



Report Number: EC2024-0528
Meeting: Executive Committee
Meeting Date: 2024 April 16

NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Extending Municipal Voting Rights to Permanent Residents

Sponsoring Councillor(s): Councillor Walcott, Councillor Wong, Councillor Dhaliwal, Councillor Mian, Councillor Penner

WHEREAS...

- The term franchise, or enfranchisement, denotes the right to vote in elections for members of Parliament, provincial legislatures and municipal councils.
- Dating back to the colonial period, restrictions once effectively limited the right to vote to male property holders. Since then, voting qualifications and voter eligibility have expanded, removing the restrictions on women, First Nations, Inuit, and Asian Canadians' right to vote, eventually affirming the right of every Citizen to vote.
- The expansion of voter eligibility reflects Canada's evolving social values and a more reflective understanding of what it means to contribute to Canadian Society.

AND WHEREAS...

- The right to vote in federal elections is enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* for those with Canadian citizenship.
- The right to vote in Alberta provincial elections is enshrined in the *Elections Act*, with limits placed on age, citizenship status, and place of residence.
- The right to vote in municipal elections in Alberta is defined in the *Local Authorities Election Act*, with limits placed on age, citizenship status, and place of residence.

AND WHEREAS...

- Municipalities are unique, as the only order of government that is not constitutionally defined, the opportunity to extend voting rights to more members of our local communities would represent a significant shift to ensure our local communities are representative of the people who call them home.
- All orders of government make decisions that directly impact the daily lives of all residents, regardless of their citizenship status.
- Municipal Governments have a unique legislative opportunity to honour the contributions of Permanent Residents – who are often long-term constituents, neighbours, and community members who pay property taxes and fees for City services, contribute to our local economy by working and purchasing goods and services, and create vibrancy in areas of social and cultural life – *by extending them a voice in local governments*.
- As municipalities exist as a result of Provincial legislation, the opportunity exists to afford municipal voting rights to Citizens and Permanent Residents alike through an act of the Alberta Provincial Government amending the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

NOTICE OF MOTION
AND WHEREAS...

- Our responsibility as municipalities extends to all who people who call our communities home who contribute to civic life, who work here, raise families here, and use city services, should have a democratic right to vote in our municipalities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED ...

1. Council forward the accompanying resolution to the municipality of Penhold and request that they second it; and
2. The accompanying resolution be submitted for inclusion at the September annual Alberta Municipalities conference to request:

“Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Government of Alberta to amend the *Local Authorities Election Act* to expand voter eligibility to include individuals who have been granted Canadian permanent resident status.”