



CARNEY
has energy to burn.
That's a problem

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NEWS

With three top players in Carney government lacking political experience, caucus feedback critical to show 'human side' of politics, say experts

BY ABBAS RANA

With Prime Minister Mark Carney, his incoming chief of staff Marc-André Blanchard, and forthcoming Privy Council clerk Michael Sabia—who all lack prior political experience—leading the country's top office, the Liberal government risks appearing overly "technocratic," which makes input from the national Liberal caucus critical to ensure

policies and decisions reflect a more "human" and political dimension.

"The one danger I see in that, I would say, is that the approach becomes more technocratic," said Prof. Paul Thomas, emeritus professor at the University of Manitoba, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "What they may not know as well is the human side of politics."

Throughout his career, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has held top positions in both the public

and private sectors, including the Department of Finance, the Bank of Canada, the Bank of England, Brookfield Asset Management, and as the United Nations Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance. Officially, he entered the political arena only in early January, following then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's announcement that he would not

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COMMENT

Trump shamelessly uses U.S. military to do his bidding in Los Angeles

These protesters passionately disagree with Trump's ruthless round-up, detention, and deportation of hundreds of immigrants to a prison in El Salvador. This is the heart of the matter. Trump doesn't like Gavin Newsom. He doesn't like California, the most Democratic state in the country. And he doesn't like anyone who stands up to him.

BY MICHAEL HARRIS

HALIFAX—Downtown Los Angeles is a long way from the halls of Montezuma or the shores of Tripoli, fabled foreign battlegrounds that figure prominently in the *Marines' Hymn*.

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It's my way or the highway: U.S. President Donald Trump, pictured in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 13, 2025. Photograph courtesy of Official White House photographer by Daniel Torok

NEWS

Poilievre is reaching out to unsuccessful candidates for feedback, say Conservatives: 'he's doing a post-mortem himself'

BY ABBAS RANA

Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre is reaching out to unsuccessful candidates

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NEWS

It's time for Ottawa to fully fund NIHB program, say Northwest Territories and Nunavut health ministers

BY TESSIE SANCI

After funding for the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program wasn't renewed earlier this year, the health ministers for Nunavut and the Northwest Territories say they are considering handing the program back to Ottawa so that it would be fully responsible for both costs and administration.

Nunavut Health Minister John Main and Northwest Territories Health Minister Lesa Semmler were in Ottawa during the first week of June for separate meetings with Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty

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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

In *L'actualité*, Chantal Hébert has four politicians to watch this summer, including an anonymous 'first Liberal to resign from caucus'



Political columnist and pundit Chantal Hébert, left, wrote recently in *L'actualité* that she'll be keeping an eye on Prime Minister Mark Carney, second left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, second right, and former Alberta premier Jason Kenney this summer. *The Hill Times* photographs by Jake Wright, Andrew Meade, and Sam Garcia

When Chantal Hébert, one of the best political columnists in the country, has something to say, politicians tend to sit up and take note. In her June 4 piece in *L'actualité*, the veteran Hill journalist—who was named to l'Ordre national du Québec on June 12—listed four politicians she'll be keeping tabs on this summer: Prime Minister Mark Carney, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, former Alberta premier Jason Kenney—and an as-yet-unknown Liberal MP.

Choosing the prime minister and the leader of the party in opposition seems too easy. But Hébert explained she'll be looking to see whether Carney can live up to the hype of being a "new start" for the governing Liberals:

"Between now and the end of the summer, we will have a better idea of the capacity of this parliamentary neophyte to guarantee the longevity of his minority government," she wrote in French.

As for Poilievre, Hébert says he "needs to find convincing answers for the many Conservatives who are questioning the role his corrosive personality played in the result of the last election."

Personality No. 3 is former Harper-era cabinet minister Kenney, whom she said could be a potential threat to Poilievre: "Actually, it's him and not Poilievre who is on track to become the defender-in-chief of Canada at the bosom of the Conservative family." She says Kenney's flawless bilingualism and his easy ability to connect

with "cultural communities" as his secret sauce. "Kenney could impose himself as the solution for change that Conservatives who no longer believe in Poilievre are looking for," she wrote.

As for Hébert's fourth choice? She says this "still anonymous" person will be "the first Liberal MP to resign" from Carney's "ship." The oracle foresees that even if there are eventual floor-crossers from the NDP or the Conservatives to help round out the number of Liberal seats in the Commons, Carney is not immune to departures from his own caucus. With a number of disgruntled MPs still stinging from not being invited into cabinet, "the Carney government is more fragile than it seems."

Two more Senators join Conservatives in Red Chamber, boosts caucus to 14

The Conservative caucus in the Senate is experiencing unprecedented growth. On June 12, the group welcomed back Quebec Senator Larry Smith to the fold. Just two days prior, formerly non-affiliated Senator Mary Jane McCallum joined the blue team—one week after Senator David Adams Richards became a Tory after just over a year of also being non-affiliated.

"It's great to be back with the team," Smith said in a June 12 press release. Appointed by then-prime minister Stephen Harper in 2010, Smith was a Conservative from then until 2022—and served as opposition leader from 2017-2019—but left for the Canadian Senators Group in August 2022.

Representing Manitoba and a member of the Cree Nation and Barren Lands First Nation, McCallum joined the Senate in 2017. "After consulting with the Grand Chiefs and community leaders, I feel strongly that this is a crucial step in building bridges," she said in a press release.

Smith and McCallum's arrival boosts the Conservative caucus to 14. The Independent Senators Group remains the largest group in the Red Chamber with 46 members, followed by the Canadian Senators Group at 21, the Progressive Senate Group at 18, and now six non-affiliated Senators. The only current Senate vacancy is a seat for Manitoba following former Conservative caucus leader Don Plett's retirement on May 14.

Prince Edward coming to Ottawa for Canada Day

King Charles' youngest brother, Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, is expected to be in Ottawa for Canada Day, July 1. Edward's visit comes just over a month since Charles was in town to read the Throne Speech.

According to "The Royal Diary" on the Royal Family's official website last week, Edward's visit to the nation's capital will wrap up a seven-day visit to



Prince Edward will be in Ottawa on July 1. Photograph courtesy of the British Embassy in Washington via Flickr

Canada, starting—appropriately—on Prince Edward Island on June 25. There, in his capacity as Colonel-in-Chief of the Prince Edward Island Regiment, he will "attend celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Regiment." On June 28 the 61-year-old prince is slated to simply "visit Toronto," followed by his July 1 schedule: "attend Canada Day celebrations in Ottawa."

Grit staffer Jedras reviews Laurier Club party grub

It's garden party season, and what many such events may lack in actual gardens, they tend to make up for in food, something which longtime Liberal Hill staffer Jeff Jedras enjoyed reviewing for his blog at the June 9 "Laurier Club summer thingy" where "the mood was ebullient, a stark contrast to the mood at the Holiday party just six months ago."

While most of the Liberal Party donors who packed the Canadian War Museum were lined up at the bar, Jedras navigated the three food stations which featured Asian bao sandwiches, poke bowls, and poutine.

"At first, I was told it would be tofu bao and I was displeased. Then, that was corrected—hey, there's also fried chicken—and like Liberal poll numbers since February, my spirits were imme-

diately lifted," wrote Jedras, who rated the morsel as "a bit messy... but delicious nonetheless."

Up next was the poke bowl, of which Jedras was initially skeptical as he's no fan of canned tuna, but "decided to take a shot" when he learned the dish featured raw tuna. "No off-putting smell. Not saying I'm going to suddenly start eating sushi. But with sticky rice, fancy mayo and veg, this worked."

Near the *al fresco* bar was a chip truck serving poutine, which Jedras dutifully tried "in the interest of food review science." While he "liked the green onions, the gravy was fine, and the fries were shoestring," the longtime staffer had opinions about the curds: "While there was plenty, I think they could have been fresher."

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Michael Sabia named new PCO clerk

Former deputy finance minister Michael Sabia has been named as the new clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the Cabinet, the prime minister announced on June 11.

Currently president and CEO of Hydro-Québec, Sabia announced he will end his mandate there on July 4. "Prime Minister Carney asked me to take on this role at a time when the country is facing some unprecedented challenges. In that context, I am joining the federal government to tackle these challenges head on," said Sabia in a June 11 Hydro-Québec press release.

In addition to his time as second in command at Finance Canada and a previous stint at PCO, Sabia's CV also includes senior leadership roles at the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, Bell Canada Enterprises, and the Canadian National Railway.

Sabia will officially take over July 7 from John Hannaford, who is retiring after 30 years in the public service.



Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford, left, is retiring soon and will be succeeded by Michael Sabia. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



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NEWS

Carney's Privy Council Clerk Sabia a 'relentlessly focused' changemaker

Former deputy finance minister Michael Sabia's appointment drew praise from Tories, and came just days after he said Canada suffers from an 'ambition deficit.'

BY MARLO GLASS

Prime Minister Mark Carney's pick for his top public servant is a man capable of transformative change, with a track record of being "totally, relentlessly focused," on his prior senior roles in both the private and public sector, observers say.

Michael Sabia's appointment as the next Privy Council clerk and secretary to the cabinet, effective July 7, drew praise from both sides of the aisle, with prominent Tories congratulating Carney (Nepean, Ont.) on his choice to tap the soon-to-be former president and CEO of Hydro-Québec. Sabia also served as former finance minister Chrystia Freeland's (University-Rosedale, Ont.) deputy minister from December 2020 until June 2023, among other impressive *bona fides* in both the private and public sector.

Carney said Sabia's "leadership will be key" to the government's "mission" to build "the strongest economy in the G7."

"Canada's exemplary public service—with Mr. Sabia at the helm—will advance nation-building projects, catalyze enormous private investment to drive growth, and deliver the change Canadians want and deserve," said Carney in a June 11 news release.

Don Drummond, an economist and former high-ranking Finance Department official, worked closely with Sabia on major tax reform legislation and the creation of the GST in the late 1980s. Then, Drummond was the department's director of economic analysis and Sabia was director of tax policy.

Drummond said Sabia is a person who is "on a mission, totally, relentlessly focused," on his job.

"The overwhelming impression of everybody is how driven he was," Drummond said. "He just drove, drove, drove. But he didn't necessarily drive everyone else. He was very pleasant to work with. People who are driven can



Michael Sabia, then chair of the board of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, pictured at a press conference in Ottawa on Oct. 1, 2020. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

be unpleasant or bossy, but he wasn't that."

He recalled one moment when Sabia got up from his desk and fainted, but waved off suggestions that he should go see the Finance Department's nurse.

"He said, 'No, pop me back in my chair and give me an aspirin,'" Drummond recalled. "To me, that kind of says it all."

Dan Lovell, a director at Sussex Strategies who lobbied the then-deputy finance minister, said Sabia has always been a disruptor and not one to maintain the status quo. In particular, Lovell cited Sabia's time helming Canadian National Railway, where he oversaw the organization's privatization.

"He's going to disrupt things for the public service in what I would think could be potentially a harmonious match to a lot of things Prime Minister Carney has put in the window for priorities for his government," he said. "He's direct, he is no-nonsense, right to the point. He knows how to navigate complex and challenging situations to try and get restitution, but also resolve."

Carney has emphasized the federal government won't impede in "nation-building" projects, and Sabia, as head of the public service, is well-placed to deliver, Lovell said.

"No doubt, Sabia is coming in to ensure the federal government is not the bottleneck to any of these processes," he said.

'A lot to fix' on Canada's regulatory approach, says Sabia

Days before his Privy Council appointment, Sabia was on stage

at *The Globe and Mail's* conference, *Intersect 2025*, saying Canada has an "ambition deficit," and seeming to echo some of Carney's pet projects, including fast-tracking nation-building projects and streamlining regulations.

Sabia said fixing the economy will involve condensing layers of regulation to encourage foreign investment, and changing how businesses and governments partner with Indigenous communities, the *Globe* reported.

"We've got a lot to fix on the regulatory side," Sabia said, arguing that rules such as energy emissions may have been implemented with good intentions, but have been piled on top of each other like "a stack of pancakes."

"We need to stand back and say, 'There's got to be a simpler, better way,'" he said.

After Sabia was the Finance Department's director-general of tax policy, he was deputy secretary to the cabinet in the Privy Council Office. Moving to the private sector, he held high-ranking positions with Bell Canada and Canadian National Railway, and more recently was president and CEO of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, and director of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto.

As Freeland's deputy minister of finance, Sabia was tasked with re-invigorating a sluggish economy in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, a period which saw large increases in federal spending, and a ballooning deficit as governments around the world grappled with a once-in-a-generation public health crisis.

Carney's announcement of Sabia's appointment did not

mention the latter's time with the Canadian Infrastructure Bank, which was accused of "coziness" with consulting firm McKinsey & Company. The institution was intended to use \$35-billion in public money to unlock four or five times as much private capital to finance infrastructure projects, but drew the ire of the political right for failing to meet these targets, and from the left for serving as a means to privatize public assets.

'Buckle up': Tories laud Carney's clerk pick

Rona Ambrose, former Conservative interim leader from 2015 to 2017, praised Carney's recent picks for top jobs on social media.

Ambrose said she was impressed by Carney's selections for two of "top jobs supporting government" in both Sabia and the recent announcement of Marc-André Blanchard as the prime minister's chief of staff, also starting in July.

"They are both leaving important positions in the private sector for public service, once again," she said on X.

Jean Charest, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada from 1993 to 1998, and one-time Conservative Party leadership candidate in 2022, was also among several who congratulated Sabia on social media.

"There is no doubt that he possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to address the numerous challenges facing the federal government in the years to come," the former Quebec premier said on X.

Former Conservative cabinet minister Lisa Raitt summed her thoughts in 10 short words: "Everyone, buckle up. Status quo is no longer an option."

<https://twitter.com/lrait/status/1932891150417080327?s=43>

Sabia 'capable of transformative change,' says Page

Former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page said he sees some similarities between Sabia and Carney, with both men having extensive backgrounds in finance, and both known for their strong work ethics.

"They're not taking these jobs for the money, right?" said Page, founder of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy. "Or celebrity status. They want to bring about change."

He called Sabia "a very strategic, very smart, very skillful

kind of public servant," and "a man capable of transformative change."

Page remembers when Sabia was deputy secretary of the Privy Council Office, responsible for planning and priorities. In that role, Sabia would have become familiar with the clerk's job in working closely with the prime minister in setting and enacting the government's agenda.

"I think he's known around the system as a great communicator, very smart, very strategic," Page said.

Page noted Carney could have tapped someone currently in the public service for the top job, which involves being secretary to the cabinet, working closely with the prime minister, and heading up the federal public service.

"From Carney's perspective, he wants [someone] capable of change. And I think that's a quality you need to have, is somebody that's willing to take risks," Page said.

"Again, he's looking at his agenda, trying to bring about change, moving very quickly. He tapped somebody with that kind of skill set, very capable of bringing about change."

Page said he imagines Carney—whom he described as confident, skilled, and demanding—would be a tough prime minister to brief on a daily basis.

"You really have to be well prepared every day," he said. "He's very smart, and he's very demanding, and he will expect that from the people around him."

Drummond said it will be mission critical for Sabia to keep trustworthy, competent people in his office, as he contends with juggling his relationship with Carney and leading the federal public service, something Drummond called "an extremely onerous job," especially as further cuts to the bureaucracy seem inevitable. In March, new data revealed the number of federal employees shrunk for the first time in a decade.

"The more we get these multi-billion dollar initiatives: the personal income tax cut, defence spending..." Drummond said. "We're going to have to have some very serious expenditure reduction; it's going to affect a lot of jobs."

Carney has telegraphed a need to rein in government spending and focus on efficiency within the federal public service, while keeping the government's spending increases to a rate of about two per cent per year, all while strengthening Canada's economy and engaging in large-scale projects.

Drummond said Sabia should "get a lot of really good people" around him he can trust, "and get them to run a lot of these files."

"If they're not people you can count on, he'd better get on that, or you could sink and disappear."

Sabia will be in a critical role as the government is trying to, "in very short order, completely radically change the nature of the Canadian economy," Drummond said. "But obviously, as the prime minister said, that's why he picked him."

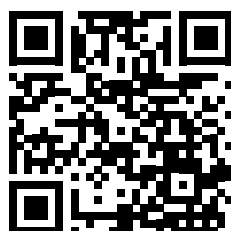
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NEWS

It's time for Ottawa to fully fund NIHB program, say Northwest Territories and Nunavut health ministers

Nunavut Health Minister John Main and his Northwest Territories counterpart Lesa Semmler were in Ottawa to discuss viable funding for the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program, and other changes to other programs funding services for Indigenous People.

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(Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, Que.) and Health Minister Marjorie Michel (Papineau, Que.). Main and Semmler wanted to introduce themselves to the new federal ministers, but also came with two specific asks: that Ottawa renew expired Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) agreements, and that it fully fund the health-related expenses that are eligible for the federal program.

Nunavut is seeking approximately \$230-million over two years, according to Main.

Semmler said her territory is looking for a one-year investment of \$46.8-million to cover medical travel costs specifically and \$33.5-million for other eligible NIHB-funded services.

A lack of funding to fully cover NIHB expenses in previous years has the ministers open to telling Ottawa it should do the work of administering the program, which is currently under the purview of provinces and territories whose residents are eligible for NIHB.

"We've had to take a real serious look at what handing the program back to Indigenous Services would mean," said Main during an interview in *The Hill Times'* office in Ottawa on June 4. He added that he is considering this option in light of the federal government's "pattern of underfunding."

"If we cannot administer it and we can't get the funding, then we have to transition this back



After becoming Indigenous services minister on May 13, Mandy Gull-Masty is now in charge of a process to renew agreements for Non-Insured Health Benefits funding. Both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have been without an agreement since March 31, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

to the federal government," said Semmler in an interview in her government's Ottawa office on June 5.

The NIHB program helps fund health services that include vision care, dental care and mental health counselling for First Nations and Inuit peoples. The Government of Canada (GOC) also includes medical travel as an eligible expense. Medical transportation is meant to "to access medically required health services not available: on reserve [or] in the community of residence," states the GOC webpage explaining the program.

NIHB is funded by the federal government and administered by the provinces and territories. This work includes having bureaucrats or health-care workers—who are employed by these jurisdictions—be responsible for processing requests and arranging medical travel.

Main and Semmler said that NIHB funding depends on the ongoing renewal of contribution agreements in which Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) sets a cap on funding.

Both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have been without a deal since March 31, 2025, when their agreements lapsed with no renewal.

With First Nations and Inuit individuals making up a significant proportion of both territories' populations—84 per cent in Nunavut, and 40 per cent in the Northwest Territories—and remote geography that makes travelling for care inevitable for many residents, the health minis-



Northwest Territories' Education Minister Caitlin Cleveland, left, and Health Minister Lesa Semmler spoke to *The Hill Times* from their Ottawa office on June 9 to discuss the need for consistent funding for the Non-Insured Health Benefits program and Jordan's Principle. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

ters say that this federal support is critical for their jurisdictions. They pointed in particular to the importance of funding for medical travel.

The Hill Times requested an interview with Gull-Masty, but she was unavailable prior to deadline. An emailed statement on June 11 from ISC states, "We are working collaboratively with the territorial governments and Indigenous partners towards a solution that ensures eligible Inuit and First Nations residents of Nunavut and Northwest Territories continue to have seamless access" to the services and benefits funded by NIHB.

In addition to the problem of the lapsed agreements, the territorial health ministers are also concerned about the funding their own governments have to put for-

ward to cover NIHB-related costs that exceed what Ottawa has set aside through the contribution agreements.

Nunavut has contributed \$411-million for NIHB-covered services over the last 10 years. That funding could have gone to other "essential government programs" such as housing, education and the territorial government's own health budget, Main said.

Semmler said that the Northwest Territories paid \$13-million for medical travel in the 2024-25 fiscal year because NIHB did not cover the full costs.

ISC's statement to *The Hill Times* said that the federal government has been "fully reimbursing" the territories for "eligible expenditures" covered by NIHB, and has been providing "funding

to help offset the high costs of medical travel for First Nations and Inuit to access insured health services."

"Canada recognizes the importance of concluding the work around medical travel expenditures and the broader NIHB agreement as soon as possible," the statement reads.

Semmler was a part of a contingent of officials from the Northwest Territories—which included Premier R.J. Simpson—who were in Ottawa to discuss the North's challenges and possible solutions. A statement by Simpson released on June 9 states that the premier had a one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.), and that meetings were also held with ministers and senior officials from departments such as finance, housing and Crown-Indigenous relations.

Also in attendance at these meetings was Caitlin Cleveland, education minister for the Northwest Territories, who participated in *The Hill Times* interview with Semmler.

Although the territorial health ministers came to Ottawa seeking a specific level of investment, the ultimate goal for both is for the federal government to cover the full costs of NIHB-eligible services.

Main said his government has been "consistent" in asking that ISC fund the full amount of expenses under the program. He added that the department came close to doing this in Nunavut's previous NIHB agreement.

Semmler said that they're asking for "full-cost recovery" as NIHB is a federal program.

The ministers also want to move away from the tendency to negotiate two-year agreements and move into longer-term arrangements such as five-, eight- or 10-year deals.

"We can't be doing this every two years. We need to ensure that we are sustainable for longer periods of time," Semmler said.

Both ministers said that they are considering handing the program back to the federal government if long-term, sustainable funding cannot be achieved, but they don't want to have to make the move.

"We think that the way we have it integrated into our system is best for Nunavummiut," Main said, adding that his territory's community health centres include administrative services for NIHB so residents don't have to travel to different offices.

"I'll be the first to say I don't want to give it back to the federal government because I know we can do it better for the residents of the Northwest Territories," Semmler said, adding that her office is working on modernizing the territory's medical travel service. "What we're asking is to provide us with the funding so that we can do it better for the residents of the Northwest Territories."

NDP MP Lori Idlout, who represents Nunavut in the House of Commons, said that she understands why the territorial govern-

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ment is considering handing the program back to the federal government.

"When they are being the bank for the federal government, they're not able to prioritize what their own health spending could be," said Idlout, who is her party's Crown-Indigenous relations critic, in a phone interview on June 9.

Idlout said that the money that is being spent by Nunavut to cover the feds' NIHB obligations could be put towards building a facility for long-term care so that elders can age closer to home and not be transferred to larger cities such as Ottawa.

The Hill Times requested an interview with Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty, who is the MP for the Northwest Territories, about her perspective on the issue, but a meeting couldn't be arranged by deadline.

Her office sent a statement on June 11, which reads in part: "I am committed to representing the needs of residents and look forward to collaborating with Indigenous governments and the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) to support their priorities. I am working with Minister Gull-Masty to ensure the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program meets the health care needs of Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories and across Canada."

Turning off Jordan's Principle funding in N.W.T would 'crumble' the education system

While in Ottawa, Northwest Territories officials also focused on the changes made to the Jordan's Principle program this past February. The program is meant to ensure that First Nations children receive proper access to publicly-funded health, social and education programs, services and supports.

Then-Indigenous services minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ont.) issued a statement on Feb. 10 which said that the number of requests for Jordan's Principle funding have grown at an "extremely fast pace," and that changes were being made to ensure the program's sustainability.

"Jordan's Principle is supposed to be used when necessary; it shouldn't negate provincial or territorial responsibility, nor should it be used for requests that are outside of what it is designed for," Hajdu said in the statement.

Changes were also made to the Inuit Child First Initiative, whose purpose is similar to Jordan's Principle, but is for Inuit children.

The Northwest Territories' education system received \$58.6-million from both federal programs in the 2024-25 fiscal year, according to information provided by the territorial government to *The Hill Times*.

Education Minister Cleveland told *The Hill Times* that the change to Jordan's Principle that will have the most detrimental effect on her territory is the loss of money for education thanks to a new policy that sees program funding not available to schools that are not on reserves.

The federal funding is predominately used to pay for educational assistants in schools, according to Cleveland.

She said schools in her territory are currently informing their educational assistants that they may lose their jobs because of the possible loss of Jordan's Principle funding.

The issue is that while only one of the two reserves located in the territory houses a school, the majority of students are Indigenous, according to Cleveland.

"Because we don't have reserves, it means that we do not have access to a



NDP MP Lori Idlout recently requested an emergency debate in the House to discuss changes to federal funding criteria for Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative. That request was denied. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

lot of different pools of federal funding that otherwise our communities would have access to, and so to say that because

our children in the territory don't live on reserve [that] they don't have access to very necessary funding doesn't work for the Northwest Territories," Cleveland said.

The education minister said that graduation rates in the territory's small communities have increased by six per cent over the last three years, which demonstrates the support's effectiveness.

Cleveland said that Ottawa made the changes to tackle the abuses of the program, but that the two governments should work on that issue while ensuring that students receive the support they need.

"To turn off the system in the meantime would absolutely be devastating to the Northwest Territories. It would absolutely unwind our successes; it would crumble our education system," she said.

In a statement to *The Hill Times* on June 12, ISC said that funding for "school-related requests will only be approved if the requests can be clearly linked to the specific health, social or educational need of the First Nation child or if it is required to achieve substantive

equality." Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

As for funding for schools that are not on reserve, that support will be "redirected to territorial school boards, or other existing territorial and federally funded programs."

The department said that it "will be reaching out" to First Nations, provincial, and territorial partners to "strengthen collaboration" on the work to meet children's needs.

Idlout asked for an emergency debate in the House on May 28 to discuss the changes that were made to Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative. That request was denied.

"These political decisions have resulted in First Nations and Inuit children being in limbo—First Nations and Inuit children being forced, unfortunately, to return to conditions where they have to go to school not having had breakfast, First Nations and Inuit children having to [re-]apply to programs that they had already been entered [into]," Idlout said.

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Editorial

Editorial

Carney should let Elections Canada oversee nominations

Another federal election has passed, and yet again, allegations of nomination election-rigging and favouritism have surfaced—this time chiefly targeting the Conservative Party. Usually, both the Liberals and the Conservatives face such allegations, as most potential candidates want to run for parties likely to form government. However, in the most recent election cycle, Pierre Poilievre’s Conservatives bore the brunt alone, due to their sustained high double-digit lead in the polls for nearly two years. Until early January, a Conservative majority seemed inevitable as the party was leading by as many as 27 points in public opinion polls.

That changed significantly in early January following Justin Trudeau’s announcement that he would not seek re-election. Also, the wave of public support amid escalating trade tensions with the United States and U.S. President Donald Trump’s inflammatory remarks about annexing Canada helped the governing party to regain lost political ground. To capitalize on this momentum, the Liberals ran an abbreviated leadership race and called an early election. As late as last year, the party was struggling to attract quality candidates, and many MPs were opting not to seek re-election. Some reversed their decisions once the political tide shifted in their favour.

