



AB Today – Daily Report August 2, 2019

Quotation of the day

“This plan will reset the record and loudly tell the world ‘Alberta is back’ — and respond, in real time, to the misinformation being spread about the industry. How will we do this? By challenging. One word at a time, one fact at a time, and one truth at a time. The lies end now.”

*Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** announces former journalist **Claudia Cattaneo** has been hired to develop a strategic plan for the province’s energy war room.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess. *AB Today* is taking the long weekend off and will be back in your inbox on Wednesday morning.

Former Financial Post columnist tasked with creating a strategic plan for Alberta’s energy war room by the fall

The Alberta government has tapped **Claudia Cattaneo**, a former *Financial Post* business reporter and columnist, to create a strategic plan for Alberta’s energy war room by the fall.

Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** announced the hiring as the next step in the government’s planned \$30-million “war room” to fight disinformation about the energy sector. “The time has come for Alberta to fight back,” she said in a statement.

Details of the war room, which will be based in Calgary, have been slow to trickle out. Premier **Jason Kenney** previously announced it would be staffed through a combination of existing government resources and private industry contractors, who he said could work faster and more nimbly than bureaucrats to combat negative messages about the oil and gas sector “in real time” on social media.

The war room is part of the UCP government’s overall “fight back strategy,” which it promised during the April election campaign. The strategy includes a \$2.5-million public inquiry into foreign funding of “anti-Alberta” campaigns, and pro-TMX billboard and advertising campaigns.

Some of its promised work has already begun. In June, Savage sent a [letter](#) to *National Geographic* asking the publication to “correct” facts in an April 11 [article](#) about Alberta’s oilsands. The article was edited and responses from the oil industry were added.

“For more than a decade, anti-fossil fuel interest groups from around the world have been leading a deceitful campaign to landlock the oilsands,” Savage said Thursday. “Not only has this campaign — founded entirely on lies — damaged the reputation of our world-class energy sector, it has caused significant damage to our province and hurt thousands of people who work hard and are proud of the work they do.”

Cattaneo is coming out of retirement to take up the contract position. She retired from her position as western Canadian business columnist for the *Financial Post* in May 2018. Prior to that, Cattaneo was the *Post*’s Calgary bureau chief and worked for the *Calgary Herald*, *Montreal Gazette* and *Toronto Star*.

In a farewell column published in the *Post* last year, Cattaneo [lamented](#) the change in oil and gas reporting, saying oil companies have become less accessible and that attacks by environmental activists were hurting journalists.

“Reporters have become collateral damage in the conflict between the two camps,” Cattaneo wrote. “Their reputations are constantly under attack and dismissed as ‘oil shills’ on social media by activists who’d rather see fair industry coverage suppressed.”

In May, the parent company of Cattaneo’s former employer, Postmedia, hired Kenney’s former chief of staff **Nick Koolsbergen**, now the CEO of government and public relations firm Wellington Advocacy, to see if its custom content division can produce content for the war room campaign.

While the custom content division is independent from editorial operations, Independent Alberta Senator **Paula Simons**, a former Postmedia journalist, said the move will compromise the credibility of the company’s reporters.

“It is very difficult for hardworking, really strong journalists to do their work with credibility when in the public mind people say, ‘Yeah, but your paper is helping the premier produce propaganda,’” Simons [told the CBC](#).

Weekend events

August 3 at 1:45 p.m. – Calgary

Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women Minister **Leela Aheer** will speak at the Calgary International Blues Festival at the Shaw Millennium Park.

August 3 at 6 p.m. – Calgary

Aheer will also speak at the Jamaican Canadian Association’s 57th anniversary of independence celebration at Evergreen Community Spaces.

Topics of conversation

- A CBC [investigation](#) reveals further details about the relationship between the Alberta Energy Regulator and the not-for-profit International Centre of Regulatory Excellence (ICORE), which was founded by AER’s former president and CEO, **Jim Ellis**.
 - Ellis founded ICORE in 2017 to share best practices with energy regulators in other countries, but records CBC obtained through FOIP show AER resources were diverted to ICORE.
 - While the energy regulator and the non-profit were supposed to be separate entities, the documents reveal more than two dozen staff from the industry-levy-funded AER’s staff had been working for ICORE.
 - Ultimately, the regulator sued ICORE for \$2.6 million for costs associated with setting up entity. The regulator told CBC it collected those funds on June 5, 2019.
 - The Auditor General and Public Interest Commissioner will both release reports on the scandal this summer. A third investigation from the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, which is looking into an individual’s behaviour rather than the work of the regulator, does not have a timeline.
 - ICORE was told to cease operations at the end of 2018.
- A group called Iron and Earth is hoping to transition the skills of oil and gas workers to a low carbon economy, *The Tye* [reports](#).
 - Some workers previously employed in the fossil fuel sector are finding work in renewable energy and abandoned oil well reclamation.
- Canadian oil companies hoping to catch the eyes of politicians on the summer barbecue circuit took out full page ads in 30 of the country’s largest newspapers — including the *Edmonton Sun* — on Thursday.

