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NEWS

Energy Minister Hodgson top-lobbied in Carney cabinet since May shuffle

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson is the top-lobbied federal minister since the May cabinet shuffle, whose engagements with the natural resources sector in recent months have included more than a dozen organizations connected to oil and gas wanting to discuss priorities, including a call to scrap the industrial carbon price.

"New minister, new politician in general in Hodgson. It's a lot he's trying to take in," said Muhammad Ali, vice-president for Crestview Strategy and a former Liberal staffer. "He's been trying to engage as many stakeholders as possible, so I think that's an indication of a lot happening here. A lot of people want to get to him early and often to make the case that they fit the plans of the prime minister and the importance of their projects or their sector within the natural resources side."

Hodgson (Markham—Thornhill, Ont.), who took on the energy and natural resources portfolio on May 13 as a rookie politician, is so far the most popular member of Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) cabinet in terms of communication reports for federal lobbying. Hodgson was listed in 43 communication reports between May 13 and July 8, based on a search of the federal lobbyists' registry on July 8. Following behind Hodgson is Industry Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), who appears in 28 communication reports in that time frame.

Since the cabinet shuffle, Hodgson has been involved in communications with fossil fuel producers including Cenovus Energy, Imperial Oil, Suncor Energy and Tourmaline Oil Corp.,

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NEWS

Conservative MP Khanna mobilizing support for Poilievre's upcoming leadership review, say Conservative sources

BY ABBAS RANA

While Pierre Poilievre is preoccupied with his August byelection and with "grumbling" about his leadership getting

"louder," Conservative MP and national outreach chair Arpan Khanna is reaching out to his party's unsuccessful candidates from the last election, urging them to help elect as many delegates as possible for the Jan.

29, 2026, biennial policy convention to help their leader win the upcoming leadership review.

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POLITICOS AND COWBOY HATS

Politicians including Prime Minister Mark Carney, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, interim NDP leader Don Davies and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May attended this year's Calgary Stampede. **See story by Eleanor Wand, pp. 6-7**



Prime Minister Mark Carney, second left, made a splat on July 6 at his first Stampede as prime minister, where he poked fun at himself for not being able to properly flip pancakes. Watching their boss' handiwork are Liberal MPs Kody Blois, centre, and Corey Hogan, centre right. Photograph courtesy of X

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Ex-justice minister David Lametti joins Carney's PMO

Former justice minister David Lametti, pictured in 2022, returns to the Hill on July 14 as the prime minister's principal secretary. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Former justice minister **David Lametti** returns to the Hill today, but this time he's in the Prime Minister's Office.

"Time to officially confirm a rumour that has been circulating for a while now: I have now joined the Prime Minister's team and on July 14 will assume the role of Principal Secretary to Prime Minister **Mark Carney**," Lametti posted on social media last week.

It's been a year and a half since Lametti stepped down as MP for LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que., which he'd held since 2015, and returned to his pre-political career of law at the Montreal firm Fasken Martineau DuMoulin.

Lametti offered "sincere thanks" to his colleagues at Fasken, whom he described as "smart, savvy and truly nice," with a special shout-out to **Alex Stein-**

house, Lametti's former chief of staff at Justice, who left the Hill in August 2023 and is currently at Fasken.

During his nine years as a Liberal MP, Lametti had been a parliamentary secretary from 2017 to 2019, at which point he was promoted to then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s cabinet as minister of justice, a role he held until he was shuffled out in August 2023.

Former Clark, Mulroney-era cabinet minister Jake Epp has died

Longtime former Conservative MP **Jake Epp** died on July 5, at the age of 85.

Born in Manitoba, Epp was a high school history teacher prior to his life in politics. He was first elected to the House in 1972 representing Provencher, Man. He served in **Joe Clark**'s cabinet as minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development from June 1979 to March 1980, and then in **Brian Mulroney**'s cabinet first as minister for national health and welfare from 1984 to 1989, and then as minister for energy and mines from 1989 until he stepped away from cabinet in early 1993 as he'd decided not to run in the election later that year.

Post-politics, Epp became a senior executive at TransCanada Pipelines until 2000, and served as Ontario Power Generation's chair of the board of directors.

Recently retired Conservative Senator **Don Plett** on X on July 8 called Epp "a close friend and a dear mentor. His many years of public service left a lasting impact on Canada."



Former Conservative cabinet minister Jake Epp, left, pictured with former deputy minister Paul Tellier, at a press conference in 2008. Epp died on July 5. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster

It was through Plett's father who was working on Epp's 1965 campaign that Plett got his first taste of politics. "I enjoyed it. I got to meet Jake, started following him a bit in politics, became very good friends, and just kind of caught the bug," Plett recalled of his time as a scrutineer during

his exit interview with *The Hill Times*.

Epp leaves behind his wife, **Lydia**, his daughter **Lisa Epp-Coleman**, and granddaughters **Melissa** and **Mackenzie Coleman**. His memorial service will take place on July 22 at Cross-view Church in Steinbach, Man.

Last of West Block's feral cats has died



Coal the cat, left, with Daniel Taurozzi in 2021. *Photograph courtesy of Daniel Taurozzi*

Coal, the last of Parliament Hill's feral cats, has died. He was 17 years old, and had been fighting salivary gland carcinoma, a rare and aggressive cancer.

His human caregiver, **Daniel Taurozzi**, confirmed to *Heard on the Hill* that Coal died by "Veterinary Assistance in Dying" at Ottawa's Capital City Specialty and Emergency Animal Hospital on July 8, surrounded by Taurozzi and Coal's younger adoptive feline brother, **Winston**.

"His condition had become grievous and irremediable, beyond what love, medicine, or therapies could ease. It was time to let him go," Taurozzi told *HOH* by email on July 10.

Despite Coal's declining health, "he was able to enjoy nearly a year of good quality of life, thanks to the extraordinary care he received and unwavering love," Taurozzi posted on Facebook.

A post from an X account purporting to be Prime Minister **Mark Carney**'s cat **Nico** offered condolences on July 8: "My fellow Catnadians, it is my sad duty to report that the Last Parliament Hill Cat and my predecessor Coal has passed away at the age of 17. Coal dedicated his life to service as a Parliament Hill Cat greeting visitors from all over the world."

HOH had reported on Feb. 5 that Taurozzi had been fundraising to help cover the costs of Coal's increased health-care needs, raising more than \$15,000, according to the CBC.

Coal was the last remaining cat from the former feral cat colony that was first established in the 1920s behind West Block to help deal with the Hill's rodents. Featuring a bespoke wooden shelter and watched over by a team of volunteers including Taurozzi, the cat sanctuary officially closed in 2013, and Coal had been living with Taurozzi ever since.

'I just love to hear when the PM says to the bureaucracy 'no, it's going to happen,' happens'



Former Conservative cabinet minister Leona Aglukkaq, left, former prime minister Stephen Harper, Nunavut Minister David Akeeagok, and Conservative MP Bob Zimmer in Iqaluit, Nunavut. *Screenshot courtesy of X*

With all current talk of "build, baby, build," here's a friendly reminder of how long such big infrastructure projects actually take to complete.

Former prime minister **Stephen Harper**, Conservative MP **Bob Zimmer**, Nunavut Minister **David Akeeagok**, and Harper-era cabinet minister **Leona Aglukkaq** recently toured the Port of Iqaluit while they were in town for the Arctic Sovereignty and Security Summit. "How does it feel standing in front of the port that was once a piece of paper [and] that's now a reality?" Zimmer asked his former boss in a 90-second video

posted on X, referring to this project's start 10 years ago during the last Conservative government. "It's great to see tangible results of all those years of effort," smiled Harper, looking out at the port which opened in 2023.

"I remember them [the engineers] telling me you can't put a port in there, it's not going to work with the tides, but they figured it out."

Replied Zimmer: "I just love to hear when the prime minister says to the bureaucracy 'no, it's going to happen,' happens."

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As Ontario Liberal Leader Crombie faces review, Liberal MP Erskine-Smith opens door for 'renewal' in provincial leadership: email

Liberal MPP Ted Hsu says he supports Bonnie Crombie as the party leader but would leave it up to party delegates to vote as they see fit at the Sept. 12-14 annual general meeting.

BY ABBAS RANA AND STUART BENSON

Four-term Liberal MP Nate Erskine-Smith has emailed his supporters—opening the debate for provincial leadership renewal—to urge them to attend the upcoming Ontario Liberal annual general meeting, where delegates will review Bonnie Crombie's leadership.

"This isn't just another meeting," wrote Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.) in a July 10 email regarding the Sept. 12-14, 2025, gathering in Toronto.

Under the subject line "Help build a stronger Ontario Liberal Party—register as a delegate before July 25," the MP said members have the opportunity to "shape the future" of the party.

"Delegates will vote to elect a new executive, set party policies and decide whether the party should have a new leader for the next election," he wrote in the email obtained by *The Hill Times*. "It's an opportunity to shape the future of our party and renew our organizational efforts. I hope to see you there, if possible, pass this along and encourage your friends and family who share a vision for serious renewal in Ontario to join you."

The Hill Times reached out to Erskine-Smith via email, text, and phone to ask for a comment for this article, but did not receive a reply by press time. Erskine-Smith lost the provincial leadership election to Crombie in December 2023. Kingston Liberal MPP Ted Hsu and Ottawa Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Ont.) also ran unsuccessfully in the same contest.

In an interview with *The Hill Times* on July 10, Hsu said he personally supports Crombie as party leader, but believes delegates should vote according to their conscience in the upcoming review. He added that he's been hearing rumours for weeks that some of Erskine-Smith's supporters have been discussing a possible change in party leadership. Hsu said that he spoke with Erskine-Smith a few weeks ago, and during their conversation, there seemed to be an indirect hint that the MP was "interested in the future of the Ontario Liberal Party."

"I've heard rumours of some organization happening, but the rumours didn't tell me, like, to what degree this organization was occurring, [whether] some supporters of Nate have had conversations between themselves or something," said Hsu.

"[Nate] wasn't that explicit, but he mentioned that he's interested in the future of the Ontario Liberal Party."

Hsu did not rule out the possibility of seeking the provincial leadership again if

it were to open up following the leadership review.

"At the moment, no, but I haven't been thinking. I haven't been wanting to run for leadership yet," said Hsu. "I mean, I won't say absolutely no, but I don't feel a desire to run for the leadership right now. My job is to support Bonnie, and I do support her, and I want her leadership to be the best it can be, and I want my fellow caucus members to do their best, my job is to be part of the team."

Two other senior Liberals confirmed to *The Hill Times* on July 10 that Erskine-Smith wants a change in Liberal leadership in Ontario.

Meanwhile, in his email, Erskine-Smith asked supporters to register as delegates by July 25 for the AGM. He also informed them that the early bird fee to attend is \$375, and that if cost is an issue for anyone, the local electoral district association can subsidize the cost.

"Apologies for the less personal note as there is a timeliness to this message and too many of you to reach in a relatively short window of time. I hope you can help and that we can connect and catch up sometime over the summer," wrote Erskine-Smith in his email. He also provided his phone number if anyone has any questions.

"The short of it is this: we deserve better than the incompetent and corrupt Ford government. To deliver positive change, we need our Ontario Liberal Party at its best. And there's an opportunity to strengthen our politics this fall. More specifically, there will be an AGM on September 12-14 in Toronto. You should step up as a delegate and make sure to register before July 25 for the best chance to being selected," he wrote.

In January 2024, Erskine-Smith announced that he would not seek re-election in the 2025 federal election, but changed his mind in December after then-prime minister Justin Trudeau promoted him to cabinet as housing minister. He was re-elected for a fourth term in the 2025 election, but was one of 10 ministers dropped from cabinet in May by Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.).

In social media posts, Erskine-Smith openly expressed his disappointment for being dropped from cabinet. "I ran again because of the opportunity to make an even bigger difference around the cabinet table and to help fix the housing crisis. I'm not back in any role, unfortunately, so it may not surprise you to learn that it's been a strange day on my end," he wrote on May 13.

"It's impossible not to feel disrespected, and the way it played out doesn't sit right. But I'm mostly disappointed that my team and I won't have the chance to build on all we accomplished with only a short runway."

On May 14, in an interview with CBC's *Power & Politics* host David Cochrane, Erskine-Smith said that his social media post was taken out of context, saying that he was disappointed that he didn't get to finish the work he wanted to do on the housing file, but wished the best to the new team. He said he will now focus on his riding and, as he did before, would continue



Liberal MP Nate Erskine-Smith is opening up the debate for 'renewal' in Ontario provincial leadership, according to an email obtained by *The Hill Times*. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

to express his opinions on different issues publicly. He also restarted his podcast, and did not rule out running again for the Ontario Liberal leadership.

"At the end of the day, who joins politics for any other reason other than to make the biggest difference they can?" Erskine-Smith told Cochrane. "And there's a huge

opportunity to make a difference at the provincial level. But, you know, it remains to be seen. Who knows? At the moment, to be honest, what I'm focused on is getting to my five-year-old's baseball game tonight, and my eight-year-old's baseball game next week, and being a good coach."

The Hill Times reached out to Erskine-Smith on June 24 to inquire if he has any plans to jump back into Ontario provincial politics, but did not hear back.

The Hill Times reached out to Crombie for her reaction to Erskine-Smith's email and the possibility he raised for leadership renewal. In a statement, she did not directly address the question:

"I welcome party members engaging in the democratic process, that's how we grow stronger. This Fall's AGM is an opportunity to keep building momentum, energize our grassroots, and focus on what matters most: defeating Doug Ford and delivering for Ontarians," Crombie—herself a former Liberal MP—wrote in her statement.

"Since becoming Leader, I've been focused on rebuilding our party—restoring Official Party Status, rebuilding our team, revitalizing our fundraising efforts, attracting talented new candidates, and growing support across the province. There's more to do, and I'm ready to keep moving forward."

In the February 2025 provincial election, the Crombie Liberals won 14 seats, which is five more than what they had going into the vote. But the Ontario Liberal leader failed to win a seat. The Progressive Conservatives, led by Doug Ford, won a landslide majority with 80 seats, Marit Stiles' New Democrats ended up with 27 seats, and the Greens won two seats.

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NEWS

Courts unlikely to provide fifth extension to Ottawa to address Lost Canadians before November, says immigration lawyer

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice has imposed a deadline of Nov. 20, 2025, for the federal government to amend provisions of the first-generation limit for those born abroad.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Parliament needs to “just get on with it” and address the issue of “lost Canadians” through amendments to the Canada Citizenship Act, according to Jenny Kwan, NDP critic of citizenship and immigration.

She told *The Hill Times* that she wonders if a judge would have the patience to grant the federal government a fifth extension on a court order requiring action before the current November deadline.

“This is astounding. What the current situation is right now is that Canada’s Citizenship Act, with respect to lost Canadians, is in violation of the Charter [of Rights and Freedoms], and [Bill C-3] will make it Charter-compliant,” said Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.).

“I don’t know how much patience [the judge] will have to continue to see delays in the passage of the bill to make it Charter-compliant.”

Immigration Minister Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, N.S.) tabled Bill C-3, an Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), in the House on June 5. The House rose for the summer on June 20, pausing the bill’s progress until Sept. 15, when the next parliamentary sitting begins.

If passed, the bill would reverse a change to the Citizenship Act made by then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper in 2009 that introduced a “first-generation limit” when it came to citizenship status. Since that 2009 amendment, a Canadian citizen who was born outside of Canada cannot pass citizenship status on to their child if that child was also born or adopted outside the country.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice declared in December 2023, that the first-generation limit was unconstitutional on the grounds that it unjustifiably limited mobility and equality rights

under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. At that time, the Court gave the federal government a deadline of six months to fix the law through legislation. This deadline was later extended on four occasions, with the current deadline set as Nov. 20, 2025.

Kwan described Bill C-3 as “a significant piece of legislation that needs to be done,” in an interview with *The Hill Times*. The bill is nearly identical to the former Bill C-71, which was introduced in May 2024, but died on the order paper when Parliament was prorogued on Jan. 6, 2025.

Kwan argued that a Conservative filibuster in the fall sitting that delayed progress in the House contributed to death of Bill C-71.

“Basically, nothing got through, and [Bill C-71] also died on the order paper. So, in this round, it will depend on whether or not the Conservatives will continue to play political games ahead of lost Canadians,” said Kwan.

The Hill Times reached out to Conservative MPs including citizenship and immigration critic Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, Alta.) and Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, Sask.), a member of the House citizenship committee, but did not receive a response by deadline.

Bill C-3 would amend the Citizenship Act to automatically grant Canadian citizenship to anyone who would be a citizen today were it not for the first-generation limit. The bill would also introduce a “substantial connection test” for Canadian citizens born outside of Canada who wish to pass on citizenship to their children born abroad. Going forward, the bill would allow access to citizenship beyond the first generation, so long as the parent has spent at least 1,095 cumulative—not necessarily consecutive—days in Canada prior to the birth of their child.

Redekopp told the House on June 19 that Conservatives have significant issues with Bill C-3, and criticized the substantial connection test of 1,095 non-consecutive days as “not substantial at all.”

“It is a very weak way to commit to being a Canadian citizen and then to confer that citizenship onto children. It is not a real test of commitment because the days do not have to be consecutive,” Redekopp told the House. “Also, people need to understand the current situation in our country. They need to live here to understand how things are and

some of the issues we have right now in our country ... People do not know that if they are living in another country.”

Kwan argued that objections to the non-consecutive 1,095-day minimum don’t make sense.

“Take, for example, a person who’s a pilot, right? You travel all the time. You could be a second-generation born and you’re a pilot. You fly out of Canada regularly as a pilot, and then that means you’re leaving Canada all the time. So, does that mean to say that they can never get a Canadian citizenship? That doesn’t make any sense at all,” she said.

