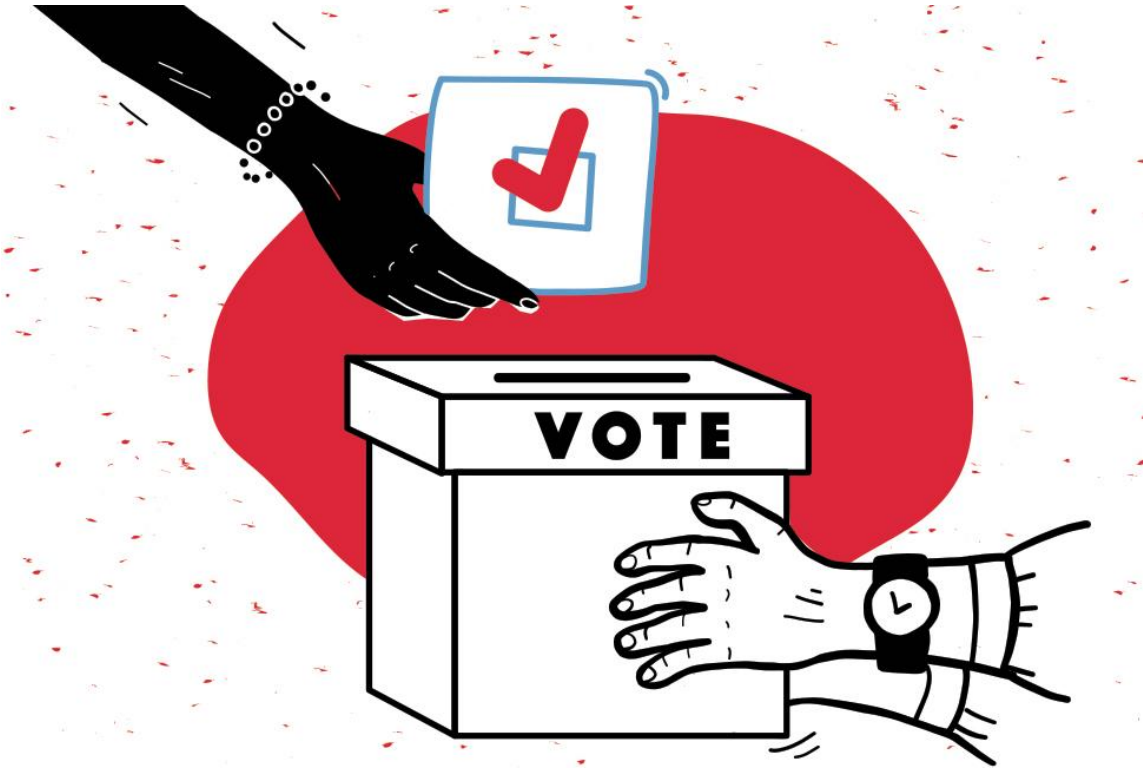
2022-2023 Research Package
Regionals/Provincials Topic: THW require approval from local referenda for all major land development decisions

(eg. stadiums, airport extensions, railways, etc)



Background:
As our global population grows, so do economic activities and development, particularly in urban areas. With this expansion comes a number of land development decisions that have an impact on the communities around them, including stadiums, airports, railways, etc. Although land-use regulations vary considerably between countries, they are usually subject to local (state/provincial) bylaws, with only some regions allowing direct voting on the local level. In this debate, side Government will be making the argument that all major land development decisions should be subject to such referenda.

Questions to think about:
The following questions are meant to help you approach the topic and to guide your research. Keep in mind how your answers might differ on proposition vs opposition.

Who is impacted by major land development decisions?
Major land development decisions can impact a wide range of people, including local residents, business owners, and community organizations. These decisions can affect the availability and affordability of housing, the viability of local businesses, and the overall quality of life in a community. Additionally, land development decisions can impact the natural environment and wildlife, as well as the cultural and historical significance of an area. Examining these actors may influence who should have a say in decision making.

How much knowledge or expertise is required to make an educated vote?
Making an educated decision about land development projects may require a certain level of knowledge about a wide range of issues. These can include planning and zoning laws, environmental regulations, economic development, and the social and cultural impacts of development. In addition, it can be helpful to have an understanding of the local community and its needs, as well as the potential effects of a development on the surrounding area. Each of these areas may have different actors who are best suited to understand the impact of these developments.

How practical and effective is this motion?
There are a number of issues that may arise on both sides of this debate, depending in part on how the proposition chooses to model the motion. The efficiency, cost, fairness, and turnout of voting all have an impact on how useful public referenda can be. Additionally, whether said referenda are binding (used to make a final decision on policy) or non-binding (used only to assess public opinion) affects not only the direction

of the debate but also the degree of burden that proposition is taking on, and by extension the fairness of the debate.

How do the principles of direct vs representative democracy influence this debate?

In a representative democracy, citizens elect representatives to vote on policies while in a direct democracy, citizens vote directly on the policies themselves. In reality, many countries use both, but lean heavily towards representative voting. Examining the pros and cons of each system will help shape the underlying principles of this debate.

Links:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/10/30/referendum-new-airport-was-test-mexicos-incoming-president-it-ended-badly/

https://hir.harvard.edu/not-in-my-haus-berlins-referendum-on-rent-reform-and-the-future-of-urban-housing-policy/