- Three Calgary-headquartered companies — Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., Cenovus Energy Inc. and MEG Energy Corp. — took out full-page ads in papers across Canada with an open letter defending the industry’s environmental record.
 - MEG Energy CEO **Derek Evans** told the *Canadian Press* the ad campaign is non-partisan.
 - “I’m fine with having **Justin Trudeau** as prime minister if he embraces a philosophy with respect to energy that says that Canada has a much larger role to play on the global stage and we need to encourage that part of our sector,” Evans said.
- Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. **Deena Hinshaw** is trying to piece together why Calgary has not seen the same spike in syphilis rates as other parts of Alberta, [CBC reports](#).
 - While Alberta’s largest city has the second highest rate of syphilis, Calgary’s rate climbed seven per cent year over year compared to other health zones which double, tripled or quadrupled the rates of infection in the same time period.
 - The province is grappling with the worst outbreak of the infection in decades.
- Municipal politicians plan to send a message to Premier **Jason Kenney** and Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** about the federally regulated mortgage stress test, [Global Edmonton reports](#).
 - When the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) meets in the fall, Edmonton councillor **Mike Nickel** will put forward a motion asking for stress test rules to be changed.
 - This follows a letter Calgary city council sent in February asking for a change to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation guideline that requires first-time homebuyers to have a 20 per cent down payment.
 - Members of the AUMA say the stress test rules make sense in overheated markets like Vancouver and Toronto, but the guidelines have led to stagnation in Alberta’s market.
- The Alberta Investor Tax Credit — a 30 per cent rebate for investors who prop up a small Alberta business — has been paused, the *Globe and Mail* [reports](#).
 - The AITC was brought in by the previous government in January 2017.
 - A spokesperson for Economic Development, Trade and Tourism Minister **Tanya Fir** said funding is on hold while the government makes sure the program is “an effective use of Albertans’ tax dollars.”

Appointments and employments

Premier’s office

- **Matt Wolf** is back as director of issues management in the premier's office after a brief stint in the private sector. Wolf replaces **Shane Bourke**, who was signed to a three-month contract.

Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

- **Danielle Murray** is the new press secretary for Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Minister **Leela Aheer**.

Community and Social Services

- **Tamara Magnan** is director of communications for Community and Social Services.

Lobbyist registrations

If you are looking for further information on any lobbying registry, it is all public and easily searchable [here](#).

Consultants who registered as lobbyists from July 26, 2019 – August 1, 2019

- **Garry Keller**, StrategyCorp Inc.
 - **Clients:** Muslim Association of Canada
- **Matt Solberg, Sonia Kont, Sarah Painchaud, Monte Solberg, Michael Solberg, Tristan Bray**, New West Public Affairs
 - **Clients:** JUUL Labs
- **Shayne Saskiw, Jenelle Saskiw, Michelle Collins, Zack Ziolkowski, Jonathon Wescott, Pascal Ryffel, Bronte Valk, Cam MacKay**, Alberta Counsel
 - **Clients:** Alberta Blockchain Consortium Corp.
- **Shayne Saskiw, Pascal Ryffel, Jonathon Wescott, Lindsay Lahey, Keith Pridgen, Jenelle Saskiw, Bronte Valk, Zack Ziolkowski, Cam MacKay**, Alberta Counsel
 - **Clients:** Association of Alberta Registry Agents
- **Michelle Collins, Cam MacKay, Bronte Valk, Jonathon Wescott, Pascal Ryffel, Zack Ziolkowski, Jenelle Saskiw**, Alberta Counsel
 - **Clients:** Alberta Supply Management 5 Group, c/o Alberta Milk
- **Michael Lohner**, CSG Canadian Strategy Group Inc. (also operating as Crestview Strategy (Alberta))
 - **Clients:** Innovative Medicines Canada
- **Evan Legate**, Longview Communications Inc.

- **Clients:** Inventys Thermal Technologies Inc.
- **Jason Ennis, Elan MacDonald,** Global Public Affairs
 - **Clients:** AltaLink Management Ltd.
- **Candice Laws, Kristin Anderson,** Global Public Affairs
 - **Clients:** Catholic Family Service
- **Natalie Sigalet,** Hill+Knowlton Strategies
 - **Clients:** Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System; Civeo Corporation; CSA Group; SICPA Product Security, LLC
- **Tim Moro, Natalie Sigalet,** Hill+Knowlton Strategies
 - **Clients:** Calgary Food Bank; EDP Renewables Canada; Rocky View 2020
- **Vivek Prabhu, Natalie Sigalet,** Hill+Knowlton Strategies
 - **Clients:** TMX Group Limited
- **Tim Moro,** Hill+Knowlton Strategies
 - **Clients:** Calgary Downtown Association
- **Jeff Johnson, Diana McQueen,** Course Consulting Ltd.
 - **Clients:** Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations
- **Dennis Chan,** Pathway Advisory Services Ltd.
 - **Clients:** Vertex Pharmaceuticals (Canada) Incorporated
- **Gabriela Gonzalez,** Crestview Strategy
 - **Clients:** Sun Life Financial

Organizations that registered in-house lobbyists from July 26, 2019 – August 1, 2019

- Alberta Seniors Communities & Housing Association (ASCHA)
- Cronos Group Inc.
- Dow Chemical Canada ULC
- Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of Alberta Association
- Canadian Natural Resources Limited
- Husky Energy Inc.
- Encana Corporation
- Investment Industry Association of Canada
- Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta
- Intrexon Corporation
- AbbVie Canada
- Cisco Systems Canada
- BASF Canada Inc.
- Construction Owners Association of Alberta
- Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta

- Aphria Inc.
- ConocoPhillips Canada Resources Corp.
- Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
- TransCanada PipeLines Limited
- Alberta Common Ground Alliance
- PetroChina Canada Ltd.