“You have to recognize the fact that we live in a global society now. Canada is a global country, and people move. You have to make sure that is addressed in such a way that fits the times of today.”

Ryan Neely, an immigration lawyer and partner at McCrea Immigration Law in British Columbia, told *The Hill Times* that he expects it is unlikely that the federal government could get yet another extension from the court to have more time to amend the Citizenship Act. He said this is because the most recent extension was for only a period of eight months, and not the full 12 months that was requested by the government.

“[The court has] been very clear in the way that they’ve handled the extensions that this is it,” said Neely. “We’re looking at almost two years of offending legislation. I cannot see us getting past a two-year mark.”

If the government does not pass Bill C-3 by the November deadline, and the courts issue no further extension to the ruling, then Section 3(3) of the Citizenship Act will be “of no force or effect,” which means Canada would be left with the citizenship-by-descent rules that were used prior to the 2009 amendments by the Harper government, effectively eliminating the first-generation limit.

However, if the bill doesn’t pass, that would mean that the substantial connection test part of the bill wouldn’t be implemented, according to Neely.

“[If] they don’t pass it, and the courts are fed up and they say, ‘we’re just striking it down,’ now you have just literally a gap, a hole, and there are no guidelines on the sides of it requiring the connection test,” he said.

The federal government did not appeal the court’s 2023 ruling because they agreed that “the current law has unaccept-

able consequences for Canadians whose children were born outside the country,” according to a press release from Immigration.

Amandeep Hayer, an immigration lawyer with Hayer Law and an executive member of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) Immigration Law Section for B.C., told *The Hill Times* that Bill C-3 has potential to address a gender discrimination issue in the Citizenship Act.

The act, which came into force on Jan. 1, 1947, carried forward several “antiquated concepts” from the 1914 Nationalization Act, and introduced several limitations on the acquisition of citizenship, according to a letter from the CBA to the Senate’s social affairs committee on Dec. 2, 2024. One of those limitations was that for a child born in wedlock, citizenship by descent could be acquired only through a Canadian father, but not through a Canadian mother, and if the parents were unmarried, citizenship could be acquired only through the mother.

“The initial 1947 Act, along with the subsequent 1952 Act and earlier British Nationality Acts, presented a major issue: they were heavily discriminatory based on gender and marital status. Specifically, a woman could only pass on her Canadian citizenship or British nationality if she was unmarried at the time of her child’s birth. Conversely, a man could pass on his Canadian citizenship or British nationality to his wife’s children,” said Hayer in an emailed statement on July 9.

“Additionally, Canadian citizenship or British nationality could be lost under several circumstances, such as a woman marrying a foreign national and acquiring citizenship in that country, being born outside Canada and having one’s birth unregistered with Canadian authorities, or having one’s mother marry a foreign national while they were minors or having one’s father acquire citizenship in another country,” he added.

According to Hayer, this discriminatory practice persisted until Parliament introduced a new Citizenship Act, effective Feb. 15, 1977, which stipulated that anyone born outside of Canada would be a Canadian citizen regardless of their parent’s gender, and the maintenance that one’s Canadian citizenship was unaffected by their parent’s actions.

However, this act applied only prospectively, meaning it only covered those born after Feb. 15, 1977. For those born before, the old laws continued to apply, albeit with some amendments made in 2009 and 2014, Hayer said.

“In a landmark unanimous decision in 1997, the Supreme Court ruled that the retrospective application of the old laws amounted to gender discrimination, violating section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Since then, the courts and Parliament have been engaged in a back-and-forth process to address potential issues and fix them with narrowly focused legislation,” he said in the email.

Don Chapman, a long-time advocate for restoring citizenship to lost Canadians, told *The Hill Times* that he considers Bill C-3 “good to pass,” although added that a deficiency he sees in the legislation is it doesn’t specify that citizenship is a right.

“Citizenship in Canada is not a right. It’s privilege,” he said. “You tell me how bad that could be if we elected a Donald Trump. I mean, Trump would be out there canceling everybody’s citizenship. And we’re very complacent in Canada where we go, ‘well, that wouldn’t happen.’ Like hell, it wouldn’t. Canada’s been stripping people of citizenship since there’s been a Canada.”

Chapman was stripped of his Canadian citizenship 64 years ago because of the rules under the Citizenship Act at that time. When Chapman was six years old, his father moved his family to the United States and took on American citizenship. Because his father had given up his Canadian citizenship, Chapman’s Canadian citizenship was automatically revoked.

“I wanted to know why I couldn’t be a citizen of my own country, and it turned out that I was stripped because I was born in Canada in wedlock and I was not adopted. Had any of those things been different, I would have remained Canadian. See how nutty this gets real fast?” he said.

A legislative amendment to the Citizenship Act in 2009 restored Chapman’s status as a Canadian citizen, following years of advocacy and lobbying.

He said the issue of when citizenship begins is “a huge issue that still affects people.”

“What someone doesn’t know about citizenship law can hurt them. Taking away one’s citizenship is one of the worst things that could ever happen to someone. Hitler knew this, as one of his first official acts as leader of the Third Reich was stripping Jews of their citizenship. When you’re not a citizen, you can’t get a passport or a driver’s license, you can’t work or get married; you often can’t get medical treatment and social services,” Chapman said in a follow-up email on July 7.

“Forced family separation is a big deal. Like with residential school survivors, many Lost Canadian children will live with the horrors of forced family separation for the rest of their lives.”

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NDP shapes leadership race as cracks form between HQ and grassroots members

A new group is encouraging donors to support local riding associations, intending to divert five to 10 per cent of funds away from the national party to ‘send upper management a message.’

BY ELEANOR WAND

A pitch for New Democrats to divert their donations away from the federal party and instead to local riding associations is drawing mixed support, with some calling it “misguided” and others welcoming a shift away from a “top-down” approach that contributed to the party’s worst electoral outcome.

The new group—called Reclaim Canada’s NDP—said party management is not listening to “boots on the ground,” and it’s time to empower local riding associations. The group is aiming to divert five to 10 per cent of funds to “send upper management a message.”

That push came before the NDP national council’s July 10 announcement of a \$100,000 entry fee for a race that begins in September 2025 and ends “no later than” March 29, 2026. That’s well above Reclaim’s recommended \$50,000, or the \$30,000 set in 2017, when Jagmeet Singh ran and won leadership.

“We are disappointed, but it’s important to know that this could have been \$150,000... It could have been way worse,” said Keith de Silva-Legault, co-organizer of Reclaim, which was founded by electoral district associations (EDAs), former MPs, candidates, staff, and volunteers. While he said he considered the six-month runway “a big victory,” he also said the group plans to “keep that pressure on.”

The group is among NDP members debating party renewal and a review of the 2025 campaign, which saw the NDP lose two-thirds of its seats in the House, including the riding held by Singh. On July 8, the party announced a “review and renewal” process, facilitated by former Ottawa NDP candidate Emilie Taman.

“We know that if the folks in charge aren’t listening, we, as a united front, need to be so loud that the upper management can’t help but listen,” said de Silva-Legault. “There needs to be more pressure, and we’re hoping to apply that pressure.”

But not all are convinced by the group’s approach. Former NDP MP Matthew Dubé said he doesn’t think the “appearance of conflict” is “helpful” to party-rebuilding efforts.



After April’s election resulted in a devastating loss for the NDP, the party appointed Don Davies as interim leader. Now, New Democrats prepare for a leadership race while battling infighting among party management and grassroots supporters. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“I don’t think that it makes sense to see riding associations and the party as being in opposition,” the former Quebec MP said. “It just seems to be more driven by negativity and this need to find some kind of conflict.”

Dubé also said it’s the wrong approach to be “disparaging towards hard-working staff,” many of whom lost their jobs post-election. He added that many working for the central party, who are or were grassroots activists themselves, “believe in the issues and the politics just as much as the grassroots activists,” calling the push to divert funds “misguided.”

“Strong local riding associations are well connected in their communities, and should have the capacity to raise money from their local supporters,” he said. “It’s what I did as a candidate and MP, and I know that’s what many others have done as well.”

Some EDAs ‘mulling over’ Reclaim’s proposal

Support on the proposal at the local level is mixed. Heather Zaleski, president of the NDP’s riding association in Windsor West, Ont., said she’s “not sure” if she supports the idea, and is still “mulling over” the potential impact. The riding was represented by former NDP MP Brain Masse for 23 years, before he was unseated by rookie Conservative MP Harb Gill in the April election.

Zaleski acknowledged there are “some pros,” noting that more money and engagement on the local level would allow riding associations to “tailor” their “advertising or events.”

“I do think a lot of time these big political parties, they’re based in Ottawa ... where I’m from, we have totally different problems,” she said. “Sometimes when you get it top-down, it’s kind of generic, and a lot of the times it doesn’t work here.”

But Zaleski said she worries that it could lead to people “never” donating to the central party,

which she doesn’t think is a good thing, either.

Michelle Scebenski, NDP riding association president in Elmwood—Transcona, Man., said she’s waiting on feedback from members before commenting. She said she “didn’t think there would be a lot of resistance” to diverting some funds to the riding, a historically strong orange seat previously represented by Leila Dance and Daniel Blaikie before the Conservatives took it in April.

While the association has sometimes struggled with resources, Scebenski said it “doesn’t mean” running campaigns “isn’t doable” and that, in her riding, there is a lot of grassroots engagement.

Other EDAs are onboard. Marie-Pierre Guerin, president of the NDP Lanark—Frontenac, Ont. riding association said she found there to be “no communication” from the party in the recent election. The riding, located south-west of Ottawa, is represented by nine-time Conservative MP Scott Reid. Guerin said she was stuck running a campaign with \$3,000 and six volunteers.

“As a riding association, our phone calls were not answered. Our emails were not answered,” she said. “There was a black hole between the grassroots people, the grassroots movement.”

Guerin, who supports Reclaim Canada’s NDP, said “leadership has not listened to anyone in two years,” and suggested NDP donors will be on the hook for the loan she said the party took out to finance the campaign.

Due to many candidates failing to meet the 10-per-cent vote share threshold for a partial reimbursement of their campaign expenses, the party has lost significant cash that could have been used to repay some of the loan.

Adam Frank, who ran for the NDP in the Montreal riding of Mount Royal, agreed that upper management is out of touch with the grassroots.

“The candidate is starting from zero. You’ve got no funds,” he said,

explaining he had to pay for his own campaign materials.

Debate underway over leadership race rules

In announcing the rules, NDP National President Lucy Watson noted the entry fee is much lower than other parties, and said additional rules would be published prior to the race’s start in September.

“I look forward to the dynamic exchange between candidates and members about the future of our party and how we will continue to deliver relief for working Canadians,” she said in the statement, which also announced the convention would be held in Winnipeg, Man.

The topic of leadership has already caused a stir within the party. A month ago, following the appointment of Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) as interim leader, a leaked letter from three NDP MPs—Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.), Lori Idlout (Nunavut), and Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.)—revealed some frustration. In their note to the executive and council, the MPs said they were not properly consulted on the matter. The trio has since come out in support of Davies, saying it was the process—not Davies—which concerned them.

But since then, other leaked emails have surfaced indicating that some party executives were pushing for higher entrance fees and a shorter race timeline, leading to infighting and resignations, according to *Canada’s National Observer*, as some believe the party is setting up the race to favour certain candidates.

Dubé, speaking before the rules were set, said he thinks there “needs to be some barrier of entry” for leadership hopefuls.

“I don’t think just anyone should be running for leader,” he said. “We need qualified individuals. ... But I also agree with the sentiment that it shouldn’t be prohibitively high.”

NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.) offered a similar assessment. McPherson told *The Hill Times* she’s “seriously considering” running for leadership, and noted there is a “balance” when it comes to entrance fees.

“You want to have a fee to enter that is accessible,” she said in a July 5 interview. “But you also want to ensure that, frankly, ... whoever is selected as a leader has the capacity to raise money. That’s a key role.”

NDP launches election post-mortem

Part of Taman’s review is expected to include “guided discussions” with “local campaign teams.”

Zaleski said she hopes the campaign review will lead to “some major changes,” and a less “top-down” approach that includes more local voices. The party is at “a great turning point,” said Zaleski, who is “optimistic” New Democrats can “rebuild with regular people in our working class.”

“We should be able to, from each riding, have an opinion, have a voice, and work cohesively to try to build a better movement,” Zaleski said. “We’re a poor party of the workers ... We’re a party of regular folks, and we want to make sure we capture that we’re not an elite party.”

De Silva-Legault said Reclaim Canada’s NDP would be “very, very happy” to participate in the review and renewal process, but noted “it’s important to remember” that following the 2021 campaign debrief—which he said was “good” and “assessed all of the issues”—sufficient action wasn’t taken.

“The report came back saying that the 2021 platform lacks substance and was too focused on the leader, rather than ideas,” de Silva-Legault recalled. “In 2025, the party upper management proceeded to make the same mistakes as last time. And this time, it costed 17 seats.”

The 2021 debrief pointed out that the NDP lacked a ballot-box question, which meant “local campaigns struggled to compel voters.” It also recommended the party “adopt a regional model for campaigns” and improve at “differentiating” from “other parties.”

But de Silva-Legault said one of the party’s failures in the 2025 campaign was still being “too leadership centric.”

“The upper management of the party relied very heavily on, like, a cult of personality, and that’s something that ... didn’t work for us in the last election,” de Silva-Legault said. “It didn’t work in 2021. Something else needs to be tried. We’re beating the same horse.”

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FEATURE

Pancake flops and a looming by-election: MPs dress the part at Stampede for 'lobbying highlight of BBQ season'

As Mark Carney struggled at the griddle, Pierre Poilievre was busy pitching himself as an Albertan returned 'home' at the festival where Alberta Senator Daryl Fridhandler says everyone is 'on the same level.'

BY ELEANOR WAND

Parliamentarians flocked to Calgary for the hot-ticket political event of the summer: the Calgary Stampede. But though they were decked out in cowboy hats, flipping pancakes and rubbing shoulders, MPs were also busy taking advantage of "a lobbying highlight of barbecue season," with Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre working to secure a seat back in the House of Commons, and others making fundraising or policy moves.

Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) stuck with tradition, spending his first Stampede since taking office flipping pancakes at a July 5 breakfast, with a few stumbles along the way. Most prime ministers make an appearance at Stampede, though not every year. Last year was unusual—Poilievre was the only major party leader to attend, with then-prime minister Justin Trudeau skirting the event as the Liberals struggled with popularity.

This year, Poilievre—who was seen sporting a Western shirt, large belt-buckle, white cowboy hat and boots—was not only joined by the prime minister, who opted for a more understated tan-coloured cowboy hat, forgoing a belt-buckle and plaid, but also by Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, B.C.) and interim NDP leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.).

May—adorned in a beige cowboy hat, a grey-western style

shirt, belt-buckle, and a skirt—often attends the Stampede, but avoids events involving animals. This year the Green leader, who went to the parade and met attendees, and then later hosted a private fundraiser, said she thinks it's "important" that there's a Green MP present at Stampede.

During his first ever visit to Stampede, Davies—who was also decked out in the called-for cowboy attire, complete with a matching black hat and shirt—attended

pancake breakfasts, a staple of the 10-day festivities.

But Stampede is more than just an excuse for politicians to fundraise and dress-up as cowboys, said political scientist Lori Williams, who is also a professor at Mount Royal University in Calgary. Williams explained that the event is a chance for political announcements, as Stampede often gets media coverage, which can be more difficult for politicians to come by over the summer with the House recessed.

"It's a relatively rare opportunity during the summer when people aren't paying as much attention to politics," Williams said. "It tends to draw attention nationally. It gets media attention, and I think partly because it's connected with this event, this—I think, curiosity—of the Calgary Stampede."

One notable announcement has already come out of this year's Stampede. On July 4, Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson (Markham—Thornhill, Ont.) told a Calgary business crowd that Ottawa had earmarked \$21.5-million for five projects in Alberta aimed at reducing the cost to capture and store carbon dioxide.

However, Carney's first festival experience was not all smooth sailing. The former banker faced some struggles staffing the griddle at an event hosted by United Brotherhood of Carpenters.

"I was better in Ottawa," Carney joked to onlookers after wrestling with his first couple of flip attempts. "I got a little cocky there. I'll take responsibility."

After producing a lopsided flapjack, which Carney announced he'd keep for himself, one onlooker told the prime minister, "you're even worse at [flipping pancakes] than Trudeau."

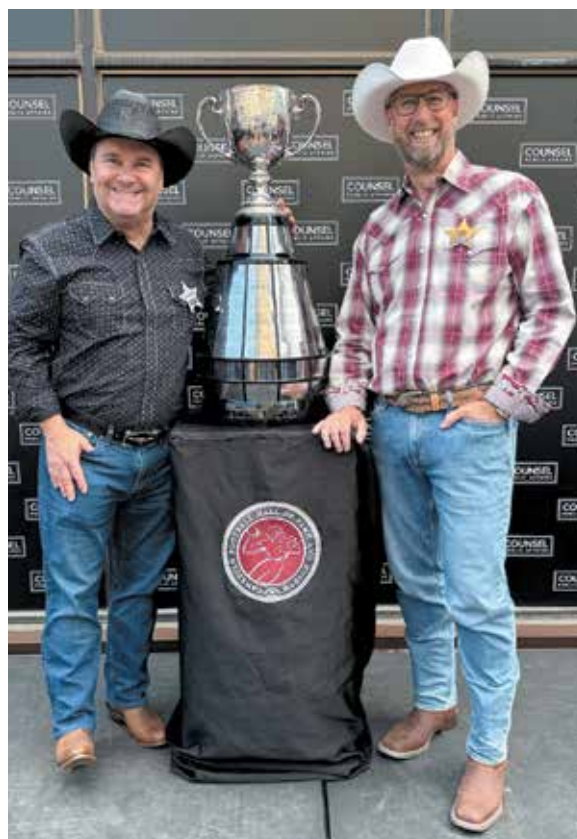
Carney jokingly replied: "there are certain things at my job I'm better at."

Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith also got down to business at the Stampede: the pair of premiers agreed to a feasibility study to look at new pipelines and rail lines between the two provinces on June 7, with Ford visiting Calgary for the event.

Both of the Liberal MPs elected to Alberta's 37 seats made appearances: Emergency Management Minister Eleanor Olszewski (Edmonton Centre,



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, left, pictured with Emergency Management Minister and Prairies Economic Development Minister Eleanor Olszewski, said it's 'important' for a Green MP to attend the Stampede. Photograph courtesy of Facebook



NDP interim leader Don Davies, left, pictured with CFL Commissioner Stewart Johnston, attended a number of pancake breakfasts at the Stampede. Photograph courtesy of X



FEATURE



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, pictured with Conservative MP Dalwinder Gill, said that, if elected in an Aug. 18 byelection, he would fight for Alberta, adding that 'the era of Ottawa telling Alberta to shut up and pay up must come to an end once and for all.' Photograph courtesy of X

newly-vacated seat in Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta. Poilievre spent July 6 flipping pancakes alongside rookie Conservative MPs Amanpreet Gill (Calgary Skyview, Alta.) and Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, Alta.), and spent July 5 doing the same alongside veteran Conservative MP Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary East, Alta.) before addressing a crowd at the Canada First Stampede Barbecue later that night.

In his speech, Poilievre pitched himself as an Albertan ready to fight Ottawa for the interests of Western Canada, starting his speech by saying: "it's great to be home."

Poilievre grew up in Calgary, but has lived in Ottawa, Ont., since 2000, and had represented the province in the House of Commons for over a decade before being ousted by first-time Liberal MP Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Ont.) in April's election.

But in his speech, attendees wouldn't have known the Conservative leader hasn't represented an Alberta riding for the entirety of his political life. Poilievre positioned himself as a candidate to stand up for the province's interests, including the oil and gas industry, which he said he would "fight" for, telling the crowd he first got involved in politics to "join with fellow Westerners to stand up for our province for fairness within a united Canada."

"The era of Ottawa telling Alberta to shut up and pay up must come to an end once and for all," he told the crowd, who cheered in response.

Poilievre also thanked Smith for her hospitality, calling the premier a "champion of freedom." While he welcomed Carney to the event, Poilievre couldn't resist poking fun at the PM's pancake-flipping abilities.

"He thought he would be great at [flipping pancakes] because in his



Pierre Poilievre, centre, with Conservative MP Jasraj Singh Hallan, right, served pancakes on July 5. Photograph courtesy of X

Alta.), who also handles Prairies Economic Development Canada, and is the province's lone cabinet minister took part in the Stampede Parade; and Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Alta.) attended Carney's pancake breakfast alongside Liberal MP Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.).

Other Alberta MPs were also spotted roaming the streets in their cowboy hats. NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.) said the festival has been a fixture on her schedule "all my life," but emphasized it's especially important for her to attend now as a federal politician.

"As the only New Democrat from Alberta ... there is a role for me to represent to make sure that folks see the New Democrats are also in Calgary," said McPherson,

who called it the "lobbying highlight of the barbecue season."

"This is an interesting point in time because as we see Danielle Smith and her ridiculous fueling of the separatist sort of fire in Alberta," she said. "It's really important that an alternative vision for our country and our province comes forward. And I think this may be one of those places where that can happen."

'It's great to be home': Poilievre positions himself as an Albertan MP

For Poilievre, the Calgary Stampede was an opportunity for the seatless party leader to drum up support from Albertans ahead of his byelection for the

trade talks with [U.S. President Donald] Trump, he's had so much experience flip-flopping," he quipped.

"A careful review of a slow-motion replay demonstrated exactly what the problem was: he couldn't figure out whether to put his elbows up or down."

The Battle River-Crowfoot byelection is set for Aug. 18. The election was called following the resignation of former Conservative MP Damien Kurek, who gave up his seat to make way for Poilievre to run. In April, Kurek won a third term with 82.84 per cent of the vote, making Battle River-Crowfoot one of the safest seats for a Conservative MP in the country.

Williams said the upcoming byelection underscores the importance of this year's Stampede for the Conservative leader, noting that, should Poilievre win the seat by a lower margin than Kurek, it could raise questions about "his vulnerability as a leader."

"[It's] not just a spectacle, fundraising, socializing event," Williams highlighted. "This actually could have political consequences for a byelection where the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada is fighting for his political future."

Stampede puts everyone 'on the same level playing field': Sen. Fridhandler

Alberta Senator Daryl Fridhandler, who organized a "familiarization" trip around the province for six other Senators starting July 11, and who is attending this year's Stampede alongside some of his colleagues, said the event is, fundamentally, about connection.

"It pins down a 10-day period that everybody—wherever they fit into the community and business hierarchy—are on the same level playing field with the cowboy hat and cowboy boots on," said the Progressive Senate Group member. "Everybody connects."

Though Fridhandler acknowledged that "not a lot of real business ... gets done," he said this is why many politicians prioritize making appearances at Stampede.

"What do politicians like to do but get out and socialize and connect with people?" Fridhandler said. "That's their stock and trade."

But Ian Brodie, former chief of staff for then-prime minister Stephen Harper, said politicians' draw to the Stampede stems from something deeper. Brodie called it "Canada's only civic festival," noting that it's the "only time" a city "shuts down" for an extended period for a celebration that's rooted in Canadian identity.

"It's the ultimate defiance of the idea that Canada has no identity or is some kind of post-national state," Brodie, who is now a professor of political science at the University of Calgary, wrote in an email to *The Hill Times*.

"Of course there's a lot of people here for Stampede and politicians love crowds, but that's not the primary reason they come," he continued. "They come for a glimpse of what every Canadian city and town should be. The Stampede inspires everyone who wants to lead. That's why it's so popular."

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Prime Minister Mark Carney attended the Calgary Stampede for the first time as prime minister. Photograph courtesy of X



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, and Ontario Premier Doug Ford agreed to a feasibility study on pipelines and railway lines between the two provinces. Photograph courtesy of X



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Editorial

Editorial

A reality check for the Carney government and Canadians

This spring was the season of the “One Canadian Economy” movement. The aforesaid Bill C-5 became a symbol of sorts for a renewed sense of domestic pride and determination although not without opposition particularly from environmental and Indigenous organizations.

The bill passed in 26 days, receiving royal assent on June 26. Its quick passage was made possible in Parliament by a co-operative Conservative Party and Senate.

But its speedy journey was undoubtedly helped by the enthusiasm of those who cannot vote in Parliament: premiers frustrated with the logjams between their borders, and the Canadian public who is questioning its consumerist reliance on the United States, following President Donald Trump’s attacks on this country’s sovereignty.

But hard work remains to be done, and sacrifices will likely have to be made, and that may be a tougher message for Canadians to take.

Multiple news outlets on July 7 reported that Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne is directing ministers to find savings over the next three fiscal years, beginning with 7.5 per cent for 2026-27.

Prime Minister Mark Carney posted on X that same day that, “It’s time to spend less so we can invest more. Canada’s new government will spend less on government operations so we can invest more in Canada—to create high-paying careers, build up our country, and grow our economy. That’s the change Canadians deserve.”

Carney’s message reiterated his statements from the recent election campaign. The Liberal platform said it

would save money in part by capping the public service and increasing the use of artificial intelligence.

Carney also said during the campaign that spending cuts would not impact provincial and territorial transfers, or transfers for individuals, including relatively new dental care and child care programs implemented by his predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

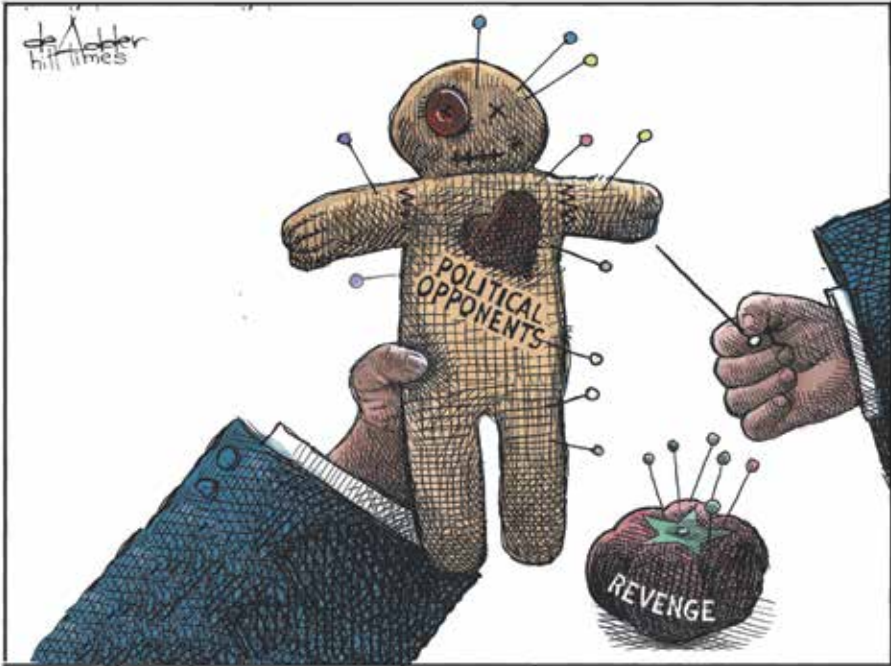
Although the messaging may seem comforting—at least to those not in the public service who are worried about job losses—there also seems to be an air of overconfidence that the government can cut spending, AI will help fill in the gaps, and Canadians will not feel the impact.

Former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page recently told *The Hill Times*’ Marlo Glass that cuts could not simply be achieved by cutting the public service, and the government would have to look at contribution funding that has increased in recent years to different groups and sectors.

And recent history has indicated that the government needs people. When there was a surge of passport applications in 2022, and Canadians were vocal about their frustration with long processing times, the federal Liberals hired at least 600 people to deal with the backlog.

This is not an argument against improving government processes or reducing duplication. And the changes that the government is looking to make will not happen quickly. But as the federal Liberals move forward with their financial review, it’s important that they are transparent with Canadians about the actual real-life impacts of the goal to spend less in order to invest more.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Some nuclear projects do provide benefits, but nuclear waste disposal is another story: letter writer

Re: “Canada fails to meet key principle of nuclear safety: Ottawa activist” (*The Hill Times*, June 16, 2025), and “Public comment on nuclear regulator welcome, but misinformation is not: letter writer” (*The Hill Times*, June 23, 2025).

Lynn Jones pointed out in her June 16 letter to *The Hill Times* that, “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.”

Jones further notes, “A March 2025 report by the IAEA 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.”

By way of a response to this letter, Jeremy Whitlock on June 23 suggests that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) does in fact address this requirement as follows: “With regard to the principle of ‘justification’ (i.e., benefit should outweigh risk), the CNSC did not check the box in the IAEA review because it is already integral to the licensing of any nuclear project in Canada: the CNSC rightly noted this in its response to the 2019 review.”

I would argue that Whitlock’s claim, namely that justification of a nuclear project is inherent in the license approval process, is highly questionable, especially for projects involving radioactive waste disposal, as explained below.

First, I would acknowledge that some nuclear projects, such as power station license renewals, do provide benefits to individuals and society by generating electricity for domestic, business, and industrial consumption. But when it comes to nuclear waste disposal, I fail to see any benefits that might accrue to individuals or society with regard to the licensing of nuclear waste disposal facilities. Simply put, radioactive waste is a very dangerous, intractable material that offers no benefit to society and has no commercial use or value. On the contrary, it is a commodity that is very expensive to manage or to safely dispose of.

A perusal of recent public hearings on radioactive waste facilities in Canada—such as a used fuel or low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste deep geologic repository, or the Western Waste Management Facility at the Bruce site in Bruce County, or the near surface disposal facility at the Chalk River site—totally lack a description by the proponent of any benefits arising from the construction and licensing of these facilities.

I would ask Whitlock to please explain how society would benefit from the Nuclear Waste Management Organization’s proposal to move Canada’s estimated total of 5-million used fuel bundles an average distance of 1,725 km, to Ignace in Northern Ontario, at a total cost of more than \$550-million.

Dr. F. R. Greening
Hamilton, Ont.

The letter writer is a research scientist who worked for Ontario Power Generation and Bruce Power between 1978 and 2013.

COMMENT

Feds have to fight comms with comms to tackle Alberta alienation problem

It is one thing for the Liberals to have won the election. It is another thing to confront the onslaught of misinformation that is being fed to Albertans by their own government.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



The French have it right: *Les absents ont toujours tort*. The absent are always wrong.

If Prime Minister Mark Carney needs proof, just review the recent messaging coming out of the Calgary Stampede.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre was given a hero's welcome, with massive coverage of his pro-Alberta Stampede event speech.

In contrast, the prime minister was filmed flubbing a pancake flip. And that flub circulated through social media in case anyone missed the missed pancake

toss. Apparently being able to flip a flapjack is a *sine qua non* for being an Alberta member of Parliament.

Carney can expect more of that one-sided coverage whenever he visits Alberta.

So, if his government intends to legitimately tackle Alberta's alienation, it needs to be present and active in the province on a daily basis.

That means a resourced federal cabinet communications committee focused on telling the Canadian story to Alberta.

After Canada almost lost the last Quebec referendum in 1995, much was invested in figuring out what went wrong.

Surveys showed that almost 70 per cent of francophone Quebecers who knew an anglophone voted to stay in Canada. The conclusion is that the most alienated are often also the most isolated.

In Alberta, support for separation is higher in rural than in urban areas. Obviously, many farmers and ranchers have little idea of the benefits of belonging to Canada.

Again, that disillusionment is definitely present in other rural areas across the country. But the national government, secure in its power structure and identity, has never spent political or financial capital in selling the benefits of Canada to anyone with the exception of doing so after the near-death Quebec experience.

That job is left to the politicians. They fly in, host a press

conference, drop a cheque, and then move on. That strategy does not work when you have a whole provincial government devoted to proving the federation is broken.

The Alberta government's public relations department, with 288 employees, was moved into the premier's office earlier this year.

In an April 29 order-in-council, the responsibility for communications and public engagement (CPE) was moved from the treasury board and finance departments into the premier's office.

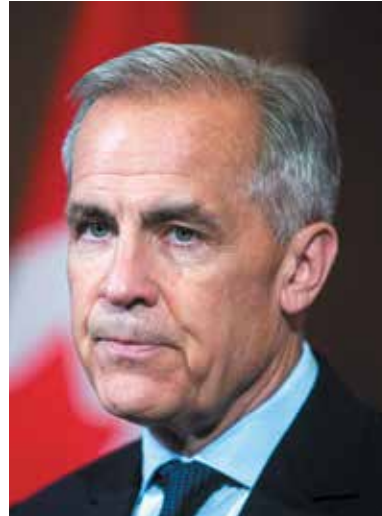
With an annual budget of \$38-million, the CPE is supposed to promote "non-partisan" government advertising. Some recent examples include a campaign to "Tell the Feds," and another to promote an Alberta pension fund to replace the Canada Pension Plan.

Not political? Hardly. The province is spending millions of dollars, and the feds expect ministers alone to manage the onslaught of negativity coming daily from Alberta.

It is not enough for the prime minister to fly in and flip a pancake. The federal government needs a massive communications and strategic presence in Alberta to treat the separation question as the existential threat that it is.

Forty years ago, the federal budget to fight disinformation by the Quebec separatists was \$25-million annually.

With the modern fragmentation of media, that number should



If the federal Liberal government, led by Mark Carney, left, wants to fight Albertan alienation, it must invest in a daily communications presence in the province to counter the messaging from Premier Danielle Smith's government, writes Sheila Copps. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



be quadrupled. It should also fight the general malaise in other rural and remote parts of Canada.

To be fair, the vast majority of Albertans are Conservative, so it is not surprising that the Tory leader gets the most applause at any public event.

But it is one thing to win an election. It is another thing to confront the onslaught of misinformation that is being fed to Albertans by their own government.

If the Canadian government does not fight back, it will see further fragmentation of the country caused by disinformation and misinformation.

While Carney's Alberta provenance—the prime minister grew up in Edmonton—certainly helped him in the election, he could soon be faced with an Alberta-based Opposition leader in Poilievre.

Poilievre is expected to be buoyed by a significant win in the most Conservative riding in the country.

Meanwhile, the country will be dealing with a wave of Alberta separatism fanned by the premier, whose own political future depends on her support from separatists.

Canada has experienced decades of complaints about Western alienation. In reality, it is not Western alienation: it is Alberta alienation with a dose of Saskatchewan disillusionment.

Two other Western provinces—Manitoba and British Columbia—have a completely different perspective.

But Canadian politicians have never pushed back against the notion of Western alienation and, as a result, the country is now facing the possibility of Alberta playing the separatist card.

It is about time the national government got into the game. Otherwise, Alberta's one-sided vision of Canada will continue.

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

The value of strategic praise

Sometimes in politics, loving your enemies can be the right political play and not just because it'll drive them a little bit crazy.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



I came across a meme the other day that made me smile not because it was funny, but because it reminded me of an underused and underappreciated political tactic.

It read: "Love your enemies; it'll drive them crazy."

Indeed, sometimes in politics, loving your enemies can be the right political play, and not just because it'll drive them a little bit crazy.

