



April 12, 2017

(Provincial Municipal Associations)

Dear Presidents:

Residents in rural Canada appreciate that federal government facilities located in their communities not only provide important public services but also much needed economic support and stability. In every region of this country, these federal facilities are a major employer which retains workers and their families and help ensure the viability of these communities into the future.

Rural communities remain critical to the economic, social and environmental fabric of Canada and they need the support of our federal government. In fact, during the last election the federal government made a campaign commitment to “...***strengthen our communities by investing in the things that make them good places to live.***”

However, recent decisions by the government to close federal facilities do not reflect this commitment. For example, in October 27, 2016 the federal government announced plans to close the Case Processing Centre (CPC) and that all 236 staff positions would be relocated to Edmonton. The Town and CPC staff are still struggling to understand how or why this decision was made. There was no consultation with the town council, no business case or economic impact report shared with the public, and no prior notice to the staff.

That is why the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) supported a resolution adopted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) encouraging the federal government to consult with rural municipalities and establish a policy framework to guide federal office moves. While the FCM has adopted this resolution, the issue will also be raised during the policy conversation at their AGM being held in June this summer. A copy of the recent letter FCM sent to Honourable Judy Foote regarding the resolution is attached.

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The FCM has long urged the federal government to consult with municipalities on the location of federal facilities and for the federal decision-making to consider the unique circumstances and challenges in rural communities. In fact, the FCM has previously submitted formal requests that the federal government look at issues and public policy through rural "lenses" and to generate a horizontal perspective within the machinery of government on the challenges and program requirements of rural Canada. The Vegreville CPC decision is further proof that this has not yet occurred.

As the provincial municipal associations in Alberta, we are asking our colleagues across the country to lend your voice to the #ruralCanadamatters campaign. It is our hope that you will show your support for Vegreville and rural Canada by writing to Minister Foote and calling your provincial MPs to request that the Government of Canada:

- establish clear performance criteria for federal facilities in rural communities and;
- prior to any decision by a federal department on relocating a federal facility, that a business case including an economic impact analysis be submitted to Public Services and Procurement Canada and that the local community be fully consulted on the relocation.

As municipal associations we need to stand together and send a message of solidarity and strength to the federal government that all communities matter. We look forward to your support and hearing more from you and your members on this issue when we meet at the FCM conference in June.

Sincerely,



Al Kemmere
President
AAMD&C



Lisa Holmes
President
AUMA

Enclosure

cc: His Worship Myron Hayduk, Mayor of the Town of Vegreville