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Alberta Scan

Issue 1114

week ending 4 October 2019

Town halls...

International financial services company Standard & Poor's this week affirmed Alberta's current debt ratings at "A+". The company concluded that the outlook for Alberta's finances is stable.

"We believe that the new United Conservative Party (UCP) will change the direction of the Alberta government's fiscal policy and implement a number of measures to restrain spending," the company said in a [statement](#). "We expect that budgetary performances will improve in the next two years, leading to near-balanced operating results by fiscal 2021 or 2022, though the challenges facing the Province of Alberta's economically important oil and gas sector will continue to weigh on the province's revenues."

Alberta's credit rating was downgraded by the company during the four years the NDP governed the province.

S&P also noted it does not expect the Alberta government to deplete the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, "thereby preserving its strong liquidity position."

Nonetheless, the rating agency noted the possibility of a negative scenario on Alberta's finances also exists.

"Although we do not expect it, further economic weakness could hurt the province's revenues. Without offsetting policy measures, this could lead to even higher borrowing needs and possible downward pressure on liquidity, causing, for instance, free cash flow to shrink below 100% of annual debt service costs consistently. Such a scenario could weaken our strong view of the province's financial management practices as well, triggering a downgrade," S&P said.

And the possible upside?

"A shift in the province's fiscal policy direction or a turnaround in energy prices and faster revenue growth, which led to operating surpluses, a rapid and consistent improvement in after-capital deficits, and debt burden stabilization, could lead us to raise the rating."

Telephone town halls. Finance minister **Travis Toews** announced this week he will hold telephone town halls on October 7 and October 9 "to listen to Albertans' ideas on the best way to return Alberta's budget to balance."

The budget for fiscal 2019-2020 will be given on October 24.

Details are available online [here](#).

Achievement. The Official Opposition drew attention to provincial achievement tests showing some improvement in results.

"This is the government trying to bury the good work of students to justify its cancellation of the curriculum update our government initiated," said NDP critic **Sarah Hoffman**.

The results are [here](#). □

Government Scan...

The following announcements were made this week by the provincial government. The title of the announcement, as written by the government, is in bold. Cabinet

decisions, called Orders in Council, are marked with the abbreviation "OC" and the number of the decision. Copies of the full text of the OCs mentioned below are available online [here](#).

Amendments to the act will be introduced in the spring 2020 session of the legislature.

Details are [here](#).

Infrastructure

1 October 2019

Post-secondary Learning Act (section 67).

Cabinet approved the lease by The Governors of The University of Alberta to Alberta Health Services of land for the Medical Isotope and Cyclotron Facility for a term of not more than 99 years. OC 184/2019.

Municipal Affairs

1 October 2019

Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act (section 7).

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from wildfires in the settlement area of the Buffalo

...continued next page

Environment and Parks

30 September 2019

Bighorn Land Swap a Win-Win

The province announced a land swap with the Municipal District of Bighorn to give the province a five hectare parcel near Dead Man's Flats in exchange for land suitable for development that can be used to boost economic growth in the region.

Details are [here](#).

Health

2 October 2019

Tobacco Act Review Will Address Vaping

Health minister Tyler Shandro promised to introduce legislation early next year to further regulate vaping in Alberta.

Alberta's current smoking and tobacco legislation doesn't specifically address vaping or the use of tobacco-like products such as hookah and water pipe in public and work places.

The *Alberta Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act* requires a review to begin by Nov. 1, 2019.

Shandro appointed UCP MLA Jeremy Nixon to conduct the required review.

It will begin by November 1 and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Recent Consultant Lobbyist Registrations

The following lobbyists recently registered to represent the clients below with Alberta's lobby [registry](#).

Consultant Lobbyists (in order of registration)

Registered	Client	Lobby Firm	Lobbyists	Target Departments/Organizations
01-Oct-19	Canopy Growth Corporation	Counsel Public Affairs Inc.	Philip Dewan, Brad Lavigne, Amber Ruddy	Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta Health, Alberta Legislative Assembly, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Premier's Office

Existing Legislation: An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis. Intermediary activities on behalf of client including arranging meetings with public office holders. Monitoring policies and programs at a general level and addressing issues as they arise related to the provincial cannabis policy.

Existing Legislation: An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving. Intermediary activities on behalf of client including arranging meetings with public office holders. Monitoring policies and programs at a general level and addressing issues as they arise related to the provincial cannabis policy.

Program or Policy: The Alberta Cannabis Framework. Intermediary activities on behalf of client including arranging meetings with public office holders. Monitoring policies and programs at a general level and addressing issues as they arise related to the provincial cannabis policy.

01-Oct-19	Adapt Pharma Canada Ltd.	1889278 Alberta Ltd. (Korte Consulting)	Brent Korte	Executive Council, Alberta Health, Premier's Office, Alberta Health Services
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Program or Policy: Increased Access to Narcan Nasal Spray. Engaging in discussions with government to make NARCAN (Naxlozone HCL) Nasal Spray more widely available in Alberta for immediate treatment to individuals suffering from opioid overdose.

Financial Benefit or Grant: Increased Access to Narcan Nasal Spray. Engaging in discussions with government to make Narcan Nasal Spray more widely available for Albertans in the community for immediate treatment of individuals suffering from opioid overdose.

