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Alberta Scan

Issue 1100

week ending 10 May 2019

Budget blues...

Premier **Jason Kenney** this week announced a panel of experts to examine a number of aspects of Alberta's spending.

He described the panel, which is to report by August 15 so its recommendations can be incorporated into this fall's Budget 2019, as the first step in getting Alberta's budget back to balance.

"The Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances has been directed to do a deep dive into Alberta's finances and economy," **Kenney** said in a statement. "The focus will be on identifying areas to eliminate waste, duplication and non-essential spending to create the space to fund government's key priorities."

The panel members include:

► **Janice MacKinnon**, chair. **MacKinnon** is chair of the board of Investment Saskatchewan, chair of the board of directors of the Institute for Research on Public Policy and a former finance minister with the government of Saskatchewan.

MacKinnon said her panel will focus on government spending.

► **Mike Percy**, vice-chair. **Percy** was previously an Alberta MLA and former Stanley A. Milner professor and dean of the Alberta School of Business at the University of Alberta. **Percy** was also the chief of staff to premier **Jim Prentice**.

► **Kim Henderson**, member. **Henderson** is a principal at Sproat Advising. Her previous roles include deputy minister to the premier, cabinet secretary and head of the public service, province of British Columbia and deputy minister of finance with the province of British Columbia.

► **Bev Dahlby**, member. **Dahlby** is a Distinguished Fellow and research director, School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary.

► **Dave Mowat**, member. **Mowat** is the former president and CEO, ATB Financial.

► **Jay Ramotar**, member. **Ramotar** has held many deputy minister posts with the Alberta Public Service, including Service Alberta, Solicitor General and Public Security, Health and Wellness, Infrastructure and Transportation and Treasury Board.

The panel will provide advice in a number of areas, including on:

► government's fiscal outlook and department and agency expenditure trends and cost drivers.

► a plan to balance the budget by 2022-23 without raising taxes, and a new fiscal framework that includes requirements for future balanced budgets and a plan to retire the province's accumulated debt.

► government's budgeting, fiscal planning and public reporting processes and systems for operating and capital.

► the business investment climate in Canada and its impact on the Alberta economy.

Details, including video of the panel's press conference with the premier and finance minister **Travis Toews**, 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](#).

- ▶ no negotiations.
- ▶ product negotiations being considered by each province/territory.

The alliance includes public drug plan and/or cancer agency participation from: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland & Labrador, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC).

Details are [here](#).

Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

9 May 2019
Sexual Violence Awareness Month
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Canada’s Premiers

8 May 2019

The pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance

Canada’s premiers issued an update on the progress of joint provincial/territorial/federal negotiations for brand name and generic drugs in Canada at April 30, 2019.

The intent of the alliance is to achieve greater value for publicly funded drug programs and patients through the use of the combined negotiating power of participating jurisdictions.

- ▶ increase access to clinically effective and cost-effective drug treatment options.
- ▶ achieve consistent and lower drug costs for participating jurisdictions.
- ▶ reduce duplication of effort and improve use of resources.
- ▶ improve consistency of decisions among participating jurisdictions.

In its update, the Alliance included the status of negotiations as of April 30 on:

- ▶ active drug product negotiations.
- ▶ complete and closed drug product negotiations.

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/Organization	Lobby Firm	Lobbyists	Target Departments/Organizations
04-May-2019	Alberta to Alaska Railway Development Corporation (A2A Rail)	New West Public Affairs	Monte Solberg, Michael Solberg, Matt Solberg, Sonia Kont	Alberta Energy, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Alberta Transportation, Premier’s Office
Decision: Permit for the Alberta to Alaska Railway(A2A Rail). Seeking to get approval and permit from the Alberta government for Alberta to Alaska Railway (A2A Rail).				
03-May-2019	The Greenbrier Companies, Inc.	Summa Strategies	Tracey Hubley, Timothy Powers, Adam Yahn, Shay Purdy	Alberta Energy, Executive Council, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Premier’s Office
Program or Policy: The government of Alberta’s crude oil by rail plan and associated contracts, administered by the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission (APMC). Discussing the benefits to Alberta’s energy industry of The Greenbrier Companies’ contracts with the government of Alberta.				
02-May-2019	Town of Vegreville	Alberta Counsel	Jonathon Wescott, Pascal Ryffel, Bronte Valk, Zack Ziolkowski, Shayne Saskiw, Jenelle Saskiw, Cam MacKay	Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Premier’s Office
Financial Benefit or Grant: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Grant (federal). Securing provincial support from the GoA and a positive recommendation to the Federal Government on the Town of Vegreville’s application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.				
Financial Benefit or Grant: Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP). Securing for funding for roads related to economic developments at SE17 Industrial Park and 75 Street commercial/business park, which would not be covered under the ‘Investing in Canada Infrastructure’ grant.				

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...government

women minister **Leela Aheer** issued a statement about Sexual Violence Awareness Month.

“We know more work needs to be done and are committed to supporting frontline workers so they can respond effectively to sexual violence and help survivors heal,” **Aheer** said in the statement. “I want to share my sincere gratitude to all frontline workers in sexual assault centres, women’s shelters and crisis centres across the province.”

She called on Albertans to show support by finding opportunities to get

involved in Alberta communities, talking to children and youth about healthy relationships and consent, modelling respect and speaking out against sexual violence in all its forms.

“We must shine bright lights into the dark corners where survivors see a hand reaching out to them,” **Aheer** said. “Together, we can build an Alberta that is free of sexual assault and sexual abuse and safe for everyone.”

Her full statement is [here](#).

Premier

8 May 2019

Israeli Independence Day

Premier **Jason Kenney** issued a statement to mark Israel’s 71st birthday.

