

Citizen Initiative Act and Citizen Initiative Regulation

Summary of Changes

January 2026

Summary of amendments to the ***Citizen Initiative Act*** contained in Bill 14: *Justice Statutes Amendment Act*, which came into force December 11, 2025, and amendments to the Citizen Initiative Regulation, by Order in Council, approved and ordered December 17, 2025.

Terminology changes

- “Chief Financial Officer” is appointed by an elector submitting a notice of intent (s.1(1)(b)).
- Added definition of “initiative petition process” which begins when an elector submits notice of intent and ends with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) submitting a copy of the proposal to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly or the Minister. (s.1(1)(g.1)).
- Added definition of “notice of intent” which is the notice of intent to apply for the issuance of an initiative petition. (s.1(1)(j.1)).
- Adjusted the definition of “proponent” to mean the elector who submitted a notice of intent that was filed or the proponent referred to in a notice, and proponent under Part 3 Initiative Petition Finances and Contributions (s.1(1)(n)).

Application for issuance of initiative petition

- Added Notice of intent requirement, which enables an elector to submit a notice of intent to apply for the issuance of an initiative petition to the CEO. The elector must submit a notice of intent, using the required form, which includes their name, contact information, proof of identity, signed statement, and statement of the subject matter of the intended application (for legislative and policy proposals) or proposed question related to the Constitution of Canada (for constitutional referendum proposals). It must also include a written appointment and consent and statement for the proponent’s chief financial officer (CFO), along with their contact information. (s.1.1(1) through (4)).
- Added requirement for the CEO to provide the elector written notice by personal service or recorded mail once the notice of intent has been filed by the CEO. The filed notice of intent and dates of the 30-day application period will be published on the Elections Alberta website. (s.1.1(5) and (6)).
- Added ability for the proponent to begin collecting funds during the 30-day application period for the application fee and expenses related to the intended petition. Electors may not begin collecting funds before this period. (s.1.1(7) and (8)).
- A notice of intent cannot be filed by a sitting MLA; CEO, Election Commissioner, election officer, or member of the CEO’s staff; an individual prohibited from being a chief financial

officer under section 29(4) or the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* (EFCDA), or an individual who has been convicted of an offence under the *Citizen Initiative Act*, *Election Act*, or EFCDA, in the past 8 years. (s.1.1(9)).

Chief Financial Officer

- Added requirements for electors intending to submit a notice of intent to appoint a chief financial officer. This must include a written appointment, signed CFO consent and statement for the proponent's chief financial officer (CFO), along with their contact information. The appointment of the CFO is effective on the filing of the notice of intent. A CFO cannot be the elector appointing the CFO; the CEO, Election Commissioner, election officer, or member of the CEO's staff; an individual prohibited from being a CFO under section 29(4) of the EFCDA; an individual who has been convicted of an offence under the *Citizen Initiative Act*, *Election Act*, or EFCDA, in the past 8 years; or an individual identified in the regulations as being disqualified. (s.1.2).
- Revised requirements for citizen initiative applications to submit a notice of intent before the application within the 30-day application period following the filing of the notice of intent and amended language to reflect terminology changes and addition of the notice of intent requirements in s1.1. (s.2).
- Added requirement for subject matter statement of the application to correspond with the statement in the notice of intent. (s.2(2)(d), (e.1), and (f)).
- Removed requirement for the statement of subject matter to be clear and unambiguous and not exceed the jurisdiction of the Legislature (previously s.2(2)(d) and s.2(3)).
- Removed requirement for a constitutional referendum proposal to be factually accurate, state a question in a way that requires a "yes" or "no" answer, and is otherwise suitable to be put to electors at a constitutional referendum. (previously s.2(2)(f)).
- Removed requirement for an initiative petition proposal to not contravene sections 1 to 35.1 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. (previously s.2(4)).
- Removed requirement for an application to not relate to a proposal that is the same as or substantially similar to a proposal that was the subject of an unsuccessful referendum in the last 5 years, or the subject of another initiative petition or would result in a conflict with the outcome of another initiative petition, or for a petition for which the signature sheets have been submitted but that has not been completed by way of an initiative vote, constitutional referendum, or otherwise resolved under s.6, Division 4, or Part 2. (previously s.2(5)).
- Updated terminology from "applicant" to "proponent" (s.2(2)(7)).
- Limited CEO's consultation with proponent to whether the application and proponent meet requirements of s.2(2) and s.2(8). (s.2(9)).
- Removed ability for the CEO to refer a question to the Court. (previously s.2.1)).
- Revised the CEO's determination of the validity of the application to include only the requirements in s.2 within 7 days after the proponent's application and requires the CEO to provide the Minister of Justice a copy of the application if the requirements of s.2 have been met. (s.2.2).
- Revised s.3 to align with the above amendments. (s.3).

