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# THE HILL TIMES

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## NEWS

Amid TikTok ban, Canadians left 'to their own devices' as feds dither on updating privacy rules: Geist

BY STUART BENSON

Following the decision to ban TikTok from government-issued devices, internet law expert Michael Geist says the Liberals' lack of action to strengthen Canada's own "legal regime" protecting citizens' online data suggests they're more interested in profiting from tech companies' data-collection policies than regulating them.

Treasury Board President Mona Fortier (Ottawa-Vanier, Ont.) announced the decision to ban TikTok from government-issued devices on Feb. 27, following a review by Canada's chief information officer, who determined the app "presents an unacceptable level of risk to privacy and

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## NEWS

# Greater regulation of political party nomination contests needed to prevent foreign, domestic election interference: Democracy Watch

BY STUART BENSON

To stop foreign election interference and influence campaigns targeting potential candidates, Elections Canada should take charge of how political parties run their nomination contests and enforce stricter regulations on third-party registration and disclosures, says Democracy Watch co-founder Duff Conacher.

"If parties are allowed to continue to run these things themselves, then you're just leaving it wide open to unethical and undemocratic influence, whether that influence is from foreign governments or interest groups within Canada," said Conacher. "They have rules for vetting, but when it comes to the voting—

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Michelle Tessier, CSIS deputy director of operations, left; David Vigneault, CSIS director; Caroline Xavier, chief of the Communications Security Establishment; and Michael Duheme, RCMP deputy commissioner of federal policing, testify before the Procedure and House Affairs Committee about foreign election interference on March 2. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## NEWS

# Poor vetting no excuse for Anderson meeting, say politicians

BY NEIL MOSS

After a Conservative MP blamed insufficient vetting as the reason he and two colleagues met with a controversial German politician, politicians say the ratio-

nale makes little sense given the traditional procedures.

With limited time and a slew of meeting requests, MPs have to prioritize whom they meet with, according to former Hill staffers, leading to questions about the like-

lihood that the group of MPs were unaware of the views of far-right German MEP Christine Anderson.

Conservative MPs Dean Allison (Niagara West, Ont.), Colin Carrie (Oshawa, Ont.), and Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.)

met with Anderson in February during her visit to Canada. The meeting was heavily criticized given Anderson's anti-immigrant and anti-Islam views.

Following the meeting, Carrie tweeted that he "profoundly"

regrets attending the meeting "without having sought the input of my staff and without having undertaken a fulsome vetting of the individuals or

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Mike Lapointe

## Heard On The Hill

# NDP MP McPherson eschews security recommendation, travels to Ukraine

The NDP's foreign affairs critic travelled to Ukraine alone, following the House Foreign Affairs Committee's European trip despite a security warning against a trip to the war-torn country.

Over the two-week constituency break, MPs on the Foreign Affairs Committee were in Finland, Sweden, Belgium, and Poland as part of its study on the Ukraine



NDP MP Heather McPherson says the recommendation against the House Foreign Affairs Committee's requested travel to Ukraine 'didn't make any sense.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

**Oleksandr Kornienko**, deputy chair of Ukraine's Parliament, as well as her visit to the Kyiv suburb of Irpin, which was bombarded by Russia.

"As I wander through the town and see there's sandbags on all the windows; statues are covered with mesh camouflage; there are porcupines, the giant metal deterrent, on many of the roads. For such a beautiful, elegant city, it's very

difficult to see what war has done to Kyiv," she said in a Twitter video.

Liberal MP and House Liaison Committee chair **Judy Sgro** previously told *The Hill Times* that Global Affairs and the House Sergeant-at-Arms advised against the trip to Ukraine due to safety concerns. The Liaison Committee approves or rejects travel requests from House committees.

While a handful of cabinet ministers have travelled to Ukraine since the start of the war, including Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly**, Defence Minister **Anita Anand**, and International Development Minister **Harjit Sajjan**, there haven't been any delegations representing Canada's legislature to the war-torn country.

Bloc Québécois MP **Stéphane Bergeron** said trips to show Ukrainian solidarity shouldn't be just reserved for cabinet ministers.

"I find it unacceptable that travelling in Ukraine seems to be considered a privilege of the executive," he told the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Jan. 31.

— By Neil Moss

## Anand to open Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence

National Defence Minister **Anita Anand** is set to deliver remarks at the 91<sup>st</sup> Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence, a major event hosted by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute.

Other speakers include Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. **Wayne Eyre**; Germany's State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defense **Siemtje Möller**; and former Canadian defence ministers **Peter MacKay** and **David Pratt**.

By far the largest security and defence conference in Canada, the Ottawa Conference attendees list includes Senators, MPs, senior public servants from 20 different government departments and agencies, foreign dignitaries, as well as a very large delegation from the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence, according to the conference website.

This event, scheduled for March 9-10, will take place at the Château Laurier in downtown Ottawa. Registration and info is available at [cdainstitute.ca](http://cdainstitute.ca).



National Defence Minister Anita Anand and Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Wayne Eyre are scheduled to speak at the upcoming Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence hosted by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## New program, personnel shifts at Macdonald-Laurier Institute



Jonathan Berkshire Miller, left, previously the director of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute's Indo-Pacific program, has taken over as the institute's new director of the foreign affairs, national defence, and national security program. Heather Exner-Pirot will take the helm of the institute's program focusing on natural resources, energy, and the environment. *Photographs courtesy of Twitter, LinkedIn*



The Macdonald-Laurier Institute (MLI), a public policy think tank based in Ottawa, has added a new program to its roster.

The policy shop will now be home to a new program focusing on natural resources, energy, and the environment, and will be led by **Heather Exner-Pirot**, who has worked as a senior fellow at MLI since 2021.

"The new program carves out a dedicated pillar for natural resources, energy and environment," said MLI managing director **Brian Lee Crowley** in a release. "I can't think of a better thought leader to take the helm than Heather."

**Jonathan Berkshire Miller**, previously the director of MLI's Indo-Pacific program, has taken over as the institute's new director of the foreign affairs, national defence, and national security program following the recent departure of **Shuvaloy Majumdar**, who led the program for several years. On March 4, Majumdar won the nomination to stand as the federal Conservative candidate in Calgary Heritage, Alta. That seat was vacated at the end of 2022 by former Tory MP **Bob Benzen**, who was first elected in a 2017 byelection after former prime minister **Stephen Harper** resigned from the safe Conserva-

tive seat. Majumdar is a former Harper-era cabinet staffer.

Crowley noted that Miller has led and expanded MLI's Indo-Pacific Program "with distinction and will build on those many successes in MLI's influence and impact."

"It has never been more important for MLI to lead the discussion and debate about Canada's rightful place in a dangerous world, to call out bad public policy and to press for better alternatives," he said.

## Iranian women tribute panel discussion scheduled for March 9

**Mahsa Amini**, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who was arrested by Iran's morality police for allegedly improperly wearing her hijab, died under mysterious circumstances in Tehran on Sept. 16, 2022.

On March 9, human rights activists **Azam Jangvari** and **Afshin Jam** will join professional boxer and actress **Najmeh Tansaz** as well as Liberal MPs **Anita Vandenberg** and **Jenna Sudds** for a virtual panel discussion to pay tribute to the women of Iran who have "for decades, been brutally oppressed, discriminated against, and harassed by the totalitarian and theocratic Islamic Regime," according to a release.

The panel, which will be moderated by lawyer and human rights activist **Mehrak Hazaveh**, will include discussions around the challenges and struggles that Iranian women face, the capacity of the international community to promote women's rights organizations in Iran, and maintaining support for the Woman, Life, Freedom movement.

The discussion will also touch on the Canadian government's support—or lack thereof—for women's rights activists and human rights defenders in Iran, as well as platforms for women rights activists to articulate their demands for change, unite around shared goals, and bolster advocacy efforts.

[mlapointe@hilltimes.com](mailto:mlapointe@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*



# INVEST IN MONGOLIA

Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC, owner of 34% of Oyu Tolgoi, is a state-owned company that has been entrusted to represent Government of Mongolia's interest in Oyu Tolgoi LLC. As a shareholder, Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC have supported the management team and mining operation to maximize the value of the Oyu Tolgoi project. Oyu Tolgoi, located in the South Gobi region of Mongolia, is one of the largest known copper and gold deposits in the world. It is also one of the most modern, safe, and sustainable operations in the world. When the underground is fully operational, it will be the fourth-largest copper mine in the world. Open pit mining began at Oyu Tolgoi in 2011 and the copper concentrator, the largest industrial complex ever built in Mongolia, began processing mined ore into copper concentrate in 2013 with water usage three times lower than the global average. As of 2023, 97% of the Oyu Tolgoi project workforce is made up of Mongolians, who have amassed incredible world class technical knowledge over a short period of time.

Oyu Tolgoi is committed to a high standard of environmental stewardship and working closely with local communities with Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC to protect the history, culture, and livelihoods of the Umnugovi province. Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC is spearheading the Khanbogd community master development plan with Oyu Tolgoi LLC to transform Khanbogd soum into a sustainable modern city.

The Oyu Tolgoi Underground mine project, which started in 2016, have recorded over 75-million-man hours. In the first quarter of 2023 Oyu Tolgoi underground mine operation will commence ahead of schedule hence providing further evidence of national workforce ability and collaboration between the Government of Mongolia and Rio Tinto. This major milestone will bring great excitement to all parties involved including the people of Mongolia and further show to the world that major mining projects can be developed in Mongolia.

An underground mine of such stature has never been constructed in Mongolia and has required extensive mining expertise which the national workforce has embraced with enthusiasm. The workforce that has helped develop the Oyu Tolgoi project will be ready for new major mining projects. The New Recovery Policy, put forth by the Government of the Mongolia to strengthen the mining sector will shift focus from exporting raw materials or concentrates to exporting final products by building major plants such as copper concentrate processing plant and oil refinery in line with green development policies.

I, Tserenbat Namsrai, would like to officially invite mining companies, investors and interested parties to Mongolia and Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC will do it's best to support you.

*2023 marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Mongolia. Together with our Mongolian partners, EDC celebrates this important milestone and the strong ties our two countries have forged over these many years. Throughout, we have been proud to support Canadian companies looking to expand their export journey into Mongolia. In 2015, EDC's participation in the Oyu Tolgoi mine project financing further solidified our commitment to grow trade between both countries. This project is a major development in the global copper industry and we look forward to continuing to work closely with Canadian exporters and with our partners in Mongolia to continue to strengthen the international business ties between our two nations.*

*-Carl Burlock, Executive Vice President & Chief Business Officer, Export Development Canada*



**ERDENES  
OYU TOLGOI**

Photo: The Oyu Tolgoi (OT) underground mine first drawbell blasting on June 17th, 2022.  
From left to right: Tserenbat Namsrai, CEO of Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC (EOT) and Member of the Board of Directors of OT; Deirde Lingenfelder, CEO of Oyu Tolgoi LLC; Andrew Wilson, Operations Director of OT LLC; and Batsukh Galsan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oyu Tolgoi LLC and former Ambassador of Mongolia to Canada. Photo credit: Oyu Tolgoi Media team.

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## News

# MPs blame Tory Genuis for stalling House Foreign Affairs Committee reproductive health study

MPs say the work on the 12-member Foreign Affairs Committee has slowed to a crawl due to the filibustering of one lone member: Garnett Genuis.

BY NEIL MOSS

Members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development are pointing the finger at a lone Conservative MP for stalling a study on global sexual and reproductive health.

The Liberals on the committee first made a call for the study on sexual and reproductive health around the world during a meeting on May 16, 2022. But, in the face of a filibuster, it took seven sessions of that meeting—over the course of May 16, 19, June 2, 6, 13, 16, and 20, with each meeting many hours long—before the committee was able to agree on June 20, 2022, to launch the study.

“At some point it is not democratic to allow one person to sideline a committee for something like 16 to 18 hours of committee work,” said Liberal MP Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.), parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister, pointing the blame at Conservative MP Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.), his party’s international development critic.

The vote to begin a study passed with the support of all MPs on the committee except for Genuis.

In an emailed response, Genuis said that Conservatives are supportive of the study, but that they are concerned that the committee has “struggled to set priorities.”

“We believe that the committee should complete its existing work, especially on Ukraine, before taking on additional projects. Some members seem to think that we can have over a dozen studies underway at once. This doesn’t make much sense,” he said.

“Sadly, Liberals and New Democrats seem to think that talking about abortion laws in the United



Conservative MP Garnett Genuis was the lone member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to vote against a study on sexual and reproductive health around the world. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

States should displace the committee’s other work—such as work on Ukraine and Iran,” he added.

The motion to start the study was tabled two weeks after a leaked opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court signalled that it would soon overturn abortion rights.

Oliphant said the timing was “coincidental,” noting that the issue has long been a priority for Liberal MP Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, B.C.), who moved the original motion. He said there was concern about the U.S., but the focus is on the Global South and developing countries.

Despite the study being agreed to, Genuis continued to filibuster during the committee’s first dedicated meeting on Dec. 7, 2022.

At the meeting, tensions between Genuis and other committee members were high, as the Alberta MP complained about being cut off amid a slew of points of order from his colleagues.

“I haven’t finished a sentence in the entire time I’ve been speaking,” Genuis said.

“We all feel so terrible for you,” Liberal MP Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Que.) responded.

Later during the Dec. 7 meeting, Bendayan questioned how long Genuis would be able to “hijack the work of the committee.”

The meeting was suspended until it reconvened on Jan. 18 to pass a series of motions. At the meeting, Genuis withdrew his motion to call on the Canadian

government to revoke a sanctions waiver to Russia for the export of Gazprom turbines, which was behind his Dec. 7 filibuster. The Canadian government revoked the waiver on Dec. 14.

The committee finally had non-filibustered meetings for its study on Feb. 16 and March 7, one of which Genuis was present for and one for which he was absent.

Oliphant told *The Hill Times* that he is hopeful that the study will be able to proceed.

“The evidence of the last few months would point towards it being a difficult study and my hope is that common sense will prevail,” he said, but noted there are “hundreds and hundreds” of motions in front of the committee that can be brought back up to interrupt the study.

Oliphant said the situation at the committee is “unbelievably frustrating,” noting that its report on Ukraine was delayed due to the filibustering, as well as other work that can be done on Ethiopia, Haiti, and Venezuela, among other pressing issues.

When the Ukraine report was finally tabled in mid-February, Bloc MP Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, Que.), a vice-chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told reporters that the committee had been taken “hostage” by “partisan issues.”

To end the filibuster in the spring, Oliphant said there was an agreement to not start the study sooner than Oct. 1, 2022, to

avoid conflicting with the Conservative leadership race, which was completed on Sept. 10, 2022.

“We have no desire to make this an internal problem for the Conservative Party,” he said, remarking that it was the Conservatives that requested the study be pushed back, which was agreed to.

Oliphant said that the filibuster continuing in December when government officials were appearing as witnesses was in “bad faith” after a deal was made to delay the study’s start.

He said the issue is a result of Genuis having an ideological view that is divergent from the rest of the committee.

“This is an issue around the world, we hear about it,” he said. “It’s something that Canada has stepped up with, with a feminist international development policy. It relates to our goals to have full access to all aspects of reproductive health, including abortion for women around the world, and Canada working on that agenda.”

NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.), her party’s foreign affairs and international development critic, echoed Oliphant’s remarks that Genuis is upending the work of the committee.

“The frustrating part of this is Canadians expect their Parliamentarians to do our job and to get to work and there [hasn’t] been a time in recent history that the Foreign Affairs Com-

mittee had more important work to do,” she said, noting that the “shenanigans” happening meant the committee couldn’t focus on crucial issues.

“It’s super frustrating. We should be able to work better together. If this was any other job and one member of your team was making it impossible to do your job, that member would be fired,” she said.

She told *The Hill Times* in February that the Foreign Affairs Committee had become nearly dysfunctional.

McPherson said if the filibustering is going to continue, she will consider not attending the committee.

“If there’s work that can be done, I’m going to be in the committee room. If certain members prevent us from getting [that] done, I’m not going to spend my time spending seven more meetings or eight more meetings listening to nonsense. I just won’t,” she said. “Frankly, it’s too much emotional luggage to have to carry around. It’s not good for anyone’s mental health to listen to someone deny women’s rights for that long, especially as a woman.”

She remarked earlier this week that she is hopeful that committee members have built a better relationship with each other following their trip to Europe over the last two weeks. Genuis wasn’t on the trip.

“I would hope we would be able to work more collaboratively,” she said. “We don’t have to agree to be able to be efficient and get things done. My hope is that we’re moving in the right direction. We’ll see.”

McPherson, who spoke to *The Hill Times* prior to the March 7 meeting, said the Feb. 16 meeting that was able to go forward was “extremely important.”

“It was really good testimony that the committee heard that made it more clear than ever that this is a study that we should be undertaking,” she said.

Liberal MP Ali Ehsassi (Wilmowdale, Ont.), who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also placed the blame for the stalled committee work on Genuis.

“This was numerous and repeated attempts by one member to impede the committee,” he said, remarking that the committee itself isn’t dysfunctional. “One member was willing to twist and bend the agenda of the committee.”

He said it has taken “quite some time” to start the study, noting there have been “many conversations” with Genuis to find a path forward and remarking that the process was “quite frustrating and annoying” for many on the committee.

“He seemed to think that this issue is a bargaining chip for him,” he said. “All the members were somewhat frustrated as he was standing in the way of a motion that was signed off on by members of his own party as well. Essentially, all the members dug in and ultimately we were able to commence a study.”

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*The Hill Times*



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## Opinion

# A foreign interference registry would protect Canadians from the long reach of threats abroad



Cindy Termorshuizen, associate deputy minister of foreign affairs, left, and Jody Thomas, national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, answer questions about foreign election interference at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee on March 1. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Diaspora communities are often the victims of foreign intimidation and interference actions, with fear of retaliation often causing people to self-censor, even in Canada.

Henry Chan

Opinion



The shocking report by the *Globe and Mail* outlining the sophisticated network of interference by the Chinese government in Canada should worry every Canadian. This foreign interference not only undermines Canada's sovereignty, but also trust in our democratic institutions.

A wide spectrum of media have called for a Foreign Interference Registry Act (FIRA) to safeguard Canada's democracy. Canada has finally recognized the problem of interference by malign regimes. But, this legislation is long overdue. CSIS has been warning for years of foreign infiltration in our dem-

ocratic, governmental, and civil institutions. Many in the Russian, Iranian, Chinese, and other Asian diaspora communities are calling for the passage of a foreign agent registry. Canada is trailing behind its allies in combating foreign influence. The United States had similar legislation passed more than 80 years ago, and Australia did so in 2018. The United Kingdom also introduced a government bill to enact similar measures.

The claim of a potential increase in racism towards people coming from hostile regimes is often used as the primary argument against legislation such as a FIRA that protects Canada and Canadian interests. However, coming from an Asian-Canadian background, I feel that a foreign interference registry actually deters intimidation and infiltration from hostile regimes. It acts as a protective measure for diaspora communities against the horrendous acts conducted by foreign states in other countries.

If politicians are truly frightened that a foreign agent registry will increase racism, they should explain to the public that such legislation is only targeted at the regimes that conduct intimidation and interference, and not at their people. Diaspora communities are often the victims of such actions. Fear of retaliation by the hostile regime often causes people to self-censor, even in Canada. Threats against their personal safety or the safety of family members are used to deter diaspora communities from dissenting or engaging in advocacy.

One must also call out the propaganda by foreign regimes to muddy the waters. The regime is not and should not be seen as equal to the people from those countries. In fact, many people escaped from regimes such as Russia, China, and Iran to Canada because human dignity has no place in the minds of their dictators. Therefore, in no way can it be said that their governments represent them.

The FIRA only requires someone to register themselves if they are receiving funding from or acting on behalf of a foreign government. The sole purpose is to increase transparency and assist the public in knowing whether a person or organization is working for a foreign entity. In no way does the FIRA limit one's freedom to run for office, lobby politicians, or engage in cultural exchanges. Disclosure and transparency are long-standing traditions in democratic countries to increase accountability and maintain public confidence.

In the long term, if foreign interference is left unaddressed, it will only allow hostile regimes to undermine and erode Canada's democratic institutions. When facing these increasingly despicable governments, Canada must be prepared and resolute in calling out such actions while making it clear that it is directed only toward the regimes and not their people.

The FIRA would be a major step Canada can take to counter the threat of foreign interference. It must be enacted in a timely fashion, as there is an uptick in

reports of interference that have already shaken the public's trust. Canadians of all backgrounds should be able to know who governs them or where their news is coming from. Politicians should be able to know whether lobbyists with whom they speak are acting on behalf of a foreign principal. Therefore, a FIRA must be a bipartisan effort to safeguard Canada's interests. Partisan warfare only allows our adversaries to poke holes in our democratic fabric.

People from ethnic communities should not be living in fear because they do not feel safe even in Canada. Fear restricts other forms of freedom. It is in combating foreign infiltration that Canada can truly be strong and free. Canadians of all stripes must be vigilant to protect those freedoms from being undermined by foreign regimes with motives to undercut a rules-based international order.

As a member of the Hong-konger-Canadian community, I believe that weakness never prevails in facing malevolent regimes. Legislation with teeth is a long-term solution to fight foreign meddling and protect Canadian diaspora communities from foreign governments that intimidate their own people.

Henry Chan is the co-director of Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong, a Hongkonger-Canadian community organization. He is also the main organizer of a nationwide multicultural coalition in concern of foreign interference in Canada.

*The Hill Times*

## Comment

## Will the West's support for Ukraine stand the test of time?

The overriding question is becoming whether the West will persist in helping Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hold back the invasion for the long term.

Les Whittington

*Need to Know*



OTTAWA—Some analysts appeared surprised that Russian President Vladimir Putin had survived in office for a year after launching a disastrous attempt at a quick military takeover of neighbouring Ukraine.

Putin has made Russia a subject of international condemnation, caused long-term damage to the domestic economy, callously sent tens of thousands of Russian soldiers to their deaths in a needless conflict with no end in sight, and conscripted 300,000 men to replace losses on the battlefield. And he is waging a barbarous, illegal war on Ukraine's civilians.

Yet there is no evidence that anything arising from Putin's monstrous miscalculation has dented his popularity or ability to continue his dictatorial 22-year hold on his country. In fact, a small literature seems to have developed among experts and opinion surveyors trying to understand why this is the case.

It starts with the reality that all leaders tend to benefit from the "rally-round-the-flag" phenomenon of war. And with Russia, with

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# Editorial

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## Editorial

### Special rapporteur on election interference should take on party nomination contests

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to appoint a special rapporteur on election interference with a goal of “combating interference and strengthening our democracy.”