And I say that as someone who is usually an advocate of aggressive messaging, always going on the attack, and keeping your opponent on the defensive. But I also recognize there are times when offering your opponent an olive branch can be a good strategy.

At least it's a good strategy for non-political party actors, such as advocacy organizations, labour unions, and charitable groups, which are more focused on promoting causes and ideals than on partisan wrangling.

For instance, a conservative advocacy group that cares about fiscal issues should openly praise a left-wing political party if it cuts taxes or lowers government spending.

Likewise, a left-wing group should publicly salute a conservative party if it makes a move to implement green environmental policies.

Yes, it might be difficult to say nice things about your opponents, but there are a couple of reasons as to why it makes tactical sense.

First off, it'll intrigue the media, which will see it as a "man bites dog" sort of story. After all, it's not every day that a political group will praise its ideological enemies. So, if you praise your opponent, you'll likely get some free media coverage, which is always a good thing.

As a bonus, it might also confuse people on the other team who ordinarily enjoy hating you.

The second reason for dishing out praise is that sometimes it's a good idea to make your opponent a hero, whether they like it or not.

Keep in mind, if a politician is making a move that goes against type, or that might contradict their ideology, they are likely taking a bit of a risk and also probably alienating part of their own base.

That's why if your group declares the politician's actions as "heroic," it might stiffen their spine a bit, meaning they'll be more likely to push ahead with the policy you support.

Plus, on top of that, if you make the politician a hero, it'll be more difficult for them to back-track on the policy.

Finally, there's one last reason why praising an opponent is a good idea: it'll strengthen your group's credibility.

My point is: if you're an advocacy group that keeps attacking a political party even when it's doing something that's in line with your stated goals, then it makes you look less like a group

that's interested in pushing certain values and more like a group that's just about partisan politics. The latter makes you seem predictable and boring.

On the other hand, if you praise your opponents for doing what you think is right, you'll gain a reputation for putting principles first, meaning your attacks will have more weight when you criticize your opponents.

Of course, in this age of increasing political polarization, it's harder to pull off this "love your enemy" strategy.

The more the other side is seen as the epitome of evil, the harder it is for advocacy groups to reach across the aisle even if it makes strategic sense.

So, for example, if a Canadian conservative group were to say nice things about Prime Minister Mark Carney, it might trigger a rebellion within their ranks.

And that's too bad.

The more we get stuck in partisan trenches, the more difficult it is to promote principles.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant. *The Hill Times*

COMMENT

We need a fix for bureaucratic delays—but is it a pipe dream?

The prime minister could and should spend his entire mandate trying to do this. But this is a classic example of a problem where the people responsible for fixing it are the same people who are the problem.

Matt Gurney

Opinion

TORONTO — My friend and colleague Justin Ling wrote



recently in the *Toronto Star* about Canada's regulatory problems. Specifically, when writing about efforts by Prime Minister Mark Carney to get Canada building faster, Ling noted that anyone trying to get any major project done in this country has to swim upstream against a crushing burden of regulatory steps and delays.

This shouldn't be a controversial thing to admit. It's a well-understood problem. And that knowledge goes beyond the theoretical. Anyone who's tried to get anything done in this country recently probably has some horror stories to tell. I'm currently sitting on one about a permit that I dare not speak about publicly, lest the permitting staff find a new and interesting way to cause me further problems. Suffice it to say, the experience has not proven surprising, and it's certainly not unique.

But there was a part of Ling's column that I think needs expanding. I'm not accusing him of missing something, but we need to really zoom in on a specific part of the problem: I don't think we can look at our regulatory issues and write them off as some kind of mistake or accident.

We are getting the system and the results that we have incentivized the system to provide. The gridlock isn't a bug. It's an unacknowledged feature.

I'm not suggesting some kind of conspiracy. I don't think many people in government actually want it to be really, really hard—near on impossible—to have nice things such as houses, pipelines, energy projects, or government buildings. Or to buy things, like software tools or military equipment. Ask literally anyone in government whether the government should be able to build, buy, or approve stuff, and you'd probably get a 100-per-cent positive answer.

But that's at the macro level. Having stuff is nice in the abstract. The problem is that no one is directly responsible for making sure we get those things, and every individual part of the system—whether an agency or an individual

within one—is personally incentivized to never let anything happen.

Because you don't get blamed for saying "no" to something.

In fact—and I will cautiously allude to my own permitting experience here—you usually don't even get told "no." A rejection carries its own risk of consequences for the regulators. You just get asked for more information. After you've provided it, you get asked for more. And once you've provided that, some of what you originally submitted is now out of date, and so you get asked to update what you already provided. And so on and so forth. Forever. Until the sun expands and eats the Earth.

Again, I'm not suggesting a top-down conspiracy. I'm simply noting that we've designed a system that punishes failures of commission, but not failures of omission. If someone approves a project that turns into a nightmare, they'll get blamed for that. But no one gets blamed for the projects that never happened because they

were smothered to death under a mountain of paperwork.

I'm entirely in agreement with Ling that we need to do something about this. It's an urgent problem. And it'll still be one even if I ever get my own goddamn permit.

But I really don't know how we're going to fix this. The entire system is designed to reward delay. Changing that, and shifting to a system that rewards success and speed, is more than a legislative or regulatory change. It's a cultural one.

Can we make those changes? Sure. Are they going to be easy? No.

Frankly, the prime minister could spend his entire mandate trying to do this. And he should. It needs to happen. This is a classic example of a problem where the people responsible for fixing it are the same people who are the problem. So I have to confess to some pessimism on this file. I really don't know how Carney is going to reverse the cultural incentives in the entire federal public service, let alone the provincial and municipal services that are just as bad (or worse).

It has to happen. It's long overdue. But gosh, it's hard to see it.

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The Hill Times

OPINION

It's time we treat campus infrastructure as a nation-building project

Investments in universities are practical and high-impact investments that will create new jobs, deliver value for taxpayers, and strengthen Canada's competitiveness.

Gabriel Miller

Opinion

Canada is having an urgent and overdue conversation about housing and infrastructure. But if we want real solutions, we need to include one of our most powerful and underused nation-building tools: our university campuses.

Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson recently called for a wartime effort to rebuild Canada's aging infrastructure—a bold statement and exactly the kind of ambition this moment demands.



But that effort won't succeed without the full strength of Canada's universities. Their land, research capacity, talent, and innovation are essential to getting it done.

Across the country, campuses are more than classrooms. They are community hubs where students live, communities gather, and ideas become real-world solutions. Universities not only support students, but also families, seniors, workers and small businesses offering services like child care, health clinics, libraries, gyms, pools, and theatres used daily by the community.

Universities help sustain critical infrastructure by supporting water systems, roads, bridges and local transit. In many communities, daily use by students, faculty, and staff keeps public transportation like buses and light rail viable for the entire community.

And yet, universities are routinely left out of federal programs designed to support community infrastructure.

This is a missed opportunity. Campus infrastructure is community infrastructure. Investing in universities means investing in local economies, a stronger workforce, and vital services that support people of all ages.

The clearest example is student housing.

Canadian universities currently house more than 135,000 students, which helps ease pressure on local rental markets, especially in smaller and mid-sized communities where vacancy rates are low and costs are high. In many communities, expanding student housing is one of the fastest and most efficient ways to increase the supply of affordable homes for all.

Student housing is Canadian housing, but most universities can't access the federal programs available to other builders. Borrowing limits, regulatory hurdles, and funding constraints mean even shovel-ready projects remain stalled.

The federal government's recent \$2-billion commitment specifically for housing for seniors and students is a welcome sign.

But if support comes only through loans, many universities will be left out. What is needed now is a dedicated student housing strategy with targeted grants, streamlined approvals, and support for private-sector partnerships that can turn plans into projects. At the same time, we need to look beyond housing and address the

broader state of infrastructure on Canadian campuses.

The situation is serious. Years of underfunding, rising costs, and inflation have left a national maintenance backlog of over \$17-billion. One in three infrastructure projects is now considered critical or near critical. These include essential upgrades to heating systems; accessibility; and research labs for work in AI, clean energy and medical innovation.

Yet most universities remain ineligible for federal infrastructure funding despite significant economic impact.

Each year, universities support more than 400,000 jobs and contribute more than \$45-billion to Canada's economy through salaries, local procurement, and infrastructure projects. Their research drives real-world innovation across sectors like agriculture, aerospace, health care and climate resilience.

We know what works. The Knowledge Infrastructure Program, launched by a previous federal government, showed the lasting value of investing in post-secondary infrastructure. It created jobs, reduced maintenance backlogs and strengthened Canada's research capacity. By allowing provinces to set priorities, it

ensured funding met local needs and delivered real benefits to both campuses and the communities.

It's now time for a renewed version that is focused on today's challenges such as student housing and sustainable infrastructure that could deliver a national long-term impact.

This isn't about special treatment for universities but about recognizing their growing role in solving national priorities.

There are three clear steps the federal government can take right now:

- Make housing programs work for student residences by offering grant-based options and flexible financing tailored to post-secondary institutions;
- Ensure campus infrastructure is eligible for federal programs, especially projects that serve the public and drive innovation; and
- Work with the provinces to streamline approvals and remove administrative barriers.

These aren't luxuries; they're practical, high-impact, nation-building investments that will create new jobs, deliver value for taxpayers and strengthen Canada's competitiveness.

If we're serious about a wartime-level response to Canada's infrastructure crisis, we need to mobilize every asset we have.

Universities are ready to do their part. Let's treat them as full partners in building what's next.

Gabriel Miller is the president and CEO of *Universities Canada*.
The Hill Times

OPINION

The dog days of summer for Pierre Poilievre

As you relax this summer, spare a few kind thoughts for the Conservatives. Their leader has shown he has nothing to offer them, but that he is clearly ‘one of them,’ and the promise that they will never again be able to feel confident of victory under his leadership.

Ken Polk

Opinion



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre holds a press conference in the House of Commons foyer on May 27, 2025. After losing the most recent election—which includes the loss of Poilievre’s own riding—the Conservatives will have to reconsider its ‘take no prisoners’ attitude, Ken Polk writes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



It has been said that history is written by the winners. Nowhere is that case more than in politics. No matter your skills, no matter how hard you work, no matter how smart you and your team are, every decision comes down to a single binary electoral judgement: did you win or lose?

For the winners, every decision and maneuver was brilliant and prescient. For the losers, every decision and maneuver was doomed to failure. But even by this cruel and unrelenting standard, the predicament of Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre in the summer of 2025 is especially bleak and bitter. It’s not just that the party lost, but the manner of their undoing is what is so painfully striking. After enjoying a 20-point lead over then-prime minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberals for two years, the Conservatives watched it evaporate in a matter of weeks in 2025.

In Poilievre, the Conservatives have a leader of tremendous skill, agility, and experience who was beaten by a political rookie in Mark Carney, who is the epitome of the “globalist elite” that Poilievre has routinely derided as being out of touch with the needs of average Canadians. Worse, Poilievre suffered the indignity of losing the Ottawa-area seat he’d held for almost two decades, while Carney swept to victory in the riding next door.

The Conservative Party of Canada scored the best vote percentage in the party’s short history. But in the end, they had to settle for finding comfort at having held the Liberals to a minority, albeit a very strong one that could last quite a while.

Much worse is the fact that Carney has systematically annexed a good chunk of the Conservative issue set: cutting taxes, legislating to streamline major project approvals, committing to massive increases in defence spending, and cutting government spending by reducing the size of the public service. This is political pickpocketing on a historically epic scale.

“AFTER ENJOYING A 20-POINT LEAD OVER THEN-PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU’S LIBERALS FOR TWO YEARS, THE CONSERVATIVES WATCHED IT EVAPORATE IN A MATTER OF WEEKS IN 2025.”

The nine-year record and legacy of Justin Trudeau’s premiership are as though they never happened. Indeed, Trudeau’s image and presence have been erased from Liberal memory so completely that it is not difficult to imagine that the Carney cabinet—many of whom held senior positions in the Trudeau government—would not admit to ever having met him.

And there is the real rub for the Conservatives. Government news releases routinely refer to “Canada’s new government.” Notwithstanding the closeness of the 2025 vote count, Carney’s approval has shot up to a level that suggests he’s enjoying a political honeymoon of the kind that is typically experienced by a new government

coming into power on a wave of voter desire for a change.

This is the Conservatives’ dilemma as they head into the summer. Instead of storming the ramparts of government with the promise of remaking it in the Conservative image, they are girding for yet another leadership review after not just another election loss, but also a crushing reversal of fortune.

There is no doubt that Poilievre is well-liked by the party grassroots who view him as a genuine conservative, unlike his

unlamented predecessor, Erin O’Toole. Poilievre also has a firm grip on the party machinery. Looking to make the most of these advantages, he argued for an early leadership review to head off any nascent internal revolt.

But he first has to return to the House. His choice of a rural Alberta seat should ensure him a big byelection win, but smacks of a leader who can be a bridge to the urban and suburban voters the party needs to win, but continues to have a heck of a time winning over.

All Poilievre and his team have to show for their time in office is snatching defeat from the jaws of what seemed to be certain victory. The loss was bad. But the “take no prisoners” attitude that the Conservative brain trust brought to everything from dissent to candidate recruitment to media relations could have been stomachached with the promise of victory. Having failed so miserably in the latter, they now have to remake how they do the former, something for which they have not yet shown any instinct.

So, as you relax this summer, spare a few kind thoughts for the Conservatives. Poilievre has truly entered the dog days of his leadership. He has nothing to offer Conservatives but the fact that he is clearly “one of them,” and the promise that they will never again be able to feel confident of victory under his leadership.

A hard summer, indeed.

Ken Polk is a public affairs counsellor at Compass Rose Group. He previously served as chief speechwriter, deputy director of communications, and legislative assistant to then-prime minister Jean Chrétien.

The Hill Times



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COMMENT



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, welcomes U.S. President Donald Trump to the G7 Leaders' Summit in Kananaskis, Alta., on June 16, 2025. Photograph courtesy of the Government of Canada

How Canadians feel about Carney will rely on trade talk success with a mercurial Trump

Will the public accept half a loaf or blame the prime minister for coming away with less than we had before? In the pitiless business of politics, the answer is far from certain.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—It is said that the beginning of wisdom is the suspension of judgement.

With Prime Minister Mark Carney, time will tell. But these days, a lot of people are giving the thumbs-down to the elbows-up guy.

Why have so many of these judgements—some of them written by yours truly—been unkind? No surprise there.

In the often cruel world of public life, political honeymoons are shorter than Arctic summers. Campaign postures retreat faster than melting glaciers under the heat of governing.

And the press dutifully records the gulf between the promises and performance of public office holders. No one has yet met the politician whose record in office remotely resembles what was promised on the hustings.

Carney's principle problem is having to deal with the fatally mercurial American President Donald Trump. Their trade talks have shown Canadians a different Carney from the one they voted for—very different from the muscular nationalist who warned them that the U.S. president was serious about taking over our country, as if we were a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise and not a sovereign nation.

In those trade talks, the former Captain Canada, who inspired a spike in national pride and purpose with his anti-Trump rhetoric, has seemingly changed.

On the surface, Carney has morphed into just another fawning world leader trying to extract goodies from Trump by shameless flattery. He can call that “pragmatic.”

But it also goes by another name. “Obsequiousness” is always hard to take, even when it is strategic rather than heartfelt. Still, it is hard to swallow Carney's statement that the G7 is “nothing without U.S. leadership.” Or that Trump has been a “transformational” president.

Reality check? All he has done is transform the U.S. from a democracy into a proto-fascist state.

Did Carney have to lather it on so shamelessly? Did United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer tell our prime minister to hold his nose and soak Trump in a torrent of compliments to get relief from ruinous U.S. tariffs? After all, that approach got Britain a “deal,” including exemptions for steel and aluminum.

Whatever the answer to that question, no one should underestimate Carney's dreadful position in these critical trade talks.

For starters, Trump's word is as meaningless as any deal he might sign. He has walked away from deals in the past that he himself negotiated. The U.S. president is a stranger to shame.

No one should forget that Trump promised 90 deals in 90 days with his trading partners around the world over his new tariff regime. All he got when his own deadline passed were three “framework” agreements.

The reason for this abject failure is simple. Trump doesn't negotiate in the traditional sense of the word. What he does is dictate and bully. He coerces rather than converses. He offers “take-take” and “take-it-or-leave it,” not “give and take.”

The latest proof of this was his decision to send threatening letters to countries that have not agreed to his terms. Either the recipients agree to his imposed terms, or they face the return of those huge “reciprocal” tariffs he

brought in last April. To call that “negotiating” is the stuff of nasal coffee rockets.

So, what should Carney do?

One thing he shouldn't do is rush into a deal with Trump. Two federal courts in the U.S.—including the country's Court of International Trade which reached its conclusion in a unanimous decision—have already ruled that Trump's sweeping emergency tariffs are illegal.

The rulings of those two federal courts are currently under appeal in the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia. The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to “fast-track” a review of those decisions until the issue has been fully dealt with by the lower courts.

In other words, Trump may well be found to have exceeded his authority to negotiate foreign tariffs, a power that usually rests with Congress. Does Canada really need to hurry into a deal with Trump, only to find that he didn't hold “all the cards” after all and that his tariffs were illegal from the get-go?

But if Carney insists on doing a deal by the artificial deadline of July 21, it would hardly come as a surprise even though trade deals normally take months—if not years—to properly consummate.

There is, after all, a great deal on the table for Canada, given its historic dependence on the American market to sustain the economy.

Tiff Macklem, the governor of the Bank of Canada, said that continuing trade tensions with the U.S. could trigger “one of the most significant economic shocks in over a century.”

