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Bill 7: Member's comments

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The recently announced Property Tax Incentives has been a concern for many of our members. Since the Bill has been announced there has been extensive media coverage. Some of the conversations the media have had with some of our members are curated in this article.

Many members are expressing caution as the details of this Bill have not been publicized. Some members have expressed optimism at the announcement citing the prospects of job creation by attracting major companies to smaller communities.

"We are pleased the province is giving municipalities the ability to be creative in attracting new investments, and that they recognize there is a role for municipalities to play in creating a favourable environment for business and industry. Such incentives are tools that can lay the foundation to create jobs and contribute to the long-term growth and prosperity of communities across Alberta," said Mayor Rod Frank, Strathcona County in an interview with *Lacombe Online*.

"I'd be very interested to see if we can actually use these regulations to accomplish what we're trying to do, which is to give small businesses looking at huge tax increases a break," Mayor Naheed Nenshi, City of Calgary told *St. Albert Today*.

Mayor Don Iveson, City of Edmonton, in talking with the *Calgary Herald* and Councillor Ken MacKay, St. Albert, in talking with *St. Albert Today* said that they have questions and are intrigued to see how the property tax deferral could play out across the province. "I'm just concerned that maybe we want to make sure that we don't create (a situation) where we have perhaps one community going after and being able to offer incentives that other (municipalities) just aren't able to do," MacKay said.

Iveson in an interview with *Global News* notes that there may be inequality in the tax collection if not properly implemented. "At the regional scale, I do have a concern about equity," He said. "If some municipalities around us have more fiscal capacity to offer more aggressive incentives, they can attract more business to have more fiscal capacity. And others don't have that capacity to compete. Then an existing inequity could be made even worse."

"That can be a very dangerous game, a real dangerous game of corporate welfare," Nenshi told *The Star Edmonton*.

AUMA continues to monitor the progress of the Bill and is exploring what it will mean for members.