

IMPAIRED: Industry cool to breathalyzers in bars

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Speaking to Calgary reporters as part of the Tory cabinet tour, Redford said the bill would be proclaimed and put into effect following consultations with the hospitality industry "with respect to whether or not they wanted to have technology in their facilities that might assist clients."

"That seems to be something that they feel would be helpful. And if they want some time to do that, then I'm certainly prepared to give them that," said Redford, when asked if that meant machines in bars to measure blood-alcohol content.

It's uncertain if the process will be complete before a provincial vote is held, as that "will depend on the extent of the consultation the minister has with industry and when I call the election," she added.

Later Tuesday at another cabinet tour event, Redford said technology was "one of the things" the government is consulting restaurant and bar owners about.

However, Mark von Schellwitz, vice-president of the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association, said breathalyzers being in bars was not being pushed by the hospitality industry.

While the idea has been raised by some establishments, the issues of potential liability are huge, he said.

"We've seen a lot of gimmicks come and go over the years," added Mike Joseph, president of Ceili's Irish Pub and Restaurant.

"Any of those sort of gimmicky breathalyzer items that are not really sanctioned or professionally monitored, I don't think they hold a lot of weight. It's nothing I would ever recommend anyone to use."

Donna Babchishin, a spokeswoman for the transportation ministry, said the government has not been approached directly by any restaurant or bar about locating machines within their establishment.

She said there are no firm timetables for enforcing the law, but little has changed since the bill was passed last fall.

Training of police officers in relation to the new law must be completed and the tracking system has to be created, said Babchishin.

Consultations with the industry will be primarily focused on putting together the public education campaign that has yet to be developed.

Wildrose MLA Rob Anderson said the government simply wants

to push the legislation timetable back because it is deeply unpopular.

"They realize it's a very poor law and they realize the vast majority of Albertans don't like it. So they're going to delay it past the election," he said.

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New drunk driving law to be phased in: premier

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A provincial drunk driving law that cracks down on drivers with a blood-alcohol level below .08 may not be in force before the upcoming election, Premier Alison Redford said Tuesday.

Bill 26, which allows for administrative penalties to be imposed on drivers who blow between .05 and .08, was one of the key bills in Red-

ford's first legislative sitting as premier last fall.

But the law provoked major opposition over civil liberties concerns and the potential impact on the hospitality industry.

While it was eventually passed, the government said the law would be phased in after the province develops a tracking system for repeat offenders and launches a public education campaign.

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