That is heavy stuff coming from the country's top banker, and enough to get any self-described pragmatist down to cutting a deal.

The Disney ending for Carney in these trade talks, which would more than justify his alleged “bootlicking” and apparent giveaway on the digital services tax, comes down to this: if the prime minister could have tariffs removed on aluminum and Canadian automobiles and parts, it would be a wild success.

It would preserve two vital industries in the country's two most populated provinces, and it would show that a lot more political savvy was going on behind the scenes than anyone imagined.

It would also show that the negative assessments of Carney's performance were a rush to judgement. He would emerge as our political prince. That's not out of the question. Remember, Canada was exempted from Trump's “universal” 10-per-cent tariff.

That said, Disney endings happen mostly on the silver screen, and not in the dusty arena of public life.

A more realistic outcome of what Carney might achieve would look something like this: a reduction—rather than a removal—of tariffs on key Canadian exports; and a new deal with the U.S., but something less than the relationship Canada has enjoyed for decades.

Will Canadians accept half a loaf, or blame the prime minister for coming away with less than we had before? In the pitiless business of politics, the answer is far from certain.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.
The Hill Times

COMMENT

What will kill the electric car this time: Trump or Canada's haplessness?



Prime Minister Mark Carney, centre, and then-foreign affairs minister Melanie Joly, right, meet with U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on May 6. Now industry minister, Joly is the federal lead on the auto file. Photograph courtesy of X/Melanie Joly

Until further notice, we are passengers in this environmental and economic setback, and Donald Trump is at the wheel.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



It appears we have elected a federal government that is not only eager to support a new oil pipeline in British Columbia, but also may end up throwing our electric vehicle ambitions into reverse—if not into the ditch.

This could be hasty and unduly negative, but Prime Minister Mark Carney has so far shown far less interest in the clean technologies of the future than in roads, railways, ports, and pipelines for his “major infrastructure” projects.

The most optimistic speculation is that his government will extend deadlines for EV adoption

by a few years in response to pressure from the Canadian auto sector. Automakers argue, reasonably, that the Justin Trudeau-era decree—that 20 per cent of new cars sold in this country must be zero-emissions by 2026—is undoable for a variety of reasons, with one of them being the Trump administration’s sharp turn away from electrification and back to gas-powered behemoths.

As to 100 per cent of new cars being electric by 2035, which was the final phase in the Trudeau plan, that now seems ridiculously ambitious barring massive federal intervention. In April, for instance, only 7.5 per cent of new car sales in Canada were EVs, and that is down significantly from their 13.8-per-cent share in 2024.

Environmental group Clean Energy Canada recently argued that if the government were to revisit the near-term targets, it should use the delay to help North American carmakers develop more affordable EVs and to build out the charging network.

This would remove two main obstacles to a transportation transition: the higher cost of EVs, as compared to gas-powered cars, and range anxiety.

The government might also re-think its incentive program.

Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin has promised to restore consumer incentives to buy zero-emissions vehicles (without saying when) and the pledge was mentioned, glancingly, in Carney’s election platform. The previous Trudeau rebates—\$5,000 on the purchase of a new, non-luxury EV—ended in January when the program ran out of money (because it was so popular).

Since then there has been a lot of foot-shuffling and throat clearing from Liberals, mounting derision about EVs from Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (of course), and, in the meantime, sales of new EVs have stalled. Unsurprising. Why buy now if there are new incentives on the way? And given U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to kill the American rebate worth \$7,500, and his general hostility to EVs—never mind his complicated relationship with Tesla co-founder Elon Musk—how sound is the zero-emissions sector, overall?

In China, it is very sound. One of a number of Chinese companies, BYD sold more than 4 million clean vehicles in 2024. It also markets a plug-in hybrid for \$11,000, along with other affordable models, and has recently

become the top-selling global EV brand, edging out Tesla.

Car-industry watchers say the quality of these vehicle is vastly improved, and Chinese auto-makers are constantly innovating, with five-minute battery recharging on the immediate horizon.

Through massive government support, long-term planning, technological innovation and vertical integration—as Chinese car companies make their own components and have exclusive access to critical minerals for batteries from around the world—China now dominates the next stage in car-making.

The problem in North America is that EVs still cost too much compared to a frisky little gas-powered car, for example.

Nor have North American governments—including those for Ontario and Canada, which invested heavily in EV battery plants in Southern Ontario—been quick enough to build charging capacity in multi-family units, condos, remote communities, and even on major highway corridors.

A 2024 federal report says 40,000 charging stations must be installed every year between now and 2040 to meet the moment. The last several years have only produced 37,000, and they aren’t universally reliable.

Meanwhile, an astonishing 97 per cent of new cars sold in Norway in June were electric. The Nordic country is often cited as a model for other cold places, like Canada. If Norway—which also has significant oil and gas wealth—can convert an entire population to zero-emission cars, why can’t we?

Norway’s revolution, like China’s, did not happen overnight. It was the product of consistent support over decades, from governments of all stripes, in the form of tax exemptions that made EVs as affordable as conventional cars.

The country also built out an impressive charging network so that home chargers are commonplace.

These were expensive undertakings, but they have been bankrolled by the country’s Sovereign Wealth Fund, which redirects taxes on fossil fuel profits into future needs and developments, including the transition to clean transportation.

Canada has no such motherlode, and it is hard to imagine provinces like Alberta willingly sharing a portion of its oil revenues with a national fund. Instead, a couple of provinces—Alberta, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador—have their own wealth funds, but they are tiny.

That said, comparisons with Norway are inexact. It does not have a powerful domestic car industry—with all the jobs, wealth and political power of the North American sector—to protect. It is also a smaller country than Canada, and very wealthy, with only 5.5 million inhabitants.

The faster way to accelerate EV sales in this country would be to remove or lower the 100-per-cent tariff on Chinese EVs, or, as Clean Energy Canada suggests, on a limited number of them.

That could provide affordable vehicles for middle-class buyers and, potentially, spur the North American industry to pick up the pace and compete on price.

The arrival of smaller, fuel-efficient Japanese cars on this continent in the 1970s didn’t destroy the domestic car industry. It forced it to innovate.

If we did such a thing, of course, Trump’s head would explode, given his current hostility to China. The powerful autoworkers union would be none too pleased, either. Indeed, it was to curry their favour that former president Joe Biden originally imposed the 100-per-cent barrier, and our government quickly followed.

But Trump, who in April imposed 25-per-cent tariffs on cars made here, is the immediate threat to Canada’s industry, not China. The tariffs, still being “negotiated,” have already led to layoffs and slowdowns on this side of the border.

That’s what “integration” does. Until further notice, we are passengers in this environmental and economic setback, and Trump is at the wheel.

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

COMMENT

Why government's aversion to risk impacts Indigenous Peoples the most

CIRNAC and ISC must be forced to actually get the money out the door to Indigenous communities because this is the rare case in which federal spending done poorly leads to lost lives.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



Our military can't buy boats, planes, or guns because of many years of procurement fiascos. Our hospitals are closing emergency wards due to not having

enough doctors or nurses, yet internationally trained professionals can't get accredited. First Nations can't get money for firefighting equipment in a world threatened by wildfires. It's a mess where the common theme is procurement.

Federal departments, agencies, and obscure corporations each have a handful of objectives to achieve, and most of them use transfer payments (the money paid to external bodies to do something) to provinces/territories, non-profits, Indigenous organizations, and others.

But here's where things get messy: how much of a department's budget stays inside rather than gets moved out to make change? It's almost impossible to track the time and dollars wasted in procurement, and in moving the money out to pay for things.

Ottawa is legendary in the world of governments for its layers-upon-layers of risk-averse check-boxes, double-checks, and triple-checks—almost all on paper! No AI to be found here.

Take Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) as an example, with a \$16.35-billion budget in 2023-2024 and 2,185 full-time equivalents or staff. About a third of the total budget is for money to pay out settlement claims to First Nations, self-government agreements, health care for First Nations and Inuit in the territories, and a basket of other stuff in the North.

Here's another unique thing about this department: it has twice the number of internal service people and costs than other departments—almost 40 per cent of its entire workforce is "internal." They are check-box people, as opposed to externally-facing, citizen-serving people.

And 30 per cent of CIRNAC's funding typically lapses every year, which is a rate that is higher than other departments. Gee, is there a correlation? And what about that statistic about Indigenous well-being lagging so far behind compared to other Canadians?

Lapsed money is promised in the beginning of the fiscal year to accomplish something on behalf of citizens, but the department doesn't get the money out the door.

Imagine if you told your spouse you would buy the groceries this month, and somehow didn't get to it because you were busy updating some pages-long logic model on where to shop, price-matched 17 times, checked sales yet again and oops, there goes the month. The money has lapsed, and there is no food on the table.

The performance measures need a complete rework. Lapsed money and spending almost as much on internal services than on citizen-focused services should be the markers of failure.

This impacts Indigenous Peoples disproportionately because only Indigenous communities receive funding directly from the federal government. The federal government's legendary risk aversion is centred in CIRNAC and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). It is on the backs of Indigenous communities.

Ottawa chatter tends to refer to CIRNAC and ISC as the departmental outliers, as they provide funding for direct services. So, these departments get a pass on their (lack of) outcomes. It's time these departments were graded as if they were serving parliamentarians. Why not?

The two departments demand to be exempt from accountability. They will say it's so difficult to work with Indigenous communities, it takes time, blah blah blah. It's all a cover to protect their status quo. In this spending review, initiated by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, the government should be ruthless with these two departments and cut the 'internal services check-box' costs in half. Force these departments to actually get the money out the door to Indigenous communities because this is the rare case in which federal spending done poorly actually leads to lost lives.

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

OPINION

Digital sovereignty must drive Canada's U.S. trade strategy

The approach we choose for trade talks will determine whether Canada controls its digital future or remains forever dependent on others' technological infrastructure.

Barry Appleton

Opinion



As Canada prepares for comprehensive trade and security negotiations with the United States, Ottawa faces a fundamental question: will we enter these talks with a coherent, digital-governance strategy, or will we continue surrendering technological control to foreign powers piece by piece?

The current approach isn't working. Our recent retreat on the Digital Services Tax demonstrates a troubling pattern of reactive policymaking. While we

debate, American tech giants consolidate their grip on this country's markets; Chinese-owned platforms harvest our citizens' data; and European regulations increasingly set the global digital agenda without Canadian input.

Traditional trade policy focused on physical goods crossing borders. Today's economy revolves around data flows, algorithmic decision-making, and platform-mediated commerce, yet Canada's trade apparatus remains structured for a pre-digital world.

Consider the mismatch: our negotiators excel at managing lumber disputes and agricultural quotas, but struggle with questions of algorithmic transparency and data sovereignty. Meanwhile, our American counterparts arrive armed with teams of technology lawyers who understand that controlling digital infrastructure means controlling economic relationships.

This isn't just about technology; it's about power. Nations that write the rules for artificial intelligence, data governance, and digital commerce will dominate the next century's economy. Those that don't will find themselves implementing other countries' standards and serving other nations' interests.

This country's passive approach to digital governance is already imposing real costs. When social media platforms blocked Canadian

news content, our government was forced to negotiate from a position of weakness. When we needed to address TikTok's data practices, we lacked clear regulatory frameworks. When Canadian AI firms need training data, they depend on datasets controlled by foreign platforms.

These aren't isolated incidents, but are symptoms of a broader strategic failure. Canada has world-class digital talent, innovative companies, and strong democratic institutions, yet we consistently punch below our weight in international digital governance because we lack co-ordinated policy frameworks.

The upcoming negotiations with Washington present both risk and opportunity. If done well, they could establish Canada as an equal partner in shaping North American digital standards. If done poorly, they could lock us into permanent technological dependence.

A policy framework for digital sovereignty

To succeed in these negotiations, Canada needs a comprehensive digital governance strategy. This means moving beyond reactive responses to proactive policy leadership.

Overall, we need to stop creating advisory committees that produce reports while foreign

platforms write our rules. This can be accomplished by establishing a digital sovereignty council with actual regulatory teeth—authority to audit algorithms, mandate transparency, block problematic acquisitions, and enforce compliance.

A new policy must include:

- **Data governance framework:** Establish clear rules for cross-border data flows that protect Canadian interests while enabling legitimate commerce;
- **Algorithmic accountability standards:** Require transparency and auditing for AI systems that affect Canadian citizens, from credit scoring to content moderation;
- **Digital competition policy:** Update competition laws to address platform monopolies and prevent anti-competitive practices in digital markets;
- **Strategic technology investment:** Create frameworks to nurture Canadian digital champions and prevent premature acquisition by foreign entities;
- **Cybersecurity requirements:** Implement robust security standards for critical digital infrastructure, including cloud services handling government data;
- **Digital rights protection:** Ensure Canadian privacy laws and democratic values are respected in any trade agreement provisions; and
- **Regulatory capacity-building:** Train government officials in digital governance and create specialized units within key departments.

But success requires more than good policy—it demands skilled negotiators and poli-

cymakers who understand the digital economy. This means recruiting legal technologists, algorithm auditors, and trade specialists versed in platform economics.

Government alone cannot deliver digital sovereignty. We need partnerships with universities, civil society groups, and the private sector to build the expertise base required for effective digital governance.

The upcoming negotiations with the U.S. will reveal whether Canada is serious about digital sovereignty or content to remain digitally dependent. The choice is ours, but the window for action is closing.

We can enter these talks as equal partners with our own vision for digital governance, or we can arrive as supplicants hoping for favourable treatment. The approach we choose will determine whether we control our digital future, or remain forever dependent on others' technological infrastructure.

The future belongs to nations that master digital governance. The question is whether Canada will be among them.

Professor Barry Appleton is a distinguished senior fellow and co-director of the Centre for International Law at New York Law School; an international law adviser on trade, technology, and global regulation at Appleton & Associates International Lawyers in Toronto; and a fellow at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo.

The Hill Times

COMMENT



In comments to the House of Commons on June 18, Transport Minister Chrystia Freeland seemed to imply that the ferries could have been purchased from a Canadian company, yet no Canadian shipyard responded when BC Ferries sought proposals last year, David Crane writes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BC Ferries story reveals Canada's confused policy on China

What basic message are we sending as we condemn the purchase of Chinese-made ferries while profiting from our sale of goods and services to China?

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



Nothing brings out the worst in our politics and public discourse than a phony crisis. The commercial decision by BC Ferries to buy four ferries from China—and the decision by the Canada Infrastructure Bank to lend up to \$690-million to fund the purchase—is the latest example of such political grandstanding.

But it also reveals something more troubling: Canada's confused policy on China. We have to choose between following American policy, or pursuing a more independent one based on our own economic and security interests.

So far, the priority seems to be to please the United States. But this comes at a high price for some Canadians, such as our canola farmers, pork

producers, and fishermen. They are being punished because of an ill-considered decision by then-finance minister Chrystia Freeland last fall to arbitrarily impose a 100-per-cent tariff on Chinese vehicles, as well as higher tariffs on imports of Chinese steel and aluminum, as demanded by the U.S. Not surprisingly, China retaliated by targeting our farmers and fishers.

Yet it was not surprising last November, when Freeland boasted that Canada was “very aligned” with the U.S. on China, predicting this would help Canada's relations with incoming U.S. President Donald Trump. That turned out to be wishful thinking, but this hope still seems to guide Canadian policy.

The current state of alarm over the contract for four Chinese-built ferries reinforces this ongoing confusion over China. The ferry carrying passengers and vehicles for crown corporation Marine Atlantic between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland was built by the same Chinese shipyard that will build the four BC Ferries, without any fuss.

The decision to award the contract to CMI Weihai to replace the aging ferries currently connecting Vancouver with Victoria and Nanaimo, and the disclosure by Canada Infrastructure Bank of its loan of up to \$690-million for the ferries and up to \$310-million to fund electric charging stations so the ferries could operate as non-polluting vessels, however, has set off a political firestorm.

A fired-up Freeland, now transport minister, told the House of Commons on June 18, “I share the concern and anger of other

members of this House about the purchase of Chinese ferries ... We also owe it to the people of Canada to support Canadian shipbuilding, [and] Canadian steel,” implying that they could have been built in Canada.

But that is not the case, and no Canadian shipyard responded when BC Ferries sought proposals last year. The fact that BC Ferries may have made the best choice seems irrelevant for Freeland or Conservative Party critics. Instead, following a Conservative initiative, the House of Commons transportation committee will hold hearings on the decision.

In announcing the award to the Chinese firm, BC Ferries president Nicolas Jimenez defended the decision. “It was the clear choice based on the overall strength of its bid, including its technical capabilities, high quality and safety standards, ferry-building experience, proven ability to deliver safe, reliable vessels on dependable timelines, and the overall cost and value it delivers for our customers—all essential as we continue to experience growing demand and the urgent need to renew our aging fleet.”

More troubling is the lack of a coherent China policy from the Carney government.

During the recent federal election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney designated China as “the biggest security threat to Canada.” Even more threatening than the U.S.? And in outlining plans for trade diversification in March, he said, “we want to diversify trade with like-minded partners,” adding that

“the partners in Asia that trade our values don't include China.”

Should trade, then, be confined to “like-minded partners”? But who are they? Are Indonesia, India, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Argentina, Egypt, Vietnam and Turkey like-minded?

And what about trade with China? Magna International has just opened its new China headquarters in Shanghai, and has some 30,000 employees in China spread across more than 60 manufacturing plants and engineering centres there. “China's ambitious automakers are becoming more competitive and Magna is a key partner in their quest for establishing a global presence,” Magna says.

Should Magna be condemned for that? Linamar, our second largest auto-parts maker, also has plants in China, as does Martinrea, another Canadian auto-parts maker.