While that “eminent” person necessarily must focus on foreign interference in the wake of explosive allegations China may have meddled in the 2019 and 2021 elections, they should also zero in on party nomination contests.

Media reports suggested these local party-run races are vulnerable to exploitation, with inconsistent rules and ways for savvy candidates to sign up bogus memberships to boost their votes come election day.

This will come as no surprise to the parties themselves, which keep a close eye on the contests that matter where the party has a fighting chance or a stranglehold on the federal electoral outcome. Every election, there are dozens of ridings predictably won by specific parties with massive margins. So, the nomination contest is where a candidate for that riding can be democratically tested—by that party’s membership, at least.

Except a competitive contest in the first place is not the norm. A Samara Centre for Democracy report ahead of the 2019 election did a deep dive and found a measly 17 per cent of the 6,600 candidates from the previous five elections were nominated through competitive races.

While the vast majority had scant hopes of taking one of the 338 coveted Commons spots and many were ballot fillers (Samara looked at Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Bloc Québécois, and Green Party candidates), it points to a broad acceptance by all parties that these “races” don’t need to be races at all.

The report observed the increasing centralization of the process, giving parties the power to decide when contests open and close, and who can run. And, to top it off, they lack transparency, with parties having no requirement to release information on votes cast or the number of contestants prevented from running.

Parties, of course, need the power to vet their candidates and set minimum conditions a member must meet to run under their banner. But once those conditions are met, it should be an equal playing field.

A contest with no set rules is easy to exploit, but let’s be honest where this interference most often happens. Samara called its report *Party Favours* for a reason. There’s a host of data that also suggests this approach doesn’t exactly benefit women or diverse candidates, either. No hand-picked person should ever make it into the House of Commons without some level of democratic challenge.

Hopefully, this special rapporteur will tap Elections Canada to step in and set basic rules for nominations.

*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor

### Feds driving food price hikes with carbon tax: Ontario reader

It’s unbelievable that the Canadian federal government doesn’t have the brains or smarts to know that the carbon tax has increased all prices for food to be delivered in Canada. It’s a really sick joke, along with the government’s own addition of a six per cent tax increase to all alcoholic beverages coming on April 1.

All producers must pass on the increase to all consumers in a food chain. Inflation rates that keep rising and the lower Canadian dollar doesn’t help with these costs. After all, Canada is still a free-enterprise country, and if profit is a bad word, then perhaps the federal government has turned communist.

Wasting money by looking at the food processors’ belly button lint just shows how out of touch this constantly tax-raising federal government that throws tax dollars around like confetti really is.

As the property taxes and a host of other taxes collected by all levels of government rise, the food industry needs profits to continue in business or will have to close their doors. This federal government is just finger-pointing to take the heat off of itself and its incompetence.

A federal election needs to be called ASAP.

**Wayne Robertson**  
Chatham, Ont.

### Russian envoy shouldn’t be platformed: UCC adviser

Re: “Russia continues bluster after suspending nuclear-weapon treaty,” (*The Hill Times*, March 1, p. 5).

Kudos to *The Hill Times* for platforming a spokesman for genocide and terrorism. Next time you sit down with Russian Ambassador Oleg Stepanov, do ask him why Russian soldiers keep murdering and raping Ukrainian women and children.

It should be a source of great shame to our Canadian government that he is allowed to remain in the country. He should have been booted out long ago.

**Orest Zakydalsky**  
Senior policy adviser,  
Ukrainian Canadian Congress  
Ottawa, Ont.

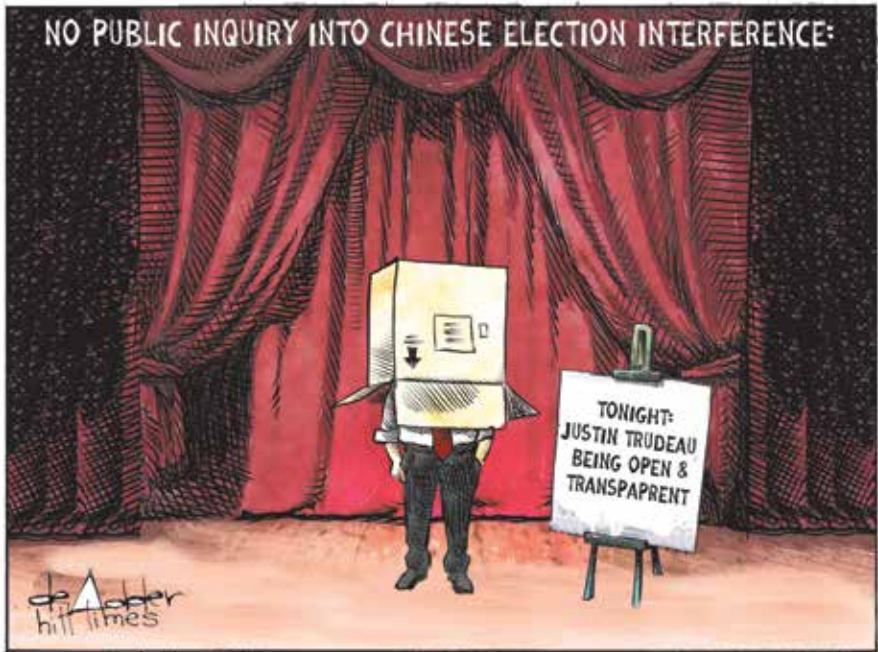
### Clock is ticking on hitting SDGs, says Calgary reader

This year marks the midpoint for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), targets for global development to be reached by 2030. To see how we are doing, you only need to remember we are just out of the crises dominated by COVID-19, climate change, and conflicts. These are creating ongoing impacts on food and nutrition, health, education, the environment, and peace and security.

There is one statistic we can all relate to: the share of countries affected by high

food prices has risen sharply, climbing from 16 per cent in 2019 to 47 per cent in 2020 (and much further since then), according to the UN. It all seems very unfair that these crises are out of our immediate control, but the Government of Canada needs to commit to increasing its international assistance envelope over the next three years, to reach at least \$10-billion annually, if we are to do our share to reach the SDGs.

**Randy Rudolph**  
Calgary, Alta.



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# MAID and mental health deserve thoughtful debate

Moronic flamethrower rhetoric and talking points from all sides won't do the job of properly figuring out what is best here.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Medical assistance in dying (MAID), as currently constructed in Canada, is something I support. Of course, it needs to be constantly reviewed, informed by new science, and rigorously overseen. It should never just be another regular prescription, but people of sound mind should be able to consent to ending their life if their condition is irremediable, nothing but

suffering is ahead, and it is in line with all current guidelines.

I am not a medical expert. I do not have advanced knowledge of psychiatry and mental health research. I have lived with depression and anxiety for more than 30 years and I was diagnosed with major depression disorder decades ago. While I have never, to the best of my memory, ever thought of ending my own life, I have had extreme lows, feelings of intense helplessness, and been in such despair that hopelessness seemed to be my future narrative.

When those depressive episodes hit, as well as before and after them, I was fortunate to have excellent medical care; deep, strong family support; intense peer help; and professional environments that lent a hand instead of handing out a pink slip. Believe you me, I appreciate my luck and good fortune because I know many people who suffer from mental illnesses often have little or none of the above. Without those things, I may have made an end-of-life choice. So, it is gravely concerning to me that Canada's journey with MAID is now in a



Conservative Senator Denise Batters is involved in the official opposition's work around the inclusion of mental illness as grounds for MAID, and are particularly thoughtful individuals on this subject, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

place where solely having a mental illness could make a person eligible for physician-assisted dying.

I look at the current discussion on the inclusion of mental illness in MAID eligibility neither philosophically nor with professional psychiatric training, but rather from the perspective of someone who lives with a mental illness. You manage your mental health like many other health conditions—or, at least that is my experience, you constantly strive for wellness, but still require different levels of vigilance to stay healthy. Sometimes you succeed, other times you don't. Through my lived experience, I don't think mental illness fits neatly into an irremediable category, which I gather is a key determinant in assessing MAID qualification.

The federal government announced recently that it has put a one-year pause on including mental illness as a sole component for MAID eligibility. The Conservative opposition say they would not make this inclusion were they to form government and have called for more investment in mental health treatments. MP Ed Fast and Senator Denise Batters are involved in this work on the Conservative side, and are

particularly thoughtful individuals on this subject.

However, it was disappointing to hear some Conservative rhetoric around MAID and this mental-health issue that stated the Liberals supported a "culture of death." I am banned from writing all the expletives I'm thinking to state how unhelpful that is when dealing with this vital legislative discussion. Moronic flamethrower rhetoric and talking points from all sides won't do the job of properly figuring out what is best here.

Again, I want to make the point that I don't have the professional credentials to know what is best here, but I also don't think it is an either/or choice—blanket inclusion or exclusion on the sole grounds of mental illness. I have known people with mental illnesses who have suffered brutally, have tried every treatment imaginable, and live in a perpetual hell. We need to do everything imaginable to help them find wellness, but science must tell us if and when every approach has been tried, and, if the consent capacity still exists, if MAID could be an option.

The discussion about mental illness inclusion into MAID is vital. Proper, thoughtful, deep, and informed review is essential.

Tim Powers is chairman of Summa Strategies and managing director of Abacus Data. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

*The Hill Times*

# China's interference in our elections is no surprise

While Canada has always practised 'strategic engagement' with China due to its economic importance, there have long been warnings of its malicious intent.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—In 1984, while working as an assistant to former solicitor-general Bob Kaplan in the Pierre Trudeau government, the minister passed along a gift he received from the Chinese Embassy. It was an or-

nate calendar, which did not suit the office of the minister responsible for the RCMP, and, later, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

About a week later, we were on an airplane and there was a Chinese trade delegation on board. They gave us China-Canada flag pins and pinned them on our lapels. We joked the calendar and pins were no coincidence, that the pins might be listening devices.

We laughed about it, but today, that scenario almost seems plausible, thanks to advanced technology. At the time, the RCMP was led by the late Robert Simmonds, who had the ears of the minister and prime minister. CSIS would come to be later that year. Confidential advice and analysis were not ignored.

Fast forward to today: the *Globe and Mail* has provided a "bombshell" report, based on a CSIS report on Chinese government efforts to influence the results of the 2019 and 2021 Canadian elections. The report says Liberal MP Han Dong was a "witting affiliate" of Chinese efforts, which he has denied. But, while the final result was not

affected, we have to wonder how many Liberal MPs are indebted to Beijing.

Let's examine the historical context. We have a prime minister who has repeatedly expressed his admiration for China, and has reached out to China despite warnings of its malicious intent. We were the last member of the Five Eyes intelligence group to reject Huawei's interest in 5G. And although the new Indo-Pacific strategy from Global Affairs Canada refers to China as an "increasingly disruptive power," this latest revelation begs the question of whether the PMO endorses that assessment.

While Canada has always practised "strategic engagement" with China due to its economic importance, there have long been warnings of its malicious intent. In 1997, in a report titled *Chinese Intelligence Services and Triads Financial Links in Canada*, an RCMP-CSIS joint task force alleged the Chinese government was "using legal and legitimate businesses to gain control over the economic levers of Canada."

In 2010, CSIS head Richard Fadden warned of the "general influence of a foreign govern-

ment," which was obviously China. For his efforts, Liberal MP Mark Holland demanded Fadden's resignation, or at least an apology. Fadden later told a parliamentary committee: "The main reason we are operating in this area is to protect Canadians from the foreign power. So, I do not think an apology is necessary."

In 2020, the *Globe and Mail* reported the National Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliamentarians outlined specific areas where Beijing (and Moscow) threatened the country's sovereignty and security, saying "if foreign interference was left unchecked, it will 'slowly erode the foundations of our fundamental institutions including our democracy itself.'"

As a mid-level diplomat, I was invited to dinner by the Chinese ambassador to Canada, and had lunch with their officers. But I was not interested in cultivating a relationship with the embassy. I was seen as an extremist by the China admirers at the Pearson building when I warned China was a fascist dictatorship and human rights abuser that couldn't be trusted.

The person who leaked the election interference report is likely someone whose advice has been repeatedly ignored by the PMO and felt they had no other recourse. Rather than seeking out who leaked the document, the government should be rooting out the problem of China's interference and potential Canadian collaboration.

The prime minister's responses have been pitiful; even some of his allies are now calling for a full inquiry into the matter. But like my former colleagues who refused to see China's faults, his government appears willfully blind. And that endangers Canada's international reputation, its relationship with its intelligence partners, and its sovereignty.

Add to that the Liberal Party fundraising among Beijing-connected businessmen, the appointment of two very China-friendly heads of the Beijing mission in John McCallum and Dominic Barton, the issue of Huawei's bid to provide 5G service (long after our allies had rejected them), and there is evidence there have long been signs of a willingness to look the other way when it comes to China, despite the concerns of our Five Eyes intelligence allies.

Andrew Caddell is retired from Global Affairs Canada, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

*The Hill Times*

## Comment



If Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy achieves his goal of driving all Russian invaders from his country's territory, that may in fact preclude any chance of a lasting peace in the region, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/President of Ukraine

# In an imperfect world, a total Ukrainian victory isn't feasible

The choice is either a large-scale ethnic cleansing or a permanent fixed security presence sitting atop a hostile civilian population.

Scott Taylor

*Inside Defence*



OTTAWA—With the war in Ukraine now into a second year, and no end in sight, it is high time that world leaders begin seeking a clear path to a resolution of this conflict. In the early days of the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy proclaimed that negotiations would be necessary to end the war.

However, as Ukraine's armed forces proved their mettle on the battlefield, and NATO countries—including Canada—continue to pour weaponry and training into the Ukraine defences, Zelenskyy has declared that total victory is now the ultimate objective.

Zelenskyy's stated goal is to drive all Russian invaders

from his country's territory. This includes both Donetsk and Luhansk, plus the Crimean Peninsula. While such a simplistic solution may sound plausible and just to a casual observer, the truth is that the situation is far more complex. Such an objective being achieved may in fact preclude any chance of a lasting peace in the region.

History buffs will recognize the fact that the Crimea has been part of Russia for some 250 years.

When the British, French, and Turkish alliance fought the Crimean War in 1853, they did so against the Russians, not the Ukrainians.

It was not until February 1954 that an administrative directive of the Soviet Union transferred Crimea from the Russians to the Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic.

Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula has long been the home port of the Russian navy's Black Sea Fleet.

Even prior to Russian President Vladimir Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia had a long-term lease with the Ukrainian government for the Sevastopol navy base until at least 2040.

It is not likely that Putin, or any potential successor to Russia's leadership, would agree to forfeit this strategic asset.

Then there is the fact the population of the Crimea is predominantly ethnic Russian—about

70 per cent, with the other major ethnicity being Muslim Tatars.

Those in the peninsula who identify as Ukrainian are approximately 10 per cent of the total population, which numbers 2.5 million.

“If NATO-equipped Ukrainian forces can eventually drive the last of the Russian military from Crimea, the question then becomes: what to do with such a potentially hostile ethnic Russian population?”

If NATO-equipped Ukrainian forces can eventually drive the last of the Russian military from Crimea, the question then becomes: what to do with such a potentially hostile ethnic Russian population?

An “ethnic cleansing” of that scale would not only cause massive human suffering, it would also deplete the region so completely of its workforce that Crimea would become unsustainable.

The alternative is to deploy a permanent Ukrainian security force to keep the ethnic Russian civilians in a state of enforced submission.

From recent experience with the Afghanistan and Iraq military occupations, we should realize that this is unlikely to end in success.

The same equation can be applied to the two self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, collectively known as the Donbas.

Long-forgotten in the popular refrain of “we stand with Ukraine” by western politicians is the fact that the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk are, by our stated definition, Ukrainian citizens as well.

The majority of the residents of these two oblasts (or republics) are either ethnic Russian or Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

When the Maidan Revolution toppled the pro-Russian regime in Kyiv in 2014, one of the first acts of the new parliament was

to repeal Russian language rights within Ukraine.

Unsurprisingly, the disenfranchised citizens of Donbas took up weapons and proclaimed their independence from the new pro-western regime in Kyiv.

Both Donetsk and Luhansk held referendums in those early days, wherein the majority voted to join the Russian Federation.

At that stage, however, Putin was content with the annexation of Crimea, and he wanted Donetsk and Luhansk to remain as a buffer against NATO within a federated Ukraine.

On the eve of his Feb. 24, 2022, invasion, Putin formally recognized Donetsk and Luhansk as independent states. As the war dragged on, Putin announced Russia's annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson on Sept. 30, 2022. All four are oblasts in Ukraine.

I have little doubt that with the right combination of NATO's sophisticated weapons, training, and munitions, the Ukraine armed forces will eventually drive the Russian invaders from these four regions.

However, it will also mean driving out those Russian-Ukrainian civilians who have long lived in this region and who have taken up arms to resist the regime in Kyiv.

Again, the choice is either a large-scale ethnic cleansing or a permanent fixed security presence sitting atop a hostile civilian population.

In a perfect world, Canada would be well-suited to broker a peace deal that invoked the recognition of regional language rights within a bilingual, unified Ukraine. However, we forfeited that possibility long ago.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of *Esprit de Corps* magazine.

*The Hill Times*



In its current form, Bill C-11 will create a two-tiered system in which Canadian broadcasters, producers, and creators are subject to one set of rules, while foreign streamers face a different, much looser set of guidelines, write Linda Schuyler and Stephen Stohn. *Unsplash photograph by Peter Geo*

# Bill C-11 affects the future of Canada's domestic film and TV sector

The future of Canada's domestic film and television sector depends on our collective ability to retain and control a meaningful share of the IP we create and produce.

Linda Schuyler & Stephen Stohn

Opinion



Some friends were travelling in China back in the 1990s, when the country was just opening up to the western world. When they introduced themselves to their interpreter as Canadian, he smiled

and said to them: "Ah, Canada: Bethune ... and *Degrassi*!"

It's been more than 40 years since the production of *The Kids of Degrassi Street*. More than 500 episodes of various *Degrassi* TV series have followed over the decades, reaching audiences across the country and around the world.

As Members of Parliament again turn their attention to Bill C-11, the Online Streaming Act, it's worth reflecting on how this Canadian franchise came to be a long-term contributor to both our economy and our culture.

In large part, it's because we Canadians owned and controlled the rights in it—the copyrights and other intellectual property (IP) rights in it. We decided how to make the show, whom to hire, and which issues to focus on. We took the risks and reaped the benefits when the show did well. This allowed us to create more jobs and help more Canadian writers, actors, and technicians establish and grow their careers. Today, the *Degrassi* family tree is immense. So many got their start—or their big break—with us.

But owning the IP isn't in the cards for many Canadian producers today. In recent years, the competitive landscape in Canadian film and television production has become severely tilted in favour of foreign streamers like Netflix, Apple, Amazon, and Disney. These global giants are amassing enormous control, leverage, economic power, and cultural influence.

Bill C-11 was created in part to address this shifting reality and lack of balance. Indeed, the motivation behind the legislation seemed clear at the time: it was about levelling the playing field. Streamers are using their size and influence to impose terms that wrestle ownership and control of Canadian stories away from Canadian companies and into the hands of global corporations. In revising the Broadcasting Act, as C-11 will do, the government could empower Canadians to stand a better chance of retaining control of their creations. And indeed, the federal government should be credited for its efforts to modernize our national broad-

casting rules. There is a lot in this legislation that is valuable and forward-looking.

But there's also a pivotal challenge. In its current form, Bill C-11 won't actually level the playing field. Instead, it will create a two-tiered system in which Canadian broadcasters, producers, and creators are subject to one set of rules, while foreign streamers face a different, much looser set of guidelines.

This undermines both the original intent of the legislation and its ability to create a system that's equitable for all.

We know that streamers have the resources to contribute to the Canadian system, thanks in large part to Canadian subscribers. We also know that other nations are taking a stand and creating rules that create an environment for fair negotiations between streamers and domestic producers.

That is what we want, and what Canadian producers need: a system in which everyone is subject to the same rules.

As a country, we need to be unapologetic about owning and controlling the rights to the intellectual property of Canadian programs—because IP has both economic and cultural value. When Canadians produce shows like *Letterkenny*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, and *Schitt's Creek*, Canadians should benefit when these series become international success stories. And the more Canadian producers benefit, the more export revenues will be driven back into Canada, to the benefit of all Canadians.

With the right policy decisions, Canada can put itself in that position. We can ensure that truly Canadian productions continue to be made for domestic and international audiences. We can build a sustainable Canadian talent ecosystem and promote

Canadian talent to the world. And we can not only preserve, but also enhance the ability of Canadians to access content that reflects the full diversity of our country and its people.

And we won't only be creating large export revenues for Canada, we will also be exporting Canadian values to a world in turmoil, a world with democracy under threat. A world that equates Canada with peace, moderation, diversity, and equality—just as that Chinese interpreter equated Canada with *Degrassi* those many years ago, and millions of others around the world do likewise with a myriad of Canadian shows.

Intellectual property is the currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The future of Canada's domestic film and television sector depends on our collective ability to retain and control a meaningful share of the IP we create and produce.

If we get this right, the Canadian film and television industry can flourish in the years ahead, creating more high-quality movies and series that showcase the talent of Canadian creators and producers. By establishing a truly level playing field, government can build a better and more vibrant future for Canadian audiences, creators, and companies.

Linda Schuyler is the CEO of Skystone Media Inc., and executive producer and co-creator of more than 500 episodes of the internationally recognized, multi-award winning *Degrassi* television franchise. Stephen Stohn is the president of Skystone Media Inc., and has worked in the entertainment industry for more than 50 years, as an entertainment lawyer and longtime executive producer of the *Degrassi* franchise.

The Hill Times

## News

# Experts welcome Rouleau's call to combat misinformation, say 'whole-of-society approach' needed

The current information landscape is a feedback loop where 'you come for the ideology, and you stay despite the science-free lunacy,' says health misinformation expert Timothy Caulfield.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

A Rouleau report recommendation calling on governments to better address the spread of misinformation and disinformation is "absolutely necessary" following the convoy protests, with the polarized online space causing "grave harm," says a law professor who studies the phenomenon.

"I really think the spread of misinformation, the embrace of misinformation, is one of the defining issues of our time," said Timothy Caulfield, a University of Alberta law professor who researches health misinformation.

