

December 8, 2025

Policy Coordination & Engagement Team
Public Health Standards and Regulations Branch
Primary and Preventative Health Services
Government of Alberta

Dear Director, Policy Coordination and Engagement,

The Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) represents nearly 700 hotels across every constituency in our province — more than 80% of Alberta's guest rooms. While many carry international brands, the vast majority are small to medium-sized businesses owned and operated by Albertans.

Food safety is a critical element of the guest experience, whether in a restaurant, lounge, or banquet facility. The AHLA supports the Government of Alberta's commitment to protecting the public and maintaining high standards. However, **we recommend that the government focus on strengthening inspection capacity and consistency rather than creating additional red tape that is onerous, administratively burdensome, and potentially damaging to the hospitality sector.**

Commercial food establishments in Alberta already comply with legislated food safety standards, including mandatory training, often supplemented by HACCP protocols and brand requirements. Adding a grading or recognition system will create unnecessary complexity, impose onerous compliance costs, and duplicate existing safeguards.

Not all food service providers face the same risks. Congregate settings such as childcare centres and long-term care facilities require different oversight than restaurants and banquet halls. A uniform grading system risks penalizing businesses for minor issues unrelated to public health.

Staffing levels in hotel and restaurant kitchens are already under significant strain, with operators struggling to recruit and retain qualified culinary staff. Introducing initiatives such as a Food Safety Culture Excellence Recognition Program would divert cooks, servers, and managers from their core responsibilities of preparing meals and ensuring safe and sanitary conditions.

Rather than imposing additional administrative burdens on businesses already stretched thin, resources should be directed toward strengthening Environmental Public Health inspections. Expanding the number of environmental health officers and ensuring consistent, rigorous inspection protocols across the province would enhance food safety in a practical, enforceable way, while avoiding unnecessary strain on frontline staff and management.

The AHLA recommends the Government of Alberta:

- **Maintain existing legislated food safety requirements.**
- **Ensure sufficient capacity for the current environmental public health inspection system, rather than creating more hoops to jump through.**
- **Focus on consistency amongst inspectors and timely, rigorous follow-up on operators with deficiencies or violations.**

AHLA members remain committed to the highest standards of food safety and look forward to working collaboratively with the government to achieve this shared goal.

Yours truly,



Tracy Douglas-Blowers
President & CEO

cc: Honourable Andrew Boitchenko, Minister of Tourism and Sport
Honourable Dale Nally, Minister of Service Alberta & Red Tape Reduction
Darren Reeder, Tourism Industry Association of Alberta
Mark von Schellwitz, Restaurants Canada