

**Statement from Justice and Solicitor General:**

**In the spring of 2014, the Alberta Funeral Service Association attempted to negotiate with the former Chief Medical Examiner to address concerns they had with a new contract; however, this did not occur and in April 2014, Alberta Funeral Service Association voted to reject the contract.**

**Given the nature and extent of the concerns raised, the department decided to re-examine the contract to ensure Albertans and grieving families have access to fair, professional and quality transportation services of their deceased loved ones.**

**The department agreed with industry that valid concerns were raised and not previously heard. A number of the provisions in the initial contract did not reflect the reality of work conditions faced by body transport providers and instituted requirements that would hinder the services provided.**

**The department believes that the current contract ensures proper quality control of body transportation services in the province and fair treatment of vendors, including those outside major urban centres.**

**The new contract was developed based on principles of reasonable pay for the services demanded. Overall costs will continue to be monitored, but cost savings initiatives must be balanced with recognizing potential service impacts.**

**The Office of the Auditor General is reviewing this matter to ensure proper processes were adhered to in the development of the contract. The Public Interest Commissioner is also investigating the appropriate management of funds as it relates to the body transportation contract. We look forward to the conclusion of these investigations.**