



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
First Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Resource Stewardship

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act Review

Tuesday, September 16, 2025  
3 p.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 31st Legislature  
First Session**

**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC), Chair  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair

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Lundy, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC)\*\*\*\*  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)

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\*\* substitution for David Eggen

\*\*\* substitution for Tany Yao

\*\*\*\* substitution for Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk

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[Mr. Rowsell in the chair]

**The Chair:** I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Garth Rowsell, MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright and chair of the committee. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. We'll begin to my right.

**Ms Lovely:** Hello, everyone. Jackie Lovely, MLA for the Camrose constituency.

**Mr. Lundy:** Good afternoon, everyone. Brandon Lundy, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont.

**Ms Hoffman:** Hi. I'm Sarah Hoffman, MLA for Edmonton-Glenora.

**Member Calahoo Stonehouse:** [Remarks in Cree] Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford.

**Ms Sweet:** Good afternoon. Heather Sweet, MLA for Edmonton-Manning.

**Ms Steenbergen:** Good afternoon. Christina Steenbergen, LAO communications.

**Ms Govindarajan:** Vani Govindarajan, Parliamentary Counsel.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Good afternoon. Abdul Aziz Bhurgri, research officer.

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

**Mr. Huffman:** Good afternoon. Warren Huffman, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** Okay. We will now go to those joining online. Please unmute and turn on your cameras now and introduce yourselves as I call your names.

We'll go to Member Dyck.

**Mr. Dyck:** Good day. MLA Nolan Dyck for Grande Prairie.

**The Chair:** Member Metz.

**Dr. Metz:** Hello. This is Luanne Metz, MLA for Calgary-Varsity.

**The Chair:** Member Cyr.

**Mr. Cyr:** Scott Cyr, the MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

**The Chair:** Member Petrovic.

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

**The Chair:** For the record I will note the following substitutions – there are lots – Mr. Lundy for hon. Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk, Mr. Cyr for hon. Mr. Boitchenko, Ms Lovely for Mr. Yao, Dr. Metz for Ms Al-Guneid, Ms Hoffman for hon. Mr. Eggen, and Mrs. Petrovic for hon. Mr. Hunter.

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

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We'll go to the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda? Ms Sweet, go ahead.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's more of a point of clarity. Under 4(b)(iii) we have the communications plan. There is a motion that was put forward about travelling the province. I just wonder, because we're going to be talking about the communications strategy, if travelling the province should be included in 4(b) while we're looking at stakeholders consultation.

**The Chair:** Yeah. I have no objection to that, if everyone is okay. Should I ask for a vote on that? No.

**Ms Robert:** I mean, travelling the province is not on the agenda, but it could certainly form part of a communications plan discussion.

**The Chair:** Sure. Okay. We could put that one in there. Yeah.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any others?

If not, would someone like to move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship approve the proposed agenda as distributed for its September 16, 2025, meeting? Who would like to do that?

**Ms Sweet:** I can do that.

**The Chair:** Member Sweet. Second? Don't need a second. Okay. Sorry, everyone. It's been a summer.

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

Approval of minutes. Next we have the draft minutes on the June 27, 2025, meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? Okay. If not, would a member like to move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship approve the minutes as distributed of its meeting held on June 27, 2025?

**Ms Sweet:** I'll do that, Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Member Sweet.

Any discussion?

All in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, all in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. That is carried.

At our last meeting, on June 27, the committee passed motions requesting the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare research to assist us in our review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act. Two of those documents are prepared and were posted on the committee's internal site for our review today. The first one, case law. The first document we have is a summary document of significant case law in Alberta related to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act since 2015. At this time I would like to invite Vani Govindarajan from Parliamentary Counsel to give us our overview of that report and respond to any questions members may have. Go ahead.

**Ms Govindarajan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you noted, this case law summary was prepared following a motion of the committee carried at its June 27 meeting, and the specific request was for a summary document of any significant case law in Alberta related to PIDA since 2015. We found that there were three cases, one of which involved two decisions, that directly considered the legislation. Each of those are briefly summarized in the case law summary document that you have received. Two of the cases were heard at the Court of King's Bench, and one was a decision of the Information and Privacy Commissioner relating to a FOIP request.

At the end of the summary document I outlined some of the key principles or issues from those cases. Two of those cases addressed the application of PIDA. One of them involved a review of an investigation into alleged misconduct contrary to the university's internal policy. It was argued that the investigation should have been done under PIDA, but the court found that the conduct did not fall within the definition of wrongdoing under the act, which had a narrower definition than the university's policy. In the OIPC decision one of the reasons that the investigation was not found to be an investigation under PIDA was that it was not made by an employee. These cases highlight for the committee that provisions of the act will be a threshold for determining whether a public body or the commissioner may investigate a wrongdoing under the act, and only certain activities or disclosure by certain individuals may be investigated.

The other set of issues that was addressed in two decisions relating to one case were confidentiality and procedural fairness. Those decisions highlight that although confidentiality is an important aspect of the act, procedural fairness may require the disclosure to a respondent of identifying information of a whistleblower or witnesses in an investigation.