On the Conservative side, strong polling numbers essentially turned a nomination contest into a guaranteed seat in the House, which led to record fundraising and a surge in party memberships. With Canadians eager for change after nine years of Trudeau, the

Conservative Party’s base was energized and a massive majority within reach. However, dozens of aspiring Conservative nominees complained that the party delayed or blocked nominations, and chose to appoint candidates after the writ dropped—sometimes without even letting potential candidates access the online application portal. Several disillusioned and disappointed potential candidates cancelled their party memberships in protest or joined other parties.

Allegations of unfair nomination contests are not new. For decades, hopeful candidates from both major federal parties have raised concerns about favouritism and outright rigging. In private conversations, party officials often defend their actions by saying they select candidates who are best positioned to win. If that’s the case, parties should tell potential candidates not to waste months and months in signing up members and fundraising under the false promise of a fair contest.

Nomination elections are the cornerstone of democratic participation. When leaders or senior party officials handpick candidates without a fair election, it undermines faith in the system—discouraging Canadians from volunteering or getting involved in the political process.

Given this background, the only conclusion one can draw is that parties will never voluntarily hold fair and open nominations. Prime Minister Mark Carney has an opportunity to reform this system by working with other parties to transfer responsibility for nominations to Elections Canada.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Image courtesy pexels.com

Canada fails to meet key principle of nuclear safety: Ottawa activist

A March 2025 report by the International Atomic Energy Agency flagged a serious problem in Canada’s nuclear governance regime. Canada has not incorporated the fundamental safety principle of justification into its legal framework, despite being urged to do so by an international peer review team in 2019.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) principle of justification in nuclear safety requires that any practice involving human exposures to ionizing radiation be justified during the licensing process for a facility. It must be demonstrated that the overall benefits of the project to individuals and society outweigh the potential health detriments of the radiation exposures it will cause.

Justification is necessary because there is no safe level of exposure to ionizing radiation from nuclear reactors and radioactive waste. Ionizing radiation causes cancers of all kinds, many other chronic diseases and damage to the human gene pool. Human-made nuclear waste will remain hazardous and radioactive for millions of years.

Canada’s failure to justify nuclear projects is a seri-

ous deficiency that urgently needs to be addressed given the federal government’s professed interest in funding and expanding nuclear electricity generation in this country. We need to ask: can we justify creating more and more radioactive waste that future generations will have to deal with even though they will receive zero benefit from the activities that created it?

Other serious deficiencies were flagged by the IAEA experts in 2019. For example, Canada allows pregnant nuclear workers to be exposed to a radiation dose four times larger than is tolerated by IAEA standards. This issue remains undressed five years later.

These problems are just the tip of the iceberg. An environmental petition to the Auditor General in 2019 described many problems with Canada’s nuclear governance regime suggesting it compares unfavourably with more robust regimes in other OECD countries.

Lynn Jones
Ottawa, Ont.

(The letter writer is a member of the Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County and Area.)

COMMENT

While the world fiddles, Canada is burning

The world needs to be seized of the emergency at hand. With thousands of hectares of our own country burning, we need to reignite global interest in finding an energy solution.

Sheila
Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—While the world fiddles, Canada is burning. Air quality report IQAir reported that, as of June 10, smoke was descending to lower European altitudes and impacting air quality across the continent. The impact ranged from “unhealthy to sensitive groups” in some cities to “very unhealthy” in parts of France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. Lyon was listed as the third most polluted city in the world while Munich was ninth. It was reported

that a plume of smoke crossed the Mediterranean reaching Greece on May 18 and 19, while another plume arrived in northwestern Europe on June 1. All thanks to our country's summer fires.

Canadians were feeling the effects directly, with air advisory warnings in most eastern communities. It was reported at one point that Montreal was suffering the worst air quality in the world.

In the midst of massive evacuations of Indigenous communities and other northerly settlements, it almost seems as though fire season is the new harbinger for summer.

Everyone is expecting more and earlier fire eruptions. But our political focus has moved from climate change to the financial havoc being wreaked by United States President Donald Trump on the world economy.

The lack of focus on climate action has environmentalists frustrated. They are trying to figure out how to get the issue of global warming back on the global agenda.

Some of them have gone elsewhere.

The other big news last week was that renowned Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg was arrested by the Israeli military for entering a no-go zone in an attempt to bring food and medical supplies to Gaza.

Thunberg and 11 others were sailing on the Madleen in an effort

to get supplies to Palestinians. The Israeli government reported that the group had few supplies on board, and this was instead a “selfie yacht of celebrities” carrying out “Instagram activism.”

Gazans who have been reporting massive food and medicine shortages would have appreciated the efforts of the sailors who were part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

As it stands, Thunberg was deported and, as a result, will be prevented from returning to Israel or Gaza.

But the strange twist to this story is that Thunberg used to be the voice for global warming.

As a teenager back in 2019, Thunberger got the attention of world leaders, calling them out at climate gatherings for the “Blah, blah, blah” approach of talking while doing nothing.

Now she seems to have moved on to other issues, with her ongoing focus on the politics of the Middle East.

COVID forced the world into small personal bubbles, but it also meant a slowdown of global warming because house confinement prompted a world drop in fossil fuel consumption.

The pandemic resulted in an immediate decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution literally within a few weeks of the shutdown.



An aerial view of wildfires burning in Flin Flon, Man., at the end of May. The wildfires have so far affected Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The fires have burned 3.49 million hectares of land, two people have died in Lac du Bonnet, Man., and 32,000 people have been evacuated from Manitoba and Saskatchewan. More than 428 structures have been destroyed. *Photograph courtesy of the Government of Manitoba*

It also changed some habits forever, permitting employees to work at home more frequently, thereby reducing their environmental footprint permanently.

But the gains made by the pandemic and the former public interest in environmental changes appear to be lagging badly.

Thunberg doesn't seem engaged. Prime Minister Mark Carney's first political action was to cancel the cost of carbon pricing to consumers. It had been effectively labelled by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre as a carbon tax, and was seen to be politically toxic on the eve of an election.

Carney definitely took the wind out of Poilievre's sails, and he is now speaking about Canada's capacity to be an energy and environmental powerhouse globally.

The prime minister has experience marrying the two. In his previous life at Brookfield, his company focused on sustainable practices with a view to creating current and future value for investors.

He was part of an international group promoting solutions

for global warming, which he hopes to apply to Canadian government environmental policies.

The call for a major national energy corridor has certainly impressed Canadians, especially Albertans, who seem to have taken a new shine to the prime minister.

His promise to achieve it with full Indigenous and provincial consensus is more than ambitious.

Meanwhile the environmental interest that we experienced before the pandemic has disappeared. Even the sale of electric cars has stalled, in part as a backlash to Trump adviser Elon Musk. But time is running out.

The world needs to be seized of the emergency at hand. With thousands of hectares of our own country burning, we need to reignite global interest in finding an energy solution.

Otherwise, Canada will keep on burning.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister, and a former deputy prime minister.
The Hill Times

Carney's ideological advantage

Mark Carney might only be a rookie politician, but it looks like he knows how to play the game.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—Thanks to the strategic situation he's in, Prime Minister Mark Carney currently enjoys the advantage of ideological flexibility.

That's to say, if he wants to move to the ideological right, he's free to do that, or if he wants to move leftward, he can do that, too.

Of course, this is not so unusual for Liberals, as one of their party's characteristics is its ability to change its ideological stripes to serve its political purposes.

But when the Liberals do change their ideological stripes, they usually do so defensively



Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives in the House of Commons foyer before Question Period on June 10, 2025. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

because they're facing outside political pressures.

Consider, for instance, how in the 1990s the Liberals under then prime minister Jean Chrétien, when faced with the growing popularity of the populist-leaning conservative Reform Party, moved to the right and began cutting taxes, slashing spending, and balancing the budget.

On the other hand, if they must, the Liberals can just as easily embrace more socialistic-style policies, as they often do when the NDP holds the balance of power in a minority government.

Consider how the NDP was able to nudge the Justin Trudeau Liberals to the left.

But today, Prime Minister Carney is operating in different political waters.

Unlike Chrétien or Trudeau or other past Liberal leaders, Carney doesn't face any outside ideological pressures because, simply put, his main political rivals are in disarray.

Certainly, the Conservative Party, under the leadership of Pierre Poilievre, has lost much of its bravado and swagger since losing the recent federal election.

Nor did it help Poilievre's reputation as a leader when he lost his seat.

My point is, the Conservative Party right now is a bit shell-shocked, a bit demoralized, and a bit uncertain about what it should stand for in a world that's much different than it was just a year ago.

What all this means is the Conservatives will lack the confidence it will take to successfully assail the Liberals from the right. Meanwhile, on the Liberal government's left flank, the NDP is in even worse shape.

While the Conservatives lost the last election, the NDP was obliterated, losing not only its leader, but also its parliamentary status.

Given their dilapidated state, you have to believe the New Democrats will—for the foreseeable future at least—be focused more on soul-searching and looking inward than on pushing an agenda.

All of this explains why Carney won't be pushed into changing ideological gears for defensive reasons, but he still might do so voluntarily, to play offense, to further weaken his already enfeebled opponents.

For instance, if Carney were to move rightward on certain key

issues like immigration, government spending, and defense, it would deprive the Conservatives of oxygen.

After all, it'd be difficult for Conservatives to attack conservative policies.

Plus, not only would moving to the right sap Poilievre of his aggressiveness, it might also help the Liberals win over voters from the Conservative Party.

Indeed, recent evidence suggests this seems to be Carney's plan.

As David McLaughlin, once chief of staff to former prime minister Brian Mulroney, recently noted, “From cancelling the consumer carbon tax, to pledging to build pipelines and offering a middle-class tax cut, Carney is actively placing conservative alongside progressive in his party's governing policies. ... Welcome to the new Canada, where PC doesn't stand for ‘politically correct’ but ‘progressive conservative.’”

Again, Carney is free to move his party into this “progressive conservative” position because the NDP is too weak to attack the Liberals from the left.

So yes, Carney might only be a rookie politician, but it looks like he knows how to play the game.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.
The Hill Times

COMMENT

Trump shamelessly uses U.S. military to do his bidding in Los Angeles

These protesters passionately disagree with Trump's ruthless round-up, detention, and deportation of hundreds of immigrants to a prison in El Salvador. This is the heart of the matter. Trump doesn't like Gavin Newsom. He doesn't like California, the most Democratic state in the country. And he doesn't like anyone who stands up to him.

Michael Harris

Harris

Continued from page 1

The United States Marine Corps built its reputation as America's elite shock troops, trained to engage and to kill the enemy abroad. Crowd control at home isn't in its bailiwick—or training.

Despite that, U.S. President Donald Trump has deployed 700 marines in America's second-largest city. More U.S. troops are deployed in Los Angeles than in Syria and Iraq. And he did it without invoking the 1807 Insurrection Act, a process that is arguably needed to make the deployment legal.

What happened the last time this extraordinary measure was taken? Then-president George H.W. Bush sent in troops during the 1992 L.A. riots when the city was burning after the four officers accused of beating Rodney King were acquitted. Bush used the Insurrection Act.

In 1965, before then-president Lyndon Johnson sent the National Guard into Alabama, over the objections of segregationist governor George Wallace, he also invoked the Insurrection Act. Johnson sent in the National Guard to protect civil rights



U.S. President Donald Trump deployed 700 Marines to Los Angeles in reaction to protests against his immigration raids. That is in addition to his federalizing thousands of California National Guard members for the same purpose. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House.

marchers in Selma who were protesting for the right to vote and against police brutality.

If Trump's decision stands—despite court challenges to its legality—the U.S. will be a giant step closer to exchanging a civilian-run democracy for a police state. It will be the kind of place that talks about government efficiency, and then blows \$60-million on a military parade through downtown Washington, D.C.

Note that it was a parade that the military itself did not want, despite this being its 250th anniversary. The parade was the brainchild of Trump, whose 79th birthday just happened to fall on the date for the gaudy and unprecedented show of militarism in America's capital.

According to the *Marines' Hymn*, the Corps fights for "right and freedom" against America's enemies. In L.A., they won't be doing either. Instead, they will act to intimidate fellow Americans exercising their constitutional right to protest.

These protesters passionately disagree with PTrump's ruthless round-up, detention, and deportation of hundreds of immigrants to a prison in El Salvador without due process.

Trump's immigration policy is carried out by armed officers of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It is a policy

that breaks families like china plates, separating children from their parents, exactly as Trump did in his first term.

It is also a policy built on unusually profound lies, even for Trump. He first falsely claimed that other nations were emptying their prisons and insane asylums to allow killers, rapists, and drug dealers into his country. It was his grounds for claiming it was a national emergency. Trump declared that it was these "bad actors" that would be the targets of ICE. Utter fiction.

For starters, Trump never produced evidence that such an "evil invasion" was taking place. That didn't stop him from declaring a state of emergency at America's borders. Why? Because that declaration gave him extraordinary powers he wouldn't otherwise have. Here's how law professor Ilya Somin put it in *The New York Times*: "He is declaring utterly bogus emergencies for the sake of trying to expand his power, undermine the Constitution, and destroy civil liberties."

But Trump didn't use those expanded powers to root out the "bad actors" as he promised. Instead, he went after dishwashers, seamstresses, and day labourers looking for work outside Home Depot stores.

And, oh yes, there was one more dangerous demographic

targeted by ICE: children. Trump's immigration cops went into workplaces, immigration offices, courtrooms, schools and even churches to make their arrests.

In the process, America was treated to the spectacle of children being led out of their classrooms in handcuffs. One four-year-old child receiving treatment for stage-four cancer was deported to Honduras. It is that heartless cruelty that has put protestors in streets across America.

There are other absurdities about Trump's troop deployments. Before he sent in 700 Marines, he federalized California's National Guard and deployed 2,000 of them to restore order in L.A. For good measure, he added another 2,000, putting a total of 4,700 military personnel on the streets of L.A. to deal with a problem that covered just two blocks of a 500-square mile city.

Trump's troop deployments in L.A., ostensibly to protect citizens and nip a potential riot in the bud, could do neither. The military forces did not have the legal authority to stop and detain protestors.

When that became clear, Trump came up with another absurdity. He claimed that his military forces were there to protect federal buildings and ICE officers as they conducted their raids. But ICE officers are armed

policemen trained to protect themselves. Who is Trump trying to kid?

But here is the ultimate absurdity of sending the military into L.A., at a staggering cost of US\$134-million. No one in the state government asked for troops, and—more importantly—no one wanted them.

Why would they? The L.A. police department itself has 9,000 officers. In addition to the LAPD, there is the Sheriff's Department, and police forces from Orange County, Ventura, and other counties to draw on.

As L.A. Mayor Karen Bass made clear, the LAPD had both the staff and the experience to deal with the situation on the ground. Far from helping to restore order, Bass blasted Trump for provoking more local protest by sending in the troops.

The mayor called on the president to stop the heartless ICE raids that are doing tremendous damage to a place she called a "city of immigrants."

As feisty as L.A.'s mayor has been, it was California Governor Gavin Newsom who lowered the boom on Trump.

Trump claimed that he had mentioned sending the National Guard into L.A. during a late evening phone-call with California's governor. Newsom's response? Trump was "a stone-cold liar."

The bottom line is that Trump overrode the governor's authority without consultation or invoking the Insurrection Act. California says that is illegal, and has taken the matter to court. As for the Trump administration's threat to arrest Newsom, the governor had a terse response: arrest threats against elected office holders were the "acts of a dictator."

The nonsensical claim from the White House is that Democrats in California had failed to protect Americans from "economic and national security threats—inaction that has resulted in a serious crisis."

Law professor Frank O. Bowman of the University of Missouri has a different take, and one that Americans ignore at their peril.

"Declaring everything an emergency begins to move us in the direction of allowing the use of government force and violence against people you don't like."

And that is the heart of the matter. Trump doesn't like Newsom. He doesn't like California, which is the most Democratic state in the country. And he doesn't like anyone who stands up to him.

If anyone doubts that, remember: the Trump administration indicted Congresswoman Monica McIver of New Jersey on three criminal counts of forcibly impeding and interfering with federal officers who were trying to arrest the mayor of Newark, New Jersey, outside an immigration facility.

The charges were announced by Alina Habba, acting U.S. attorney for the District of New Jersey. It just happens that Habba was Trump's former personal lawyer.

We are a long way from Selma.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Nothing says colonization better than special economic zones

There are no good ethics in trampling over the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the rush for national projects. That is actually the very definition of colonial. Who knew that Canada would so easily cave on its reconciliation commitment when faced with a threat?

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—Here's Ontario's Bill 5, paraphrased: "economy trumps everything so we'll take the natural resources through force by calling them 'special economic zones' where provincial and federal laws are suspended, and to hell with wildlife and clean water or human rights." Doug Ford's Ontario government passed Bill 5 in an hour of debate, and in that hour made sure to eject First Nations for wearing orange shirts.

And not a peep out of Ottawa was heard about Bill 5. Perhaps because Ford's special economic zones, which are on mostly Crown lands—also known as First Nations communities—dovetail nicely with the federal Liberals' stated need for national economic projects. But who benefits?

This is like Groundhog Day yet again when the loud demands for economic projects to benefit corporate interests and inflation rates, combines with that colonial tinge of self-righteousness when faced with Indigenous dissent: how could you possibly put Indigenous needs ahead of the majority?

It would be nice, just for once, to have a special economic zone in the middle of a city just to test the ethical muscle. Let's say there's lithium underneath Manotick, for example, and it's only 100 feet deep—really cheap to mine, but unfortunately all those people will not have livable homes or grocery stores or trees left. The Rideau River will be forever gone, but *c'est ça*. The needs of the majority first and they want batteries. Don't be so trite as to put your needs for a livable home first, Manotick.

There are no good ethics in trampling over the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the rush for national projects. That is actually the very definition of colonial. Who knew that Canada would so easily cave on its reconciliation commitment when faced with a threat?

Expedite natural resource development and sidestep Indigenous rights. This is the Colonizer Two-Step dance from the past, an old polka that sounds suspiciously like an out-of-tune chicken dance. That old colonizer two-step led to

protests and showdowns from Clayoquot Sound to Listuguj, Caledonia to Kenora, and to Ipperwash, and more. The Kane-satake Resistance led to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to resolve the generations-long conflicts on development versus Indigenous rights, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission built on that with the Calls to Action, and yet here we are again.

Groundhog Day.

Did you know the Department of Indian Affairs used to have a hotspot reporting system to track 'splinter' First Nations who might just make some noise—an honest-to-god race-based watchlist—at the same time they funded the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? The hotspot watchlist was outed in 2011, and I'm guessing it was rolled into the federal Government Operations Centre after that. The federal government built this dangerous approach to manage the outcry of just some Canadian citizens, and now there is very real threat when Indigenous Peoples demonstrate. This is completely the

fault of feds', something they have yet to apologize for, much less confront the racism in the name of public safety.

This is the warning yet again that running graders over Indigenous rights and land can be life threatening for Indigenous Peoples (and quite threatening to the ethics of decision-makers). Get ready for Indigenous demonstrations and strikes, and do not call them blockades. Please don't let police kill Indigenous people this summer.

Instead, I have a great idea right out of the Poilievre playbook: Indigenous demonstrations are a convoy! Please bring coffee instead of Colt carbines.

And maybe this time around, allies who are committed to reconciliation will stand at our side. We're demonstrating to protect the four-leggeds, the water, and the land, and due democratic process, you know, the things that benefit you, too.

Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the West Coast and the CEO of the Indigenous Reconciliation Group. She writes twice a month about Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. In Tlingit worldview, the stories are the knowledge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.

The Hill Times

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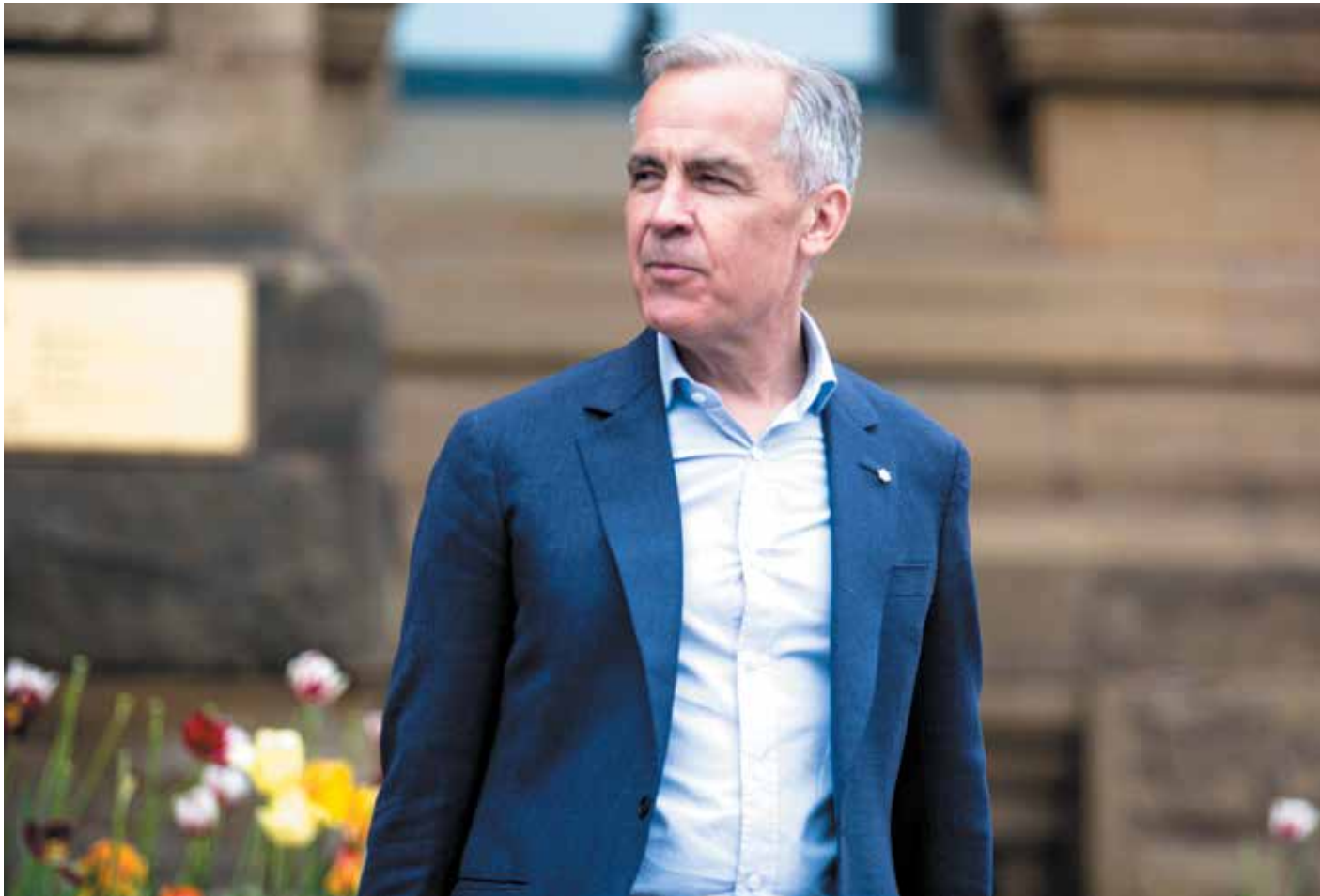
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COMMENT



Prime Minister Mark Carney's his recent talk of 'decarbonized oil' deals a near-fatal blow to climate hopes for his new government. No one who is serious about fighting climate change would parrot this ludicrous talking point, drawn directly from the oil and gas sector's well-funded marketing department, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

policy. (The money isn't trivial: oil and gas was a \$187-billion enterprise in 2022 that employed 172,000 people and made up 30 per cent of our exports.)

Meanwhile, Carney introduced a bill last week that allows cabinet to override any environmental regulation—protection of species, fish, endangered habitats, rivers, or landscapes—that inhibits a pipeline, railway, port development, or road that is deemed to be in the “national interest.”

There are caveats, including a requirement for Indigenous buy-in; evidence that the project will succeed and advance Canada's economic autonomy and security; and that it will contribute to clean growth and Canada's climate change objectives. That last demand would be more reassuring if clean energy didn't include “decarbonized oil.”

The National Observer's astute columnist, Max Fawcett, argues that Carney is trying to out-manoeuvre Premier Smith: you can have a pipeline, he says, but only if you live up to your promise to get the province's most lucrative industry to net-zero emissions by 2050. Perhaps, but it depends on how you measure progress towards emissions reduction and who does the calculation.

Two practical obstacles stand in the way of another oil pipeline: a nervous private sector and opposition from premiers, or Indigenous peoples. B.C. Premier David Eby, for instance, is cool to the idea of a revived Northern Gateway route, which would see oil tankers plying the pristine British Columbia coast. Carney says he won't proceed over the wishes of a premier, which brought an immediate rejoinder from Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre.

“No consensus is needed,” declared the unseated Poilievre in the Commons foyer in a media availability on June 9. “At the end of the day, if you wait until everyone agrees on everything nothing will happen... We need a pipe.” Quite a change in tone from someone who spent years ranting against federal “interference” in Alberta's economy.

As for Carney, some believe he is playing a long game on climate, waiting for the inevitable decline of oil and gas, and avoiding the pious posturing and distracting provocations of his predecessor. And no nation-building project, green or not, has yet been approved so everything is conjecture at this point. Fair enough.

But there is a troubling disconnect between the climate-controlled Parliamentary precinct, and the rest of the country. As this was being written, up to 40,000 people—mostly northern, many Indigenous—have been driven from their homes; smoke blankets southern cities; and revered recreational havens like Jasper last year, and now, Squamish, B.C., are threatened.

How can it not be in the “national interest” to act on climate change—and act quickly?

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Carney has energy to burn, that's a problem

The federal government's legislation encouraging the building of pipelines comes as wildfires in parts of British Columbia and Manitoba force residents to flee their homes for yet another year. It should be in the 'national interest' to act on climate change—and act quickly.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



Prime Minister Mark Carney's endorsement of a so-far performative, long-in-gestation, carbon-capture scheme in northern Alberta was disconcerting, but his

recent talk of “decarbonized oil” deals a near-fatal blow to climate hopes for his new government.

No one who is serious about fighting climate change would parrot this ludicrous talking point, drawn directly from the oil and gas sector's well-funded marketing department.

