



AB Today – Daily Report August 7, 2019

Quotation of the day

“We were elected with a mandate to be fiscally responsible, and that has to start at the top. Today’s decision is about leadership by example.”

*Premier **Jason Kenney** applauds the Special Standing Committee on Members’ Services for voting to cut MLA pay by five per cent and the premier’s by 10 per cent.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess.

Premier Watch

Premier **Jason Kenney** and Community Services Minister **Rajan Sawhney** met with the non-profit Inclusion Alberta at the legislature Friday. They discussed expanding the number of educational and job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

Kenney also spent time at the Heritage Festival in Edmonton over the weekend. He attended the annual, traditional Pow Wow held by the Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centres in Sturgeon County, where he was joined by UCP MLAs **Rick Wilson, Jason Luan, Peter Guthrie** and **Dale Nally**.

On Saturday, the premier swung by the Big Valley Jamboree in Camrose, where he [posed for photos](#) with country musician **Brett Kissel** and briefly joined him onstage.

Finally, Kenney issued a statement following the death of longtime Conservative MP **Deepak Obhrai**, who lost a battle with liver cancer Friday night.

“Deepak and I first met while running for Reform Party nominations in adjacent constituencies in 1996,” Kenney said in a statement. “We quickly became good friends, helping each other in our successful campaigns, and working together ever since.”

Committee votes to cut MLA pay, NDP worries UCP is setting the stage for broader pay cuts in the public sector

MLAs on the all-party members’ services committee voted unanimously on Tuesday to cut their own salaries by five per cent — and the premier’s by ten per cent.

The meeting ended in heated debate after, in a motion that was rejected by their UCP peers, NDP members demanded the cuts “not be used as rationale to justify any measures to roll back compensation of Alberta’s public sector workers.”

The cuts, which fulfill a UCP campaign promise, will take effect on August 15.

In a statement, Premier **Jason Kenney** called the committee’s move “leadership by example,” noting former premier **Jim Prentice** also slashed MLA pay by five per cent in 2015.

“When combined with today’s pay cuts, MLAs will be paid \$13,000 less compared to 2014, and the Premier \$31,500 less,” Kenney said.

Alberta MLAs will now earn \$120,931 annually, which — despite the five per cent cut — remains the highest in Canada. Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament come in second at \$116,500.

The premier, Speaker and deputy Speaker, cabinet ministers, opposition leaders, and committee chairs and deputy chairs also earn an additional allowance.

Under the old pay schedule, the premier earned \$79,560 on top of the MLA baseline pay, for a total of \$206,856. Tuesday’s cut brings the premier’s total pay to \$185,927.

Despite voting in favour of the pay cuts, NDP MLAs on the committee voiced unease about how the UCP will communicate the salary reduction, warning the governing party could be planning to exploit the MLA pay cut as “shield and cover” to deflect criticism ahead of potential cuts to broader public sector wages.

NDP MLA **Christina Gray** said the phrase “leading by example,” which was used during the meeting by Fort McMurray—Lac La Biche UCP MLA **Laila Goodridge** and later by the premier, suggests more salary cuts are coming.

Tensions simmered at the meeting, particularly between Speaker **Nathan Cooper** and NDP MLA **Thomas Dang** (Edmonton—South), who was asked to apologize and withdraw comments he made about the UCP “screwing Alberta workers.”

Dang proposed that cabinet ministers forgo their salaries until after the report from the government’s blue ribbon panel is submitted on August 15. He accused the executive council of “dilly-dallying around waiting” instead of doing their jobs in advance of the report’s release.

Ministers have repeatedly deferred decisions about programs and funding until post-report.

Goodridge, the committee’s deputy chair, disputed Dang’s accusation that cabinet ministers are off the clock and the motion was voted down.

The committee also voted to close a loophole that allowed MLAs to expense their fuel costs twice and to bring the mileage rate in line with other public servants.

Today’s events

August 7 at 9 a.m. – Edmonton

Advanced Education Minister **Demetrios Nicolaidis** will take a tour of the Norquest College Singhmar Centre for Learning.

August 7 at 9:30 a.m. – Edmonton

Premier **Jason Kenney** will make an “important announcement that will benefit Indigenous Peoples in Alberta” outside the Federal Building. He will also amp his first 100 days in office.

August 7 at 10 a.m. – Morley

Children’s Services Minister **Rebecca Schulz** will speak at the Stoney Nakoda Parent Link Centre grand opening of the Wesley Elders Lodge.

August 7 at 10 a.m. – Edmonton

Seniors and Housing Minister **Josephine Pon** will speak at the Capital Region Housing Star Award Recognition Ceremony at the University of Alberta Lister Conference Centre.

Topics of conversation

- The province’s lawyers filed a stay application in court Tuesday asking for their appeal of a judge’s decision to grant the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) an injunction against **Bill 9**, the Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act, to be expedited.