Those were the key issues that came out of those three cases. I'm not a technical expert on whistle-blower legislation, but I'm happy to answer questions, if there are any, about those cases.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Are there any questions? Member Hoffman, go ahead.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Chair Rowswell. I guess, to me – and I read the summary; I really appreciate this review that was provided for us – if our goal is to be able to empower people to feel confident in coming forward, considering changing the legislation to require them to disclose their name or their identity to the person that they're potentially blowing the whistle on I think would be counter to that. I appreciate that the summary says that there may be an issue with procedural fairness, but I think if our goal is to ensure that people feel safe, that they're not worried their job is going to be threatened, that we need to provide anonymity. That's what the second court case, the Campbell versus Alberta, I think, demonstrated happened in that situation.

Just based on the summary that was provided, I'm led to believe that maybe the goal isn't to have that anonymity. I just want to confirm: is that indeed the recommendation? What's the purpose of highlighting that there could be an issue with procedural fairness if people's names are revealed through the process?

**Ms Govindarajan:** I'm not really in a position to make a recommendation to the committee. That's a policy question that's there. I identified case law that directly considered how the act was being applied.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you. That's a fair answer.

Just to clarify, it's case law within Alberta? No interjurisdictional case law comparators?

**Ms Govindarajan:** Right. The request was for case law in Alberta, so that's what the summary looks at.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any other questions?

Thank you very much, Ms Govindarajan. I'm going to get this: Govindarajan. I'll get better.

3:10

Okay; 4(a)(ii). The next item that the LAO has prepared for our review today is a draft list of stakeholders of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act. This list was also made available on the internal site. Abdul Bhurgri from LAO research services has joined us to speak to the draft list and then can respond to any questions.

Abdul, go ahead.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Thank you very much, Chair. I'm happy to give an overview of the draft list of prospective stakeholders that was prepared by research services. Before I talk about the contents of the document itself, I would just like to emphasize that this is a draft list. It is entirely the committee's prerogative to add, subtract, or alter this list.

Now, within this list we have divided the document into 10 sections. If you see, the first section is just the introduction. The second section includes the government of Alberta departments, so this includes deputy ministers as well as ministers and the Premier. Section 3 includes the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, members, and constituency offices. Section 4 includes all offices of the Legislature.

Moving on to section 5, this includes agencies, boards, and commissions. This is on page 4. If you see on page 4, we have a list of organizations. These are provincial corporations that the act does apply to. However, we have included all provincial agencies, boards, and commissions on the stakeholder list. There is one thing that I would like to highlight in this, that the list of provincial agencies is usually fluid in that there are public agencies, boards, and commissions that are formed, or there may be some that may not exist anymore. We have updated this list by checking the government of Alberta website as well as sort of checking with various government departments. However, if the committee approves this list, we will go back and make sure that we have up-to-date information regarding provincial agencies.

Then section 6 includes the health sector. There is again a list of organizations that we have on page 5. However, we have included all public health agencies that are under a government department in this list.

Section 7 is the education sector. This includes postsecondary institutions. It includes early childhood service providers, primary and secondary schools. We have included school board associations. We'll be sending a letter to perhaps invite all school boards.

In section 8 we have labour organizations and unions, in section 9 we have associations representing municipal bodies, and then, finally, in section 10 we have some think tanks or nonprofit or nonpartisan institutions that were either invited in the past or have sort of done some recent commentary on the public interest disclosure legislation.

I do believe that is it for my part, but if there are any questions about the list, I'm happy to answer. Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much for the report.

Any questions? Go ahead, Member Hoffman.

**Ms Hoffman:** Yeah. A couple of questions and then a proposed amendment. I just want to start by saying how grateful I am. This list: clearly a great amount of thought went into it, reviewing prior presentations on this same topic as well as looking at a number of the areas where things have evolved.

Specifically, even, I imagine, since this document was created, organ and tissue services has now been renamed to Give Life Alberta. I just will note on the record that I'm not proposing an amendment, but under 6, the last bolded stakeholder mentioned there, organ and tissue services, I will note that it's my intention that be inclusive of Give Life Alberta, the new agency that was just announced I think last week, maybe two weeks ago now. That's a great one.

Then we did, Mr. Chair, submit a couple of motions that I think possibly could be combined through a few amendments into this one so that we don't need to deal with as many motions. My intention with stakeholders – and I hope it's the intention of all members; maybe we should clarify that through discussion and if you believe a vote is necessary – is for these to be people that we seek out information from, that they're stakeholders we want to make sure don't just read the newspaper and maybe respond with a written submission but that we ask them potentially if they'd like to present to us and share more information about how this could apply to them.

For example, I submitted a motion which was called motion 5, I think.

Rather than going through my whole motion, I think we can just amend this stakeholder list by adding the two that I don't think are included from that motion, which is just the primary care networks. If it's the belief of the table that the PCNs are actually included in this stakeholder list, then we don't need to add it, if that's the consensus of those who are making the submission. But I didn't see how they fit into this proposed list. And then the other one was just Cancer Care Alberta. I know it says agencies, boards, and commissions; I just want to make sure that they're also included in agencies, boards, and commissions. They were just the two that were from my proposed motion that I think could be included as clarification or as an amendment to this motion that we're considering.

Actually, I should clarify. Do you need a mover to accept this motion?

**The Chair:** Yeah. They're just going to respond here.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Yeah. If you'll notice, we do have Cancer Care Alberta in this. It's in the health sector list on page 5, so just wanted to flag that.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sorry. I'm just looking for it specifically. I'm on page 5.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Yes. It's the second last on page 5. You can look at the health sector, section 6, and it's the second last.