Manulife and Sun Life are active in China's insurance and retirement savings markets. CAE sells flight simulators there. The Trans-Mountain oil pipeline has China as a top customer and LNG Canada, which is 15-per-cent owned by PetroChina, will ship Canadian natural gas to China. Likewise, China is a major market for agricultural and natural resource commodities. Moreover, the small and medium-sized Canadian businesses that trade with China might amaze our MPs.

But what basic message are we sending as we condemn the purchase of Chinese-made ferries while profiting from our sale of goods and services to China? Are exports to China

good, but imports from China bad?

And what are the Chinese supposed to think? In their June 2 summit communiqué, our federal and provincial leaders agreed on “the critical importance of regular and ongoing engagement with China at the highest level to improve the overall trade relationship.”

Carney subsequently talked with Chinese Premier Li Qiang on June 5, and they agreed on the need to “regularize channels of communication between Canada and China.”

The two countries plan to convene an early meeting of the bilateral Joint Economic and Trade Committee. This committee, created in 1973, last met in November 2017. It is chaired at the deputy minister level, and according to Global Affairs Canada “is a bilateral dialogue where key Canadian and Chinese trade and investment issues can be discussed.”

A clear Canada-China policy should be a priority.

Meanwhile, public procurement is an important policy tool for this country to help advance promising Canadian companies with exciting and proprietary technology and we should go all out to support them. But we cannot build everything we need, and the ferries are a case in point. CMI Weihai appears to be the best choice for BC Ferries. This does not undermine the procurement policy. It just makes commercial sense and means that B.C. will be better off as a result.

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The Hill Times

OPINION

G7 may have missed the mark on health, but Canada has a second chance to lead

If health is embedded into the G7's work, the returns will be real and lasting. Otherwise, the cost of the missed opportunity will be measured not in dollars, but in lives.

Charmaine Crockett

Opinion



It's hard to miss what was missing in Kananaskis.

Global health was conspicuously absent from the G7 Leaders' Summit, despite being fundamental to nearly every issue on the table.

Economic resilience depends on a healthy workforce. Migration pressures intensify when people lack access to care. Climate shocks hit hardest where health systems are weakest. And instability thrives where public trust erodes. If Canada wants to lead on peace and stability, it must also lead on health.

But the window to act strategically is narrowing. The remainder of Canada's G7 presidency offers a critical opportunity to lead with purpose, and to put global health back on the agenda.

The United Nations' upcoming High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development from

July 14 to July 23 is one such moment. As countries take stock of progress toward the forum's 17 sustainable development goals—which include good health and well-being, clean water and sanitation, gender equality, and zero hunger—Canada can push for a renewed focus on health as both a goal in itself, and an essential condition for achieving the rest.

Good health outcomes enable education, foster inclusive economic growth, reduce inequality, and help build peaceful societies. With the UN General Assembly and other multilateral gatherings on the horizon this fall, the timing is right to align G7 leadership with the ambition of the 17 sustainable development goals.

This is not new territory for Canada. The Muskoka Initiative in 2010 helped to mobilize global momentum around maternal, newborn, and child health, lever-

aging Canadian investment to bring others on board.

That same spirit of targeted, measurable, collective action is exactly what we need right now.

In 1990, 12.6-million children around the world under the age of five died. By 2020, that number had fallen to 5-million, a remarkable decline of 60 per cent in just one generation thanks in no small part to Canada's catalytic investments and global leadership.

Investments in the health of women, children and adolescents—which includes investments in sexual and reproductive health and rights—remain some of the highest-impact interventions available. They are particularly vital in fragile and crisis-affected settings where the risk of poor health outcomes is highest, and progress can be most transformative. Yet, these areas remain underfunded, and are too often neglected in broader strategies.

Canada has an opportunity to close that gap. That includes expanding support for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, and ensuring that adolescent health needs are no longer an afterthought. These are not fringe issues. They are central to the well-being of communities and the resilience of systems.

Nutrition must also be part of the equation. Nearly half of all global deaths among children under the age of five are linked to malnutrition. Investing in maternal and child nutrition is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve lifelong health outcomes and reduce poverty, with early

nutrition interventions delivering an estimated US\$23 in returns for every US\$1 spent.

Strengthening local health systems is not only about services delivered, but also about who delivers them and how. Canada can reinforce inclusive governance by funding local organizations, especially those led by women and youth, and by supporting the policies and data systems needed to make sure progress is tracked and shared. Locally-led reform when supported through long-term partnerships and smart policy is more likely to be sustainable and equitable.

These approaches won't just advance global health. They'll support the very issues G7 leaders highlighted: economic stability, climate resilience, and peace. A healthy population is a more productive one. Health systems that earn trust reduce the drivers of displacement. Prepared health systems are better able to manage shocks, from climate emergencies to infectious disease outbreaks.

Canada's presidency has not passed. Its second act is only beginning. The next five months can shape how the G7 addresses the most interconnected challenges of our time. If health is embedded into that work, the returns will be real and lasting. Otherwise, the cost of the missed opportunity will be measured not in dollars, but in lives.

Charmaine Crockett is the Interim CEO of the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH).

The Hill Times

Carney's plan should emphasize public health rather than fossil fuels

The federal Liberal government needs to prioritize giving Canadians a longer and more prosperous life rather than aligning itself with the fossil fuel industry.

Richard van der Jagt, Maria Medeleanu & Geoff Strong

Opinion



The global climate is warming due to carbon dioxide levels being at record levels. Indeed, the past 10 years were the 10 warmest years on record, with 2024 being the warmest of all. Canada is warming faster than almost anywhere else on Earth.

The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat—it is accelerating, becoming hotter and more unpredictable at a faster rate than scientists anticipated. Climate warming, resulting from the burning of fossil fuels, is also causing more frequent and intense heat waves.

These heat waves threaten the safety, well-being, and prosperity of Canadians, even in cities that have historically had more moderate climates, such as Vancouver, Whitehorse, and Halifax. Every ounce of fossil fuels we burn harms our health by polluting the air we breathe, impairing brain function, increasing mortality, and affecting the future of our children.

Air pollution created by burning fossil fuels increases respiratory disease in children, and worsens breathing for people who already have fragile lungs. Hospitalizations for respiratory illnesses are rising, while families living near fire zones face disproportionate health burdens. These impacts are magnified in lower-income communities, where access

to clean air and health care is limited.

Rising temperatures are also contributing to obstructive sleep apnea, a condition now affecting between 15 and 32 per cent of Canadians that often leads to premature death. A global study of more than 116,000 adults across 41 countries found that extreme heat increased the odds of obstructive sleep apnea by 45 per cent on any given night. This translates to nearly 800,000 lost healthy life years and an estimated US\$32-billion in lost workplace productivity.

Air pollution also impairs children's brain development, has been linked to dementia, and will be the third-biggest killer worldwide by 2040. The costs of brain disorders to the individual, their caregivers, the economy, and to society are incalculable. Even unborn children are affected, with prenatal exposure linked to long-term developmental issues.

Finally, as massive wildfires become more frequent in Canada, the effects of wildfire-related air pollution are rapidly growing especially for children: increased

rates of asthma, impaired cognition, diabetic control, mental health problems and long-term risks like cancer.

It also reduces the ability to have healthy pregnancies through decreased sperm quality, pregnancy loss, fertility and adverse birth outcomes. Wildfire smoke exposure also leads to increased rates of hospitalization for respiratory disease.

A recent survey of Canadian Medical Association members, which was conducted on behalf of the World Health Organization and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, showed 95 per cent of respondents recognized the impacts of climate change.

Public support directly follows with 67 per cent of Canadians preferring clean energy, and 85 per cent wanting stronger federal climate action, according to a poll published on June 17, from Clean Energy Canada.

But Prime Minister Mark Carney's government appears to be moving in the opposite direction, with plans to build more pipelines that would wreak more havoc at even greater cost to our

current annual health care bill of \$372-billion—\$9,054/per Canadian—which is 12.4 per cent of Canada's GDP and rising.

While we can't return to the world we once had, we still have the opportunity to shape a liveable future, but time is short. The next decade will be critical in determining whether we can protect current and future generations from the worst impacts of climate change.

The Carney government needs to prioritize giving Canadians a longer and more prosperous life rather than aligning itself with the fossil fuel industry. Developing a transnational clean energy grid and utilizing Canada's potential in geothermal energy could be beneficial both economically and for the future generations.

Richard van der Jagt is a retired hematologist/oncologist, an adjunct professor of medicine at the University of Ottawa, and a member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. Maria Medeleanu, PhD, is a medical student at Queen's University, a researcher at the Hospital for Sick Children, and a member of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. Geoff Strong is an atmospheric/climate scientist by profession and a fellow of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Can Canada be a clean energy superpower? Not without tax credits

It will take enormous commitment and discipline to meet the bold promise of making Canada a clean energy superpower—traits that have not yet been demonstrated on the clean energy and climate file.

Shawn McCarthy

Opinion



As the United States reverses course on climate change-related energy policies, Canada has a unique opportunity to take the lead on the transition to cleaner energy in North America. But realizing that potential will require much faster action to implement the clean-economy tax credits that were introduced by the previous Liberal government. Under President Donald Trump, the U.S. government has taken aggressive measures to block renewable energy development and promote fossil fuels. The massive fiscal bill, called the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, that was approved by the U.S. Senate on July 1, will kill the generous tax incentives contained in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that was signed by then-president Joe Biden in 2022.

The previous Liberal government, led by Justin Trudeau, responded to the IRA by announcing a suite of refundable investment tax credits (ITCs) that would help drive investment in clean technology adoption and manufacturing, carbon capture and storage, new hydrogen technology, the electric vehicle supply chain and clean electricity.

However, the rollout of those tax credits has been painfully slow. Six tax credits were planned, but two of those—the clean electricity and EV-related credits—have not yet been legislated into force. Investors' take-up of the other four is hampered by undue complexity, bureaucratic sluggishness, and the lack of federal resources that are required to



Energy Minister Tim Hodgson said in a recent speech that the climate is changing, and the Canadian economy has to be retooled to reflect that reality, but Shawn McCarthy argues that Hodgson's government has not demonstrated the same urgency around clean-economy policies that it has shown with deregulation. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

manage their adoption, industry officials say.

Incentives conspicuously absent

Prime Minister Mark Carney is promising swift action on energy policy in pursuit of his stated goal of making Canada an "energy superpower" in both low-carbon sources and conventional fossil fuels.

In his Canada Day address, Carney acknowledged the threat of climate change, saying the country is going to have to transform the economy with home-grown technology, and "make our companies more competitive while fighting climate change."

In a speech to the Toronto Board of Trade on June 25, Energy Minister Tim Hodgson stated the case more strongly: "Our climate is changing, and we need to retool our economy to reflect that reality."

However, three months into its mandate, the Carney government has not demonstrated the same urgency around clean-economy policies that it has shown with deregulation via the passage of Bill C-5, One Canadian Economy Act. That bill, which received royal assent June 26, aims to accelerate construction of "nation-building" infrastructure such as pipelines, ports and transmission lines.

If the federal government intends to build Canada into a

"clean energy superpower," it will require every tool it has to do so, including the tax credits. "I think we're about to see how serious [the Carney government] is" with regard to the ITCs, said Lynn Côté, executive director of the Canada Cleantech Alliance. "The pressure is being felt as the team gets in place. We're looking to see when will the pedal hit the metal and what that will look like."

"These [tax credits] have the potential to be huge catalysts for important investments, but people have to know about them, and they have to be easy to use," she said.

Clean electricity waits in the wings

The clean-economy tax credits are expected to support some \$500-billion in investment in clean technologies and innovation over 10 years, the Parliamentary Budget Office projected last year. That figure is based on a scenario in which Canada generates the investment needed to meet its emission targets. But we will fall far short of those optimistic projections unless the Carney government commits to stronger climate action.

Among the most important next steps, Finance Canada must release draft legislation to enact the clean electricity and EV supply-chain credits. The government "is in the process of finalizing the two credits," a Finance Canada

spokesperson said in an email on July 8. "As the government sets its legislative agenda, it will determine how and when to deal with [the] previously announced measures."

With the reversal in the U.S., international wind, solar and battery companies are keen to invest in Canada, said Fernando Melo, federal director of the Canadian Renewable Energy Association. He's confident the government will table legislation for the clean electricity credit this fall. "They want to get it done and need to get it right," Melo said. "They're in active listening [mode] this summer to get things right."

Lack of staffing creates a barrier

Meanwhile, there are a number of bottlenecks that have hampered access to the ITCs that were legislated in June 2024, said Bryan Watson, senior vice-president at Venbridge Capital Ltd.

The problems include too few staff at the Canada Revenue Agency and Natural Resources Canada to review eligibility questions and conduct audits to determine compliance with the rules.

There are only two people assigned to respond to technical questions and curate the list of what technologies are included as "cleantech," Watson said. At the same time, the CRA audit team is understaffed and takes more than three months to complete

a review that is needed for the investors to claim their credit.

The current system will support large projects where investors have the resources to deal with doubt and delay, but smaller players—from farmers looking to add wind turbines, to school boards keen to put solar panels on roofs—are often unable to access the credits, Watson said.

"This is grossly inadequate to manage a program like this," he said. "To not resource this program properly [and] not put the proper communications resources in place indicates a lack of understanding of what is needed to get people to engage with and leverage the credits."

Market forces inadequate on their own

Declining costs of renewable and clean technology can make a compelling case for businesses, farmers, and public-sector institutions like schools and hospitals to invest in clean, energy-saving technology, particularly if their upfront costs are subsidized with tax credits.

However, it will take a broad array of policies to attract the investment needed to retool the economy with innovative technology and clean energy, said Rick Smith, president of the Canadian Climate Institute, in a statement after the Throne Speech was read on May 27. Smith urged Ottawa to enact the clean electricity tax credit, strengthen the industrial carbon price, finalize methane regulations for the oil and gas sector, establish well-defined guidelines for the financial sector, and apply clear flood- and fire-resilience criteria for federally supported housing.

However, enacting policies is not enough. The poor performance on the tax credits to date makes it clear: transformational energy and climate policies need strong leadership, both among key ministers like Hodgson, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin, as well as within the bureaucracy. Adequate staffing is required to ensure that goals are met.

The Carney government faces an array of tough challenges, including managing trade relations with Trump, forging partnerships with restive provinces and Indigenous communities, and reining in a budget deficit even as spending on defence and housing increases.

It will take enormous commitment and discipline to meet the bold promise of making Canada a clean energy superpower—traits that have not yet been demonstrated on the clean energy/climate file.

Shawn McCarthy is a senior counsel at Sussex Strategy and 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.

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NEWS

New U.K. trade strategy IDs Canada as ‘key partner’ to boost economy, procurement opportunities

The new plan defines strengthening ties with key partners like Canada as an ‘obvious priority,’ and builds on leaders’ commitments.

BY IREM KOCA

Canadian firms could gain easier access to procurement and trade opportunities in the United Kingdom under its new trade strategy that identifies Canada as a “key partner,” and contains language which observers say signals “deepening commitment.”

The U.K.’s Trade Strategy unveiled on June 26—its first since Brexit—aims to boost the country’s economy by attracting foreign investment, cutting red tape in procurement, simplifying trade rules, and injecting billions of pounds in funding for high-growth sectors.

The new strategy defines strengthening ties with key partners, such as Canada, as an “obvious priority,” building on Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s June 15 commitments to deepen the bilateral relationship.

The message from London was echoed by the high commission in Ottawa. In a June 30 statement, British High Commissioner Rob Tinline defined Canada as a “key partner” in the U.K.’s efforts to boost its economy by “making it easier, faster, and more attractive for international firms to invest.”

In the same statement, the U.K.’s trade commissioner for North America, Oliver Christian, said, “Whether you’re a Vancouver life sciences company looking to unlock innovation or a Toronto tech firm ready to expand internationally, the U.K. is creating the ideal environment for international businesses to thrive.”

Carney committed to introducing legislation when Parliament resumes in the fall to ratify the U.K.’s accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This would give U.K. and Canadian suppliers greater access to procurement opportunities. The CPTPP’s member coun-



U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney have agreed on further collaboration across a range of sectors. *No 10 Downing Street photograph by Simon Dawson*

tries include Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

The new strategy’s aim is to “kickstart economic growth by putting international partnerships at its core,” Alan Gogbashian, the U.K.’s deputy trade commissioner for North America, told *The Hill Times* in a July 7 email.

When asked how the new strategy could affect business and procurement with Canada, Gogbashian pointed to the U.K.’s Procurement Act which came into force this past February. He said the reforms to remove barriers for new entrants and small and medium-sized enterprises by reducing paperwork, standardizing procedures across authorities, and cutting bid costs.

“Improvements to our central procurement portal also mean Canadian and U.K. firms alike will benefit from full digital tendering across departments,” Gogbashian said.

“Once Canada ratifies the U.K.’s accession [to the CPTPP], Canadian firms will gain guaranteed access to more U.K. procurement markets on top of what is already covered by the existing trade agreement between the U.K. and Canada,” he said.

Further commitments were made in June with Carney and Starmer agreeing to establish a new U.K.-Canada Economic and Trade Working Group, which is expected to address trade barriers, extend co-operation in areas such as critical minerals and artificial intelligence and infrastructure, and report its findings to both prime ministers within six months.

Gogbashian said the U.K. officials are “frequently in touch with Canadian counterparts at all levels of government and across a range of sectors, including procurement,” and added that the findings of the working group will inform future steps. “We’ll look forward to seeing how its findings might benefit procurement,” he said.