In the final report of the Public Order Emergency Commission, released Feb. 17, Justice Paul Rouleau made 56 recommendations. Caulfield said he was pleased to see recommendation 53, which



One of Justice Paul Rouleau's 56 recommendations in the Public Order Emergency Commission report calls on governments to address the 'serious challenges' of misinformation, disinformation, and online harms. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

says governments should "continue to study the impact of social media, including misinformation and disinformation, on Canadian society, with a focus on preserving freedom of expression and the benefits of new technologies, while addressing the serious challenges that misinformation, disinformation, and other online harms present to individuals and Canadian society."

In his report, Rouleau notes he had two mandates. The first, created by the Emergencies Act, to assess whether the act had been used properly. The second, from the order-in-council that created the commission, and instructed him to look at, in part: the evolution and organization of the convoy, domestic and foreign funding, crowdsourcing platforms, and the sources and impact of misinformation and disinformation, including the use of social media. That second mandate led to this finding.

"Evidence from many of the convoy organizers and participants demonstrated a range of views that I have no difficulty characterizing as being based on misinformation," Rouleau wrote in the 2,000-page report. For example, he pointed to James Bauder, a protest organizer, who testified he believed mRNA vaccines alter people's genes and, in light of this, international conventions gave the Senate authority to override domestic law.

Caulfield pointed to a report he worked on with the Council of Canadian Academies, titled *Fault-lines*, which estimates misinformation resulted in thousands of excess deaths during the pandemic,

as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in extra hospital costs.

"It's not hyperbole to say it's killing people, if you even just look at it in the context of the vaccination space," said Caulfield of health misinformation.

He said the growing relationship between misinformation and ideology makes it even more complicated.

"The polarization, the ideological component—it's an interesting feedback loop," he said. "Because what happens is a bit of misinformation arises, and then it is adopted as part of the ideological signaling for a particular group."

Caulfield explained this means someone may be "attracted to a community or to a broader narrative, because there's something that's ideologically appealing" to them, regardless of where that person sits on the political spectrum.

Once someone becomes part of such a community, he said they embrace the messaging and the misinformation that comes with it.

"Put another way," said Caulfield, "you come for the ideology, and you stay despite the science-free lunacy."

In his report, Rouleau said he had "no doubt that misinformation about COVID-19 influenced the views of some protesters and how they assessed the quality of government health measures."

He also observed that "individuals protested for a variety of reasons, ranging from the genuine fatigue and hardship caused by almost two years of COVID-19 measures, to polarized and hostile partisan views."

"At the fringes were more radical actors," wrote Rouleau, "including both ethno-nationalist extremists and conspiracy groups. Most protests were peaceful, but social media amplified calls for violence."

Social media regulation has been advocated as a potential response, although experts differ on the best approach. However, given the scale of the problem and the challenges posed by regulating online platforms, those who work in this field say governments have additional tools they should explore to address this recommendation.

Marcus Kolga, a senior policy fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute who studies disinformation

among foreign actors, said addressing the problem will require "a whole-of-society approach."

## Information literacy for governments and citizens

Vanessa Sung, interim executive director of Ottawa-based nonprofit Evidence for Democracy, said the public service should assess the information landscape as part of policy design and rollout.

"It's important to have a better understanding of what citizens in different populations believe about [an] issue, or how they understand [an] issue, to try and get ahead of any mis- and disinformation that can be circulating," she said.

Sung said governments should be identifying and analyzing what types of mis- and disinformation exist on a given topic, so they can be "crafting policy and communications around that knowledge."

She said the government already has some recent experience using this approach at the Public Health Agency of Canada with COVID-19, and the approach can be applied by other departments.

In his report, Rouleau writes that mis- and disinformation "undermine the ability of government officials and members of the public to meaningfully engage in discussions on policy and governance."

In the case of the "Freedom Convoy," he said the "government did not have a realistic prospect of productively engaging with certain protesters, like those that believed COVID-19 vaccines were part of a vast global conspiracy to depopulate the planet. At the same time, protest organizers' mistrust of government officials was reinforced by unfair generalizations from some public officials that suggested all protesters were extremists."

That's why Sung said the government's response should go beyond policy-making to include investments in digital literacy training, particularly in public schools. Most experts consulted for this story expressed similar suggestions.

One organization working to promote this kind of civic and digital literacy is CIVIX.

Dimitri Pavlounis, director of research for CIVIX, said "Canadians just aren't equipped with the skills to navigate the digital environment as well as they could."

He said his organization is working "on the ground at the



University of Alberta law professor Timothy Caulfield says Rouleau's recommendation was 'absolutely necessary.' *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*



Marcus Kolga of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute says the problem will require 'a whole-of-society approach.' *Photograph courtesy of MLI*

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## News

Continued from page 12

citizen level” on “building citizen resiliency,” through activities such as professional development work with teachers.

“We’re teaching these evidence-based methods of digital literacy, that will hopefully help people do a better job of navigating their online environments, making sure that they’re getting information that is accurate and meaningful to them,” he said.

### ‘A Band-Aid’ for ‘larger structural problems’

However, said Pavlounis, sometimes this feels like “a Band-Aid, until some of these larger structural problems are dealt with.”

“There’s obviously the failures on the level of public communication, or just failure of institutions—that are designed to serve the public interest—losing trust from some members of the public,” he said, in addition to a “complete lack of transparency” about how various social media platforms work.

Kolga said Canada should look to its allies, pointing to Taiwan, Finland, Sweden, and the Baltic states, as countries that have been “on the frontlines of foreign disinformation for quite some time.”

For example, he said, Taiwan has brought technology companies “around the table” to work on algorithms that “dethrottle” the spread of misinformation. While he called regulation a “nuclear option,” he said if companies are not willing to take these steps, then it may be necessary.

Pavlounis and Caulfield both noted that the Rouleau recommendation hinted at one of the largest challenges when it comes to regulation: balancing it with freedom of expression and the constitutional challenges such legislation could face.

“These are private actors,” said Caulfield. “And envisioning how a government would craft regulation in a way that it would have real teeth is not an insignificant mountain to climb up.”

*The Hill Times* sent an inquiry to the office of Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.), asking how Rouleau’s recommendation would inform his department’s ongoing work on online harms legislation.

In an email, his press secretary Laura Scaffidi said the Liberal government “has made it a priority to help equip citizens with the tools and skills needed to think critically about the information they consume online” in response to the increase in disinformation published online and through social media.

Scaffidi highlighted several initiatives at Canadian Heritage, such as the Digital Citizenship Contribution Program, which she said provided approximately \$15-million for research and learning activities to help Canadians navigate information online. She noted a March 2022 call for proposals, totaling \$2.5-million, for activities designed to help citizens detect mis- and disinformation about COVID-19 and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

*The Hill Times* also reached out to the office of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) for a more specific comment on how this Rouleau recommendation would inform its ongoing work, but did not receive a reply.

Conservative heritage critic Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, Alta.), and NDP MP Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, Ont.), his party’s spokesperson for the report, were unavailable for comment.

Caulfield said the issue remains “one of the problems where we have to come at it from absolutely every direction.”

“It’s like other public health issues, like smoking,” he said. “It’s not going to be one tool.”

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# Global



The report by former senior civil servant Sue Gray, left, could take perhaps 25 per cent of the credit for bringing Boris Johnson down, but no more, writes Gwynne Dyer. Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Flickr

## ‘Partygate’ inquiry lead turned Labour Party hire: a dastardly plot?

Sue Gray’s civil service exit to take the job as Labour Party leader Keir Starmer’s chief of staff caused shock and horror throughout Whitehall.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—At first, it just looked like dumb luck.

Less than a year after he was driven from office by his party, former British prime minister Boris Johnson was getting his final comeuppance. The cross-party privileges committee created to determine whether he had lied to

Parliament issued its report last week, and it was dire.

In essence, it said that Johnson must have known about the more-frequent-than-weekly drinking parties held by his personal staff to celebrate birthdays, people leaving, or simply the fact that it was Friday because:

- a) it was all happening in his own rather large 17<sup>th</sup>-century residence in Downing Street (British prime ministers live above the shop);
- b) there were many personal reports that Johnson himself took part in these events; and
- c) the police actually fined him for breaking the rules against large social gatherings that were in force during those early COVID times.

The crime was not drinking alcohol, which was never banned. It was getting together in groups at a time when ordinary people were obliged to avoid such gatherings, not even visiting hospitals to say farewell to dying parents.

Such contempt for ordinary people was damaging the Conservative Party brand, as was Johnson’s gen-

eral incompetence and fecklessness, so eventually, the Tories themselves ditched him. But the party is already on his second replacement as prime minister (Rishi Sunak), and Johnson is still hanging around hoping to make a come-back.

The best way to scotch that possibility is the privileges committee, because if it finds him guilty of lying to Parliament, it can recommend that he be suspended or even expelled from Parliament. That would end his come-back hopes, but there was a last-minute hitch.

Everybody in Parliament knows that Johnson lies all the time. Most other people in the country now know it, too, and only a dwindling minority are still amused or excited by his boyish behaviour and brazen lies. But the committee had to find actual evidence that he had knowingly lied to Parliament.

They seem to have found it, and it looked like he was done for. And then, without any personal effort, our hero was free.

Sue Gray is a senior career civil servant who was working in

the prime minister’s office as “ethics adviser,” so she was the obvious choice to conduct an inquiry into the allegations of drunken parties in Downing Street. She did so, and indirectly criticized the prime minister for “failures of leadership and judgment.”

There was also the police inquiry, the formation of the parliamentary committee, and above all, the revolt by Johnson’s colleagues. Gray’s report could take perhaps 25 per cent of the credit for bringing Boris down, but no more.

But last week, she announced that she was quitting the civil service and taking a job as chief of staff to Labour Party Leader Keir Starmer. Shock and horror throughout Whitehall, and the dominant response was a conviction that this would somehow absolve Johnson of his sins.

As his rather dim-witted wingman Jacob Rees-Mogg put it: “So much for an impartial civil service. The Gray Report now looks like a left-wing stitch-up against a Tory prime minister.”

I’m a simple, trusting soul, so I went along with the idea that Gray and Starmer had made a big political mistake by letting Johnson wriggle off the hook like that. Gray’s move didn’t really discredit the evidence at all, but you know how people think.

However, my wife Tina Machiavelli—“Tina Viljoen” to the rest of the world—took quite a different tack. She immediately asked: Why would Starmer and Gray deliberately schedule the latter’s resignation for the precise week when the parliamentary privilege committee would be releasing its report?

It’s almost as if they wanted Johnson to hang around as the alternative leader of the Conservative Party. After all, if he’s still in Parliament and not facing expulsion, all he needs is one serious stumble by Sunak, and he launches his come-back bid. But he’s even likelier to lose the election next year than Sunak is.

Alternatively, the Tories lose the election without Johnson, and the broken and decimated party turns to him afterward to save it. But half the surviving Tory Members of Parliament would still blame Johnson for destroying the brand, so he would probably just split the party instead.

Johnson would soon get bored with being the opposition leader and return to making big money on the speaker’s circuit. His breakaway faction would crumble, and what’s left of the party would spend the next decade in the wilderness.

That may not all happen. From Starmer’s and Gray’s points of view, however, what’s not to like?

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is *The Shortest History of War*.  
*The Hill Times*

# ENERGY

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**Canada's oil and gas industry faces an existential crisis and a weak emissions cap won't save it**

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## Energy Policy Briefing

# Feds' sustainable jobs plan a good start, but too soft on emissions reductions, say environmental experts



Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson says 'Canada has what it takes to become the clean energy and technology supplier of choice in a net-zero world,' in a Feb. 17 departmental press release announcing the interim Sustainable Jobs Plan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The federal government released its interim Sustainable Jobs Plan on Feb. 17, which will guide efforts to help transition workers away from the fossil-fuel industry and toward clean energy.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

The federal government's recently unveiled plan to help transition Canada's workforce over to a net-zero economy is a step in the right direction, but doesn't go far enough when it comes to addressing climate change, say environmental advocates.

"The climate science is clear: we need to fully transition off of fossil fuels as quickly as possible. The biggest problem with the Sustainable Jobs Plan is that the government seems to have abandoned the idea of 'transition' along with the term 'just transition,'" said Chris Gusen, a spokesperson for the Canadian branch of climate change advocacy group 350.org, in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times* on March 1. "The government explicitly says that it isn't planning a regulatory phaseout of fossil fuels, despite success in taking that approach with coal power."

The Trudeau government released the interim Sustainable Jobs Plan on Feb. 17, which will guide efforts to create sustainable jobs to help transition workers away from the fossil-fuel industry and toward clean energy. The interim plan sets the framework for a full sustainable jobs plan, which will be released every five years starting in 2025.

The interim plan defines federal government commitments, including the creation of a sustainable jobs partnership council that will advise the government on effective measures to create sustainable jobs and support workers in the transition. The plan also outlines a commitment to establish a Sustainable Jobs Secretariat, whose role would be to offer a one-stop shop to provide workers and employers with up-to-date information on federal programs, funding, and services across government departments.



Chris Gusen, a spokesperson for 350.org, says the government's sustainable jobs plan 'leans heavily on carbon capture and storage technology as an excuse' for the fossil-fuel industry to continue expanding. *Photograph courtesy of Chris Gusen*

"Canada has what it takes to become the clean energy and technology supplier of choice in a net-zero world. With this plan, the federal government is taking yet another step forward to ensure that Canada's workers have the skills and support necessary to seize this generational opportunity," said Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) in a departmental press release announcing the interim plan.

Gusen argued that the interim sustainable jobs plan lacks a sense of urgency with regard to curtailing greenhouse gas emissions. He referred to a report commissioned by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, which argued that wealthier countries, such as Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, must reduce oil and gas production by 74 per cent by 2030.

According to the interim plan, the use of hydrocarbons in combustion applications will decline, but remain significant during the next three decades of transition, and countries producing hydrocarbons with low emissions will have a "significant competitive advantage." The plan cited the International Energy Agency's (IEA) net-zero emissions by 2050 scenario, which predicts the world will still use about 24 million barrels of oil per day in 2050, or about a quarter of present consumption. Oil and gas will be needed in non-combustible applications, such as plastics, solvents, lubricants, and waxes, according to the IEA's scenario.

"Although the plan mentions 'declining demand' for fossil fuels,



Ana Guerra Marin, the communities director and Just Transition lead with Iron & Earth, says 'many think tanks all over the world have indicated that we need to phase out fossil fuels.' *Photograph courtesy of Iron & Earth*

it also says 'the production and use of oil and gas will continue for many decades,'" said Gusen in an emailed statement. "The plan leans heavily on carbon capture and storage technology as an excuse for Canada's fossil-fuel industry to continue expanding oil and gas production."

Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, a senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), described the interim Sustainable Jobs Plan as a promising step with regard to justice for workers and communities, but criticized it as "distressingly non-specific" when it comes to showing a commitment to a climate-friendly economy, in an article published in the *Monitor*, CCPA's policy and current affairs magazine, on Feb. 20.

"Despite the success of Canada's regulatory phase-out of coal power, the government makes clear that it will not be taking the same approach with other fossil fuels," said Mertins-Kirkwood in the article. "The plan goes on

to highlight non-fuel oil and gas products, such as petrochemicals and blue hydrogen, as a 'regional growth opportunity.' Altogether, the Sustainable Jobs Plan fails to reflect an ambitious climate agenda and raises serious questions about the government's net-zero commitment."

Ana Guerra Marin, the communities director and Just Transition lead with Iron & Earth, told *The Hill Times* that it makes sense that the interim plan would focus more on resource extraction and labour, but argued greenhouse gas reduction is not shown as a priority.

"Many think tanks all over the world have indicated that we need to phase out fossil fuels. That is not there anymore. That phaseout is not there. They're just saying, 'we're going to keep extracting the fossil fuel, and we're going to use it for other things,'" said Marin. "They're saying we're going to keep extracting, but we're going to make it clean, right? But if you look at the science behind it ... where are we with carbon capture utilization sequestration from a science perspective to the level that they're indicating? This is a massive undertaking."

Marin said the interim plan provides a good summary of the federal government's actions related to climate change and the transition to sustainable jobs so far, but doesn't say much new. Unanswered questions for Marin include which federal department the proposed Sustainable Jobs Secretariat will report to, and whether it will have power to change legislation.

"What I'm concerned with is more of, how do we make this plan feasible? What's the reality of this plan? How does this look in implementation? And we still don't know," she said. "It paints a picture, which is not a bad picture, but there's a lot of uncertainty."

Iron & Earth was formed by oilpatch workers in 2016, when low oil prices were causing massive layoffs in the sector. The group works to support fossil-fuel industry and Indigenous workers who are looking to make the transition into jobs in renewable energy and related fields.

The federal government's plan to transition to a clean energy economy has drawn criticism from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who said it will eliminate jobs in her province's oil and gas sector, as reported by Global News on Feb. 17. Smith argued that 90 per cent of Alberta's electricity comes from natural gas, and the plan blocks the ability to expand that.

In a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) on Feb. 16, Smith said Alberta is prepared to work with the federal government on a co-ordinated approach for a carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) incentive program for the purpose of net-emissions reductions, while attracting billions in new investments for Alberta-based oil and gas projects, electricity, manufacturing, and other sectors.

## Net-zero economy transition statistics

- A total of 3.1-million Canadian jobs—or 15 per cent of the labour force—will be changed in some way over the next 10 years as the country transitions toward a net-zero economy.
- The net-zero transition will demand a reshaping and enhancing of existing skillsets. Accountants will need to audit emissions, as well as financial statements, and city planners will be tasked with designing urban settings resistant to the impacts of more frequent floods and wildfires. The overall shift in many occupation groups may be small, but for some jobs, an average 25 per cent to 30 per cent of tasks are already changing.
- Canada's transportation, energy, and manufacturing sectors will undergo the most significant early shifts, as 46 per cent of new jobs in natural resources and agriculture, and 40 per cent of new jobs in trades, transport, and equipment require an enhanced skillset.
- Initial changes will affect highly paid, highly skilled workers more dramatically. Managers in engineering, architecture, utilities, and manufacturing are already seeing more than 50 per cent of their tasks shift due to the climate transition—five times that of managers on average.
- Between 235,000 and 400,000 new jobs will be added in fields where enhanced skills will be critical.

—Source: The skills revolution Canada needs to reach Net Zero, a Royal Bank of Canada report published on Feb. 18, 2022

Continued on page 18

# The IRA is a game changer for Canada's climate and energy security

Canada has everything it takes to be a global leader in low-carbon transportation fuels – energy infrastructure, sustainable feedstocks and expertise – everything except for a competitive investment climate with the U.S.

The North American fuels market is highly integrated and Canada competes with the U.S. for investment. For over two decades, the U.S. has been implementing robust programs, such as tax credits, to attract investment in clean fuels. This has resulted in strong, clean fuels production capacity in the U.S., and Canada becoming more reliant on clean fuel imports.

Canadian Fuels Association (CFA) members are some of the largest producers of clean fuels today and, since 2020, members have been steadfast in their commitment to produce more clean fuels in Canada. Then came the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) last summer, doubling down with a suite of new clean fuel production measures; including new, generous Production Tax Credits (PTC) for low-carbon road transportation fuels and sustainable aviation fuel.

This PTC is a complete game changer, dramatically tipping project economics in favour of clean fuel projects in the U.S. The PTC will also result in more Canadian-grown feedstocks being exported to the U.S., translating into significant, lost economic benefits to Canada and undermining our energy self-sufficiency.

And the timing could not be worse. CFA members have plans to implement large-scale renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), hydrogen and ethanol projects highlighting their commitment to clean fuels and support for Canada's climate goals as we continue Driving to 2050. These projects, worth \$8B and with the potential to deliver 10 MT of GHG reductions from coast-to-coast, are awaiting final investment decisions; but companies are re-evaluating the business case for building in Canada. Just last Friday, Parkland discontinued plans for a stand-alone renewable diesel facility in Burnaby, B.C., citing the IRA as a key factor. This means that without investment parity, there is a growing concern that more of these projects are at risk of being delayed or being built in the U.S.

Parkland's decision reinforces the need for an urgent response by the Government of Canada, and that is why we are calling for the introduction of a Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit in Budget 2023. This would apply to all clean fuels produced in Canada, including ethanol, renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuel and hydrogen and provide the required investment certainty. Like the U.S., the credit rate would vary according to carbon intensity, meaning the higher the GHG reductions achieved, the higher the credit value.

The economic and climate benefits of clean fuel production in Canada would extend throughout the value chain, from agricultural and forestry feedstock providers to distribution, while decreasing our reliance on imports and creating thousands of

direct and indirect jobs for Canadians. We cannot risk losing these added economic and climate benefits for Canada.

In a recent speech, Environment and Climate Change Minister Stephen Guilbeault said "The Inflation Reduction Act removes any doubt that we can stick with the status quo. It has made the rush for innovation in clean tech more competitive than ever". Our transportation energy sector has been pivotal to Canada's economic success for over a century. We have an opportunity to be a world leader in terms of clean fuel production, while meeting Canadians' evolving energy needs and climate goals.

Budget 2023 is a critical juncture. We must respond to the IRA or be left behind at the expense of our economy, energy and climate security.

**Bob Larocque**

**President & CEO, Canadian Fuels Association**



**MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER:**  
2022 UPDATE ON CFA'S  
DRIVING TO 2050 VISION

 **Canadian Fuels**  
ASSOCIATION

**LEARN MORE AT**  
**CANADIANFUELS.CA**



## About the Canadian Fuels Association

The Canadian Fuels Association (CFA) represents Canada's transportation fuels industry and our members supply 95% of Canada's transportation fuels. Contributing over \$10 billion to Canada's GDP annually, the sector also provides employment for more than 117,000 Canadians at 15 refineries, 75 fuel distribution terminals and 12,000 retail and commercial sites across the country.

## Energy Policy Briefing

# Feds' sustainable jobs plan a good start, but too soft on emissions reductions, say environmental experts

Continued from page 16

"To this end, we propose co-ordinating a federal CCUS income tax credit with an expansion of our current Alberta Petrochemicals Incentive Program (APIP) to include CCUS projects. This new incentive program would be in addition to the over \$1.8-billion already invested into CCUS projects across the province by the Government of Alberta as well as our province's additional implicit contribution to CCUS made through our current royalty regime," said Smith in the letter. "Our government is also willing to discuss ... expanding this co-ordinated approach to incentivizing other emerging emission reducing technologies as well, though we suggest beginning with agreement on a co-ordinated CCUS incentive program, so we are able to establish a successful foundation on which to build upon."

In an emailed statement, Lisa Baiton, CEO and president of Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), said Canada's oil and natural gas sectors can help meet growing global energy needs while helping to ensure a transition to a lower-carbon economy. Canada's oil and gas is produced with some of the most stringent environmental standards in the world, according to Baiton.

