



February 18, 2016

Ms. Suzie Cadieux  
Clerk of the Standing Committee on Finance  
614, 131 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Cadieux:

As the representative of Alberta's 271 urban municipalities, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association is pleased to offer the following submission for the 2016 federal budget process.

Canada is facing challenging economic times and, given our natural resource economy, Alberta is particularly vulnerable. We appreciate the federal government's recent funding commitments to our infrastructure requirements and the resulting job creation and support for economic growth. Alberta's urban municipalities look to the federal government to:

- ✓ Provide additional funding for municipalities through investment in infrastructure:
  - In order for municipalities to best utilize these funds, an outcome-based, predictable funding approach is preferable over a conditional, application-based grant. Ideally, funding should flow directly to municipalities, consideration could be given to using the gas tax program since it is already established and its formula and administration are already developed and have proven to be successful.
  - Provide funding for public transit to increase Alberta's productivity through reducing congestion and improving connectivity within and between large urban centres, which in turn lower commute times and vehicle emissions.
  - Cash flows for projects should be established in advance of major expenditures, and cash should ideally flow predictably according to these schedules so that municipalities do not need to "up front" the cost of a projects. This will help those municipalities that do not have significant reserves, and prevent municipalities from exceeding their debt limits.
- ✓ Provide funding for disaster mitigation (e.g. flooding and fire mitigation), and adequate financial assistance to municipalities after a disaster has occurred.
- ✓ Increase the intake for the RCMP cadet program in order to fill vacancies that are creating risk of burnout in the existing force and hampering service delivery. Actions are also required to address high crime rates in Alberta communities, especially those adjacent to Aboriginal communities.

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- ✓ Renew Canada's commitment to affordable housing to ensure that the health and safety needs of lower income Canadians can be met.
  - Review the temporary foreign worker (TFW) program to ensure the program is properly used without restricting access to the workers needed to address labour shortages when the economy recovers.
- ✓ Build on rail safety by strengthening Bill C-52 and corresponding regulations to improve the safety of our communities and environment.
- ✓ Expedite work to harmonize federal and provincial wastewater regulations, including the timely completion of equivalency agreements wherever appropriate.

AUMA would appreciate the opportunity to make a presentation to the standing committee on these priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "L. Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Holmes  
AUMA President

cc: Raymond Louie, President of Federation of Canadian Municipalities