**Ms Hoffman:** I see Workers' Compensation Board. Section 5, page 4?

**Mr. Bhurgri:** No. It's section 6, health sector, and it's page 5.

**Ms Hoffman:** Oh, section 6. Sorry. Page 5.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Yes.

**Ms Hoffman:** Oh, yeah. Cancer Care. Yeah; okay. Confirmed that that's Cancer Care Alberta. Great. So I don't need to move that one.

What about the PCNs? Primary Care Alberta is included, but PCNs ...

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Yeah. The one thing that's in the act is that usually service providers are included in the act, but they're not defined, so I'm not sure if they'd be covered under that or not. Currently "service providers" is not defined under the act.

**Ms Hoffman:** So might I move an amendment that the list include an invitation to primary care networks to also present, as this would impact them potentially?

**The Chair:** Yeah. The motion is not on notice. We'll have to be unanimous to allow it to happen here at this time. Oh, right; just a majority. Sorry.

**Ms Hoffman:** Right. Here's my argument to that. If you accept my one amendment to just add this one thing, then we don't need to debate my whole motion, which is on notice. That's my argument.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Well, we do have to make a motion to put it in, right?

Member Sweet, go ahead.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I need a point of clarity for this. The stakeholder list that is currently being presented to us as of right now would be used for requesting written submissions, I would think. This is not about providing oral submissions to the committee or invite. So this is a broader conversation than I think maybe my colleague's motion around asking people to come to present.

The one other question that I have is that when we were listening at the last meeting – with the new structure created under Alberta Health Services, we actually have some corporations that are going to be established that aren't set out in regulation as of right now. Could I get clarity, please, around whether or not they are entitled to be invited to speak at this point, or are they outside of the scope of health agencies, boards, and commissions?

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Sure. I can speak to the current requirements that exist. There were some amendments made to, I believe, the regional health agencies act and it became the Provincial Health Agencies Act. The current requirement is, I believe, that all provincial health agencies, regional health authorities, or provincial health corporations that fall under the Provincial Health Agencies Act would be included under PIDA. Unfortunately, we don't really know who these organizations would be, so there's not a lot of clarity in terms of who'd fall under it. But yes, as per the change in the Provincial Health Agencies Act all provincial health agencies, regional health authorities, all provincial health corporations would fall under PIDA.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. Yeah.

**Ms Robert:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Abdul. I'll just try to add a little bit more context if I can. What we're trying to do: because public agencies are a very fluid group, the researchers are working very, very closely with the Public Agency Secretariat to get their most current list every time an order in council is passed to create one. We checked with them just last week and had some correspondence with them. We will be checking with them again today when this meeting is over to ensure that every public agency on the books is included in sort of an Excel spreadsheet that we will send out.

Does that help?

3:20

**Ms Sweet:** Yeah. I think we're kind of in a weird zone right now just because we're not quite sure, based on what the Public Interest Commissioner told us last meeting, about whether or not they qualify. So I think that's where I'm trying to understand whether or not we know if they qualify or not at this point.

**Ms Robert:** Yeah. Because of sort of that uncertainty, we've decided that perhaps the approach we would suggest to the committee is that we just invite all of them to make a written submission. Then if they're not actually covered under the act, that's fine. That's better than not offering an invitation and finding out that they are.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you. Yeah.

**Mr. Bhurgri:** Just one small comment to further provide context. Like Nancy said, it's not clear what the specific definitions are, but as you can see on page 5, we have said that we are inviting all public health agencies listed under government departments. If there's a public health agency listed under the department, we will be sending them a letter if the committee approves this.

**The Chair:** Would that be PCNs as well, then?

**Ms Robert:** Those are private, so we should deal with this motion to ask for permission to move the motion to add PCNs.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Huffman:** I have some wording for a motion to request to put one on the floor that wasn't on notice. Can you look at the screen and tell me if that matches what you were looking for?

**The Chair:** So far, yeah.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sure. Oh, I would recommend that we just say "the primary care networks" instead of "primary care network" because there's a variety of them. So just take out the word "Alberta" and add "the" before "primary," please. Thank you so much for doing that, Warren. I appreciate it.

So we don't need somebody to move the motion because this motion was already on the agenda? We just need to move this amendment, right? But the main motion . . .

**The Chair:** We've got to do this first, and then we do the main motion as amended.

**Ms Robert:** If you would like to request permission, you need to move this motion.

**Ms Hoffman:** All right. Is the main motion already moved?

**Ms Robert:** No. You need the permission of the committee to move the motion because it was not on notice.

**Ms Hoffman:** The motion to amend?

**Ms Robert:** Correct.

**Ms Hoffman:** So doesn't there need to be a main motion that I'm amending?

**The Chair:** Yeah. That comes after this.

**Ms Hoffman:** Okay.

**Ms Robert:** Just go ahead.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sure. I'll move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship permit under Standing Order 52.041(3) the following motion be moved despite prior notice not being given by the deadline established by the chair: that the draft stakeholder list be amended by adding "the primary care networks."

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Any discussion?

Okay. All in favour, say aye. Any opposed? Any online, say aye if you're in favour.

