



AB Today – Daily Report June 3, 2019

Quotation of the day

“The notion that a carbon tax is going to stop a forest fire — I don’t think anybody seriously thinks that’s a real issue.”

*Premier **Jason Kenney** speaks to reporters about climate change after an Economic Club of Canada speech in Calgary Friday.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House will reconvene on Monday at 1:30 p.m. for the second week of the summer session. The United Conservative Party has said it will keep the House in session until it passes a number of priority pieces of legislation, with an adjournment scheduled on July 8 for the Calgary Stampede.

Bill 1, An Act To Repeal the Carbon Tax, is scheduled for third reading.

MLAs will also have more time to respond to the throne speech.

Four new bills are listed on the order paper including two supply bills to fund government programs and services in lieu of a spring budget:

Finance Minister **Travis Toews** is scheduled the supply acts: **Bill 5**, Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, and **Bill 6**, Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act.

Municipal Affairs Minister **Kaycee Madu** will introduce **Bill 7**, Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act.

Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** will introduce **Bill 8**, Education Amendment Act, which is expected to pull back protections for students who are members of gay-straight alliance clubs.

Premier watch

On Sunday, Premier **Jason Kenney** was in High Level to announce the community will be reopened for residents to return after being under mandatory wildfire evacuation order for two weeks (the town remains on alert).

On Saturday, he participated in the Muslim Council of Calgary's [Iftar dinner](#). He also stopped by the [Calgary Uke Fest](#) where he "fell off the low carb wagon for some amazing pierogies." He got more practice with [giant novelty scissors](#) while attending a ceremony for WestJet's first flight from Calgary to Dublin.

On Friday, he gave an [address](#) to the Economic Club of Canada in Calgary at its luncheon.

Today's events

June 3 at 8:45 a.m. — Red Deer

Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** will speak at the Alberta School Boards Association spring general assembly at the Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre.

June 3 at 9 a.m. — Edmonton

The UCP caucus will meet in the Federal Building.

June 3 at 10 a.m. — Medicine Hat

Seniors and Housing Minister **Josephine Pon** will declare Seniors Week at the Veiner Centre with Medicine Hat Mayor **Ted Clugston**.

Premier says carbon tax doesn't prevent forest fires

As wildfires burning across the province's northwest forced 11,000 people from their homes, Premier **Jason Kenney** denies carbon pricing has any power to quell the flames.

"I think the reason for any particular forest fire is often complex," Kenney told reporters in Calgary Friday.

"All of the forestry experts will tell you that these regions of Alberta have been overdue for a major forest fire," Kenney said, pointing to dry conditions and "huge patches of very old boreal forest where there have not been fires for 80 or 90 years."

“We’ve always had forest fires; we always will,” Kenney said.

The remarks came the day after the UCP government implemented its regulations to end the former NDP government’s carbon tax. The government flagship legislation **Bill 1**, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, will likely be passed at third reading today.

Meanwhile, at least 10 out-of-control [wildfires continue to rage](#) across 571,000 hectares of the province.

Kenney acknowledged human activity has an impact on climate change, but contends other human activity could be to blame for worsening fires.

The premier also pointed to British Columbia, which has had its own carbon tax for a decade, noting that policy has not prevented wildfires within its provincial boundaries.

Experts agree wildfires have a myriad of causes, but Queen’s University professor **Edward Struzik** of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy [told Global News](#) a warming climate warming means more lightning strikes as well as bigger, hotter fires down the road.

In a [Q&A](#) with the *Edmonton Journal*, University of Alberta wildland fire professor **Mike Flannigan** said four or five years ago, Alberta’s wildfire season shifted from April 1 to March 1 and that the size of Alberta forest fires has doubled since the 1970s because of human-caused climate change.

Meanwhile, British Columbia is sending additional personnel to both Alberta and Yukon to help battle the out-of-control wildfires and Canadian National Resources Limited has evacuated 240 staff from its oil production facilities at Pelican Lake and Woodenhouse.

Instead of the NDP’s carbon tax, Kenney touted the UCP’s upcoming TIER fund — a tax on heavy industrial emitters that will be put towards funding new technology to combat emissions. Kenney said that technology can be sold to the developing world, which has faster growing emissions than Alberta.

Topics of conversation

- The UCP government is launching a review of existing supervised consumption sites while putting new sites on hold, the *Globe and Mail* [reports](#).
 - Currently there are six sites in the province. New sites are planned for Medicine Hat and Red Deer. An additional mobile site is also planned for Calgary.
 - **Jason Luan**, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, told the *Globe* the government’s review will look to balance health needs with concerns communities have about crime.

