

Equitable Provincial Charitable Gaming Model

Moved by: City of St. Albert

Seconded by:

WHEREAS charitable organizations provide a valuable service across Alberta and their sustainability is of utmost importance to Alberta society;

WHEREAS Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) helps to ensure the sustainability of charitable organizations through revenue generation made possible by volunteer charitable casino events;

WHEREAS an inequitable model for the disbursement of casino revenues to charities currently exists, and the frequency of revenue generating opportunities varies greatly based on location in the Province;

WHEREAS previous reviews of the Charitable Gaming Model have articulated the inequities that exist across Alberta, yet decades of inaction have perpetuated and intensified these inequities;

WHEREAS the AGLC initiated a charitable gaming review in 2019-2021, and published a “What We Heard Report” that highlighted both a need and potential options for more equitable casino revenue distribution; and

WHEREAS since publishing the What We Heard Report, no substantive action has been taken to address the specific issues of inequitable disbursement of casino revenues and the frequency of revenue generating opportunities based on a charitable organization’s geographic location and assigned casino region;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Government of Alberta and AGLC to implement a more equitable provincial Charitable Gaming Model, informed by the findings of the Charitable Gaming Review and 2021 What We Heard Report, to support the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of charitable organizations across Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

Under Alberta’s current Charitable Gaming Model, adopted in 2003, charitable groups may be licensed by the AGLC to conduct charity casinos, in coordination with licensed private casino facilities, as a revenue generating opportunity. These revenues are critical for charitable organizations’ sustainability and ability to provide services to communities across Alberta.

There are 19 casino facilities located throughout Alberta, each of which belongs to a “casino region.” Charities are generally assigned to their nearest casino facility, however only charities located within Edmonton and Calgary or charities that provide province-wide services are permitted to receive a license for a casino event in Edmonton or Calgary casinos.

In a 2010 MLA Advisory Report on “Eligible Organizations’ Access to and Distribution of Proceeds from Licensed Casino Events,” it was identified that inequities exist because:

- There is a long waiting period to hold casino events across the province because there are more charitable organizations than there are possible casino events – waiting times vary from 16 months in Fort McMurray to 34.5 months in Lethbridge.
- Amongst casino regions, charitable proceeds can vary, from an average high of \$77,486 in the Edmonton region to \$18,011 in the St. Albert/Camrose region.

Despite this report, inequities continued to persist and grow over the subsequent decade. From 2019 through to 2021, AGLC surveyed over 3,800 organizations and conducted targeted stakeholder engagement with 90 charitable organizations and casino representatives as part of their Charitable Gaming Review. Feedback from the subsequent What We Heard Report included:

- Casino revenues should be pooled provincially and distributed equally to charitable organizations; alternatives included pooling rural casinos revenue, pooling a portion of all revenue and distributing it equally and using a sliding scale to distribute based on need;
- Eliminate/re-draw casino boundaries so that charitable groups can choose any casino in the province; and
- Allow organizations outside the Edmonton and Calgary boundaries to have access to casino events within those boundaries, where revenue generation is greater.

Since this report was published, neither AGLC nor the Government of Alberta have implemented policy changes to action any of the above-mentioned recommendations.

Furthermore, the landscape of gaming has changed since this report; in 2020, AGLC launched Play Alberta, a provincially-regulated online gaming platform. Play Alberta generated \$37 million in revenue its first year, and has now grown to generate \$270 million in revenue for 2025. This new revenue stream did not exist when AGLC conducted the Charitable Gaming Review referenced above and serves as an example that while the gaming industry has evolved and changed, the Charitable Gaming Model has not.

The inequities of the Charitable Gaming Model continue to generate intermunicipal complexities, such as in 2024 when the Camrose Casino applied to relocate to Edmonton but to remain as a “rural” casino. While rural charities and municipalities supported the move as it would reduce long wait times and increase their charitable gaming revenue, urban charities in Edmonton opposed the move as a new “rural casino” within Edmonton would reduce foot-traffic and charitable gaming revenue for Edmonton-area casinos.

The increased emphasis on this issue in recent years – reflected in multiple resolutions approved by both Alberta Municipalities and Rural Municipalities of Alberta – creates a strong foundation for Alberta Municipalities to continue advocating on this issue to the Government of Alberta and AGLC with the support of a diverse range of villages, towns, and mid-sized cities. The City of St. Albert

hopes that this advocacy will advance the long-standing recommendations for a more equitable provincial Charitable Gaming Model, and that it will ensure the issue remains a priority for the Government of Alberta and AGLC.

The following table outlines the wait times and revenues each casino-region received in 2024.

Casino Region	2024 Wait Time for Key Events (Months)	2024 Annualized Return (product of wait times and proceeds)
Calgary	20	\$47,500
Calgary-Rural	37	\$18,200
Camrose	41	\$6,100
Edmonton	23	\$41,500
Fort McMurray	16	\$25,900
Grande Prairie	28	\$17,300
Lethbridge	34	\$12,000
Medicine Hat	17	\$11,500

Red Deer	33	\$10,300
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St. Albert	32	\$7,900
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