



## AB Today – Daily Report November 18, 2019

### Quotation of the day

“There’s lots of obnoxious to go around.”

*On CTV’s Question Period, former Ontario premier **Kathleen Wynne** [worries](#) about the “inflammatory” language being used to discuss western alienation (and notes she hung out with another ex-premier, **Rachel Notley**, “the other night”).*

### Today in AB

#### On the schedule

The house is scheduled to reconvene at 1:30 p.m. During private members’ business, the house is likely to debate **Bill 204**, Election Recall Act, which was introduced by UCP MLA **Mark Smith**.

The government is poised to introduce three new bills:

- **Bill 22**, Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Government Enterprise Act, a bill required for budget implementation, to be brought forward by Finance Minister **Travis Toews**;
- **Bill 24**, Appropriation Act, a budgetary supply bill, which will also be brought forward by Toews; and
- **Bill 25**, Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, by Associate Minister for Red Tape Reduction **Grant Hunter** — the second red tape reduction bill from the UCP government.

#### Committees this week

The Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills will meet this morning to discuss three private members' bills brought forward by UCP MLAs.

- **Matt Jones' Bill 205**, Human Tissue and Organ Donation (Presumed Consent) Amendment Act;
- **Roger Reid's Bill 206**, Workers' Compensation (Enforcement of Decisions) Amendment Act; and
- **Dan Williams' Bill 207**, Conscience Rights (Health Care Providers) Protection Act.

Williams defended **Bill 207** in the *Calgary Herald* last week. [He argued](#) the bill, which removes the requirement for a health-care provider to refer a patient to another provider if they are unwilling to perform a service, will not restrict access to health care.

"My private member's **Bill 207**, the Conscience Rights Protection Act, merely seeks to affirm constitutional rights — the highest law of the land — in Alberta law," Williams wrote.

Meanwhile, protestors with Friends of Medicare, Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition and Dying with Dignity gathered in front of the legislature on Saturday to protest Williams' bill — which they warn will restricts access to abortion, LGBTQ health care and physician-assisted suicide.

On Friday, Premier **Jason Kenney** [told reporters](#) he hasn't read **Bill 207**, but will in due course. He pointed out his government brought in free votes for matters of conscience, so MLAs cannot be whipped into voting with the government caucus.

(At least two UCP MLAs have said they won't support the bill: Cochrane—Airdrie UCP MLA **Peter Guthrie** [told](#) *Cochrane Now* the legislation would just add to red tape because freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are already constitutionally protected. Justice Minister **Doug Schweitzer** [said](#) he will be voting against it unless material changes are made.)

All-party standing committees will also continue to debate main estimates on Tuesday.

### **In the legislature**

Students from the University of Alberta and MacEwan University [plan](#) to protest post-secondary cuts at the legislature on Monday with a "students not silent" march.

### **Premier watch**

Premier **Jason Kenney** is scheduled to fly to Texas on Monday, where he will meet with business leaders and investors in Houston and Dallas. He will stay until Thursday, when he is scheduled to meet with Canadian Consul General **Rachel McCormick** before flying back to Calgary. The cost of Kenney's trade mission for himself, three political staff and a security detail is \$32,000.

On Friday, the premier delivered a speech to the Rural Municipalities Association convention in Edmonton and Kenney [attended](#) a UCP fundraiser in Calgary—Beddington with Seniors and Housing Minister **Josephine Pon**.

On Saturday, the premier [spoke](#) to members of Foothills Stake Central in Calgary, where he told faith groups that citizens need to be reminded that “freedom of religion and conscience are an inheritance from our forebearers that we must continue to defend.”

At a Saturday evening event hosted by Wexit founder **Peter Downing**, co-organizer and UCP operative **Craig Chandler** [claimed](#) he had dinner with the premier Friday. Chandler said Kenney “made it clear he’s a federalist ... but he says more power to ya, get that message out there.”

**Matt Wolf**, Premier Kenney’s director of issues management, responded to Chandler’s claim: “Don’t believe every story you hear. Jason Kenney is a federalist, fighting for a fair deal for Alberta within Confederation. 100% clear.”

## **Gunning for a return to government, Notley blasts UCP record**

Alberta’s New Democrats must be ready to retake government, leader **Rachel Notley** told party members at the NDP’s bi-annual provincial council in Edmonton Saturday, arguing their United Conservative successors have left a trail of broken promises since taking office.

Notley said she will fight for Albertans for the next three-and-a-half years in opposition, and told the crowd of supporters that the NDP’s values — “good jobs, good schools, strong public services, and a more fair and just society” — belong in office again.