- The move follows a similar path taken in Ontario, where Premier **Doug Ford**'s government undertook a review and revamped the application process for new and existing sites, ultimately defunding some. The government also rebranded the sites under a new "consumption and treatment services" model.
- Speaker **Nathan Cooper** levied a \$50 fine against NDP MLA **Richard Feehan** after a phone call he received in the chamber [interrupted](#) Health Minister **Tyler Shandro**.
 - The fine is to be paid to the charity of Feehan's choosing. Cooper cautioned MLAs to turn off their ringers, or face a \$100 fine in the future.
- Municipal Affairs Minister **Kaycee Madu** and Calgary Mayor **Naheed Nenshi** are in a funding feud after Calgary city council proposed a \$191-million business tax relief plan last week that asks the province to pitch in \$60 million.
 - Madu does not seem to want to play ball, responding that Calgary "needs to look after its own house."
 - For his part, Premier **Jason Kenney** said, "I wish [Calgary councillors] well in trying to come up with a solution here, seems to me they're going to have to go through a period of fiscal responsibility."
- *The Star Calgary* [contrasted](#) the NDP's "Keep Canada Working" campaign with the UCP's "Yes to TMX" campaign, which rolled out last week.
 - Political scientists noted the NDP's \$23-million campaign featured childlike illustrations and bright photographs designed to bolster social licence for the pipeline, whereas the UCP utilizes a campaign-style tone and makes use of bold blue, white and black imagery.
 - Queen's University professor **Jonathan Rose** said the campaigns are "pure political theatre" and said the public should be skeptical of government-funded advertising regardless of what party is in power.
- *A Globe and Mail* [editorial](#) implores Alberta Premier **Jason Kenney** to reduce the province's reliance on non-renewable resources and to get off the boom-and-bust oil revenue roller coaster.
 - "Mr. Kenney, like every Alberta premier before him, argues that the province has every reason to want to take full advantage of its resource bounty. He's right. Oil is Alberta's competitive advantage," the editorial states. "But while the Alberta economy can't abruptly diversify away from oil, the provincial government needs to diversify its revenues — up to and including the Alberta apostasy of a sales tax."
- During a speech at the Health Sciences Association of Alberta convention in Edmonton Friday, NDP Leader **Rachel Notley** warned delegates that the UCP has a plan to make fiscal cuts to the province's public health system.

- Last week, Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** announced the new government will review Alberta Health Services and opened a request for proposals for firms interested in providing the probe.
- Calgary-based Big Rock Brewery [blames](#) the province's beer tax regime for its \$1.7 million loss in the first quarter of 2019, which has prompted layoffs.
 - Big Rock contends changes the ex-NDP government made to the beer markup framework and small brewer grants disadvantage the mid-sized company.
 - The NDP hit a roadblock when a small brewery pricing program it initiated was accused of breaking interprovincial trade rules.
 - A spokesperson for Finance Minister **Travis Toews** told the *Calgary Herald* the UCP is reviewing the province's liquor policy, including markup rates, grants and trade issues.
- Paddle Prairie Métis settlement resident **Pudgin Wanuch** [pulled out a guitar](#) and sang gospel music while his house burned, the *Canadian Press* [reports](#). The people of Paddle Prairie were only give a "moment's notice to flee," according to *APTN*.

Appointments and employments

Ministerial chiefs of staff:

The UCP has provided *AB Today* with an updated list of cabinet ministers' chiefs of staff.

- Office of the Premier — **Jamie Huckabay**
- Advanced Education — **Jesse Robertson**
- Office of the Agriculture and Forestry Minister — **Tim Schultz**
- Office of the Children's Services Minister — **Steven Puhallo**
- Office of the Community and Social Services Minister — **Ryan Hastman**
- Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women — **Mandi Johnson**
- Economic Development and Trade — **Kristopher Barker**
- Education — **Nicole Williams**
- Energy — **Andrea Smotra**
- Associate Minister of Natural Gas — **Filip Palasz**
- Environment and Parks — **Pam Livingston**
- Health — **Warren Singh**
- Indigenous Relations — **Riley Braun**
- Infrastructure — **David Jackson**
- Justice and Solicitor General — **Craig Bellefontaine**
- Labour — **Janet MacEachern**
- Municipal Affairs — **Bill Bewick**
- Seniors and Housing — **Shannon Gill**
- Service Alberta — **Jamie Mozeson**
- Transportation — **Mark Jacka**

- Treasury Board and Finance — **Mitchel Gray**
- Office of the Associate Minister Red Tape Reduction — **TJ Keil**

Saskatchewan NDP

- Saskatchewan NDP Leader **Ryan Meili** [hired](#) **Adrienne King** as chief of staff, replacing **Olin Valby** who recently left the post for personal reasons.
 - King previously served as chief of staff to former premier **Rachel Notley** and former Alberta NDP leader **Brian Mason**.

Order of Alberta

- The government announced the eight new recipients of the Order of Alberta, the highest honour in the province. They will be honoured at a ceremony on October 17. This year's recipients are:
 - **Robert Burrell**, University of Alberta's chair of biomedical engineering and the Canada Research Chair in Nanostructured Biomaterials;
 - **Bonnie DuPont**, University of Calgary's acting board chair and former vice-president of corporate resources with Enbridge;
 - **Katie Ohe**, a renowned abstract sculptor;
 - **Ron Sakamoto**, Canadian Country Music Hall of Famer and owner of Gold & Gold Productions Ltd;
 - **Beckie Scott**, three-time Olympic cross country skier and anti-doping advocate;
 - **Malcolm Sissons**, historic preservationist in Medicine Hat;
 - **Muriel Stanley Venne**, president and founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women; and
 - **Frances Wright**, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Male Survivors of Child Sexual Assault and founder of the Famous 5 Foundation.