



AB Today – Daily Report October 8, 2019

Quotation of the day

“In the immortal words of **Randy Bachman** — you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

*Government House Leader **Jason Nixon** says while last session was busy with 13 bills passing, the fall session will be even busier with 14 to 17 bills.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The fall sitting of the Alberta legislature kicks off today, beginning with prayers at 10 a.m. The first question period of the new session is slated for 1:50 p.m.

The government is expected to introduce **Bill 14**, Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation Act, and could introduce **Bill 15**, Real Estate Amendment Act.

There are also a number of government motions on the order paper. Among them are a suite of standing orders changes that would allow the government to call a vote on bills — regardless of stage — for third reading on the final day of a session, as long as they have been debated for a certain number of hours.

“We’ll do exactly what we have to do to get our legislation through the house,” Government House Leader **Jason Nixon** told reporters at the legislature on Monday. “If the Opposition wants to spend their time going around in circles, we’ll wait them out. That said, I won’t allow them to waste taxpayer dollars going on and on endlessly.”

There is also a government motion on the order paper to allow individuals to wear pro-Canadian oil and gas apparel when visiting the legislature. That motion is in response to at least two Albertans who were [booted](#) from Canada's federal Parliament in Ottawa for wearing "I love Canadian Oil and Gas" apparel.

Premier Watch

Premier **Jason Kenney** is [back](#) in Edmonton, after a weekend trip to Ontario in support of Conservative Party of Canada candidates running in the federal election.

"If the Trudeau government is re-elected, it will be a bleak day for Alberta's economic future," Kenney said in a social media video on Monday. "Worse yet, if Justin Trudeau is re-elected in a minority situation, with the backing of the Greens and the NDP, I call that the Frankenstein coalition. That is the worst case scenario for Alberta."

Government will use new standing orders to pass 'ambitious' legislative agenda

On the eve of the fall session, Government House Leader **Jason Nixon** outlined an even more ambitious legislative agenda than the UCP government brought forward during its last sitting, when 13 bills passed.

In order to get through 14 to 17 planned bills, Nixon said he is bringing in standing orders — similar to existing ones used in Saskatchewan — that will allow government to pass legislation on the final day of the session, regardless of what stage it is at.

"In the immortal words of **Randy Bachman**, you ain't seen nothin' yet," Nixon said.

First up will be **Bill 14**, Indigenous Opportunities Corporation Act, which would create a new Crown corporation to assist First Nations in gaining ownership of oil and gas projects.

The second bill on the order paper is **Bill 15**, Real Estate Amendment Act. The UCP has not yet outlined what the legislation will entail.

The government will also table its first budget on October 24, which it says will bring Alberta's fiscal house in order and "restore the province's triple-A credit rating."

He said there are no current plans to legislate public sector wages, adding, "we'll see how the fall session progresses."

The government will introduce its Technology, Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) program, which will put a levy on greenhouse gas emissions from large industrial emitters. Revenue from the levy will go towards developing technology to reduce emissions.

Nixon, who is also the Environment and Parks minister, estimates the program will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 to 45 megatonnes. *AB Today* asked for clarity about the timeline for reaching the reduction target but did not hear back by press time.

The first 50 per cent of revenues collected by the TIER fund will go towards technology, while \$20 million will go towards the government's \$30-million energy war room. Additional revenues will be used to pay down the deficit.

Nixon said he is committed to having the TIER program in place by January 1, 2020, which is when the federal carbon backstop would kick in.

The government also has plans to introduce an Alberta version of Clare's Law, which aims to reduce domestic violence by allowing police to disclose someone's abusive criminal past to their partner.

Farm freedom safety legislation will also be tabled, as will be legislation intended to modernize grazing leases.

Abortion and conscience rights

When asked by reporters to address rumours of a private member's bill that would allow doctors to exercise conscience rights by denying access to abortion, Nixon said as a member of the executive council he sees private members' bills as the business of the chamber.

"Those will be handled by the free vote process, and we'll see what members bring forward and I'll listen to them with interest," Nixon said, adding that he is not aware of any such bill.

NDP teases its own legislative plans

NDP House Leader **Deron Bilous** said the Opposition will be holding the government to account on its lack of job creation and cuts that have made life less affordable in Alberta.