Simon Donner, a well-known climate scientist from the University of British Columbia and co-chair of a federal climate action advisory group, was blunt in a recent interview with *The Toronto Star*: “There is no such thing as decarbonized oil and gas. Oil contains carbon. It is high school chemistry. (Both) emit carbon when they are burned.”

In other words, talking about “decarbonized oil” (the successor to “ethical oil”) is like talking about desalinated salt. It is a “complete contradiction... a dangerous lie that government after government has tried to spread under the spell of industry lobbying,” said Catherine Abreu, another well-known climate advocate, through her X account.

Both critics are correct and, surely, the prime minister understands. When the oil sector talks (and talks and talks) about “decarbonized oil,” it is referring to efforts to decrease emissions from the extraction process which, currently, relies largely on burning fossil fuels. Indeed, the energy-intensive Alberta oil patch alone accounts for 30 per

cent of national greenhouse gas emissions.

And that is before that oil becomes gasoline, or heating fuel for homes and industries—the so-called “downstream impact”—and contributes even more emissions as it burns in Asia, or Texas, or wherever. Global warming, after all, is global.

The main attempt to “decarbonize” Alberta's heavy crude rests on carbon capture and storage, which is a costly technology that to date has been more successful in squeezing leftover oil out of exhausted mines than in removing significant emissions from the atmosphere. The Pathways Alliance' \$16.5-billion project, north of Edmonton, envisions a 400-kilometre pipeline that would transport carbon emissions from 20 oil-sands facilities to a storage hub near Cold Lake, Alta. Backed by the six major oil-sands companies, carbon capture has been promoted for years as a win-win, a way to increase fossil fuel production while limiting emissions.

So far, more effort appears to have been put into pressuring governments to pay for the project than getting shovels in the ground. The immense cost, jittery oil prices, and the unproven effectiveness of the technology at a large scale, means the Pathways project has functioned more as an industry bargaining chip than an actual solution.

It could also be a waste of press releases, engineering studies and lobbying efforts, given that there is a straightforward way of reducing emissions: stop producing and burning fossil fuels, including oil, coal and methane. Obviously, this isn't going to happen overnight, but any responsible government would at least discourage expansion of the oil and gas sector, and begin an orderly transition to clean energy.

Despite Carney's climate finance background, he has treated this option as an afterthought. Yet accelerating the clean energy sector (which is booming in unlikely places like Texas and was already bringing billions in investment to Alberta before Premier Danielle Smith threw up regulatory barriers) is a project of “national interest” if anything is.

Directing some of the prime minister's “build, baby, build” energy towards sustainable infrastructure like interprovincial electricity transmission (including proposals to link the Yukon to B.C.'s hydro grid, or extend Labrador's green power to Atlantic provinces) would be smart, future-oriented and would create jobs.

Sadly, none of these projects would be as immediately lucrative as oil, and money—more than recurring wildfires and other climate disasters—is what has always driven our timid climate

COMMENT

Ramped-up military spending is good news, but will face challenges

Defence Minister David McGuinty will be in charge of more than \$9-billion in additional funding for the Canadian Armed Forces this fiscal year. A June 9 announcement said that funding would go towards better pay for Canada's soldiers, new aircraft, and repairs for existing infrastructure among other purposes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Two per cent gets us back on track if we lived in 2014. That alone may be a hard sell, eventually, for the prime minister. What comes next will be harder. But it's needed, and overdue.

Matt Gurney

Opinion



TORONTO—The defence announcement made by the prime minister last week is—hands down—good news. It's good news for the Canadian Armed Forces, and it's good news for Mark Carney, who'll be able to head into the G7 and upcoming allied defence summits without having to worry about being asked why Canada isn't at the NATO defence spending stan-

dard of two per cent of GDP. It is truly a win-win.

Right now, Carney has political support for this spending. That includes both a newly elected caucus behind him, which seems inclined to give the boss the benefit of the doubt for the time being (and if recent precedent is any guide, could remain so inclined for a decade). It also includes a Canadian population that—in an atypical development that may not last—is supportive of much higher defence spending.

But there are two problems for Carney here.

The first, as my friend Susan Delacourt observed in *The Toronto Star* last week, is that, right now, Canadians get to approve of higher defence spending in the abstract. We haven't yet had to balance the good of higher defence spending with the cost of it—a cost that will be paid in some mixture of three ways. We'll borrow more, tax the public more, or spend less on other things. Carney seems to believe that higher economic growth will solve this problem, and further seems motivated to achieve that growth.

That's great! God bless him, sincerely. I wish him every success in the world. But even in a best-case scenario, the benefits of

that economic growth will come gradually and later. The costs of the higher defence spending come now, and though I wholeheartedly support it, I suspect many of my Canadians may prove more fickle. Especially once the bills start to arrive, literally and politically. That's inevitable.

The other problem—which is one that hasn't really been grappled with by the prime minister (at least in public)—is that the new spending and the political problems it will eventually cause are only a first step. There is a lot more work to be done, and the costs are going to go up. By a lot.

The two-per-cent target was agreed to over a decade ago. Before the renewed Russian invasion of Ukraine, before the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, before U.S. President Donald Trump and his annexationist rhetoric. Hitting two per cent matters. It's important and good. But what it will do, in theory, is flesh out the military's capabilities that we claim exist, but really, sadly, do not.

The Canadian military has had major problems with recruiting and retaining

personnel, and so it is badly understaffed. Many units could not deploy into combat or respond to a major domestic emergency if asked. Meanwhile, in part due to a shortage of trained maintenance personnel (see understaffing), a shocking percentage of our military equipment and vehicles is out of service. The money that has been immediately pledged to the military is largely intended to address these problems.

That's fantastic. It's necessary and overdue. Assuming everything goes as planned though, what it will mean is that Canada will finally have the kind of military we thought we needed circa 2014, when we made the pledge.

That kind of military will be an improvement over what we have today. It will not be the right kind of military for the military we actually need today. And that's where the rest of the money is going to come in.

In 2014, Canada was not responsible for commanding a full brigade in Latvia. It is now. In 2014, we did not face the same threat from drones, hypersonics and cyberwarfare that it does now. We did not have the same urgency in defending the Arctic, and we did not have the same doubts about our American neighbours and their willingness to defend us, or frankly, their friendliness and stability. We do now.

Two per cent gets us back on track if we lived in 2014. That alone may be a hard sell, eventually, for the prime minister. What comes next will be harder. But it's needed, and overdue.

Matt Gurney is a Toronto-based journalist. He is co-editor of *The Line* (ReadTheLine.ca), an online magazine. He can be reached at matt@readtheline.ca.

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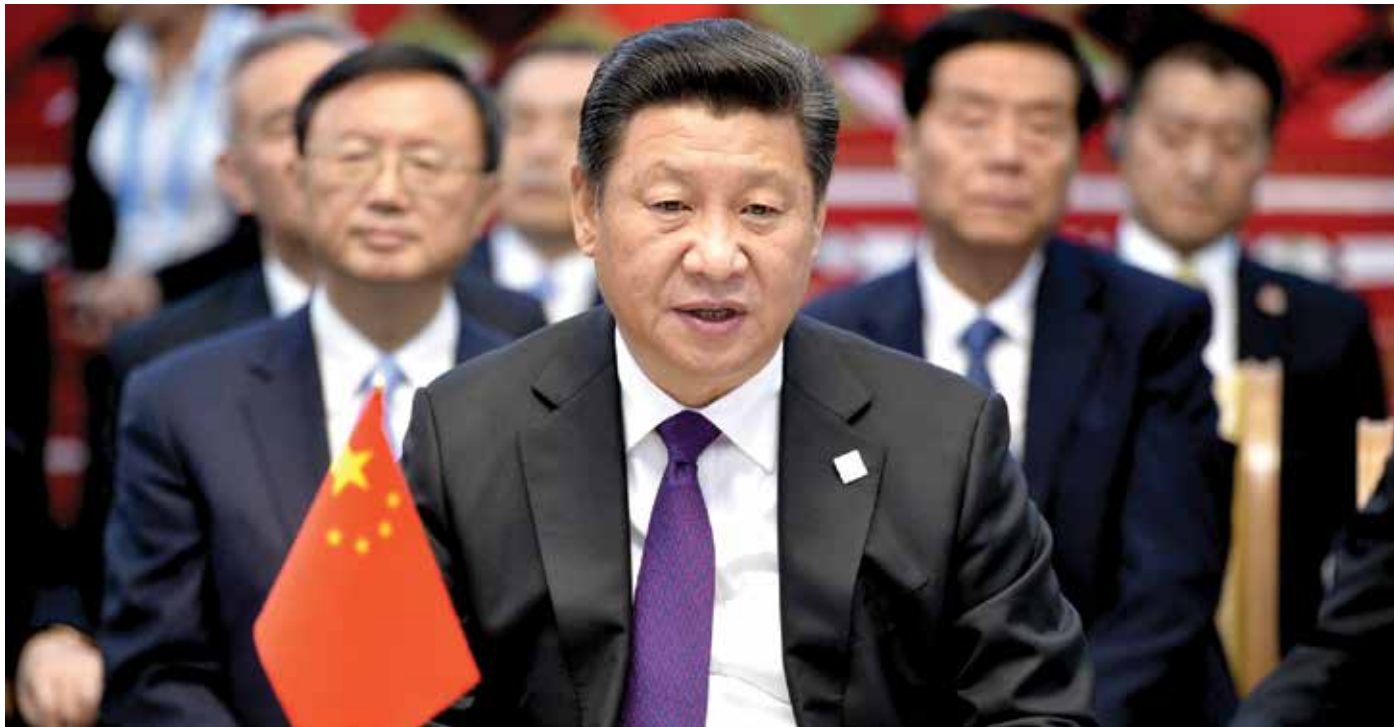
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IMAGINE
CANADA

COMMENT

Achieving a pragmatic working relationship with China must be a foreign policy priority for Canada



China's President Xi Jinping, pictured, was not invited to the G7 Leaders' Summit in Alberta, but Canada is making it quite clear that China has an important and positive role to play if our country is going to be economically less dependent on the United States, writes David Crane. Photograph courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

There is much to gain from a stable and inclusive world that is not undone by competing muscle-flexing superpowers.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—While China's President Xi Jinping is not among the invitees at the G7 Leaders' Summit in Alberta even though China is on everyone's mind, at their recent Saskatoon summit, Canada's own first ministers were quite clear in recognizing that China has an important and positive role to play if we are to become economically less dependent on the United States and to seize opportunities.

The challenge is to establish an effective working relationship with China in the face of U.S. policy, which is to contain China and slow its economic and technological advance, and in pursuit of this, pressure other countries—including Canada—to align their own foreign, economic and trade policies with a U.S.-led Cold War strategy. But not only is this U.S. policy both dangerous and ineffective, but it's also very much not in our best interest.

This doesn't mean turning a blind eye to Chinese policies and



International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu, pictured June 11, 2025, met with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao on the sidelines of a WTO meeting in Paris on June 3 where they agreed to convene an early meeting of the Joint Economic and Trade Commission to deal with outstanding trade issues. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

practices where we disagree—but it does mean pursuing a working relationship with the world's second-largest economy. As then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau declared in 1968, "many of the major world issues will not be resolved completely or in any lasting way, unless and until an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation." Canada established diplomatic relations with China in 1970.

What Trudeau said then is even more relevant and necessary today. But there is a narrower self-interest, as well. China is Canada's third-largest export market; between April 2024 and April 2025, our merchandise exports to China rose 31.3 per cent. Moreover, the Trans Mountain pipeline would be in serious trouble today without purchases by China while much of the talk

of new oil pipelines or LNG facilities on the West Coast will depend on Chinese buyers.

In their June 2 communiqué, Prime Minister Mark Carney and the provincial premiers agreed on "the critical importance of regular and ongoing engagement with China at the highest level to improve the overall trade relationship."

Then, on June 5, Carney spoke with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, with the two agreeing on the need to "regularize channels of communication between Canada and China." On June 3, Canada's International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu met with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao on the sidelines of a World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Paris where they agreed to convene an early meeting of the Joint Economic and Trade Commis-

sion to deal with outstanding trade issues.

Later this year, Carney will have two chances on the sidelines of the APEC leaders' summit in Korea (Oct. 31-Nov. 1) and at the G20 leaders' summit in South Africa (Nov. 22-23) to meet with Xi to pursue a serious future relationship. Or he could consider a state visit to China and perhaps other Asian countries (including Australia) either later this year or early next year.

In the meantime, though, the two countries have to iron out difficult trade irritants. They began with a unilateral Canadian decision to impose 100-per-cent surtax on Chinese automobiles, trucks, buses, and delivery vans, effective Oct. 1 last year; a 25-per-cent surtax on steel and aluminum products from China effective Oct. 15; and the threat of

future trade barriers on Chinese batteries and battery parts, semi-conductors, solar products, and critical minerals.

While Canada has the right, under WTO rules, to retaliate against subsidies that enable a foreign competitor to unfairly gain an unfair and damaging advantage in our domestic market, the WTO convention would have had the Canada International Trade Tribunal hold a formal trade investigation under the Special Import Measures Act, following a determination by the Canada Border Services Agency into whether Chinese electric vehicles were subsidized.

The tribunal would have gathered evidence, held hearings, and taken other steps to determine the size of the penalty—if any. It would have been a transparent process. This is what the European Union did. But instead, Canada simply imposed a 100-per-cent surtax because that's what the Americans demanded we do.

Not surprisingly, China retaliated. Effective March 20 of this year, China imposed 100-per-cent tariffs on our canola oil and meal, peas, seafood and pork products. Canola exports of about \$1-billion are affected, making this a big issue in Western Canada. With peas, pork, and fish and seafood products included, about \$3-billion of exports are impacted.

Extricating itself from the current tariffs on Chinese vehicles, steel, and aluminum will be tricky since there is huge pressure on Canada from the U.S. to support its efforts to contain China. Former Biden-era U.S. ambassador to Canada David Cohen stressed that his key goal as envoy was to ensure that Canada's policies on China were aligned with those of the U.S. His Republican successor, Peter Hoekstra, has sent a similar message.

With Canada and the U.S. now engaged in negotiations for a new economic and security agreement, the issue of Canada-China policy could be a hot-button challenge. Yet without a compromise or some give from China on vehicle tariffs and more broadly Canada's barriers to Chinese investment, it's hard to see how the relationship can progress.

So for Carney, the challenge is to devise a policy that regularizes relations with China while making clear to the Trump administration that Canada, as a sovereign nation, will pursue its own national interest. This includes assuring the U.S. that Canada will not engage in activities that clearly threaten the safety and American security.

Canada is not alone in seeking to pursue a relationship with China rather than being forced to choose sides between the two superpowers. This is an issue very much on the minds of the EU, Britain, Australia, Mexico, Brazil, and the Indo-Pacific nations. There is much to gain from a stable and inclusive world that is not undone by competing muscle-flexing superpowers. Achieving a pragmatic working relationship with China must be a foreign policy priority for Canada.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.

The Hill Times



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Hill Times
Policy Briefing
June 16, 2025

Energy superpower
**MEANS GOING
CLEAN, IN 2025**

CANADA NEEDS TO
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**RESOURCE
ADVANTAGE**

CANADA COULD BE A
**RESOURCE
SUPERPOWER**

Historic opportunity
**TO FAST-TRACK
PROJECTS**

**TRUST CAN'T BE
LEGISLATED**

CANADA SHOULD
**BE A MINING
SUPERPOWER, TOO**

NEED TO MAKE SURE
natural resources markets
ACTUALLY WANT THEM

GIVE CANADIAN CRITICAL MINERALS
'A REASONABLE CHANCE'

**Canada must
DELIVER ON ITS
NATURAL RESOURCES**

NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

Bill to fast-track major projects could boost GDP, but raises environmental concerns



Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy Dominic LeBlanc, left, joins Prime Minister Mark Carney at a press conference concerning Bill C-5, One Canadian Economy Act, in West Block on June 6, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The One Canadian Economy Act seeks to remove interprovincial trade barriers, ease labour mobility and streamline the federal regulatory processes for major projects.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Economists argue that recently-tabled legislation to remove internal trade barriers in Canada and expedite major projects has significant potential to boost the economy, but critics are also wary of what projects will end up getting those speedier approvals.

The good news is that if the federal government is successful in unlocking this country's interprovincial barriers, doing so will "generate some considerable ... gains" in gross domestic product, said Paul Smetanin, president and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA).

"In terms of Bill C-5, part of my concern would be major project accelerations," he continued. "While we might get excited about that, that assumes that the major projects in and of themselves are actually worth doing, because the federal government



Paul Smetanin, president and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, says that it is 'exciting' that Ottawa is working on harmonizing requirements that will allow for the mobility of intellectual and capital resources. *Photograph courtesy of the CANCEA*

has not had a good track record ... in understanding and properly evaluating major infrastructure projects."

Bill C-5, or the "One Canadian Economy Act," was tabled by Canada-United States Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) on June 6. The bill would enact a Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act intended to remove interprovincial trade barriers and to ease labour mobility. The bill would also enact

a Building Canada Act, intended to streamline the federal regulatory processes for major projects. Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has said the bill is a top priority for his government, and "will do everything to get it passed before the summer."

In terms of free trade and labour mobility, the bill seeks to harmonize federal regulations with provincial and territorial standards. According to the bill, any goods produced, used, or distributed in accordance with a



Daniel Schwanen, an economist and senior vice-president of the C.D. Howe Institute, says Bill C-5 is 'not about cutting corners' but about producing an 'efficient process.' *Photograph courtesy of the C.D. Howe Institute*

provincial or territorial requirement would be considered to have met any comparable federal provision, so long as the requirements respect the same aspect or element of the item; are intended to achieve a similar objective; and meet any conditions set out in the regulations. Likewise, any service meeting provincial or territorial standards would be treated as meeting federal standards if they meet those equivalent conditions.

A report from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, released

in September 2022, estimated that removing interprovincial trade barriers could grow this country's economy by \$200-billion annually through the elimination of regulatory mismatches between provinces.

Smetanin told *The Hill Times* that he likes the intention behind Bill C-5.

"It is exciting that there is an intention here to try and create some harmony, and to try and create, internally, some mobility of our intellectual and capital resources because as a country ... we can't keep acting like each province is a country on its own because we're not getting the economies of scale that's required to run a country of 40.1 million people," he said.

In regard to major project development, Bill C-5 aims to accelerate the regulatory process for infrastructure projects that the federal government designates as being in the "national interest."

The bill would empower the governor-in-council to decide if an infrastructure project is in the national interest by considering factors such as whether a project would strengthen Canadian autonomy, resilience and security; provide economic or other benefits to the country; have a high likelihood of successful execution; advance the interests of Indigenous Peoples; and contribute to clean growth and to meeting Canada's objectives with respect to climate change.

Smetanin described Canada as a very politicized country where "infrastructure is treated like a political football."

What projects would be considered of "national interest" is ambiguous, according to Smetanin.

"The thing about major project acceleration, that's on the assumption that these major projects have been properly evaluated," he said. "If things are hard to get off the ground from an infrastructure point of view—and the infrastructure is not worth doing—well, then, the friction or the barriers to getting the project going is a good thing because it will save us money in the long run and hopefully give rise to better planning, too."

Smetanin described Canada as displaying "volatility" when it comes to infrastructure decision-making.

A CANCEA report released on Jan. 16, 2022, stated that a "volatility of investment levels," or changes in said levels over the short term is potentially the nation's biggest barrier to export success, and that infrastructure investments should be part of a strategic long-term plan.

Daniel Schwanen, an economist and senior vice-president of the C.D. Howe Institute, described Bill C-5's project acceleration component as a good start, "but let's see what projects are actually listed that meet all those criteria."

He argued the bill is clear about the government's intention to streamline the approvals of certain projects, without removing or changing project approval criteria.

Continued on page 26



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NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

Governments and Indigenous communities have historic opportunity to fast track projects

John Desjarlais

Opinion



Governments, Indigenous Peoples, and private companies must unite to build national projects, counter American trade protectionism, and assert Canada's economic independence. However, fast-tracking projects without addressing key Indigenous concerns risks failure.

Successful resource projects require Indigenous consultation and inclusion. An RBC study found that 73 per cent of Canada's 504 major resource and energy projects intersect or lie within 20 kilometres of Indigenous territories. Yet, these projects face opposition when governments bypass Indigenous groups. Many Indigenous communities support development and could accelerate projects further. However, barriers like limited capacity, limited opportunities to co-manage or co-govern, and access to affordable capital persist.

Indigenous communities often lack the resources to fully

engage in the resource economy due to institutional challenges like the Indian Act, geographic isolation, and inadequate infrastructure. We can get to consent and support in appropriate timelines, but the capacity funding needs to reflect this. Consent models also need to be led by the community themselves, incentivized to be resilient, and can meet milestones without compromising rights.

Everyone needs to understand as well that we can hit timelines and avoid risk aversion. The permit process should not be absolute, and it should accommodate impacts on rights. A historic lack of government investment in Indigenous infrastructure compared to mainstream communities exacerbates these disadvantages.

The RBC study reported 85 per cent of projects on First Nations land—worth \$83.6-billion—are at risk due to these capacity gaps. Addressing these issues could unlock significant economic potential and help Indigenous peoples overcome historical disadvantages.

Considerable progress has been made. Governments have introduced financial tools, including a loan guarantee

program, to expand Indigenous access to capital markets. Moreover, institutions such as the First Nations Finance Authority, First Nations Bank of Canada, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and Aboriginal capital corporations all offer remedies, but risk premiums still exist for many Indigenous parties.

Notable partnerships also offer examples of successful collaboration. Just look to any deals completed by any loan guarantee programs including Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation, and the new federal Canada Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, which just offered its first guarantee to a major pipeline deal involving 36 First Nations in British Columbia. The deals not only provided economic benefits, but enhanced capacity within Indigenous communities.

Projects involving Indigenous equity participation are more resilient. RBC estimates Indigenous equity opportunities for resource projects could reach \$98-billion over the next decade. Increasing Indigenous involvement, including co-management and co-ownership, ensures

greater project success and benefits all parties. Legal trends also reflect this shift. Recent court rulings, such as in *Kebaowek First Nation v. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories*, indicate a growing emphasis on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If upheld, this ruling could further elevate the legal standard for project approval.

Forward-thinking proponents already integrate FPIC-level engagement. For example, Taseko, Tsilhqot'in, and the B.C. government recently signed an accord granting an equity stake to Tsilhqot'in and requiring consent for new mining developments. Ongoing successful models of consent-based agreements are Cedar LNG, Eskay Creek, and Woodfibre LNG, all of which integrate Indigenous-led review processes.

The federal government's new One Canadian Economy Act and its Major Federal Projects Office show positive movement. However, Ottawa must avoid mistakes in Ontario, B.C., and other jurisdictions where rushed processes faced Indigenous opposition. Indigenous groups will not compromise rights or

environmental concerns. Encouragingly, the office includes an Indigenous Advisory Council to guide decisions, but its role and membership remain unclear, creating regulatory uncertainty.

Finally, the projects office and the new government will face the challenge of prioritizing projects. The government must demonstrate it has abandoned unhelpful animus toward oil and gas projects, and reward efforts where industry and Indigenous communities have already done the demanding work of getting to consent, agreement, or equity, or some combination thereof.

The RBC study identified the Indigenous equity opportunity in oil and gas as \$57.6-billion, far surpassing critical minerals, which ranked second at \$9.2-billion. The government must recognize Indigenous opportunity thrives in the energy sector and respect the many Indigenous groups envisioning their future in this development. Ottawa must honour Indigenous economic self-determination.

Governments and proponents must grasp this reality: Indigenous groups, while enthusiastic about development, need fair access and meaningful participation. Crafting balanced fast-track legislation that respects Indigenous rights is essential. Without these measures, Canada risks missing the opportunity to unlock its resource potential and fostering conflict with Indigenous communities.

John Desjarlais is executive director of the Indigenous Resource Network.

The Hill Times

The generational imperative for Canada to embrace its resource advantage

Margareta Dovgal

Opinion



When Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson told a Calgary crowd on May 23 that Canada should lean into its role as "a conventional and clean energy superpower," he wasn't making a bold claim. He was stating the obvious.

Canada is leaving a trillion-dollar opportunity on the table by not mobilizing our natural resource advantage. That's a lost chance for GDP growth and to resource the future Canadians have been promised.

To deliver on affordability, decarbonization, housing, and long-term national security, the federal government must frame

the responsible development of our minerals and metals, oil and gas, and forest products as central to the public good, not as trade-offs to be negotiated behind closed doors.

Let's be clear: resource revenues are what allow us to underwrite the ambitions we hold as a society. They are not incidental to affordable housing or a just energy transition. They are the funding mechanism. If we want transformation, we need to finance it. And if we want to finance it without punishing working people, we must unlock investment in our most capital-intensive, high-output sectors.

But we're stuck. Between 2015 and 2023, labour productivity grew at a meagre 0.5 per cent per year. In 2023, it fell sharply. The result: Canadians are working harder, producing less, and feeling poorer for it. The root problem is not just policy drift. It's not fully leveraging the capital-intense industries that drive real wealth creation.

That's where resource development comes in, not as a nostalgic throwback, but as the most powerful, controllable lever available to modernize our economy and restore generational progress. These are the industries that invest at scale, lift wages, and make our country matter in global supply chains.

The Public Policy Forum recently laid it out: get the 500 major resource projects already in the queue to final investment decision with faster approvals and Indigenous-partnered delivery models, and Canada can catalyze \$600-billion in private capital and unlock up to \$1.1-trillion in GDP by 2035.

This isn't a pipe dream. It is what happens when policy shifts from "maybe, someday" to "yes, and how."

The stakes aren't abstract. Nearly 60 per cent of Canadians under the age of 35 report being seriously worried about housing

affordability. That number doesn't represent economic frustration: it signals economic immobility. My generation is ready to build lives, families, and futures. But we're stuck in place because the fundamentals—income growth, access to housing, economic certainty—aren't there.

Unlocking investment in our resource economy is also mainstream Canadian consensus. April polling by Ipsos found that 69 per cent of Canadians want faster progress on energy and resource projects. In a country as diverse and politically dispersed as ours, that kind of agreement is rare and precious.

But here's the catch: public support means little without political will. For years, federal policy has tried to placate the most vocal opponents of development. The result is a policy limbo that satisfies no one and delivers nothing. It is not principled compromise—it is paralysis.

True leadership means advancing the national interest even when it's contested. That's how institutions earn trust. And right now, Canadians are watching closely to see whether this government is still capable of delivering prosperity.

