



AB Today – Daily Report August 13, 2019

Quotation of the day

“The proof is going to be in the pudding.”

*Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction **Grant Hunter** said evidence that cuts to red tape are saving Albertans money will be revealed in a report next year.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess.

Premier Watch

Premier **Jason Kenney** [posted a video](#) of himself at his desk in the McDougall Centre in Calgary, saying he has been busy holding meetings with “key business leaders from across Canada and around the world.”

Artificial intelligence employed in red-tape-reduction task

Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction **Grant Hunter** said the Alberta government is using artificial intelligence in its efforts to reduce regulatory hurdles for residents and businesses.

In a [report released](#) Monday, titled “Cutting Red Tape — The First 100 Days,” Hunter said the province has more than 470 acts and upwards of 1,000 regulations, making it the most “overburdened” jurisdiction in Canada.

Hunter said his mission is to slash regulation until the province has the country’s fewest.

In its quest to cut red tape by one-third, the United Conservative government has employed AI to conduct a “fulsome count” of potential red tape hurdles by searching government forms, documents and websites using keywords such as “must” and “shall.”

According to Hunter, governments in B.C. and Ontario found more than 300,000 pieces of red tape during their own efforts to identify burdensome regulations. Manitoba found almost one million, he said, by evaluating every agency, board and commission — not just searching within government ministries.

“Unless you measure, you cannot fix,” Hunter told reporters.

In addition to introducing an associate minister position for red tape reduction, the new Kenney government has directed departments to develop their own three-, six- and 12-month red-tape reduction plans.

Hunter plans to table a follow-up report on the UCP’s progress on reducing red tape reduction early next year.

Meanwhile, the province has received more than 2,400 submissions to its [online suggestion box](#).

On top of suggestions from the general public, Hunter has also struck two industry-specific red tape reduction panels — one to examine the oil and gas sector, the other hospitality — with more on the way.

Hunter made the comments during an announcement about cutting red tape for drivers. The province will now allow auto insurance companies to offer digital proof of insurance, instead of requiring drivers to carry paper pink cards in their vehicles. The change is effective immediately.

“We welcome this announcement and are looking forward to working with the government to make Alberta’s insurance system move into the 21st century,” said **Celyeste Power**, a vice-president at the Insurance Bureau of Canada, at the announcement.

The digital pink card, which can be displayed on a phone or other digital device, exists in dozens of U.S. states, as well as in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hunter said the insurance industry has been asking for the change for five years and the only reason for its delay was a lack of political will.

“This specific example — can you say it has a material effect on getting Albertans back to work? No, I don’t think you can say that, but it certainly does make life better,” Hunter said.

The change was made official in a [bulletin](#) issued by Alberta Superintendent of Insurance.

Today's events

August 13 at 7:30 a.m. – Calgary

Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** will speak at the Canadian Beef Industry Conference in the BMO Centre's Palomino room.

Topics of conversation

- The Freedom Conservative Party (FCP) issued a statement saying there is no truth to rumours of a merger between the party and other non-Tory conservative parties.
 - In a statement, the FCP said its board has been in talks with other parties, but no formal agreements have been reached.
 - “At our recent Annual General Meeting, we reconfirmed our [policy document](#) and committed to continuing to champion our '[Equality or Independence](#)' policy as our plank position,” the statement reads. “We also reaffirmed the authority of our [constitution](#) and our board of governors.”
 - Among other things, the policy document calls on Alberta to negotiate in good faith with Ottawa for a fairer financial deal within the Confederation, and if those negotiations fail, to put the question of independence from Canada to Albertans in a referendum.
- Speaker **Nathan Cooper** [chatted](#) about the size of ridings — both geographic and the number of constituents — in his latest edu-tainment social media video.
 - The province's largest riding is Peace River — 109,000 square kilometres — while Calgary—Buffalo is only about 10.5 square kilometres, Cooper said.
 - There are only roughly 26,000 constituents in Lesser Slave Lake, while Bonnyville—St. Paul—Cold Lake has about 54,000 constituents.
- New data from Statistics Canada [shows there was a major dip](#) in Alberta's construction industry in June, with a 12.5 per cent decrease in the number of building permits issued compared to the previous month.
 - Nationally, the number of building permits decreased just 3.7 per cent in June — Alberta on its own accounted for a third of the national decrease.
 - Multi-family dwellings suffered the largest monthly decline of all build types, StatsCan said, falling by 6.7 per cent nationally in June.