Oh, I'm sorry. Dr. Metz, I see your hand up there. Did you want to say something? We're voting.

**Dr. Metz:** It's a question, but it can come after.

**The Chair:** Okay. Fair enough. Thank you. Sorry I didn't notice that.

Any opposed online, say no.

That's carried.

Now we'll move the motion.

**Ms Hoffman:** The main motion as amended?

**Ms Robert:** Just move the motion that the draft stakeholder list be amended.

**Ms Hoffman:** Now I move that

the draft stakeholder list be amended by adding "the primary care networks."

**The Chair:** All right. Okay. Now we can have discussion.

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

That is carried.

Okay. Now we go to the amended motion. Go ahead. Now you've got it.

**Mr. Lundy:** It's only been two years. You've got to cut me some slack here.

Mr. Chair, I would like to move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship approve the draft stakeholder list as amended.

**The Chair:** Good job.

Okay. Any discussion?

Dr. Metz, did you have something you wanted to say?

**Dr. Metz:** After we vote. I just have questions for clarification.

**The Chair:** All right. Perfect.

Okay. No discussion.

All in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no.

That is carried.

**Mr. Lundy:** Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Lundy:** I'd like to move another motion that as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship (a) direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a draft communications plan and news release to invite public submissions . . .

**The Chair:** Hold it. Wait.

**Mr. Luntz:** Oh, I was on a roll.

**The Chair:** I've just got to get to this part, the written submissions. Okay. I'll get to you.

**Mr. Luntz:** Sure. I was practicing.

**The Chair:** Okay. Hon. members, we have now agreed upon a list of stakeholders the committee wishes to engage. In similar reviews committees have also invited written submissions from the public. I would now open the floor to a discussion on whether the committee wishes to invite written submissions from the public as part of this review.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sorry. May I ask a point of clarification?

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thanks. Those were who we were going to ask specifically for written submissions. That was what I was told when I said about the presentations piece being separate. So I just want to confirm that stakeholders for written submission is what we've agreed to. We haven't agreed that they're the only stakeholders that matter, just that those are the ones for written submission. Okay. And are we opening it up to more? Sounds great.

**The Chair:** Yeah.  
Okay. Go ahead.

**Mr. Luntz:** Move it?

**The Chair:** Move this one. It's on the screen there. Okay. Just a minute.

Dr. Metz, we'll let you discuss here if it's applicable to what you are wanting to get across.

**Dr. Metz:** Sure. Yeah. Okay. My first question is: why are we not inviting all of the professional colleges to provide input? Would they be informed of this and they provide input along with the public? We've only chosen a couple of colleges.

**The Chair:** Ideally, it would have been before we voted on the list.

**Dr. Metz:** Oh, okay.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Sorry about that.  
Okay. We'll go on to Member Luntz.

**Mr. Luntz:** Okay. I'd like to move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite written submissions from identified stakeholders and the public as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act with a submission deadline of 4:30 p.m. on October 31, 2025.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.  
Any discussion? Okay. Go ahead, Member Sweet.

**Ms Sweet:** I think this goes back to what I was talking about with the agenda piece, which is that we're talking about written submissions and creating a plan to speak to Albertans about doing written submissions. This is sort of where I thought we would have a conversation about: we also want to travel. Why do we have this motion going forward when we haven't discussed the fact that we might need a communications strategy and/or plan around if we're going to travel the province? Like, we haven't got there yet.

**The Chair:** What you're saying is that if we have a communication plan before we've decided on a road show or not, it might make it different.

**Ms Sweet:** I would think that it might make this motion a little different.

**The Chair:** Yeah. That's the reason that she's wondering about that. So I'm just wondering – go ahead. Yeah.

**Ms Robert:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think, in my view, and the advice I would offer to the committee is that they're two separate things. Written feedback and oral presentations are two different things that are two different decision items. I don't think they need to be made together. Similarly, deciding to have public meetings on the road is a different kettle of fish, if you will, than inviting people here to make oral presentations. They're three sort of segmented things. Not to say that because you've agreed to have public written submissions, you're not going to agree to anything else; they're just done as different decision items.

**Ms Sweet:** Okay.

3:30

**Ms Hoffman:** Would it make sense that we refer this just to a later point in the agenda, then, when we've had an opportunity to make those other decisions and then decide if we think October 31 still makes sense? It makes sense to me if we're doing public meetings as well after that, but if we're not doing public meetings, then maybe people need more time to make a submission. That's where my head is at on this. I feel like I can make a better decision about whether October 31 is a reasonable timeline if I know what the overall strategy looks like.

**Ms Robert:** Can I just offer a bit of feedback?

**The Chair:** Yeah. Go ahead.

**Ms Robert:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. What I can offer you in terms of the thinking in suggesting that date is that in the past numerous years when I've been involved in these reviews, we tend to keep the written submission period about five weeks because we find that if it's much longer, people forget about it and they don't engage as much. We find that it actually works quite well. So that's sort of been the past experience, that opinion that I would kind of offer you. Of course, again, it's up to the committee if they want to.

**Ms Hoffman:** If I could just clarify, that's regardless of whether there is a public presentation component or not, having a five-week period at the beginning?