Collection of signatures

- Added requirement for individuals who wish to sign an initiative petition to produce proof

of identity and status of an electors using one piece of government-issued photo ID with name and current residential address or two pieces of authorized ID, each of which includes their name and at least one of which includes their current residential address. (s.4(2.1)).

- Added requirement for canvassers to sign a statement on each page of the petition confirming the witnessed signatures were provided by eligible electors and each individual produced proof of their identify and status as an elector, along with the canvasser's name, residential address, and telephone number. Failure to provide this information will mean the signature(s) on that petition sheet will not be counted. (s.6(4)).
- Added requirement for any signature sheets that have not been destroyed to be submitted with the notice of withdrawal of initiative petition or change of proponent (s.9(2)(b)).
- Amended language that if proponent dies, resigns, or, in the opinion of the CEO, becomes ineligible or incapacitated (except due to a contravention of the Act), and the CFO does not deliver a notice in writing within 14 days from the date the CEO becomes aware or the vacancy, the CEO must publish a notice that the notice of intent, application of the issuance of an initiative petition or initiative petition has been withdrawn. (s.9(4)).
- Revised effect of a withdrawn notice publication to include deeming a notice of application to be withdrawn, deeming an application that has not been issued to be rejected, or ending the petition signing period of an issued initiative petition and deeming the petition unsuccessful.
- Amended CFO duties to reflect updates in s.9(4)(b). (s.9(8)).
- Amended s.9(9) to reflect applicability to funds collected during notice of intent period, application period, and petition period to be dealt with in accordance with the regulations in the case of the proponent. (s.9(9)).

Determination whether initiative petition successful

- Changed from "judicial review" to "judicial review of a decision of the Chief Electoral Officer". If a decision of the CEO leading to termination of the citizen initiative petition process is vacated, subject to the Court's direction, the initiative petition will continue as if the CEO's decision had not been made. The time periods will be adjusted to be suspended during these proceedings and restart on the day after the Court issues its decision. Within 7 days, the CEO must notify the proponent in writing of revised dates and publish them on the Elections Alberta website. In the case of a judicial review of a decision of the CEO in any other matter, the initiative petition process will continue in accordance with the Court's direction. (s.13(2)).
- Added clearer requirement that destruction of copies of signature sheets includes destroying or permanently deleting all digital copies of signature sheets created in any manner. (s.13.2).

Duties re successful initiative petition

- Added ability for a report tabled recommending a policy proposal be referred to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for the purposes of a referendum to include recommendations respecting the form and substance of the question(s) to be put to electors in a referendum. (s.15(2.1)).

- Added ability for the Minister of Justice to make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council respecting changes to the form or substance of a proposed constitutional question for a constitutional referendum that the Minister considers necessary or advisable to ensure the referendum will result in a clear expression of the will of electors and the question is suitable to be put to electors as a constitutional referendum. (s.16(1.1)).

Initiative Petition Regulations

- Added ability for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations prescribing:
 - information required in a notice of intent, appointment of a chief financial officer, and requirements to be included with the appointment of a chief financial officer (s.17(b));
 - individuals or classes of individuals disqualified from being a CFO (s.17(b.1)); and
 - respecting the application fee (s.17(c)).

NOTE: Changes to the Citizen Initiative Regulation are detailed later in this document.

