I could move a motion from the floor, that would be helpful at this time.

The Chair: You are able to, sir.

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. I might need some assistance.

Ms Robert: He needs to tell us what the motion is that he wants to move.

The Chair: Okay. We're getting close to our allotted time. Is the committee able to extend by 15 minutes? We would need unanimous consent. Anybody opposed to unanimous consent? Hearing none, the committee is now extended by 15 minutes.

We'll just need a second to draft your motion.

Go ahead, Member Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. Just to clarify, Mr. Chair, exactly where we're at right now. I believe Mr. van Dijken proposed a motion, and his previous motions are now dealt with. We're just looking to add a second or a third motion to clarify that members of the public are to be invited to this process.

The Chair: Again, I will defer to the table here for clarification.

Ms Robert: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay. So the original motion that was passed was just for stakeholder engagement. Then Mr. van Dijken attempted to move a motion to have a communications plan proposed, but there's no need for that if we don't have public consultation, so we're holding back on the motion about a comms plan and Mr. van Dijken is seeking the permission of the committee to move a motion from the floor seeking public feedback, I believe. If he gets the permission of the committee, he'll move that motion, and if that's passed, then he can move the motion about the comms plan. Does that make sense?

Mr. Dach: Thank you.

Mr. van Dijken: Chair, if I may.

The Chair: Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. van Dijken: The motion that's presented on the screen would encompass the intent of my ask to be able to bring this forward. I believe it's important that we have engagement with the public on this process, so this would enable us to communicate with the public that we are open for their feedback. So if it's okay with the committee, then I would like to present this motion.

The Chair: Okay. Is there any discussion or anybody who has any objection to moving this motion from the floor? Are we all in favour of moving this motion from the floor? Online? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

You can now move your motion forward.

11:00

Mr. van Dijken: Okay. I move that

> the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future invite written submissions from the public as part of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act with a submission deadline of 12 p.m. on August 17, 2026.

As I've stated before, I do believe that inviting the public to participate is an important part of the committee's work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken. Is there any further discussion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour in the room or online, please say aye. Any opposed in the room or online?

That motion is carried.

Hon. members, now that the committee has decided to invite public written submissions, we need to look at developing a communications plan to get the word out to the public. I would like to invite Ms. Christina Steenbergen with the Legislative Assembly Office corporate communications to speak to this matter.

Ms. Steenbergen, go ahead.

Ms Steenbergen: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the committee. I'm more than happy to put a low-cost, no-cost communications plan together. I can have a draft by the end of this week. If the committee or the chair decides to go with cost, I would recommend probably no more than $1,000, so it should be a pretty simple and successful campaign.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Steenbergen: Yeah. If that date works for the committee and for yourself.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Thank you, Chair. With that information I'd like to propose the following motion, that

> the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future (a) direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a low- to no-cost draft communications plan in support of the committee's review of the Lobbyists Act and distribute it to committee members for their review and (b) authorize the chair and the deputy chair to approve the draft communications plan after committee members have had an opportunity to review the draft of that document.

The Chair: Thank you. Your motion is up on the screen. Does that reflect what you just read?

Mr. van Dijken: It does.

The Chair: Thank you. Is there any further discussion?

If not, I'll call the question. All those in favour in the room and online, please say aye. All those opposed in the room or online?

> That motion is carried.

Thank you.

Okay. Hon. members, the committee has commenced the process of consultation in relation to our review of the Lobbyists Act. I would encourage the committee members to review figure 3 on page 28 of the practical guide to committees as to the ordinary flow of next steps taken in these types of reviews. Once the committee has received written submissions in relation to the Lobbyists Act, members may wish to have a discussion at subsequent meetings regarding whether it wishes to hear oral presentations.

That brings us to other business. Are there any other items for discussion today? Seeing none.

The next meeting date will be at the call of the chair.

I will now call for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. van Dijken: So moved.

The Chair: Member van Dijken moved. All in favour? Any opposed in the room or online? That motion is carried. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 11:04 a.m.]

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