



AB Today – Daily Report October 23, 2019

Publisher’s note: Today marks one year since the launch of AB Today. Thanks to all our subscribers for your continued readership.

Quotation of the day

“That was a very diverse spectrum of Albertans who sent a message last night. Many of them are saying they don’t feel at home in their own country.”

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said his province spoke with “one loud voice of defiance” in Monday’s federal election. Alberta elected not one Liberal MP.

Today in AB

On the schedule

The house will reconvene at 9 a.m on Wednesday.

Two bills are on the schedule for debate:

- **Bill 17**, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare’s Law) Act, at third reading.
- **Bill 18**, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, at second reading.

T-minus one day until budget day — the UCP’s first budget drops Thursday afternoon.

Tuesday's debates and proceedings

Bill 16, Public Lands Modernization (Grazing Leases and Obsolete Provisions) Amendment Act, passed third reading.

MLAs also debated **Bill 18**, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, at second reading. The bill cancels the NDP-era plan to move to a capacity electricity market.

Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act, passed the committee of the whole stage.

In the legislature

Advocates calling for an end to seclusion rooms in schools protested on the legislature grounds.

Premier Watch

Premier **Jason Kenney** spoke to Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** on the phone Wednesday to congratulate him on winning re-election with a minority government.

Later in the day, he posted a [message in remembrance](#) of Warrant Officer **Patrice Vincent** and Corporal **Nathan Cirillo**, who were killed five years ago by a lone gunman who committed a terrorist attack on Canada's federal parliament in 2014. Kenney was a member of parliament at the time.

Premier Jason Kenney doubles down on fight against re-elected Trudeau

Alberta Premier **Jason Kenney** said his government will form a panel to fight for the province's interests under Ottawa's new minority government.

The panel's work will include holding public hearings, and Kenney said its members will be "considering all options" though didn't elaborate further.

After phoning re-elected Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** to congratulate him on Monday's federal election result, Kenney followed up with a five-page letter setting out Alberta's expectations for fair treatment within Confederation.

In the letter, which Kenney announced in the legislative chamber, the premier said he will hold a referendum to strike Section 36 of the constitution, which could eliminate equalization payments, if the federal government doesn't comply with the province's requests.

Kenney's letter echoed Saskatchewan Premier **Scott Moe**, who asked for three things from the Liberal government — a cancellation of the federal carbon tax, a commitment to negotiate a

new equalization formula that is fair to Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the construction of pipelines. Saskatchewan also elected no Liberal MPs.

Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** told reporters ahead of question period she is confident the Trans Mountain pipeline project will still go ahead, noting that Liberal and Conservative MPs are in favour of the project.

In a speech on Tuesday, federal Conservative Party of Canada Leader **Andrew Scheer** said he told Trudeau to take notice of the loss of Liberal seats, adding that when the energy sector succeeds, Canada succeeds.

Conservatives received 69.2 per cent of the vote in Alberta but took home 97 per cent of the seats. The NDP, with 11.5 per cent of the vote, held onto Edmonton—Strathcona. The Liberals were shut out of seats but got 13.7 per cent of the popular vote.

Kenney, whose name has been floated as a potential future federal Conservative leader, backed Scheer and congratulated him for winning the popular vote and increasing the CPC's seat count.

"Canadians woke up this morning to a more divided country," Scheer said. "The separatist Bloc Quebecois is on the rise, and Alberta and Saskatchewan have completely rejected Trudeau's policies."

When asked about western separatism, Scheer said he will make sure his Opposition MPs are there for Albertans.

Separatist sentiment

Following the election, separatist sentiment flared up.

"Wexit" trended on Twitter, and its campaigners pledged to put up billboards.

The Freedom Conservative Party chimed in, calling for an "equality or independence" referendum.

Re-elected Calgary CPC MP **Michelle Rempel** said in a Facebook video that "western alienation is a real thing."

Former Conservative and Reform Party MP **Jay Hill** — who represented the British Columbia riding of Prince George—Peace River for 17 years — [told CBC](#) Monday's results have turned him into a "reluctant separatist" and floated the idea of a western secession that includes northern B.C.

Kenney, meanwhile, repeated that he is a federalist and that he won't be bullied by Trudeau. He said he has support from other provincial leaders and that separating would only further landlock Alberta. The premier also mentioned he has heard from people who told him they want Alberta to separate.

Business reaction

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers president and CEO **Tim McMillan** congratulated Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and said his organization is committed to working with the federal government.

"We all agree on the importance of making life affordable for Canadians, enabling results on climate change, and creating prosperity for all," McMillan said. "A strong oil and natural gas industry can contribute to the government's mandate and benefit all Canadians by providing affordable energy, prosperity, and creating opportunities for Indigenous communities."