27-Sep-19	Chinatown Multi-Level Care Foundation	Content Consulting, Inc.	Truman Severson, Jeff Johnson	Alberta Health, Alberta Seniors and Housing, Alberta Health Services
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Financial Benefit or Grant: ASLI Grant Award: 2009, 2014. Approval of grant.

Program or Policy: Chinatown Multi-Level Care Foundation. Clarification of ownership, accountability.

...government

Lake Métis Settlement between April 14, 2019 and May 11, 2019 to be a disaster for the purpose of section 7 of the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. OC 177/2019.

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from a wildfire

in Lamont County on May 12, 2018 to be a disaster for the purpose of section 7 of the act. OC 178/2019.

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from flooding caused by the extreme rainfall experienced in the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 on July 25, 2019 to be a disaster for the purpose of

section 7 of the act. OC 179/2019.

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from wildfires in Mackenzie County between May 6, 2018 and May 13, 2018 to be a disaster for the purpose of section 7 of the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. OC 180/2019.

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Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act

The collective agreements below now fall under the provisions of the *Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act* (see page four).

Employer	Union/Association
Calgary Board of Education	Calgary Board of Education Staff Association
Agreement: Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Board of Education Staff Association September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2020	
Calgary Board of Education	Calgary Board of Education Staff Association for Professional Support Staff
Agreement: Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Board of Education Staff Association for Professional Support Staff September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2020	
Carewest	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
Collective Agreement between Carewest and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees Local 048/008 (On behalf of Employees employed in General Support Services at Glenmore Park) Local 048/009 (On behalf of Employees employed in General Support Services at George Boyack) Local 048/010 (On behalf of Employees at Carewest when employed in Maintenance Services) Local 048/035 (On behalf of Employees in General Support Services when employed at Signal Pointe) September 9, 2019 to June 30, 2020	
Carewest	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
Collective Agreement between Carewest and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees Local 48 Chapters 007, 008, 009, 016, 035, 037, 038, 039, 040 and 041 (all employees at Colonel Belcher, George Boyack Nursing Home, Cross Bow Auxiliary Hospital, Dr. Vernon Fanning Extended Care Centre, Glenmore Park Auxiliary Hospital, Rouleau Manor, Garrison Green, Sarcee, Signal Pointe, Nickle House and C3 Beddington when employed in auxiliary nursing care) September 9, 2019 to June 30, 2020	
Covenant Health, Bonnyville Health Centre	Health Sciences Association of Alberta
Collective Agreement between Covenant Health - Bonnyville Health Centre and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (Covering all employees when employed in a general support services capacity) April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020	
Covenant Health, St. Therese Villa	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
Collective Agreement between Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and Covenant Health St. Therese Villa April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2020	
Mount Royal University	Mount Royal Staff Association
Collective Agreement The Mount Royal Staff Association The Board of Governors of Mount Royal University July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	
Portage College	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
Collective Agreement between Portage College and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees Local 071/008 July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2020	
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
Collective Agreement between the Board of Governors of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees Local 039 July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020	

Alberta Scan

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Research

Thanks to staff at the Legislature Library for their ongoing help with researching items in this newsletter.

Political Monitor

Word of Mouth Communications provides *Alberta Political Monitor*, a service about ongoing policy developments. Call or email for further information.

Seminars on Alberta Politics

Word of Mouth Communications offers presentations of varying lengths about how the Alberta government decides and how the Cabinet Policy Committee process works. Call or email for further information.

Feedback

If you have suggestions to improve *Alberta Scan*, please contact:

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...government

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from flooding caused by the extreme rainfall experienced in Rocky View County on July 19, 2019 to be a disaster for the purpose of section 7 of the act OC 181/2019.

Cabinet declared the extraordinary losses and damages and emergency response costs resulting from flooding caused by the extreme rainfall experienced in Yellowhead County, Lac Ste. Anne County, Parkland County, Brazeau County and the Town of Stony Plain between July 6, 2019 and July 23, 2019 to be a disaster for the purpose of

section 7 of the act OC 182/2019.

Seniors and Housing

1 October 2019

Online Tool Helps Seniors Cut Through Red Tape

To mark the International Day of Older Persons, seniors minister **Josephine Pon** announced a new online tool she claimed is part of the government's red tape reduction strategy.

The seniors financial assistance online tool allows seniors to scan and upload documents such as forms, banking information and receipts. Until now, they had to fax, mail or drop off these documents in person.

Details are [here](#). ☐

Regulations Scan...

The provincial cabinet passed the following regulations this week. Copies of the cabinet decisions

(called Orders in Council or "OCs") are available online [here](#).

Finance

1 October 2019

Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act (section 5).

Cabinet passed the Collective Agreement Designation Regulation. OC 185/2019.

The regulation adds a number of collective agreements to the schedule of the act. The additional agreements are

listed on page three.

Infrastructure

1 October 2019

Government Organization Act (Schedule 5, section 4).

Cabinet passed the Calgary Restricted Development Area Amendment Regulation. OC 183/2019. ☐

Appointments Scan...

The provincial government made the following appointments this week. Cabinet appointments are

followed by the Order in Council (OC) number of the decision. The full OCs are available online [here](#).

Premier

1 October 2019

Government Organization Act (section 4); Public Service Act (section 18).

Effective October 7, 2019, Cabinet appointed **Paul Wynnyk** as deputy

minister of the municipal affairs department. OC 176/2019.

Wynnyk was most recently vice-chief of the defence staff in Ottawa, the third highest ranking member of the Canadian Armed Forces, a post he retired from in July of 2019. ☐