**Ms Robert:** Correct. Yes. It's quite typical for committees to do the written feedback portion and then make a decision on whether they want to hear more and hear orally. They often wait until they've received the summary of submissions and reviewed the submissions to find out what other things they want to know about and therefore then make the decision to invite an oral component.

**Ms Hoffman:** Is there precedent that the inverse has happened as well?

**Ms Robert:** I'd have to look. Typically, like, the vast majority of cases I've been involved with, we do written submissions first as a starting point.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other discussion?

If not, we will go to the motion. All in favour in the room, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, all in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no.

That is carried.

Okay. The communication plan. It is common practice to engage the services of the Legislative Assembly Office communication services in developing a communication plan to alert and engage the public with respect to our review of the act and invite written responses from the public. I would like to call upon Christina Steenbergen from LAO communications to discuss the advertising options available. Go ahead.

**Ms Steenbergen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to kind of focus just on the written submission piece until the committee can decide amongst themselves how to move forward.

In previous years we did just stick to a low-cost social media campaign that just pushes people to the website to encourage people to put in their written submissions. So we will have a written submission form. We will put out a media release. We do have some credits available, so we could do some boosted social media ads, probably between \$500 to \$2,000, depending on what the committee would like to do. Generally if you spend about \$1,000, you can get a pretty good boost for those submissions.

Apart from that, we can offer an e-card that we can send out to members, who can then send that to their constituents. That will also have a link to the written submission piece, which will, again, be updated on our website. And then, of course, if you wanted to do more specific targeted advertising on the social media platforms, we can look into that and put some more money into it. Then there are other higher cost items that we can do such as newspaper ads, extra promotion online, and more targeted advertising.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Questions? Go ahead.

**Ms Lovely:** I have a question, Chair. The question I have is: which social media would you be engaging in? Facebook, I'm guessing. Would you be on X? And what other platforms?

**Ms Steenbergen:** Yeah. Thank you for the question. The platforms that the LAO currently uses are X, which is Twitter; YouTube; Facebook; and Instagram. Generally for committees we do find that X gets the most attention. We do get a lot of people from there, and Facebook would be the second most attention-getting one that we use.

**The Chair:** Any others?

Okay. Are there any comments, questions, or motions to be brought forward in relation to the creation of the communication plan? Member Lundy.

**Mr. Lundy:** All right. I think I tried to read this one earlier. This is probably a better time. I would move that

as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship (a) direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a draft communications plan and news release to invite public submissions and (b) authorize the chair to approve the plan after it has been distributed to committee members for their review.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Any discussion?

**Ms Hoffman:** I just don't see a timeline. Did I miss that? It'll have to be pretty quick is all I'm thinking. If the deadline is six weeks from now, it'll have to be. Yeah.

**Ms Steenbergen:** Sorry. If I may, Mr. Chair. I can have a draft communications plan to the chair probably by the end of this week, because of the time constraint, and hopefully get the advertising going by the beginning of October, which will give a full month.

**Ms Hoffman:** And five weeks is usually standard, did we hear?

**Ms Robert:** Four to five weeks-ish. The stakeholder letters will go out before the end of the month, so that whole element of this will happen before the end of the month. Then as soon as the comms plan is done here and everybody has had a look at it and the chair has approved it, presuming you pass this motion, it can get activated pretty quickly.

**The Chair:** Any others? Okay.

So that's carried? We're done, right? Okay. I did the discussion. Sorry. Jeez, I'm getting lost in all our motions.

Okay. For that motion in the room, all in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, all in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no.

That is carried.

Hon. members, as the committee has now provided direction on seeking written submissions, the committee may wish to direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a summary of the submissions received. I would like to open the floor to comments, questions, and motions on this matter.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sorry. Just to clarify, where are we on the agenda, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** We are on summary of written submissions.

**Ms Hoffman:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Lundy:** I'd like to move a motion that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct the Legislative Assembly Office to prepare a summary of the written submissions received by the committee in relation to its review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Any discussion?

Okay. Given that, in the room, all in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, anyone in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no.

That is carried.

Okay. Next steps. The identified stakeholders will receive a letter from the chair inviting them to make written submissions on the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act, and the LAO will commence advertising to solicit public submissions once the communication plan has been approved. As those submissions come in, they will be made available on the committee's internal site. After the deadline passes, the LAO will prepare a summary of those written responses, and we will hold a meeting to review the summary document.

Typically in statute reviews after receiving written submissions, committees decide if they would like to invite any of the submitters to provide an oral presentation to the committee. Do members have any questions or comments about the next steps of our review?

**Ms Hoffman:** I'd like to move a motion, Mr. Chair.



**The Chair:** Okay. Fair enough. There you go.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thanks. As I said, I'm quite happy with the nature of the folks within Alberta that we're inviting to make written submissions. I have two different motions – we can maybe deal with them one at a time – that were provided previously in writing. Do you wish for me to read it out loud, the first one?

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Ms Hoffman:** That

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act the following organizations to present at an upcoming committee meeting: the Ministry of Hospital and Surgical Health Services; Acute Care Alberta; Alberta Health Services; Covenant Health; Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services; Primary Care Alberta; primary care networks; Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction; Recovery Alberta; Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services; Assisted Living Alberta; Cancer Care Alberta; Give Life Alberta, also known as organ and tissue services; emergency health services Alberta; Ministry of Treasury Board and Finance; and Ministry of Infrastructure.