"We need to continue to build on the expertise of our workers and grow Canada's energy workforce so we can be a preferred global supplier of safe, secure, affordable, and reliable energy for the decades to come," said Baiton.

Dan McTeague, president of Canadians for Affordable Energy, said the federal government's sustainable jobs plan is "a solution in search of a problem," arguing that global oil consumption is poised to continue growth over the next several decades, rather than shrink. By 2040, he said global demand for oil is anticipated to increase to 106 million barrels per day—a prediction also made by CAPP.

"It seems like poor public policy to be aiming to reduce or remove—or completely eviscerate—an industry the world wants more of, and for which Canada cannot do without, like it or not," said McTeague. "Trading good, solid, sustainable jobs in the oil and gas sector in favour of magic and make-believe is not a good way of conducting public policy."

McTeague is a former Liberal MP who was first elected in 1993 to represent the then-riding of Pickering-Scarborough East, Ont., and sat in the House for 18 years.

According to the interim plan, "sustainable jobs" refers to any job that is "compatible with Canada's path to a net-zero emissions and climate resilient future."

In a post on the Canadians for Affordable Energy website, McTeague argues that jobs in Canada's oil and gas industry should be considered sustainable because they are stable and well-paying.

"I don't see how anyone could want to wish away jobs and prosperity in an industry ... managing to provide the federal government and all municipal levels of governments tens of billions of dollars a year of revenue, which will not be replaced by widgets made in China, which will not be replaced by rare earth minerals, processed or EV batteries, or solar panels, or wind-mills made abroad," McTeague told *The*



Dan McTeague, president of Canadians for Affordable Energy, says it seems like 'poor public policy' to reduce the oil and gas industry, which 'the world wants more of.' Photograph courtesy of Dan McTeague

*Hill Times*. "This is not about the government going out and saying we're going to help, because these jobs will ultimately be eliminated. This is actually a more sinister plan by the Trudeau government to eliminate those jobs deliberately by blocking pipelines, bringing in emission caps, [and] bringing in more onerous regulations."

Merran Smith, chief innovation officer and founder of Clean Energy Canada, said the transition to clean energy represents "the economic opportunity of our lifetimes," and called the interim Sustainable Jobs Plan a step in the right direction in a Feb. 17 press release.

"Canada will need the right policies, the strategic investments, and the skilled labour to turn this plan into tomorrow's reality. For now, it is a key first step toward ensuring Canadian businesses and workers are ready and prepared to gain the greatest benefit from the energy transition," she said.

The clean energy sector's GDP is forecast to grow by 58 per cent by 2030, and employment is expected to grow by almost 50 per cent to 639,200 jobs, according to data from Clean Energy Canada.

*jcnockaert@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*

## World energy investment information

- Clean energy investment grew by two per cent a year in the five years after the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. Since 2020, the pace of growth has accelerated to 12 per cent.
- Clean technologies, such as wind and solar photovoltaics, remain the cheapest option for new power generation in many countries, even before accounting for the exceptionally high prices seen in 2022 for coal and gas. Renewables, grids, and storage accounted for more than 80 per cent of total power sector investment in 2022.
- Sales of electric vehicles (EVs) more than doubled in 2021 over the previous year and rose strongly in 2022. Back in 2012, just 120,000 EVs were sold worldwide. In 2021, more than that number were sold each week.
- Plans for around 130 commercial-scale CO2 capture projects in 20 countries were announced in 2021. They aim to capture CO2 from a range of applications, including hydrogen and biofuel production, which combined account for almost half of newly announced projects.
- As of 2022, oil and gas spending is too high for a pathway aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 C, but not enough to satisfy rising demand in a scenario in which governments stick with current policy settings and fail to deliver on their climate pledges.

—Source: *The International Energy Agency's World Energy Investment report, released June 2022.*

# Canada should be the world's energy producer and supplier of choice

The solutions are transformation, not transition; technology, not taxes; led by the private sector, not government.

Conservative MP Shannon Stubbs

Opinion



On Feb. 17, the Liberals announced a "sustainable jobs plan," which is really their rebranded "just transition" initiative.

Eighty-four per cent of Canadians don't yet know what "just transition" is about, but the Liberals' previous attempt for the coal sector severely failed both the workers and communities it targeted. The change in wording is clearly designed for political palatability and to obfuscate the potential costs and risks of their plan. It's mostly buzzwords now, but what's clear is it will jeopardize 170,000 stable, well-paying jobs in the oil and gas sector, and affect 2.7 million jobs in other sectors across Canada.

That's not speculation—it's in the government's own internal briefings.

After eight years of anti-energy messages, delays, arbitrary and inconsistent regulatory conditions, an outright veto of an approved export pipeline, and the imposition of project-killing Bill C-69 despite universal provincial opposition, the Liberals have made no secret of their intention to accelerate the phase-out of oil and gas in Canada. They know: it won't be produced if it can't be shipped.

Liberal-created uncertainty and barriers have driven billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of energy jobs out of Canada. Regulatory conditions and the lack of political will to see projects get built after approval are among the top decision factors for mega-projects that can already cost billions of dollars and involve a decade or more of assessments before a shovel hits the ground.

Heating and cooling homes, driving, manufacturing processes, and countless goods require energy. Canadian energy and energy companies affect everyday lives. But Canada and the world are in an energy crisis: Russia's illegal attack on Ukraine and the hostility of Beijing's Communist regime highlight the crucial need for energy security and self-sufficiency. Other countries want oil and gas from Canada. Global demand will rise for the foreseeable future.

Now is a better time than ever to get liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminals built, but since 2015, not a

single one of the 18 LNG proposals in Canada has been developed while other countries have built several. Canadian LNG can help lower emissions globally and reduce or eliminate dependence on dictatorships with much lower environmental and human rights standards than Canada's.

Energy transformation has long been the norm in Canada, driven by societal and industrial needs, spurred by partnerships between industry, government, and academia. The truth is that 75 per cent of Canadian investment in clean technology comes from the oil and natural gas sectors.

If the rest of the world followed Canada's track record, total emissions from every barrel of oil produced would drop by 23 per cent. In fact, Canada's oil and gas sector produces about 0.3 per cent of overall emissions, globally.

But despite the current energy and cost-of-living crises, the Liberals are still moving to phase out Canadian oil and gas. Why? They need the swing NDP and Green voters in key ridings to maintain power.

The Liberals will spend billions of tax dollars on education programs that internal briefing notes explicitly say will still leave workers at risk of only being able to get jobs as janitors, and on shutting down a sector that is already the leading research and development investor and skills trainer in alternative, renewable, and future energy technologies. The Liberals' plan won't be able to "replace" the quantity, quality, or pay of those working today in Canada's energy sector, never mind the tax revenue to all governments that benefit every Canadian. Indigenous people in Canada and visible minorities, who are more highly represented in the sectors that Liberals want to transition away from, will face even higher job disruptions, and more trouble finding new opportunities.

Canada should be the world's energy producer and supplier of choice, and be energy secure and self-sufficient. But the Liberals put ideology and partisanship above reality and the economy. Politicians should be honest about the outcomes of their policies; no wordsmithing can negate the socioeconomic consequences of the "just transition" concept for Canada. Besides, Canadian oil and gas jobs are sustainable jobs.

The solutions are transformation, not transition; technology, not taxes; led by the private sector, not government. Conservatives would bring costs and red tape down, and accelerate approvals, to make both traditional and alternative energy more affordable and accessible for all Canadians.

*Shannon Stubbs has served as the Member of Parliament for Lakeland, Alta., since 2015, and is the Conservative critic for natural resources.*

*The Hill Times*



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Professor Jeffrey Bergthorson  
Department of Mechanical Engineering, McGill



Jeffrey Bergthorson believes that Canada needs to think outside the box to reach its 2050 net-zero emissions target. His lab is using metal powders – an abundant natural resource – to store and generate clean energy. With this technology, we can safely transport clean energy across Canada and internationally, all with existing infrastructure.

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## Energy Policy Briefing

# Indigenous ‘priorities’ and the threat of investor–state arbitration



The Indigenous affairs bodies of the Canadian and Mexican governments signed a memorandum of understanding on the heels of a meeting between United States President Joe Biden, left, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in January. Photograph courtesy of Eneas De Troya/Flickr

TC Energy’s pursuit of investor–state arbitration over U.S. President Joe Biden’s cancellation of Keystone XL serves as a dull warning to Mexico.

Anna Zalik & Eliana Acosta Márquez

Opinion



As the world observes the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine that stalled hydrocarbon projects and resulted in windfall profits for the oil and gas industry, efforts to plaster fossil fuel pipelines over Indigenous territory in North America have ramped up. Indigenous land defenders resisting the Coastal Gas Link (CGL) pipeline in British Columbia, operated by TC Energy—the firm behind the failed Keystone XL project—

have been criminalized. Canada’s energy-sector interests in Mexico under the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) follow a parallel line. In late January, on the heels of the North American Leaders’ Summit in Mexico City, the Indigenous affairs bodies of the Canadian and Mexican governments signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a stated objective: to provide “a mechanism for collaboration and engagement in areas of mutual interest.”

Analogous MOUs on Indigenous affairs have formed part of the Canada–Mexico Partnership for some time. But in recent years, new gas pipelines in Mexico owned by Canada’s TC Energy—formerly TransCanada Corporation—have been dogged by both financial controversy and Indigenous resistance.

This recent unveiling of a Canada–Mexico MOU on Indigenous priorities coincides with TC Energy’s release of its annual report announcing a final investment decision on the stalled Tuxpan–Tula gas pipeline in Mexico, based on a “take-or-pay” contract with the Mexican government. The firm notes that it’s “working with [Mexico’s Federal Electricity Commission] on the Tula pipeline’s west section

to procure necessary land access and resolve legal claims.” In 2020, a regional council opposed to that project—given its impact on water sources, ecological conditions, and territorial rights—successfully pressured the Mexican government to reroute the pipeline. But over the past year, and ramping up in recent months, “consultations” have started in earnest to push the pipeline forward in communities neighboring those that opposed the previous route. These consultations are advanced by representatives of Mexico’s National Institute of Indigenous Peoples acting on behalf of the Mexican Federal Electricity Commission. The regional council opposed to the pipeline has stated that although the rerouting may change specific impacts, the destruction of the environment in the Puebla–Hidalgo mountains will remain the same.

TC Energy’s “necessary land access” to the region, alongside the shutdown of massive protests in Canada in support of Wet’suwet’en resistance to CGL prior to the first COVID lockdown, exemplify why Canada has declined to ratify International Labour Organization Convention 169 on the rights of Indigenous peoples. TC Energy describes itself as the

single largest Canadian investor in Mexico and has been a lead in the Canada–Mexico Energy Partnership. Export Development Canada has invested billions of dollars in both the firm itself and Mexico’s Federal Electricity Commission.

The various TC Energy pipelines constructed or in development in Mexico financially tie that country to ongoing imports of U.S.-fracked gas to fuel its energy grid. A former net exporter of energy to the United States, Mexico became a net importer in 2017. This followed the 2014 Mexican energy reform that opened the country to foreign, private investment in the sector in a form unparalleled since Mexico’s expropriation of the transnational oil industry in the late 1930s. Currently, TC Energy boasts seven gas pipelines in Mexico (five in operation and two under construction) and is now a contractor on priority Mexican government infrastructure projects. Among them are the Dos Bocas Refinery, the Interoceanic Corridor, and the Mayan Train, which, taken together, share features with the massive infrastructure project previously dubbed the Plan Puebla Panama. TC Energy audaciously declares it has

been “adopted by the Mexican government.” In this picture, TC Energy’s pursuit of investor–state arbitration over American President Joe Biden’s cancellation of Keystone XL serves as a dull warning to Mexico. Although the possibility of investor–state arbitration was removed for the U.S. and Canada under CUSMA, it remains in place over the Mexican energy sector under Annex 14 of the new pact and parallel trade agreements. For Mexico, collaboration on “Indigenous priorities,” as they affect TC Energy, is clearly pressing.

Anna Zalik is a professor in global geography at York University. Her research concerns the political economy and ecology of the transnational oil and gas industry. She has studied the Mexican oil and gas industry since 2004. Eliana Acosta Márquez is a professor–researcher at the Directorate of Ethnology and Social Anthropology at Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History. Her work centres on ancestral knowledge and community management of water and territory as related to dispossession processes. She conducts research in Puebla State’s northwestern mountains and other regions of Mexico.

The Hill Times

# To advance electrification and climate change action, Canada must advance reconciliation

In pursuing these opportunities, we must acknowledge and learn from our past, including the negative impacts the build-out of our legacy hydro projects had on Indigenous Peoples.

Heather  
Ferguson

Opinion



Climate change and reconciliation are generational challenges facing all jurisdictions across Canada.

They are also intersecting challenges.

Addressing climate change by decarbonizing the broader economy through electrification is Ontario's clear pathway to net zero—a pathway that must also secure the participation of and partnership with Indigenous communities.

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) also believes this pathway should include not only two clean energy technologies our country helped pioneer—nuclear and hydroelectric power—but also newer technologies like hydrogen and energy storage.

Today, nuclear and hydro provide more than 85 per cent of Ontario's electricity needs and remain the backbone of its grid—one of the cleanest in the world. Our focus is on expanding and leveraging this grid to electrify more facets of everyday life, such as transportation. At the same time, we need to make sure Indigenous communities, especially those in the North, aren't left behind by this energy transition.

Given the urgency posed by the potential doubling of demand for electricity by 2050, OPG has been moving quickly on many fronts.

At our Darlington Nuclear site, we continue to develop North America's first commercial, grid-scale small modular reactor (SMR), which will reliably power about 300,000 homes. And through the Global First Power project, we are building Canada's first off-grid SMR, a potentially viable alternative to diesel generators for remote mines and communities.

In keeping with the need to act and invest now to secure a clean energy future, OPG released the Northern Ontario Hydroelectric Opportunities Report, with input and advice from the Ontario Waterpower Association and Indigenous communities. The report showcases 4,000 megawatts of hydro projects we believe hold great potential in northern Ontario and would enable



Former U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission chairman Stephen Burns, right, tours the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station in Bowmanville, Ont., with its then senior vice-president in 2015. Photograph courtesy of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission/Flickr

Indigenous partnerships and multi-generational clean power assets for the province. It also proposes options for expediting development timelines and makes key recommendations on how to move forward with Indigenous communities.

The benefits of new nuclear and hydro are clear: more clean, long-lasting, and reliable power. More high-quality jobs. And, in the case of SMRs, a chance to lead the global export market, which could be worth more than \$150-billion to \$300-billion per year by 2040.

That said, unlocking these benefits won't be easy. New nuclear and hydro power have long lead times and require early planning and investment. Going forward, we will also need to work with government to advance policy, efficient regulatory frameworks, and financing instruments that will help expedite achievement of Canada's net-zero goals.

We must also ensure Indigenous Peoples and communities reap lasting benefits from these developments.

OPG's Reconciliation Action Plan recognizes this and commits to growing our economic impact for Indigenous communities and businesses to \$1-billion over the next 10 years through targeted procurement and equity partnerships on clean energy projects, as well as increasing Indigenous hiring and community investments.

As we work toward our goals, we are also breaking down barriers that could block smaller Indigenous companies from participating in this energy transition.

At the very foundation of it all is open and respectful communication. Whether in our exploration of new hydro or in our SMR projects, we are engaging with Indigenous communities at the earliest stages of planning to listen to and understand their

needs, concerns, and challenges. This helps us identify opportunities for employment, supply chain participation, and potential economic partnerships on new developments. OPG's current partnerships continue to demonstrate benefits and value to Indigenous communities and the province.

Very small modular reactors, like our Global First Power project, could also provide "energy equality" to off-grid communities in Canada's North, as abundant nuclear energy replaces unreliable, costly diesel. This would give remote communities the quality of life many of us take for granted.

As Canada continues its reconciliation journey, new nuclear and hydro offer a path to meaningfully advance reconciliation.

In pursuing these opportunities, we must acknowledge and learn from our past, including the negative impacts the build-out of our legacy hydro projects had on Indigenous Peoples.

And we must engage and listen to Indigenous voices, communities, and businesses at every step, to ensure understanding and sustainable development in line with the best interests of the community.

Together, this is how we will realize Canada's clean energy future.

*Heather Ferguson is the senior vice-president of business development and corporate affairs for Ontario Power Generation. Ferguson has more than 25 years of experience in the resource development, energy, and electricity sectors. Her focus includes ensuring progress on the company's Reconciliation Action Plan and advancing hydroelectric generation development across the province, in partnership with local Indigenous communities.*

*The Hill Times*

## Canada needs to own its role as an energy supplier on the global stage

With the energy disaster in Europe, our potential energy customers see confusion from this government.

Conservative MP  
Earl Dreeshen

Opinion



It has been a little more than a year since the war began in Ukraine. As a participant in numerous meetings of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) over the last number of years, I have witnessed the aggressive actions of Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime. It is too simplistic to assume that the present war is just over territory and energy superiority, but nevertheless, the consequences have manifested into a global energy crisis.

How well prepared is Canada's energy sector to meet the obvious global demand for hydrocarbons?

Have government policies helped or hindered our preparedness?

What needs to be done to ensure Canadian resources and technology remain relevant on the world stage?

When I was first campaigning in 2008, a local energy worker who had worked all around the world told me how proud we should be of Canada's energy sector and its environmental record. He stated that the only ones close were the Australians, and that was only because they were aggressively implementing Canadian state-of-the-art technology.

The quest for excellence is still part of the Canadian oil and gas industry's DNA, but there have been hurdles, perhaps well intended, that have lessened the industry's

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## Energy Policy Briefing

The Albian Sands site in Alberta in 2014. Canada's biggest oil producers are making record profits, so they have cash on hand they could invest in reducing their pollution, write Amy Janzwood, Sam Rowan, and Josh Medicoff. *Pembina Institute photograph by Julia Kilpatrick/Flickr*



# Canada's oil and gas industry faces an existential crisis and a weak emissions cap won't save it

Ottawa's job is to ensure that the inevitable transition is as smooth as possible by sending a clear signal to the industry to clean up its pollution.

Amy Janzwood,  
Sam Rowan & Josh  
Medicoff

Opinion

As the Alberta United Conservative Party denigrates federal attempts at emissions regulation in re-election political theatre, the federal government may quietly delay draft regulations around the emissions cap on oil and gas, a key pledge in the Liberals' 2021 election campaign.

Yet this is a crucial window of opportunity for the federal government to regulate Canada's largest emitter: the oil and gas industry. Canada's biggest oil producers are making record profits, so they have cash on hand they could invest in reducing their pollution. But they are not.

Instead, the oil and gas industry is aggressively lobbying for more government subsidies, loopholes, and lower ambition. Consider the new Pathways Alliance, made up of six companies responsible for 95 per cent of oilsands production in Canada. They have advertised their goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, yet have decried the "impractical timeframes" before 2050 that could drive away investments.

The industry group's vice-president recently summarized their doublespeak perfectly: "We have not opposed an emissions cap—but have emphasized it must have realistic targets and timelines." This is simply another delay tactic.

The federal government must not bow to this pressure.

It's important to remember the oil and gas industry has never been responsible for its total emissions. In fact, only half of the

carbon that Canada extracts each year is actually counted in our national inventory. This is because we export most of our fossil fuels to other countries—and have continued to do so faster than ever. The proposed emissions cap will hardly reduce the total (or lifecycle) emissions caused by the industry, ignoring the elephant in the room.

Most global energy scenarios expect demand for oil will peak before 2030 and decline steadily afterwards as governments decarbonize. This means producers with the cheapest and least-emitting oil have a huge advantage. But Canada produces some of the most expensive and carbon-intensive oil in the world, leaving us facing massive financial loss when our oil and gas are priced out of the global market.

The writing is on the wall for Canada's fossil-fuel industry. Ottawa's job is to ensure that the inevitable transition is as smooth as possible. This requires sending a clear signal to the industry to clean up its pollution.

An airtight cap on emissions from the oil and gas industry is a crucial first step. Here's what that means.

First, the oil and gas industry needs to reduce emissions in line with other sectors of the economy. The government's Emissions Reduction Plan outlines that the industry can reduce its emissions by 31 per cent (from 2005 levels) by 2030, which is still lower than the whole-of-economy target (40-45 per cent from 2005 levels). An emissions cap target must reflect the sector's fair share of pollution.

Second, close loopholes. The cap regulates overall pollution and gives firms the flexibility to decide how to do so, for example, by making investments in clean energy or reducing production. Carbon trading—where a company buys scarce emissions credits from another company—can provide certainty that the industry is reducing its emissions. But allowing oil and gas companies to purchase offsets from other industries defeats the goal of emissions reductions in the sector. Recently, the government's Trans Mountain Corporation bought carbon credits from a seaweed startup that never actually operated, illustrating the dangers of these schemes, amplified when trading credits between industries and in an unregulated market.

Third, stop subsidizing emissions reductions. The federal government faces intense pressure from the oil and gas industry to increase funding for their emissions reduction efforts, asking for billions more in support for carbon capture and storage projects. Not only are these projects unproven, but the oil and gas industry is using this magical unicorn to push for delayed timelines. For an industry with historic profits, it is past time for the industry to take responsibility for its emissions.

The cap must be implemented urgently if Canada is to meet its 2030 emissions target. If the federal government waits for Alberta's May 29 election, it must be prepared to hit the ground running immediately. The Pathways Alliance already warns that if the regulatory framework isn't ready by the first half of 2023, oilsands producers likely won't comply with its 2030 emissions cap until 2035.

Canada can no longer afford to delay. The world is moving towards a carbon-constrained future, and the oil industry will be left behind. It's time to pay the piper.

Amy Janzwood is an assistant professor in the department of political science and the Bieler School of the Environment at McGill University. Sam Rowan is an assistant professor in the department of political science at Concordia University. Josh Medicoff is a graduate student in the department of political science at McGill University. The authors thank Dr. Kathryn Harrison for her excellent comments.

The Hill Times

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## Energy Policy Briefing

# Energy transitions: away from diesel, or towards sovereignty?

Indigenous off-grid communities in Canada are exploring their own solutions to move towards cleaner energy generation that are aligned with their worldviews and sovereignty objectives.

Serasu Duran, Feyza G. Sahinyazan, Jordyn Hrenyk & Emily Salmon



Most Indigenous, rural, and remote communities in Canada rely on diesel fuel for heat and electricity. Diesel is polluting, expensive, and conflicts with the Government of Canada's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions to support a low-carbon future. Federal and local governments are introducing policies and programs to help off-grid Indigenous communities in Canada shift from diesel to renewable energy, such as the Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative and the Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities program. Yet, because these policies are sometimes misaligned with

community priorities, the uptake of renewable energy projects has been slow. Those implemented are often not used to their fullest potential or are even abandoned over time.

