



AB Today – Daily Report August 15, 2019

Quotation of the day

“This is the same [prime minister] who killed thousands of jobs and prolonged a recession in our energy sector by killing the Northern Gateway and Energy East pipelines.”

*Premier **Jason Kenney** [slams](#) Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** who, in response to a finding he violated the ethics act during the SNC-Lavalin affair, said he was acting to protect jobs.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess.

With provincial funding for green energy uncertain, Edmonton boosts municipal solar subsidy

The City of Edmonton has upped its rebate program for home solar installations to 40 cents per watt, which it says will cover about 15 per cent of a home solar energy system installation.

The announcement, made Wednesday, comes in response to the provincial government’s funding freeze at Energy Efficiency Alberta (EEA), an agency established in 2017 by **Rachel Notley**’s NDP government.

EEA was offering homeowners \$0.90 per watt through EEA, while the city previously topped up provincial rebates with \$0.15 per watt.

“While the costs of solar have fallen dramatically in recent years, our climate targets, like those in the Edmonton Declaration, require us to move further and faster than ever before,” said Mayor **Don Iveson** in a news release. “Creating incentives for renewable energy sources like solar power is one of the most impactful ways of building a climate resilient city while also creating jobs and diversifying Edmonton’s local economy.”

Iveson’s announcement follows the news that his city is not on track to meet its emissions targets.

The city issued a report last week on progress it has made towards the Edmonton Declaration, a climate change strategy that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 35 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035. The report determined the city is on track to hit its per-capita emissions cap within eight years, three years sooner than it hoped, prompting council to ramp up its carbon emissions efforts.

Meanwhile, the EEA was being funded through the province’s carbon tax, which the United Conservative government scrapped shortly after it took power by passing **Bill 1**, the Carbon Tax Repeal Act. While the UCP initially said it would scrap the energy efficiency agency, it later walked back the remarks, instead launching a review of its programs.

The solar subsidy program, which was launched June 2017, led to the installation of 1,500 solar projects, resulting in an estimated greenhouse gas emissions reduction of 338,000 tonnes.

The city says previous municipal solar programs have generated \$15 million in economic activity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 3,000 tonnes annually, the equivalent of taking 1,000 cars off the road.

Today’s events

August 15 at 9 a.m. – Calgary

The UCP government’s cabinet will meet at the McDougall Centre.

August 15 at 11 a.m. – Edmonton

UCP MLA for Spruce Grove—Stony Plain **Searle Turton** will speak at a Habitat for Humanity home dedication at Carter Place.

August 15 at 1 p.m. – Calgary

Labour and Immigration Minister **Jason Copping** will announce plans for the government’s reassessment of the minimum wage at the McDougall Centre alongside University of Alberta associate professor of economics **Joseph Marchand**.

August 15 at 2 p.m. – Crossfield

Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** will deliver remarks at the Highline Mushrooms expansion groundbreaking ceremony.

August 15 at 3 p.m. – Calgary

The UCP's legislative review committee will meet at the McDougall Centre.

August 15 at 7:30 p.m. – Edmonton

Fort Saskatchewan—Vegreville UCP MLA **Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk** will attend the Edmonton International Fringe Festival.

Topics of conversation

- The Alberta Energy Regulator has [released](#) its annual report on industrial water consumption. The report shows while the oil and gas industry upped its use of freshwater in 2018 compared to 2017, individual companies are using far less than allotted levels.
 - The report found industrial water use intensity rose by 15 per cent year over year as a result of Suncor's new Fort Hills mining operation starting up in the province.
 - Of all the water used in the province, 12 per cent is licensed for use by the energy sector. In 2018, the industry used 27 per cent of its allotted water. Seventy-nine per cent of its overall water use came from recycled water.

- Koch Industries Inc., headed up by billionaire brothers **Charles** and **David Koch**, sold off oilsands land to Calgary-based company Cavalier Energy Inc. in June while abandoning licences for other wellsites, the *Financial Post* [reports](#).
 - Koch Industries is the latest foreign company to either pull out of the oilsands or let leases expire.
 - Shell Canada Ltd., ConocoPhillips Co., Devon Energy Corp., Marathon Oil Corp., Statoil SA and Total SA have all divested from the oilsands since 2017, the *Post* reports.
 - Some of their former operations have been bought up by Canadian-based companies including Suncor Energy Inc., Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., Cenovus Energy Inc. and Athabasca Oil Corp.

- A spokesperson for Finance Minister **Travis Toews** has doubled down on the government's plan to release the blue ribbon panel's report on finances in September — and said that is also when the Opposition will first be authorized to take a look.
 - The response follows NDP Leader **Rachel Notley**'s call earlier this week for the government to publicly release the report on the same day it receives it.
 - Cabinet is scheduled to receive the report today.
 - A government spokesperson told *AB Today* preparations for the budget are underway, including scheduling for public consultation.

- Ahead of today's blue ribbon panel deadline, **Franco Terrazzano**, Alberta director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, [penned an op-ed](#) in the *Edmonton Sun* saying tough times call for tough measures.
 - Terrazzano quoted blue ribbon panel head MacKinnon and University of Calgary economist **Jack Mintz**, who argue Alberta public sector workers are compensated far more than their counterparts in other provinces.
 - "Alberta could have saved around \$2.1 billion in 2016, if public sector salary levels [per employee] were the same as the average of the three biggest provinces (British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec)," Terrazzano wrote.
- A new Mainstreet Research [poll](#) found 65 per cent of Albertans find it morally appropriate to compensate blood plasma donors.
 - The data suggests popular opinion goes against the NDP's 2017 legislation, **Bill 3**, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, which banned paid plasma donations.
 - The U.S.-based Consumer Choice Center says the law should be reversed. "The calls to ban paid blood plasma, prior to Alberta doing so in 2017, were extremely hypocritical given that 70 per cent of Canada's plasma made medicine is derived from American blood plasma, where they compensate blood plasma donors," **David Clement**, the organization's manager of North American affairs, said in a statement. "It was a shame that the NDP government caved to pressure from uninformed sources. What is even worse, is that the former government's misguided policy likely did nothing but make Canada's national shortage worse."
 - At the time, then-health minister **Sarah Hoffman** said the move was in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization and the Royal Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada.
 - "Donating blood should not be viewed as a business venture, but as a public resource saving lives every day," Hoffman said. "Banning paid blood donation will make sure people are donating to the same, coordinated, integrated blood supply network."