The strategy also sets out a \$37.5-billion expansion for the U.K. Export Finance (UKEF)—the country’s official export credit agency—bringing its total lending capacity to \$150-billion. UKEF provides financing and insurance to exporters, and provides guarantees on loans made to international buyers to finance the purchase of goods or services from a U.K. supplier.

The U.K. is Canada’s third-largest trading partner, behind the United States and China. In 2024, Canada exported \$28.3-billion worth in goods to the U.K., and imported \$9.8-billion.

Gogbashian highlighted that Carney and Starmer agreed on further collaboration across a range of sectors—including semiconductors, quantum, digital, AI, biomanufacturing, and civil nuclear—as well as an enhanced defence and security partnership.

The U.K. government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Canadian AI firm Cohere on June 16 to explore the use of AI in health care, finance, defence, and national security.

Canadian Commercial Corporation also signed a MoU with UKEF this past spring, under which UKEF will provide financing to eligible international buyers using Canada’s government-to-government contracting model.

‘There’s an open door for Canadians who want to do business with Britain’: Robertson

Though concrete benefits have yet to materialize, observers agree that strong political messaging—if backed by action—could translate into meaningful economic opportunity for both countries.

Andrew Percy, a former British government minister and trade envoy to Canada who currently serves as vice-president at Crestview Strategy, told *The Hill Times* in a July 4 interview that the combination of the “very warm” comments from both Carney and Starmer on the bilateral relationship over the last month, as well as the recent mention of Canada as a key partner in the U.K.’s new trade strategy are positive signs.

“We don’t have a lot of detail yet, and these documents are high level, but the key takeaway for Canadian businesses looking at the U.K. is that there’s clearly a commitment on both sides to greater alignment and a deeper trading relationship,” Percy said.

“That is obviously of interest to business and will provide opportunities. And access to public procurement is key, given how much governments actually spend.”

Percy underlined that both countries’ prime ministers are facing similar pressures to diversify trade. The U.K. is trying to reduce reliance on the European Union while still maintaining critical ties to the bloc, and Canada is attempting to do the same with the United States amid President Donald Trump’s consistent tariff threats and annexation rhetoric.

“Take all that together, then you have a clear commitment on both sides to deepen the trade relationship, which of course means much more opportunity for Canadian businesses,” Percy said.

Greg Quinn, a retired British diplomat and a member of the Governing Council of the Canada-U.K. Council, told *The Hill Times* in a July 4 interview that Britain’s push for closer alignment with allies reflects a broader need to recalibrate on the global scale.

“There’s been a very clear idea that we need to look at our group of likemindeds—of which Canada is one—and work more closely with them, and to diversify away from the U.S. because maybe we’ve all become a bit too reliant on them,” Quinn said. “We live in a somewhat different world today than we did

even 12 months ago with what is happening with the U.S.”

When Starmer’s Labour government came to power in the U.K. in July 2024, ending 14 years of Conservative rule, it did so with a “very clear” understanding that it needs to build industry and attract investment into the country, according to Quinn.

“And to do that, you need to make it simpler. You need to simplify the procurement rules, you simplify the accounting rules, you simplify the tax rules, etc.,” he argued.

“What we want to do in the U.K., I think, is to make it as simple as possible for companies—like those from Canada—to invest and procure in the U.K. It’s [about] making it as easy of a process, removing non-tariff barriers that might exist. We want to hopefully make it easier for U.K. companies to invest into Canada.”

Quinn argued that a strong trade relationship between the two countries already exists with multiple large Canadian firms such as Lightspeed, Strata, Magellan Aerospace, and TD Securities being already well established in the U.K., but underlined that difficulties still exist with British companies investing in Canada, partly due to differences between provinces.

Former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson echoed that this country already has a preferential advantage in doing business with the U.K. through its partnerships under the World Trade Organization and the CPTPP. But the U.K. “targeting” Canada as a key partner in its recent trade strategy signals a deepening of ties, Robertson said as “there is more clarity, and it’s more concrete.”

“There is an open door for Canadians who want to do procurement or business with Britain,” said Robertson, who’s now a senior adviser at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, adding that while it is very hard for governments to promote business, they ultimately create the framework to ease the rules and boost opportunities. “The British are certainly well-inclined,” he said.

With both countries increasing their defence spending, sources pointed to defence procurement as an obvious area where joint efforts can flourish. “Most likely prospects are going to be on the industrial defence side, because we’re both increasing investments in that area, and we already have long-standing partnerships there,” Robertson said.

One of the largest defence procurement projects between Canada and the U.K. is the River-class destroyer, touted as the largest and most complex shipbuilding initiative in Canada since the Second World War. The Canadian company Irving Shipbuilding is building the 15 warships for the Navy, which has an estimated cost of \$60-billion, but U.K.-based firms such as BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce are also involved in the build, which is based on the U.K.’s Type 26 frigate design.

“Will Canadian businesses take advantage? That’s the question,” said Robertson. “We have these agreements that give us preference, but ultimately, it’s business that does business with business.”

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NEWS

Conservative MP Khanna mobilizing support for Poilievre's upcoming leadership review, say Conservative sources

The Conservative 'movement is bigger, stronger and more energized than ever' under Pierre Poilievre's leadership, says Conservative MP Arpan Khanna.

Continued from page 1

"What he's [Khanna] really doing, he's building delegates," one former Conservative candidate told *The Hill Times*. "So he's whipping support for the leader and he's going to be successful. This definitely falls within the scope [as national outreach chair] of that. He's doing what's in his best interest and the leader's best interest."

Poilievre is set to face a mandatory leadership review, as required by the party constitution following an electoral defeat. While there is no fixed threshold he must meet to stay on as party leader, some current and former senior Conservatives point to the support he received of 68 per cent in the 2022 leadership race as a potential benchmark. Falling short of that figure could "jeopardize" his position, these insiders opined.

In the 2022 leadership contest, former Quebec premier Jean Charest placed a distant second with 16 per cent of the vote, followed by Conservative MP Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.) with 9.6 per cent, now-Conservative MP Roman Baber (York Centre, Ont.) with five per cent, and Conservative MP Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound-Muskoka, Ont.) with one per cent. At the time, the Conservative Party had 678,000 members, 438,000 of whom cast their votes in the leadership election.

According to the Conservative Party constitution, each of the 343 ridings may send 12 delegates, including the electoral district association president and the candidate of record or incumbent MP, to the convention. Additionally, all 20 elected national councillors,



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, right, pictured with his wife Anaida Poilievre on April 28 in Ottawa, is set to face a mandatory leadership review at the Calgary convention in January, as required by the party constitution following an electoral defeat. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

former party leaders, and members of the national policy and constitution committees are also eligible to attend.

In a leadership review vote, party leaders decide themselves if they received adequate support to remain in place, or step down and trigger a new leadership election. In 2022, then-United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney resigned from his role as premier of Alberta after earning just 51.4 per cent support in his leadership review. In 2016, then-federal NDP leader Tom Mulcair stepped down after receiving only 48 per cent. And in 1983, then-Progressive Conservative leader Joe Clark triggered a leadership election after securing 66.9 per cent of the vote.

At last month's quarterly meeting in Ottawa, the Conservative Party's national council decided its next convention would take place in Calgary. The decision was made to change the location—which was originally supposed to be Ottawa—not only because Poilievre lost his Ottawa-area seat in the April 28 election, but also because the party hadn't won any seats in the capital, according to senior Conservative sources.

Poilievre is now running in an Aug. 18 byelection in the Alberta riding of Battle River—Crowfoot, vacated by now-former Conservative MP Damien Kurek. With the riding being in one of the safest Conservative regions in the country, Poilievre is widely expected to win this byelection with a comfortable margin.

At this time, it appears that Poilievre will get strong support in his leadership review from party grassroots members. In addition, there's no challenger waiting in the wings to undermine Poilievre's leadership. According to Conservative sources, Khanna (Oxford, Ont.) recently told former candidates that he doesn't expect any serious challenge to Poilievre's leadership.

The last election result was devastating for party members, candidates, and the leader as for close to two years, the party led in the polls by a high double-digit margin.

In early January, the Conservatives were leading with a 27-point margin, but the political landscape changed after then-prime minister Justin Trudeau announced his departure plan and Mark Carney ran for the Liberal leadership. United States President Donald Trump's trade war also played a key role in the remarkable turnaround for the Liberals in the April 28 election. At the time, the Conservatives were projected to win a super majority of 220 seats. To seize the momentum, Carney called an early election and won a strong minority government. The Conservatives failed to form government, and Poilievre failed to win back his own seat.

One of the criticisms that Poilievre is facing for the election loss was that his campaign failed to pivot in time when it was clear that Trump's tariffs were top of mind for Canadians. The campaign focused chiefly on cost-of-living issues. During the election, senior

Conservatives like Kory Teneycke, who was communications director to former prime minister Stephen Harper, went public with his criticism that the federal Conservatives were not focusing enough on the Trump tariffs.

In the last election, the Liberals won 43.7 per cent of the vote and secured 169 seats, which are just three short of a majority in the 343-member House of Commons. The Conservatives received 41.3 per cent of the vote and captured 144 seats. The Bloc Québécois—which fields candidates only in Quebec—and the New Democratic Party each garnered 6.3 per cent of the vote, with the Bloc winning 22 seats and NDP taking seven. The Greens earned 1.2 per cent of the vote, and managed to win just one seat.

In comparison, after the 2021 federal election—when the House had 338 seats—the Liberals won 160 seats, the Conservatives 119, the Bloc 32, the NDP 25, and the Greens two.

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Conservative sources said that Khanna has been meeting with former candidates to gather their feedback on the last election and to discuss potential changes the party should consider. He is also asking whether they plan to run again, and is encouraging them to bring as many delegates as possible to the upcoming convention in support of the party leader.

During these conversations, Khanna has reminded these candidates that riding associations can help subsidize the cost of attending the convention—which can range from \$2,000 to \$3,000 depending on travel, accommodations, the convention fee, and other expenses. According to Elections Canada, riding associations are permitted to cover boarding and lodging costs, and parts of the convention fee.

Prior to every party convention, each electoral district association decides whether to subsidize and determines the amount based on the funds available in their bank accounts.

Conservative sources told *The Hill Times* last week that most—if not all—former candidates reassured Khanna that they would support the leader. But some former candidates told *The Hill Times* the election took place only two months ago, and they are still processing the loss.

After all the hard work and sacrifices they made, many are unsure about reoffering again. They said that their decision would depend on whether the recommendations they shared with the party leader during his post-election review are taken seriously, and whether meaningful changes—both personnel and policy—occur within the party. Until then, they are hesitant to commit to recruiting and sending delegates to the January convention in Calgary, citing concerns about the winter weather, the post-Christmas return to regular life, and the question of whether it's worth the effort if they don't intend to run again.

They said that, at the moment, members are not having honest talks about the leadership review happening—even among former candidates—because as soon as discussions begin, people go into self-preservation mode out of

concern their comments might make it back to the leadership team. They also want to see what changes Poilievre brings once he returns to House, and whether those changes are substantial enough to reassure candidates and party members that they can realistically win the next election under the current leader.

"If nothing changes at the top, there's no point of running again," said a second former Conservative candidate who met with Khanna recently. "I'm not going to go out of my way to encourage people to go to the convention. If they go, they go."

Incumbent Conservative MPs and candidates of record are the party 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.

Khanna was not available for an interview, but sent a written statement for this article.

"Pierre has my full support and everywhere I go, Conservatives are united behind him. We smashed records, won new seats coast to coast, and delivered the highest vote percentage in modern Conservative history," wrote Khanna. "He broadened our voter coalition, inspiring a new generation of supporters, and even earning endorsements from labour unions. Under Pierre Poilievre's leadership, our Conservative movement is bigger, stronger, and more energized than ever."

Meanwhile, two veteran Conservative-leaning columnists last week wrote that grassroots members of the party are not as enthusiastic about Poilievre as they were before the April 28 election.

"There was bitterness, anger, a desire for change and outrage over how the general election campaign had gone. Rather than that anger being directed at those around Poilievre, this time it was aimed at him," wrote Sun Media columnist Brian Lilley last week.

"Former political staffers, campaign volunteers, fundraisers and more were all willing to vent their spleen and express their frustration. For those asking, these were not Doug Ford conservatives who had flown in from Ottawa or Toronto for the Stampede, these were rock-ribbed conservatives upset at their party snatching defeat from the jaws of victory."

Long time *National Post* columnist John Ivison also echoed similar views on his Substack last week.

"MPs say privately they are resisting efforts to draw them closer into the leader's orbit. Outgoing staff say that while Jenni Byrne is being blamed for an election strategy that snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, the real architect was Poilievre himself, who micromanaged every aspect of the campaign," wrote Ivison.

"One former employee said Conservatives are openly laughing at efforts by chief of staff, Ian Todd, to re-staff the Opposition Leader's Office. Some of Poilievre's closest supporters don't sound convinced the leader will make it through January's review."

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Energy Minister Hodgson top-lobbied in Carney cabinet since May shuffle

The Pathways Alliance’s list of advocacy priorities include a recommendation for the federal government to repeal the industrial carbon pricing system, which they call “uncompetitive.”

Continued from page 1

as well as a communication on May 23 with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), whose members produce more than 90 per cent of Canada’s natural gas and crude oil. Since May 13, Hodgson has also engaged in communication with organizations involved in infrastructure, transportation, trading, or power generation involving conventional energy, such as Canadian Energy Infrastructure Corp, ATCO Ltd., Emera Incorporated, and Enbridge.

Outside of the oil and natural gas sector, other groups that have communicated with Hodgson since his appointment include Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, the B.C. Lumber Trade Council, and the Alberta Forest Products Association.

Ali, who is also the corporate secretary of the Government Relations Institute of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that Natural Resources Canada is often most frequently engaged in communications with the fossil fuels sector, followed by mining and forestry, in terms of the volume of communications.

“It’s because, I think, it aligns with what the prime minister has been trying to echo, [that] conventional energy is an important part of making Canada an energy superpower,” said Ali. “I think that all fits into a number of companies and associations, and even beyond that, trying to engage on ‘what does this mean? How do we move the projects forward?’”

During his election campaign in April, Carney pledged to make Canada a leading energy superpower by fast-tracking projects of national interest, accelerating exploration of critical minerals, and working with provinces and territories to build out an East-West electricity grid. A Liberal



With 43 communication reports, Energy Minister Tim Hodgson was the minister whom lobbyists communicated with the most since cabinet was appointed on May 13. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

government bill, the One Canada Economy Act, intended to expedite national interest projects, and reduce barriers to internal trade and labour mobility received royal assent on June 26.

Similarly, Hodgson talked about turning this country into a energy superpower by taking advantage of both conventional and clean energy during a speech to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on May 23.

Kendall Dilling, president of the Pathways Alliance, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on July 8 that his organization has been discussing its priorities with Hodgson.

“We look forward to continuing to collaboratively work with government on our shared priorities of developing our natural resources, strengthening Canada’s economy and advancing environmental innovation and projects, including carbon capture and storage,” said Dilling in the email.

The Pathways Alliance media team directed *The Hill Times* to its list of federal policy priorities for 2025, which was released on March 21. The priorities include a recommendation to build additional pipeline capacity and increase market access, and for Ottawa to repeal the industrial carbon pricing system, which Pathways criticized as “uncompetitive.” The priorities list suggested that the federal government should instead allow “more suitable” carbon regulations to be set by provincial governments.

Pathways Alliance also advocated for the removal of the



Muhammad Ali, vice-president at Crestview Strategy, pictured, says the energy minister’s popularity with lobbyists is due to people wanting to show that their work will fit with the government’s natural resources plans. *Photograph courtesy of Yaron Eini*

industrial carbon price in a letter to Carney on April 30. In the letter, the group argued that the federal cap on emissions “creates uncertainty, is redundant, will limit growth and unnecessarily result in production cuts, and stifle infrastructure investments.”

Pathways Alliance, which is a group of six of Canada’s largest oil-sands producers, filed two communication reports for communication with Hodgson on May 27. The organization is represented on the registry in-house by Dilling, as well as by five consultants from StrategyCorp,

including Lisa Samson, Liam Thompson, and Garry Keller.

Lisa Baiton, president and CEO of CAPP, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on July 8 that, along with the new federal ambition to build projects faster, there is a need for a policy reset, and the introduction of “a more pragmatic regulatory framework” to help this country attract the investment needed to strengthen market access and build new trading relationships.

“Regulatory certainty will be key in bolstering investor confidence and national competitiveness, allowing Canada to reach its full potential. As a collaborative and solutions-oriented partner in growing a strong and resilient economy, Canada’s energy sector is working to ensure all the pieces are in place to drive investments, create high-paying jobs, encourage innovation, and allow Canada to reach its full potential as an energy superpower,” said Baiton in the email.

In response to the introduction of the One Canadian Economy Act on June 6, Baiton released a statement that argued Canada is facing an “increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment and a world in which the global trade order is being reshaped at a pace unseen in modern history,” adding that urgent action is required to strengthen Canada’s position in trade negotiations with the United States and other major global players.

“CAPP is encouraged by the federal government’s flexibility and efforts to work with the provinces to accelerate the approval

process for major projects. To continue to rebuild investor confidence and economic competitiveness, in parallel the federal government also needs to take [a] hard look at the current inefficient and cumbersome regulatory environment,” said Baiton in the statement.

“In today’s volatile geopolitical climate, oil and natural gas remain among Canada’s strongest assets. CAPP estimates there are currently \$26-billion worth of oil and natural gas industry-related projects under construction, with more than \$100-billion in additional projects planned or awaiting final investment decisions. These include LNG export facilities, pipelines, carbon capture projects, and upstream developments, all backed by proponents ready to invest billions in Canada.”