So, let me say it plainly: Liberals cannot afford to simply tolerate Canada's resource

economy. They must champion it. Champion it not for corporate stakeholders, but for renters in Vancouver, young workers in Thunder Bay, and families in Halifax who need a functioning, ambitious, wealth-generating economy.

That means aligning policy levers. Streamlining permitting. Setting clocks, not question marks. Championing Indigenous partnerships not just in words, but in commercial outcomes.

Our window to act and to match aspiration with the economic capacity to achieve it is narrow. The alternative is a generation adrift, a climate transition unfunded, and a nation that shrinks from its own potential.

Embrace our natural resource advantage. Articulate it as a generational imperative. Anything less is both poor policy and a failure to lead.

Margareta Dovgal is the managing director of Resource Works Society where she oversees programs and research on responsible natural resource development. A lifelong Vancouverite, she sits on the city's Renters' Advisory Committee. She holds a master's of public administration in energy, technology and climate policy from University College London.

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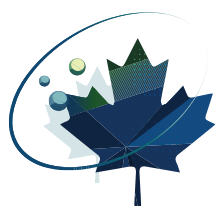
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NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

Canada should be a mining superpower, too

Being a mining superpower isn't just about mining the most. It's also about having the ability to supply the material needs of our allies in a reliable and secure manner.

Heather Exner-Pirot

Opinion



As the world's second-largest country, Canada, in theory, has the world's second-largest mineral bounty. But we also have difficult geography and burdensome processes.

In the past few decades, we've punched well below our weight, losing market share across a variety of critical minerals and products. Canada has unfulfilled mining potential.

The silver lining is that as our allies and trading partners look to secure their raw material needs—for the digital economy, the energy transition, defence supply chains, you name it—Canada still has vast untapped reserves that it can develop to satisfy those needs. With just 41 million people, we have more than we could ever use ourselves. We can be that arsenal of democracy, providing the critical minerals needed for our allies' supply chains.

This begs the question: why aren't we a bigger player already? Growing the mining sector is not as easy as deciding to dig up more rocks. The industry is highly competitive and mining is capital intensive, often requiring long timelines to realize returns. The past decade has seen relatively low investment into the sector: global capital expenditures in mining are still well off their 2013 record, even though the

world's population has grown by over a billion humans since.

Suppressed commodity prices, high regulatory burdens, and geopolitical volatility have spooked many investors. According to S&P Global, the average time to build new mines around the world increased to 17.9 years for new mines coming online in 2020-23—a significant jump of more than five years for mine projects started 15 years ago. Canada is not the slowest jurisdiction, but it's close. At any rate, the biggest competition for capital is from other sectors, not other mining jurisdictions.

In some commodities, where the market is healthy, Canada is attracting investment and is growing. While Canada produces more than 60 minerals and metals in almost 200 mines across the country, the value is disproportionately in a handful of commodities. Gold, potash, and coal lead the way, with iron ore, copper, and nickel coming in behind. Diamonds and uranium fill in much of the rest. We could expand market share by improving the regu-

latory and tax competitiveness for these products, and ensuring fair benefits for Indigenous nations impacted by development.

These GDP-driving commodities are not the critical minerals we focus on politically; battery and defence metals are more likely to preoccupy bureaucrats and politicians. In fact, most of the mineral products with supply chain risk have small global markets. In many cases, China has been able to secure market dominance through export restrictions, price controls, strategic investments, and predatory pricing.

China's greatest leverage is not on the production of critical minerals, but on their processing. And that is a gap Canada should seek to fill proactively.

Securing supply chains for niche metals may not be economic drivers. They may even require the government to offer price supports. But where they are essential to our and our allies' supply chain needs, we should fill the gap where we are able to do so. Amongst NATO's list of

defence-critical raw materials, Canada is well positioned to fill almost all of them, in particular aluminum, cobalt, germanium, gallium, tungsten, titanium, graphite, platinum, and some rare earths. Either we are already a producer, or we produced them in the past, or they are by-products of things we produce today.

The most important place for Canadian governments to intervene is midstream processing, where the market is most manipulated and where our supply chains are most vulnerable. Strategies such as equity, subsidies, contracts for difference, feed-in tariffs, and stockpiles have all been proposed, and in some cases applied. The right tool will vary depending on the market and the stage of the product required (e.g. raw, processed, intermediate, finished). As such, we should develop many tools, and industry and government should work together to apply them most efficiently.

Being a mining superpower isn't just about mining the most. It's also about having the ability to supply the material needs of our allies in a reliable and secure manner.

Canada is lucky that it has the choice to be able to produce, process, and sell more critical minerals. But it still needs to choose to do so.

Heather Exner-Pirot is director of energy, natural resources, and environment at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

The Hill Times

Being an energy superpower in 2025 means going clean

Investing in clean technologies and supply chains is now an economic imperative globally. Of Canada's 10 largest non-U.S. trade partners, all have net-zero commitments and carbon pricing systems, and roughly half apply carbon border adjustments on imports and have domestic EV requirements.

Rachel Doran & Mark Zacharias

Opinion



Canada's new government has been clear that, in addition to building our clean energy sector, building the nation's conventional energy sector (read oil and gas) is a priority.

But how much effort should Canada be putting into further building out its fossil fuel versus clean energy industries? Also, is this even possible given where global energy markets are headed?

The evidence continues to pile up that we should look before we leap into betting this country's future on fossil fuels, which are globally fast becoming the highest-cost option and energy source of last resort.

Consider natural gas. Last year, the European Union's demand was at its lowest level since 1996. United Kingdom gas demand was down 10 per cent between 2022 and 2023, and is now at the lowest level since 1992. To the east, Japan's LNG imports are at the lowest level in 14 years. Even China, a perennial growth market for gas, is slowing as it builds out renewables. Last year, the country installed 356 gigawatts of solar and wind power, equivalent to 320 Site C dams or 64 Bruce Power nuclear plants.

Global oil markets are no less certain. OPEC+ members,

including the United Arab Emirates, are breaking ranks on production caps as they liquidate reserves in the expectation that oil demand peaks in the coming decade. The International Energy Agency forecasts that this peak will happen around 2030, leading to surplus capacity in production and refining globally. This is already leading to challenges in fiscal planning here at home. At around US\$63 at the time of writing, the price of West Texas Intermediate is well below the US\$68 the Alberta government used for its Budget 2025 forecast, creating a \$5.2-billion provincial budget deficit.

Why? The global energy transition is underway. Quite simply, electrons are winning because they are better and more efficient at producing and delivering the energy we need. As fossil fuels lose almost two-thirds of their primary energy before producing any benefit, and are the most volatile component of Canada's overall inflation—accounting for a third of inflation during the period between February 2021 and June 2022—electricity is moving markets primarily for practical, not ideological reasons.

Investing in clean technologies and supply chains is now an

economic imperative globally. Of Canada's 10 largest non-American trade partners, all have net-zero commitments and carbon pricing systems, and roughly half apply carbon border adjustments on imports and have domestic EV requirements. The world has changed, and so, too, must Canada's approach to its industrial strategy.

Public dollars that can be used to spur innovation and build new infrastructure are finite. Competing head-to-head with the Gulf states, Russia, and the United States to produce commodities that economies are trying to use less of is not a proposition that sets our economy up for future success. With investment in clean technologies on track to be 50 per cent higher globally this year than the total amount spent bringing oil, natural gas, and coal to market, our first order of business should be generating and transmitting more clean energy, to increase competitiveness, and to insulate ourselves against uncertainties in the U.S. electricity market.

Take Alberta—while volatile oil prices created fiscal challenges, renewables were poised to help fill the gap. Pre-2024, the province had attracted \$6.4-bil-

lion in renewable energy capital investment, creating 6,200 jobs, and enough energy to power 1.7 million homes. However, policy choices are important, and Premier Danielle Smith's have created uncertainty and reduced investor confidence in the market.

In a world increasingly powered by critical minerals, and where production is increasingly centralized in a few states, Canada has the potential to anchor innovation and investment in the upstream production of things like EVs, batteries and other applications by strategically and thoughtfully producing and deploying new resources.

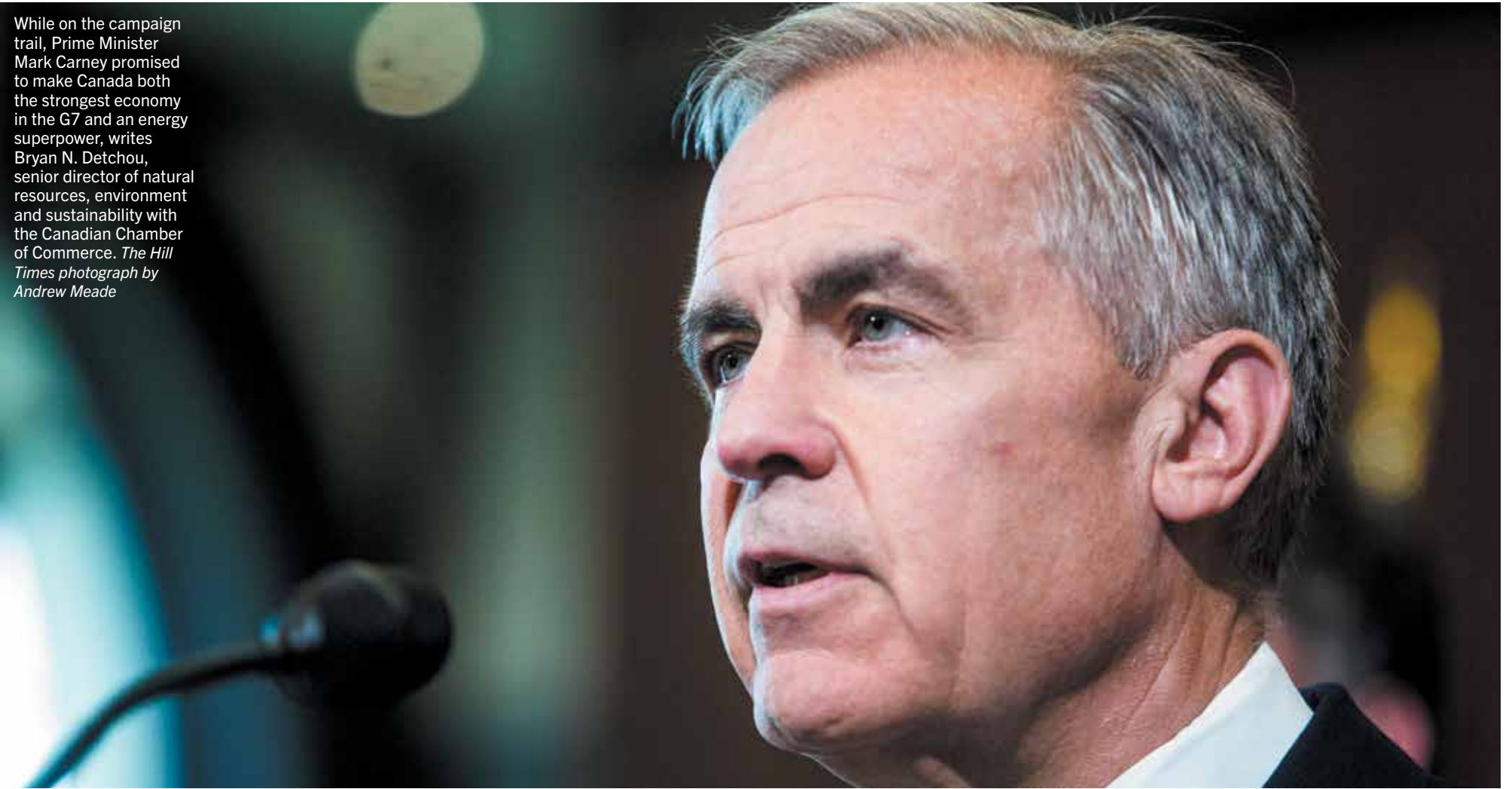
We look wistfully at countries like Norway that have exploited their resource wealth to decarbonize their own economies, boosting wealth and well-being. But we can't recycle a playbook from the era of landlines in the age of AI and expect the same outcome. As Warren Buffett once put it, "If past history was all that is needed to play the game of money, the richest people would be librarians."

Rachel Doran is the executive director of Clean Energy Canada, a think tank at Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. Doran previously led the organization's policy work, and has been a frequent commentator on all aspects of the energy transition. Mark Zacharias is a fellow at Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue, and a special adviser for Clean Energy Canada.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **NATURAL RESOURCES**

While on the campaign trail, Prime Minister Mark Carney promised to make Canada both the strongest economy in the G7 and an energy superpower, writes Bryan N. Detchou, senior director of natural resources, environment and sustainability with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



The stars are aligned: now Canada must deliver on its natural resources

If we don't seize this moment, we may not get another. Because if Canada doesn't step up, others will.

Bryan N. Detchou

Opinion



For too long, Canada has been a modest contributor on the global economic stage. But modesty is no longer a virtue in a world demanding bold leadership. While on the campaign trail, Prime Minister Mark Carney promised to make Canada both the strongest economy in the G7 and an energy superpower. That ambitious goal is not only necessary, it is also within reach—if we are willing to unleash the full potential of Canada's natural resources sector, including responsibly expanding our

energy and critical minerals industries.

This isn't about nostalgia or propping up legacy industries. It's about strategic economic renewal rooted in reality. Our economy is stagnating. Much of our recent GDP growth has come from population increase through immigration, and not from productivity gains or rising wages. While newcomers bring immense value, we cannot build a prosperous future on demographics alone. We must grow the economic pie, not just slice it thinner.

If Canada is to become the strongest economy in the G7, it must deliver not just for global partners, but also for its own people. It must deliver for young Canadians who are losing hope, for families squeezed by rising costs, and for workers who want to build meaningful careers in industries that matter. Energy and critical minerals are the industries of Canada's future. Low-emission oil and gas, hydrogen, liquified natural gas, uranium, lithium, copper, nickel, rare earth elements: these are the ingredients of the 21st-century

economy. And Canada has them in abundance.

After years of policy inertia and handwringing, the world has changed. The provocations of United States President Donald Trump were a wakeup call.

For the first time in decades, natural resources development was a significant issue during a federal election campaign. Canadians seem to better understand how trade dependent we are, and how valuable our resources are to a world desperate for secure, reliable and responsibly sourced inputs. We've elected a new government—one with a minority mandate, but arguably with more freedom to act boldly than any in modern Canadian history.

Even public opinion in Quebec—long seen as a barrier to major energy infrastructure—is shifting. Many Quebecers are now open to pipelines and energy projects that could ease the chronic energy insecurity of eastern Canada, while unlocking massive economic benefits.

When B7 leaders gathered in Ottawa earlier in May, they acknowledged what many of us already know: Canada has a

pivotal role to play in the future of global energy, critical minerals, and clean economic growth. This is a generational opportunity to reshape the trajectory of our country for the next century. We must act boldly—and swiftly. This message has been shared with G7 leaders in advance of their summit, which Canada will chair in Kananaskis, Alta., this month.

Early signs give reason for cautious optimism. The appointment of Tim Hodgson at the new minister of energy and natural resources was welcomed across the sector, and his first major speech in Calgary struck the right tone, declaring Canada would be “defined by delivery.” Prime Minister Carney's recent mandate letter to his ministers also reflects a sense of urgency and seriousness about the economic promise of this country's natural resources. But let's not mistake intention for action.

And to be clear, a push for urgency does not absolve us of our constitutional responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples, or give us license to trample on provincial jurisdiction, or grant us permission to abandon our commitment

to environmental stewardship. What it does require is a co-ordinated, respectful, and united “Team Canada” approach—for the good of Canadians and our global partners.

We must also come to terms with another truth: not every bet will pay off. Some investments may underdeliver. Some projects may fail. It's a reality we should work diligently to minimize—especially when taxpayer dollars are on the line—but we must accept that the far greater risk lies in doing nothing at all. The cost of inaction, delay, and missed opportunity will be paid in lost jobs, growth, relevance, and a diminished ability to meet global demand.

Canada needs to break the cycle, and stop undermining our most productive sector—whether through a thousand cuts of poor policy, or by trapping it in a never-ending labyrinth of government consultations.

The window of opportunity won't stay open forever. Major projects take years—even decades—to complete, and governments and public opinions change.

Canadians are watching closely, and many are beginning to ask: if the potential loss of our sovereignty, prosperity, and future is not sufficient to compel us to act, then what will it take—and will we ever rise to the occasion?

If we don't seize this moment, we may not get another. Because if Canada doesn't step up, others will.

Bryan N. Detchou is the senior director of natural resources, environment and sustainability with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The Hill Times

NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

Giving Canadian critical minerals ‘a reasonable chance’

While Canada has long been a major producer of copper, nickel, zinc and others on the critical minerals list, our path to getting other high priority critical minerals—like lithium and rare earth elements—‘produced in Canada’ may be a rocky one.

Charlotte Gibson

Opinion



Critical minerals are the backbone of modern technology, crucial for products like mobile phones, solar panels, electric vehicle batteries, medical devices,

and defence applications shaping our future and security.

In the Government of Canada’s definition of what makes a critical mineral, one line stands out: “There is a reasonable chance of the mineral being produced in Canada.” No other country’s critical minerals definition specifies anything like this, not the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, nor any member of the European Union. This line is Canada’s critical minerals differentiator—the phrase alludes to our country’s biggest opportunity, but also its greatest risk. As Canada advances its Critical Minerals Strategy, amidst the excitement of investing millions of dollars in critical minerals projects, we can’t forget to invest in the people and knowledge required to make these projects work.

Despite our long-standing status as a resource-rich nation, many of Canada’s identified 34 critical minerals are not those we’re experienced in producing. While Canada has long been a major producer of copper, nickel, zinc, and others on the critical minerals list, our path to getting other high priority critical minerals—like lithium and rare earth elements—‘produced in Canada’ may be a rocky one.

According to the United States Geological Survey, Canada only produced about 4,300 tonnes of lithium in 2024, despite reporting reserves of 1.2 million tonnes. Over the past decade, this country’s lithium production has been mostly limited to the on-and-off operation of two mines which produce and export lithium mineral concentrate. In other words: although we produce lithium raw materials here at home, we do not currently make the materials required to build things like lithium-ion batteries. Likewise, Canada claims 830,000 tonnes of rare earth reserves, but produced zero rare earths in 2024. While this may change with the newly commissioned Rare Earth Processing Facility in Saskatchewan, the facility was reportedly tested by treating material from “several international clients” with no mention of the plant treating material from Canadian mines.

The value chain is currently disjointed. Our struggle in end-to-end production of some of these minerals, despite their abundance, is ultimately an economic one. Investment in critical minerals projects hinges on volatile and often opaque prices, influenced by geopolitics and global economic shifts. Price drops discourage investment in domestic projects, where high costs and strict

regulations already result in tight margins and long implementation timelines.

The government has made efforts to mitigate this struggle. Ontario’s 2025 budget committed \$500-million to a new critical minerals processing fund aimed at attracting investors to the sector. This past March, the federal government and province of Ontario announced conditional funding of up to \$120-million to help construct a lithium midstream processing facility. These cash commitments, along with other industry-targeted funding programs, are tangible steps towards building end-to-end production capacity. However, on their own, new processing facilities will struggle to ramp up production and profit, failing to bring us any closer to our ambitions of producing critical minerals in Canada.

For our critical minerals facilities to survive the inevitable boom-and-bust price cycle, we need innovation and expertise in critical minerals processing. If cost and performance can be improved, projects will stand a chance at operating even in low-price environments. Deep technical expertise, founded on fundamental understanding of the processes we have built, is required for smooth project commissioning and con-

tinuous operation without serious technical disruption. For many critical minerals—like lithium and rare earths—this expertise is lacking.

Unfortunately, mineral processing and extractive metallurgy undergraduate programs are a dying breed at most Canadian universities, resulting in few fit-to-purpose degree programs related to critical minerals processing. This pushes training to graduate studies, where master’s and PhD students effectively apply multi-disciplinary learnings from other degrees to the minerals sector. The problem is that graduate programs are small and the number of professors conducting research in this space is limited. Canadian universities need long-term government support to build critical minerals research and training capacity.

It is insufficient for Canada to invest in building projects and infrastructure; we need to invest in building knowledge. By establishing research centers at this country’s universities—where academics and industry professionals work together on real-world industrial challenges—we can create the training grounds for the next generation of critical minerals experts. The race to lead the work in the responsible production of critical minerals is ours to lose; now is the time to give the Canadian critical minerals industry ‘a reasonable chance.’

Dr. Charlotte Gibson is an assistant professor and associate head of the Robert M. Buchan Department of Mining and director of the Critical Minerals Processing Lab at Queen’s University. The Hill Times

Canada can be a resource superpower if we build the road to get goods to market

What we need is a co-ordinated, long-range strategy, a national trade corridor plan that links the country’s productive zones to its export gateways through reliable, resilient, multimodal infrastructure.

Gary Mar

Opinion



Canada’s new Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Tim Hodgson, has a vision: make

Canada the global leader in energy and resource exports. It’s dynamic, timely, ambitious, and entirely within reach. We have the goods, now we need the delivery. If you can’t move it, you can’t sell it.

Canada has the natural resource endowment many countries envy: world-class energy reserves, critical minerals, forests, and vast agricultural capacity. We are the world’s leading producer of potash; we can feed the world with our abundance of wheat, canola and pulses; and we are an emerging player in hydrogen and biofuels. The world wants what we have, and more of it. But our ability to compete on the global stage is constrained by a logistics system that still fails to match the scale and complexity of our potential. Our biggest obstacle isn’t lack of demand—it’s infrastructure.

At first glance, the picture looks good. In the World Bank’s 2023 Logistics Performance Index, Canada ranked seventh overall—a solid position globally. But the details tell a different story. While we scored high

in infrastructure quality and tracking systems, we lagged in a critical area: international shipments—where we scored just 3.6 out of five, far below our potential. That metric captures how efficiently and affordably exporters can arrange transport to foreign markets. In other words, even if the highways and rails exist, the overall system isn’t working fast or predictably enough to get goods where they need to go.

So, what’s holding us back? Start with our ports—the gateways to global markets. From Vancouver to Halifax, key ports operate either at or near capacity with limited flexibility to scale. Rail and road links are vulnerable to weather and disruption, as the 2021 British Columbia floods made painfully clear. Co-ordination between jurisdictions and infrastructure modes is weak, and planning is often reactive instead of strategic. There’s also the challenge of moving goods from inland production regions—like the Prairies—to the coast. And while Canada’s customs system is getting better, our exporters still struggle

with high costs and unreliable shipping logistics.

This isn’t just an inconvenience—it’s a national liability. Our competitors are investing in trade infrastructure with long-term strategies in mind. Australia, the United States, and the European Union are aligning capital to build resilient corridors, intermodal hubs, and next-generation logistics networks. Canada, by contrast, is still stuck in a fragmented approach where provinces, municipalities, and federal departments often pull in different directions.

What we need is a coordinated, long-range strategy—a national trade corridor plan that links the country’s productive zones to its export gateways through reliable, resilient, multimodal infrastructure. That means not just laying track or pouring asphalt, but building a logistics system that integrates rail, road, port and pipeline, supported by digital technology and faster permitting.

Hodgson has recognized the urgency. In his first public statements, he emphasized accelerating major project approvals and cutting red tape—aiming for decisions within two years. That’s a good start. But even quick wins won’t mean much without a broader vision to guide long-term investment and private sector confidence.

Such a plan must also address domestic bottlenecks. Canada lacks an “interstate”-style approach to building infrastructure between provinces, which leads to missed opportunities and weak links in

our economic chain. We don’t just need more investment—we need smarter, better-targeted investment in high-value corridors. That means fixing rural access roads, revitalizing short-line rail and expanding port capacity in tandem with inland logistics hubs.

Fortunately, there’s momentum. In 2023, all 13 premiers unanimously backed the need for a national infrastructure strategy focused on trade. That consensus was reaffirmed this month, with first ministers recognizing that productivity, competitiveness and energy security all depend on how well we can move what we make.

This is a genuine nation-building opportunity—a Team Canada moment that brings together provinces, Indigenous communities, industry and the federal government around a shared goal: connecting Canadian goods to global markets, reliably and at scale.

Canada’s trade dream needs a nation-building infrastructure reset. Born on a railway, stalled on the sidetrack, because if you can’t move it, you can’t sell it.

Gary Mar is a respected leader with expertise in the Canada West Foundation’s key focus areas of resources, economy, trade and trade infrastructure and workforce innovation. He was a member of Alberta’s Legislative Assembly where he held several cabinet portfolios and was Alberta’s Official Representative at the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., and in Asia. The Hill Times

Policy Briefing NATURAL RESOURCES



Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives for the Liberal caucus meeting in West Block on May 25, 2025. While climate change policy appears to have receded as a priority for the Carney government, the urgency of confronting a warming world remains, writes Shawn McCarthy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The urgency of confronting a warming world remains

As Mark Carney battles Donald Trump's trade wars and confronts western alienation, he will also have to lead Canada's heightened effort in the energy transition and prepare the country for the baked-in impacts of climate change.

Shawn McCarthy

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith emerged from the June 2 first ministers' conference touting a "grand bargain" to fast-track new oil and gas infrastructure.

But while the new Liberal prime minister envisages nation-building energy development consistent with federal climate goals, his western counterpart sees Ottawa's carbon policy as a problem to be rid of.

Smith is less interested in a give-and-take bargain than seeing the

Liberal government's total renunciation of Justin Trudeau's climate agenda. The question remains: to what degree will Carney uphold it?

The phrase "grand bargain" evokes memories of a past effort between Ottawa and Edmonton to tie federal support for new fossil fuel infrastructure to provincial action to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2016, Alberta's then-NDP Premier Rachel Notley made a concerted effort to keep up her end of the implicit deal. Among other actions, Notley's government backed Trudeau's carbon pricing plan by adopting a comparable provincial version; introduced regulations to reduce the industry's methane emissions, and spent billions of dollars to speed up the province's phase-out of coal-fired power.

In contrast, Smith is offering only a retreat on climate. She has echoed demands by industry that Carney gut the federal environmental assessment regime that includes a climate test; give short-shrift to Indigenous consultations; scrap a proposed emission cap on the oil sector, and end Ottawa's industrial carbon price regime in order to allow the province to rely on its own—much weaker—version.

At an energy show in Calgary, the premier said that, in return for a pipeline, the province and industry would ensure construction of the Pathways Alliance project. Under proposal, companies are demanding large federal subsidies in order to capture and sequester emissions in the oilsands.

Such a "bargain" would seriously weaken Canada's contribution to the international effort to mitigate climate change.