The Calgary and Edmonton Chambers of Commerce encouraged parties to work together to tackle the big issues facing the country.

"A minority government is an opportunity for all our elected leaders to reach across the aisle and demonstrate just how powerful the 'AND' conversation can be. Let's give Canada more Canada," Calgary Chamber of Commerce president and CEO **Sandip Lalli** said in a news release.

Today's events

October 23 at 9 a.m. — Edmonton

The UCP's Resources and Sustainable Development committee will meet in the cabinet room of the legislature.

October 23 at 12:15 p.m. — Edmonton

Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** and Associate Minister of Natural Gas **Dale Nally** will make an announcement on energy diversification in the media room of the legislature.

October 23 at 3 p.m. — Edmonton

Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** will announce new provincial guidelines on the use of seclusion, physical restraint and time-outs in schools at the Centre for Education.

October 23 at 3 p.m. — Edmonton

The UCP's Jobs and Economy committee will meet in the cabinet room of the legislature.

October 23 at 7 p.m. — Two Hills

Justice Minister **Doug Schweitzer** will make a stop at Two Hills Recreation Centre as part of his rural crime tour.

Topics of conversation

- Alberta voters increased the number of female MPs representing them in the House of Commons by one on Tuesday — there are now six female MPs heading to Ottawa, up from the five elected in 2015. However, the number of ridings in Alberta grew from 32 to 34 since the last election.
 - Nationally, the number of female MPs rose to about 29 per cent — from 88 to 98 — up from 26 per cent in 2016, according to Equal Voice.
 - Female representation in Alberta tracks with representation in the CPC caucus — about 18 per cent.
- Municipal Affairs Minister **Kaycee Madu** penned an op-ed in the *Edmonton Journal* on Tuesday, [hinting](#) at cuts to come for Calgary and Edmonton and accusing the big cities of “excessive spending.”
 - “This massive and unsustainable growth in city spending has led to a never-ending reliance on property-tax increases for Edmontonians and Calgarians — tax increases that often far exceed inflation and create undue burden for residents,” Madu wrote.
 - When asked by reporters for examples of where the big cities had spent “recklessly,” Madu refused to give specifics.
- Calgary-based Husky Energy [announced](#) an unspecified number of layoffs ahead of third-quarter results expected to be released on Thursday.
- Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** [congratulated](#) his Red Deer—Mountain View MP **Earl Dreeshen** — who happens to be his father — on a commanding 80 per cent win at the ballot box Tuesday.
 - “Alberta is angry,” Dreeshen tweeted. “My MP got way more votes than all four Liberal MPs in PEI put together. The federal government needs to start listening.”
- Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** [says](#) the recent \$260-million settlement with opioid manufacturers in the United States will have no impact on the class action lawsuit Alberta joined last week.

New briefs — Governmental

Ministry of Health

The province has shut down the Addictions Recovery Network drug treatment facility in Clearwater County, citing complaints received by Alberta Health about “poor safety, quality of care and inappropriate financial practices.”

“To any company engaged in harmful practices: know that we will pursue you to the fullest extent of our authority,” said Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions **Jason Luan** in a news release. “We will not allow the process of recovery to be brought into disrepute.”

Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** halted the private facility’s operations via ministerial order and is launching an investigation.

The former NDP government’s *Mental Health Services Protection Act* established [new guidelines and minimum standards](#) for private addictions facilities that are scheduled to come into effect on November 1.

Current patients will be moved to another treatment centre.

Question Period

NDP kickoff

- NDP Energy critic **Irfan Sabir** kicked off question period by asking why the corporate tax cut not only failed to create jobs, but has led to more layoffs — pointing to Calgary-based Husky Energy’s layoffs on Tuesday.
 - “Can the premier please confirm how many people lost their jobs today and explain why your so-called plan failed them?” Sabir asked.
 - Sabir followed up by asking why the corporate tax cut is not tied to job creation.
- Government House Leader **Jason Nixon** said he sympathized with those who lost their jobs, but the UCP government was put in the situation because of the NDP government’s failures.
 - Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** took the second question, saying the job losses represent the need to build a pipeline.

Other NDP questions

- Opposition MLAs also asked whether Premier **Jason Kenney** will stay on in his role or is toying with federal ambitions, when the UCP will show action on climate change, potential cuts to municipal funding, diagnostic imaging wait times, potential hospital closures, reproductive health-care access, support services for seniors, and seclusion rooms in schools.

UCP friendly questions

- UCP backbench MLAs asked about condo consumer protection, the province's tourism strategy, rural housing and high speed internet, what's being done to change the Alberta Energy Regulator, and red tape reduction.