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THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR, NO. 2264

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

'It's a new lens': Champagne unveils new budget framework that splits operating from capital spending

BY MARLO GLASS

Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne says the Liberals are taking a new approach to budgets, distinguishing between day-to-day spending and funding for capital expenditures, and updating the fiscal cycle so the budget comes every fall instead of the spring.

"It's a new lens," Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) told reporters on Oct. 6 ahead of his appearance at the House Finance Committee.

Champagne said the revised timing, starting with the Nov. 4 budget, will bring "clarity for parliamentarians" so they can better scrutinize spending ahead of the main estimates, which are tabled in the spring. The economic and fiscal update, typically presented in the fall, will be moved to the spring.

"It's going to align far better," he said, while also bringing "more

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NEWS

Canada's submarine purchase has new 'sense of urgency' with possible selection by end of year, says German envoy



BY NEIL MOSS & IREM KOCA

With two options on the table to replace Canada's aging fleet of Victoria-class submarines,

Germany's top diplomat in Canada says that a decision could be made by the end of the year as there is a new "sense of urgency" for the procurement.

In August, the federal government narrowed the field of potential submarines to Germany's

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NEWS

'We evolved together': ex-senator Mégie reflects on eight years of Red Chamber

BY ELEANOR WAND

After nearly nine years in the Red Chamber, recently retired senator Marie-Françoise Mégie says she is "proud" to have evolved with the institution as its first Haitian woman appointee who began her Hill career in the early days of Senate independence.

Mégie was appointed by then-prime minister Justin Trudeau on Nov. 25, 2016—just over one year after the Liberals swept to a majority government—and retired on Sept. 21. She said she witnessed the Senate modernize, and her with it, as she joined its ranks at the start of Trudeau's reform rollout as his 23rd appointment to the body.

"I was proud to have been part of that movement when I arrived," said Mégie in French, sitting down with *The Hill Times* on Sept. 24 in the Senate of Canada Building, the halls where she represented Rougemont, Que.

Continued on page 6

NEWS

Hegseth's attack on rules of engagement could limit Canadian operations with 'lawless' U.S. military, says former House Defence Committee chair McKay

BY NEIL MOSS

Recent inflammatory remarks by the United States' so-called Secretary of War Pete Hegseth should lead to an

increase in occasions where the Canadian military won't be participating in joint operations with their American counterparts, says former Liberal MP John McKay.

In a much-anticipated Sept. 30 speech at the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Va.—with 800 senior American military generals and flag officers summoned—Hegseth deplored "politically

correct" and "overbearing" rules of engagement, and attacked diversity in the military.

"We also don't fight with stupid rules of engagement," he said. "We untie the hands of our warf-

fighters to intimidate, demoralize, hunt, and kill the enemies of our country. No more politically correct and overbearing rules of

Continued on page 32

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

The Poilievres guest star on a pair of podcasts



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, joined hosts Karman Wong and Travis Dhanraj on the *Can't Be Censored* podcast on Oct. 1, while on Oct. 3, Anaida Poilievre, bottom right, was the guest on Amanda Alvaro, top right, and Rachael Segal's *Beyond a Ballot* podcast. Screenshots courtesy of YouTube and Instagram



Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** and his wife **Anaida Poilievre** were each a special guest on different podcasts last week, both touching on politics, policies, as well as the personal.

The official opposition leader sat down in person with former journalists **Travis Dhanraj** and **Karman Wong** on their *Can't Be Censored* (a.k.a. CBC) podcast on Oct. 1. The 46-minute-long episode addressed the usual policy issues including crime, Canada-U.S. relations, housing, and the media, but also touched on how Poilievre got interested in politics (a hockey injury sidelined him as a teen, and so he began accompanying his mother to political meetings), his son **Cruz**'s love of Spiderman, how he'd describe Prime Minister **Mark Carney** ("disappointing"), and whether he'd ever grab a beer with his

former foe **Justin Trudeau** ("no").

Describing himself as a fighter whose favourite wrestler is **Bruce Hart** (of the Hart family of wrestlers from Alberta, who attended 10-year-old Pierre's birthday party), Poilievre credits his wife for giving him "the best and most unvarnished feedback."

Two days later, Mrs. Poilievre was the guest of **Amanda Alvaro** and **Rachael Segal** on their *Beyond A Ballot* pod on Oct. 3. On the 54-minute episode, Ana Poilievre described herself as a "tough cookie ... [and] strong-minded," detailed how she met her husband (she was a staffer to then-senator **Diane Bellemare**, and he was an MP who "actually followed me ... on Sparks Street"), and shared that she's "obsessed with self-help and personal growth," as she

unpacked her outpouring of emotion at a rally on election-night eve (she's reading about Stoicism, grit, and "learning to be comfortable in the uncomfortable").

On raising children in the public eye, the 38-year-old said she has "a lot of empathy and compassion for the previous leaders—Justin Trudeau, and **Erin O'Toole**, **Andrew Scheer**, everyone ... I know it can be very difficult." She also discussed her new project of bringing her *Pretty and Smart* blog into hard-copy magazine format, and the importance of listening in politics, saying it's her husband's superpower on the hustings ("He listens more than he talks ... that's his way of doing polling").

Oh, and she confirmed that she was the "spy influence" behind her husband's glasses-free makeover.

Writers' Trust unveils Balsillie Prize shortlist, total funds raised at Politics and the Pen



Shortlisted: Denise Hearn and Vass Bednar's *The Big Fix: How Companies Capture Markets and Harm Canadians* (Sutherland House Books), left; Vince Beiser's *Power Metal: The Race for the Resources That Will Shape the Future* (Riverhead Books); Pamela Cross' *And Sometimes They Kill You: Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence* (Between the Lines); and Stephen J.A. Ward's *Irrational Publics and the Fate of Democracy* (McGill-Queen's University Press). Book covers courtesy of Sutherland House, Riverhead, Between the Lines, and MQUP

The Writers' Trust released the shortlist for the \$70,000 Balsillie Prize for Public Policy last week. The four shortlisted titles are: **Vince Beiser**'s *Power Metal: The Race for the Resources That Will Shape the Future* (Riverhead Books); **Denise Hearn** and **Vass Bednar**'s *The Big Fix: How Companies Capture Markets and Harm Canadians* (Sutherland House Books); **Pamela Cross**' *And Sometimes They Kill You: Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence* (previously shortlisted for last year's Donner Prize, published by Between the Lines); and **Stephen J.A. Ward**'s *Irrational Publics and the Fate of Democracy*

(McGill-Queen's University Press). The Balsillie Prize will be awarded on Nov. 25.

Meanwhile, the trust's Sept. 24 fundraiser and award ceremony—the Politics and the Pen gala—raised \$475,000 for Canadian writers. "The proceeds raised from the event go a long way to supporting Canadian literature and the work we do at Writers' Trust. We hope you will join us next year in celebrating our 50th anniversary," reads a press release. The annual gala in Ottawa is where the \$40,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing is announced, which **Raymond B. Blake** won this year for his book *The Prime Ministers*.

Press Gallery 'mugs' former members Ibbitson, Thanthong-Knight, Marquis, and MacDonald



John Ibbitson, left, Jim MacDonald, Mélanie Marquis, and Randy Thanthong-Knight each received an engraved silver mug in honour of their time in the Parliamentary Press Gallery at an event in Ottawa on Oct. 3. *The Hill Times* photographs by Marlo Glass

The Parliamentary Press Gallery "mugged" four former members—**Randy Thanthong-Knight**, **Mélanie Marquis**, **John Ibbitson**, and **Jim MacDonald**—at an Oct. 3 lunch in the Sir John A. MacDonald Building.