Regardless of Smith's demands, Carney and his Energy Minister Tim Hodgson have their own rationale for backing new oil and gas export infrastructure, including the economic activity it would bring.

On June 6, the prime minister unveiled the One Canadian Economy Act, which aims to speed up environmental assessments of energy facilities, including pipelines, liquified natural gas terminals, and electricity transmission projects.

The legislation also reflects Carney's determination to make this country an "energy superpower"—a goal that would make this nation less dependent on the United States for trade markets, while positioning this country as a stable, secure, democratic energy supplier for potential customers in Asia and Europe.

Priority projects under the One Canadian Economy Act will be assessed against several factors, including whether they are consistent with federal climate goals. Canada has committed to reduce emissions by 40 per cent to 45 per cent by 2030, and to net zero by 2050.

Smith and industry executives argue that the private sector would not risk its time and money to pursue pipelines and other infrastructure unless and until Ottawa clears away the regulatory thicket they say is impeding the industry.

That point was made in an open letter signed by 38 senior

executives two days after Carney won the April 28 election. They encouraged the Liberal prime minister to work with them "to achieve our energy sector's potential and our shared goal to position our country as a global energy superpower."

However, they insisted that the necessary investment won't happen without big changes in federal policy.

"Over the last decade, the layering and complexity of energy policies has resulted in a lack of investor confidence and consequently, a barrier to investment—especially when compared to the United States, which is taking steps to simplify its permitting process," their letter stated.

Their targets are the same as Smith's: the federal environmental assessment regime, the proposed emissions cap on oil sands producers, and the federal industrial carbon levy.

Carney and his ministers have some fundamental decisions to make on energy and environment. One of the biggest is whether they maintain the Trudeau government targets which are already stretch goals and will be even more so if western Canada ramps up exports of oil and gas via new pipelines.

If the Liberal government does recommit to 2030 and 2035 targets, they must outline how they plan to get there.

Under the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin must release a report this year that assesses progress

towards the target of a 30 to 35-per-cent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030. She can also amend the target.

Trudeau's climate plan has already faced major challenges from provinces and industry, especially with the short time frame to achieve promised reductions. Carney has not made climate change a key priority either in the recent Throne Speech delivered by King Charles III, or in his mandate letter to ministers.

The large-emitter pricing system, which is under attack from Alberta and the oil executives, is a cornerstone of the federal climate plan. It applies directly in some jurisdictions while setting the standard for stringency in provinces that use their own pricing systems like Alberta.

The Canadian Climate Institute said in a 2024 report that the industrial carbon price would deliver between one quarter and 40 per cent of emission reductions expected from federal policies in place at that point. Carney's decision in March to scrap the consumer carbon tax only heightens the importance of the industrial levy.

However, the system is currently in serious jeopardy and needs to be fixed to ensure companies that invest in emission reductions can realize revenue by selling excess credits in the market, the Climate Institute said in a report released June 4.

That large-emitter pricing underpins the oil industry's Pathway Alliance project in which companies proposed to capture and sequester carbon emissions from the oilsands. Carney points to the pathways project as an important tool to reduce emission from oilsands production. Smith announced in May that her government was freezing the industrial price at \$95 per tonne of CO₂. The move puts her at odds with the federal government plan, which will raise the levy to \$110 next year and to \$170 by 2030.

The levy also applies to other industrial sectors—including steel—that are under pressure due to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff war. To be effective in the future, it needs to be more stringent.

While climate change policy appears to have receded as a priority for the Carney government, the urgency of confronting a warming world remains.

Just one example of its impacts: Canada is literally burning with forest fires. Climate change has exacerbated conditions that result in larger, more frequent fires.

In the long term, energy security—whether for Canada or for other countries—cannot be gained by relying on unsustainable use of fossil fuels.

As he battles Trump's trade wars and confronts western alienation, Carney will also have to lead Canada's heightened effort in the energy transition and prepare the country for the baked-in impacts of climate change.

Shawn McCarthy is a senior counsel at *Sussex Strategy*, and is a former national business reporter covering global energy for *The Globe and Mail*. He's also the past president of the *World Press Freedom Canada*, a volunteer advocacy group based in Ottawa.

The Hill Times

NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

How will the Carney government navigate between fighting climate change and bending to corporate priorities? Only time will tell



Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a press conference in West Block on June 6, 2025, to speak about his government's One Canadian Economy: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

there are meaningful advances towards the realization of its carbon capture and storage project. Many questions remain about carbon capture and storage feasibility.

Carney's mandate letter to his cabinet, published prior to the Speech from the Throne, stated the government's intention for Canada to become an energy superpower in both clean and conventional energies. The letter outlined seven priorities—none of which explicitly mentioned climate. It simply stated: "We will fight climate change."

The Speech from the Throne, delivered by King Charles III, opened the 45th session of Parliament on May 27. It mentioned the creation of a new Major Federal Project Office committed to building an industrial strategy to make Canada more globally competitive, while fighting climate change.

At the June 2 meeting between the federal government and premiers in Saskatoon, a joint statement was issued reading in part, "First ministers agreed that Canada must work urgently to get Canadian natural resources and commodities to domestic and international markets, such as critical minerals and decarbonized Canadian oil and gas by pipelines..." Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said she is "encouraged" by the federal government's change of tone when discussing energy, suggesting that there is a "grand bargain" to be made.

A 2024 UN Environment Program report concluded, under a *status quo* scenario, Earth is on track to reach an approximate 2.7°C increase in planetary warming by 2100. There is a possibility that the world could experience 2°C before the end of this decade according to the World Meteorological Association.

Bruce Campbell

Opinion



How will the Carney government navigate between "fighting climate change" and bending to corporate priorities—notably the petroleum sector—and their political enablers?

State of the planet

A 2024 UN Environment Program report concluded, under a *status quo* scenario, Earth is on track to reach an approximate 2.7°C increase in planetary warming by 2100. There is a possibility that the world could experience 2°C before the end of this decade, according to the World Meteorological Association.

A study by leading climate scientists published in the journal *Oxford Academic* warned: "We are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster. This is a global emergency beyond any doubt. Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperilled. ... We have now brought the planet into climatic conditions never witnessed by us or our prehistoric relatives."

We are currently seeing devastating wildfires and emergency evacuations across Western Canada.

Carney's history on the climate crisis

Prime Minister Mark Carney has long been an authority on the risks posed by climate change. In 2015, as Bank of England governor, he gave the "tragedy of the horizon" speech which introduced climate change to bankers as a threat to international financial stability.

In his 2021 book *Value(s)*, Carney critiques free-market fundamentalism for its disregard of the human condition. The existential threat of climate change, state of inequality, etc., all stem from a common crisis in values. A

practising Catholic, Carney sat on the Committee of the Council for Inclusive Capitalism launched at the Vatican in 2020.

In an interview shortly after he was appointed UN Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance in December 2019, Carney described climate change as the world's greatest existential threat. He urged people everywhere to keep up the pressure in calling for climate action.

Canada's GHG emissions reduction record

Canada's Nationally Determined Contributions represent our commitment under the Paris Agreement to reduce emissions by 45 to 50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035 building on its emissions reduction plan of 40 to 45 per cent by 2030. Canada's commitment to reach net zero by 2050 is codified in law through the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act.

This country has been a laggard in meeting its emissions reduction targets.

In his 2024 report, commissioner of the environment and sustainable development Jerry V. DeMarco warned that since 2005, Canada's emissions have declined by 7.1 per cent, still a long way off from reaching the reduction of at least 40 per cent required by 2030.

Fossil-fuel development projects cannot not proceed without financing from banks and other financial institutions. The Net-Zero Banking Alliance, a global member-led initiative

supporting banks to lead on climate mitigation in line with the Paris Agreement goals, has seen more than 140 banks—including Canada's big banks—leave the alliance since the election of Donald Trump as United States president. The Canada Pension Plan dropped its commitment to invest in line with the country's net-zero action targets.

Carney government climate-related actions to date

In his election victory speech, Carney said, "it's time to build an industrial strategy that makes Canada more competitive while fighting climate change." He also promised action to increase clean energy infrastructure, particularly interprovincial transmission ties that will help decarbonize and electrify the economy.

Carney appointed Tim Hodgson—former chair at Ontario Hydro One, and formerly on the board of fossil-fuel company MEG Energy—to serve as energy and natural resources minister. Hodgson is also a former Goldman Sachs banker, and worked alongside Carney at the Bank of Canada.

Hodgson's speech at a Calgary gathering on May 23 pressed for the Pathways Alliance project to proceed with a proposed carbon-capture facility in the oilsands region of northern Alberta. Negotiations are currently underway which suggest that the carbon emissions cap could be changed if

Going forward: navigating corporate interests and the planet's health

It is still too early to judge the effectiveness of the Carney government's actions to address the climate crisis. Will it implement measures necessary to ensure the government meets its Paris Agreement commitments? What changes will it make to its emissions cap on fossil-fuel company emissions? Will it finalize methane regulations for oil and gas, finalize the clean electricity investment tax credit, establish a made-in-Canada climate taxonomy, mandate the Canadian Sustainability Standards Board to provide binding obligations for public companies, adopt ISG Senator Rosa Galvez's Climate-Aligned Finance Act—a bill to ensure that financial institutions align their activities with Canada's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

How will the Carney government navigate the turbulent waters between "fighting climate change" and bending to the priorities of large corporations, notably petroleum companies and their political enablers? Only time will tell.

Bruce Campbell is adjunct professor at York University in the faculty of environmental and urban change; a senior fellow at Toronto Metropolitan University's Centre for Free Expression; and a former executive director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. He was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing NATURAL RESOURCES

Trust can't be legislated, but it can be built

First Nations must be included as business partners from the outset, and it's a question of laying out a framework for how to move projects forward with their involvement.

Karen Restoule

Opinion



Canada is under pressure to build, and to do it fast. With this comes an historical opportunity: First Nations, industry, and government have a chance to come together through business partnerships and reposition the Canadian economy.

Historically, major project development has forged tensions between these three groups. But in recent years we've seen business-focused partnerships formed through equity, royalties, and other financial-based solutions. This has happened for projects of varying sizes, across various sec-

tors, and in regions throughout the country. With this approach there has been growth. We are now seeing a shift in the relationship: from one of chaos and adversity to one of mutual benefit and shared jurisdiction.

The current moment presents an opportunity to grow that foundation. Many First Nations from coast to coast to coast are keen to partner in resource development within their respective territories and proactive partners. Over the past decade or so, we have witnessed several First Nations secure equity in major projects, create investments arms, and shape development to limit its impact and secure a constitutionally protected way of life.

When we talk about economic reconciliation, this is it. This is the stuff that moves beyond virtue signaling and towards nation building. Through these kinds of business partnerships, projects are developed in a way that respects First Nations' territories, laws, and rights. All of this is only made possible by the time and effort invested in talking and listening to one another, and a willingness to share a vision.

In the Liberal government's new bill, C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act, Ottawa seeks to create a federal Major Projects Office to reduce project approval timelines from five to two years. This, at face value, seems to be



First Nations men and boys drumming on the Hill during the gathering of the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa on Dec. 4, 2018. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the appropriate solution for the challenges currently facing this country: lagging productivity and a heightened demand for infrastructure development.

However, in assessing the office's potential, we must consider a factor that has had significant impacts on project timeliness: consultation and accommodation with First Nations.

The reality is that streamlining processes around major infrastructure development can't come at the expense of constitutional obligations. The duty to consult—and, where appropriate, accommodate—is a requirement held by the Crown. It is mandatory in matters relating to First Nations where projects run the risk of impacting

their rights—inherent, Treaty, and jurisdictional. It's not a duty that can be outsourced to industry, nor can it be rushed or minimized to general conversation. It must be exercised with First Nations rights-holders in good faith.

As such, it's important to recognize that any advice received from Indigenous Peoples within the Major Projects Office is just that: advice. To be clear, the legally required duty to consult cannot be fulfilled through the activities of this office. The legislation does include plans for an Indigenous Advisory Council in the office, but it's unclear exactly how it will function. While their insights may assist the federal government in organizing itself, only the actual rights-holders speak on behalf of First Nations governments. The Crown's obligation rests with the elected leadership of First Nations whose lands and rights run the risk of being impacted by a project.

That said, there are some key ways the office could make an impact. It could work to ensure that engagement is prioritized, done well, and done consistently. It could help shift negative perceptions of consultation, and show how a proactive approach often improves timelines, reduces litigation risk, and ultimately builds certainty—the kind investors look for when considering opportunities in Canada.

Further, the federal government needs a shift in mindset—from regulation to relationship. Streamlining approvals should not look like a checklist. It should front-load direct engagement so that First Nations protocols are upheld and parties are aligned before the permitting process begins. Big investment in co-ordination, time, and resources on the front-end is required here, and shortcuts should be avoided. What appears to be time intensive at the beginning will exponentially move things along on the back end of the process. It will also lay a foundation of trust, which is vital for relationships to advance.

Resource development has been central to Canada's economy. The reality is that it will continue to be. The question is no longer whether First Nations should be included, or a choice between timeliness and First Nations rights. First Nations must be included as business partners from the outset, and it's a question of laying out a framework for how to move projects forward with their involvement.

The bottom line: trust can't be legislated, but it can be built.

Karen Restoule, director of Indigenous affairs and a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, is a strategic adviser on complex public affairs issues, and is Ojibwe from the Dokis First Nation.
The Hill Times

Before we get our resources to market, we need to make sure those markets actually want them

Canada was built on forestry, but if we want to ensure that that industry and the over 200,000 people employed in it can continue to thrive, things are going to have to change.

David Wallis

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney has set forth an ambitious agenda to reshape the Canadian economy in order to stand up to economic aggression from the United States through large-scale

“nation-building projects.” These projects will get our goods and resources to new markets, and reduce our dependence on our largest customer to the south through new infrastructure such as railways, ports, pipelines, and highways. While these will doubtless help get our resources to market, there is still something Carney's government is forgetting. Before we can get our resources to market, we need to make sure that those markets actually want them.

In 2023, the European Union passed the European Union Deforestation Regulations which require any companies selling forest products in the EU to prove that those products are not tied to deforestation or forest degradation, a move then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's government recognized as implicating Canada's forest industry when they lobbied against the regulations in the EU. This should have been a wake-up call to the government. Continuing to operate a logging sector that is based primarily

on clear-cutting primary and old-growth boreal forest and replacing it with monocultures of spruce that are all the same age is not only bad for the forest, but also bad for trade. They should have taken this as an opportunity to update this country's own regulations to end forest degradation but instead engaged in Orwellian Newspeak and changed Canada's definition of forest degradation to try to get around the regulations.

This is emblematic of a longstanding Canadian tradition of greenwashing our logging practices. This country has long portrayed the logging industry as carbon-neutral, despite the fact that a report by Nature Canada, backed by a peer-reviewed study using the federal government's own data, shows it to be the third-highest emitting sector in Canada at 147 megatonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide after oil and gas at 217Mt and transportation at 156Mt in 2022. These emissions are not accounted for in the government's National Inventory Report or in the Emissions

Reduction Plan, and they seriously hamper our efforts to fight climate change and meet our international commitments to our allies.

It would be a mistake to assume that our allies don't notice what's happening in our forests. They know that the government has been cooking the books. Last year, the United Nations also took issue with the way Canada has been accounting for emissions from forests, particularly when it comes to our ever increasing wildfires. We are unique among nations in not counting the emissions from wildfires on managed lands as part of the logging sector's total. However, Canada does count the carbon sequestration from those same forests' natural regrowth and credits it to the logging industry, essentially turning catastrophic emissions events like wildfires into a massive carbon credit. If those emissions were counted, they would rival those of the world's largest nations, with the 2023 wildfires alone causing more emissions than any coun-

try other than India, China, and the U.S.

Canada was built on forestry. We have always had a logging sector, and we likely always will. But, if we want to ensure that that industry and the over 200,000 people it employed can continue to thrive, things are going to have to change. We need to come to terms with the sector's massive emissions, and we need to be open and transparent in reporting them accurately. We need to reckon with the ecological harm caused by clear cutting old-growth and primary boreal forest, and recognize that planting a monoculture in its place does not replace the ecosystem that used to be there. And most of all we need to respect our allies and trading partners when they engage in good faith efforts to ensure that they don't import forest products tied to deforestation and forest degradation, and not try to hoodwink them by changing the definition of words to get around their laws.

If Carney wants to bolster our relationships with our allies and find new markets for our forest products he's going to have to embark on a different sort of nation building project, one that reshapes logging into a truly sustainable industry—where sustainability means both economic viability and ecological integrity.

David Wallis is the policy manager for reforestation at Nature Canada.

The Hill Times

NATURAL RESOURCES Policy Briefing

Bill to fast-track major projects could boost GDP, but raises environmental concerns

Continued from page 16

"The environmental criteria is there. The Indigenous consultation criteria is there," he said. "It's not about cutting corners. It's about ... having an efficient process [with] less overlap."

Energy Minister Tim Hodgson (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.), said on May 23 at an event in Calgary that the government would establish a Major Federal Projects Office that would reduce approval schedules for nationally significant projects from five years to two.

A C.D. Howe Institute report released on June 18, 2024, argued large infrastructure projects in Canada—such as mines, electricity generation, ports and oil or natural gas pipelines—often involve multiple levels of jurisdiction and are slow to gain government approval.

"Perhaps less obvious are costs driven by time or uncertainty. The longer the approval process takes, the higher the profitability bar must be raised to offset the costs incurred by paying staff prior to receiving revenue and forgoing investments should funds be needed to be kept liquid. Further, if a proponent considering an investment is unsure whether a project will receive approval at all, it is less likely to even start the approval process," reads the report.

In regard to Bill C-5, Schwanen said that "on its face and in the intention, it's really good news," but added that the proof would be in the pudding.

"The processes are still in place, but this will accelerate them and make sure that the answer that project promoters get about whether it meets the criteria or not, instead of taking five years ... will take two years, and that will encourage investors to actually submit ideas and submit projects. It doesn't mean that they get an automatic approval. I think, far from it," he said.

"Other countries are doing a lot better than us, and we're not talking countries that just deregulate willy-nilly. It's just that they have just a more streamlined process so that investors that ... want to put money in major projects get an answer more quickly."

Pedro Antunes, chief economist at the Conference Board of Canada, said the bill is possibly a good thing, but time will tell if it's a success.

"I'm holding back a little bit on a lot of glee around the interprovincial trade barriers and labour mobility. I think there's a lot that has to come from the provinces on that front. I'm not convinced yet that this is going to make major changes there," he said.



Pedro Antunes, chief economist at the Conference Board of Canada, says, 'I'm holding back a little bit on a lot of glee around the interprovincial trade barriers and labour mobility. I think there's a lot that has to come from the provinces on that front.' Photograph courtesy of Pedro Antunes

"But certainly on the [Building Canada Act], I think there's a lot to be said there that we need to do better on that, for sure, and hopefully this pushes us in the right direction."

Since Bill C-5 was tabled, some critics with environmental concerns have raised the alarm about the expedited project approval plans outlined in the legislation.

Ecojustice referred to the bill as a threat to democracy and the environment in a June 6 press release, and argued that the feds would risk "silencing communities, sidelining science, and undermining the law," by fast-tracking national interest projects.

"The newly tabled Bill C-5 will give the government extraordinary powers once it has designated a project as in the 'national interest', including the ability to authorize it despite potential negative environmental impacts—on species, ecosystems, and communities—that would not otherwise be permitted," said Charlie Hatt, Ecojustice's climate program director, in the press release.

"On top of the compressed process set out in Bill C-5, it also gives the governor-in-council the ability to fully exempt a national interest project from the application of any federal law. We've never seen a federal law that gives this much unchecked executive power before in the

history of modern Canadian environmental law."

Carney said on June 6 that his government will not impose a project on a province that doesn't want it, as reported by Radio Canada International.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.), described the bill as "a blank cheque for cabinet to push through projects without proper oversight," in a statement on June 6.

"The bill also sidelines Indigenous rights. Even where Indigenous communities' constitutionally protected rights may be harmed, the bill requires only that they 'must be consulted'—while giving full veto power to the Canadian Energy Regulator over pipeline approvals," reads the statement.

"That is an appalling double standard," May added.

Keith Brooks, program director for Environmental Defence, told *The Hill Times* the bill is potentially very problematic from an environmental perspective.

"This bill gives the government powers to override pretty much every piece of federal environmental legislation. That seems very risky, because all that legislation has been put in place for a reason, and just ignoring it, I think, opens up potential for serious harm," said Brooks.

"I think the real risk is that it's politicized decision-making and not giving us a robust framework



Keith Brooks, program director for Environmental Defence, says Bill C-5 'gives the government powers to override pretty much every piece of federal environmental legislation.' Photograph courtesy of Keith Brooks

to understand how the assessment of national interest will be done, and for people to weigh in on whether we agree that these projects are of the national interest and should be expedited."

Brooks argued that there are many possible major projects that could be worth doing, but it should be clear if those proj-

ects advance Canada's economic interest, advance a clean economy, and also include high levels of support from Indigenous Peoples.

"We'd love to see good projects move forward more quickly. I just think we really need to make sure that we've got really good guardrails in place, and we have a robust conversation about what nation-building is," he said. "Why don't we expedite getting clean drinking water and housing for all Indigenous and First Nation communities? That doesn't seem like a contentious thing to me."

"I think we could get behind the notion of high-speed rail ... intercity rail between Edmonton and Calgary, and we can get behind the notion of a clean electricity grid as well," Brooks added.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) will hold a virtual forum for chiefs from across the country on June 16 to discuss Bill C-5, said AFN National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak in a statement released on June 10.

She said First Nations want to open new economic development opportunities and address economic threats, but "we also have rights that cannot be ignored."

"Unfortunately, the government provided First Nations only seven days to respond to an outline of the bill and did not provide the full text (a consultative draft) in advance. Compounding this, the parliamentary process is not well-suited to the depth of consultation such complex legal matters require," said Woodhouse Nepinak in the statement.

"An enormous responsibility now rests on the shoulders of each Member of the House of Commons and the Senate to uphold the Honour of the Crown and to protect First Nations rights during their consideration of this bill. The AFN expects the House and Senate Committees to do everything within their power to accommodate First Nations and to meet their concerns."

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The Hill Times

Canada Natural Resources Statistics (2023)



- Energy resources accounted for more than half (61 per cent) of the value of all natural resource assets in 2023, followed by mineral resources (24 per cent) and timber (16 per cent). These shares of resources were similar to those of 2022.
- Energy resources totalled \$1.038-billion in 2023, a decrease of \$575-billion from 2022, as lower energy prices offset an increase in oil production.
- The value of crude bitumen totalled \$608-billion in 2023, down by \$248-billion from 2022. Despite this decrease, crude bitumen remained Canada's top natural wealth contributor in 2023, making up more than one-third of the total natural resource value.
- Crude oil and natural gas contributed to 13 per cent of the total natural resource

wealth in 2023, which is less than the 22 per cent of 2022. Conversely, bituminous coal increased in contribution to the total resource value in 2023 (12 per cent) from 2022 (eight per cent).

- Though mineral prices remained high in 2023, they overall trended downward compared with 2022. In 2023, mineral resources decreased in value by more than one-quarter (28 per cent) to \$406-billion. Potash (35 per cent) was the top contributor to the mineral resource value, followed by iron (30 per cent), gold (13 per cent) and nickel-copper (12 per cent). These resources have been the top contributors for the past six years.
- The value of timber assets was \$267-billion in 2023, a 29-per-cent decline from the previous year.

Source: Statistics Canada data released on Nov. 20, 2024

OPINION

From bureaucratic bloat to resilient growth: delivering on Carney's economic vision



Evan Solomon, centre, pictured being sworn in as Canada's new federal AI minister, by PCO Clerk John Hannaford on May 13, 2025. Solomon should cut all IT projects over \$100-million by 20 per cent and reduce IT consulting budgets by 50 per cent, writes Greg MacDougall. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Federal leadership can't fix everything. Health care and education are provincial. But Ottawa can lead by example and partner with provinces that want to move first. The fix isn't glossy strategies or more regional programs. It's about value.

Greg MacDougall

Opinion



The federal government has overbuilt and underperformed for more than a decade. With rising headcounts and billions of dollars spent on consultants, the public service needs structural reform. Naming the problem isn't enough. Cutting 250 full-time staff here and another 100 there isn't enough. The real work is rebuilding a leaner, more accountable government focused on results.

We're entering a tariff-driven global economy, shaped by unpredictable shocks and artificial intelligence. The old approach of more money, more staff, and more process no longer works. Canada's productivity gap with the



Solomon, right, shakes hands with Transport and Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland after being sworn in on May 13, 2025. Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, left, Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu, Canadian Identity Minister Steven Guilbeault, and Justice Minister Sean Fraser look on. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

United States continues to grow. Our innovation system, as Jim Balsillie said, is still "hopping on one leg." To keep up, we need tighter controls, smarter systems, and measurable outcomes across the board.

Since 2014, total government debt has grown 64 per cent, with federal liabilities approaching \$2-trillion with Crown corporations included—and nearly \$3-trillion when provinces are added.

There's no fiscal wiggle-room left without cuts. Rebuilding a resilient economy with a much-needed robust contingency fund—last seen under Harper-era finance minister Jim Flaherty—requires reallocating existing dollars, not spending more.

Take Finance Canada. Staffing has grown 1.6 per cent annually for a decade, yet core

budgeting remains manual. An AI-driven Fiscal Analysis Unit could automate forecasting and reporting—saving time, reducing errors, and recovering millions in public funds as reducing routine repetitive back-office functions.

Artificial intelligence isn't optional; it's core to modern governance. As Canada's new minister of AI and Digital Innovation, Evan Solomon needn't look beyond his own downtown Toronto riding. RBC, Canada's largest bank, rivals the Canada Revenue agency in IT headcount, but that's where the comparison ends. RBC started back in 2016 creating two supporting AI platforms to help the bank make smarter, faster decisions, cutting costs, decreasing fraud and streamlining compliance, ranking the financial institution No. 3 globally in AI maturity.

With the United Arab Emirates committing to be the first country to offer ChatGPT to all its citizens, the United Kingdom has had no end of trouble rolling out its AI strategy. Despite a national action plan and AI teams deployed across departments, fewer than six per cent of U.K. public-sector organizations have completed digital transformation. Legacy systems, talent gaps, and weak internal capacity continue to drag progress, costing taxpayers an estimated £45 billion (\$83-billion CAD). Without reskilling, infrastructure upgrades, and performance, tied to funding, progress has stalled.

