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Alberta Scan

Issue 1092

week ending 1 March 2019

Path to balance...

This week, finance minister **Joe Ceci** released a relatively rosy budget update for the first nine months of the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

He said the third quarter estimate of the annual deficit will be \$6.9 billion, \$1.9 billion below the Budget 2018 forecast.

“Despite ongoing market access challenges, the government has made progress on balancing the budget by the 2023-24 fiscal year,” **Ceci** said.

Other details in the report:

► total revenue of \$49.6 billion is forecast, up \$1.8 billion from budget, due primarily to higher resource revenue, personal income tax revenue and federal transfers, partially offset by lower investment income and corporate income tax revenue.

► total expense of \$56.6 billion is forecast, up \$398 million from Budget 2018, with \$271 million of this due to provision of disaster assistance for wildfires, floods and the agriculture sector.

► operating expense increases of a net \$96 million include funding for case loads, costs per case and indexation of social programs for children, seniors, low income and disabled Albertans, as well as for the Lubicon Lake First Nation settlement, pipeline advocacy, Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention recommendations, Legal Aid, rural crime initiatives and municipal support for cannabis legalization.

► other expense is decreasing by a net \$93 million, primarily due to reduced debt servicing costs and capital grants.

On the same day the Conference Board of Canada issued a less rosy report on Alberta’s economic prospects.

“Economic growth in Alberta will slow to 1.3 per cent this year largely due to the cuts in oil production and the declines in energy investment,” the Board said in its report, *Provincial Outlook: Winter 2019*. “Despite the uncertainty in the energy sector, employment in the province is forecast to increase by 1.1 per cent this year.”

The Alberta quarterly report also included an unusual section on the government’s “Path to Balance,” providing detailed arguments justifying why the province decided to run annual deficits rather than cut programs. **Ceci** said the province is focused on balancing the budget by 2023-2024.

The opposition United Conservative Party (UCP) criticized the deficit and the accumulating debt.

“The NDP’s supposed plan still puts Albertans on track to nearly \$100 billion in debt by 2023,” UCP finance critic **Drew Barnes** said. “The average Alberta family’s share of that is more than \$89,000. Today alone, Albertans will pay \$5 million in interest payments on the NDP’s debt.”

Information on the Conference Board report is [here](#). The Alberta government’s third quarter budget report is [here](#). The UCP response is [here](#). □

Government Scan...

The following announcements were made this week by the provincial government. The title of the announcement, as written by the government, is in bold. Cabinet

decisions, called Orders in Council, are marked with the abbreviation "OC" and the number of the decision. Copies of the full text of the OCs mentioned below are available online [here](#).

Transportation

25 February 2019

Expanding Ray Gibbon Drive in St. Albert

Transportation minister **Brian Mason** announced the provincial government will widen Ray Gibbon Drive between Anthony Henday Drive and Villeneuve Road.

A new cost-sharing agreement between the province and the City of St. Albert means design work for widening all eight kilometres of Ray Gibbon Drive can begin in 2019, with construction anticipated to start in 2020.

Details are [here](#). □

Children's Services

27 February 2019

Alberta Child Poverty Rates Cut in Half

Children's services minister **Danielle Larivee** announced Alberta has the lowest child poverty rates in Canada according to new Statistics Canada figures.

Details are [here](#).

Finance

27 February 2019

Financial Administration Act (sections 56 and 58).

Cabinet amended Order in Council numbered OC 4/2014 to increase the borrowing limit of the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission from \$800 million to \$1 billion. OC 65/2019.

Municipal Affairs

27 February 2019

Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act (section 7).

Cabinet amended Order in Council numbered OC 283/2018 to expand the geographical boundaries of the October 1, 2018 disaster declaration. OC 63/2019.

Service Alberta

27 February 2019

Foreign Ownership of Land Regulations (section 14).

Cabinet ordered that the transaction under which G3 Canada Limited or any affiliate of G3 Canada Limited acquires the fee simple interest in certain lands for the purposes of construct-

ing and operating a grain elevator facility and related infrastructure is excluded from the operation of the Foreign Ownership of Land Regulations, except for sections 22 and 25. OC 72/2019.

Regulations Scan...

The provincial cabinet passed the following regulations this week. Copies of the cabinet decisions

(called Orders in Council or "OCs") are available online [here](#).

Energy

27 February 2019

Oil and Gas Conservation Act (section 10); Oil Sands Conservation Act (section 20); Responsible Energy Development Act (section 68).

Cabinet passed the Curtailment Rules Amendment Regulation. OC 75/2019.

