AB Today – Daily Report
July 15, 2019

Quotation of the day

"It is time to move beyond timid gradualism, and if that takes one province to set an entrepreneurial example, then Alberta is proud to be that province."

*Premier **Jason Kenney** is [calling on](#) his fellow first ministers to follow his lead by lifting trade exemptions within their own provinces.*

Today in AB

On the schedule
The House is now adjourned until Tuesday, October 22.

Premier Watch
Premier **Jason Kenney** divided last week between [Calgary Stampede](#) events and the Council of the Federation conference in Saskatchewan.

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, Alberta NDP and Opposition Leader **Rachel Notley**, Ontario Premier **Doug Ford** and federal Conservative Leader **Andrew Scheer** also swung by Stampede.

Kenney drops trade exemptions, challenges fellow premiers follow suit

Alberta Premier **Jason Kenney** met with his counterparts in Saskatoon for the annual Council of the Federation meeting last week, where he made the surprise announcement that he would unilaterally axe half of Alberta's exemptions to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

Kenney's announcement immediately scrapped 13 of the province's 27 exemptions to the 2017 pact, opening up out-of-province bidding on procurement contracts at government branches and agencies, including the legislative assembly building, Alberta Innovates, the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Alberta Electric System Operator and the Alberta Utilities Commission.

Kenney said opening up procurement will save money for Alberta taxpayers and encouraged other provinces to do the same.

"Alberta is proud to take a leadership role on an ambitious free enterprise agenda to benefit our province and promote national economic growth," Kenney said in a news release.

Kenney also pledged to review the 14 remaining exceptions and "get as close to zero exceptions as possible."

Ontario Premier **Doug Ford** welcomed Kenney's move saying it will spur job creation and economic growth, but did not commit to taking up Kenney's challenge.

While Kenney said the changes put Alberta at the forefront of free trade in Canada — barriers to internal trade cost the country between $50 billion and $130 billion annually — B.C Jobs, Trade and Technology Minister **Bruce Ralston** said B.C. already has fewer trade regulations than Alberta.

Cutting trade regulations was part of the UCP's election platform, which promised the party would "fight for market access and reduce interprovincial trade barriers" but did not include specifics about either goals or action on the issue.

Kenney also invited premiers from non-western provinces to join the New West Partnership Agreement.

Despite much agreement around the table about expanding trade between the provinces, Kenney said Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** is threatening national unity with his government's resource policies — a charge Trudeau disputes.

"The level of frustration and alienation that exists in Alberta right now towards Ottawa and the federation is, I believe, at its highest level, certainly in our country's modern history," Kenney said.

"Too often we seem to have partners in the federation, including in Ottawa, intent on pinning us down and blocking us in and impairing our ability to develop the resources that help to pay the bills," he said at the end of the annual premiers' meeting.

For his part, Trudeau said there is no need to pit one corner of the country against another.

"Conservative politicians are choosing to play a high degree of politics, including bringing up threats to national unity, which we categorically reject," Trudeau said Friday at a news conference at the TransMountain terminal.

Trudeau was at the pipeline terminal for a pre-election stop and told reporters he believes the Liberal Party of Canada can pick up seats in Alberta in the fall election.

An announcement on the TMX was expected, but Trudeau brought no new details.

Upcoming events

July 15 at 12:40 p.m. – *Calgary*
Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** will deliver a speech at the Legislative Agricultural Chairs summit at the Hyatt Regency.

July 15 at 2:30 p.m. – *Calgary*
Premier **Jason Kenney** will give a speech to SHAD Canada at the Energy Environment and Experiential Learning building at the University of Calgary.

Topics of conversation

- The number of Calgary-area cabinet ministers interviewed by the RCMP has climbed to at least five as Mounties continue to investigate allegations of voter fraud in the 2017 UCP leadership race, CBC reports.
    - Justice Minister **Doug Schweitzer**, Infrastructure Minister **Prasad Panda**, Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Minister **Leela Aheer**, Seniors and Housing Minister **Josephine Pon**, and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions **Jason Luan** have all been interviewed by police.

- The UCP is walking back an election promise to charge heavy industrial emitters a carbon levy of $20 per tonne, instead saying the government is "seeking input" on the rate of its carbon pricing.
    - As part of the UCP's environment platform, the party promised to scrap the NDP's Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation and introduce the

Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) system as of January 1, 2020.

- Consultations are underway to [replace](#) the NDP's contentious *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*, formerly known as **Bill 6**, which passed late in 2015.
  - Farmers and ranchers protested at the legislature over changes to workers' compensation requirements for waged, non-family farm workers.
  - A [survey](#) for feedback will be open until August 31.

- Alberta is seeking intervenor status in the B.C. Supreme Court of Canada case that argues the province should have control over the resources that ship through its borders, in a bid to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, the *Canadian Press* [reports](#). Alberta plans to argue that interprovincial projects, such as pipelines, are within federal jurisdiction.

News briefs - Governmental

Health information systems under review

The government launched an independent review of Alberta Health's health information systems — [Alberta Netcare,](#) [MyHealth Records](#) and [Connect Care](#).

"Health-care providers and patients should be able to access health information as quickly and easily as possible," Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** said in a news release. "As we committed in our campaign platform, this third-party review will ensure our health information systems are implemented efficiently and help deliver better results for Albertans."

The review is scheduled to begin this summer with a report due back at the end of the year.