## Motivations to eliminate diesel

Diesel generation has significant economic drawbacks. On top of rising and volatile fuel prices, remote regions see amplified costs for shipping and storing diesel. Energy can cost up to 10 times the average Canadian electricity price for off-grid communities, many of which already face significant costs of living. Accounting for the true cost of diesel with all its environmental, social, and health impacts can raise this cost many times higher. Diesel fuel is also polluting and generates negative environmental impacts, such as high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Additionally, diesel fuel can contaminate the environment through spills or leaks during transportation and storage. Beyond the adverse impacts on climate, air pollution creates health problems such as increased cardiovascular disease risk and worsening asthma.

Diesel fuel is also polluting and generates negative environmental impacts, such as high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Additionally, diesel fuel can contaminate the environment through spills or leaks during transportation and storage. Beyond the adverse impacts on climate, air pollution creates health problems such as increased cardiovascular disease risk and worsening asthma.

## Disconnect from Indigenous realities and worldviews

While Canada aims to reduce overall GHG emissions, those from off-grid communities using diesel are negligible (0.2 per cent of Canada's overall GHG



Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson is in charge of programs such as the the Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative and the Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities program, but these policies are sometimes misaligned with community priorities. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

emissions). Thus, it is important to recognize that GHG reduction is neither the only, nor the most important, motivation for Indigenous communities.

Despite the benefits of renewable energy, there are logical and values-based reasons for some communities to continue using diesel generators. Off-grid Indigenous communities are familiar with existing diesel systems and have the capacity to maintain them. Many communities depend on diesel generators to store game and country food for family and cultural use. Being asked to rely on potentially intermittent renewable energy for essential food systems provokes anxiety. Some community members also

express fear that new systems could disrupt the lifeways of culturally important species, such as caribou in northern communities.

In our research, we learned from Indigenous energy champions that these systems should not be implemented in isolation from other community needs, such as food security, economic growth, and secure housing. For example, the Tsay Keh Dene Nation in British Columbia is switching to biomass generation, allowing the community to build commercial greenhouses, which will cultivate food security in the face of declining moose and caribou populations. Unfortunately, these reasons are often overlooked within the policy and project planning phases.

## Paths to energy sovereignty

Indigenous off-grid communities in Canada are exploring their own solutions to move towards cleaner energy generation that are aligned with their worldviews and sovereignty objectives. We study community-led approaches through individual case studies and government and NGO reports to shed light on how policy efforts can better support Indigenous communities' priorities.

The intense focus on supply-side shifts—such as implementing new clean and renewable energy infrastructure—can often overshadow important potential demand-side shifts, such as retrofitting existing buildings to be more energy-efficient. Retrofitting may have significant positive impacts on cost, GHG emissions,

and quality of life for community members, and it may more closely align with community priorities of capacity development and sovereignty.

For example, Haíłzaqv (Heiltsuk) Nation has overseen the shift of one-third of community homes to energy-efficient heat pumps. This has lowered the cost of electricity for community members, improved air quality, and reduced GHG emissions. Haíłzaqv Climate Action Team has developed energy projects based upon *gvilás* (Haíłzaqv's system of philosophy, traditional laws, and values) and community priorities, including land stewardship and self-sufficiency. This approach has ensured a successful implementation and has built community trust in the projects.

Governments and industry partners can effectively support communities that want to transition to renewable energy systems by creating stable, multi-year funding programs. These programs can offer holistic support for feasibility studies and system implementation alongside long-term maintenance and capacity-building. Most importantly, community priorities must be at the centre of potential interventions. By taking direction from communities themselves, we can build effective programs that enhance well-being and Indigenous sovereignty over the long term.

*Dr. Serasu Duran is an assistant professor at the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary. Dr. Feyza G. Sahinyazan is an assistant professor at the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. Jordyn Hrenyk is an Indigenous (Michif) PhD candidate at the Beedie School of Business. Emily Salmon is a Coast Salish (Cowichan) researcher and PhD candidate at the Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria.*

*The Hill Times*

# Canada needs to own its role as an energy supplier on the global stage

Continued from page 21

ability to remain on the leading edge. Limiting the access of oil and gas to world markets through federal legislation, denigrating the industry at international fora, and advocating against investment in Canada's oil and gas sector have had consequences.

What the industry needs is certainty. A strong, supportive government is not what international players see. What they see are investors seeking opportunities elsewhere. With the energy disaster that is taking place in Europe, our potential energy customers see confusion from this government; we have a world-class product to sell, but leave the heavy lifting to others.

The question becomes: how can the federal government sup-

port Canada's energy sector in meeting the demand?

First, there must be recognition of what the problem really is, both globally and domestically.

At the OSCE meeting in Birmingham, U.K., last summer, European countries spoke of the consequences of the Russian invasion. Countries were going back to traditional non-renewable energy, postponing new solar and wind projects, and preparing themselves for long-term solutions such as liquefied natural gas (LNG). They are now aware that their fixation on green strategies and policies has put them in the crosshairs of ruthless authoritarian rulers.

There was, however, a certain irony when Canada, as a major energy-producing country, presented as its contribution to

this meeting the sponsorship of a resolution called "Accelerating the Green Energy Transition."

This does not seem to be a clear recognition of Canada's potential as an energy superpower.

The prime minister's reluctance to commit to an aggressive global LNG strategy certainly does not improve this situation.

Domestically, the government seems to believe that its greenhouse gas targets will be met primarily through rapid expansion of electric vehicles (EVs), reductions in fertilizer use, and the eventual phasing out of Canada's oilsands. Sadly, there are major repercussions for Canada and the world because of these short-sighted policies.

As we move forward as a nation, we should ensure that every action that we take is measured.

Perhaps my 34 years as a math and physics teacher is why I believe that, whatever technology we consider, we must measure the impact from the first shovel that we need to dig it up to the last shovel we need to cover it up.

EVs require much more energy to produce than internal combustion engine vehicles; rare earth mineral excavation and chemical processing for any electrical components do not come without environmental impact; and even revamped electrical grids will never be fail-safe. Windmills require hydrocarbons for both manufacturing and maintenance. Used solar panels will need to be disposed of properly, and a backup grid will still be required when the system fails.


Fortunately, as Canadians, we have the know-how to meet

many of these challenges. We should look for solutions that are tailored to the uniqueness of the communities in which we live. This means to celebrate our strengths rather than exaggerate our differences. It means recognizing those Indigenous leaders who want a future for their young people in a resource-rich nation, not being dictated to once again by a government that knows best.

It means caring for each other, giving workers the best opportunities to grow and succeed, and to fulfill our role as responsible energy suppliers on the global stage.

*Earl Dreeshen is the MP for Red Deer-Mountain View, Alta. He is a retired math and physics teacher as well as a fourth-generation farmer. Since being elected in 2008, he has served on a number of House committees, including: Public Accounts; International Trade; Indigenous Affairs; Industry, Science, and Technology; Agriculture; Environment; and, presently, Natural Resources.*

*The Hill Times*



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## Energy Policy Briefing



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland laid out Canada's initial response to international action, but what's still missing is a clean industrial strategy, matched with key investments in the 2023 budget to stay competitive, write Meeran Smith and Rachel Doran. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# The worst plan is no plan when faced with an inevitable energy transition

For Canada to gain forecasted clean energy jobs and GDP benefits, it needs to not only keep its climate policies, but also build on them.

Merran Smith & Rachel Doran

Opinion



Much hullabaloo has been made about the federal government's clean energy transition plan.

Alberta's premier went so far as to suggest that 2.7 million jobs would be "eliminated" in the process. This is, well, nothing close to accurate. Rather, 2.7 million Canadian jobs currently exist in sectors that will be *transformed* by the global energy transition, according to a ministerial briefing note.

This may fall on deaf ears in the throes of a provincial election, but political leaders aren't judged by their talking points of the day. Instead, they're judged on where they succeeded, or failed, to prepare for a foreseeable future.

And this one is very foreseeable.

To date, 88 per cent of global emissions, 92 per cent of global GDP, and 85 per cent of the world's population is covered by some kind of net-zero commitment. The question is whether Canada sails with the wind, or against it.

According to the International Energy Agency, in a net-zero 2050, the price of oil would drop to less than US\$30 a barrel. With the breakeven price of the oilsands well above this, many Canadian projects are simply too expensive to be economical in a world that requires a lot less carbon.

The good news? As Clean Energy Canada will soon reveal in a forthcoming report, Canada will actually see a net increase in energy jobs by 2050 if we and the world achieve our net-zero ambitions—the key difference being that most will be in clean energy.

In fact, the International Energy Agency recently noted that clean energy employment now accounts for just more than half of the global energy workforce. But for Canada to gain these jobs and GDP benefits, it needs to not only keep its climate policies, but also build on them.

There are big opportunities in emerging sectors like the battery supply chain, which alone could support up to 250,000 jobs by 2030 while adding \$48-billion to the Canadian economy annually, once again assuming governments meet the opportunity head on (to their credit, the federal, Ontario, and Quebec governments have helped secure billions of dollars in electric vehicle-related investment already).

Indeed, the transition to clean energy represents the economic opportunity of our lifetimes, and it therefore requires—and Canadians deserve—a good plan.

Broadly speaking, Canada can do three things: implement domestic policy to support our sectors and accelerate the transition at home (so we don't fall behind); encourage investment in key industries that will

be part of the transition (so there will be more jobs); and, finally, foresee the jobs and skills that will be required and get people prepared (to benefit workers but also to make Canada a competitive investment environment).

In just the last year, America's US\$370-billion Inflation Reduction Act rocked the global balance of power and the trajectory of energy as we know it. The European Union's response, in the form of its Green Deal Industrial Plan, earmarked 250-billion euros in spending and tax breaks for clean energy over the next decade.

If America's actions have lit a fire under the EU, Canada—a much smaller economy more closely integrated with the United States—should really be feeling the heat. Last year's Fall Economic Statement laid out Canada's initial response, but what's still missing is a clean industrial strategy, matched with key investments in the 2023 budget to stay competitive.

Canada doesn't have America's firepower nor endless resources for every potential sector. We must instead be swift and

targeted to maximize economic growth and job creation.

That means focusing on activities with the greatest value for Canada. Our lithium shouldn't merely be exported, for example. We should use it to make batteries at home, developing our own domestic expertise, research and development outputs, and intellectual property.

Similarly, Canada's relatively clean electricity grid means we can produce batteries today with a smaller carbon footprint than elsewhere, and yet we've been slow to add more renewables and improve our transmission infrastructure. Clean electricity will be the lifeblood of clean industry.

Finally, the federal government's recently released interim Sustainable Jobs Plan, whose measures include establishing a new training centre along with a government advisory body, is a crucial step in the right direction. Backed with appropriate funding and legislation, it will help ensure Canada navigates the energy transition with foresight and intention.

Pretending this isn't happening will not save jobs, but it will leave Canada unprepared.

There are indeed many important conversations Canada needs to be having about its energy future. But all of them involve facing facts—not making them up.

*Merran Smith is the chief innovation officer and Rachel Doran is the policy and strategy director of Clean Energy Canada, a think tank at Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.*

*The Hill Times*

# It's on all of us to curb anti-democratic trends

Programs and initiatives that are context-dependent, local, and plentiful provide alternatives to the digital divide and our growing polarization through action and collective power.

Samantha Reusch & Habon Ali

Opinion



Efforts to support democracy internationally, particularly through trade and diplomatic relations, are essential. However, without substantial and ongoing domestic investment in democracy in Canada, we remain vulnerable to the same threats at home that we fight abroad and limit our credibility in supporting international efforts.

Democracy was repeatedly cited throughout the 2022 Fall



Without substantial and ongoing domestic investment in democracy here, we remain vulnerable to the same threats at home that we fight abroad and limit our credibility in supporting international efforts, write Samantha Reusch and Habon Ali. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Economic Statement (FES) as a deep concern, particularly as it relates to foreign affairs, trade, and development, and the promotion of democratic values abroad. By contrast, within Canadian borders, we have a serious gap between policy and practice.

In fact, there was no new investment at all in FES 2022 for the promotion of democratic values, practices, or the strengthening of our institutions at home. The next federal budget must address this gap if we are to combat the global anti-democratic trends which are taking root in Canada.

Recently, an alarming number of news reports have demonstrated increasing foreign efforts to undermine Canadian government officials, elections, and media.

Our blindspot towards our own vulnerabilities leaves us even more exposed. We know that a substantial number of Canadians are being left out and excluded from our democracy. This provides an opportunity to exacerbate feelings of disenfranchisement if we do not work towards reducing them.

In FES 2022, there is substantial acknowledgement, rightfully, of the economic challenges that we are facing as a country. However, the burden of these challenges on our capacity to participate and have faith in collective governance, an unfortunate and well-studied side effect of inequality and economic downturn, are unacknowledged and, most importantly, unaccounted for.

Over the next year, the effects of rising costs will inevitably place more barriers between Canadians and their democracy. Meanwhile, Canadians, particularly youth, are lonelier, more disconnected, and have even lower trust in their governments, traditional media, and their neighbours than before. According to a jointly released report from the United Nations and The Body Shop (*Be Seen Be Heard: Understanding young people's political participation*), eight in 10 youth in Canada think political systems need drastic reforms to be a fit for the future. Research from Apathy is Boring and Abacus Data also found that less than half of youth in Canada feel our country is moving in the right direction. We have not yet seen these trends slow, nevermind reverse. There is potential for these trends to worsen before they get better.

For groups like Apathy is Boring to continue our work engaging young people in our democracy, we need long-term investment in civil society organizations that can bridge the gap between the day-to-day lived experiences of citizens and provide a pathway towards advocating for themselves and their communities.

A strong democracy requires a massive amount of skilled human capital. Beyond electoral participation, it requires convening, organizing, listening, learning, mentorship, time, and patience. This can happen on behalf of our country's private sector, too: beauty retailer The Body Shop is one example of a brand equipping young people with skills and resources to participate in democracy through their "Be Seen. Be Heard." campaign.

The human labour required to self-govern goes beyond simply sending representatives to various legislatures: it requires our time, effort, and ongoing attention—all diminished by increasing economic and social pressures.

It also requires us to trust that our efforts and patience will be rewarded with a better future that reflects, to the best of our ability, our shared values and concerns.

Programs and initiatives that are context-dependent, local, and plentiful provide alternatives to the digital divide and our growing polarization through action and collective power. We can stem skepticism about democracy's ability to address the challenges we face and provide an alternative to despair. Democracy is a cause worth fighting for and investing in, both here and abroad.

We understand that times are difficult, and that public spending must be economized to address inflation and other economic challenges. All that we ask is that spending is not economized at the cost of the very system that enables this government and every government since 1867 to govern in the first place—Canadian democracy itself. To safeguard against foreign interference, disinformation, and every other threat to Canada's system of governance, we must invest in democracy here at home.

*Samantha Reusch is executive director and Habon Ali is the president and chair of Apathy is Boring, a national charity that supports and educates youth to be active and contributing citizens in Canada's democracy.*

*The Hill Times*

## Comment

# Will the West's support for Ukraine stand the test of time?

Continued from page 6

its seminal heroic myth arising from the defeat of Hitler's invasion, the hardship of war in the cause of supposed national salvation is, of course, also a unifying element. Beyond that, Putin and his propaganda machine have been able to maintain an iron grip on information about the attack on Ukraine.

Russians haven't been so brainwashed since the Stalin era, one observer said. In fact, polls seem to indicate that a majority of the Russian population supports the war, and that support, at least among older people who generally get their news from state-run TV, might actually be increasing. As to why there hasn't been a backlash after a year of bloody, failed attacks, explanations range from people thinking "it was a

mistake to start the war but we can't quit while we're losing," to Putin's successful propaganda campaign claiming it's a war against NATO to protect Russia from the West's aggression.

So, while things can change quickly, there's little reason to think that an upheaval in Moscow will end the Ukraine invasion. Nor is there much reason to hope that Putin would decide to seek peace. Despite the Russian leader's diatribes about the West's plot to destroy Russia, it's all too clear that Putin sees his life's mission as expanding his country's borders to redress what he sees as the catastrophe of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

It was obvious enough to Russia's neighbours. In *Politico's* recent oral history on the run-up to the invasion, then-United Kingdom foreign secretary Liz Truss

described efforts to enlist other countries in opposition to the Kremlin's expected invasion. "The Baltic states and Poland were always incredibly strong on this," she recalls, "because they knew exactly what the threat was—they know if Putin is successful in Ukraine, it won't be the end of it."

Putin has recently warned his country of a protracted war and, in addition to systematically destroying Ukraine's infrastructure, is stepping up the military offensive. The overriding question is becoming whether the West will persist in helping Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hold back the invasion for the long term.

United States President Joe Biden has vowed to stand by Zelenskyy as long as necessary to block Putin's invasion, and Washington last week added another

US\$400-million to the US\$32-billion in aid sent so far. But Biden's ability to keep up the current level of assistance is increasingly being questioned. Some polls indicate a slippage in war-weary Americans' support for the huge outpouring of funds for Ukraine and opposition from a small, but influential, group of Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives could complicate the White House's efforts.

Also, the political debate over continuing support for Kyiv is likely to sharpen as the 2024 presidential election gathers momentum. Both of the most prominent current Republican candidates—Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis—have slammed Biden's handling of the U.S. role in the conflict.

DeSantis criticized the president for providing an "open-ended

blank cheque" for Ukraine, adding that it's not in the American interest to take part in Ukraine's attempt to regain territory seized by Russian forces.

Trump has blamed Biden for allowing a situation where "we're teetering on the brink of World War Three" and promised to "end the Ukraine conflict in 24 hours." That claim, while anchored in the usual fanciful realm of Trumpism, is seen by supporters of Ukraine as a pledge to shut off American funding.

In that vein, some say declining support for Zelenskyy could unfortunately turn out to be Putin's only astute calculation in the whole war. "The Russians are digging in for the long haul," Fiona Hill, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told AP. Like other analysts, Hill said Putin is hoping for western support for Kyiv to dissolve—"that it goes away and that Ukraine is left exposed, and then that Russia can force Ukraine to capitulate and give up on its territory."

*Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.*

*The Hill Times*

## News

# Former U.S. president Carter hailed for his ‘honesty’ and ‘enormous decency’

Canada-U.S. relations were ‘as good as one can hope between two close countries during [Jimmy] Carter’s time’ as the American president, says former Pierre Trudeau cabinet minister Marc Lalonde.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

As the oldest living American president in history spends his final days at home in Plains, Ga., receiving hospice care, former federal cabinet ministers who served in Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments during the time now 98-year-old Jimmy Carter occupied the Oval Office are remembering him mostly for his deep humanity.

“I have great admiration for his genuineness, his honesty, and his devotion to his country,” said 93-year-old Marc Lalonde, who served as minister of justice and attorney general, and later as minister of energy, mines, and resources in former Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau’s government when Carter held office.

Lalonde never had any formal dealings with Carter’s Democratic administration, but played an important role in helping to orchestrate a bit of U.S. history involving the former president.

At Trudeau’s state funeral at Montreal’s Notre-Dame Basilica on Oct. 3, 2000, Lalonde—who

was close to the former prime minister as both his first principal secretary and as one of his most senior cabinet colleagues—arranged for a quick meeting between Carter and then-Cuban president, Fidel Castro, all three of whom were designated as honorary pallbearers.

“Castro indicated that he wanted to speak to Carter,” explained Lalonde, who said that he took them to an anteroom in the basilica where they spent about 15 minutes in conversation without any aides or interpreters.

“I don’t know what they discussed.”

Public historian and frequent *Hill Times* contributor Arthur Milnes, a friend of Carter’s for the past two decades, said the former American president and Cuban leader talked about Carter visiting Cuba—which he did, 19 months later, becoming the first former or sitting U.S. president to visit the island nation since the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Carter had “one condition,” recalled Milnes. “He wanted to give a speech on human rights, and that would involve sticking it to Castro, and Castro agreed.”

According to a recap of that historic visit by the Atlanta-based Carter Center, which the former president established in 1982 with his wife, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, he “urged the United States to end its economic embargo against Cuba, in place since 1960, and President Fidel Castro to hold free elections, improve human rights and allow greater civil liberties.”

Carter was the only former U.S. president to attend Trudeau’s funeral, which “was a sign of the warm relationship” he had with the former prime minister, said Lalonde.

“They were on the same wavelength, generally. Quite clearly, they were men who were progressives in their own ways,” he explained. “Trudeau had a natural affiliation—policy-wise, politically wise, and morally wise—to Carter, since they were both religious men.”

Lalonde added that Canada-U.S. relations were “as good as one can hope between two close countries during Carter’s time.”

On Feb. 21, 1977, Carter greeted Trudeau on the South Lawn of the White House, the day before Trudeau addressed the U.S. Congress, the first Canadian prime minister ever to do so.

Referring to Trudeau as “a senior statesman of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” Carter said the prime minister was long recognized “as one of the developed nations’ leading negotiators” who understood “the problems of the developing nations of the world.”

In reply, Trudeau said that “Canadians are looking forward to this period of good relationships” with Carter, just a month into his presidency.

Among the pair’s meetings was one in 1979, when they were both near the end of their time in office.

“We benefit from the stable and reliable and very valuable friendship that we have with the Canadian people. And I think it’s accurate to say that the relationship that we have with the great prime minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, is accurately mirrored in this same context,” Carter told reporters on March 3 on the South Lawn of the White House at the conclusion of their meeting.

Carter never managed to pay an official visit to Canada during Trudeau’s time as prime minister.



Then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau, left, and then-U.S. president Jimmy Carter, meet at the White House on Sept. 8, 1977. According to colleagues and historians, the two had a bond as likeminded progressives. *White House staff photograph*

He planned to come to Canada as president when Joe Clark briefly led a PC government. But the day before he was scheduled to arrive, a group of Iranian revolutionaries stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on Nov. 4, 1979, and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

Six American diplomats evaded capture and found refuge at the home of John Sheardown, the chief immigration officer at the Canadian Embassy, and at the residence of Ken Taylor, Canada’s ambassador at the time. Taylor helped co-ordinate their escape with the Clark government, which secretly issued Canadian passports to the six Americans who posed as Canadian filmmakers.

