



AB Today – Daily Report August 22, 2019

Quotation of the day

“Conversion therapy is not love. It’s harm.”

*Edmonton—Centre Liberal MP **Randy Boissonnault** was among the presenters at Edmonton City Council as the municipality mulls a ban on the practice of conversion therapy.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess.

Construction starts up again on Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project after a year of dormancy

Federally owned Trans Mountain Corp. says it is reviving construction on its pipeline expansion project.

The company [issued](#) a notice to contractors in B.C. and Alberta on Wednesday, giving crews 30 days to get back on the job after the National Energy Board (NEB) [said](#) earlier this month that the project can go ahead. The construction approval followed an NEB decision in February that ruled the project was in the public interest and that it could proceed — with 156 conditions.

Construction will begin immediately at the Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby, and right-of-way work will soon start on the section of the pipeline between Edmonton and Edson. Work on the project, which had begun in Edmonton and Burnaby and on the pipeline route in

between them, was halted in August 2018 when the Federal Court of Appeal ruled the federal government had failed to consult with First Nations during the initial approval process.

“With the first wave of regulatory approvals complete, we are confident that we have a path forward by which the Expansion Project construction can commence,” **Ian Anderson**, president and CEO of Trans Mountain Corporation, said in a news release on Wednesday.

But the entire project isn't yet ready to go and there are still outstanding regulatory approvals and permits that must be obtained. For example, Trans Mountain must develop site-specific emergency response plans, horizontal directional drilling noise management plans and a strategy to offset the project's potential impact to caribou habitat.

In a statement, Premier **Jason Kenney** called Wednesday's announcement a step forward, but said it's not time to celebrate yet.

“The start of construction is an important milestone, but it should have never taken this long,” Kenney said.

“TMX has been mired in delays and has been through countless months of consultation and a lengthy and rigorous review process. It has been cancelled twice. This cannot be allowed to happen again. Because of all of this, there is only one way to measure success for this project: completion of the pipeline.”

Trans Mountain expects 4,200 contract workers to be working along the route in the last few months of 2019.

Construction work was already underway last year when the Federal Court of Appeal found the federal government failed to properly consult with First Nations people affected by the project. Courts ordered the project to stop.

“We are committed to ensuring the project incorporates all appropriate measures to protect the cultural, environmental and local Indigenous interests in the lands and waters through construction and into operation,” Anderson said.

Kenney added both federal and local authorities “must ensure the rule of law is enforced and that construction is not illegally blocked” by protestors.

“History has shown us that there are a small minority of individuals who are willing to break the law to prevent responsible resource development in Canada, and they must not be allowed to essentially veto a project that is vitally important — not only to Alberta, but to all of Canada,” said the premier.

Anderson said the pipeline will be operational by 2022.

Speaking in Sherwood Park on Wednesday, federal Natural Resources Minister **Amarjeet Sohi** said extensive consultation with Indigenous communities along the pipeline route is to thank for the project's go-ahead.

"We're very happy that people will be actually in the field, digging the ground and installing the pipe," Sohi said. "It's a very exciting time for Alberta. It's a very exciting time for Canada. This is a project that is in the national interest."

He rejected accusations from Conservative Party of Canada Leader **Andrew Scheer**, who called the announcement's pre-election timing cynical.

"We need to make sure we support the energy sector in a non-partisan way because the workers who are building this country deserve our united support," Sohi said. "It is unfortunate that some politicians criticize these decisions."

Meanwhile, Kenney noted "TMX will be the only new coastal pipeline for the foreseeable future" — and called the lack of other projects "unacceptable."

Today's events

August 22 at 9:30 a.m. – Edmonton

The government's stay application on the **Bill 9** injunction will be heard at the Alberta Court of Appeal.

August 22 at 12:25 p.m. – Edmonton

Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** will make an announcement on the future of the provincial education curriculum redevelopment at St. Teresa of Calcutta Elementary School.

August 22 at 12:50 p.m. – Edmonton

Spruce Grove—Stony Plain UCP MLA **Searle Turton** will speak at the Alberta's Future Leaders Program at the Wingate Hotel.

August 22 at 3 p.m. – Edmonton

Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions **Jason Luan** will speak at the Lieutenant Governor's True Awards ceremony, which honours "successful efforts to reduce stigma, encourage recovery and strengthen programs and services in the area of mental health and addiction."

