



AB Today – Daily Report October 17, 2019

Quotation of the day

“Alberta’s government loves Canadian oil and gas.”

*Environment and Parks Minister **Jason Nixon** was elusive when asked if “I love Canadian oil and gas” signs will stay in the windows of the legislature when climate activist **Greta Thunberg** visits Edmonton on Friday.*

Today in AB

On the schedule

The house will convene at 9 a.m.

MLAs are expected to debate **Bill 16**, Public Lands Modernization (Grazing Leases and Obsolete Provisions) Amendment Act, and **Bill 17**, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare’s Law) Act.

Energy Minister **Sonya Savage** is expected to introduce a new government bill, the fifth of the session — **Bill 18**, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act.

In the Legislature

Artist **Emily Taylor** and the Awo Taan Healing Lodge presented Indigenous Relations Minister **Rick Wilson** with a red dress, as part of a campaign to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people.

Families of survivors and victims of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash were also in the gallery, and came to oppose the UCP's potential changes to provincial trucking regulations.

Wednesday's debates and proceedings

Community and Social Services Minister **Rajan Sawhney** introduced **Bill 17**, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act. The bill was granted first reading.

Bill 16, Public Lands Modernization (Grazing Leases and Obsolete Provisions) Amendment Act, passed second reading and was debated at committee of the whole.

Climate activist Greta Thunberg to visit the legislature on Friday

Greta Thunberg will attend a [protest](#) in front of the legislature on Friday.

The teenage climate change activist — whose campaigns have gained international recognition — was [spotted](#) in Calgary on Wednesday. A staffer for Calgary Mayor **Naheed Nenshi** [gave Thunberg a card](#) and let her know the mayor is open to meeting with her, if her time allows on future visits.

In Edmonton, Thunberg plans to attend a march that will start Friday morning at Beaver Hills House Park and end with a noon rally at the legislature. The rally is being organized by Indigenous Climate Action, Edmonton Youth for Climate, Beaver Hills Warriors and Climate Justice Edmonton.

Edmonton Mayor **Don Iveson** [has also expressed](#) his willingness to meet with her.

Thunberg, who lives in Sweden, is travelling across North America to ask all levels of government to commit to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030 while respecting Indigenous rights.

Premier **Jason Kenney** told reporters on Wednesday that he hopes Thunberg enjoys the beauty of the province but has no plans to meet with the activist, citing a prior engagement at a gas pipeline announcement.

Environment and Parks Minister **Jason Nixon** welcomed Thunberg to Alberta and said he hopes she takes her time to learn about the province's environmental and social record, which he called the best in the world.

Nixon said he will be busy meetings with forestry industry stakeholders and the chief of the Piikani Nation on Friday, and is unaware of any government MLA who plans to meet with Thunberg.

NDP Leader **Rachel Notley** said it's great the young activist is continuing her work. Notley said she doesn't agree with all of Thunberg's opinions but agrees climate change needs to be taken seriously.

Notley is unsure whether members of the NDP caucus will attend Friday's rally, but she said it is important for a representative from the government to show face, pointing to protests against the NDP's controversial farm safety legislation, **Bill 6**, when then-agriculture minister **Oneil Carlier** met with angry demonstrators on the steps of the legislature.

She contrasted that with the UCP government's response to a recent climate demonstration where staffers put up signs reading, "I love Canadian oil and gas."

"I was quite appalled to see what their reaction was, to put pictures in the windows that appeared to troll protestors," Notley said.

Asked whether the signs government staffers put up in the windows of the legislature last month, declaring support for Canadian oil and gas in response to climate protesters, will remain during Thunberg's rally, Nixon did not answer directly.

"Alberta's government loves Canadian oil and gas," he said. We're proud to display that."

Families of Humboldt bus crash victims demand clarity from Transportation minister, MLAs hold urgent debate

MLAs unanimously passed an NDP motion calling on the UCP government to maintain safety requirements for newly licensed commercial vehicle drivers, including drivers of school buses, agricultural equipment and trucks.

The motion is non-binding.

Earlier in the day, NDP Leader **Rachel Notley** joined four families of victims killed in the 2018 Humboldt Broncos bus crash, who were at the legislature to ask the government to reconsider its plan to review licensing regulations.

The families said they were outraged at a suggestion made by Transportation Minister **Ric McIver** that school bus drivers and farm workers should be exempted from new Class 1 and Class 2 licence testing requirements. A fifth family's opposition was made public through an open letter.

McIver also met with the families and said he had a respectful conversation with them.