The so-called Canadian Caper is featured in the Oscar-winning 2012 film *Argo*, for which Carter—whose voice appears in the end credits—offered a film review of sorts in a Feb. 21, 2013, interview with then-CNN host Piers Morgan. The former president said that whereas “the movie gives almost full credit to the American CIA, 90 per cent of the contributions to the ideas and the consummation of the plan was Canadian.”

“The main hero, in my opinion,” offered Carter, “was Ken Taylor, who was the Canadian ambassador who orchestrated the entire process.”

Perrin Beatty was a member of Clark’s cabinet at the time of the rescue, the youngest person (at the age of 29) ever appointed a federal minister.

“The fact that we were hiding escaped Americans was held extremely closely until after they were free, so I wasn’t privy to any information,” said 72-year-old Beatty, now president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

“The only relevant thing I can say is that Jimmy Carter devoted himself to trying to get the hostages who were imprisoned freed. He held back from campaigning during their captivity, which may have cost [him] the election.”

Carter is “a man of enormous decency, who will be remembered as much for how he conducted his post-presidency as for his time as president,” said Beatty, who went on to serve in the PC cabinets of prime ministers Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell, where he served as secretary of state for external affairs.

“Instead of enriching himself as other ex-presidents had done, he returned to Plains and modestly and quietly focused on how he could help the less fortunate,” said Beatty, who referred to Carter as “the American version of the Roman statesman, Cincinnatus,” celebrated in history as a model of civic virtue.

For Milnes, 56, the connection to Carter is far more personal.

Inspired by his parents’ admiration for the former president, Kingston, Ont.-based Milnes—a onetime speechwriter for former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper—was determined to meet Carter, and did so, about 20 years ago.

Having no luck with interview requests he sent to the Carter Center, Milnes and a friend flew to Atlanta, rented a car and drove 235 kilometres south to Plains (population 553 in 2021) and ended up at Maranatha Baptist Church, where the former president was a longtime Sunday school teacher.

Like anyone there, Milnes got to meet Carter, and through some friends of the former president, secured the interview he sought,

Continued on page 34

# Poor vetting no excuse for Anderson meeting, say politicians

‘When you end up in a meeting with someone controversial, it’s not an accident,’ says former NDP staffer Cameron Holmstrom.

Continued from page 1

organizations with whom I was meeting—which is my usual practice.”

“I, alone, own this mistake. I will do better,” he tweeted on Feb. 24.

In a statement attributed to the three MPs, they said that they were not aware of the “associations” of Anderson and her Alternative for Germany party, nor do they either share or endorse them.

Former NDP staffer Cameron Holmstrom, now a principal at Niipaawi Strategies, said given the volume of meeting requests an MP receives, some are prioritized over others.

He said meetings can be boiled down to three categories: riding issues, critic portfolio, and personal interest.

“When you end up in a meeting with someone controversial, it’s not an accident. I refuse to believe the accident part,” he said, noting that if the Tory MPs legitimately did take the meeting by accident, they should have left early.

Holmstrom said there were times that an MP that he staffed received requests for a meeting and he wasn’t aware of the individual making the request.

“But I made a point of finding out who they are,” he said, remarking that is done both for political cover and prioritize meetings. “If I don’t know who you are and what you’re about, I can’t make a good judgement on how to prioritize it.”



Conservative MPs Colin Carrie, left, Leslyn Lewis, and Dean Allison met with a far-right European parliamentarian last month. Carrie blamed insufficient vetting for the rendezvous. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

“Most offices have procedures. They don’t just meet with someone willy-nilly,” he said.

Holmstrom, who was a staffer for three MPs during his time on the Hill, said there is notice given by caucus and critics not to meet with certain controversial figures, adding that such advice is followed the great majority of the time.

“But there are some people that are going to meet with someone regardless of what the party thinks,” he said.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) initially called the views of Anderson “vile,” and remarked that the MPs were unaware of her opinions. On March 6, he said the three MPs won’t be removed from caucus for attending the meeting.

The meeting with Anderson is far from the first get-together to be questioned. Conservative MPs hosted leading figures of the so-called Freedom Convoy on the Hill last June, which was organized by Allison. A group of cross-party MPs attended a

Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group event where an alleged antisemitic newspaper publisher was present. The group later said it would review the process in which it invites outside attendees to events. Then-finance minister Paul Martin was criticized for attending an event in 2000 hosted by a group that has ties with the Tamil Tigers, a listed terrorist organization.

More recently, Senate Speaker George Furey (Newfoundland and Labrador), Conservative Senator Don Plett (Landmark, Man.), and non-affiliated Senator Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Alberta) came under fire for meeting with controversial Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana while in Israel. Ohana has made Islamophobic comments in the past.

Liberal MP Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Ont.) echoed the need to prioritize who MPs hold meetings with.

“Inevitably we have to say ‘no’ to a lot [of meetings] because of time,” he said. “Every single time

I sit down with somebody, I have some idea of who I am meeting with. The idea that a Member of Parliament has no idea of what another politician’s view are or what they’ve done or what they’ve said recently is, quite frankly, totally impossible from my perspective.”

He said the response from the Conservative MPs is “so clearly a fabrication” that is “laughable for anybody that has taken a political meeting before.”

“It’s really disappointing ... that we even have to have this conversation. That is really troubling. That is a party [Alternative for Germany] that represents some pretty reprehensible stuff.”

Van Koevorden said he meets with people on a priority basis and needs to be “picky” about who he meets with.

“What strikes me about the meeting that those three Conservative MPs had with Christine Anderson is she was a priority for them,” he said. “It wasn’t some random meeting.”

Conservative strategist Tasha Kheiriddin, principal at Navigator Ltd., previously told *The Hill Times* that there is “no room” for the vetting mistakes like the one made by Carrie, Lewis, and Allison.

“You have aides for that reason, to vet the people that you meet with,” she said. “You also have a responsibility to know who you’re engaging with.”

“They can’t say they didn’t know, and if they did not know, then they didn’t do their homework, so it’s a no-win situation,” Kheiriddin said.

Ottawa-based consultant Greg MacEachern, a former Liberal staffer on the Hill, said the decision to take certain meetings is typically made by the MP and their office, but noted there are orientation sessions given by the House of Commons as well as from parties.

He said it “strains belief” that a meeting with Anderson would be set up with no knowledge of her beliefs, and that Carrie’s credibility is lost by claiming not to have known about Anderson’s views, despite having cited her words in the House of Commons last year.

In March 2022, Carrie noted that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) had been “admonished” at the European Parliament, which followed a viral video of Anderson condemning the Canadian government’s approach to COVID-19 mandates.

MacEachern said MPs need to show “common sense” about how they approach their job.

Past Liberal MP and staffer Joe Jordan, now a senior associate at Bluesky Strategy Group, said as an MP, there is priority given to constituents when taking meetings.

“You try to find out as much as you possibly can to find out about what the meeting is going to be about to just save people a lot of time,” he said.

The next important meetings are policy ones, through which an MP can gain increased knowledge of an issue that is important to them, such as those being dealt with at committee.

Beyond that, meetings that can benefit the MP’s constituency are prioritized, such as meeting a group that has interest in moving a business to the riding.

“After you’ve exhausted those three, there are not a lot of hours left in the day,” he said.

Jordan noted that the vetting happens in an ad hoc way, with each MP’s office being staffed by aides with varying degree of experience and expertise.

“They tend to make things up as they go along,” he said, noting that there isn’t much instruction on what vetting procedures to use. “It’s not as formal as people might think it should be.”

Following the meeting the three Conservative MPs had with Anderson, Jordan said some offices may revisit their own policies about taking meetings to ensure they don’t garner unneeded negative publicity.

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*The Hill Times*



Conservative MPs Colin Carrie, third from left, Leslyn Lewis, and Dean Allison, are pictured with far-right German MEP Christine Anderson, centre. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has called Christine Anderson’s views ‘vile.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## Opinion

# Health-care resourcing is failing Canada's most vulnerable children

In the absence of vital health-care supports and programming, children are regressing from the developmental progress that in some cases had taken years to achieve, writes Nicola Lewis. *Unsplash photograph by Vitolda Klein*



The pandemic exposed the fragility of Canada's health-care system and removed access to necessary supports for thousands of Canadian families.

Nicola Lewis

Opinion



For the 850,000 Canadian families struggling to ensure the best possible outcomes for their children living with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDDs), the recent crisis in children's hospitals across the country came as no surprise. Children with NDDs are deeply and disproportionately affected by the deep cracks that the pandemic exposed—and widened—in the public services designed to serve them.

At Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN), we continue witnessing the devastating impact the health-care resourcing crisis has on Canada's most vulnerable children. The pandemic exposed the fragility of Canada's health-care

system and removed access to necessary supports for thousands of Canadian families.

Prior to 2020, families were already struggling to access timely interventions and supports for their children living with NDDs. For these children—who experience a higher risk of mental health disorders, sleep issues, and other health problems—ongoing supports and interventions are critical to healthy development and overall well-being. When the pandemic hit, virtually all existing supports evaporated and many families continue to carry the burden without any help.

The results are catastrophic. In the absence of vital health-care supports and programming, children are regressing from the developmental progress that in some cases had taken years to achieve.

When dealing with extremely challenging behaviours, some families have no option but to turn to the child welfare system. We need to do better as a society to support vulnerable children and their families. Funding, collaboration, and equitable access to the necessary services is how we will get there.

Parents and caregivers are taking on the role of service provider to support their children, leading to burnout and a sharp increase in mental health issues. One mother contacted her support worker more than 200 times in six months to help manage her son's escalating behaviour

and mental health challenges. She said her family would have fallen apart if it weren't for the availability of a support program funded by KBHN.

This needs to change.

Not addressing the needs of children with NDDs and their families in Canada's health-care plan will only cause additional strain throughout the health-care system, including pediatric and mental health services.

According to the Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network, it is estimated that fetal alcohol spectrum disorder alone costs the Canadian economy \$9.7-billion

each year. Canada has an opportunity to leverage our expertise and lead the charge in establishing disability-inclusive systems that can withstand any future crises while allowing children with NDDs to realize their full potential.

Governments must recognize the unique needs of children with NDDs and commit to developing responsive policies and programs. We're off to a positive start with the implementation of the Accessible Canada Act, a commitment to realizing a barrier-free Canada by 2040, and the Federal Framework on Autism Spectrum

Disorder Act, but we can't afford to lose momentum.

We now have the opportunity to put systems in place that will allow for a more thoughtful approach to future crises. With the pandemic showing gaps in our health-care system, an expert advisory group is needed to consult around the needs of children with NDDs in any emergency situation. When developing a national child health strategy, the federal government must consider the unique needs of children living with NDDs and ensure that the plan is inclusive of all children in Canada.

Canada must also prioritize expansion of the Connecting Families Program, designed to bring high-speed internet to families in need, including those with children who have NDDs. This is especially critical now that many services and supports have expanded to virtual models and parents can take advantage of online services.

The pandemic shined a light on what families living with NDDs have always known: having systems of support in place is non-negotiable. However unwanted, the COVID-19 pandemic is unlikely to be our last global health emergency that negatively impacts Canada's health-care resources.

Now is the time to work towards a future where services and supports for children with NDDs are essential. Support for these groups is imperative, we must do everything for the most vulnerable amongst us.

KBHN and other not-for-profits have the expertise to help, and we are ready to work with the government and other key stakeholders to ensure all kids in Canada with NDDs are supported in future health-care planning and resource allocation.

The livelihood and wellbeing of countless families depends on it.

*Nicola Lewis is the chief executive officer of Kids Brain Health Network, a Canada-wide network that develops and harnesses scientific advances in technologies, interventions and supports with the goal of helping children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families live the best lives.*

*The Hill Times*



Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion Minister Carla Qualtrough makes an announcement in Ottawa on Nov. 17, 2022. The implementation of the Accessible Canada Act and the Federal Framework on Autism Spectrum Disorder Act is a positive start, but we can't afford to lose momentum, writes Nicola Lewis. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

# Don't let earthquake shake hopes for peace in war-weary Syria

The international community must conquer donor fatigue and provide a full-scale humanitarian response in Syria.

Anne Delorme

Opinion



A few weeks ago, a deadly earthquake struck Turkey and Syria. The result was unfathomable destruction to people and infrastructure, with entire villages wiped out. Millions of people are now homeless. In the disaster area, hospitals are overwhelmed. Civilian infrastructure is severely damaged. Access to electricity, telecommunications, food, water, heating, and medical care are

limited, all while freezing winter weather adds to the despair. International attention has focused primarily on Turkey, while war-torn Syria is all but forgotten.

For 12 years, Syrians have been experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis. The war in Syria has already claimed more than 300,000 lives and caused 13.2 million refugees and displaced people to flee their homes. Infrastructure, like hospitals, was already partially destroyed by bombing. The earthquake destroyed what little infrastructure was still standing in Northern Syria, leaving survivors with too few resources and too little hope for recovery.

Those most affected by war are among the least likely to benefit from assistance, as conflict complexifies the humanitarian response. Nearly three weeks after the earthquake, international aid is slowly reaching Syrians. In recognition of the absolutely desperate situation, the United States and allies have temporarily eased some of the sanctions against the Bashar al-Assad regime to

facilitate humanitarian relief. Additional aid routes are being opened through the Bab al-Salama border crossing. These are encouraging developments. However, it is estimated that 15 million people are still in need of food and agricultural assistance—68 per cent of the population of Syria. The high commodity prices and limited access to essential humanitarian aid are still causing further population displacement. Those injured from war and the from the earthquake have little access to the health services they need. Untreated injuries can lead to long-term mental and physical disabilities, while lack of rehabilitation services for amputees impedes the ability of survivors to regain a fully productive life.

Populations previously spared from the indiscriminate carnage of landmines have a new reason for fear. It is likely that land mines and unexploded ordnances have migrated to new areas. The magnitude of the shock demolished the Al-Taloul dam, causing flooding in northwestern Syria. There is a strong chance

that the flash floods moved explosive ordnances into areas which were previously free of this danger. When an area is infested with unexploded ordnances, it becomes too dangerous for rescuers to access, and impedes both social and economic development for generations to come.

Now is the time for action. The international community must conquer donor fatigue and provide a full-scale humanitarian response in Syria. Canada has stepped up and committed \$10-million in matching funds to the earthquake response in Turkey and Syria in funding to Canada's Humanitarian Coalition which includes Humanity & Inclusion. This follows the government's matching of \$10-million in donations to the Red Cross. These are important measures, but more is urgently needed, specifically in Syria where the humanitarian emergency is most acute.

This past November, Canada joined 82 other states in endorsing the first-ever international explosive weapons declaration to protect civilians in populated ar-

eas. When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, 90 per cent of victims are civilians. This historic agreement sends a clear message that bombings in cities and towns must end. Nowhere is this more urgent than in Syria, where bombings continue, even after the earthquake.

Ending the war in Syria will take infinite persistence. Anything less than peace and dignity for all Syrian people is unacceptable. Canada and the international community must build on the few, but nonetheless promising, diplomatic developments towards implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, which outlines a roadmap for a peace process in Syria.

Aid can be part of the solution. Studies have shown that raising economic conditions and peace building can be mutually reinforcing. However, aid done wrong can exacerbate tensions. Syria's post-earthquake recovery must be carefully orchestrated in such a way that it serves as a catalyst for the peace process—if it includes peace-building and conflict-transformation strategies.

The earthquake has caused so much suffering. We cannot let hopes for peace in Syria become another casualty.

Anne Delorme is the executive director of Humanity & Inclusion Canada.

The Hill Times

# We must support Azerbaijan's sovereignty against Kremlin-backed separatism

Canada should indeed be involved in the region, not to further flame the decades-long ethnic feud, but to aid the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Nika Jabiyeva

Opinion



A recent opinion article published by *The Hill Times* alleged claims that relied on shock factor and the general public's lack of awareness about the South Caucasus region. Disinforming the Canadian public to garner sympathies for a Russia-backed separatist regime on Azerbaijan's sovereign territory only serves to disrupt the long-awaited peace-building process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In the early 1990s, Armenia invaded Azerbaijan and, within four years with Russia's military support, occupied 15 per cent of Azerbaijan's sovereign territory. More than 700,000 indigenous Azerbaijanis were ethnically cleansed from the Karabakh region by the invading Armenian forces. Thousands were massacred, including 613 civilians in a small town of Khojaly in 1992. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were left scattered across post-Soviet Azerbaijan, forced to raise families in tents and train cars. As one former Azerbaijani internally displaced person said in a gripping interview, "people didn't just die in the war; we kept dying."

In 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding the Armenian forces' immediate and complete withdrawal from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The occupation lasted for nearly three decades, until the fall of 2020, when the Azerbaijani defence forces drove out the Armenian military in the 44-day Second Karabakh War. Today, the ethnic Armenian population continues to live in the area. In the last two years, Azerbaijan and Armenia have been negotiating the terms of the final peace agreement that

would stipulate a mutual recognition of one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It would be more challenging for the 700,000 Azerbaijanis to return to their homes. Large swaths of the formerly occupied regions are laden with landmines, which claimed more than 282 victims, including the lives of two journalists, just in the last two and half years. The Network of Azerbaijani Canadians, a national grassroots advocacy organization, has been raising awareness about this humanitarian urgency of de-mining the region while encouraging Canada to assist with life-saving efforts.

This principal historical context was missing from the recently published article, which audaciously claimed that it is Azerbaijan that has an "ongoing policy of displacement and elimination of the Armenians of [Karabakh]."

The reference to a blockade is related to recent Azerbaijani protests—peaceful protests—on the Lachin road that Armenians residing in Azerbaijan's Karabakh region have been using to travel to Armenia. Despite the claims of a blockade in the abovementioned article, the protesters have not prevented passage of civilian vehicles or humanitarian convoys. Since Dec. 12, 2022, more than 2,500 vehicles with food and

medical supplies have passed through the road.

The larger context behind the tensions is the recent installation of a sanctioned Russian oligarch of Armenian origin, Ruben Vardanyan, as the state minister of an unrecognized separatist regime inside Azerbaijan's sovereign territory. The Armenians refer to it as Artsakh. "The worse our situation becomes, the better the global reach of our demands and our voice," Vardanyan admitted in December, when his arrival coincided with the renewed tensions on the Lachin road.

Observers have called out Vardanyan's sudden appearance in the region as Russia's attempt to re-establish control over the South Caucasus. It's important to note that should Azerbaijan and Armenia sign the peace agreement, which was, until Vardanyan's appearance, being facilitated by the European Union, Russia's role in the conflict would become obsolete.

Canada should indeed be involved in the region, not to further flame the decades-long ethnic feud, but to aid the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia. During the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs' recent hearing on the conflict, the parliamentary secretary to the foreign minister

rightfully reiterated Canada's long-standing support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. He also reaffirmed that official Canada does not recognize any self-declared entities within Azerbaijan's sovereign territory.

Official Azerbaijan's willingness to discuss the rights and securities of the local Armenian population in Azerbaijan's Karabakh region was reiterated in the Azerbaijani president's Feb. 18 speech at the Munich Security Conference. The latest development in the region saw the sudden removal of Vardanyan from his position on Feb. 23, raising as many questions as did his initial arrival from Russia.

Russian-backed separatism in the former Soviet republics has been a tool to exert control over its former sphere of influence, as has been the case with Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine. We should actively support the independence and sovereignty of the former Soviet republics, not contribute to Russia's ambitions of returning them to its sphere of influence.

Nika Jabiyeva is the executive director of the Network of Azerbaijani Canadians.

The Hill Times

## Opinion

A new generation of leaders is stepping up to the challenge to increase diversity in sustainable water management for equitable decisions that leave no one behind and protect those most vulnerable to water-related extremes, write Andrea May Rowe and Corinne Schuster-Wallace. Photograph courtesy of Unsplash



# Is Canada ready to hear from a new wave of water leaders?

While Canada has had a Feminist International Assistance Policy since 2017, little attention has been paid to elevating the voices of women and girls in global water dialogues.

Andrea May Rowe & Corinne Schuster-Wallace

Opinion



The climate crisis is a water crisis. This won't surprise many after the destruction, loss of life, and economic impacts of recent extreme climate events.

Atmospheric rivers caused massive flooding and mudslides in British Columbia and severely damaged critical infrastructure. Heat domes razed large parts of Western Canada and are believed to be responsible for more than

600 deaths in the summer of 2021. In January, a bomb cyclone left millions of North Americans under a blanket of cold snow and ice, leading to 1.5 million people without power.

However, these extreme events have not directly impacted all of us. Even when directly affected, people experience impacts to different degrees due to existing access to drinking water, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, remoteness, and more. This is partly because of a lack of representation and diversity in water management and fragmentation in water governance that contributes to inequities in water resource allocation and climate change mitigation, adaptation, and planning.

Recent United Nations Climate Change Conferences, including COP 26 in Glasgow, U.K., and COP 27 in Sharm-el Sheik, Egypt, have only highlighted global inequities in water decision-making and power access.

COP 26 in Glasgow was called out by activists and journalists as the most exclusionary climate conference in history because of the high cost of accommodation, lack of travel visas, and low representation of women, Indigenous people, and people from the Global South; this was repeated

at COP 27 in Sharm-el Sheik in 2022.

The COP conferences are one example of an ongoing problem that permeates water decision-making spaces. White men from the Global North dominate the field of water research and policymaking. At the same time, the lived experience and expertise of women, Indigenous People, people from the Global South, racialized people, and people in equity-deserving groups are systematically on the margins of developing the solutions necessary to address the climate crisis.

While Canada has had a Feminist International Assistance Policy since 2017, little attention has been paid to elevating the voices of women and girls in global water dialogues. At COP 15, the December 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, equity, diversity, inclusion, and the representation of Indigenous Peoples featured prominently in what is considered a historic biodiversity agreement.

How will Canada take up these recommendations? There are more than 30 long-term drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario still to be resolved, which take a social, economic, and environmental toll on the people living in these

communities daily. Investing in high-quality, gender-disaggregated data using an intersectional approach and implementing decision-making processes informed by the intersection between people and water is the only way to fully understand who is vulnerable, where, and why.

There is a significant opportunity for governments at all levels to reflect on how they engage with diverse voices and to ensure that there is space for all voices to be heard by extending invitations to participate in high-level dialogues, funding attendance, and insisting on a diversity of participants in every room where decisions are made.

To support this change, Women Plus Water, an initiative born out of Global Water Futures and the Global Institute for Water Security at the University of Saskatchewan, is launching an expert list to introduce communities, leaders, and policymakers to a new wave of leaders in water research, management, and decision-making. The inspiration for the expert list came from the more than 2,000 participants in 49 countries who regularly attend the online Women Plus Water lecture series events that take on topics from water diplomacy to water modelling, and more. The audience, expert guests,

and hosts are from all aspects of water research and management and include a mix of early-career professionals and established leaders.