Initiative Petition Finances and Contributions

- Added notice of intent and application for the issuance of an initiative petition. (s.20(1) and (3)).
- Revised to prohibit contributions being accepted by an elector who has submitted a notice of intent that has not been filed, and add notice of intent and application for the issuance of an initiative petition. (s.20(4)).
- Revised to reflect addition of notice of intent and application for the issuance of an initiative petition, elector who has submitted a notice of intent, and elector's CFO. (s.21(a) through (g)).
- Revised to add application of *Election Act* and EFCDA to advertising with respect to a notice of intent, application for issuance of an initiative petition, or an initiative petition. (s.21(f)).
- Revised to add application of *Election Act* and EFCDA to any investigation, penalties, and other administrative action in respect of finances and contributions relating to a notice of intent, application for issuance of an initiative petition, or an initiative petition. (s.21(g)).
- Added restrictions on incurring expenses by an electors whose notice of intent has not been filed. Added notice of intent and application for the issuance of an initiative petition. (s.22).
- Added notice of intent and application for the issuance of an initiative petition throughout, as well as terminology changes as described previously. (s.23).
- Removed opinion polls from legislation. (s.23(d)).
- Added the following entities not eligible to be registered as a third party:
 - An individual, corporation, or entity who has been convicted of an offence under this Act, the *Election Act*, or the EFCDA within the previous 8 years (s.25(6)(h));
 - A corporation, if the officer who has signing authority for it has been convicted of an offence under this Act, the *Election Act*, or the EFCDA within the previous 8 years (s.25(6)(i)); and
 - A group, if the principal officer or member of the group has been convicted of an

offence under this Act, the *Election Act*, or the EFCDA within the previous 8 years (s.25(6)(j)).

- Added restriction that a person disqualified from acting as a CFO under s.1.2(4) is also disqualified from being appointed as a CFO for a third party (s.38(2.1)).

General

- Added requirement for the CEO to retain all records relating to a notice of intent, an application for issuances of an initiative petition, or an initiative petition, or any decision of the CEO in connection with those, until the 30-day period judicial review application period has expired or, if a judicial review application is filed, until the Court issues its decision. (s.53(3)).
- Expanded offences to include retaining personal information (s.57(3)).
- Prescribes fines for a person who collects, uses, discloses, or retains personal information to:
 - \$50,000 to \$500,000 for individuals and
 - \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 for corporations, organizations, or groups. (s.57(5)).

Transitional and Causes of Action

- Transitional clauses affect the period before Bill 14 coming into force (December 11, 2025).
 - If an application for a citizen initiative petition has been made, but the petition has not been issued, that application is deemed to have never been made.
 - If an application is deemed to never have been made, the applicant may submit a notice of intent with the same subject matter within 30 days of December 11 and the required application fee waived.
 - If the CEO has stated a question to the Court, the special case is discontinued with costs to any party or person granted status to intervene in the special case.
 - The Act as it read when an application for the issuance of an initiative petition was submitted applies, except as noted above.
 - No cause of action lies against or may be commenced against any person with respect to the transitional clauses including the Government of Alberta, the Minister of Justice, the CEO, or Elections Alberta.

Citizen Initiative Regulation

- Changed the application fee from \$500 to \$25,000 and added an application fee refund requirement to include the initiative petition being successful. (s.2(1) through (3)).
- Added clause prohibiting an elector who has submitted a notice of intent that has not been filed from receiving contributions. (s.2.1).
- Revised contribution period to start from the date a notice of intent is filed to the withdrawal or conclusion of the initiative petition period. (s.2(3)).
- Updated language throughout to add elector who has submitted a notice of intent that has not been filed, notice of intent, and application for the issuance of an initiative petition, as in the Act.

- The applicable period for financial contributions begins when the notice of intent is filed and ends when the petition is withdrawn, deemed withdrawn, rejected, or the signature sheet submission date (whichever is later).
- Updated throughout that maximum contributions for a citizen initiative are \$4000 in aggregate of all contributions under the *Election Act*.
- Within 30 days of when the petition is withdrawn, deemed withdrawn, rejected, or the signature sheet submission date, the CFO must file their expense limit report with the CEO. This report must include the 30-day period after the notice of intent is filed. (s.18).
- Amended to apply the disposition of surplus funds to include the notice of intent period. (s.19).
- Amended to apply the late filing fee to an elector who has submitted a notice of intent that has not been filed. (s.20).



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