In the statement, Baiton said that CAPP “strongly supports” any action to double the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program in order to “encourage greater equity ownership and deeper participation of Indigenous leadership in projects that build the nation and strengthen the economy.”

CAPP is represented on the registry in-house by Baiton, as well as Wil Robertson, CAPP’s senior adviser of federal affairs; Richard Wong, vice-president of regulatory and operations; and Johanne Sénécal, vice-president of sustainability, external and Indigenous affairs.

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Top-lobbied cabinet ministers	
Cabinet minister	Communication reports
Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson	43
Industry Minister Mélanie Joly	28
Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald	21
Finance and National Revenue Minister François-Philippe Champagne	13
Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault	12
International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu	12
Minister of Women and Gender Equality Rechie Valdez	11
Prime Minister Mark Carney	9
Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade Dominic LeBlanc	9
Environment and Climate Change Minister Julie Dabrusin	8
Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand	7
Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson	7

The above table shows the federal cabinet ministers who were listed in the most communication reports between May 13 and July 8. Based on a search of the federal lobbyists’ registry on July 8.

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Minister Champagne brings some fresh faces to finance file

Staffers currently leading Champagne's policy team previously worked for the ministers of international trade, innovation, and housing.

Finance and National Revenue Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** has made good progress in firming up his new office, and he's introduced some fresh talent to the portfolio.

Niloofer Boroun, who was previously director of policy to then-international trade minister **Mary Ng**, has been hired as director of international policy to Champagne.

Boroun had been working for Ng—who opted not to seek re-election this year—since April 2024, beginning as a senior adviser. She was promoted to policy director that June.

Prior to working for Ng, Boroun was a principal and founder of Lotus Consulting Group in Toronto. Boroun has some provincial political experience under her belt, including as a senior policy adviser for international trade, economic development, and immigration in then-Ontario premier **Kathleen Wynne**'s office between 2016 and 2018, and as a past executive assistant to then-training, colleges, and universities minister **John Milloy**.

On the public-service side, Boroun also briefly worked as a senior policy and public appointments adviser with Ontario's Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Science. And according to her LinkedIn profile, Boroun was director of tour and operations for Ontario Liberal Leader **Bonnie Crombie**'s successful 2023 leadership campaign.

Boroun is also a former executive director of Consider Canada, and a former manager of investment services and global markets with Toronto Global, among other past jobs.

Matthew O'Connell has been named deputy director of financial sector policy to Champagne.

O'Connell comes from Champagne's old team as then-innovation, science, and industry minister, having worked in that office as a policy adviser since May 2024. O'Connell continued to

tackle policy in the office during now-Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita Anand**'s brief turn as innovation minister from March to May of this year, and stayed on briefly after current Industry Minister **Mélanie Joly** was sworn in on May 13. Prior to first being hired by Champagne last year, O'Connell's LinkedIn profile indicates he was manager of strategic partnerships with Drop, a consumer services firm in Toronto.

Kyle Fox is now deputy director of policy to Champagne. Fox took a break from working on the Hill at the start of this year, having previously been director of policy to then-housing, infrastructure, and communities minister **Sean Fraser**, who was briefly shuffled out of cabinet last December before returning to the front bench in May in his

current role of minister of justice and attorney general. Fox had been running Fraser's policy shop since shortly after the minister took over the file in July 2023. Before then, Fox was a senior policy adviser to then-housing, diversity, and inclusion minister **Ahmed Hussen**.

Fox is also a past special assistant—for operations, and later for policy—to then-associate finance minister **Mona Fortier**, a former Ontario field organizer for the federal Liberal Party, and a former aide to Toronto city councillor **Paul Ainslie**, amongst other past experience.

Also tackling policy for Champagne are senior advisers **Jessica Fullerton** and **Yianni Papadatos**. Fullerton is also an Atlantic regional affairs adviser to Champagne.

A former research analyst with The Capital Hill Group, Fullerton joined the Liberal research bureau (LRB) as a special assistant in the spring of 2020. After the 2021 election, she landed a job as a policy adviser for intergovernmental affairs to then-intergovernmental affairs, infrastructure, and communities minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, and—until recently—stuck with LeBlanc through his various portfolios since. More recently, she was a senior policy adviser in his office as then-minister for public safety, democratic institutions, and intergovernmental affairs. According to her LinkedIn profile, she continued as a senior policy adviser to LeBlanc during his recent brief turns as finance and intergovernmental affairs minister, and international trade and intergovernmental affairs minister.

Papadatos has been with the finance portfolio since April 2024 when he was hired as a parliamentary affairs adviser to then-minister and deputy prime minister **Chrystia Freeland**.

Before then, he had been a communications assistant and later parliamentary affairs adviser to then-Indigenous services minister **Patty Hajdu**. Papadatos is also an ex-aide to Quebec Liberal MP **Annie Koutrakis**.

Cheryl Cardinal is in place as a senior adviser for Indigenous affairs. Another former Freeland adviser, Cardinal was hired as director of strategic initiatives and Indigenous equity in the finance office under Freeland in the fall of 2023. Before then, she'd been working for the then-named public services and procurement minister, starting as director of Indigenous policy and procurement to then-minister **Anita Anand**, and later as director of policy and Indigenous procurement to then-minister **Helena Jacek**.

A federal cabinet staffer since 2018, Cardinal's first post was as director of Indigenous relations and reconciliation to then-natural resources minister **Seamus O'Regan**. Before then, she'd been president and CEO of the Indigenous Center of Energy.

Sean O'Neill continues as director of parliamentary affairs to Champagne, a role he previously filled in Champagne's office as then-innovation minister since October 2024. O'Neill is also a former parliamentary affairs director to Ng as then-trade minister, an ex-parliamentary affairs and issues management adviser in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office, and previously tackled parliamentary affairs in the innovation office under both Champagne and then-minister **Navdeep Bains**. As well, O'Neill is an ex-aide to Ontario Liberal MP **Ali Ehsassi**, and a former special assistant in the LRB.

Ashton Ross is director of issues management.

She recently oversaw issues management—while also serving as a senior policy adviser—for then-veterans affairs minister **Darren Fisher**, and briefly for his successor, current minister **Jill McKnight** before being hired to Champagne's new finance team last month.

A former assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Jennifer O'Connell**, Ross worked in various roles for LeBlanc from 2022 until early this year. Starting as assistant to the parliamentary secretary in LeBlanc's office as then-intergovernmental affairs, infrastructure, and communities minister, Ross was later made an Ontario adviser,

and went on to be a legislative assistant and later parliamentary affairs and policy adviser in LeBlanc's office as then-public safety, democratic institutions, and intergovernmental affairs minister.

Pierre-Yves Bourque continues as director of operations to Champagne, a role he's filled since the end of 2021, previously in Champagne's office as then-innovation minister. Bourque has been working for Champagne since the start of 2019, beginning as director of communications in Champagne's office as then-infrastructure and communities minister. He went on to be a senior communications adviser and issues manager to Champagne as then-foreign affairs minister, and was later promoted to director of parliamentary affairs in that office.

Bourque is also a former Quebec Liberal staffer, an ex-assistant to then-Liberal MP **Stéphane Dion**, and a former parliamentary affairs assistant to then-international development minister **Marie-Claude Bibeau** and to Freeland as then-foreign affairs minister.

François Massicotte is a senior Quebec affairs adviser to Champagne, no doubt working closely with **Elyse Moisan**, the minister's Quebec regional affairs adviser, also known as the Quebec desk.

Massicotte was most recently director of strategic planning to Champagne as then-innovation minister, and has been working for Champagne since the start of 2015, beginning in Champagne's constituency office as the MP for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que. Massicotte joined the ministerial staff ranks at the start of 2020 as a special assistant for Quebec and Atlantic affairs, La Francophonie, and parliamentary affairs to Champagne as then-foreign affairs minister. He was promoted to director of operations to Champagne roughly a year later—a title Massicotte initially carried with him when he followed Champagne to the innovation portfolio in early 2021.

Moisan was previously a Quebec adviser to Freeland as then-finance minister and deputy prime minister. Hired by Freeland roughly one year ago, before then, Moisan had covered Quebec for the LRB.

Quinn Ferris is senior West desk for Champagne. Ferris was last director of operations to then-agriculture minister **Lawrence MacAulay**, and before then spent

two-and-a-half years working in the ministers' regional office in Winnipeg, Man., one of 16 such offices across Canada which support all of cabinet. He's also a former West and North regional adviser to then-rural economic development minister **Gudie Hutchings**, a former communications adviser to then-fisheries minister **Bernadette Jordan**, and an ex-aide to then-Manitoba Liberal MPs **Jim Carr** and **MaryAnn Mihychuk**, amongst other past roles.

Audrey Milette is director of communications to Champagne, working closely with deputy director of digital media **Kevin Acquah** and press secretary **John Fragos**.

Milette previously did the same for Champagne as then-innovation minister. A former lawyer with Lacoursière Lebrun avocats, Milette has been working for Champagne since 2021, starting in his office as an MP. She joined his innovation office as a communications adviser after that year's federal election, and worked her way up to Quebec regional affairs adviser, then policy adviser, then press secretary before being made communications director this past February.

Acquah comes from the LRB where he's been working since a 2023 summer internship, most recently as a communications and outreach adviser and videographer.

Fragos previously tackled communications for the federal employment minister under various titles—starting under then-minister **Randy Boissonnault**, and continuing through Liberal MP **Genette Petitpas Taylor** and now-Government House

Leader **Steven MacKinnon**'s turns in the role—and is a past press secretary to then-sport and physical activity minister **Carla Qualtrough**. Between 2020 and 2021, he worked as an assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Marc Miller**, and joined Qualtrough's office in 2023 after a little more than two years working as a communications specialist with ABB Canada in Montreal.

Hélène Botelho is office manager for Champagne. Botelho was previously executive assistant to Champagne as then-innovation minister, and before then did the same for then-foreign affairs minister **Marc Garneau** and for O'Regan as then-natural resources minister.

Hirra Majid is executive assistant to Champagne's chief of staff, who, as previously reported, is **Ian Foucher**.

Majid is a former assistant to Toronto Liberal MP **Julie Dzerowicz**, and according to her LinkedIn profile, worked on Dzerowicz's recent successful re-election campaign in Davenport, Ont.

Wrapping up Champagne's 19-member team—as it currently stands, at least—is ministerial driver **Naran Leseigneur**.

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Niloofer Boroun is director of international policy. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Kevin Acquah is deputy director of digital media. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Ashton Ross is director of issues management. 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.

Prime minister launches meetings with First Nations about Bill C-5



At a June 20 press conference, following Bill C-5's passing, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced he would meet with First Nations rights holders to discuss the bill. Buckley Belanger, secretary of state for rural development; Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty; and Liberal MPs Natilien Joseph and Jaime Battiste were also in attendance. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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

Webinar: Can 'Mission-Driven' Government Work Here?—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a webinar, "What is 'mission-driven' government, and can it work here?" Jack Pannell of the U.K.'s Institute for Government and Dan Honig of University College London's School of Public Policy share their insights into what has been the experience so far in the U.K., and can this approach work with Canada's structure and culture of our federal public service? Tuesday, July 15, at 11 a.m. happening online: irpp.org.

Webinar: Stopping health-care privatization—The Canadian Health Coalition hosts a webinar, "Stopping runaway privatization of health care in Canada?" featuring the Ontario Health Coalition's Natalie Mehra, Andrew Longhurst, and Canadian Doctors for Medicare's Dr. Melanie Bechard. Tuesday, July 15, at 12 p.m. ET. Register online: healthcoalition.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

CSIS Director to Deliver Remarks—Daniel Rogers, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Services, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, July 16, at 12 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 17

Prime Minister Carney to Meet with First Nations Leadership—Prime Minister Mark Carney, responsible cabinet ministers, and public servants are expected to hold the first in a series of meetings with First Nations rights holders in Ottawa. Details to follow.

SATURDAY, JULY 19

Move Nation: A Parliament Hill Revival—The Canadian Mental Health Association hosts a free, bodyweight

workout open to the entire community. All fitness levels, all ages, and all backgrounds are welcome. Bring a water bottle, a fitness mat or towel. Saturday, July 19, at 11 a.m. ET. on the lawn of Parliament Hill. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JULY 21— WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Council of the Federation Summer Meeting—Ontario Premier Doug Ford, chair of the Council of the Federation, will host the premiers' 2025 Summer Meeting. Monday, July 21, to Wednesday, July 23, at Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ont. Details: canadaspremiers.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Elevate Girls on the Hill—Elevate International hosts a leadership forum that brings girls and young women to the steps of Parliament Hill for a day of leadership, empowerment, and celebration. Students, emerging leaders, Members of Parliament, educators, and changemakers will take part in keynote speeches, youth-led panels, and leadership workshops. Wednesday, July 23, at 9:30 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Room 100, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JULY 28

Webinar: 'Continuing the Fight for Pharmacare'—The Canadian Health Coalition hosts a webinar, "Continuing the fight for pharmacare, breaking the grip of big pharma," featuring Dr. Joel Lexchin and Sharon Batt. Monday, July 28, at 12 p.m. ET. happening online: healthcoalition.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

Panel: 'Telecommunications in Canada'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts a discussion on "Telecommunications in Canada," featuring Vicky Eatrides, chair and CEO of the CRTC; and Rachelle Frenette, general counsel and deputy executive director, CRTC. Wednesday, July 30, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, AUG. 18

Byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will be running in the byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta., which will

be held today. Former Conservative MP Damien Kurek resigned his seat so that Poilievre could run here and get a seat in the House.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1

Senator Seidman's Retirement—Today is Quebec Conservative Senator Judith Seidman's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 3— FRIDAY, SEPT. 5

Assembly of First Nations' AGA—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual general assembly. Wednesday, Sept. 3, to Friday, Sept. 5, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: afn.ca/events.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 5— SATURDAY, SEPT. 6

CSFN Regional Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its 2025 Regional Conference. Conservatives will gather to discuss the unique needs and aspirations of Western Canadians within the Canadian federation. Friday, Sept. 5, to Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, SEPT. 15

Ottawa Centre September Trivia Night—The Ontario Liberal Party hosts an evening of trivia and fun downtown with fellow Liberals. Each ticket includes snacks and a drink cover, and new Future Fund sign-ups will be accepted at the door. Monday, Sept. 15, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: ontarioliberal.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16

Conference: 'Canada's Next Economic Transformation'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a day-long conference, "Canada's Next Economic Transformation: Industrial Policy in Tumultuous Times." Participants include Steve Verheul (former assistant deputy minister of the Trade Policy and Negotiations branch of Global Affairs Canada); Matthew Holmes (Canadian Chamber of Commerce); Emma Braham (L'Institut du Québec); Jim Stanford (Centre for Future Work); Jesse McCormick (First Nations Major Project Coalition); Chris Bataille (Centre on Global Energy Policy); and Tim Hudak (Counsel Public Affairs). Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Lord

Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17

CUTA 2025 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2025 Policy Forum, bringing together some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts to discuss the industry's future. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 8 a.m. ET the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 19

First of 2025 CBC Massey Lectures—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." The next lectures will take place in Vancouver (Sept. 25), Edmonton (Oct. 1), Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador (Oct. 15) and Ottawa (Oct. 30). Friday, Sept. 19, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Details to follow: massey-college.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

Senator Mégie's Retirement—Today is Quebec ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

Future Forward Summit—Canada 2020 hosts its annual policy summit on the topic "Future Forward: Shaping Public Policy in Canada." At a time when the world is shifting fast, this summit asks the question: how can Canada shape—not just react to—the forces defining our future? Tuesday, Sept. 23, at The Westin Ottawa. Details: canada2020.ca.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 24

Politics and the Pen Gala—The Writers' Trust of Canada hosts the Politics and the Pen Gala, its annual fundraiser where the \$25,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing will also be presented. Location to be announced. Details: writerstrust.com.

MONDAY, OCT. 6

An Evening with David Peterson—The Pearson Centre hosts an evening with David Peterson, celebrating the 40th anniversary of his becoming premier of Ontario in 1985. Monday, Oct. 6, at 6:30 p.m. ET at One King West, Toronto. Details: thepearsoncentre.ca.

THURSDAY, OCT. 9

CPAC Fall Parliamentary Reception—CPAC hosts an evening of insightful conversations, refreshments and entertainment to celebrate the channel's legacy of connecting Canadians with their democracy. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Contact rsvp@cpac.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Senator Richards' Retirement—Today is non-affiliated New Brunswick Senator David Adams Richards' 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

TUESDAY, OCT. 21

The Regent Debate—The C.D. Howe Institute host the seventh Regent Debate, a marquee platform for serious discussion on policy issues essential

to Canada's future. Speakers to be announced. Tuesday, Oct. 21 at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Register: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22— SUNDAY, OCT. 26

Ottawa International Writers' Festival—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival fall edition takes place from Wednesday, Oct. 22, to Sunday, Oct. 26. Details to come: writersfestival.org.

THURSDAY, OCT. 30

Final CBC Massey Lecture—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver the final instalment of this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." Thursday, Oct. 30, at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details to follow: masseycollege.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 5

Vimy Gala—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute hosts its 33rd annual Vimy Gala. This prestigious black-tie event honours Canada's fallen heroes and celebrate exceptional Canadians who have shaped the nation's defence and security landscape. The 2025 Vimy Award Laureate will also be honoured. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at the Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Pl. Register: cdainstitute.ca.

SATURDAY, NOV. 22

Press Gallery Dinner—The Parliamentary Press Gallery will host its annual gala dinner. Saturday, Nov. 22, at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Ottawa. Details: collin.lafrance@parl.gc.ca.

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