On Feb. 10, The Women Plus Water expert list was officially launched at the United Nations General Assembly in conjunction with the United Nations International Day for Women and Girls in Science led by Iraqi princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite and the Royal Academy of Sciences International Trust.

Water experts from Canada and worldwide are strongly encouraged to join the list by applying at [womenpluswater.org](https://womenpluswater.org). Organizations seeking water experts to engage in community outreach, speaking engagements, conference presentations, consulting, and more are also welcome to access the list and invite experts to participate directly.

A new generation of leaders is stepping up to the challenge to increase diversity in sustainable water management for equitable decisions that leave no one behind and protect those most vulnerable to water-related extremes. Diversity benefits everyone. The time is now to act for a more inclusive water community.

*Dr. Andrea May Rowe is the equity, diversity, and inclusion specialist at the Global Institute for Water Security and Global Water Futures at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace is Global Water Futures associate director and associate professor in the department of geography and planning at the University of Saskatchewan and founder of Women Plus Water.*

*The Hill Times*



# Agriculture

## POLICY BRIEFING

Labour shortages is one of the major issues facing the agriculture sector. How can the federal government help the agriculture sector fill job vacancies? Are current immigration strategies up to the challenge?

How is Canada's agriculture sector currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Has the sector turned a corner? What are the current challenges in regards to plant closures, market fluctuations and supply chain delays?

Canada imposed a 35 per cent tariff on all imports from Russia in February 2022, including nitrogen fertilizer products. What is the effect of fertilizer tariffs on Canada's agriculture sector, and how can the federal government help?

Climate change can affect agriculture through increased temperatures, changes in the length of growing season, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. What are the challenges facing Canada's farmers from climate change, and how can the federal government help? Are there any opportunities for the sector, such as growing more warm-weather crops?

What innovations in technology or in farming techniques are shaping the future of agriculture in Canada? What do farmers need to take advantage of these opportunities?

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## Opinion

# Will Justin Trudeau stop the biggest beer tax increase on Canadians in 40 years?

The excise tax ‘escalator’ is badly flawed policy, and there are many valid reasons to defer further scheduled tax increases until inflation returns to more normal levels.

CJ Hélie

Opinion



On Feb. 14, Beer Canada organized a lobby day on Parliament Hill.

It was great to get back to in-person events that have not been possible for several years. But this year’s “run on the Hill” felt very different from those of the past. Brewery unions, including representatives from the Service Employees International Union, the Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers, the Fish, Food and Allied Workers, and Unifor; barley and grain farmers; maltsters; small, medium, and large beer companies; restaurateurs; spirits, wine, and cider producers; tourism organizations; and alcohol retailers all came together with a common message: now is the time to freeze federal alcohol taxes.

As a sign of what’s at stake, this is the broadest and deepest coalition ever to come together to fight for fairness for Canadian beer. In a period of high inflation and rising interest rates, when brewers’ costs are at their highest and per capita beer consumption is at an all-time low, a rigid formulaic tax policy that then imposes the biggest beer tax increase in 40 years defies common sense.

The excise tax “escalator” is badly flawed policy, and there are many valid reasons to defer further scheduled tax increases until inflation returns to more normal levels. It’s not clear why some in government appear so wedded to this dated policy. They often resort to simplistic sound bites that ignore the current market context and the real impact on workers, consumers, and businesses. But you don’t need to take our word on its real-life impact. According to Restaurants Canada, this year’s beverage alcohol increase will impose a new \$30,000 tab on a typical casual licensed restaurant. Maybe even

more pernicious is that this tax policy adds to inflation, making life less affordable for Canadians and making the Bank of Canada’s job to return to its two per cent CPI inflation target more difficult.

Brewery union workers are concerned with the uncertainty these annual inflation-based tax hikes may mean for future labour gains at the negotiating table. Grain farmers and maltsters know that higher prices that lead to lower beer consumption inevitably means fewer bushels of premium malted barley and hops sold in the domestic market. Beer is nearly unique within Canada’s processed agri-food sector with 88 per cent of beer consumed here, made here. That means that any significant contraction of the domestic beer consumer market will be felt from the farmer’s field to the choices available to beer lovers.

Nationally, out-of-home beer sales volumes in bars, licensed restaurants, sporting venues, and festivals remain 25 per cent below pre-pandemic levels. Some of this is certainly due to reduced capacity, but many consumers also have not yet fully returned to their past habits. Clearly, cost-of-living increases across both essentials and discretionary items means many families are more cost conscious of their purchasing decisions than ever.

Tourism, another key driver of the hospitality sector, also remains well below pre-pandemic levels. For example, international travellers to Canada in September 2022 were 6.1 per cent below those in the same month in 2019, and domestic travel by Canadians within Canada was also still down more than three per cent.

And, of course, higher beer taxes mean beer prices will go up and this

will harm consumers, hospitality businesses, and the beer industry. It’s hard to believe that in a period of hyperinflation our government would choose to make life more expensive. We hope the government uses the opportunity of this year’s budget to address the upcoming beer tax increase. It’s a simple way for the prime minister and the deputy prime minister/minister of finance to demonstrate to Canadians in a tangible way that they care, have their backs, and understand the impact of higher costs of living due to widespread inflation. It’s also sound policy with huge support from MPs across all parties. We remain hopeful that the government will do the right thing and freeze this tax. Otherwise, on April 1, Canadians will have a very bad tax hangover.

CJ Hélie is a veteran Canadian beverage alcohol executive with more than 30 years of experience and was appointed president of Beer Canada in June 2021.

The Hill Times



Higher beer taxes mean beer prices will go up and this will harm consumers, hospitality businesses, and the beer industry, writes CJ Hélie. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## News

# Former U.S. president Carter hailed for his ‘honesty’ and ‘enormous decency’

Continued from page 28

elements of which appeared in the *Toronto Star*, *The Hill Times*, and *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.

The two hit it off, and Milnes would return to Plains at least once every year—with his wife, Alison Bogle, or other friends—and have lunch or dinner with Carter and his wife.

“He jokingly called me the Plains, Ga., honorary Canadian tourism rep,” recalled Milnes, who edited the McGill-Queen’s University Press 2011 book, *Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter: A Canadian Tribute*, for which he said four former prime ministers—Clark, Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, and Paul Martin—sent personal donations to support the research.

Milnes, meanwhile, credits Carter with helping him deal with lifelong clinical depression.

“I was at my worst and lowest and one day the phone rang, and it was President and Mrs. Carter,” recalled Milnes. “They talked to me for half an hour and it really bucked me up.”

“Mental health is a very great passion of theirs. Mrs. Carter, in particular, started battling the stigma surrounding mental health in the early ‘60s in rural Georgia.”

The couple’s closeness to Milnes was most apparent in 2012 when Queen’s University awarded the Carters honorary degrees to be presented to them at a Nov. 21 morning ceremony, which former ambassador Taylor and Flora MacDonald, who was secretary of state for external affairs at the time of the Iranian hostage crisis, attended at the former president’s request.

“I phoned President Carter and said basically, ‘why don’t you stay with us when you come to Kingston?’” remembered Milnes.

The Carters accepted the invitation, and with Secret Service protection in tow, stayed with Milnes and Bogle at their home and planted two trees in their backyard—adding to the trees planted there by seven former prime ministers.

Milnes and Carter have a deep friendship that has evolved over two decades, filled with many conversations that often focused on the former president’s views of Canada.

“He’ll tell you that his very first memories of anything Canadian was in the 1930s, listening to radio reports from this mysterious, far-off place called Ontario, talking about the Dionne quintts”—the five identical girls born near Callander, Ont., the first quintuplets known to have survived infancy, said Milnes, who added that Carter was also intrigued by Niagara Falls, after a relative visited the Canadian side.

“Remember, from rural Georgia, the idea of going to Niagara Falls was like going to the moon back then,” he said.

Carter first set foot in Canada in late 1952 as a 28-year-old naval officer attached to the U.S. nuclear submarine program.

Lt. James Earl Carter Jr. was dispatched to Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories, about 200 km northwest of Ottawa, where a Dec. 12 accident led to a partial meltdown—the world’s first serious nuclear mishap. Carter



After befriending former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, right, Canadian historian Arthur Milnes, left, invited him and his wife to stay at his Kingston, Ont., home in 2012. *Photograph courtesy of Arthur Milnes*

led the contingent of U.S. military personnel who helped shut down the reactor.

Milnes said that from a distance, Carter has long admired Canada’s approach to health care.

“One of his great regrets is that he couldn’t get a Canadian-style health-care system in the United States,” said Milnes, who echoed Lalonde’s comments about the affinity between Carter and Trudeau.

In 2002, the former president was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.”

The latter has brought him to Canada, where, through Habitat for Humanity, Carter and his wife helped build 150 homes in Edmonton and Winnipeg in 2017 to celebrate Canada’s sesquicentennial.

While in Winnipeg, the former president was briefly hospitalized for dehydration and received a check-up call from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.).

Among the many memories Milnes has of his iconic friend, the one that stands out happened at the April 30, 2011, book launch for *Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter* at the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park in Plains, which featured a lunch catered by the Canadian consulate general in Atlanta.

At the event, the former president talked about the most consequential Canadian connection to his presidency.

“In his speech, he started to describe how he felt when our ambassador, Ken Taylor, put himself in personal danger, and our prime minister, Joe Clark, put himself in political danger, to keep his hostages safe,” recalled Milnes. “He choked up, and cried a bit.”

“We were outdoors, and there were 70 or 80 people, and you could have heard a pin drop at that moment.”

The Hill Times

# Vulnerable populations will be more at risk due to Bill S-5's CEPA changes



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May unsuccessfully introduced amendments to Bill S-5 at the House Environment Committee that would have corrected the gap in the legislation, write Joseph Castrilli and Fe de Leon. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

This background informed May's proposed amendments to Bill S-5 in committee last month, to correct this gap by requiring mandatory industry testing when available information is insufficient to make appropriate determinations.

Unfortunately, the reaction of federal witnesses to this proposed change missed the mark. Witnesses pointed to other measures that could be used, including monitoring, partnering with academia, leveraging data from other jurisdictions, or requesting it from industry to complete a risk assessment. The point of the amendment was that if there is still insufficient data about a substance after all efforts have been exhausted, then testing by industry—or by the government at the industry's expense—should be mandatory. This simple, straight-forward amendment was vigorously opposed by the federal government and voted down by the committee.

## Bill S-5 repeal of explicit CEPA authority for geographic regulation of toxics

The ministerial background-er suggesting Bill S-5 would enable geographically targeted regulations to better support the protection of communities at risk from local sources of pollution is mystifying. CEPA already has enabling authority that makes geographically focused regulation possible to protect the environment, biological diversity, or human health. What does Bill S-5 do with this existing authority? It proposes to repeal it.

In pursuing this approach, the federal government appears to rely on general authority under the Interpretation Act that states every enactment applies to the whole of Canada, unless a contrary intention is expressed in the enactment. While this approach may allow the federal government to achieve the same result as the sections of CEPA to be repealed, reliance on the Interpretation Act obscures, rather than highlights, the authority to do so. In practice, there have never been any geographically focused regulations under CEPA. Removing explicit authority to make such regulations hardly seems like a recipe for it to occur any time soon.

Not expanding the definition of vulnerable populations. Not requiring mandatory testing when available information is insufficient. Repealing existing authority to promulgate geographic-specific regulations. When one threads these missed opportunities and missteps together, they do not add up to Bill S-5 coming to the rescue of vulnerable populations in Canada where toxic, or would-be toxic, substances are concerned. Parliament is running out of time to correct these unforced policy errors.

Joseph F. Castrilli is counsel at the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Fe de Leon is the organization's senior researcher. *The Hill Times*

Bill S-5 may doom attempts to improve environmental health outcomes for vulnerable populations for generations to come.

Joseph F. Castrilli  
& Fe  
de Leon

Opinion



A mid-February media release from the federal environment minister repackaged a year-old outline of Bill S-5 amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) currently being considered by Parliament.

Under a heading entitled "Protecting Vulnerable Populations," the release's backgrounder trumpets the federal government's commitment to protecting

vulnerable populations from toxic substances under Bill S-5 by emphasizing its: definition of them; consideration of available information about them; and ability to geographically target regulations to protect communities at risk from local sources of pollution.

However, there is no basis for federal optimism about Bill S-5 on these issues. Bill S-5 may doom attempts to improve environmental health outcomes for vulnerable populations for generations to come.

## Failure of Bill S-5 to expand vulnerable populations definition

In February, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May introduced amendments in the House Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to clarify as well as expand the scope, meaning, and application of the Bill S-5 definition of vulnerable populations. However, federal witnesses appearing before the committee suggested the definition of "vulnerable populations" was not expanded by the government because that would have the

effect of limiting the term, and certain groups objected to being identified as a vulnerable population. The committee voted down the proposed amendment.

The explanation provided by federal witnesses is not a satisfactory answer to the issues raised. Greater detail in a definition can always be of assistance to courts, the regulated community, the public, and regulators in understanding the purpose and scope of the definition.

Legislatures in other jurisdictions have not hesitated to provide greater detail in a "vulnerable populations" definition. The 2021 State of Washington Environmental Justice Act provides a far more expansive definition of "vulnerable populations" than Bill S-5 does. The Washington law also defines related terms in the definition to further improve understanding of the law's scope in protecting vulnerable populations. Thus, expanding the definition of "vulnerable populations" does not appear to pose the obstacles for Washington state legislators that it appears to pose for Ottawa. To the contrary, expansion improves understanding.

Failing to define terms or keeping a definition vague when you do define something does not help elucidate the meaning or purpose of a statute. Rather it obscures it. Obscurity is not helpful in a statute meant to control toxic substances.

## Failure of Bill S-5 to require mandatory testing where available information inadequate

The Bill S-5 amendment that would require ministers to consider available information regarding vulnerable populations in risk assessments is important. However, the amendment did not go far enough. Often there is not any (or not adequate) information available, and the amendment did not require the ministers to direct that testing be undertaken by industry where there is an information gap.

In its June 2022 report on Bill S-5, the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources concluded that "testing should be done by industry where and when available information on substance toxicity is unavailable or inconclusive."

## News

# Amid TikTok ban, Canadians left 'to their own devices' as feds dither on updating privacy rules: Geist

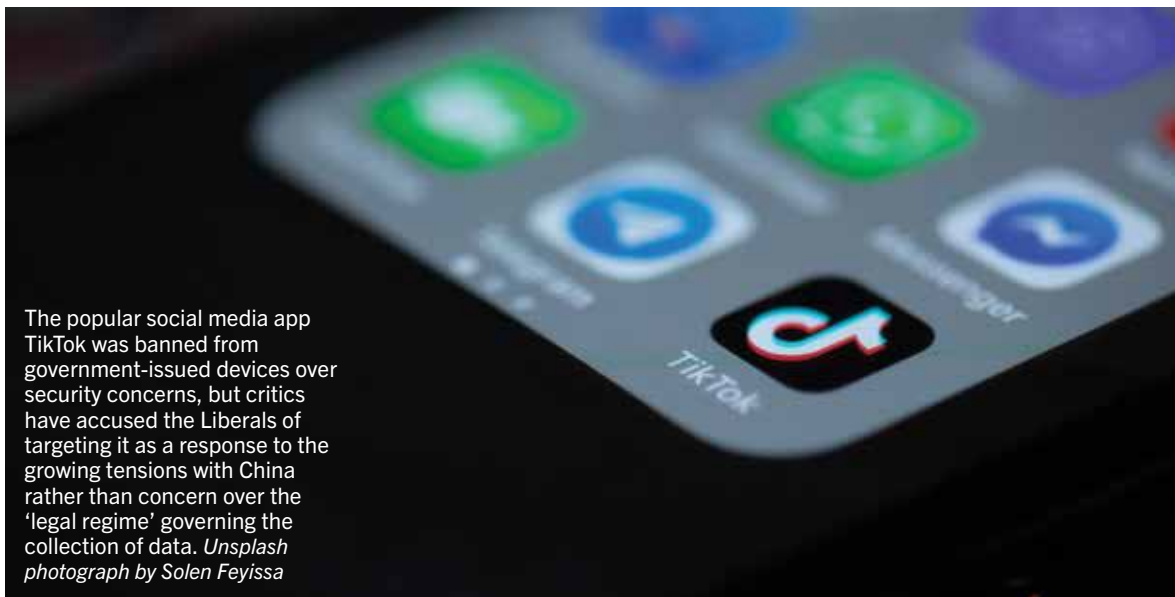
The Liberals' latest attempt at modernizing the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, Bill C-27, has only made it to its second reading nine months after being introduced.

Continued from page 1

security." The government's move was quickly followed by similar bans from the House and Senate regarding parliamentary issued devices. The Bank of Canada has also moved to prohibit TikTok from its devices, and various political parties suspended or deleted their accounts on the platform.

In her announcement, Fortier said the ban is a precaution due to concerns about the "legal regime" governing the information TikTok collects from mobile devices and that the app's "data collection methods provide considerable access to the contents of the phone," but said there was no evidence that government information had been compromised.

As for the general public, Fortier wrote that the decision over whether to continue using TikTok will remain a personal choice, but pointed to guidance from the Communications Security Establishment's Canadian Centre for Cyber Security which "strongly recommends that Canadians understand the risks and make an



The popular social media app TikTok was banned from government-issued devices over security concerns, but critics have accused the Liberals of targeting it as a response to the growing tensions with China rather than concern over the 'legal regime' governing the collection of data. *Unsplash photograph by Solen Feyissa*

informed choice on their own before deciding what tools to use."

At a press conference shortly after the announcement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) told reporters that while the ban could have an effect on businesses and private individuals who may re-evaluate their own data security and decision to use TikTok, freedom of expression and the personal choice of how to engage online should be respected.

"This may be a first step, it may be the only step we need to take, but every step of the way, we're going to be making sure we're keeping Canadians safe," Trudeau said.

The ban follows a Feb. 23 announcement by federal privacy commissioner Philippe Dufresne that, alongside his provincial counterparts in Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta, he would be launching an investigation into TikTok. In a joint statement, the commissioners said they would be investigating whether the app complies with Canadian privacy legislation, including the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and specifically whether "valid and meaningful consent" is being obtained for the collection and use of personal information.

Canada's decision to ban TikTok was preceded by similar bans in the United States and by the European Commission, and amid increasing concerns over its China-based parent company, ByteDance, and heightened geopolitical tensions with the country's government, including the alleged spy balloon the U.S. shot down last month after it had flown through Canadian airspace and recent news reports over China's alleged interference in the last two federal elections.

At a time when there is no shortage of controversies involving the Chinese government, Geist, a law professor and Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce law at the University of Ottawa, told *The Hill Times* he finds it difficult not to conclude that Canada is targeting TikTok in response to those controversies, and not because of concerns over data collection, as there are numerous social media platforms that engage in similar practices, including Twitter and Meta, the company that owns both Facebook and Instagram.

"It may be that the Chinese government has some influence in a way that may not be true for some other apps, but the core privacy-related concerns for individuals, in many respects, are pretty consistent," Geist said. "It's hard to avoid the sense that this is an attempt for the government to say they're gonna get tough on China without actually dealing with some of the core issues that have been raised over the last couple of weeks."

More notably, however, Geist said he was surprised by Fortier's reference to "the legal regime" governing how information is collected from mobile devices as part of the government's rationale for the ban.

"I was surprised because that's their responsibility," Geist said, pointing to PIPEDA, which governs how private-sector organizations can collect, use, and disclose Canadians' personal information, adding that the Liberals have shown "no urgency whatsoever" on updating and modernizing those rules.

In a March 1 letter addressed to Fortier, TikTok also noted that PIPEDA was the "legal regime" governing how Canadian's personal information is collected by the platform, noting that no

other specific concerns had been cited as to why a review of the company had determined it posed an "unacceptable level of risk to privacy and security."

In the letter, which was posted to social media, TikTok's chief operating officer Vanessa Pappas wrote that she was "disappointed" by the ban and had not been provided the opportunity to respond to any of the government's specific concerns prior to the ban.

"TikTok welcomes questions about how we safely protect the safety and privacy of Canadians, but these are questions that should be posed to all digital platforms," wrote Pappas, citing a University of Toronto Citizen Lab report that found TikTok had similar levels of data collection when compared to other social media platforms and found "no overt data transmission to the Chinese government" by the company.

"Singling out TikTok does nothing to advance the privacy and security of Canadians," Pappas wrote, adding that the timing, impetus, and standards applied to the decision to impose the ban remain unclear. She questioned what threshold was used to justify a ban on TikTok from government devices and no other platform.

"It's inexplicable to think that we have spent years and years and years waiting for the government to move on this when the irony is Canada's own privacy and data governance lies at the heart of many of the concerns," Geist said. "To see the government say that part of the problem [with TikTok] are the rules that they have neglected to fix is pretty striking."

During the previous Parliament, then-innovation minister Navdeep Bains introduced the former Bill C-11 on Sept. 23, 2020, which aimed to repeal parts of PIPEDA and replace it with the

proposed Consumer Privacy Protection Act to improve the rules for the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information for commercial activity in Canada. The bill reached second reading in the House but died on the Order Paper in August 2021 when Parliament was dissolved for that September's federal election.

The Liberals' second attempt, Bill C-27, was introduced by current Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) in June 2022, but the bill has only made it to its second reading during the intervening nine months, with debate having resumed on March 7.

While the kinds of information that companies would be allowed to collect wouldn't change under Bill C-27, organizations would have to provide Canadians with information in plain language about the handling of their personal details and require "meaningful consent" from users before collecting any data. The bill would also provide better "data mobility" to allow Canadians more control over the transfer of their information from one organization to another as well as the right to request the deletion of their data when they withdraw consent or when it is no longer necessary for an organization to handle the information.

Geist told *The Hill Times* that rather than prioritizing Bill C-27 to safeguard Canadians' private data, the Liberals seem much more interested in profiting from the collection policies of social media giants like TikTok through its Online Streaming Act, the current Bill C-11. The bill, which passed its third reading in the Senate last month with 26 amendments, would create a framework to regulate digital streaming platforms like Netflix, Disney+, and Spotify to contribute to the creation of Canadian content and allow the CRTC to create discoverability rules for user-generated content on YouTube and TikTok.

Geist said that Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) structured a digital policy agenda that seems to treat tech companies as what he describes as "policy ATMs" from which Heritage Canada can make withdrawals, noting that it is the same data collection tools used by sites like TikTok that would ensure Canadian content is promoted to the right users as would be required under Bill C-11.