In response to available data, Alberta is increasing production in April by 25,000 barrels to a total of about 3.66 million barrels a day, an overall increase of 100,000 barrel per day from the January limit.

Factors related to the increase in the limit are:

- ▶ storage levels have shown some volatility but have trended downward from January.
- ▶ the difference in price between Alberta heavy oil (WCS) and the U.S. mid-continent price (WTI), which can be an indicator of capacity shortfall, remains narrow.
- ▶ warmer weather in spring can increase transportation capacity with potentially less diluent needed in pipelines.

Details are [here](#). □

Appointments Scan...

The provincial government made the following appointments this week. Cabinet appointments are

followed by the Order in Council (OC) number of the decision. The full OCs are available online [here](#).

Finance

27 February 2019

ATB Financial Act (section 3).

Effective June 16, 2019, cabinet reappointed **Manjit Minhas**, **Robert**

Pearce and **Diane Pettie** as members of the board of directors of ATB Financial, each for a term to expire on June 15, 2022.

Cabinet appointed **Diane Brickner**

...continued on page four

Recent Consultant Lobbyist Registrations

The following lobbyists recently registered to represent the clients below with Alberta's lobby registry.

Consultant Lobbyists (in order of registration)

Registered	Client	Lobby Firm	Lobbyists	Target Departments/Organizations
28-Feb-2019	AltaLink Management Ltd.	Global Public Affairs	Randy Pettipas, Elan MacDonald, Jason Ennis	Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Energy, Alberta Indigenous Relations, Alberta Climate Change Office, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO)
<p>Program or Policy: First Nation Consultation Policy. Supporting AltaLink's participation in the renewal process for Alberta's Indigenous consultation policies and guidelines.</p> <p>Financial Benefit or Grant: Funding Applications: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program: Rural and Northern Communities funding stream as well as the Emission Reduction Alberta BEST Challenge. Supporting AltaLink's application related to two renewable energy/storage/transmission system proposals (LL-BESS and WC-BESS) with Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Energy. The amount they are seeking is C\$10M and \$C6.5M respectively as per the individual funding parameters.</p> <p>Guideline or Directive: AESO rules, AESO tariff structure, Capacity Market Design, and electricity transmission system planning and project requirements. Supporting AltaLink as a Transmission Facility Owner who actively participates in all of the department of energy and AESO's initiatives and engage with the department and AESO on a continuing basis as it relates to designing and constructing transmission and storage projects that will address Alberta's integrated system in the most cost effective way possible.</p> <p>Legislative Proposal, Bill or Resolution: Alberta Climate Leadership Plan (ACLPL). Support AltaLink's input and discussions related to government's continuing execution of the ACLP and the development of market and industry policies, particularly the disposition of utility assets and the integration of renewables into Alberta's robust transmission grid in the most affordable, cost efficient way possible.</p> <p>Guideline or Directive: Water Act Approvals and Reclamation Certification. Supporting AltaLink's engagement as part of a working group engaged with the department to find ways to streamline the <i>Water Act</i> approval process for electric utilities and improving processes and guidelines for Reclamation Certification requirements for transmission facilities.</p> <p>Legislative Proposal, Bill or Resolution: Proposal for the government to enact legislation to deal with metal theft security issues surrounding electricity and other critical infrastructure. Supporting AltaLink's participation in the Provincial Electricity Physical Security group (PEPS) that is working with the Justice and Solicitor General department with the goal of developing legislation to address this growing security issue. PEPS is proposing legislation similar to Bill 201, <i>Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act</i>, which was passed in 2012 but never proclaimed.</p>				
27-Feb-2019	Acciona Energy North America	Prairie Sky Enterprises Ltd. (Prairie Sky Consulting)	Jeff Sterzuk, Jeff Sterzuk, Marnie Dawson	Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Energy, Executive Council, Alberta Indigenous Relations, Alberta Climate Change Office, Premier's Office, Alberta Utilities Commission, Alberta Electric System Operator
<p>Program or Policy: Renewable Electricity Program and Policy. To engage with government on matters pertaining to the development of renewable energy in Alberta, including the design of future rounds of AESO's Renewable Electricity Program, and/or other policies as they pertain to renewable energy development and procurements in Alberta.</p>				
22-Feb-2019	Rahr Malting Canada Ltd.	T. Bjornson & Associates Consulting Inc.	Tyler McCann, Tyler Bjornson	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Executive Council, Alberta Climate Change Office, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Premier's Office
<p>Existing Legislation: Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation. Allow for emitters below 50,000 tonnes CO₂e to voluntarily participate in the Output Based Pricing System.</p>				
22-Feb-2019	Canada Malting Company Ltd.	T. Bjornson & Associates Consulting Inc.	Tyler McCann, Tyler Bjornson	Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Executive Council, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Climate Change Office, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Premier's Office
<p>Financial Benefit or Grant: Value Added Processing Grant. Secure matching government funding for investments in these areas.</p> <p>Financial Benefit or Grant: Low Carbon Economy and Energy Efficiency Grants. Secure matching government funding for investments in these areas.</p> <p>Existing Legislation: Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation. Allow for emitters below 50,000 tonnes CO₂e to voluntarily participate in the Output Based Pricing System.</p>				
21-Feb-2019	Kambo Energy Group	Global Public Affairs	Randy Pettipas, Yonathan Sumamo, Brian Senio	Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Premier's Office
<p>Financial Benefit or Grant: Energy Efficiency Alberta grant. Increase awareness of the <i>Empower Me</i> program that supports vulnerable Albertans to manage energy poverty and energy efficiency. Seek support for extended programming funding from Energy Efficiency Alberta.</p>				