Approximately 200 reporters, editors, and broadcasting crew gathered for a seasonal lunch ahead of the official "mugging" ceremony.

As is tradition, former members who'd been on the Hill for a minimum of three years receive an engraved silver mug upon their departure from the gallery.

In his remarks, erstwhile economics reporter for Bloomberg **Thanthong-Knight** confessed that when he first arrived in Ottawa from Bangkok in February 2022, he was too shy to ask what a "mugging" was, but to now receive a silver mug himself, called it a career "highlight."

Thanthong-Knight was scheduled to fly to Bangkok that evening, still working for Bloomberg, but to pursue his "dream job of editing," according to his now-former Ottawa colleague **Laura Dhillon Kane**, Bloomberg's bureau chief, in her tribute remarks.

In other tributes, *La Presse*'s bureau chief **Joël-Denis Bellavance** praised Marquis as being a fearless journalist with the ability to bring text to life, comparing her stories as being on par with those of legendary political freelancer **Chantal Hébert**.

Like Thanthong-Knight, Marquis is still a reporter, but no longer based in Ottawa. A teacher prior to her career in

journalism, she has returned to Montreal where she is now reporting for *La Presse* on Quebec education issues. In Ottawa, she's been the paper's parliamentary correspondent from 2019 to 2025, and was formerly with *La Presse Canadienne* from 2014 to 2019.

The Globe and Mail's **Bob Fife** gave the tributes for both his former colleagues MacDonald and Ibbitson.

Fife said he and "Jimmy" worked together for a decade at CTV, and praised the photojournalist's eye for detail, listing off the dozens of history-making events MacDonald covered during his career. Now based in Lunenburg, N.S., MacDonald thanked the press gallery executive for their work at keeping "the chaos at bay" for reporters, and noted that to have taken photos that are now part of history "is pretty cool."

After detailing Ibbitson's exhaustive list of accomplishments—including serving as bureau chief in both Ottawa and Washington, D.C.; being an award-winning novelist; a playwright; and a columnist—Fife noted that Ibbitson is the one who first coined the term "Laurentian elite," which he joked was now overused.

Ibbitson retired from *The Globe* last December, having been with the national newspaper since 1999. In his thank-you remarks, Ibbitson offered the advice of "keep trying," noting that he'd applied five times to *The Globe* before they accepted him. He also mused that the job of a columnist is not to tell readers what you think, but to share what you've learned and what you know.

Nov. 16 deadline to apply for Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate

Calling all artists! Parliament is looking for its first Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate. Applications are open until Nov. 16.

Established last year, the artist laureate will "promote the arts in Canada, through Parliament, including by fostering knowledge, enjoyment, awareness and development of the arts," accord-

ing to an Oct. 6 release. Focused on arts promotion rather than creation, the artist laureate must work in at least one of the following media: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, videography, filmmaking or digital creations.

The role is not full time, nor does it require living in Ottawa (though

travel will be involved). The artist will receive support from the Library of Parliament.

The two-year position comes with an annual stipend of \$25,000 and a programming budget of up to \$35,000 a year to cover expenses. Learn more on the Library of Parliament's website.

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The Hill Times

COMMENT

Foreign policy is all about self-interest

Canada should focus on its own interest: building credibility in defence investment and alliances, and reaching out to our economic partners.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE—It is a long way from Kamouraska to New York City, and it has been two decades since I was at the United Nations General Assembly. But the years I worked for the UN abroad, followed by studies on the body, and half a decade as an analyst in the UN division of the Department of Foreign Affairs shaped my thinking on international relations.

One of the lessons I learned was that interest—national interest, self-interest—is the driver of foreign policy. So, it was with curiosity I read and listened to the speech our foreign minister, Anita Anand, delivered to the General Assembly last week. In what is an about-face from the Trudeau years, the “three pillars” of Canada’s foreign policy will be led by defence and security. Anand described this as “keeping Canadians safe, strengthening our sovereignty, being good allies and partners in NATO and NORAD.”

As someone who grew tired of saying, “you can’t have foreign policy without a defence policy,” this is both revelation and vindication. From the late 1990s when American Joseph Nye’s championing of “soft power” became popular with disciples like then-foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy, it struck me that you couldn’t have soft power without hard power to back it up. As author Kim Nossal wrote, “The term has little to recommend it, for it encourages us to think about power in a sloppy and undisciplined way.” In fact, Canada’s greatest foreign policy achievement—Lester Pearson’s

1957 Nobel Prize—came about because Canada had an army at the ready for Middle East peacekeeping.

So, finally, we are realists: it is a dangerous world out there, and we need force to defend our sovereignty. No more Justin Trudeau *mea culpas* for domestic sins, or acting like boy scouts “here to help.”

The second pillar, “Economic resilience,” was a sales pitch: Canada is “an attractive destination for capital and a trusted trading partner,” in the wake of United States President Donald Trump’s tariffs.

The third pillar, “core values,” was a laundry list, including: “promoting democracy and pluralism, balancing, and maintaining, human rights, fostering gender equality, protecting our environment and working with Indigenous partners.”

Let’s face it: we are engaged in multilateral organizations because they help us promote our interests with like-minded countries. We can’t do that alone, so we work with others, supplying development funding, using our missions abroad, and engaging our diplomatic corps. Sure, we have values, but those values

motivate us to collaborate with other like-minded countries for our mutual benefit—or *interest*.

Now we face a world where authoritarians are acting in what they see as their interest, and supporting war, terrorism, and isolationism to achieve their objectives. Dictators like Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping don’t care about the global fallout of their avarice or ambition.

Here is Anand’s take: “The rise of unilateralism and protectionism weaken multilateral institutions and the rule of law—the very bedrock of the post-war order.” The withering away of the global order evident in the rise of China and the Russian war on Ukraine is almost ignored when she says, “Multilateralism remains our best hope for solving global challenges.”

As Shakespeare wrote: “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves.” The United Nations at 80 is a doddering organization, which has tried and failed to re-invent itself in the last two decades. It is subservient to the veto-wielding big powers on the Security Council (the U.S., China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and

France); and the G-77, the 134 member-states of the developing world aligned with China, who control the General Assembly.

The UN is much more than one building in New York: its specialized agencies and organizations have accomplished much in the past. But the missteps of the World Health Organization in the pandemic and the involvement of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with Hamas in Gaza have tarnished them. As the Trump administration cuts its UN funding, its structure may need a rebuild to a leaner organization.

Not being able to carry that on its shoulders alone, Canada should focus on its own interest: building credibility in defence investment and alliances, and reaching out to our economic partners. Relying on the UN for a more peaceful world may not be the most effective use of our time and energy.

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

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NEWS

Prime Minister Carney’s \$5M Liberal leadership war chest fuelled by billionaires, bankers, and Canada’s wealthiest neighbourhoods

From Rockcliffe to Rosedale: Carney’s campaign received over \$5-million from more than 25,000 donations during the 45-day Liberal leadership race, and nearly half a million dollars came from just five neighbourhoods.

BY STUART BENSON

The prime minister’s winning Liberal leadership campaign’s \$5-million fundraising haul was buoyed by the former central banker’s “billionaire and business elite” connections in Canada and internationally, with just five of this country’s most affluent neighbourhoods contributing more than half a million dollars in combined donations.