August 22 at 6 p.m. – Rocky Mountain House

Environment and Parks Minister **Jason Nixon** will speak at the Alberta Masters Games reception.

Topics of conversation

- Edmonton City Council's Community and Social Services committee unanimously passed a motion Wednesday to ask the city's administration to look at a ban on conversion therapy.
 - The full council will vote next week on a bylaw that would prohibit the licensing, practice and promotion of conversion therapy — and would authorize the city to fine violators up to \$10,000.
 - Edmonton is the latest Alberta municipality to use bylaws to withhold business licences to organizations that conduct the discredited practice.
 - Three prominent LGBTQ politicians from Edmonton spoke in support of the ban: NDP MLA **Janis Irwin** (Edmonton—Highlands—Norwood), the only openly gay MLA in the current legislature; federal Liberal MP **Randy Boissonnault** (Edmonton Centre), who is special advisor on LGBTQ2 issues to the prime minister; and former Edmonton city councillor **Michael Phair**, the first openly gay elected official in Alberta history (who was ousted from his role as University of Alberta board chair during Premier **Jason Kenney**'s appointment spree last week).
 - Irwin told council the committee tasked by the ex-NDP government to strategize banning conversion therapy in the province still plans to meet and release its findings — despite being disbanded when the UCP took power earlier this year.
 - Unlike previous municipal debates in St. Albert and Spruce Grove, religious groups opposed to the ban showed up to voice their disagreement, calling the move “totalitarian.”
 - Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** has previously said he is willing to hear recommendations from anyone and that the UCP government is opposed to conversion therapy, but gave no firm commitment to legislating against the practice.
- Pembina Pipeline Corp. [inked](#) a \$4.35-billion deal to acquire Kinder Morgan Canada and the U.S. section of the Cochin pipeline.
 - Kinder Morgan Canada accounts for \$2.3 billion of the acquisition, which includes Kinder Morgan's storage assets and the Vancouver Wharves Terminal; \$2.05 billion was handed over to Kinder Morgan Cochin LLC for the U.S. pipeline.
 - The 110,000 barrel-per-day pipeline runs from Fort Saskatchewan (east of Edmonton) to Chicago, Illinois.
 - The deal is expected to close late in the first half of 2020.
 - The acquisition comes one day after Alberta Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** granted herself ministerial discretion over how oil production limits will be applied to companies following an acquisition or merger.

- Québec-based commentator **Martin Patriquin**, writing in the *Montreal Gazette*, [said](#) Alberta premier **Jason Kenney**'s recent remarks on Alberta separatism harken back to the playbook of the Québec Liberal Party, which has historically used the threat of the Québec sovereignty movement to win concessions from the federal government.
 - “In invoking separation, and positioning himself as the last bulwark against it, Kenney has glommed onto one of the oldest hustles in the country — one that has served Québec mightily for decades,” notes Patriquin.
 - Patriquin argues the rise of the Québec sovereignty movement allowed successive Liberal and separatist governments to up the amount of transfer payments the province receives. “Successive provincial Liberal governments leveraged the ... threat to the advantage of the province’s purse strings. In 1957, Quebecers put in \$39.5 million and received \$46 million; about three decades later, after two successive Parti Québécois governments and a bruising referendum, they put in just over a billion dollars and received over \$3 billion back.”
 - However, Patriquin said — without a real and organized sovereignty movement in Alberta — Kenney’s tactics ring hollow. “Kenney’s problem is this: as Québec showed time and again, he needs a proper separatist threat to demonize for his hustle to work. Yet the Alberta separatist movement is eternally disorganized and the parties championing it are almost laughably fringe-y. Until this changes — until he has his own Parti Québécois as a foil — his threats sound entirely empty.”

News briefs — Governmental

Ministry of Transportation

- Transportation Minister **Ric McIver** was in Fort Saskatchewan on Wednesday to [give an update](#) on details about the Highway 15 twinning and North Saskatchewan River Bridge projects.
 - The design work for the highway twinning began in 2017. Construction on the first part of the project is expected to wrap up this year; the second phase is also under construction and is expected to take three years to complete.
 - The twinning project is one of nine existing Capital Plan projects the UCP government has committed to continuing.