Alberta Scan

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Photocopying

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Research

Thanks to staff at the Legislature Library for their ongoing help with researching items in this newsletter.

Political Monitor

Word of Mouth Communications provides *Alberta Political Monitor*, a service about ongoing policy developments. Call or email for further information.

Seminars on Alberta Politics

Word of Mouth Communications offers presentations of varying lengths about how the Alberta government decides and how the Cabinet Policy Committee process works. Call or email for further information.

Feedback

If you have suggestions to improve *Alberta Scan*, please contact:

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...appointments

as a member of the board of directors of ATB Financial for a term to expire on June 15, 2022. OC 64/2019.

27 February 2019

Securities Act (sections 11 and 13).

Cabinet reappointed **Maryse Saint-Laurent** as a member of the Alberta Securities Commission for a term to expire on March 31, 2022.

Effective April 1, 2019, cabinet appointed **Matthew Bootle** and **Gail Harding** as members of the Alberta Securities Commission, each for a term to expire on March 31, 2022.

Effective April 1, 2019, cabinet designated **Kathryn Chisholm** as the lead independent member of the Alberta Securities Commission for a term to expire on March 31, 2020. OC 66/2019.

Justice and Solicitor General

27 February 2019

Criminal Code (Canada) (sections 672.38 and 672.4).

Effective June 1, 2019, cabinet appointed **Jill Taylor** as a member and cabinet designated her as chairperson of the Alberta Review Board for a term to expire on May 31, 2022. OC 67/2019.

27 February 2019

Fatality Inquiries Act (section 2).

Effective March 14, 2019, cabinet appointed **Joshua Bergman** as a member of the Fatality Review Board for a term to expire on March 13, 2022. OC 68/2019.

27 February 2019

Victims of Crime Act (section 7).

Cabinet appointed **Linda Klein** as a member of the Criminal Injuries Review Board for a further term to expire on February 26, 2022.

Cabinet appointed **Dr. Randy Naiker** as a member of the Criminal Injuries Review Board for a term to expire on February 26, 2022.

Effective June 5, 2019, cabinet reappointed **Deborah Gust** as a member of the Criminal Injuries Review Board for a term to expire on June 4, 2022.

Cabinet appointed **Lisa Heighington** as a member of the Criminal Injuries Review Board for a term to expire on June 4, 2022. OC 69/2019.

Labour

27 February 2019

Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (section 14); Labour Relations Code (section 8). OC 70/2019.

Cabinet reappointed several persons for various terms as members of the Labour Relations Board.

Cabinet appointed **Geoffrey Eustergerling**, **Raelene Fitz**, **Corinne Galway** and **Darren Leclair** as members of the Labour Relations Board, each for a term to expire on February 26, 2022.

27 February 2019

Workers' Compensation Act (section 5).

Cabinet appointed **Mike Boyle** as a member of the board of directors of The Workers' Compensation Board for a term to expire on February 26, 2022. OC 71/2019.

Transportation

27 February 2019

Traffic Safety Act (section 22).

Cabinet appointed **Gordon Bogstie** and **Patricia Gregory** as members of the Alberta Transportation Safety Board, each for a term to expire on February 26, 2022. OC 73/2019.

27 February 2019

Traffic Safety Act (sections 22 and 23).

Effective April 9, 2019, Cabinet appointed **Lynn Varty** as a member and cabinet designated her as chair of the Alberta Transportation Safety Board for a term to expire on April 8, 2022. OC 74/2019. □