Over the course of the 45-day Liberal leadership race—which officially began on Jan. 23 when the first \$50,000 instalment of the \$350,000 entry fee came due—now-Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) raised just over \$5-million in campaign donations from 25,337 individual contributions, plus an additional \$46,331 from campaign fundraising events, according to the campaign’s financial returns published by Elections Canada. Carney’s return also lists a \$150,000 loan from the Bank of Montreal, but no outstanding balance.

Carney received the majority of his fundraising donations—just under \$4.27-million—from 22,051 “directed contributions,” where Liberal Party members allocate all or part of their donation toward a leadership candidate.

Of the remaining \$782,788 Carney received in regular campaign donations, he received 2,711 donations of \$200 or less, and 227 maximum or near-maximum donations of \$1,750, including one contribution of \$1,749 from Peter Chiarelli, vice-president of operations for the St. Louis Blues, and previous general manager for the Edmonton Oilers. Chiarelli was also

Carney’s captain on the Harvard hockey team. Carney also received a maximum donation from J.P. Barry, who, according to *Forbes*, is one of the world’s top hockey agents, having negotiated more than \$1-billion in contracts throughout his career, including Evgeni Malkin’s \$76-million deal with the Penguins in 2013.

Provincially, Carney received more than half of his total contributions—\$2.9-million worth—from supporters in Ontario, followed by British Columbia (\$793,293), Quebec (\$440,227), and Alberta (\$338,582), plus \$33,200 from international locations, including maximum donations from private equity investors and former bankers in New York, Paris, and London.

Carney also received two maximum donations from Geneva, courtesy of Canadian billionaire businessman and philanthropist John McCall MacBain, who founded the John McCall MacBain Scholarship at McGill University, and his wife, Marcy, who co-founded the scholarship and serves as a member of the Geneva Committee of Human Rights Watch.

Carney received the most significant amount of donations from major cities, including more

than \$500,000 from Toronto and six-figure totals from Ottawa (\$392,514); Vancouver (\$288,014); Brampton, Ont. (\$193,796); and Calgary (\$155,253); as well as his hometown of Edmonton (\$92,814) coming in just below that mark. However, just five neighbourhoods provided more than 10 per cent of his total donations.

A handful of the country’s 1,650 Forward Sortation Areas (FAS)—which are represented by the first three characters of a postal code—contributed just shy of \$570,000 to Carney’s campaign, the bulk of which came from the K1M area representing Ottawa’s Rockcliffe Park neighbourhood. However, that includes the \$25,000 maximum personal donation Carney provided to his own campaign. Other notable maximum donations from Carney’s former neighbours include Sarah Baxter, chair of the Rockcliffe Park Foundation; and Elder Marques, a former adviser in Justin Trudeau’s PMO.

Ottawa’s Glebe, Old Ottawa South, and Old Ottawa East neighbourhoods in the K1S area also donated a combined \$105,731, including a maximum donation from Scott Gilmore, the current

PMO’s senior adviser on foreign, defence, and security policy.

In Toronto, the Rosedale neighbourhood (M4W) provided the second-highest total contribution of \$124,513. The Yorkville area (M5R) also made the top five with \$82,075 donated, just below Brampton’s Castlemore neighbourhood, which had \$105,688 in total contributions.

While the vast majority of the donations in Brampton were directed donations by party members, Carney’s Toronto supporters in Yorkville include maximum donations from several investors, bankers, and two CEOs, as well as Rob Prichard, the former director of Torstar Corporation and former chairman of the Bank of Montreal, climate philanthropists Brian and Joannah Lawson, and Greg Sorbara, the former Ontario finance minister.

In Rosedale, Carney received maximum donations from Andy Chisholm, who sits on RBC’s board of directors; Donald Guloien, the former CEO of Manulife; and Roger Garland, the Four Seasons Hotel’s former chief financial officer.

David Hare, former director of operations with the federal NDP and current principal with Alopex Insights, said that beyond

the “billionaires and business elites,” the more compelling trend is the centralization of the majority of Carney’s donations from just a handful of affluent neighbourhoods.

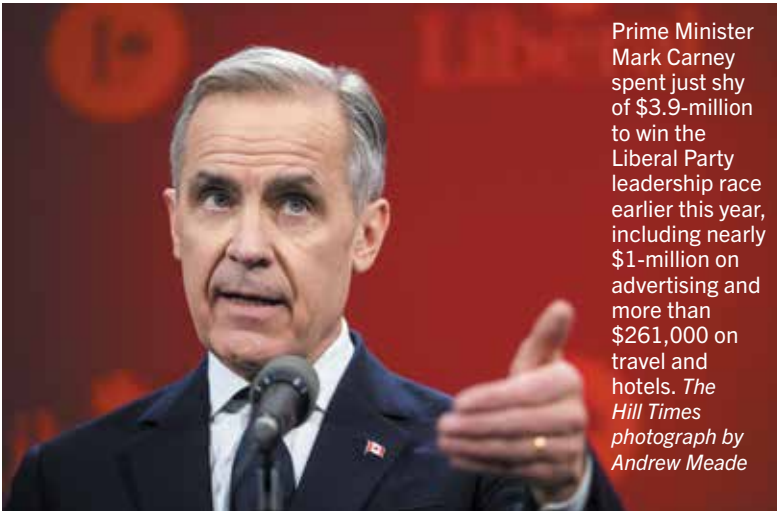
As first reported by the Investigative Journalism Foundation (IJF), Carney had no shortage of billionaires and wealthy connections to help fund his campaign, including both John and Kenneth Irving, whose family is estimated by *Maclean’s* to be the fourth-wealthiest in Canada with a net value of \$14.47-billion; Scott McCain, chair of McCain Foods, whose family *Maclean’s* ranked fifth-wealthiest in the country with a net worth of \$13.16-billion; as well as donations from Olivier and Paul Desmarais, whose family’s estimated net worth is estimated to be nearly \$10-billion; and from Charles and Stephen Bronfman, with an estimated familial net worth of \$3.6-billion.

Several of Carney’s former colleagues at Brookfield Asset Management also made maximum donations, including *Forbes*-ranked billionaire Bruce Flatt, Brookfield’s chairman, and his billionaire predecessor, Jack Cockwell, who still sits on the company’s board of directors.

Beyond the billionaires’ club, IJF also reported that Carney received maximum donations from Marcia Moffat, the Canadian head for BlackRock; Cyrus Reporter, a Trudeau-era staffer turned lobbyist, and Garrick Tiplady, a senior Meta executive and former director of Facebook and Instagram Canada. During the leadership election, Carney’s campaign spent one-quarter of its just under \$911,500 in advertising expenses—\$265,600—on digital advertising for Facebook and Instagram.

In total, the campaign incurred roughly \$3.89-million in bills, nearly half of which was spent on direct campaign expenses, including \$685,351 for salaries, wages, and consulting fees; \$195,820 on campaign events, as well as \$261,087 on travel and living expenses, with the roughly \$1.7-million remaining expenses classified as “other,” primarily campaign processing and banking fees, as well as food and other hospitality-related expenditures.