He said, since July, there have been 13,000 jobs lost in the natural resources sector and the UCP government cancelled grant programs and tax benefits the NDP brought in to diversify the economy.

Bilous said potential private members' bills from the NDP include a plan to stave off American-style health care, similar to the final bill the NDP introduced before dissolving the legislature earlier this year, and affordable child care legislation.

He also re-upped the NDP's forthcoming shadow budget, which he said will not only counter the government's agenda, but propose a different path for balancing Alberta's books.

On proposed changes to the standing orders, Bilous said he is awaiting details, but said it's clear the government is not interested in the value of debate.

“In the spring we saw the premier run around the house and hand out ear plugs,” Bilous said. “We’ll see if they bring forward permanent earplugs.”

Today’s events

October 7 at 8 a.m. — *Edmonton*

The United Conservative Party cabinet will meet in the cabinet room of the legislature.

Topics of conversation

- Premier **Jason Kenney** got name-checked during Monday night’s official English-language federal leaders’ debate. In response to a question about cooperation between Ottawa and the provinces and territories, federal Liberal Leader **Justin Trudeau** attacked Kenney’s record on climate change. “**Jason Kenney** and Doug Ford and other Conservative premiers don’t want to do anything on climate change. We need a government in Ottawa that is going to fight them and fight for Canadians,” Trudeau said.
 - CPC Leader **Andrew Scheer** held firm on his plan to cancel the federal carbon backstop. Asked whether he would halt natural resources or energy development projects if consultations with Indigenous groups deemed them unpopular, Scheer responded by stressing how many jobs the sectors create for First Nations workers.
- Activists with Extinction Rebellion blocked traffic on the Walterdale Bridge in Edmonton on Monday as part of the global #BridgeOut protests aiming to raise awareness of climate change.
 - “We’re sorry for any inconvenience #BridgeOut is causing commuters, but the government won’t listen unless we disrupt business as usual,” the Extinction Rebellion YEG Twitter account [wrote](#). “We’re not here to blame or shame motorists (in fact, we baked cookies for you). We gave EMS notice to avoid disruption to emergency services.”
 - The protestors’ tactics drew ire from the United Conservative Party government, including Premier **Jason Kenney** and Environment and Parks Minister **Jason Nixon**.
 - In response, the premier tweeted: “Somehow this is all supposed to be in the name of environment, but hundreds of cars are now idling unnecessarily as they wait backed up.”
- Norway’s largest pension fund, KLP, [divested](#) from several Calgary-based oil companies including Cenovus Energy Inc., Suncor Energy Inc., Imperial Oil Ltd. and Husky Energy Inc., as well as a Russian oilsands company.

- In a news release, KLP said the divestment is worth approximately \$58 million USD.
- “As the largest pension fund in Norway, KLP also wants to send a signal to the markets that oil sands should not form part of the current and future energy supply,” said KLP CEO **Sverre Thornes** in a news release. “We hope that other large asset managers will follow this example. By going coal and oil sands free, we are sending a strong message on the urgency of shifting from fossil to renewable energy.”
- The Alberta Federation of Labour [released](#) a “top 10 list of lies and distortions” from the UCP that it says will be used to create public support for deep cuts.
 - “Both citizens and members of the media should carry this list around with them over the next month or two to act as a shield and antidote against the avalanche of bullshit that’s about to be dumped on them,” said AFL president **Gil McGowan**.
- Alberta’s population hit 4.37 million in Q3 2019, an increase of 1.6 per cent year over year from Q3 2018, slightly ahead of the national growth rate of 1.4 per cent, according to the province’s [weekly economic highlights](#).
 - Interprovincial migration to the province was 40 per cent higher in the second quarter of 2019 compared to the same period last year.
 - The number of business bankruptcies was down by 43.5 per cent in August 2019 compared to the same time last year, dropping from 23 to 13. However, consumer bankruptcies were up by 8.5 per cent, from 423 in August 2018 to 459 in August 2019.
- Speaker **Nathan Cooper** made an appearance on *The Ryan Jespersen Show* on Monday to breakdown how busy the summer sitting was.
 - Based on Hansard, there were 1,990,309 words spoken in the last session, which Cooper contrasted with the 587,287 words in **Leo Tolstoy’s** *War and Peace*.
 - That was fueled, in part, by filibusters and overnight debates.