- The government filed its appeal last Wednesday after Court of Queen's Bench Justice **Eric Macklin** ruled the province must respect the collective bargaining process.
- Arbitration with the AUPE is currently scheduled to begin today.
- Elections Commissioner **Lorne Gibson** is investigating complaints made by **Tariq Chaudhry** in relation to the 2017 UCP leadership race. This comes months after Chaudhry, a former president of the Pakistan Canada Association, filed a sworn affidavit alleging he was recruited to hand out UCP memberships to the province's Pakistani community so they would support Premier **Jason Kenney's** leadership bid.
 - CBC [reports](#) an investigator with the Office of the Election Commissioner, **Dave Jennings**, has sent two emails to Chaudhry confirming he has been assigned to investigate his complaints.
 - The allegations in the sworn affidavit, which include claims that Chaudhry spent upwards of \$27,000 buying memberships and putting on events during the campaign, have not been proven in court.
 - The premier's office [told](#) the *Star Edmonton* that Kenney has not been contacted by Gibson's office.
- Advanced Education Minister **Demetrios Nicolaides** said a delay in the application process for the Alexander Rutherford scholarship was the result of a "miscommunication" within the education ministry and that students can now apply for the program.
 - Online applications for the scholarship, which provides up to \$2,500 to Alberta students with an academic average of 75 per cent or higher ahead of their first year of post-secondary school, were not available on the August 1 opening date.
 - "I want to be clear: the Rutherford Scholarship should never have been affected by the technology upgrade," Nicolaides said in a statement. "There was miscommunication within the department and when I found out, I took immediate steps to address the issue to ensure that this important service is available to students across Alberta."
- Lawyer and former special prosecutor **Robert Peck** [told the Star Edmonton](#) it's a "mystery" why the name of the special prosecutor appointed to investigate the 2017 UCP leadership race has not been released.
- Four-term Alberta PC MLA **Alana Delong** is [running](#) for the Conservative Party of Canada in the B.C. riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.
 - Delong represented Calgary—Bow in the legislature from 2001 until 2015, when she decided not to seek re-election.
 - Delong also ran for the B.C. Liberals in 2017 in the riding of Nanaimo—North Cowichan, placing second behind NDP MLA **Doug Routley**.

News briefs — Governmental

Carbon tax court challenge officially filed

Alberta has officially joined the list of provinces filing a court challenge against the federal government's carbon pricing backstop.

On August 2, government lawyers filed a factum within the Alberta Court of Appeal challenging the constitutionality of the federal carbon tax.

“Our constitution is not based on ‘Ottawa knows best’,” Justice Minister **Doug Schweitzer** said in a statement. “It is based on the principle that the provinces are best situated to make policy decisions for their own citizens.”

The UCP government will argue its planned levy on large industrial emitters, which will replace the NDP's repealed carbon tax, meets Ottawa's carbon pricing standard.

The factum also argues Alberta has been a leader in greenhouse gas emissions regulations for the past decade.

Government creates two industry panels in red tape reduction efforts

The government's latest move to reduce red tape is the creation of two industry panels.

The tourism and hospitality industry panel had its inaugural meeting Tuesday, while the oil and gas panel will meet on Thursday for the first time to discuss how to reduce red tape in its sector by one-third.

“I am looking forward to meeting with the industry panel attendees and gaining valuable insight into each sector of Alberta's economy,” said Associate Minister for Red Tape Reduction **Grant Hunter**. “Identifying opportunities to improve how our province does business is a big win for our families and future.”

The government also plans to create similar panels for small business; agriculture, agri-food and bio industrial sectors; forestry; construction; manufacturing and the non-profit sector.

So far, the province's cutredtape.alberta.ca website has received more than 2,200 suggestions on how to reduce red tape since launching on June 24.

Appointments and employments

Red Tape reduction panel

- The following people were named to the tourism and hospitality panel for red tape reduction:
 - **Dave Kaiser**, president and CEO, Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association;
 - **Brett Ireland**, chair, Alberta Small Brewers Association;
 - **Ed Sims**, president and CEO, Westjet;

- **Darren Reeder**, executive director, Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association;
 - **Corey Jarvis**, president, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society;
 - **Matthew Ellis**, vice-president of government and stakeholder relations, Convenience Industry Council of Canada;
 - **Yannis Karlos**, co-chair, Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment;
 - **Brenda Holder**, chair Indigenous Tourism Association Canada;
 - **George Goldhoff**, president and CEO, Pure Canadian Gaming; and
 - **Leslie Echino**, board member, Restaurants Canada.
- The following were named to the oil and gas panel for red tape reduction:
 - **Tim McMillan**, president and CEO, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers;
 - **Tristan Goodman**, president, Explorers and Producers Association of Canada;
 - **Chris Bloomer**, president and CEO, Canadian Energy Pipeline Association;
 - **Gary Mar**, president and CEO, Petroleum Services Association of Canada;
 - **Mark Scholz**, president and CEO, Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors;
 - **Randy Findlay**, chairman of the board, Pembina Pipeline Corporation;
 - **Sue Riddell Rose**, president and CEO, Perpetual Energy;
 - **Paul Ferneyhough** executive director, North America, Repsol; and
 - **Jeff Tonken**, president and CEO, Birchcliff Energy.