3:40

If I could give a little rationale. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The most recent public presentations that I was a part of through committee were in relation to the way that the COVID rollout of the public health measures was implemented, and public presentations were by far the most impactful part of our learning as a committee member, on that part. When somebody is just doing a one-sided communication, where they are writing down some of the thoughts that they have, it definitely doesn't enable the committee to delve more deeply and understand the issue from various perspectives. So having the opportunity for committee members to be able to engage with these experts who are so closely connected to the legislation from the health perspective.

I think it's really important that we as Members of the Legislative Assembly have a high degree of transparency when it comes to holding one another to account on delivering world-class health care here in the province of Alberta. These are the folks that we entrust to do that work on our behalf, and it's important that they and their designates within those organizations have full confidence that we understand the issues that they're facing.

I'm sure I'm not the only MLA who gets calls on the regular from people who are saying things that they're not comfortable speaking publicly. They're worried about the culture that's being created within their workplace.

Allowing some of these different organizations to come here – they're high-level organizations. They can bring representatives to talk about the implications of the current legislation but also any amendments to the legislation. These are Alberta stakeholders. They are those that we're entrusting to help us execute the legislation. I think it would be important for us to not just have one-way communication but to be able to ask some questions, have them present publicly, and be able to have a better understanding so we can have the best legislation possible here in Alberta.

**The Chair:** Any other discussion? Member Lundy, go ahead.

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I appreciated the overview of the process that we heard earlier from the LAO staff. I think it's important that we get a chance as a committee to review written submissions, including, presumptively, from the organizations on this list. Then as a committee we'll be able to review

those written decisions and then, following the regular procedure, be able to make our decisions on who is going to come to present to the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We've got Dr. Metz first, and then I'll come to you.

Dr. Metz, go ahead.

**Dr. Metz:** Yes. Thank you. I would really like to be able to hear from all the health colleges. It's very complex, what the issues would be, and I do believe that we need to be able to delve back into some questions so we can understand what their feedback is and what their thoughts are on this legislation.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Member Sweet, go ahead.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate what the member opposite was saying about procedure. I think we're getting some things confused along the way. Travelling town halls are one conversation; asking experts to come and present to a committee is actually a pretty normal part of this process. I've done many of these legislative reviews where we're able to invite. The most recent one that I did was surface rights, where we invited many stakeholders to come and present to the committee to talk about surface rights, and then we also went on a tour of the province after that.

I think having written submissions for community members to be able to write in, to have concerned citizens, Albertans able to write in and let the committee know how they feel is one thing, but having experts come and present to us in person to talk about the impact of this legislation on the work that they do is a very important process that this committee has a responsibility to engage in. We were able to listen to the experts that directly utilize the legislation, that are the ones responsible to administer the legislation. I believe that the individuals that are impacted by this legislation, the very people that work in this industry, that are the health care professionals, that are the ones that may have the information that is needed to be able to ensure that Albertans have access to open and transparent governments, should be allowed to come here and present to this committee.

So, although I appreciate talking about past practice, I can say 10 years in that I have done this a variety of different ways, and the best way as a committee and as a nonpartisan body that is to be reviewing legislation is to ensure we are opening up as much openness and transparency as we possibly can and allowing Albertans to come and present to us. That is our responsibility as members of this committee.

I would encourage everyone to really consider the fact that having the people who are directly impacted by this legislation, who are the ones that would be considered the whistle-blowers, the right to come here and speak to us and tell us how we can make things better so that they feel like they have the right to be able to use this legislation, is in the best interest of all Albertans.

**The Chair:** MLA Dyck, you had your hand up. Did you?

**Mr. Dyck:** Sure. Yeah.

Every single one of these organizations, Chair, is already in our written submission list, so I don't think we need to belabour this by asking them to do written and also an oral presentation. That seems overstating that at this point. We've already requested them in our written, so let's leave it at that.

I would encourage the committee to vote no to this purely based upon: we just asked them to do written submissions. Let's get them

to do the work and then at our future meetings see who we want to invite for oral presentations based upon that, which is precedent from prior meetings, that we would not be inviting organizations before seeing those written statements.

I appreciate the motion. I would encourage the entire committee to vote no on this one.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any other discussion?

**Ms Hoffman:** May I close?

**The Chair:** Yeah. Go ahead.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thanks. Just to close, I'll say that one way to do this is to have everyone submit written and then decide if you want to invite some people forward. Another way is to let people know that, yes, everyone is allowed to submit something in writing; these groups we would really like to hear something from in person and be able to have a chance to go a little bit deeper because we know that they're the ones who are going to be directly impacted by the legislation on the front lines in health care.

My proposal is that we give them notice, that we say now, that we don't wait another six weeks into the process before we say hey – probably even longer because it would be six weeks before the deadline to submit and then there'd be a summary and then we'd be reviewing that summary. I think we probably want to get going with this legislation, and having as great an understanding of the nuances, the limits under the current legislation would benefit us in being able to move more expeditiously as a committee. So my proposal remains to tell these groups that we want them to come and have an opportunity to engage with us on this. Obviously, they can provide something in writing. Usually presenters do have something prepared writing, but it gives them more notice to be able to align their schedules, our schedules and to be able to do this work.