“We can; we did; and we must do it again,” Notley said.

The former premier launched barbs at the current government, saying it would take three “almost Kenney length” speeches to lay out all the promises the UCP has broken since taking office.

“This is the only party cobbled together from two legacy parties that has come out worse than the sum of their parts,” she said.

Notley said the UCP’s inaugural budget was worse than anticipated, accusing the government of “heartless cuts” and slamming its decision to stop indexing personal taxes to inflation. She argued the business tax cut will disproportionately help wealthy corporations, who she said will use the money to invest in places outside Alberta.

Meanwhile, Notley said the government has no problem throwing money at “useless referendums, partisan war rooms and bogus panel consultations.”

“This premier has more panels than a solar farm,” Notley said. “But, ironically, fewer solar farms.”

Notley also took a dig at Ontario Premier **Doug Ford** for not getting a seat on the \$16,000 chartered flight from the premier’s stampede pancake breakfast in Calgary to the Council of the Federation in Saskatchewan.

Several conservative premiers and their spouses and staffers were gifted the plane ride, paid for by Alberta taxpayers, whereas Ford took a commercial flight to the premiers’ meeting.

“Hard to find out through the media that he wasn’t invited on the cool kids’ plane,” Notley said. “Little harsh.”

She also took aim at the \$45,000 in expenses that the premier’s principal secretary, **David Knight-Legg**, has racked up in the last seven months.

“We’ve all heard of champagne socialists — we get called that every now and then — but champagne bar conservatives? That’s an exclusively **Jason Kenney** thing,” Notley said.

## Today’s events

**November 18 at noon — Calgary**

Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Minister **Leela Aheer** will make an announcement with the Calgary Stampeders and youth organizations at McMahon Stadium.

**November 18 at 1:30 p.m. — Edmonton**

Indigenous Relations Minister **Rick Wilson** will speak at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs meeting at the Holiday Inn and Conference Centre.

**November 18 at 6 p.m. — Edmonton**

Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** will speak at the Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations’ MLA reception at the Matrix Hotel.

## Topics of conversation

- Following a meeting with Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, former Green Party leader **Elizabeth May**, who heads up the party’s parliamentary caucus, told reporters “there is no planet Alberta” and [took aim](#) at western separatists, as well as Premier **Jason Kenney**’s environmental record.
  - “The biosphere is going to go into meltdown,” May told reporters on Friday. “Alberta is not exempt. Alberta’s already experienced the Fort McMurray wildfires; Alberta’s already experienced the Calgary floods; Alberta is experiencing the rapid retreat of glaciers.”

- May said transitions from harmful industries have happened before, such as the move away from asbestos mines in Quebec.
- “We have got to really talk to other premiers who don’t grasp this in a way that respects their intelligence — Jason Kenney is plenty intelligent, so he has to be able to understand the science,” May said. “The discussions have to be grounded in, ‘What does this mean if we continue down the path that says fossil fuels have an economic future?’”
- Premier **Jason Kenney** [says](#) his government will do everything it can to mitigate impacts of the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision earlier this year on orphan wells — also known as the Redwater ruling.
  - The decision requires energy companies to clean up abandoned wells before paying back creditors in cases of insolvency or bankruptcy.
  - One of the measures being [floated by the UCP](#) is a royalty holiday on new drilling activity.
- General support services workers at the AgeCare SkyPointe long-term care home in Calgary voted to join the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.
  - More than 2,000 workers have unionized at private seniors facilities in the province in the past year and a half.
- Ethics Commissioner **Marguerite Trussler** will not heed the NDP’s request for an investigation into **Steve Allan**, the commissioner of the public inquiry into the source of funding for environmental activists, for conflict of interest after he recruited the firm where his son is a partner to provide \$905,000 worth of legal advice. NDP critic for Democracy and Ethics **Heather Sweet** [said](#) this is thanks to a loophole in Allan’s contract.
  - Instead, any investigation requests must be forwarded to Deputy Minister of Energy **Grant Sprague**, who signed Allan’s employment agreement. Sweet has written to Sprague asking him to ensure taxpayer funds are being spent in an “ethical and transparent way” and are not enriching private individuals.
  - Sprague was deputy justice minister when former premier **Alison Redford** was questioned over awarding a tobacco litigation case to her ex-husband. She was cleared of wrongdoing.
- Meanwhile, **Bob Wyatt**, executive director of the Muttart Foundation, a private non-environmental charity, [released his organization's 184-page submission](#) to the public inquiry into foreign-funded anti-oilsands activism.
  - The submission includes more than 100 pages of analysis on how much foreign cash Canadian charities received in the 2016 fiscal year (most received none) and calls on people to “tone down the rhetoric” when it comes to attacking charities.