“Seventy-one years ago, in the wake of the Holocaust, Jews from all over the world returned to their homeland, which they had dreamed of for over 2,000 years,” the premier said in the statement. “It was to be a sanctuary, a stronghold and a beacon – and so it has become.”

Kenney lamented that even after more than 70 years, Israel remains a country threatened by groups and regimes that deny its right to exist.

His full statement is [here](#). □

Recent Lobbyist Registrations, continued

Registered	Organization	Lobby Firm	Lobbyists	Government Targets
02-May-2019	AECON Group Inc.	KTG Public Affairs	Ken Boessenkool	Alberta Transportation, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Premier’s Office
Decision: Arbitration between Capital City Link General Partnership (CCLGP) and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta as represented by the Minister of Transportation. Pursuing a favourable outcome for government and AECON, a partner in CCLGP.				
02-May-2019	MNP LLP	-	Jason Tuffs, Lanny Westersund, Clayton Norris, Tony Collabella, David Woodman, Will Fong, Chris Lavin, Mariesa Carbone, Gord Tait, Scott Dickson, Craig Gates	Alberta Labour, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Energy, Alberta Indigenous Relations, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Executive Council, Service Alberta, Alberta Human Services, Alberta Climate Change Office, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Health, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Alberta Status of Women, Premier’s Office, Alberta Seniors and Housing, Alberta Energy Regulator

MNP registered as an organizational lobbyist.

Financial Benefit or Grant: Alberta Emergency Management Agency. Ongoing Program Support for our firm and clients affected by natural disasters including Indigenous communities.

Financial Benefit or Grant: Canadian Agriculture Program (Growing Forward 3). To understand the legislation and the impacts on our client base moving forward, what is the impact, and compliance requirements and challenges.

Existing Legislation: Modernized Municipal Government Act, Farm Safety Legislation, Budget. To understand the legislation and the impacts on our client base moving forward, what is the impact, and compliance requirements and challenges.

Guideline or Directive: Agristability and AgrilInvest program guidelines or directives. Serve clients that are accessing programs and trying to remain in compliance.

Program or Policy: All programs in agriculture that have an impact on our professional services clients. Information gathering to better serve the interests of our clients and their business operations and provide more fulsome business advisory services.

Existing Legislation: Training Programing. To assist our clients in accessing training and in the delivery of training across the province where applicable.

Program or Policy: Self Employment Programming. To continue to be a service provider for self employment and Aboriginal employment in Alberta

Existing Legislation: Bill 6, Workers Compensation Board Legislation. MNP is the largest chartered accounting and business advisory firm in Alberta and many of our clients access Government programs, services and or need to be in compliance with existing or forthcoming legislation.

Program or Policy: Self Employment Programming, Small Business Taxation. Skills Training.

Financial Benefit or Grant: Professional Services Firm. MNP is the largest chartered accounting and business advisory firm in the Alberta and many of our clients access government programs, services and or need to be in compliance with existing or forthcoming legislation and budget policy.

Program or Policy: There is not a specific policy or act in order to better service our clients. We seek information about all existing policy and programs that might impact our clients.

Alberta Scan

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

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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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NDP Opposition Scan...

The following items represent issues the opposition in the Legislature deemed important enough to warrant a press release and often a news

conference. They result in news only sometimes. NDP caucus news releases are posted [here](#).

Alberta Legislature

9 May 2019

Swearing-in Ceremony of New Democratic Party MLAs

The Legislature announced that members of the New Democratic Party caucus of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta will be sworn in on Monday, May 13, 2019, at 2 p.m. in the Chamber of the Alberta Legislature Building.

The Chamber ceremony will be broadcast on Assembly Online at assembly.ab.ca and on Alberta Assembly TV on Telus Channel 843, Shaw Cable Channel 930 and Shaw BlueSky Channel 263. Photos of the ceremony will be available on Flickr (legassemblyofab) that same day, and the video will be posted on YouTube (AlbertaLegislature) shortly thereafter.

Members of the United Conservative Party caucus of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta will be sworn in on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, in the Chamber of the Alberta Legislature Building.

Health

9 May 2019

Anti-choice Protestors Rally at Alberta Legislature to Celebrate UCP Government

Former NDP health minister **Sarah Hoffman** characterized a March for Life event as a rally to celebrate the recent election of over two dozen anti-choice UCP MLAs.

March for Life says its objective is to conduct an annual peaceful outdoor march where invited speakers would speak about pro-life issues, to share information, and raise public awareness.

Hoffman said at least 28 members of the UCP caucus can either be linked to anti-choice groups, have made

statements opposing a woman's right to choose or walked out on debates involving women's health.

"This is deeply concerning when you consider the ways a provincial government can limit access, funding, and protections for women seeking reproductive health services including abortions," said **Hoffman**. "**Jason Kenney** has not condemned these positions, if anything, he has emboldened them."

Kenney has said his government will not address the March for Life issues.

The government of Alberta has a responsibility to improve access, not restrict it, **Hoffman** said.

9 May 2019

Ready, Fire, Aim, How Much Will The UCP's Backwards Healthcare Plans Cost Albertans?

Former NDP health minister **Sarah Hoffman** charged that new UCP health minister is realizing his party's plan to cancel the Edmonton "superlab" is "a really bad one."

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) reviewed lab services and concluded that a public lab system was the best option for patients and for taxpayers, **Hoffman** said.

"Lab services impact over 70 per cent of health care decisions, which is why it's so important that we are building an integrated, efficient lab service."

The UCP need to come clean on how much the cancellation of this project is going to cost Albertans, how it will affect lab services, and whether patients and physicians can expect to wait longer for both testing and results, the former minister added.

The HQCA report, *Provincial Plan for Integrated Laboratory Services in Alberta*, is [here](#). □