Ideally, I know that many of these committees try to meet when the House is sitting. That appears to be a very limited number of weeks in the upcoming year, so I think us being able to proactively ask the LAO staff to help us engage with these groups, to have them ready to come and present at a time that works for the committee and for these groups is just respectful and a more efficient way to deal with everybody's time.

So my motion still stands, and I hope that the members, too, want to hear from the public and folks who right now often feel muzzled and want to be able to support all of us in delivering on our mandate of strong public health care here in the province of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** All right. Ms Robert has a comment. Go ahead.

**Ms Robert:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to offer this to the committee. I don't know if it helps at all, but the stakeholder letter that the chair will send to all the stakeholders does mention that the committee may decide to have oral presentations and to please indicate if you have any interest in coming and speaking to the committee, so the concept of oral presentations is introduced in the invitation letter. I don't know if that helps at all, but it's just a bit of added information.

**Ms Hoffman:** Yeah. I appreciate the information. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Dr. Metz, did you have a comment?

**Dr. Metz:** Hello?

**The Chair:** Yep. Go ahead.

**Dr. Metz:** Yes. I just want to remind everyone that one of the crises we have right now is a limited workforce, particularly in the health sector and also in education, and one way to engage our workforce and make them feel that they are listened to is to give them an opportunity to speak and to present and for us to hear them. Any way that we can do that improves retention in our workforce. I think that's an important consideration, along with making the legislation better.

3:50

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Any other comments?

Okay. We will go to a vote. All those in favour of the motion, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, those in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no.

**Ms Sweet:** Can I have a recorded vote, please, Chair?

**The Chair:** Okay. We will go to a recorded vote. Oh, I'll have to say that

it was defeated.

Right. The process for a recorded vote in a committee is similar to the process for a division in the House. I will first ask those in the room who are in favour of the motion to raise their hands, and then the committee clerk will call the names of those who have raised their hands and record the votes. We will then follow the same process for those who are against the motion. If you wish to abstain from the vote, please do not raise your hand. Once we have the recorded votes in the room, I will ask those participating remotely to please turn on their cameras if they wish to vote. The committee clerk will then call the names of committee members who have activated their cameras and record their voice votes. If you are participating remotely and you wish to abstain from the vote, please turn off your camera.

Okay. We will go to the recorded vote. Those in the room who are in favour of the motion, please let the clerk know; raise your hand.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Sweet, Member Calahoo Stonehouse, and hon. Ms Hoffman.

**The Chair:** Okay. Those in the room who are opposed, please raise your hand.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Lovely and Mr. Lundy.

**The Chair:** We will now go online, and I'll let the clerk call out your name. If you want to vote, you have to turn on your camera.

**Mr. Huffman:** Dr. Metz.

**Dr. Metz:** In favour.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mr. Dyck.

**Mr. Dyck:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mrs. Petrovic.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** And Mr. Cyr.

**Mr. Cyr:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mr. Chair, for the motion, four; against, five.

**The Chair:** Okay.

That motion is defeated.

We'll go to the next motion. Do you have another motion?

**Ms Hoffman:** Yes, please.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms Hoffman:** Okay. I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act the following organizations and individuals to present in an upcoming committee meeting: Paul Merriman, former Saskatchewan Health minister; the Alberta Medical Association; the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta; the United Nurses of Alberta; the Health Sciences Association of Alberta; Alberta Union of Provincial Employees; Dr. Cameron Hutchison, University of Alberta; the Parkland Institute; MLA Vicki Mowat from Saskatchewan; the Alberta Federation of Labour; Dr. James Turk and Niamh Leonard from the Centre for Free Expression; Jay Chalke from the University of British Columbia law clinic; and Dr. Ian Bron from Carleton University as well as C. Lynn Romero from Manitoba, senior legal adviser.

I'm happy to give some rationale on a number of these folks to help. I'll maybe just speak to the individuals, because I think everyone in this committee knows who the organizations are generally and some of the organizations have been approved on our list, a couple of them; for example, the Alberta Federation of Labour, the Centre for Free Expression, Health Sciences Association, United Nurses, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and Parkland Institute. Those were approved on the list for written submission, but there are many individuals on here as well as the colleges that we've listed that aren't included.

If I could give a little bit of context, a number of you, especially those on the government side of the Legislature, might know Paul. He served . . .

**The Chair:** Excuse me. We're getting close to the end of our hour, and I need support to extend the meeting if we have to.

**Ms Hoffman:** I'll move that.

**The Chair:** I want you to get all the time you got to be able to talk.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. In the room and online, if anyone objects to extending the meeting past 4 o'clock, say no.

Okay. Then we're good to go.

**Ms Hoffman:** I'll try to keep it brief, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Fair enough.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you to my colleagues for that.

Paul was the Minister of Health between 2011 – oh, no. He was an MLA between 2011 and 2024, and he was the minister responsible when the whistle-blower protection specifically for the health care workers came into the government's existing act in the last few years. I can't remember exactly which year, but recently. Vicki Mowat, who I also put on the list – sorry. Member Mowat and Minister Merriman worked together to make this happen. It came first as an NDP private member's bill, and while it wasn't passed as a private member's bill, the minister, Merriman, worked across the aisle to take a number of the components that were proposed in the private member's bill and work them into a government bill, which then was passed enthusiastically by both sides of the House.