Rounding out the top 10, Carney also received sizeable total contributions from Toronto’s Forest Hill and Deer Park neighbourhoods (\$64,675), and its Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon



Prime Minister Mark Carney spent just shy of \$3.9-million to win the Liberal Party leadership race earlier this year, including nearly \$1-million on advertising and more than \$261,000 on travel and hotels. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Prime Minister Mark Carney’s top neighbourhoods

Top 15 Forward Sortation Areas (FSA) by total campaign and directed contribution

FSA	Neighbourhood	City	Province	Total Campaign Contributions	Total Directed Contributions	Contributions
K1M	Rockcliffe Park	Ottawa	ON	\$39,000	\$112,837	\$151,837
M4W	Rosedale	Toronto	ON	\$24,000	\$100,513	\$124,513
K1S	The Glebe/Old Ottawa South, Old Ottawa East	Ottawa	ON	\$10,160	\$95,571	\$105,731
L6P	Castlemore	Brampton	ON	\$1,000	\$104,688	\$105,688
M5R	Yorkville	Toronto	ON	\$29,250	\$52,825	\$82,075
M4V	Forst Hill/Deer Park	Toronto	ON	\$15,454	\$49,221	\$64,675
H3Y	Westmount	Montreal	QC	\$21,000	\$42,600	\$63,600
L7C	Bolton South	Caledon	ON	\$1,000	\$46,908	\$47,908
H9W	Beaconsfield	Greater Montreal	QC	\$30,500	\$16,632	\$47,132
M4T	Thorncliffe Park/Flemingdon Park	Toronto	ON	\$15,500	\$27,070	\$42,570
M4N	Lawrence Park	Toronto	ON	\$14,025	\$28,470	\$42,495
M5P	Forest Hill South	Toronto	ON	\$18,000	\$22,264	\$40,264
K1Y	Wellington/Hintonburg	Ottawa	ON	\$16,400	\$23,544	\$39,944
M6S	Runnymede/Swansea	Toronto	ON	\$2,750	\$30,509	\$33,259
L6Y	Churchville	Brampton	ON	\$0	\$32,947	\$32,947

—Source: Elections Canada

Continued from [page 4](#)

Park neighbourhoods (\$42,570); Montreal's Westmount (\$63,600) and Beaconsfield (\$47,132) areas; and Caledon, Ont.'s Bolton South (\$47,908).

Hare told *The Hill Times* the Rolodex of billionaires and rich Canadians localized in a handful of wealthy neighbourhoods "paints a pretty clear picture of who supports Carney, and whose agenda they believe he's carrying out."

"It's illustrative of who supports him, and who thinks he's going to deliver for them," Hare explained, noting that the average donation in those neighbourhoods ranged from \$500 to just over \$900.

Sandstone Group's Kevin Bosch, a former Liberal staffer who supported Carney's campaign, told *The Hill Times* that while Carney's resumé and business connections were undoubtedly a boon to his campaign coffers, the much larger amount of smaller donations from Liberal Party members is indicative of more widespread support and excitement.

Carney won the Liberal leadership race with an overwhelming 85.9 per cent of the 151,899 votes cast on March 9, with the other three candidates trailing by substantial margins. MP Chrystia Freeland (University Rosedale, Ont.) placed second with eight per cent, followed by MP Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.) with 3.2 per cent, followed by former Liberal MP and businessman Frank

Baylis with three per cent.

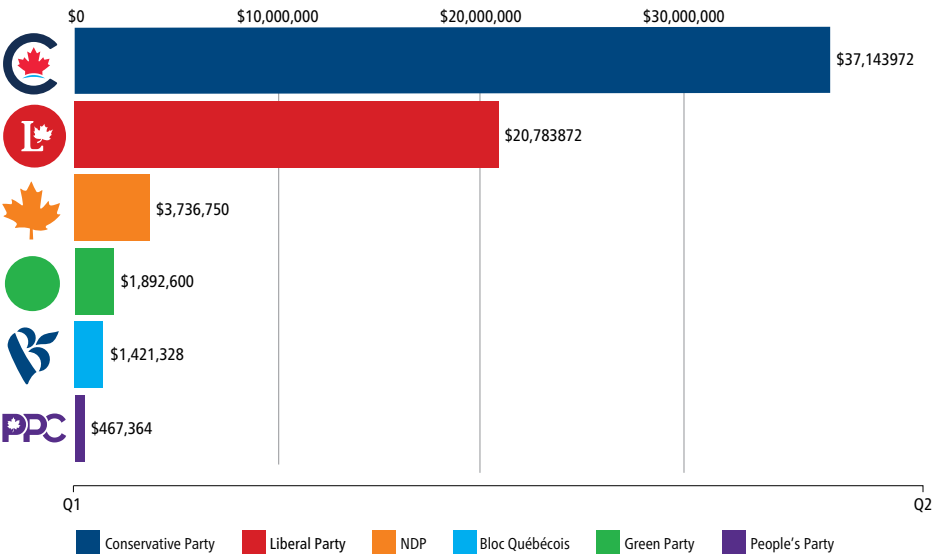
Neither Freeland's nor Gould's returns have been submitted, with both having been provided extensions beyond the original Sept. 9 deadline, until Nov. 9 and Oct. 9, respectively. However, based on their first and second interim fundraising reports, both Freeland and Gould raised just over \$360,000 from 1,227 and 2,393 individual contributions, respectively.

Baylis—the only other leadership candidate whose final return has been published by Elections Canada—raised a total of \$432,328 from 688 individual contributions and spent just shy of \$559,000 in campaign expenses. Baylis also took out two loans: a \$50,000 personal loan, and a \$70,000 loan from RBC.

"It's quite an incredible fundraising haul over such a short time period," Bosch said, noting that during the previous Liberal leadership race in 2013, now-former prime minister Trudeau's seven-month campaign raised more

Federal Party Fundraising, First and Second Quarter, 2025

Federal party fundraising totals, Jan. 1 through June 30



Source: Elections Canada

than \$2.9-million in donations from over 10,500 contributions, and spent just over \$1.48-million, for a surplus campaign balance of roughly \$800,000.

During the Conservatives' 2022 leadership race, which ran from early February until Sept. 10, Pierre Poilievre's (Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta.) successful campaign—winning just over 70 per cent of the vote—raised \$9.4-million, ending with a \$1.9-million surplus, which was donated to the Conservatives' coffers, but not

included in its overall fundraising numbers provided to Elections Canada.

Leadership runner-up and former Quebec premier Jean Charest was also second in fundraising with \$3.4-million, followed by Conservative MP Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand–Norfolk, Ont.) with \$2.25-million, and now-Conservative MP Roman Baber (York Centre, Ont.) with \$958,497.

Bosch said that given the widespread anticipation over whether Carney would put his name for-

ward, and his resounding victory during the leadership vote, "there was obviously widespread excitement within the party," for Carney, as "the man for the times with the resumé the job required."

During the first quarter of 2025—Jan. 1 to March 31—the Liberal Party itself raised \$13.7-million from 156,489 individual contributions, a three-month total just slightly less than any previous year's annual total. That figure does not include money raised by the leadership candidates.

While the Liberals saw a nearly 50-per-cent drop quarter over quarter, down to \$7.6-million raised from April 1 through June 30, the party is well on its way to surpassing all of its previous years' totals, according to data published by Elections Canada.

During the same period, the Conservative Party raised nearly \$28.4-million, averaging \$191 per donation from 148,676 individual contributions—roughly triple the \$10.7-million it raised in the first three months of 2024. Despite a sharper quarter-over-quarter decline—raising just over \$9-million in the second quarter of 2025, with a nearly 50-per-cent reduction in contributions, down from 148,676 donors to 83,681—the Conservatives' six-month total of \$37-million from 148,676 contributions is already nearing their total for all of 2024, when they collected \$42.2-million from 211,255 individual contributions.

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NEWS

‘We evolved together’: ex-senator Mégie reflects on eight years of Red Chamber modernization

Former physician and senator Marie-Françoise Mégie says she’s proud of her efforts addressing systemic discrimination, creating a Pandemic Observance Day, and shepherding health legislation through the Upper Chamber.

