

September 22, 2025

To: The Honorable Wab Kinew
Premier of Manitoba
Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8
To follow Cc:
All Members of the Executive Council (Cabinet Ministers)

Re: Submission of the Manitoba Municipal Recall Act – Legislative Proposal.

Dear Premier Kinew and Honorable Members of Cabinet,

I respectfully submit, for your consideration, a legislative proposal titled the Manitoba Municipal Recall Bill/Act. This initiative stems from a growing recognition across the province — particularly in municipalities like the RM of Springfield — that the existing mechanisms under The Municipal Act are insufficient to resolve breakdowns in public trust, elected official conduct, and democratic engagement at the local level.

This Bill seeks to strengthen — not replace — the foundations of municipal autonomy and respectful governance. Its core intent is to equip residents themselves, not provincial administrators, with a clear and reasonable tool to address egregious misconduct, neglect of duty, or breaches of public trust by municipal officials.

In many rural municipalities, candidates are often acclaimed or appointed due to a lack of public engagement or confidence in the system. The Recall Act not only serves as an accountability mechanism, but also as a catalyst for improved civic participation. It can help restore confidence among prospective candidates — especially those previously hesitant — by ensuring that council members are elected on merit and accountable to their communities throughout their term.

A Provincial Precedent with Local Application

British Columbia and Alberta have successfully enacted municipal recall legislation. Their experience shows that when properly structured, recall mechanisms do not cause instability — they reinforce democratic legitimacy. They are rarely triggered, but their existence deters abuse and encourages officials to serve with transparency and respect. In Alberta, legislation passed within months of a provincial election — an impressive example of responsive democracy.

The quiet momentum across jurisdictions signals an emerging national consensus: reforms rooted in trust and guided by responsible leadership are timely and necessary.

A Flexible Path to Reform

This Bill is intentionally structured to allow for discretion in implementation:

- As a stand-alone statute, or
- As an amendment to The Manitoba Municipal Act or its regulations

This preserves compatibility with Manitoba's unique municipal structure and longstanding tradition of provincial non-interference. Offloading Procedural Burden from the Manitoba Municipal Board

The proposal also addresses a critical administrative issue: the growing reliance on the Manitoba Municipal Board (MMB) to resolve dysfunction that is fundamentally political or procedural. While the MMB plays an important adjudicative role, it has increasingly become the default channel for bypassing local accountability. This has delayed resolutions, strained provincial resources, and fueled public disillusionment.

The Municipal Recall Act offers an elegant redirection — enabling citizen-driven correction and greater transparency within councils themselves, thereby reducing unnecessary provincial interventions.

A Measured and Respectful Proposal

This is not a call for populist disruption. It is a respectful request to align with best practices, empower local electors, and safeguard democratic trust.

The Manitoba Municipal Recall Act offers a locally driven, non-partisan, fiscally neutral tool — rooted in constitutional balance — to allow citizens, not bureaucracies, to correct dysfunction where it affects them most directly: their municipality.

Should you, Mr. Premier, wish further dialogue, I remain humbly open. Otherwise, I trust that Cabinet — particularly the Ministry of Municipal Relations — will consider this with the deliberation and leadership that Manitoba is known for.

Respectfully submitted,
Edwin Giesbrecht
Advocate – Municipal Accountability
RM of Springfield.