My hope, of course, in this committee and in all committees is that we find ways for all of us to work together to improve the laws that govern our province, and I think a neighbouring province where we had an NDP opposition and a Conservative government demonstrating that is a great place to start looking when we're updating our own legislation, the same legislation that they worked together on doing that for. So I think having these two, a current MLA and a former minister, come and present – whether it's in person or virtual, I don't care. But I would love to get us to a place in this committee and in our Assembly where we find ways to reach across, learn from one another, and make sure that we improve legislation. That's why I'm moving those two individuals specifically.

And then maybe I'll just touch on a couple of others. Dr. Hutchison is a professor of law at the University of Alberta specializing in intellectual property, statutory interpretation, anticorruption law, legal ethics, whistle-blower protections, and public interest law, so I think he would be a perfect addition to this committee and would have a great deal to say on that topic.

From British Columbia's law clinic, which I had as item L on our list, the current Ombudsperson, who's known for leading systemic investigations and advancing whistle-blower protections, previously served as a public guardian and trustee in B.C. as well and a King's Counsel member for the Law Society, so decades of experience in engaging with these types of legislation.

The last one I'll mention is from Manitoba. Lynn Romero during Manitoba's review of their whistle-blower protection in 2023 and '24 led the five-year review and submitted a report with recommendations, so they've done this very recently. Again, another prairie province that implemented many, not all, of her recommendations. She's already delved very deeply into very similar legislation. I think it would again be of great benefit to our committee to be able to look at some of our neighbours, take the best things that they've done, and find ways to make them work here in Alberta.

So those are my proposals for partners in the other three western provinces for us to make sure that Alberta learns from the work that they've already done, that we don't repeat a lot of it, and that we're able to move forward efficiently, effectively, and with the best bills possible, working across the aisle, through you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Any others? Member Lundy, go ahead.

**Mr. Lundy:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sure this committee looks forward to reviewing any potential written submissions from this list and having them indicate to our committee as part of the process whether they would like to come and present orally at that time. So I look forward to that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Lundy, the folks that I highlighted aren't part of the list. They're experts in other provinces, and that's why I'm proposing we invite them to come speak, just for context.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, of course, they are, presumably, all part of the public, so they would definitely be part of our entire suite of people who could provide written submissions as anyone else from the public could.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any others online?

Okay. We will go to a motion. All those in favour of the motion, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online, those in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Okay.

**Ms Sweet:** Can I have a recorded vote, please?

**The Chair:** Recorded vote.

That is defeated by the voice vote.

We'll now go to a recorded vote. We'll follow the same procedures. All those in the room in favour, please raise your hand.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Sweet, Member Calahoo Stonehouse, and hon. Ms Hoffman.

**The Chair:** In the room, those who oppose, raise your hands.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Lovely and Mr. Lundy.

**The Chair:** Those online, the clerk will ask for you, and then you can say your position.

4:00

**Mr. Huffman:** Dr. Metz.

**Dr. Metz:** I support the motion.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mr. Dyck.

**Mr. Dyck:** No.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mrs. Petrovic.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** And Mr. Cyr.

**Mr. Cyr:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mr. Chair, that was four for the motion and five against the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

That motion is defeated.

The next motion. Go ahead, Member Calahoo Stonehouse.

**Member Calahoo Stonehouse:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My motion is that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship hold public meetings as part of the committee's review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act on dates and locations in Alberta determined by the chair after consulting with committee members.

Mr. Chair, the reason why I think this is imperative: if you look at the list that was shared of stakeholders, not a single First Nations or Métis community or organization has made that list. Furthermore, it was mentioned that stakeholders would be notified to make a submission. I think it's imperative that we include Indigenous peoples in our province and uphold the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action along with the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. That's why consultation with Albertans is imperative with this new act, so that's why I put forward this motion.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Any discussion?

If not, I will go to the vote. Those in favour of the motion, say aye. Those opposed, say no. Online, those in favour, say aye. Those opposed, say no.

That is defeated.

**Ms Sweet:** Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Recorded vote? Yeah. No problem.

In the room, all those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Sweet, Member Calahoo Stonehouse, and hon. Ms Hoffman.

**The Chair:** Those opposed, please raise your hand.

**Mr. Huffman:** Ms Lovely and Mr. Lundy.

**The Chair:** Those online, you can state your case when you get identified.

**Mr. Huffman:** Dr. Metz.

**Dr. Metz:** I favour the vote. I'm in favour.

**Mr. Huffman:** Thank you.

Mr. Dyck.

**Mr. Dyck:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** Mrs. Petrovic.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** And Mr. Cyr.

**Mr. Cyr:** Opposed.

**Mr. Huffman:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, four for the motion and five against the motion.

**The Chair:**

That motion is defeated.

Any other motions?

Okay. Other business. Are there any other issues for discussion at the meeting today?

Okay. The date of the next meeting is at the call of the chair. If the written submission deadline has passed and the summary document has been prepared, we will call for another meeting.

If there is nothing else for the committee's consideration, I call for a motion to adjourn.

**Ms Lovely:** So moved.

**The Chair:** Member Lovely moves that the September 16, 2025, meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship be adjourned. All in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. Online in favour, say aye. Any opposed, say no. That is done.

Meeting adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 4:03 p.m.]