Continued from page 1

“I fell right into that movement, and we evolved together.”

Mégie noted the Chamber’s makeup when she was appointed was much different than it is now. At the time, the Senate was settling into its new independence three years after Trudeau severed ties with the then-Senate Liberals, and new groups began to emerge under the design of a less-partisan body. Now, the two-party system is replaced with five groups: the Conservatives as official opposition, the Independent Senators Group (ISG), the Canadian Senators Group, the Progressive Senate Group, as well as the five-member Government Representative’s Office. In 2016, Mégie joined the ISG, which is the currently largest group at 43 members.

“When I arrived, I counted how many women there were: 33 out of 99,” recalled Mégie, a former physician and professor. “And when I left, there was gender parity.” Of the 100 Senators, there are 45 men and 55 women, with five vacancies.

“There was only one person who was part of the LGBTQ community. There were two or three people from First Nations,” she continued. “When I left, there were many.”

She said the current mechanism of appointing Senators—whereby interested parties submit an application, which is then reviewed by the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments—should continue to ensure the modernized Chamber remains.

She recalled that when she was first deciding to put herself forward for the post, she was hesitant, but what ultimately swayed her was wanting to be a role model for young Canadians.

A friend told me, “what you are doing on a small scale in Mon-



Former senator Marie-Françoise Mégie, who retired on Sept. 21, was the first Haitian woman appointed to the Senate. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



The Senate African Canadian Caucus’ vernissage for its Black History Month exhibit on Feb. 1, 2023, in the Senate foyer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

treil and Quebec, why aren’t you doing to do it at a national level?” she said.

‘If we don’t talk about it, it’s dead’

Mégie said Trudeau had a “vision” to diversify the Senate both in representation and in skills, a reality that she said has since been spelled out in both the Chamber and its many committees.

As a member of the Parliamentary Black Caucus, Mégie used her voice in the Senate to advocate for tackling systemic racism in Canada.

In a speech in the Chamber on June 18, 2020, Mégie called on all levels of government to address the still-ongoing issue, and tried to table a document

visible minority? I’ll let you count them,” Mégie said at the time.

“It’s time to genuinely engage with Black Canadians and other racialized Canadians,” she said. “If the upper echelons of the public service were as diverse as Canada is, it would better reflect the society we’re supposed to serve.”

Mégie told *The Hill Times* addressing racism in Canada is a “long-term project, perhaps even involving my grandchildren,” but emphasized if parliamentarians do the work, there could be “a stronger voice” that resonates within society.

It’s essential to keep the conversation going, she said. “If we don’t talk about it, it’s dead.”

The former physician was also a member of the African Canadian Senate Group, where she started the tradition of holding an exhibition in the Senate to mark Black History Month every February.

The exhibitions highlight the Black community’s achievements, she said. This year, the group invited Black athletes, including those who attended the Paris Olympic Games. In 2023, the group hosted a month-long exhibition in the Senate foyer featuring works from Black artists.

It’s a tradition Mégie emphasized she is eager to have someone take on now that she won’t be in Ottawa to keep it going.

“It’s another thing I’m going to be very proud of because it didn’t exist before,” she said. “Maybe now that I’ve done it, others will do it after me.”

Canada must prepare for future health emergencies, says Mégie

Mégie immigrated to Canada from Haiti in 1967. Before being appointed to the Senate, she worked as a physician for more than 35 years, providing in-home care to the elderly, people with disabilities, and those in palliative care in Quebec. She also taught family medicine at the Université de Montréal.

She told *The Hill Times* that her background in the medical field has informed all her work in the Chamber, including a number of pieces of health legislation that she’s shepherded through the Senate.

“Even if it’s a bill that doesn’t have to do with health, ... if there’s a health connotation, if there’s an impact on health, it concerns me. And I speak out on that.”

When asked what she was most proud of, Mégie pointed to the Pandemic Day Act, which originated from her 2021 public bill, S-209. The legislation designated March 11 as Pandemic Observance Day, something

Mégie said was “needed” after COVID restrictions were lifted.

She acknowledged that the pandemic is a time that many Canadians want to forget, but emphasized she heard from others who wanted to mark the period, remembering the effect it had on them and their loved ones.

She said the day also serves to remind Canadians and the government of the need to prepare for future emergencies.

“We don’t know what kind of health emergency might arise, but Canada should at least be prepared so that it doesn’t have to resort to other countries or others to fill its coffers with masks,” she said.

The former senator also sponsored Liberal MP Sonia Sidhu’s (Brampton South, Ont.) private member’s bill, C-237, which became law in 2021 as the National Framework for Diabetes Act after making its way through the Senate in only 18 days.

Mégie explained that her team had to work hard to “take advantage of the momentum” to pass the bill “as quickly as possible” as there were concerns that it could die on the Order Paper.

About a month and a half after it passed into law, Parliament dissolved ahead of the September 2021 snap election, which would have sent the bill back to square one. The act resulted in a national framework to improve prevention and treatment access for Canadians with diabetes.

Mégie also sat as vice-chair on the Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID).

She told *The Hill Times* that when a MAID committee was first being discussed, she saw it as her place as she helped to set up the first hospice in Laval, Que., and had experience with end-of-life care.

“Laval didn’t have one,” she explained, “and so far, it’s the only one.”

“When we started talking about medical assistance in dying, I was still a doctor,” she said, “I raised my hand from the beginning because I was aware of the problem. ... I knew I had something to contribute as a doctor, so I told myself that this is where I belonged.”

MAID was legalized in Canada in June 2016, just a few months before Mégie first joined the Upper Chamber.

With Mégie’s retirement, there are five vacant seats in the Senate for Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) to fill. Mégie said new Senators coming into the Chamber should remember that conversation and collaboration is key to getting legislation through.

“Just because someone is against your bill doesn’t mean that person can’t be an ally for other bills, or an ally, period,” she said.

“Continue the conversation ... because that happens when you’re new as a Senator, you have a tendency to take it personally.”

Now that she’s retired, Mégie said she’s looking forward to doing everything she didn’t have time for before: going to the cinema, the theatre, and resuming her piano lessons.

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The Hill Times

COMMENT

Canada's moves on procurement overshadowed as the U.S. prepares for war against its citizens

As important as Canadian defence issues might seem, what happens south of our border will have a far greater impact on our future as a nation.

Scott
Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Last week, I was in Halifax, N.S., to attend the annual DEFSEC Atlantic event. While this defence and security conference/trade show has grown steadily over the past two decades, this year saw by far the most exponential growth in attendance.

There is no mystery as to why international and domestic defence companies would be anxious to display their wares to potential buyers at this time: the Canadian Armed Forces are in dire need of just about everything in terms of modern weaponry and platforms, and the Carney Liberals have vowed to spend the tens of billions of dollars required to acquire that hardware.

The DEFSEC crowd was a mix of senior serving military personnel, top procurement officials, lobbyists, and defence contractor officials. As such, the networking opportunities were abuzz with water-cooler speculation about many of the rapidly changing advances in Canadian defence procurement.

For instance, it was recently announced that the government had narrowed down the field of bidders to just two in the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project. And there is speculation that the government could announce the winner by the end of this calendar year. Originally the timeline for selecting a winner between the Korean Hanwha Ocean KSS-III submarine and the German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems design was to be announced in mid-2026.

The historical pattern with Canadian defence procurement is to announce delays, or “slide them to the right,” not rush them forward. Hence the inspired chit-chat at DEFSEC.