"They expressed they're not pleased with the exemptions," he added, referring to thousands of exemptions the government has granted since taking office earlier this year. "We're going to

think about that. We haven't made a decision to do anything different yet, but I told them we'd think about that and we will."

He blamed the exemptions, which grandfathered in 6,800 new drivers who had not completed the new Class 1 or Class 2 test, on the backlog in driving tests caused by the NDP's move to eliminate private driver testing — a policy move that followed the deadly bus crash, in which an Alberta-based long haul truck driver was found guilty in the deaths of 16 people.

The driver ran a stop sign in his semi-truck, crashing into the coach carrying the Humboldt Broncos hockey team just outside Armley, Saskatchewan.

In the wake of the accident, the previous NDP government also announced new Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT); McIver contended that change was not related to the bus crash but was instead owed to a new requirement for semi-truck drivers who wanted to enter the United States.

"MELT is here to stay," McIver declared.

[Earlier this month](#), Premier **Jason Kenney** and Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** said farm workers should be exempt.

"Safety comes first, so we need to make sure that people licensed to drive, particularly long-haul trucks, have gone through rigorous training and licensing requirements," Kenney told the *Globe and Mail* at the time.

"On the other hand, farmers who are taking their grain trucks to the local elevator or perhaps to a regional terminal, and they have a perfect driving record, and they're just driving their own product, I think that some consideration might be given to them because they are not professional drivers in that case."

The families of the crash victims said they came to the legislature for clarity but got none.

Today's events

October 17 at 9 a.m. — *Edmonton*

The UCP's Legislative Review committee will meet in the cabinet room of the legislature. The committee will meet again at 3 p.m.

October 17 at 10:30 a.m. — *Edmonton*

Education Minister **Adriana LaGrange** will speak at a rededication ceremony for St. Oscar Romeo Catholic high school.

October 17 at noon — *Edmonton*

Health Minister **Tyler Shandro** will announced an expansion of the role of licensed practical nurses.

October 17 at 4 p.m. — *Edmonton*

The Alberta Order of Excellence Ceremony will be held at Government House.

October 17 at 6:30 p.m. — *Edmonton*

Advanced Education Minister **Demetrios Nicolaides** will speak at the Athabasca University Hall of Fame Awards Gala at the Matrix Hotel.

October 17 at 6:30 p.m. — *Calgary*

Seniors and Housing Minister **Josephine Pon** will speak at the Top 7 over 70 Awards Gala at the Hyatt Regency.

October 17 at 7:45 p.m. — *Sherwood Park*

Service Alberta Minister **Nate Glubish** will speak at the Strathcona County condo association AGM.

October 16 to 17 — *Chicago*

Infrastructure Minister **Prasad Panda** will address the ITServe Alliance Synergy Conference. He will also participate in a panel discussion with U.S. Senator **John Kennedy** and Representative **Raja Krishnamoorthi** of Illinois.

Topics of conversation

- Finance Minister **Travis Toews** spoke to the Alberta Liquor Store Association in Edmonton on Wednesday, promising to further reduce red tape for the industry.
 - “I’m blown away by 26,000 products here in Alberta and how much we exceed Ontario and especially B.C.,” Toews told conference attendees at the Westin. “That is impressive.”
 - He outlined changes his government has made to improve the liquor business in the spirit of former premier **Ralph Klein**, who privatized the province’s liquor industry.
 - “We have clarified regulations that trust Albertans to use alcohol responsibly in provincial parks on their long weekend camping trips and in select day-use picnic sites; implemented universal small brewer markup, expanding the eligibility for small manufacturers with an annual world production of up to 400,000 hectoliters of beer to apply for a reduced markup,” Toews said.

- A first-time voter who accidentally cast a ballot twice in the last provincial election says he immediately notified Elections Alberta when he realized his mistake, the *Star Edmonton* [reports](#).
 - It is the first time Elections Alberta has confirmed a case of double voting, but the watchdog is investigating other cases.

- In a joint letter to Opposition Leader **Rachel Notley**, the mayors of Brooks, Wetaskiwin, and Lacombe said Notley was wrong when she claimed their municipalities oppose the UCP government's plan for a new police funding sharing model.
 - "Misrepresenting our views for political theatre is dishonest and unbecoming for any member of the provincial legislative assembly," the letter states. "We respectfully ask you to correct your statement for the record immediately."
 - On Tuesday, Notley said the communities of Brooks, Wetaskiwin, Barrhead, Sundre, Foothills and Lacombe all oppose a plan to cut provincial funding for rural policing.
 - The mayors' position is that municipalities should bear a portion of the costs for police services they receive.