That's why the AI team that Solomon puts together should be funded directly from the savings it generates—while linking the \$223-million paid annually in

performance bonuses to AI-verified results, starting with deputy ministers.

Ottawa should also look to the provinces for early leadership. Nova Scotia, under Premier Tim Houston, offers an ideal test-bed: small enough to move fast, ambitious enough to lead on AI in health care, trade diversity, and critical mineral extraction.

Industry Canada saw its budget more than double since 2014, and yet Canada filed just 4,100 patents last year, compared to more than 17,000 in the U.S. It's stuck in maintenance mode, not growth mode.

Global Affairs Canada is no different. Its staff exceeds 11,000 while missing 42 per cent of performance targets in 2023–24.

With rising tariffs and shifting markets, we can't afford this drift. A Trade Diversification Unit, backed by AI tools, could turn underused budgets into real growth.

Federal IT spending is another problem. Solomon should cut all IT projects over \$100-million by 20 per cent, and reduce IT consulting budgets by 50 per cent. The auditor general has flagged repeated overruns—most recently in the Benefits Delivery Modernization program—while media reports have exposed consultants billing multiple departments for the same hours. To secure Canada's digital sovereignty, Solomon must also prioritize domestic supercomputing capacity, and reduce reliance on foreign cloud infrastructure, critical vulnerabilities that leave our economy and data exposed in an era of geopolitical uncertainty.

What's needed is focus and discipline across government. A Cabinet Subcommittee on AI and Innovation, reporting to the prime minister, should lead mandate reviews, wind down outdated programs, and ensure departments use AI to improve outcomes. Budget discipline, headcount reduction, trade growth, and innovation returns must be closely tracked. If resilience is the goal, leadership must start at the top.

Just as importantly, we need experienced eyes inside government. A small group of due-diligence experts, embedded in the PMO and key ministries, can identify waste, spot overlap, and shut down what isn't working. They won't be popular. But they'll cut Canada's growing debt payments by billions of dollars.

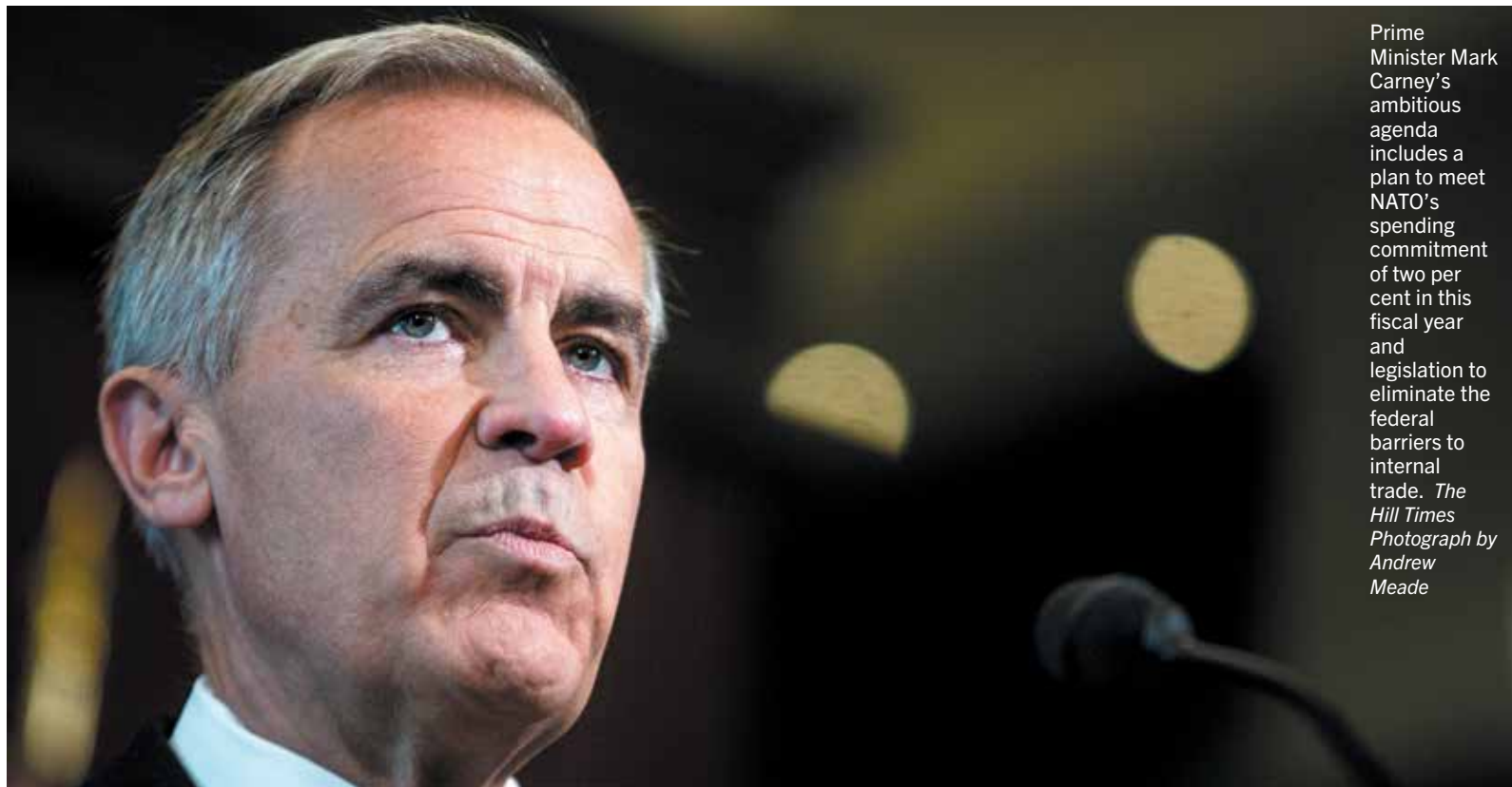
Federal leadership can't fix everything. Health care and education are provincial. But Ottawa can lead by example, and partner with provinces that want to move first. The fix isn't glossy strategies or more regional programs. It's about value. Like his constituent, Solomon needs to anchor these reforms—cutting the fluff and delivering speed, clarity, and impact.

It's about moving money from legacy programs into infrastructure, trade, innovation, and services Canadians actually use. It's about restoring public trust by doing less—but doing it better.

Greg MacDougall is a former federal executive, now co-founder of [GovernmentAnalytics.ca](https://www.governmentanalytics.ca).

The Hill Times

OPINION



Prime Minister Mark Carney's ambitious agenda includes a plan to meet NATO's spending commitment of two per cent in this fiscal year and legislation to eliminate the federal barriers to internal trade. *The Hill Times* Photograph by Andrew Meade

Carney's ambitious agenda runs counter to how Ottawa operates

Prime Minister Mark Carney's bold agenda will undoubtedly meet obstacles in the form of bureaucratic inertia and the opinions of highly influential voices, including First Nations organizations.

Jamie Carroll

Opinion



With each passing day it seems increasingly likely that Prime Minister Mark Carney is the quintessential unstoppable force running into the immovable object that is "Ottawa."

First, let's agree that Carney has the most ambitious agenda of any prime minister in recent times. While he only has seven priorities, some of them might as well be inventing cold fusion or curing cancer given how big a lift they will require.

But his focus is uncanny: every minister received the exact same mandate letter that ostensibly boils down to "figure out how your department fits into the platform priorities and do that."

His Throne Speech—delivered by King Charles III, no less—



Prime Minister Mark Carney, centre, at a press conference on June 9 in Toronto with Chief of Defence Staff Jennie Carignan, left, and Defence Minister David McGuinty, right. Carney announced a plan to invest \$9.3-billion in the Canadian Armed Forces, which would mean this country could meet its NATO defence spending commitment of two per cent this fiscal year. Screenshot courtesy of CPAC.

was entirely on these priorities. The same goes for Carney's public appearances since the election. His legislative agenda: 100-per-cent the same. His goals for the myriad high-profile domestic and foreign meetings (first ministers' meeting, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, G7, Canada's meetings with the European Union, NATO) all focus on these priorities. His responses in Question Period... you get the point.

But ya know what those priorities aren't necessarily? Those of everyone else in Ottawa.

One of the problems with having not had an active government in Ottawa for the last six months is that things have piled up. Deputy ministers, senior officials, stakeholders, lobbyists, and corporations all have lists of things that have been waiting for a decision for months. And many

of those decisions have nothing to do with Carney's priorities.

That's not to say those other things aren't important or worth doing, but with finite time and resources, they have already started competing for time, money and attention.

The power of bureaucratic inertia should never be underestimated. Many around town are already digging in to entrench their interests and put up walls to stop many of the most important things Carney has promised—defence procurement is an obvious example.

Unstoppable force, meet immovable object.

Don't get me wrong: Carney's ambition is not only impressive, but it's also exactly what the moment calls for. Infrastructure, defence procurement, internal trade, government efficiency: those are all files that have been

screaming for attention, some for 20-plus years.

And, to say the quiet part out loud, thanks goes to United States President Donald Trump for making it possible to do these things with a stunning level of national consensus!

But let's be clear: time is not Carney's friend on any of these files.

I am not one who believes that the current strand of American nativism goes away with the mid-terms or even with Trump. U.S. Vice-President JD Vance and the cadre of daytime vampires around him like senior presidential adviser Stephen Miller are far more scary on these issues because one gets the sense he actually believes in them (as opposed to the opportunist that is Trump).

But cracks in Team Canada are already beginning to appear. First Nations—including the Assembly of First Nations—are sounding

the alarm around Carney's efforts to push big projects forward without adequate consultation and consent. Attorney General Sean Fraser got a taste of this when he declared recently that no, First Nations do not have a constitutional or UNDRIP-based veto of those projects, and then walked the comment back—at length—the very next day.

Generally Liberal-friendly media like Althia Raj at *The Toronto Star* are looking at Carney's early signature legislation—Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act—and calling it "the type of legislation that Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper might have been too timid to bring forward, fearing a public backlash."

So, while the crazy in the U.S. will likely continue for most of the next decade in some form or another, how long Canadians are able to focus their attention on the dumpster fire in our own basement is far less certain.

Carney needs to deliver quickly. He knows that. He says that. But the internal signs are that he does not fully appreciate what is necessary in order to do that.

Most concerning, that isn't what the current iteration of the senior public service has been built for: a combination of the Harper-era purges of independent thinkers and the Trudeau-era focus on communications over delivery are conspiring to create that immovable object.

Developing processes for dealing with other people's priorities efficiently through the Prime Minister's Office/Privy Council Office/Treasury Board Secretariat; a major realigning of deputies and other senior officials to those more suited to delivering big things; and a mandate to allow ministers to make some pretty major decisions in their own departments without excessive central review are all ideas the prime minister is going to have to embrace if he wants to get things done.

Carney may have taken one of the first steps in addressing these challenges last week by appointing Michael Sabia the next Clerk of the Privy Council—effectively both the PM's deputy minister and head of the public service. As Stephen Harper's former director of communications put it on X, "With this nomination, Mark Carney has sent an unmistakable message to the entire federal public service: change is coming—and not a leisurely pace."

More will be required.

Politics—especially the bureaucratic kind—is all about compromise. And Carney's willingness to do some horse trading will be the principal determinant of how successful his ambitious agenda ultimately is.

The new PM has had a helluva good start to his mandate. He is clearly focused on things that matter to Canadians, including things that have been neglected by his predecessors.

But, despite his inclinations, he needs to accept he can't do it all alone.

Jamie Carroll is a former national director of the Liberal Party of Canada and is now an entrepreneur and consultant.

The Hill Times

OPINION



Women and Gender Equality Minister Rechie Valdez, pictured, can demonstrate that her government is serious about its commitment to a robust gender equity analysis by working with feminist civil society experts to apply and evaluate the government's actions, writes Suzanne Zaccour. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Seven ways Carney's agenda can advance gender equality

The bottom line?
Investing in women
is good policy and
good politics.

Suzanne
Zaccour

Opinion



Women are the political capital of Prime Minister Mark Carney's new government. The gender split that many pollsters reported during the campaign materialized at the ballot box, with a notable 13-point gap among women in favour of the Liberals.

Now, with the government promising to "protect women's rights and prosperity," women voters will expect concrete action—and soon. Delivering early, visible wins for women is not just good policy; it's a political imperative.

Among the early signs that the National Association of Women and the Law will be watching for are the key goals that Carney and his ministers prioritize in their upcoming work plans. In light of the prime minister's mandate

letter directing his cabinet to "propose new ideas and act decisively" in managing their core responsibilities, here are seven policy achievements relevant ministers can deliver as early wins for women in Canada.

Implement full gun control reforms

Bring into force all measures addressing intimate-partner gun violence in former Bill C-21, close magazine-capacity loopholes to reduce the potential lethality of mass shootings like the École Polytechnique femicides, and complete the buyback program for military-style weapons. These long-awaited and repeatedly promised gun control measures are strongly supported by women and a concrete response to the epidemic of gender-based violence and rising femicide rates.

Protect survivors of domestic violence in family court

Listen and respond to more than 250 women's organizations and a United Nations report calling for an amendment to the Divorce Act to protect survivors of domestic violence from being accused of "parental alien-

ation"—a discredited concept that punishes mothers for raising safety concerns. This reform is essential to protect the safety of mothers and children who are victims of family violence in Canada.

Remove discrimination against mothers in EI benefits

Amend the Employment Insurance program so that mothers who lose their jobs while on parental leave remain eligible for regular benefits. In this time of heightened economic insecurity, this reform would resonate with young women contemplating motherhood, as well as older women who have experienced its financial sacrifices and who want better for their daughters and granddaughters.

Adapt the Canada Disability Benefit to meet disabled women's needs

Reform the Canada Disability Benefit, which reinforces disabled women's financial dependency by tying their eligibility for the benefit to their partner's income. Thirty per cent of Canadian women lives with a disability, and they face significantly higher

rates of poverty, unemployment, and domestic violence. Carney's plan for a prosperous Canada must include everyone.

Ban NDAs in government-funded institutions

Stop the use of non-disclosure agreements in cases of harassment, violence and discrimination within the federal government and government-funded workplaces, as proposed by non-affiliated Senator Marilou McPhe-dran in Bill S-261, the Can't Buy Silence Act. This initiative will resonate with countless women who are disgusted that federally funded Hockey Canada used hush money to quietly resolve cases of sexual violence, protecting men's reputations at the expense of safety and accountability.

Apply a feminist analysis to government policy

Respect the Liberal platform commitment to evaluate all policymaking through the lens of a gender-based analysis (GBA Plus). Research by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women has revealed shortfalls in the implementation and measurement of GBA Plus by federal departments

and agencies. Women and Gender Equality Minister Rechie Valdez can demonstrate that her government is serious about its commitment to a robust gender equity analysis by working with feminist civil society experts to apply and evaluate the government's actions through an intersectional feminist lens.

Invest in the women's rights movement

Protect women's rights from the attacks of an increasingly powerful alt-right movement. At a time of global backlash against human rights, Canada's national women's rights organizations must be properly resourced to defend—among others—the rights to safe abortion healthcare, pay equity, and equal access to economic opportunities.

The bottom line? Investing in women is good policy and good politics. Advancing substantive gender equality is crucial to nation-building, maximizing innovation, and driving productivity growth. These proposed deliverables support systemic change and will have lasting impacts on improving the safety and economic resilience of women in Canada.

These policy wins would also be prudent deposits in a rainy-day account to prevent the evaporation of women's support for the Carney-led government, amidst the inevitable headwinds to come.

Suzanne Zaccour is the director of legal affairs at the National Association of Women and the Law.

The Hill Times

NEWS

With three top players in Carney government lacking political experience, caucus feedback critical to show ‘human side’ of politics, say experts

Mark Carney, Marc-André Blanchard, and Michael Sabia have extensive public service experience which will prove to be an asset in delivering on the government’s agenda, says Donald Savoie. But the Liberal government risks appearing overly ‘technocratic’ and will need to listen to its caucus, too.

Continued from page 1

lead the Liberal Party into the next election. Carney went on to win a decisive victory in the Liberal leadership election this past March, and led his party to victory in the April 28 federal election. He is now a rookie MP and the prime minister of Canada.

Blanchard, a lawyer by training and former Canadian ambassador to the UN, will take over as chief of staff in the Prime Minister’s Office in July. He currently serves as executive vice-president of Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec. Blanchard will succeed outgoing PMO chief of staff Marco Mendicino, a former Toronto MP and cabinet minister.

The chief of staff is one of the most powerful positions in any PMO, that manages access to the prime minister, decides which files lands on the leader’s desk, and plays a key role in cabinet decision-making and political strategy. Prime ministers typically appoint someone they trust the most to this role, as the chief of staff plays a decisive role in a leader’s success or failure.

It is also common for new prime ministers to appoint a new clerk of the Privy Council to help implement their agenda. Carney recently named Sabia as the new clerk, succeeding John Hannaford. The clerk—the most powerful public servant in federal government—serves as the prime



Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, should use the national Liberal caucus as a sounding board before introducing any policy or legislation to better gauge how Canadians might respond, says Donald Savoie, one of the country’s leading experts on government machinery. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Former Canadian diplomat Marc-André Blanchard will join the PMO as chief of staff in July. *Photograph courtesy of the United Nations.*



Former deputy minister of finance Michael Sabia has been appointed as the new clerk of the Privy Council. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

minister’s deputy minister and secretary to cabinet, providing non-partisan advice to the PM and his ministers.

Public servants, including the clerk, are expected to offer candid and fearless advice, though this varies in practice depending on the individual. Sabia brings extensive experience from both the public and private sectors. His term as CEO of Hydro-Québec wraps up July 4, and he has held other senior executive roles at Bell Canada and Canadian National Railway. In government, he was deputy minister of Finance Canada, and held senior roles at the Privy Council Office, which he will now lead.

Donald Savoie, Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance at the University of Moncton, said that one advantage of having the three top positions held by former public servants is that they have a deep understanding of how gov-

ernment operates. He said new prime ministers often surround themselves with senior campaign aides who helped them win an election, but who lack experience in government. For example, former prime ministers like Brian Mulroney, Stephen Harper, and Justin Trudeau initially had limited or no understanding of the inner workings of government when they took office. In Carney’s case, however, the current leadership team understands both the strengths and limitations of the federal government, and knows how to deliver on the government’s promises to Canadians.

“There was an incredibly steep learning curve for Justin Trudeau, for Stephen Harper, certainly not for Jean Chrétien, but certainly for Brian Mulroney,” said Savoie, one of the country’s leading experts in the machinery of government and author of a number of award-winning books on the subject, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “The

three of them [Carney, Sabia, and Blanchard], don’t need to be told which lever to pull. They know which lever to pull and they know where the weaknesses are. So I see it as a positive.”

Savoie said that the national Liberal caucus can provide crucial support by offering meaningful feedback to the prime minister. He praised Carney for agreeing with the caucus’ demand to bar senior PMO staff from attending weekly national caucus meetings, calling it a positive step that will encourage MPs from across the country to provide their perspectives on political and policy issues. Savoie said that under Trudeau, the caucus was largely prevented from fulfilling this role, but so far, it appears that Carney is willing to give caucus members the space to do so.

“After a year or two, prime minister and his staffers in Ottawa ... lose touch [with] the average Canadian,” said Savoie. “It

comes with the territory. The key there has always been caucus, and certainly to some extent, cabinet. The question is: has caucus been allowed to play its full role? I don’t think it was the case under Justin Trudeau. It may be the case under Mark Carney, but we’ll see.”

Savoie predicted that Sabia will offer the kind of fearless advice the prime minister needs to get. He said that Sabia, now in his 70s, is financially independent and has already served at the top levels of government and the private sector. Savoie said that, historically—beginning with Pierre Trudeau—new prime ministers tend to appoint new clerks who understand their thinking, align with their vision, and can help deliver on their promises during an election campaign.

“He [Sabia] will call a spade a spade,” said Savoie. “He’s not your typical public servant. Public servants have become that [risk averse] of late, and I can tell you why. It’s not their fault. When they operate under a ministerial staff of 25 people, and they’re watched when they have access to information programs that they have to respect. When you have social media and 24-hour news [cycles], public servants become very, very risk averse because all the incentives point to the benefits of being risk averse. Michael Sabia will not be that. That’s not going to stop him from doing what needs to be done.”

Meanwhile, Thomas agreed with Savoie on the point that if the new prime minister values caucus feedback, it could become a valuable asset. MPs engage with their constituents regularly and have a strong understanding of public sentiment on government’s political and policy decisions. By using the caucus as a sounding board before introducing any policy or legislation, Carney could identify gaps and improve proposals based on real-world feedback, Thomas said. This approach would not only strengthen the government’s initiatives but also boost MPs’ confidence that their perspectives matter and their roles are meaningful. Thomas said that this kind of engagement is particularly important in a minority government, where every vote counts.

“It’s often the threesome there: the party whip, chair of caucus, and the liaison person from the Prime Minister’s Office, are supposed to read the mood of caucus and ensure that there’s as much harmony and solidarity behind the government’s position and not many things going forward are all that controversial,” Thomas said.

He added that in the short term, the outlook appears positive for the Liberals, who are currently leading the Conservatives by a double-digit margin. However, within the next 18 to 24 months—the average lifespan of a minority government—the situation could shift if Liberal support begins to slip in the polls. At that point, opposition parties may start testing the government’s confidence in the House votes, any one of which could trigger the government’s downfall.

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Poilievre is reaching out to unsuccessful candidates for feedback, say Conservatives: ‘he’s doing a post-mortem himself’

The Conservative campaign team ‘missed the moment’ rather than rising to meet it—ultimately losing the 2025 election, says an unsuccessful Conservative candidate.

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from this year’s election to get their feedback and to gauge the level of support for him within rank-and-file party members ahead of the mandatory leadership review, say Conservatives.

“He’s doing a post-mortem himself,” said an unsuccessful candidate who only agreed to speak on a not-for-attribution basis because the conversation with their leader was private. “He wants to hear from everybody. It’s an individual check-in from him. He’s obviously trying to rally support, trying to figure who’s coming with him in the next election.”

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Conservative candidates of record from different regions of the country said that Poilievre personally reached out to them, and that these phone calls typically lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

According to these candidates, the leader listened attentively to their candid reflections. The candidates shared insights into why they believe they lost their ridings—many of which were considered competitive before the election. They said that Poilievre came well-prepared, familiar with the vote counts in each riding. The candidates offered frank feedback on what went wrong, pointing to concerns with the party’s messaging, the loss of support to the Liberals among senior citizens—a traditional ally of the Conservative Party—and the need to broaden the party’s electoral base.

“We’ve got to expand the base, and we need to get more seniors on our side,” said the candidate. “The boomers are now sitting with the Liberals, and we need to expand our messaging. There’s different levels of conversation that people had [with Poilievre]. Some of the more experienced candidates have pushed him a lit-

Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured June 10 on the Hill, has been reaching out to candidates of record from the last election to get their feedback on why the party fell short, and to find out whether they are planning to run in the next campaign, say Conservatives. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

tle more. We’re all trying to figure this thing [election outcome] out.”

During these calls, Poilievre also gained a sense of whether the candidates intend to run again in the next election, candidates told *The Hill Times*. While he did not directly ask them, many candidates volunteered this information on their own. At the same time, Poilievre never raised the subject of his leadership review, but the candidates saw these calls as an indirect way to rally support and to get a sense of his level of support within rank-and-file members of the party. They explained that candidates of record are the leader’s local representatives on the ground; they serve as important points of contact for Poilievre within their communities as most ridings have hundreds or thousands of card-carrying party members in each riding association.

According to the party’s constitution, any leader who fails to win an election must undergo a mandatory leadership review. Poilievre is widely expected to receive strong support from delegates during the leadership review at the next biennial policy convention. The Conservatives failed to form government after the April 28 election but won 41.3 per cent or nearly 8.1 million votes across Canada, while the Liberals won 43.7 per cent or 8.6 million votes. The Conservatives increased their total vote count compared to the 2021 federal election, when they received 33.7 per cent or 5.7 million votes.

“Rallying support is not a bad thing,” said the source. “He doesn’t necessarily say, ‘I’m calling for feedback.’ He’s saying ‘I’m trying



Ron Chhinzer, pictured on Sept. 7, 2023, in Quebec City, is a former Toronto Police officer who ran unsuccessfully for the Conservatives in the last election. He said that he recently spoke with Pierre Poilievre and found him ‘motivated’ and ‘all in’ to lead the party in the next election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

to touch base, want to connect with you.’ Generally speaking, if you think about all the candidates, every candidate is connected to thousands of members, basically. There’s going to be delegates coming to the convention.”

Conservative candidates said that some may not run again chiefly because the timing of the next election remains uncertain. They explained that once someone becomes a nominee, their work and personal lives are effectively put on hold until the election is called. Several of them admitted they hadn’t fully anticipated the personal and professional sacrifices involved in running for office in the last election.

“When you are running, these things are difficult. Your whole life

is on hold. A lot of people who did it [last time] didn’t realize what it will take,” said the source. “Some of these people are tired. From his perspective, he’s checking in with everybody and he’s listening.”

Sources said that, toward the end of each conversation, Poilievre thanked the candidates for their efforts and feedback, and promised to stay in touch going forward.

For about 18 months in the lead-up to the April 28 election, the Conservatives had maintained a double-digit lead in the polls—largely driven by growing public frustration over the rising cost of living and fatigue with then-prime minister Justin Trudeau’s nearly nine-year tenure. Most voters blamed the Liberal government for inflation and the sharp increases in housing, gas, and grocery prices. However, the political tide began to shift after Trudeau announced he would not to lead the party in the next election, and the trade tensions with the United States helped the Liberals gain renewed public support.

The recent election loss was a major disappointment for party members and candidates alike, many of whom had expected a landslide majority. Although the Conservatives won 41.3 of the vote across Canada, and nearly 8.1 million votes, they did not win government with 144 seats. In this election, Poilievre even lost his own riding, and will now run in a forthcoming byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.

Ron Chhinzer is a former Toronto Police officer and a Conservative candidate who ran unsuccessfully in Oakville-East, Ont., losing to Foreign Affairs

Minister Anita Anand by 6.2 percentage points. He confirmed to *The Hill Times* that he spoke recently to the leader about the election.

He declined to share specific details, citing the confidentiality of their discussion. Chhinzer had previously lost the 2022 Mississauga-Lakeshore byelection to Liberal MP Charles Sousa. If Chhinzer chooses to run again, he would require a party waiver, as candidates who have lost twice must seek special permission from the party. For now, Chhinzer remains undecided, saying that his choice will depend largely on the timing of the next election, and whether or not his family wants him to run again.