It was also announced on Oct. 1, the second morning of the trade show, that the Carney Liberals will finally be implementing a Defence Investment Agency aimed at streamlining defence procurement in Canada. This was something first proposed by the Justin Trudeau Liberals as an election promise in the 2019 campaign. After Trudeau won a minority, the plan disappeared.

This new agency will handle any defence procurement valued at more than \$100-million. Again, lots of fodder for the defence industry rumour mill.

However, what topped the list of most discussions among Canadian peers at

DEFSEC was the unprecedented address by United States President Donald Trump and his Secretary of War Pete Hegseth to their senior military brass on Sept. 30. This was obviously meant to be a spectacle, and Trump and Hegseth certainly succeeded in achieving that goal, albeit for the wrong reasons.

More than 800 of the most senior U.S. generals and their enlisted counterparts

were summoned to attend a conference in Quantico, Va.

The stage setting with a massive Stars and Stripes backdrop behind the lectern that faced rows of attendees was actually based on the opening scene from the 1970 Hollywood blockbuster movie *Patton*. That biopic is based on the life and death of one of America's most celebrated and controversial

generals, George S. Patton. That scene featuring actor George C. Scott portraying Patton is an incredible show of personal force.

Unfortunately for Hegseth and Trump, in trying to replicate Patton, they came closer to an incredible show of personal farce. What stopped it from being

Continued on page 10

ADVERTISEMENT

Early Removal of Unreasonable Surtax on Chinese-made EVs Serves Canada's Best Interest

By H.E. Wang Di, Chinese Ambassador to Canada

A few days ago, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney met at the margins of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The two leaders praised recent efforts to improve and develop China-Canada relations in a pragmatic and constructive manner, and particularly welcomed the constructive dialogue at the China-Canada Joint Economic and Trade Commission meeting in August. Canada has initiated a review of the surtax on Chinese-made EVs and other products while China has extended the anti-dumping investigation into Canadian canola seeds by six months. These actions provide new opportunities to re-calibrate China-Canada relations and bring bilateral trade and economic relations back on track. I would like to share my thoughts in this regard.

First, the surtax on Chinese-made EVs contravenes WTO rules, and removing the surtax as soon as possible will once again highlight the image that Canada has been trying to establish as an advocate for a rules-based international economic and trade order. Without conducting necessary investigations, Canada imposed the surtax targeting relevant imports from China, breaching Canada's Most-Favored-Nation treatment obligations under the WTO. With these measures in place, the tariff rates on the selected products significantly exceed the bound tariff rates committed by Canada within the WTO framework, violating its bound tariff obligations and WTO commitments. Especially under the current circumstances, these measures have further undermined the multilateral trading system and seriously disrupted the international economic and trade order, which is not what the international community wants to see.

Second, the surtax on Chinese-made EVs has failed to achieve Canada's original objective of protecting its domestic industries and workers, and early removal of the surtax is the best way to address the bottlenecks in Canada's domestic industrial development and unleash the vitality of the Canadian economy. China always follows international market rules. The competitiveness of Chinese-made EVs is powered by technological innovation and the advantages of a well-established industrial chain, rather than the so-called “unfair trade practices”. It is well known that Chinese-branded EVs have not yet entered the Canadian market on a large scale. The implementation of the surtax on Chinese imports has failed to boost the development of Canada's domestic EV manufacturing industry. Instead, it has further increased the reliance on the US

and Mexico for auto imports. Canadian automakers are facing problems such as increased component procurement costs. Other consequences range from fewer Canadian consumer choices, higher auto sales prices, to increased reluctance to buy EVs, hindering Canada's transition to green transportation.

Third, early removal of the surtax on Chinese-made EVs will provide Canadian companies with greater opportunities to participate in international cooperation and competition. China is the world's largest trading nation in goods and the second-largest consumer market. With over 400 million middle-income consumers, China's demand for high-quality global products continues to grow, providing ample opportunities for Canadian companies in various sectors, including agricultural products and energy. Chinese EV companies are actively integrating into the global industrial system and promoting cross-border collaborative innovation. Collaborations between Chinese and foreign companies, such as between Volkswagen and Xpeng, Stellantis and Leapmotor, and Ford and CATL, are vivid examples of this. The Chinese and Canadian industries can leverage their respective strengths to conduct mutually beneficial cooperation through joint ventures and joint technological research and development. This is also in line with the global trend of addressing climate change and achieving a green transition. Furthermore, since the Chinese government has just announced export license management for pure EVs starting in 2026, the Canadian industry does not have to worry about being overwhelmed by Chinese-made EVs.

Due to the complementary economic structures and needs of industrial development of the two countries, China-Canada economic and trade cooperation is mutually beneficial. China is willing to work with Canada to, leveraging the 55th anniversary of the diplomatic ties and the 20th anniversary of the strategic partnership between the two countries, continue managing differences by addressing each other's economic and trade concerns in a constructive manner, and create conditions and space for expanding bilateral trade and economic cooperation. I believe that early removal of the unreasonable surtax on Chinese-made EVs will usher in the spring of improvement and development in China-Canada economic and trade relations

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Editorial

Editorial

Will the fall budget cycle be the spark MPs need to actually study spending?

The budget that will be tabled in November won't just be the Carney government's first formal financial plan, but it will also be the first in what is supposed to be new era of federal budget cycles.

On Oct. 6, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne outlined the plan for the government to shift to a fall budgeting cycle.

He said the revised timing, starting with the Nov. 4 budget, will bring "clarity for parliamentarians" so they can better scrutinize spending ahead of the main estimates, which are tabled in the spring. The economic and fiscal update, typically presented in the fall, will be moved to the spring.

The trials and tribulations of the federal financial cycle and how it affects parliamentary scrutiny is something on which *The Hill Times* has consistently reported over the years.

"I think we got very sloppy, the past Liberal and Conservative governments, in terms of releasing budgets late in the financial cycle after the tabling of main estimates," even sometimes releasing the budget after the start of the fiscal year, former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page told reporter Marlo Glass this week.

There have been brief, aborted attempts to shake things up—most notably a two-year project launched in 2018—but for the most part, it seems as though MPs have mostly given up on any lasting change.

Will this new schedule be the needed spark to light the fire under parliamentarians? Lest we all forget, examining spending is a key and primary component of their actual jobs.

The financial cycle that saw spending estimates come before the budget was tabled in the spring meant that many figures were stale or incomplete. But that doesn't absolve MPs of their responsibility. In fact, one could argue that makes it more important—how will they know where the gaps are if they're not watching to see where the estimates and budget fail to overlap?

No, most MPs aren't forensic accountants, but that's not the role they're fulfilling when looking at financial plans—they're supposed to be parsing them with a people-focused lens, and asking whether the spending works for the people who put them in office.

As Neil Moss reported last year, 10 parliamentary committees eschewed reviews of \$25.4-billion in planned governmental spending, leaving more than 13 per cent of voted spending estimates without committee scrutiny.