- **Paul Poscente**, the CEO and chair of Backwoods Energy Services, [told](#) the *Financial Post* the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation must be careful not to widen the gap between wealthy First Nations and those struggling with poverty.
 - "Those few communities that have real business teams and have real capacity to access this corporation, it's going to be their bank, and the gap between those and the have-nots are actually going to get wider," Poscente told the *Post*.
 - Backwoods Energy Services is a project purchased by the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation in 2015.
 - **Bill 14**, Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation Act, is currently awaiting royal assent.

- The federal Green Party candidate running in Edmonton—Strathcona [quit his campaign](#) Wednesday, and threw his support behind his NDP rival in advance of Monday's election.
 - **Michael Kalmanovitch** announced he was stepping down at an event at The King's University.
 - "I ran this campaign with the goal of winning the Edmonton—Strathcona riding, but based on polling projections, it has become clear that success is unlikely under our first-past-the-post system," he said. "My goal has never been personal political power. My goal has always been policy change. That is why I am ending my campaign effective today, and calling on supporters to consider voting strategically for the candidate and party with the next best climate action plan. I believe that candidate is **Heather McPherson** of the NDP."

- The Edmonton—Strathcona contest is considered a toss-up between the NDP and Conservative Party of Canada. The riding was most recently held by the NDP's **Linda Duncan**, who is not standing for re-election.
- After Kalmanovitch's announcement, the [federal Greens said](#) they had removed him as a candidate and that he is no longer a member of the party.
- Legal and privacy experts [talked to The Star Edmonton](#) about the province's decision to make the Canadian Energy Centre, aka the energy war room, a private corporation.
 - The government has said the CEC's internal operations will not be subject to Freedom of Information requests, but that it would be governed by the *Personal Information Protection Act*.
 - PIPA states organizations cannot collect or disclose information on an individual without their consent and that individuals have the right to request information collected about themselves from a body.

New briefs — Governmental

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Community and Social Services Minister **Rajan Sawhney** introduced **Bill 17**, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act, on Wednesday, the government's legislation to address domestic violence.

The law will include a "right to ask," which will allow people to request a criminal record check on their partner to see whether they have any violent history. It will also include the "right to know" that will allow police officers to disclose someone's police history to those at risk of domestic violence.

"Our government believes it is crucial for people to have access to this kind of information, particularly when lives are at stake," Sawhney said. "This law will enable people to see the full history of criminal activities from an intimate partner so they are able to make the best choices for their safety and be informed about the potential risks of a relationship."

Whether police disclosures will include an individual's entire police history or only convictions will be determined during the implementation phase of the bill, a government spokesperson told *AB Today*.

Premier **Jason Kenney**, who was alongside Sawhney at WIN House shelter for the bill's announcement, said the government will maintain the funding increase brought in by the NDP for shelters.

The bill is modelled after Clare's Law in the U.K., which was also adopted in Saskatchewan. The legislation is named for **Clare Wood**, who was murdered by an ex-boyfriend, **George**

Appleton, in 2009. Wood had told her father Appleton had a criminal history, but thought his troubles with the law were related to driving offences.

Alberta has the third highest rate of police-reported domestic violence in the country. Between 2008 and 2017, 166 people died at the hands of their partner.

In Canada, half of the women and girls murdered in a domestic violence incident had partners with a prior conviction.

Question Period

NDP kickoff

- NDP Opposition Leader **Rachel Notley** opened question period by asking about driver training requirements.
 - “To the premier: can he explain why his government doesn’t think every single truck driver or bus driver on our roads should be safe?” Notley asked.
 - Notley then asked whether the government would lift the exemption for the 6,800 new drivers not captured by her former government’s licensing law.
- Premier **Jason Kenney** said all Albertans and Canadians grieve the loss felt in the Humboldt Broncos bus crash and said the province will maintain the highest standards for driver training.
 - “Unfortunately the previous government cut in half the number of driver examiners available, creating an enormous backlog.”
 - The premier said he would take action on abuses of the temporary foreign worker program by truck-driving companies.

Other NDP questions

- Opposition MLAs also asked about the government’s response to the report on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, post-secondary tuition hikes, the UCP’s use of federal infrastructure grants, affordable child care, potential conflicts of interest within the Canadian Energy Centre, and coal worker transition funding.

UCP friendly questions

- UCP backbench MLAs asked about the timeline and budget of the Calgary Ring Road, a ban on vaping, support for the gas industry, a seniors’ housing project, and the government’s plan to increase people in the trades.