“I support him as the leader, he’s exactly what we need going forward,” said Chhinzer. “He unified the country in a lot of different ways. Wherever I can support him, I will. He’s all in, so there’s no change in him. He’s going to do the hard work. He’s doing the hard work. He’s motivated.”

A third candidate of record said it was important for Poilievre to hear directly from those who ran about their experiences on the ground. They said that candidates spent months door-knocking, and saw first-hand how public sentiment shifted. For nearly 18 months, Canadians seemed eager for change in government, but many changed their minds and ultimately gave Liberals a fourth mandate. These nominees, the source said, can help the leader understand why the momentum shifted so drastically.

“You need to hear from those who were in the trenches, who knocked on doors, who heard the good things and heard the bad things on the doors, and hear that first hand because there is no substitute for hearing such feedback directly, especially when people who put their ... their lives on hold to represent the party, to really explain why or what happened, or what they think happened,” said the candidate.

They also said the campaign team “missed the moment” rather than rising to meet it—ultimately losing the election. It’s still unclear why the team was so slow to pivot. They continued emphasizing the carbon tax even after it was apparent in January that the Liberals would abandon it, and they failed to adequately address the escalating trade tensions with the U.S. The source speculated that the Conservatives’ consistent high double-digit lead in the polls—driven largely by cost-of-living concerns—may have given party leaders false confidence. They likely believed that sticking to this issue would secure victory. The candidate added that no one they know can recall a previous election in which a governing party, trailing by as many as 27 points, rebounded so quickly to win.

“Did the [Conservative] party meet the moment, or did the party miss the moment?” said the source. “And I think it’s fair to say that the party certainly didn’t meet the moment in terms of the overall campaign strategy.”

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NEWS

Treasury Board reports gains on diversity and equity in public service, but will cuts hamper progress?

As of March 2024, just over 70 per cent of the core public administration belonged to one or more employment equity groups. But as the bureaucracy now begins to shrink for the first time in over 10 years, these groups could be disproportionately impacted.

BY MARLO GLASS

The federal public service continued to increase the number of women, Indigenous people, visible minorities, and people with disabilities in its ranks between 2023 and 2024, according to the latest report on employment equity. But as the federal public service now begins to shrink for the first time in over 10 years, some have raised concerns that job cuts will hamper progress for equity-seeking groups.

Nicholas Marcus Thompson is president and CEO of the Black Class Action Secretariat, which filed a class-action lawsuit against the government for decades of systemic discrimination against Black public servants. He said the report shows progress, which is “cautiously” welcomed, but Black public servants will be hit by impending cuts.

“We’re very concerned Black workers are being disproportionately impacted by the austerity measures the Government of Canada is taking,” he said in a recent interview with *the Hill Times*. “We know that the majority of Black people are hired on term [contracts], and based on those systemic structures, term employees are first to go.”

The report, presented by Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali (Brampton—Chinguacousy Park, Ont.) on May 27, said between 2023 and 2024, the number of Black workers in the federal public service grew by 1,499, bringing the total to 13,270 as of



Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali presented the latest annual report on employment equity in the public service on May 27. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

March 2024. The data published does not differentiate between hires in permanent or term roles, but Thompson said his group’s tracking shows Black workers are largely hired in temporary roles.

Thompson noted the Canada Revenue Agency and Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada’s recent cuts of thousands of temporary and term positions. Those numbers aren’t reflected in this report, which spans from 2023 to 2024.

“It almost seems to be like a distortion of the data,” he said. “Because now your data shows, ‘Hey, we’re doing really good.’ But the reality is the majority of those people already went home.”

Waheed Khan is a long-time federal public servant and president of the Community of Federal Visible Minorities. He said, ideally, layoffs would take an employee’s equity status into account, but “that’s not how the workforce adjustment works,” he said in an interview. “It’s about the position, and the work.”

Khan said the government should collect data on how layoffs impact equity groups. The federal government has an obligation to inform the union of layoffs, and with that, could specify which equity groups are set to be impacted.

“Then we can see which group was impacted disproportionately, if that’s the case,” he said, adding it’s not clear at this point if, when, and where jobs will be cut within the federal public service.

He noted the annual report shows which equity groups are most highly represented in certain roles. Women, for example,

are highly represented in human resource management, health services, translation, and program and administrative services, whereas correctional services, education and library science, and operational service have the highest proportion of Indigenous employees. Cuts occurring in certain jobs, then, have the potential to adversely affect certain equity groups over others.

The report says that, overall, employment equity representation of the four designated groups across the public service has been improving, “but there is more work to be done to further identify, understand and eliminate systemic barriers to inclusion and belonging faced by all designated groups.”

The 2023-24 report said as of March 2024, just over 70 per cent of the core public administration belonged to one or more employment equity groups. On the executive level, 67.4 per cent belonged to one or more employment equity groups.

The report noted as of March last year, the “employment equity population totalled 188,016, representing 6.56 per cent of the core public administration.”

The report showed persons with disabilities are the only equity group that remain under-represented in the core public administration, making up 12.1 per cent of the available workforce, according to the 2021 census, but only 6.9 per cent of the public service in 2023 and 7.9 per cent in 2024.

Within the core public administration, women represented 56.6 per cent of the population in 2023, and 56.9 per cent in

2024. Women made up 55.3 per cent of the available workforce according to 2021 census data, the most recently collected available information.

Indigenous people accounted for 4.1 per cent of the available workforce, according to the 2021 census, and made up 5.3 per cent of the core public service in 2023 and 2024.

Visible minorities made up 21.7 per cent of the core public service in 2023 and 22.9 per cent in 2024, while comprising 22.7 per cent of the workforce in the 2021 census.

Representation of Black employees increased from 2.8 per cent of the public service as of March 2017, to five per cent as of March 2024, the report notes, but workforce availability is not tracked for this group.

Black employees have the highest distribution of employees in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 salary range, compared to other employment equity designated groups, something Thompson said indicated equity programs need to be “looked at more carefully,” noting the 2021 census showed a high level of post-secondary education among Black workers.

“So if the data from the census is that Black people are highly qualified, the question begs: why are they still in the lowest salary range of the federal public service in 2023-2024?” he said.

Cuts targeting younger staff could hurt equity groups more

Andrew Griffith, a former public servant who was a director general of citizenship and multiculturalism at then-Citizenship and Immigration Canada, noted Treasury Board data shows visible minorities in the federal public service tend to be younger, with just 25 per cent of the cohort nearing retirement.

“That strikes me as clearly the future of the public service,” he said. “Visible minorities, whether men or women.”

The impact on equity-seeking groups within the civil service will depend on where cuts are administered, he said, adding if “they just do the easy thing and cut casuals and term [positions], which I suspect have a large percentage of visible minorities, it could have an impact.”

If job cuts impact people closer to retirement, “then I don’t think it won’t make too much of a

difference in terms of representation of visible minorities because they are the younger cohort.”

Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has pledged fiscal restraint since the April 28 election, saying the federal budget has grown by an unsustainable nine per cent per year in recent years. He vowed to cap budget growth at an increase of two per cent by “cutting waste, capping the public service, ending duplicative programs, and deploying technology to boost public sector productivity.”

The Conservative Party appeared to take aim at diversity efforts in its election platform, pledging to “put an end to the imposition of the woke ideology in the federal public service and in the allocation of federal funds for university research.” Similarly, the Bloc Québécois platform proposed to abolish equity, diversity, and inclusion in the federal public service’s hiring practices. Both were denounced by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest union of federal public servants. Union president Sharon DeSousa said these initiatives are vital “to ensure Canada’s public service reflects all the people it serves.”

Anne Marie Pham, president of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, said commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) fluctuate over time based on social, economic, and political change.

“Historically, we’ve seen when an organization does not embed its DEIA values and goals in policies, in practices and in culture, equity-seeking groups tend to be disproportionately affected,” she said in a recent interview. “So you may see more layoffs, or fewer opportunities, or reduce programming to support equity in the workplace.”

She said the government showed a “strong commitment” to these values in 2020, amid a global reckoning with racial justice, and after unmarked gravesites at former Indigenous residential schools surfaced in 2021. That was when the economy was struggling amid the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain shocks and inflation, she said, and yet there was a strong commitment to these equity practices.

“I think cutbacks aren’t an excuse to reduce a commitment, or lower a commitment to DEIA,” said Pham, who encouraged employers to think of innovative ways to keep these initiatives “in light of potential cutbacks.”

While the Carney government has pledged to be laser-focused on the economy, Pham said it’s also an important time to focus on Canadian identity and “coming together to support a strong economy, in this time of economic uncertainty.”

“There is incredible power and opportunity, through DEIA, to actually bring people together with diverse and innovative thinking and ideas, and diverse connections,” she said. “These ways of being, thinking, planning, help advance Canadian society in the most positive way.”

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Ottawa's climate adaptation plans 'incomplete,' and 'neither systematic nor comprehensive,' says Environment Commissioner DeMarco

Canada released its National Adaptation Strategy two years ago—in that time, only one of the strategy's three 'key' components has been established, but with 'gaps,' the report finds.

BY ELEANOR WAND

The environment commissioner's report on Canada's National Adaptation Strategy finds that while the two-year-old plan marks an "important first step," the government has not done enough to advance climate adaptation measures, nor do the plans "prioritize Canada's climate change risks."

The report, released June 10, found that "although it is early days for implementation," two of the strategy's three "key" components have not yet been implemented. The Liberals launched the strategy in June 2023 to act as the government's "blueprint" for plans to adapt to the impacts of climate change—making it one of the last nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to develop one.

"We found weaknesses in the strategy's design and implementation," Jerry DeMarco, commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, told reporters in a press conference shortly after his office tabled four reports in the House of Commons. "Essential elements needed to make it effective, such as a prioritization of Canada's climate change risks, were missing," he said.

The National Adaptation Strategy targets a number of areas. It includes plans to improve and build up infrastructure to be better equipped to weather natural disasters, address the physical and mental well-being of those impacted by climate change, protect and restore nature, and identify collaborative priorities between Indigenous leaders and provincial governments.

"Given the scale of the challenge, engagement from all levels



Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development Jerry DeMarco's report on the government's National Adaptation Strategy found that progress is slow and unfocused. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of government and civil society as well as the private sector and all Canadians is critical to Canada's ultimate success in adapting to climate change," reads the report, which notes the federal government's role as a leader to ensure actions are "co-ordinated, effective, and efficient."

The report highlights that the government failed to implement two of the strategy's three components: the "Federal, Provincial and Territorial Bilateral Action Plans," and the "Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda."

The former included logistics for provincial and territorial bilateral plans, and to ensure "continued" communication between federal and provincial governments to work collaboratively on adapting to the impacts of climate change. The latter promised a "pathway to support self-determined action to address Indigenous Peoples' climate priorities" by establishing a line of communication between Ottawa and Indigenous leaders to work collectively to implement the goals outlined in the strategy.

But the report also found the strategy's only implemented component—the Government of Canada Adaptation Plan, which includes 73 federal actions tied to 22 departments and agencies—was "incomplete and inconsistent."

This component covers Ottawa's contributions to the strategy, and was intended to act as a complementary plan to "the adaptation work and strategies of



The Liberals launched the strategy in 2023 under then-environment minister Steven Guilbeault. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

provinces, territories and Indigenous partners," but it was found to have "gaps" by the commissioner, who tabled his report alongside Auditor General Karen Hogan on June 10, the report calling the plan "neither systematic nor comprehensive."

The plan was launched under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau and then-minister of environment and climate change Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.). Since coming into power in 2015, the Liberals have invested more than \$6.6-billion in climate adaptation-related efforts.

Of that, \$1.6-billion went to implement this strategy, a pricetag that doesn't include

response or emergency spending, which has only grown in recent years, as extreme weather events, such as the wildfires currently ravaging the Prairies, become an increasingly common seasonal feature Canada has to contend with.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), last year's summer was the "most destructive season in Canadian history" for insured losses, costing over \$7.7-billion in insured losses across the country.

IBC welcomed the audit, saying it clearly indicates that "despite years of focus on emissions reduction, the federal government has underperformed on commitments to protect Canadians from the wildfires, floods, windstorms and hailstorms affecting hundreds of thousands of Canadians today. As we've seen in recent weeks, wildfires have once again forced thousands of Canadians to flee their homes—a powerful signal that urgent action is needed to shield communities from worsening weather events."

Recent wildfires have displaced thousands, prompting an emergency debate in the House of Commons last week.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has estimated that investment in proactive adaptation measures, in the long-term, will save the public money—the department estimates savings of between \$13 and \$15 for every dollar invested in adaptation measures.

The report also found that only 17 federal programs were required to submit annual reports on their progress, yet none were connected to the National Adaptation Strategy's "objectives, targets, and indicators," pointing to a lack of communication and direction from the top down, starting at Environment Canada.

This issue extended to regular reporting on progress. The commissioner's report called the government's plan lacking in a "whole-of-society reporting framework," making it difficult to get an accurate picture on what actions were effective.

The audit also found issue with the methodology, finding that the 73 actions targeted a mix of new and existing federal programming, instead of presenting a "systematic and comprehensive plan." The report concluded that instructions given to departments were unclear and unfocused, writing that ECCC "did not provide clear guidance" to departments jointly responsible for leading the plan.

This confusion led to "inconsistency," the report said. The audit also highlighted that the plan failed to "prioritize" actions that benefit communities disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, such as older people, those living alone, and some Indigenous communities, as Environment and Climate Change Canada did not "assess the anticipated equity outcomes" to inform their priorities.

The report assessed seven of the government's 73 actions, and found that the implementation in those areas was "limited."

"The adaptation Action Plan, which is meant to be the centrepiece of the national strategy, was not comprehensive," DeMarco said at the press conference. "The plan includes 73 actions, and we found that implementation was limited for the seven actions that we assessed."

One issue with the seven actions assessed was a lack of "value-for-money" consideration in spending decisions, the report found, which the commissioner highlighted leads to issues when it comes to transparency about the spending of public funds, as it is difficult to conclude how the spending contributed to results.

Canada is not the only country to have such a strategy. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Japan all have National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) that outline each country's adaptation plans in response to climate change. France's first NAP was released in 2006, 17 years before Canada's, despite the Environment and Sustainable Development commissioner recommending Canada develop one that same year.

Canada's own National Adaptation Strategy came after a 2016 ratification of the Paris Agreement specified within the document the need for countries to develop a NAP. Four years later, Ottawa committed to creating its first such strategy, beginning that work in January 2021, and releasing it two years later after a consultation and comment period.

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NEWS

S-2 sponsor Sen. Audette says First Nations status fixes don't 'go far enough,' but it's 'one step' to tackle 'racist' Indian Act

One of the first government-sponsored bills in the Senate, Bill S-2 seeks to amend the Indian Act—a move that stakeholders say is welcome, but should not distract from the other inequities that still need to be addressed.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Long ago, Senator Michèle Audette promised herself that if she were ever appointed to the Red Chamber, she would work to change the Indian Act. Now, with four years of parliamentary experience, that's exactly what she's doing as the sponsor of Bill S-2, a piece of government legislation amending the long-standing colonial Act.

"When I was 28 years old, I was president of Quebec Native Women, and we had to go to the Senate to denounce ... over and over, the discrimination under the Indian Act," said Audette (De Salaberry, Que.), who was appointed to the Senate in July 2021 at age 50. "I promised myself ... if I can get to the Senate, when I'll be old, it will be to change the Indian Act."

When the Progressive Senate Group member was asked to sponsor Bill S-2, Audette said it "was the first thing that came to my mind."

Bill S-2 seeks to change eligibility for band membership and status to allow some First Nations people to either regain or claim status for which they were not previously eligible. Canada historically stripped status from First Nations people, in some cases through forced enfranchisement, which was compulsory until 1961 if a person sought an university education or fought in the military. Some also voluntarily deregistered to have their name removed from the "Indian Register." Status under the Indian Act entitles First Nations people to a number of on-reserve rights, like housing and voting, as well as federal programs and services, among other entitlements—but those rights were not available



PSG Senator Michèle Audette, Bill S-2's sponsor in the Red Chamber, said that witnessing her mother's struggle after losing status informed her advocacy to change the 'racist, discriminatory' Indian Act. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

to the descendants of those who lost status.

For Audette, the loss of status was a reality her mother was forced to navigate.

"My mom married the most beautiful Québécois ... a person that is not First Nation," Audette explained. "She had two children—myself and my brother—and she was kicked out from her community, and she had to live outside, and we weren't allowed to go to school or to live in a community, until she divorced."

Up until 1985—when Bill C-31 was passed to amend the Indian Act—women who married non-Native men lost their status, losing with it access to on-reserve housing, among other rights.

Audette said that her family being denied housing on her mother's reserve and growing up in Montreal with limited access to her Innu community meant loss of language. And, even after the divorce, her mother still was not granted the right to on-reserve housing.

This led to her family living in a tent, basement, or in a "cabin behind houses" until her mother was able to find shelter, Audette explained.

Bill S-2 addresses status eligibility for those who've previously had their status revoked for various reasons, as well as for those who voluntarily applied for enfranchisement—an action taken by some First Nations people to protect their children from the residential school system, which forcibly removed Native children from their families.

Those who qualify will be classified under a new category in the act if the bill passes—this means

that even for some of the individuals who previously gained status under other amendments, the new classification will allow them to pass on full status to their children, not just partial status.

The bill also proposes changes to some of the language in the act, and grants First Nations women—who prior to the passing of Bill C-31 were automatically transferred to their husbands' bands following marriage—the ability to reclaim their pre-marital band memberships.

Audette said that though the bill is "not perfect," it's an important step forward.

"I'm still going to fight," she said of her plans to address the Indian Act. "This legislation is racist, discriminatory, and ... until we have the self-government, those amendments are very important. It's not perfect, but very important."

Eligibility under the Indian Act has long been a point of contention among Indigenous leaders and organizations. The Indian Act, which covers First Nations' land, band, and status rights, was first enacted in 1876, and though it has since been amended multiple times to remove some of the oppressive and discriminatory enforcements, many still criticize the document and its colonial legacy, pushing instead for self-governance for First Nations communities.

Two of the most notable amendments to the act have been Bill C-31 in 1985, and Bill C-3 in 2011. Bill C-31 amended some inequities in the act, such as women losing their status after marrying a non-Indigenous man, but it also introduced

a second-generation cut off for status. This means that some First Nations people are ineligible for status if their parents are not registered under the act, even if they have a grandparent with status—an inequity that First Nations leaders continue to advocate against, as it effectively removes status after two generations.

In 2011, following a British Columbia court decision, the Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act amended the law to allow grandchildren of women who lost status through marriage to register for status. And in 2017 the Liberal government introduced another law to address sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act.

Audette, who delivered her second reading of S-2 on June 11, said although it "doesn't go far enough"—and doesn't address the second-generation cut-off—it's a welcome move for about 3,500 people who have "been waiting for a long, long time," and who will gain eligibility if the bill passes.

But there remains concern from advocates on the likelihood of it passing quickly into law, despite being one of the first bills introduced in the Senate, and one of the only government-sponsored pieces of legislation tabled in the Red Chamber.

"The introduction of Bill S-2 represents an important step in amending ongoing inequities in the Indian Act," a spokesperson for the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), an organization that has long been advocating for government action to address inequities in the Indian Act, told *The Hill Times* in an email statement. "However, the

government must ensure Bill S-2 does not get pushed to the side and forgotten, like its predecessor C-38."

Bill C-38, which was largely similar to Bill S-2, was first introduced in the House in December 2022, but ultimately died on the Order Paper in January of this year following the prorogation of Parliament, which sent the legislation back to square one.

"We saw with Bill C-38 ... after two years, it's just gathering dust," Brendan Moore, national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, a group which represents Indigenous people living off-reserves, including status and non-status Indians, told *The Hill Times*. "When it comes to ending discrimination ... the past government talks the talk but, but drags its feet. And so we are hoping that S-2 is quickly passed and implemented so we can finally see the results."

Moore also called the second-generation cut-off the "elephant in the room," and a "structural inequity" that needs to be addressed, noting that Canadians "don't face losing" their citizenship under the same circumstances.

In an interview with APTN News, Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, Que.) acknowledged the importance of addressing the second-generation cut-off, calling Bill S-2 "the first step in a two-part process."

"We are looking at the bill, we're working on it to be sure that we're able to pass it, but also we're going to be launching a stakeholder process to really look at what is not addressed in the bill such as the second generation cut-off," said Gull-Masty, who was not available to speak with *The Hill Times* by deadline.

But increased status eligibility may also further worsen Indigenous Services' processing time for applications. A June 10 Auditor General report revealed long delays in the department's status application process.

The audit on registration under the Indian Act found that more than 80 per cent of applications for registered status took over six months—which is the department's service standard—to receive a decision. Looking at decisions made between April 2016 to March 2024, the audit found that the average processing time for applications was nearly 16 months.

The report also found that those making the final decisions on the applications failed to demonstrate "the required training and certification" at the time of making decisions, calling into question the legitimacy of some decisions.

Audette emphasized Bill S-2 is "one step," but said that she would continue to fight for more rights and inequities to be addressed.

"It's targeting a small portion of the individuals that are affected by the Indian Act," she said, "but there's so [much] remaining discrimination that I'm not going to give up."

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FEATURE



Kìwekì Point a beautiful new public space

THE HILL TIMES PHOTOGRAHS BY ANDREW MEADE

High up on a cliff overlooking the Ottawa River, Kìwekì Point is a newly developed public space with beautiful panoramic views of Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Gatineau, and the Ottawa River. Located behind the National Gallery of Canada, it officially opened in May. Once known as Nepean Point, the \$45-million redevelopment was led by the National Capital Commission and the revamped space connects Major's Hill Park by the new Pidàban foot-bridge. The entire space is a tribute to the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn. Kìwekì means 'returning to one's home-land' in Algonquin. The River Walk Esplanade encircles Kìwekì Point.



A person looks out at the Ottawa River from under the Whispering Point, top, at the Kìwekì Point park on June 4, 2025. Kichi Zibi Innini statue, above left, (Great River Man, formerly called the Anishinaabe Scout). Kichi Zibi Innini, which used to be located kneeling at the base of the Champlain statue previously located at the top of Nepean Point, now has a new spot at Kìwekì Point. The NCC says the statue is now located to align with the convergence of the Ottawa, Gatineau, and Rideau Rivers. Sculpted by Hamilton MacCarthy in 1918, it renamed in 2013 by Algonquin Anishinaabe elder Annie Smith St-Georges. The Samuel de Champlain statue, right, also sculpted by Hamilton MacCarthy in 1915, used to be on top of a massive stone monument at the very top of the hill. It is now set in the landscape below the hilltop. Another Indigenous statue, below left, and people cycling along the River Walk Esplanade.



NEWS

Federal government doesn't know how many offices sit empty: AG

Auditor General Karen Hogan's report says departments need to accelerate their efforts to reduce office space, and PSPS needs better data on the number of public servants using office space on a daily basis.

BY MARLO GLASS

Key information about how the federal government manages its offices, including how much office space sits empty on a daily basis, is often not collected by departments, or made available to the public, according to a new report by Canada's auditor general.

And while the feds have committed to transforming surplus federal offices into 4,000 units of affordable housing by 2027-28 under the Federal Lands Initiative, progress is slow on that front, and about half of those units are expected to be ready for occupancy by then.

"Public Services and Procurement Canada and federal tenants need to accelerate their efforts to reduce the office space they occupy, and contribute to increasing stock for housing that is sustainable, accessible, and affordable," Karen Hogan, Canada's auditor general, told reporters on June 10 after tabling an audit on the current and future use of federal office space.

The report says Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) has details on the number of public servants that need workspace, but lacks up-to-date, standardized, and reliable information from federal departments on the number of public servants using office spaces on a daily basis.

Having those details would "better enable the department to maximize opportunities for further reductions on the basis of this data and would better equip the department to adjust its plans according to the actual usage of the space by federal tenants," the report says.

Hogan told reporters that the data collected by departments was too scattershot and incomplete to include in the audit.

"It's not collected from all organizations, it was in different formats, and for us to be able to put something in our report, we want to make sure that it's solid and we can vet it all," she said at a press conference. "So there was just too many gaps and weaknesses in the data for us to be able to confidently put it in the report."

PSPC presents annual data to the public about the management



Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound said the government has accepted all of the recommendations in an audit looking at federal office space which found that Ottawa has been slow to reduce its footprint. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Auditor General Karen Hogan says key data about how the federal government manages its offices is often not collected by departments. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of office space, with the most recent annual report containing the percentage of office space that was modernized each year, and the percentage of time that real property facilities were fully operational, compliance on accessibility standards, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in Crown-owned buildings, excluding housing.

But the audit found other important information about office buildings was not publicly available, including the percentage of office space used, specific buildings that were sold and their condition, total proceeds of sale on office buildings, total market value of office buildings sold and those remaining in the portfolio, and greenhouse gas emissions of office buildings in the portfolio.

"In our view, given Public Services and Procurement Canada's ambitious plan to reduce office space by 50 per cent by 2034, Parliament and the public need additional relevant information to be better informed on the progress being made and on how office space is being used," the audit says.

"Furthermore, if made publicly available, information such as cost per square metre, cost per employee, and square

metre per employee by federal tenants may incentivize federal tenants to optimize their use of office space."

Since 2019, when the first office reduction plans were developed, PSPC has achieved only a "slight reduction" in office space from 6.0 million rentable square metres down to 5.9 million rentable square metres in a five-year time span, according to the 2023-24 fiscal year's numbers.

The department had estimated savings of \$3.9-billion over the next 10 years, and ongoing savings of \$900-million per year generated from the disposal of vacant or underused office space.

Some of the empty office buildings could be used for housing under the Federal Lands Initiative, a program by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that pledges to turn surplus government-owned property into affordable housing. The CMHC program pledged to build 4,000 units by 2027-28, but has so far built just 309, the audit said.

During Question Period on June 10, Deputy Conservative Leader Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.) criticized this initiative, which she called "the crown jewel of the government's agenda on building

housing" but has attained just seven per cent of its target so far.

"That is less than 50 units a year. That is over a million bucks a unit. Now, the prime minister says he is going to create another bureaucracy to do exactly the same thing," she said. "How much more of Canadians' money will be flushed down the drain to pay for bureaucracies rather than paying for building homes?"

Housing Minister Gregor Robertson (Vancouver Fraser-view-South Burnaby, B.C.) said the Liberal government is focused on building affordable housing, using the federal land and "partnering in good faith" with mayors, premiers, and chiefs "to work in partnership and in synergy with all levels of government to leverage federal lands."