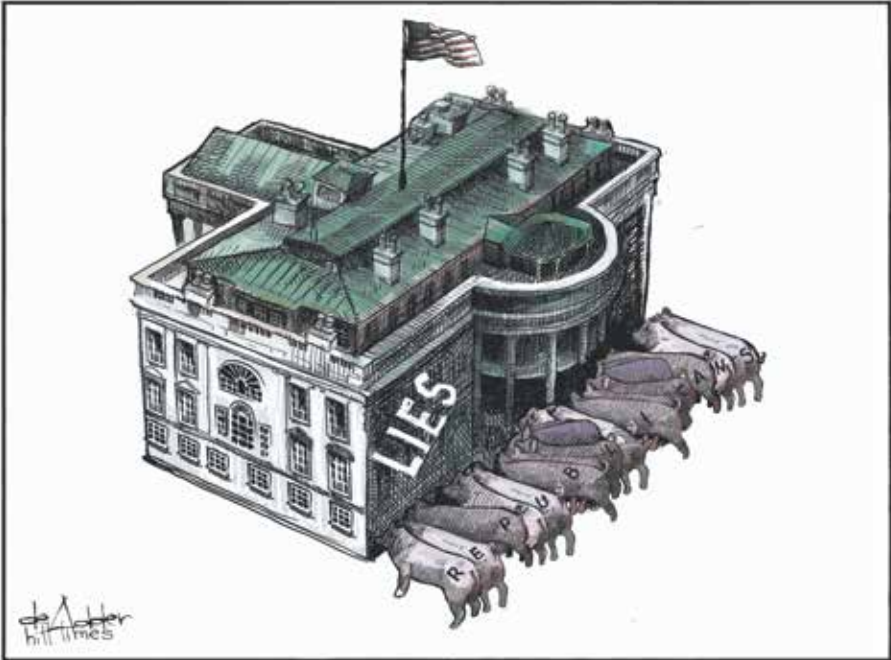
If the amount of money wasn't enough of an incentive for study, then perhaps the timing will be the right motivating factor.

Nicholas Dahir, research officer at the C.D. Howe Institute, told *The Hill Times* last year that the money tasked for committee review could be doubled, but was unlikely to lead to any increased scrutiny.

"The estimate cycle is pure inertia," said Dahir, who studies fiscal transparency.

With that inertia interrupted, parliamentarians now have no excuse not to do the jobs they're in Ottawa to do. Let's see if that happens.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor

Fiscal excuses can't hide leadership failures at Acadia University, says pool committee member

Re: "Higher education is under pressure, and we're up to the challenge," (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 24, p. 18).

I was disappointed by the recent article from the president of Acadia University about the state of the school that referenced the closure of its pool and aquatic programming. His explanation was incomplete and misleading, presenting the decision as a fiscal necessity. The reality points to failed leadership, selective truth-telling, and disregard for community impact.

The president wants us to believe the closure was about money. It wasn't. It was about leadership. No one was consulted: not alumni, governments, pool users, or community groups. Despite numerous willing partners, he made no effort to seek support or solutions. Even a no-cost proposal to keep the pool open until a new one was ready was ignored, and likely never presented to the Board of Governors.

The pool—jointly funded by the town, university, and users—served primarily local residents, representing approximately 80 per cent of users. With no comparable facility nearby, its closure means a generation will miss out on swimming lessons, water safety, and aquatic programs. Seniors lose their lane swims and aqua-fit classes. Roughly 75 per cent of the varsity swim team has transferred to other schools, along with the new recruits, deepening Acadia's losses.

Yet the president blames federal international student policy, an excuse not supported by the university's own records. Board minutes show Acadia was financially healthy in early 2024: revenue was one per cent above budget, a \$2.3-million surplus was recorded, and endowed assets neared \$122-million. Internal correspondence confirms finances weren't the issue: "We could find \$5-million under the mattress and we're still going to close the pool ..."

Staff estimated it would cost just \$25,000 to keep it open.

The administration also failed to explore alternatives. It never consulted the University of New Brunswick, which successfully operates a similarly aged pool. Only after announcing the closure did Acadia contact Dalhousie University, an hour away. This was not due diligence; it was damage control.

This was a rash and damaging decision that reflects deeper problems of governance and accountability. Acadia's pool didn't close out of necessity. It closed because of a failure of leadership.

Meg Shephard
Save Acadia Pool Committee
Uxbridge, Ont.

Foreign aid is a smart investment for Canada: B.C. letter writer

Prime Minister Mark Carney said, "My government will not cut foreign aid."

I was also deeply moved by the words spoken by our Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai at the United Nations General Assembly recently: "Our responsibilities don't end at our borders. Our compassion and actions can help share a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world for everyone."

Carney made a pledge on the campaign trail not to cut international assistance, and I am keen to see the new government keep its word in the November budget.

International assistance is a smart investment for Canada, supporting life-saving programs like the Global Fund and nutrition initiatives, because they help to harness new trade partners, create regional stability, and ensure health systems are prepared for future outbreaks. All that—and to help our fellow humans.

Please keep your word!

Anita Mark
Saanichton, B.C.

COMMENT

Gaza: the 20-point plan

The draft peace plan may not be dead on arrival, but it is extremely vulnerable.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



U.S. President Donald Trump, left, has a very short attention span, but he was able to bully Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into at least the opening stages of a ceasefire, writes Gwynne Dyer. *White House photograph by Daniel Torok*

LONDON, U.K.—When a bad man does a good thing, we should honour him for it even if his motives are selfish.

United States President Donald Trump is only trying to “bring peace to the Middle East” because he wants the Nobel Prize, they say. He blusters, and threatens, and lies. He boasts about the seven wars he claims to have settled/ended/avoided, but he cannot even tell the difference between Armenia (which did recently have a war) and Albania (which didn’t).

All true, but so what? Trump’s motives don’t matter, and neither does his geopolitical ignorance. As U.S. president, he is the only person with the power to force

the Hamas group in Gaza and the current Israeli government to discuss making peace, and—after long hesitation—he has finally deployed that power.

That certainly does not guarantee success. Neither the Hamas extremists who rule the Gaza Strip nor Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu actually want peace on the terms implicit in Trump’s draft 20-point peace plan.

Hamas would definitely welcome a lengthy ceasefire. Most of its leaders and at least half its fighters have been killed in the past two years of fighting. The dead leaders have been replaced by less experienced men and the rank-and-file by new recruits, but there has been a steep drop in their combat efficiency. They want time to rest and rebuild.

However, the draft peace plan does not offer them that. It requires the prompt return of all the Israeli hostages—Hamas’ last bargaining chip—in return for nothing except the freedom of 1,950 Palestinians held in Israeli jails, and a ceasefire of unspecified length. Israel could arrest them all again if the shooting restarts, and it broke the last ceasefire only six months ago.

It gets worse for Hamas if the peace talks make further progress: it would have to hand over all its weapons and disband its organization. This is an Islamist organization whose members truly believe that they will go instantly to paradise if they die in battle with the infidel. They might play for time, but they will always

choose glorious death over unconditional surrender.

The resistance to a peace deal is also strong right inside the leadership on the Israeli side. Many Israelis believe that the prime minister needs the war to continue to placate ultra-religious and extreme nationalist members of his cabinet who would bring the government down if he makes any concessions to the Palestinians.

That doubtless plays a major role in Netanyahu’s calculations, but there is also a real ideologue hiding inside the apparently cynical tactician.

Netanyahu’s entire political career has been devoted to preventing the creation of a Palestinian state. Why? Because the emergence of a genuine Palestinian state would foreclose the option of building a “Greater Israel” by annexing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and replacing the existing Arab population with Jews.

All of Netanyahu’s actions in Gaza this year—like breaking the last ceasefire, driving Gaza’s whole population to the southwest corner of the Strip and starving them—have been directed at making that outcome more likely. However, they were only possible

thanks to Trump’s unstinting, unquestioning support.