"[The government] has structured their bill—the most controversial element involving the regulation of user content—around services like TikTok, while at the same time, they say it's too dangerous for their own employees to use," Geist said. "They have structured laws around the ability to profit—for policy purposes—from Canadians' usage of these apps while neglecting to address the underlying legal framework that the government has acknowledged is a source of concern and we're leaving Canadians to their own devices."

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*The Hill Times*



University of Ottawa professor Michael Geist says Liberals have neglected modernizing Canada's own 'legal regime' governing the collection of personal data online. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*

# Greater regulation of political party nomination contests needed to prevent foreign, domestic election interference: Democracy Watch

The watchdog organization and a former would-be Liberal candidate are calling for stricter regulations on third-party registration and disclosures, and enforcement of rules on where and when nomination contests are held.

Continued from page 1

including how the meetings are held, who chairs the meeting, and how the voting process is done at the meeting—it's just a Wild West free-for-all."

On Feb. 24, Global News reported that, ahead of the 2019 election, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) briefed senior aides to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) that Liberal candidate Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.) was part of a Chinese foreign interference network. Among a number of concerns, the report cited sources who claimed that Chinese international students with fake addresses were allegedly bussed into the riding and coerced by Beijing to vote in Dong's favour, with threats that their student visas would be revoked if they did not co-operate. Dong won that election, holding the seat for the Liberal Party with 54.4 per cent of the vote—a 24.6 percentage-point margin over the Conservative challenger.

Dong, who was re-elected in 2021, denied the allegations in a statement released on Feb. 27, writing that his nomination and election campaign teams have found no indication of irregularities or compliance issues and that "all procedures and processes related to his campaign and political career have been continually, transparently and publicly reported as required."

"I strongly reject the insinuations in media reporting that allege I have played a role in off-shore interference in the processes and will defend myself vigorously against such inaccurate and irresponsible claims that come from an unverified and anonymous source," the statement continues.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, the Liberal Party said its rules for electing candidates are "robust" and that "all of our candidates who have taken part in an open nomination contest have been nominated by local registered Liberals in processes that have been fully in line with all of our National Nomination Rules," including the 2019 nomination process that saw Dong elected as the party's candidate.

"We thank Han for his continued work championing the issues that matter to the people of Don Valley North," wrote Parker Lund, the party's director of communications. "The Liberal Party works very hard to engage as many Canadians as possible in our democratic process, and protecting the integrity of our democratic process continues to be a foremost priority."

According to the Liberals' 2019 National Nomination Rules, all registered party members are eligible to vote in a nomination meeting as long as they meet certain criteria, including ensuring the member is voting in the electoral district they currently live in. Prior to voting at a nomination meeting, members are required to present identification to prove they live in the same riding they're voting in. Under party bylaws, anyone "ordinarily" living in Canada over the age of 14 can become a member, so long as they are not a member of another federal party or publicly declare their intention to be a federal candidate for another party while registered as a Liberal.

On Feb. 28, a panel of top civil servants released a report concluding that attempts to interfere in the 2021 federal election did not affect the final results, but it highlighted local party nominations as a source of concern and advised the government to consider lowering the threshold for when Canadians can be alerted to "potential" impacts on election integrity. The report also recommends the panel's scope be expanded to include the period leading up to an election campaign.

"There were also concerns raised by some that some foreign states have supported potential candidates for Parliament who will promote the interests of the foreign state," reads the report prepared by Morris Rosenberg, a former public servant who served in multiple departments for 20 years under both Liberal and Conservative governments.

"[Candidates] may receive assistance from agents of the foreign state to sign up party members to help the preferred



Democracy Watch co-founder Duff Conacher says as long as political parties continue to run nomination contests themselves without more oversight from Elections Canada, the process will remain a 'Wild West free-for-all.' Photograph courtesy of Duff Conacher

candidate win a party's nomination," it continues.

A 2019 report by the Samara Centre for Democracy analyzing more than 6,600 election candidates nominated by Canada's major federal parties over five general elections between 2004 and 2015 found only 17 per cent were chosen through a competitive nomination race, while nearly 40 per cent were directly appointed. In ridings where open nominations did occur, the contests were short and unpredictable, with reports of backroom deals, infighting, shunning of grassroots members, and parachuting in candidates, and the majority had only one candidate on the ballot.

In a recent column in *The National Post*, University of Ottawa associate professor Michael Kempa echoed Conacher's description of the Liberal Party's nominations as "the Wild West of Canadian politics," based on his experience running for the party's nomination in Scarborough Southwest, Ont., in 2015 before dropping out after now-Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair announced he would be entering the race.

Kempa wrote that party nominations "taking place almost completely outside of any rules set by Elections Canada and under the winking gaze of the private party 'guidelines,'" make the contests "optimal weak links in Canada's electoral chain that are ripe for capture by foreign interests with bad intentions," turning contests

in "major urban centres into ethnic-block knife-fights."

Speaking with *The Hill Times*, Kempa clarified that his criticisms are not based solely on his experience in 2015, nor are they confined only to Liberal Party nominations. He said the fact such contests have become increasingly designed to favour the interests of party officials across the board make nominations vulnerable to interest groups that may be dominant in a given riding.

As a more recent example, Kempa pointed to controversy surrounding the Conservative Party's nomination contest for the riding of Oxford, Ont., where former Tory MP Dave Mackenzie has accused Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) and House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) of playing favourites. MacKenzie, who represented the riding from 2004 until earlier this year, sent a scathing letter on Feb. 24 accusing Arpan Khanna, one of four candidates in the contest, of violating the nomination rules "with full co-operation" of Poilievre.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, MacKenzie also questioned the party's decision to close the nomination contest with two days' notice when its constitution requires two weeks.

While the party did not provide an explanation for the short notice in an email to party members on Feb. 23, it cited the rules invoked to close the nominations, specifically section 13, which allows the national council to authorize "abridgement of the rules" by the executive director and the president of national council, in consultation with the national council, "for the affected jurisdiction."

The party did the same in Calgary Heritage, Alta., earlier this month, similarly providing a two-day notice, according to an email obtained by *The Hill Times*. The email cited the same section of the party rules.

Kempa said while he understands the value of political parties having more control over their nomination processes, the lack of restrictions makes them vulnerable to "anybody who can get a few hundred people on a bus."

Since political parties have discretion over when and where nomination votes are held, and the length of time potential candidates have to submit their applications to enter the contest, candidates depend on finding blocks of voters who can be easily and rapidly mobilized for "late an-

nounced, random location votes," said Kempa. The same structures intended to prioritize the interests of party officials in favour of their preferred candidate are just as exploitable by interests outside of the party with sufficient motivation and resources looking to do the same, he said.

"This is almost the optimal structure for foreign governments or any special interest to take control of," Kempa said. "If someone comes forward and says, 'I can get you X number of busloads of X number of voters,' it's very tempting for a nomination candidate to accept, even if they're not entirely sure of where those votes are coming from."

Kempa said any candidate who accepts such support may not be doing so maliciously, but rather because they know that if they don't, the offer will be passed along to their competitor.

He argued that Elections Canada should implement rules to require a certain number of days' notice for when and where a party plans to hold its nomination meeting.

"That would make the honest candidate less tempted and less dependent on accepting improper help, because they would simply have enough time and information to mobilize a legitimate vote," Kempa explained.

Conacher said the lack of oversight over nomination contests allows third parties to collude with candidates, not only to pay for transportation and recruitment of voters, but for social media ads as well, to run a parallel campaign alongside the candidate's official one.

"There's no limit on how much you can spend, no registration, and no disclosure required of your activities," said Conacher of the current rules. "It's dangerous to allow that, because in a safe seat, if you win the nomination, you win the election."

Regulations governing third-party contributions to campaigns should be extended to nomination contests, said Conacher, and the entire process should be overseen by Elections Canada, in particular to ensure that votes in nomination contests are only cast by Canadians who would be eligible to vote in a federal election.

Conacher pointed to activities by the anti-abortion group Right-Now, which recruited and trained activists to volunteer for 50 Conservative candidates during the 2019 election and the preceding nomination contests. While the organization was not formally reprimanded by the Commissioner of Canada Elections following an investigation into whether its activities broke rules against collusion, Conacher said the group was far more active during the nomination contests, when the rules are far less stringent.

Until the process is changed, wealthy individuals and organizations can continue to influence candidates in secret, said Conacher, which is just as much of a threat to democracy when that influence was based in Canada.

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The Hill Times

Feature

Japan hosts birthday bash

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



A member of the drumming group Oto-Wa Taiko performs at the Château Laurier on Feb. 13 during a party celebrating Japan's national day and the Japanese emperor's birthday.



Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, left, and Canada's chief of protocol Stewart Wheeler.



Former prime minister Jean Chrétien and Yamanouchi.



Edward Salazar, husband of the Hungarian ambassador, left; Sarah Harvey, and her husband, New Zealand High Commissioner Martin Harvey.



Yamanouchi, left, Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray, Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, and Yukiko Yamanouchi, wife of the Japanese ambassador.

Kosovo marks national day



Kosovo Ambassador Adriatik Kryeziu, left, and Liberal MP Yvan Baker at Kosovo's national day reception at the Château Laurier on Feb. 16.



Traditional Albanian folk dance group Shqiponjat e Vogla performs for guests.



Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevicius, left, with daughter Sofija; his wife Dorota Skuseviciene; Kryeziu; and his wife Nezaqete Fazliu Kryeziu.



Kryeziu, left; Andrew Turner, a director in Global Affairs Canada's Eastern Europe and Eurasia division; and Heidi Kutz, Global Affairs' director general, Nordic, Eastern Europe, and European Affairs.

Romania closes out 2022 on a high note



United Kingdom High Commissioner Susannah Goshko, left, greets Romanian Ambassador Bogdan Manoiu at the Romanian national day reception at the Château Laurier on Dec. 5, 2022.



Then-Tanzanian High Commissioner Mpoke Ulisubisya, left, Senegalese Ambassador Viviane Laure Elisabeth Bampassy, and Rwanda High Commissioner Prosper Higiro.



Liberal MP Francesco Sorbara, left, NDP MP Carol Hughes, Manoiu, Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde, and Senator Andrew Cardozo.



Manoiu, left, Conservative MP Damien Kurek and son Emerson, and Alina-Victoria Manoiu, wife of the Romanian ambassador.

# European Commission head meets GG Simon on March 8



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will meet with Governor General Mary Simon on March 8 at Rideau Hall, following her address to Parliament the evening before. Photograph courtesy of the European Parliament/ Flickr

**TUESDAY, MARCH 7—THURSDAY, MARCH 9**  
**Asset Management Conference and Trade Show**—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its second annual National Asset Management Conference and Trade Show. This year's theme is "An Asset Management Approach to 'Closing the Infrastructure Gap.'" This event will take place at the Hilton Lac-Leamy, 3 boul. du Casino, Gatineau, Que. Details: afn.ca.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8**  
**House Sitting**—The House returned on Monday, March 6. It will sit for one week and will adjourn on Friday, March 10. It will return on Monday, March 20, and will sit for two weeks (March 20-March 31). It will break again on Friday, March 31, for two weeks and will return on Monday, April 17, and will sit for five consecutive weeks (April 17-May 19). It will adjourn on Friday, May 19, for one week and will return again on Monday, May 29, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (May 29-June 23). It's scheduled to adjourn for the summer on June 23, 2023. It will break for 12 weeks (June 23-Sept. 18) and will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-Nov. 17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15).

**European Commission President Visits**—Governor General Mary Simon will meet Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, on Wednesday, March 8, at 9:30 a.m. at Rideau Hall.

**Interest Rate Announcement**—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate. Wednesday, March 8, at 10 a.m. ET.

**National Symposium on Agricultural Mental Health**—Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau will deliver remarks at the national symposium on Agricultural Mental Health, hosted by the Guardian Network, Agriculture Wellness Ontario, and the Canadian Association

for Mental Health Ontario. Wednesday, March 8, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Register for the virtual conference: nsamh.ca.

**Speaker Night with Thomas d'Aquino**—Tom d'Aquino will take part in a Speaker's Night hosted by the Rockcliffe Park Residents Association. He will discuss his new memoir—*Private Power ~ Public Purpose: Adventures in Business, Politics, and the Arts*—featuring personal insights on four decades of private sector leadership at the apex of power with the Business Council of Canada. This event will take place at the Rockcliffe Park Community Hall, 380 Springfield Rd., Wednesday, March 8, at 8 p.m.

**An Evening with Tasha Kheiriddin**—The Confederation Club hosts an evening with Tasha Kheiriddin, one of Canada's best-known commentators and political analysts. She will be speaking on "Politics, Economics, and Uncertain Times: What is the Right Path for Canada?" She will also sign copies of her book *The Right Path*. This event will take place at Edelweiss Tavern, 600 Doon Village Rd., Kitchener, Ont., at 5:30p.m. Details online.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 9**  
**Jagmeet Singh at Progress Summit**—NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh will take part in a keynote fireside chat, part of the Broadbent Institute's annual Progress Summit. This year's theme is "Stronger Together: Forging Unity in a Time of Division." Also delivering remarks today are Linda Silas, president, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions; Dr. Alikha Lafontaine, president, Canadian Medical Association; former NDP MP Peggy Nash; Ontario NDP MPP Chandra Pasma; and Chi Nguyen, executive director of Equal Voice. This event will take place at the Delta Hotel City Centre Ottawa, 101 Lyon St. N., at 10:45 a.m. Register: broadbentinstitute.ca/summit2023.

**Indigenous Peoples and Small Modular Reactors**—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a webinar, "Finding a good fit: Indigenous peoples and small modular reactors," featuring a panel of Indigenous voices to explore Indigenous engagement in Canada's nuclear renaissance, discussing concerns that still need to be addressed, and identifying economic opportunities for Indigenous

Peoples in the burgeoning sector. Thursday, March 9, 12-1:15 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

**Economic Progress Report**—Bank of Canada senior deputy governor Carolyn Rogers will deliver an Economic Progress Report to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. This event will take place at the Fairmont Winnipeg, 2 Lombard Pl., 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. CST. Register: business.mbchamber.mb.ca.

**Lecture: 'Building a Fairer Democracy'**—Carleton University hosts a lecture: "Building a Fairer Democracy: A Computational Perspective". Alan Tsang, assistant professor at the School of Computer Science, will examine how computer science can help society build towards a fairer democracy, exploring aspects of information (and misinformation) propagation, resource allocation, and voting, from a computational perspective. Thursday, March 9, 7 p.m. ET. Carleton University, 342 Tory Building, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Tickets via: events.carleton.ca.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 9—FRIDAY, MARCH 10**  
**Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence**—National Defence Minister Anita Anand will deliver remarks at the 91<sup>st</sup> Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence hosted by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. Other speakers include Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Wayne Eyre, Germany's State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defense Siemtje Möller, Inuit Circumpolar Council president Lisa Qiluqqi Koperqualuk, and former Canadian defence ministers Peter MacKay and David Pratt, among others. This event will take place at the Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Registration and details: cdainstitute.ca.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—THURSDAY, MARCH 23**

**Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium**—The Canadian Institute hosts the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium with programming geared to government and industry professionals involved in Northern infrastructure and resource development. Explor president Allan Chatenay is conference co-chair. Learn more about the future of sustainable resource development in the North and Canada's role in global energy markets. Get the latest on infrastructure advancements, regulatory issues and what's required to move forward with new projects. Meet the decision makers and key Northern stakeholders. March 22-23 at the Hotel Arts in Calgary. Agenda: bit.ly/3hpiwDC. Details: customerservice@canadianinstitute.com or call 1-877-927-7936. Save 10 per cent with the Hill Times promo code: D10-999-HILLTIMES.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 16**

**Conference on Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants**—International Development Minister and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada Harjit Sajjan and Janez Lenarčič, European commissioner for crisis management, will co-host the International Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants and their Host Countries and Communities. Details to follow. Contact Haley.Hodgson@international.gc.ca.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 21**

**The Energy of Tomorrow and the Path to Net Zero**—Join the Canadian Club of Ottawa for a lunchtime discussion on how will we continue to power an increasingly energy-dependent world while continuing the path to net zero. Representatives from across Canada's electricity sector will speak about one of the greatest challenges facing the Canadian economy, and innovative solutions to address them. Tuesday, March 21, at the Château Laurier Hotel, 1 Rideau St. Doors at 11:30 a.m. 12-1 p.m. Tickets: canadianclubottawa.ca.

**Southeast Asian Envoys to deliver remarks**—Malaysian High Commissioner to Canada Siti Hajjar Adnin, Indonesian Ambassador Daniel Tumpal S. Simanjuntak, and Vietnamese Ambassador Cao Phong Pham will take part in a panel discussion on "Southeast Asia: Canada's Partners of the Future" hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations on Tuesday, March 21, at Le Westin Montréal, 270 rue Saint-Antoine O., Montreal. 11:30 ET. Details: corim.qc.ca.

**Panel: 'Should Canadians Worry About Inflation?'**—McGill University hosts a panel discussion: "Should Canadians Worry About Inflation? Is the Cure Worse than the Disease?" Expert economists will discuss the problem of inflation for Canadians and for policymakers, and what should our governments be doing to reduce inflation or to reduce its harmful effects. Tuesday, March 21 at 4:30p.m. ET. McGill University's Faculty Club 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22**

**Lecture: 'Disability Justice in Canada'**—McGill University hosts a lecture: "Absent Citizens No More: Advancing Disability Justice in Canada". University of Ottawa political science professor Michael Orsini will discuss what it means to centre disability justice in Canadian politics. This event will take place in the Billiards Room, Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. 4p.m. ET. Details: mcgill.ca.

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**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—FRIDAY, MARCH 24**

**Canada Strong and Free Networking Conference 2023**—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is among the speakers taking part in the Canada Strong and Free's Networking Conference 2023 from March 22-24. Other speakers include Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, former premier minister Stephen Harper, and Canadian Medical Association President Dr. Alikha Lafontaine, among others. This event will take place at the Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

**MONDAY, MARCH 27**

**Inaugural Bill Graham Lecture Series**—The Canadian International Council will recognize the late Bill Graham's contributions to Canada, its international policies, and the CIC itself with the creation of an annual Bill Graham Lecture on International Affairs. Two of his friends, Canada's ambassador to the UN Bob Rae and history professor Margaret MacMillan, will deliver the inaugural lecture. This event will take place in Arcadian Court, Simpson Tower, 401 Bay Street 8th Floor, Toronto. 6p.m. ET. Tickets via eventbrite.com.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 30**

**Europe One Year After the Invasion of Ukraine**—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a discussion on "Continent at a Crossroads: Europe One Year After the Invasion of Ukraine." Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada, Yuliya Kovaliv, will kick off the event by reflecting on the war's impact on her people and the future of her country's place within Europe. Other participants include European Union Ambassador to Canada Melita Gabrič; Finland's Ambassador Roy Eriksson; and British High Commissioner Susanah Goshko. Thursday, March 30, at the Château Laurier Hotel, 1 Rideau St. 12-1 p.m. Tickets: canadianclubottawa.ca.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 4**

**Modernizing Procurement for the Digital Age**—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, National Capital Region, welcomes Carleton University associate professor Dr. Amanda Clarke for a discussion about federal IT procurement practices. This event will be of interest to a wide variety of public servants and observers, including those who work in public policy, procurement, information technology, and corporate services. This event will take place at the Delta Ottawa, 101 Lyon St. N., 5:15-7:30 p.m. Register: TI-fed-IT.eventbrite.ca.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19**

**Senator Black hosts a Reception**—Senator Rob Black, in partnership with Grain Farmers of Ontario, Quebec Grain Farmers, Atlantic Grains Council and Spirits Canada, hosts a reception featuring grains and oilseed farmers, and samples of some exceptional Canadian whiskies made from Canada's finest grains. April 19, 2023, from 4-8 p.m. in Room 325, Wellington Building. Invited guests and Parliamentarians please RSVP to ahessels@gfo.ca.

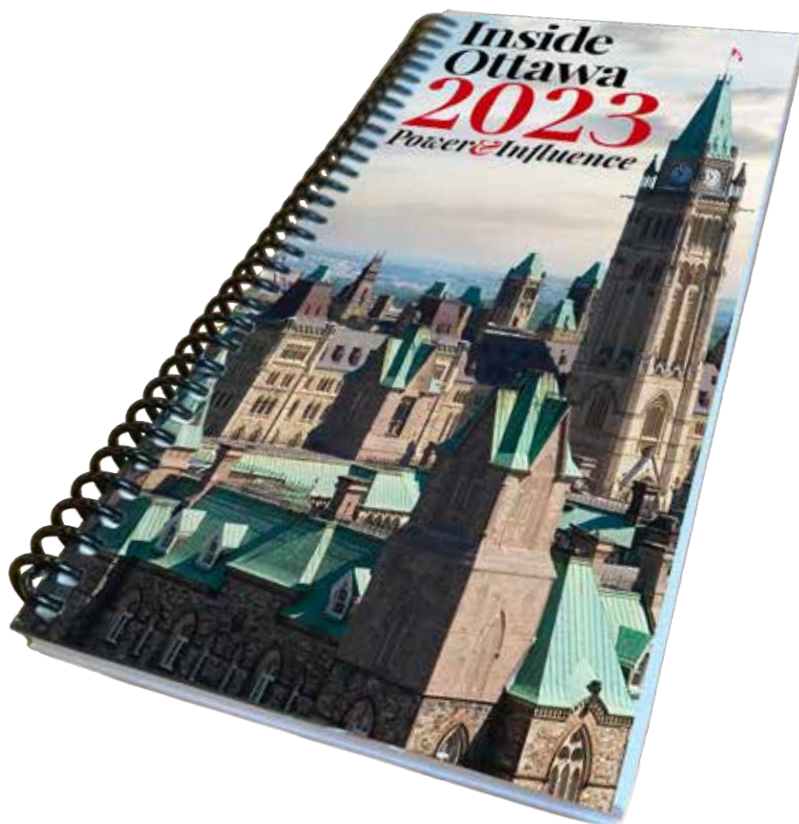
**THURSDAY, MAY 4—SATURDAY, MAY 6**

**Liberal National Convention**—Liberals from the across the country will gather in Ottawa for the Liberal National Convention, May 4-6. The convention will feature policy discussions, special keynote speakers, innovative campaign training session, and the election of a new national board of directors. Early-bird registration before Feb. 27 is \$499.99. There will also be a virtual access pass to the convention. Register: 2023.liberal.ca. Contact lib2023@liberal.ca or 1-888-LIBERAL.

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

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