

STURGEON COUNTY

PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR FARM WORKPLACE LEGISLATION

WHEREAS *Bill 6: Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* received Royal Assent on December 11, 2015;

WHEREAS the Provincial Government subsequently established Technical Working Groups to provide recommendations on how employment standards, occupation health and safety, and labour relations should be applied to the agriculture sector, with the intent of influencing *Bill 17: The Fair and Family-Friendly Workplace Act*;

WHEREAS *Bill 17: The Fair and Family-Friendly Workplace Act* received Royal Assent on June 7, 2017;

WHEREAS it is generally understood that both *Acts* and associated regulations will impact the agricultural industry;

WHEREAS a detailed understanding of these impacts, and any associated changes required of agricultural producers and stakeholders is necessary to ensure compliance given the scope of the new legislation;

WHEREAS without a thorough understanding of farmworker legislation, agriculture producers and workers are challenged to understand how their businesses, families, and livelihoods are impacted; and,

WHEREAS agriculture is an integral part of Alberta's economy and Albertans' way of life and misinformation and lack of certainty regarding legislative requirements make it challenging to make informed business decisions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and Labour, develop and implement a communications plan to advise Alberta's agriculture sector of actual and intended changes regarding workplace legislation, with the outcome of establishing increased awareness and effective change management.

Member Background

Sturgeon County remains committed to working with the Government of Alberta to maintain and grow Alberta's agriculture sector. Sturgeon County supports the AAMDC's position statement: that the AAMDC recognizes that the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* serves an important purpose in ensuring agricultural workers have the same rights and protections as other workers in Alberta, and it is important that this legislation and associated regulations do not unfairly compromise the ability of agricultural producers to operate sustainably.

While the Provincial Government's public consultation processes regarding this Act, as well as *Bill 17: The Fair and Family-Friendly Workplace Act*, were well-intentioned, there appears to be a knowledge gap within the agricultural community as to impacts and next steps required of agricultural producers, as this sentiment was expressed to Sturgeon County Council by our Agricultural Service Board. While

this is an example within a Sturgeon County context, we believe this experience is likely common amongst other Counties and Municipal Districts across Alberta.

Therefore, the intent of this resolution is that increased awareness and certainty be achieved amongst Alberta's agricultural community regarding any required operational changes as result of new legislation, and that this be done by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, by "closing the loop" with Alberta's agricultural community through a communications plan.