- “People and organizations are entitled to hold different opinions on important issues of the day,” Wyatt wrote.
- The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is [concerned](#) over the government’s decision to approve Fortress Mountain ski hill’s request to truck 50 million litres of water from Kananaskis to sell at its resort.
  - “Permitting the driving of thousands of truckloads of mountain stream water each year out of Kananaskis to Calgary is a very poor water re-allocation decision,” said AWA conservation specialist **Carolyn Campbell**, in a news release. “Fortress ski hill should have the highest water conservation practices possible given its privileged position surrounded by Alberta mountain parks. Trucking and selling mountain water definitely doesn’t meet that standard.”
  - Earlier this year, Fortress Mountain hired conservative insider **Hal Danchilla** of Crestview Strategy to lobby Alberta Environment and Parks regarding its redevelopment plans.
- Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund Board chair **Sandra Johnston** wrote a letter to Finance Minister **Travis Toews** on the UCP’s plan to shift the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund (ATRF) from being co-managed by teachers to being solely managed by AIMco.
  - Johnston said the change should not happen until the auditor general completes an independent review of ATRF’s fiscal data and determines “how AIMCo is better positioned or better able to perform the pension management responsibilities currently performed by ATRF.”
- Trans Mountain [released the details](#) of its agreement with the Upper Nicola Band (UNB) on the Trans Mountain expansion project, which led the band to drop its court case against the project earlier this month. UNB Chief **Harvey McLeod** said their negotiating team “came up with the best deal possible under the circumstances presented.”
  - The agreement will provide emergency response resources and employment opportunities for band members. McLeod said UNB looks “forward to working with Trans Mountain to implement this agreement honourably and in good faith,” but also said the Indigenous consultation process for large resource projects “needs to change.”

## News briefs — Governmental

### Government releases study on the economic impact of carbon pricing

The Ministry of Environment and Parks [released a study](#) showing the economic impacts of various carbon pricing models — which the UCP says makes its case for axing the NDP-era carbon tax.

“The release of this report clearly demonstrates that the previous government’s plan would have further slowed economic growth and taken thousands of dollars away from Alberta families,” Environment and Parks Minister **Jason Nixon** said in a news release.

However, the numbers in the report show only minor differences in how economic growth would play out under different greenhouse gas taxation systems.

- Under the Specified Gas Emitters Regulation, the \$15-per-tonne price on large emitters that was in effect from 2007 to 2015, provincial GDP was projected to grow on average 2.57 per cent per year between 2016 and 2030.
- Under the NDP’s Climate Leadership Plan and its \$30-per-tonne carbon tax, GDP would have grown by 2.52 per cent per year until 2030.
- In a scenario where the NDP-era tax increased to \$50 per tonne in 2022 and stayed that way until 2030, GDP growth would average 2.5 per cent per year.
- Under the federal carbon backstop, set to come into effect on January 1, 2020, GDP growth is predicted to be an average of 2.51 per cent per year from 2016 to 2030.

The UCP’s new TIER plan was not included in the study.

### **Richard Gotfried at economic leadership forum in Seattle**

Calgary—Fish Creek UCP MLA **Richard Gotfried** is at the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region meeting on behalf of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism Minister **Tanya Fir**.

Gotfried’s three-day Seattle mission will include bringing the “open for business” message to U.S. lawmakers, industry, academics and other delegates.

The forum will include representatives from Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Washington state, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. The trip will cost \$2,695.

### **News briefs — Non-governmental**

#### **NDP slams raised targets for traffic fatalities and injuries**

NDP Transportation critic **Rod Loyola** says for the first time in five years Alberta Transportation’s target for traffic injuries and fatalities is higher than the year previous.

Loyola said the higher targets reflect a decrease in highway safety spending, including a \$137-million cut to highway maintenance, a \$27-million cut to the intersection safety upgrade budget and \$300-million cut to Deerfoot Trail upgrades in Calgary.

“It is deeply shocking that Minister [**Ric**] **Mclver** signed off on a plan that accepts dozens of additional fatal or serious collisions just to save a couple bucks,” Loyola said in a news release. “What kind of a person signs that plan?”

The UCP [says](#) the target increased because it is calculated on a three-year average.