The audit recommended PSPC gather and publicly report more information on its management of office space, including its progress toward the target of 50-per-cent reduction, the use of office space, and the occupational density to enhance transparency and efficiency. The department agreed with the recommendation.

The audit cites other countries that report extensively on their government office spaces, noting

Australia's finance department produces an annual report that includes the percentage of tenancies that meet occupational targets, the number of work stations, vacant work stations, and the number of employees using the department's office spaces.

Return-to-office mandate affected 'flexibility' in reducing office work space

The department's own policies require it to work with federal tenants to monitor actual on-site use of space through various means, and PSPC is doing so in stages, the audit says. PSPC received data on office space use from 37 of 105 federal tenants, and the tenants collect data via badge swipes, physically counting staff present, monitoring IP addresses, looking at office reservation systems, or by other means.

Hogan said many departments cited the space required for the government's current return-to-office mandate, which requires most federal public servants to be in the office a minimum of three days a week. Executives are expected to be in-office four days a week, according to the September 2024 mandate.

Unions have fought back on the return-to-office order, calling it a one-size-fits-all approach. Last summer, the Public Service Alliance of Canada surveyed its members and found that 79 per cent of respondents cited a lack of workspace as an issue exacerbated by going into the office three times a week.

Canadian Union of Professional Employees president Nathan Prier recently told *The Hill Times* that the mandate "flies in the face of all evidence" that remote work saves taxpayers money and increases productivity.

Hogan said when the first plan to offload excess office space was put in place by PSPC, the requirement for hybrid work was two and three days in-office, but noted those conditions have changed.

"With that increase, Public Service and Procurement Canada confirmed that they had lost all the flexibility that they originally had in their plan," she told reporters. "They're really dependent now on the larger department signing on to reduce their office space, and as we found, many are hesitant to do that."

Hogan said her own office has offered to reduce its workspace, "and I would hope that other deputy heads would do the same in order to support the goal."

Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.) said in a media statement that he welcomed the findings of the auditor general's report, and that the government accepted all of the recommendations.

Lightbound said his department plans to share annual updates on its progress and that it remains committed to working with federal departments and agencies to improve data collection.

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Party Central



By Stuart Benson

Hill media flock to Carney's Rideau Cottage garden party

Prime Minister Mark Carney hosted his debut garden party for the Hill media on June 11 and more than 100 media, Liberals, and staffers came out.

A little rain wasn't enough to dampen the mood at Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** first media garden party on June 11, as Hill reporters, Liberal MPs, cabinet ministers, and their staffers rubbed elbows on the front lawn of Rideau Cottage under a big white party tent and a strict confidentiality agreement.

For those parliamentary reporters still holding out for some one-on-one time with the prime minister, his first run at hosting the annual off-the-record event was somewhat of a monkey's paw moment, as **Party Central** cannot report any of the hot gossip overheard at the party.

Fortunately, photographs were allowed, and as usual, this reporter kept track of the who's who in attendance and will leave the wild speculation to those who will immediately use this column as evidence of a grand conspiracy between the media and the Liberal government.

With special thanks to *The Hill Times'* **Christina Leadlay**, who offered up her lovely home for a quick pre-gathering, where **Party Central**, **Marlo Glass**, **Riddhi Kachhela**, **Neil Moss**, and **Katie Schultz** discussed which political party hosts the best actual party over a quick after-work/pre-party pint before meeting up with the rest of the team—**Charelle Evelyn**, **Abbas Rana**, **Irem Koca**, **Andrew Meade**, **Sam Garcia**, **Paul Park**, and **Tessie Sanci**—later in the evening.

As the *Hill Times* crew rolled up to the side gate near MacKay Street and Dufferin Road just before 6:30 p.m. as the first raindrops began to fall, the party was already in full swing under the canopy. However, most attendees still huddled in tight social circles with their direct newsroom or parliamentary colleagues as they scarfed down the complimentary hors d'oeuvres, including spicy scallop ceviche from Le Poisson Bleu, smoked-roasted beef brisket sandwiches from Parlour, tuna tostadas from Torta Boyz, or the wide selection of offerings from Coconut Lagoon, as well as

Suzy Q doughnuts for dessert. While the menu may also have been adjusted slightly

from **Justin Trudeau's** tastes, sadly, there was no *cacio e pepe* made fresh in a giant wheel of Parmesan cheese from North and Navy, though the good people from Nita Beer were once again serving pints alongside several other tables serving wine and soda.

For fear of forgetting any colleagues and making them feel unseen, of the bureaus **Party Central** spotted, in no particular order, there were strong showings from almost every Ottawa outlet, from CBC and Radio Canada, CTV, Global News, Bloomberg News, Reuters, CPAC, *Canadaland*, *The Canadian Press* and *La Presse Canadienne*, *La Presse*, *Francopresse*, *The Hill Times*, *Politico*, *iPolitics*, *The Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Ottawa Citizen*, *La Presse*, *Le Devoir*, *Le Droit*, *The National Observer*, and plenty of independent journalists like **Paul Wells**, and **Justin Ling**, and regular *Hill Times'* contributor **Chris Guly**.

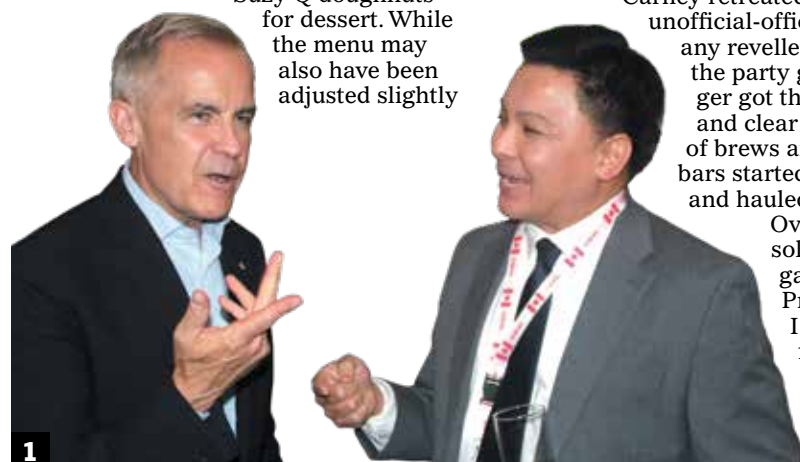
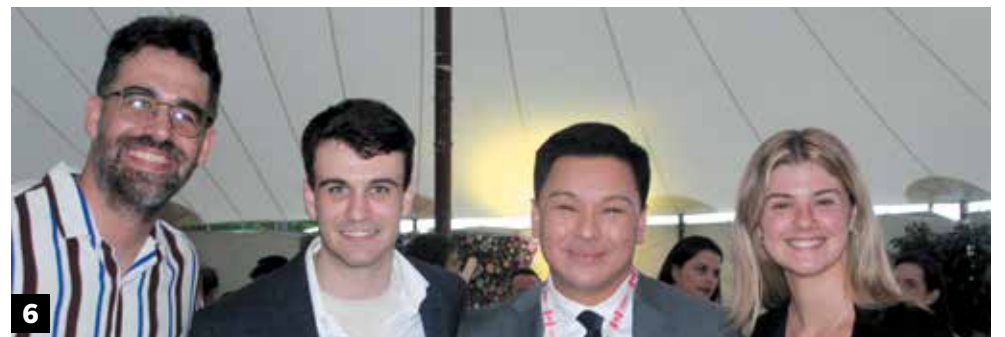
Fresh from their own more private garden party the night before, there were also plenty of Liberal staffers, with a handful still following their principals around the party to ensure there was zero photographic evidence that their boss might be enjoying an alcoholic beverage at an event with an open bar. Taking the opportunity for a no-stakes conversation with the reporters who had been hounding them outside of their caucus meeting earlier that morning, **Party Central** spotted **Mélanie Joly**, **Steven Guilbeault**, **Gary Anandasangaree**, **Rechie Valdez**, **Marjorie Michel**, **Patty Hajdu**, **Maninder Sidhu**, **Mandy Gull-Masty**, **Joël Lightbound**, and **Julie Dabrusin**, as well as Deputy Minister **David Morrison**, and both of Carney's incoming and outgoing chiefs of staff, **Marc-André Blanchard** and **Marco Mendicino**.

However, like the pretty girl at the party, the person everyone wanted to talk to was the night's host, who, after arriving fashionably late around 7 p.m., was immediately swarmed with guests hoping to introduce themselves, grab a selfie, or patiently wait for their chance to jump into the conversation. As further evidence that Carney is not his predecessor, there were neither party tricks nor stair-based slapstick, or at least none he was willing to demonstrate, and he's a much tougher judge of any attempts to crack wise. Prime Minister Carney is the one who knock-knocks.

While the party kept going well after Carney retreated back into his unofficial residence,

any revellers hoping to keep the party going much longer got the message loud and clear once Nita ran out of brews and the remaining bars started being folded up and hauled away.

Overall, it was a solid 8/10 debut garden party, Mr. Prime Minister, but I had to ding you for the lack of a cheese wheel.
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1. Prime Minister Mark Carney chats with CPAC's Michael Serapio. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **2.** The PMO's Hartley Whitten, left, and Bloomberg's Randy Thanthong-Knight. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **3.** Reuters' David Ljunggren, left, incoming PM chief of staff Marc-André Blanchard, and independent journalist Paul Wells. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **4.** Independent journalist Paul Wells, Deputy Minister David Morrison, and *The Hill Times'* Abbas Rana. *The Hill Times* photograph by Christina Leadlay **5.** CTV's Rachel Aiello, left, and Politico's David Thurton. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **6.** CPAC's Felix Bernier, left, Cameron Ryan, Michael Serapio, and Cassandra Bellefeuille. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **7.** *The Hill Times'* Irem Koca, left, and Minister Joel Lightbound. *The Hill Times* photograph by Christina Leadlay **8.** Global's Sophall Duch, left, and *The Hill Times'* Tessie Sanci. *The Hill Times* photograph by Christina Leadlay **9.** CBC's David Thurton, left, and Independent journalist Chris Guly. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **10.** CTV's Stephanie Ha, left, Spencer Van Dyk, Liberal MP Julie Dabrusin, and Rachel Hanes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **11.** Canadaland's Sam Konner, left, *The Toronto Star's* Joy SpearChief-Morris, The Canadian Press' Alessia Passafiume, and CBC's Derek Vanderwyk. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson **12.** CBC's Power and Politics Team: Meredith Healey, left, Derek Vanderwyk, Tyler Buist, Katie Sherwood, Olivia Chandler, Jessica Mundie, Mayson Maharaj, Racy Rafique, Sarina Mohan, Sarah Brunetti, and Christina Lopes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

More cabinet chiefs of staff confirmed, as other staff hires begin rolling in

Steven Guilbeault has scooped up a former PMO spokesperson to run his Quebec lieutenant office, and has made progress staffing up his culture and identity team.

Another raft of chiefs of staff has been confirmed as news of cabinet staffing hires beyond the top-most jobs begin to trickle out.

New Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Minister **Joël Lightbound** has named **Allie Chalke** as his chief of staff.

Chalke was previously chief of staff to then-rural economic development minister **Gudie Hutchings**, a role she first stepped into in June 2023 fresh from then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** office.

Chalke started in the Trudeau PMO as a senior policy adviser in 2021, and was promoted to deputy policy director in February 2022. She's also a former director of policy to then-fisheries minister **Bernadette Jordan**, and a former Atlantic adviser and later senior policy adviser to then-finance minister **Bill Morneau**.

AI and Digital Innovation Minister **Evan Solomon**, who's also responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, has hired an experienced, albeit relatively new chief of staff, **Anson Duran**, to run his first-ever ministerial office.

Duran was most recently busy helping his former boss, ex-minister **Pablo Rodriguez**, in his campaign for Quebec Liberal Party leadership, having previously been chief of staff to Rodriguez as then-transport minister between March and October of last year—exiting shortly after Rodriguez, who'd resigned the month prior in order to run for Quebec leadership.

Prior to becoming Rodriguez's chief of staff in March 2024, Duran had been his deputy chief of staff and director of policy as transport minister. Duran is also a former senior policy adviser to then-innovation minister **François-Philippe Champagne**, a

past Quebec regional adviser in Trudeau's PMO, a former policy and Quebec regional adviser to then-transport minister **Marc Garneau**, an ex-aide to now-Government House Leader **Steven MacKinnon** as the MP for Gatineau, Que., and a former lawyer with Montreal firm Robinson Sheppard Shapiro, amongst other past experience.

Duran noted his new role in a recent LinkedIn post, writing that the job offers "an incredible opportunity to help shape the future of artificial intelligence at a pivotal moment—for both the technology and society at large."

"I'm immensely energized by the journey ahead," he continued in the post, which he said he may or may not have had "a little help" in writing "from a very enthusiastic large language model."

Transport and Internal Trade Minister **Chrystia Freeland** now has a new chief of staff running her office in **Vasken Vosguian**.

Prior to his exit for Liberal Party headquarters last fall to help prep for the federal election, **Andrew Bevan** had been chief of staff to Freeland in her previous capacity as then-deputy prime minister and finance minister.

Vosguian was previously chief of staff to then-transport and internal trade minister **Anita Anand**, having first taken over as acting chief of staff in the transport office following Duran and Rodriguez's exits last fall. Before then, Vosguian had been deputy chief of staff and director of parliamentary affairs to Rodriguez as transport minister.

Vosguian is also a past director of parliamentary affairs to Rodriguez as then-heritage minister. Between early 2020 and late 2021, he worked for Freeland as then-deputy prime minister and finance minister, beginning as a legislative assistant and ending as a senior parliamentary affairs adviser.

A former assistant to now-Industry Minister **Mélanie Joly** as the MP for Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que., Vosguian has been working for Liberal ministers since

2017, beginning as an executive assistant in then-Treasury Board president **Scott Brison's** office. He worked his way up to senior special assistant for legislative affairs in that office, and went on to briefly tackle issues management and legislative affairs for **Joyce Murray**—who had held the Treasury Board portfolio between March and November 2019—as then-digital government minister.

Canadian Identity and Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault** has named a second chief of staff to run his office as Quebec lieutenant.

As previously reported by **Hill Climbers**, **Hilary Leftick** has been tapped to run Guilbeault's shop as identity and culture minister.

Former PMO media relations director **Ann-Clara Vaillancourt** has landed the role of chief of staff to Guilbeault as Quebec lieutenant.

A former Quebec Liberal staffer—including as press secretary to then-Quebec international relations and La Francophonie minister **Christine St-Pierre**—Vaillancourt has been working in Ottawa since July 2018, beginning as press secretary to then-international trade diversification minister **Jim Carr**.

Vaillancourt went on to work as press secretary to Champagne as then-infrastructure and communities minister before being scooped up to do the same for the Trudeau PMO at the start of 2020. After the 2021 election, Vaillancourt was promoted to lead PMO press secretary, and at the end of 2023, was elevated again to director of media relations. During the recent federal election, Vaillancourt was among those on the road with the Liberal campaign, serving as a campaign spokesperson.

Speaking of Guilbeault, the minister has settled a couple of other staffing hires in his culture and identity office, with **Alisson Lévesque** confirmed as director

of communications and **Marie Froggatt** as executive assistant to the minister.

Lévesque was most recently communications lead for Guilbeault as then-environment minister, having taken on that job this past January fresh from then-diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities minister **Kamal Khara's** office.

Lévesque had been working for Khara since the fall of 2022, beginning as a Quebec adviser in Khara's office as then-seniors minister, and was promoted to director of communications there in May 2023. A month later, she followed

Khara to the diversity portfolio after the minister was shuffled in July 2023, continuing as communications head. Among other past jobs, Lévesque worked as a communications adviser on **France Bélisle's** successful 2021 mayoral campaign in Gatineau, Que.

Froggatt was previously executive assistant to Guilbeault as then-environment minister between April 2023 and this past January. Prior to being hired by Guilbeault, she worked for Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada, last as executive assistant in the office of the director general of ISCED's

spectrum management operations branch. Back on the chief of staff beat, Secretary of State for the Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions **Wayne Long** has hired his former assistant **Kevin Collins** to take on the role.

Collins is another first-time chief of staff, having most recently been deputy chief of staff and director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to then-housing minister **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith**.

Collins started out as a constituency assistant in Long's office as the MP for the then-named riding of Saint John-Rothsay, N.B., in the summer of 2017, and became Long's legislative assistant in Ottawa a few months later at the start of 2018. Collins managed Long's successful 2019 and 2021 re-election campaigns, and after the latter elec-

tion landed his first cabinet-level job as a legislative assistant to then-intergovernmental affairs minister and Privy Council president **Dominic LeBlanc**.

Collins joined then-housing and diversity and inclusion minister **Ahmed Hussen's** office as an issues adviser and parliamentary affairs assistant at the start of 2022. After now-Justice Minister **Sean Fraser** took over as housing minister in July 2023, Collins stayed on as an issues manager and senior parliamentary affairs adviser, and subsequently worked his way up, first to deputy director of parliamentary affairs and issues management, then to director outright.

As recently reported by *Politico*, Secretary of State for Children and Youth **Anna Gainey** has tapped **Alexander Jagric** to be her chief of staff.

Jagric ran Gainey's recent successful re-election campaign in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Que.—a.k.a. NDGW—and earlier this year worked on Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** successful leadership campaign.

It's a return to the Hill for Jagric, who hasn't been walking parliamentary halls since his departure from the Trudeau PMO in May 2024.

A former Quebec Liberal staffer, Jagric first joined Trudeau's office in the fall of 2020 as a legislative assistant, and worked his way up to deputy director of issues management and parliamentary affairs, and then director of the same by the end of 2023—his most recent role.

Jagric is also a former assistant to Gainey's riding successor, Garneau, as then-transport minister. Jagric ran Garneau's successful 2015 campaign in NDGW—returning to do the same in 2019—and was subsequently hired as a special assistant for issues management in Garneau's transport office.

After the 2019 election, Jagric spent almost a year working for then-innovation minister **Navdeep Bains**, ending as a senior adviser for issues and parliamentary affairs, before exiting to join the PMO.

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Marie Froggatt is executive assistant to Minister Guilbeault. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Vasken Vosguian is now chief of staff to Transport and Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Ann-Clara Vaillancourt is now a cabinet chief of staff. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Kevin Collins is chief of staff to Secretary of State Wayne Long. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Anson Duran is chief of staff to the AI and Digital Innovation Minister Evan Solomon. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Alisson Lévesque is director of communications to Minister Guilbeault. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Alex Jagric is chief of staff to Secretary of State Anna Gainey. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Parliamentary Calendar

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.

Nunavut Premier Akeeagok to speak at C.D. Howe Institute's panel 'Asserting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty' on June 17 in Toronto



Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok will speak at C.D. Howe Institute's panel 'Asserting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty' on June 17 in Toronto. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

SUNDAY, JUNE 15— TUESDAY, JUNE 17

G7 Summit—This year, Canada is president of the G7, and the annual leaders' meeting will take place in Kananaskis, Alta., from Sunday, June 15, to Tuesday, June 17. Details: g7.canada.ca.

MONDAY, JUNE 16

CAFP Annual Memorial Service—The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians will hold its annual memorial service to honour the 27 Parliamentarians who have passed away in the previous year. An informal reception will follow. Monday, June 16, at 9 a.m. in the Senate Chamber, Senate of Canada Building, 2 Rideau St. Details: exparl.ca.

National Virtual Forum on the Building Canada Act—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a national virtual forum on the Building Canada Act. First Nations leadership will gather for an important dialogue on the federal government's proposed Bill C-5, One Canadian Economy: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act. Monday, June 16, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: afn.ca.

MONDAY, JUNE 16— TUESDAY, JUNE 17

2025 Americas Agriculture & Food Security Forum—Inter-American Institute for Cooperation's office in Canada, with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the collaboration of many Canadian and international partners in the agri-food sector, is convening the 2025 Americas Agriculture & Food Security Forum. This event will serve as a positive and inclusive space for dialogue, bringing together government officials, industry representatives, academics, development experts and students, to explore solutions that enhance agriculture, food security, sustainability, innovation, and trade. Monday, June 16, to Tuesday, June 17, held online and in person at Olds College, in Olds, Alta. Details: americasagforum.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Panel: 'Asserting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty'—Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok, the head of Greenland's

representation to the United States and Canada Jacob Isboethsen, Trent University professor Whitney Lackenbauer, and Arctic360 president, and CEO Dr. Jessica M. Shadian will deliver the Tom Kierans Lecture 2025 hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, June 17, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17— THURSDAY, JUNE 19

Workshop: 'The Road to Sovereignty'—Okimaw and Niipaawi Strategies host "The Road to Sovereignty," a three-day, high-level gathering focused on building Indigenous law policy frameworks that reflect the unique traditions, cultures, and governance aspirations of First Nations across Canada. Tuesday, June 17, to Thursday, June 19, at the Rideau Club, 15th floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

NMMA Canada Parliamentary Reception—It's boating season in Canada. Join the National Marine Manufacturers Association in Canada on the Rideau Canal to experience our boats and meet our Canadian manufacturers on Wednesday, June 18, from 5-8 p.m. ET beside the NAC patio and the canal. RSVP by June 13 to rsvp@blueskystrategyygroup.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19

Sickle Cell Breakfast—To mark National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, Senator Marie-France Lalonde will host a parliamentary breakfast in collaboration with Canada's Sickle Cell Association, and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health of uOttawa. Thursday, June 19, 7:30-9 a.m. ET, Senators' Lounge, Senate of Canada Building, 2 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP by June 6 to: dichemael.jean-baptiste@sen.parl.gc.ca.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

Congolese Excellence Award—Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde will present the Congolese Excellence Award at an evening celebrating the achievements and exceptional talent of the Congolese community in Canada. Friday, June 20, at 6 p.m. ET at 144

Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20— SUNDAY, JUNE 29

Ottawa International Jazz Festival—The Ottawa International Jazz Festival once again shines a national spotlight on Canadian jazz with a stellar lineup that stretches from coast to coast to coast. Friday, June 20, to Sunday, June 29 in Confederation Park and other downtown locations. Details: ottawajazzfestival.com.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24— THURSDAY, JUNE 26

NATO Summit—The 2025 NATO Summit will be held at the World Forum in The Hague, the Netherlands, from Tuesday, June 24, to Thursday, June 26. Details: nato.int.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25

Conference: 'Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance'—The Canadian International Council co-hosts this conference, "Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance," exploring the intersection of pluralism, security, and transatlantic partnerships in an evolving global order with an emphasis on how Canada and Germany, as well as other G7 nations, can collaborate to strengthen inclusive societies and enhance stability. Wednesday, June 25, at 8:30a.m. ET at the Global Centre for Pluralism, 330 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details: thecic.org.

Panel: 'Freedom to Move'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts "Freedom to Move," a panel discussion on labour mobility and non-competes with experts from McMaster University, the Competition Bureau, and more. Wednesday, June 25, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

GRIC Spring Social—The Government Relations Institute of Canada's Board of Directors hosts a toast to the end of the Parliamentary session and to welcome the summer. Wednesday, June 25, at 5 p.m. ET at Beyond the Pale Taproom, 21 George St., Ottawa. Register: gric-irc.ca.

Webinar: 'Is the Pivot Possible?'—The Canadian International Council hosts a webinar, "Is the Pivot Possible? Evaluating Economic Diversification Options in the Age of Trump," featuring former co-CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada Paul Evans, and retired diplomat and host of the *Global Exchange* podcast Colin Robertson. Wednesday, June 25, at 6 p.m. ET happening online: thecic.org.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

Sharon Musgrave is Retiring—After 35.5 years at the CBC, Sharon Musgrave is ready to travel, sit on the dock and ski her butt off. Come and raise a glass to Musgrave, a friend and colleague. Thursday, June 26, 6 p.m. (speeches begin at 7 p.m.). The Met, 700 Sussex Dr, Ottawa. Please RSVP: rosemary.barton@cbc.ca

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

Fireside Chat: 'Global War and Chaos'—The Royal Canadian Legion hosts a fireside chat on "Global War and Chaos: How Did We Get Here and What's The Solution?" featuring retired general Walter Natynczyk and retired general David Lord Richards of Herstmonceux. Friday, June 27, at 7 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details via Eventbrite.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29

Ottawa Commission on the Future of Ireland—Sinn Féin has conducted commission events the length and breadth of Ireland. Ottawa is the next stop as Sinn Féin encourages the Irish diaspora in Canada to have a say in Ireland's constitutional future. Featuring Sinn Féin TD Rose Conway-Walsh. Sunday, June 29, at Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts, 310 Saint Patrick St. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JUNE 30

Senator Gold's Retirement—Today is non-affiliated Quebec Senator Marc Gold's 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

THURSDAY, JULY 3— SATURDAY, JULY 5

CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting—The annual Caribbean Community Heads of Government

meeting is scheduled to take place from Thursday, July 3, to Saturday, July 5, in St. George's, Grenada. Details: caricom.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 5

Canada First Stampede Barbecue—The Conservative Party of Canada hosts its Canada First Stampede Barbecue at the Calgary Stampede. Saturday, July 5, at 5:30 p.m. MT at Heritage Park, 1900 Heritage Dr. SW, Calgary. Details online.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

Panel: 'Reforming Access to Information'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts a panel discussion on "Reforming Access to Information," featuring Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard, freelance journalist Dean Beeby, Canadian Press reporter Jim Bronskill, and access to information activist Ken Rubin. Wednesday, July 9, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, 302 Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

Lawn Summer Night—Cystic Fibrosis Canada's annual lawn bowling fundraiser is switching things up this year in Ottawa. We're condensing the excitement into one epic evening instead of four. Invite your friends out to come watch, and get ready for cold drinks and great prizes. Wednesday, July 9, at 6 p.m. ET at the Elmdale Lawn Bowling Club, 1 MacFarlane Ave., Ottawa. Details: lawnsummernights.com.

THURSDAY, JULY 10— SUNDAY, JULY 20

Ottawa Bluesfest—Ottawa's Bluesfest returns for 10 days featuring a lineup of musicians from a variety of genres including blues, world music, alternative, rock, jazz, funk, soul, rap, folk, urban, and more. Thursday, July 10, to Sunday, July 20 in LeBreton Flats Park, Ottawa. Details: ottawabluesfest.ca.

TUESDAY, JULY 15— THURSDAY, JULY 17

Assembly of First Nations' AGM—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual general meeting. Tuesday, July 15, to Thursday, July 17, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: afn.ca/events.

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