Sometimes Trump seemed aware of the implications of his actions and unashamed by them: the notion of turning the Strip into a Palestinian-free “Middle Eastern Riviera,” for example. At other times he seemed to be just blindly following Netanyahu’s lead. But for the moment, at least, Trump seems fully awake and not at all happy about Netanyahu’s genocidal project.

This may not last—Trump has a very short attention span, but he was able to bully Netanyahu into at least the opening stages of a ceasefire. However, Netanyahu will sabotage the process every chance he gets, and the 20-point plan is full of holes he can exploit.

Hamas will also turn against the plan as soon as negotiations get into critical issues like surrendering its weapons and going into exile. The 20-point plan may not be dead on arrival, but it is extremely vulnerable.

There will be some performative peacemongering for a while, but the plan to cleanse Gaza of its Palestinians could be back on track well before the end of the year.

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World’s Climate Engineers*. The previous book, *The Shortest History of War*, is also still available.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Jordan’s Principle isn’t a ‘program’—it’s a legal duty

If the federal government publishes tight service standards, merges duplicative forms, pays on time, and reports honestly, families and front-line clinicians will feel the difference within weeks.

Irving Gold

Opinion



Eight-year-old Maya can’t bathe safely without a custom chair. Her occupational therapist filed the paperwork months ago. The request is still in a federal queue. Maya grows; the tub doesn’t. A

simple piece of equipment is stalled by a system that was designed—by law—to put the child first.

Jordan’s Principle is not a nice-to-have. It is a legally enforceable child-first rule born of Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rulings beginning in 2016 that require timely access to services for First Nations children, with governments sorting out who pays later.

That’s the standard. We aren’t meeting it.

What should worry the Canadian government is that this isn’t about a few hard cases or the occasional slow form. Indigenous Services Canada has acknowledged a massive backlog—about 140,000 requests in late 2024, and roughly 135,000 as of February 2025—including thousands marked urgent.

That’s not drift; that’s a standing failure.

Two tracks matter here. For First Nations children, requests go through Jordan’s Principle. For Inuit children, supports run through the Inuit Child First Initiative (ICFI). Both pathways are experiencing delays and policy whiplash, with Inuit partners publicly flagging

slowdowns after Ottawa’s late-2024 changes. Treating them as interchangeable erases real governance differences, and hides specific fixes each of them needs.

Process is policy. Right now, process defects are doing the damage. Problems include:

- **Unclear, shifting timelines**
Tribunal materials and government guidance mention timelines, but practical service standards are uneven—30 business days for certain capital decisions, shorter targets cited for non-urgent cases—none of it consistently measured or published by region in plain language. Families and providers live in the gaps.
- **Payment lags that push costs onto families and front-line providers**
When the government doesn’t provide payment in a timely fashion, in practice, clinicians often extend no-interest credit to the Crown while invoices age. That is not child-first.
- **Administrative duplication**
Multi-form intakes, inconsistent regional requirements, and no clear, real-time tracking of request/claim status—forcing therapists and schools to re-send

the same information, burning time that should be spent on kids.

The good news is that the process is fixable without a single new dollar. Ottawa can repair the machinery it already owns, and legislators, staff, and reporters could all verify progress quickly.

This is not rocket science. If the government is serious about meeting its commitments, here are three things it can do now to prove it:

1. Publish and meet service levels

Set a 10-day decision standard for non-urgent requests (24 hours for urgent), and a 30-day reimbursement standard reported monthly by region, including volumes, aging buckets, and the number of urgent cases. Make the standards operational and transparent.

2. One intake, one status page

Replace duplicative forms with a single digital intake for therapy and equipment requests, usable by families, schools and providers; provide real-time claim status and a defined escalation path. This is basic case management, not transformation.

3. Direct deposit by default, blanket approvals where appropriate

Mandate direct deposit for providers and enable semester-length blanket approvals for school-based group programs (e.g., therapy blocks), so children aren’t stranded between sessions while paperwork catches up.

For Inuit children, co-develop ICFI-specific fixes with Inuit organizations and publish them alongside Jordan’s Principle metrics so differences in pathway and performance are visible.

Some will say the backlog is already “coming down.” Good, but not good enough—hold that line and steepen the slope. A backlog measured in six figures—after years of Tribunal orders and non-compliance motions—is not a metric of success. It is a warning light that’s been blinking so long we’ve stopped seeing it.

Others will point to the billions of dollars committed since 2016, and the historic compensation settlement. Both are real. Neither excuse slow approvals, unclear standards, or late payments for services that help children bathe, learn, communicate, and participate at school.

Money announced is not care delivered.

This is a test of management, not sentiment. If the federal government publishes tight service standards, merges duplicative forms, pays on time, and reports honestly, families and front-line clinicians will feel the difference within weeks. If not, the next “update” will again be about the size of the queue, not the number of kids who finally got what the law says they deserve as essential care.

Irving Gold is CEO of the *Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists*.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

A crisis in search of a cause: Smith brandishes unity issue in dangerous new pipeline gambit

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith made it clear she would see anything but a go-ahead from Ottawa as a powerful accelerant for the smouldering Alberta separatist movement.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—If Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's demand that somebody build her a pipeline—somewhere, somehow—to the Pacific Ocean wasn't enough, Jason Kenney's rhetorical hit job on reluctant British Columbia Premier David Eby brought inter-provincial relations to a new low.

Purportedly quoting John Horgan, the now-deceased former NDP premier, Kenney told the CBC that Eby's opposition to another pipeline reflects the fact that Eby is part of the provincial NDP's "mud-hut wing of green extremists."

The current B.C. premier is "an ideological zealot" whose opposition to an oilsands pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific coast poses a bigger threat to Confederation than the Alberta separatist movement, Kenney added.

As a former Alberta premier, Kenney was adding his voice to the inflammatory gambit launched by Smith when she announced that, in view of a lack of private sector interest, her government would be the official proponent of a westbound pipeline.

What she has in mind is a redo of the long-dead Northern Gateway pipeline from Alberta to the northern B.C. coast, a proposal that 10 years ago united the people of that region of B.C. in opposition like no other issue ever had.

Although Alberta's new pipeline proposal itself will not be ready for review by the federal Major Projects Office until next year, Smith said she wants Prime Minister Mark Carney to give it a thumbs up when the second tranche of approved "nation-building" projects is announced in mid-November.

Cranking up the stakes and the pressure on Carney, Smith made it clear she would see anything but a go-ahead from Ottawa as a powerful accelerant for the smouldering Alberta separatist movement. A "no" from Carney



Asking the Liberals to scrap one of their signature environmental policies is just a political stunt, but Alberta Premier Danielle Smith seems to see her move as a win-win, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

would leave Albertans out in the cold, and signal that Canada no longer works as a nation, the premier inveighed: "If we can't build with the collaboration of the federal government and between provinces—if it's 'everybody gets to get their products going to market except Alberta'—then it's not a country."

And, like Kenney, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre happily piled on, saying Carney alone will bear the blame if it turns out that Smith's crushed pipeline dreams ignite a secessionist wave in Alberta that threatens to break up the country.

What is perhaps most remarkable about this is that Smith and her allies are conducting a totally hyped-up campaign to try to force Canadians into a real, potentially very damaging argument about a non-existent, illusory project.

The fact is that Northern Gateway redux is, for the most part, unneeded and unwanted. First of all, as B.C. Energy Minister Adrian Dix points out, his province gave at the office. Although Smith, the oil industry, and apparently most of Alberta's voters hardly noticed, the Trudeau government spent \$34-billion on the largest Canadian infrastructure project ever in order to double the Trans Mountain (TMX) oil pipeline from Alberta through B.C. to an export terminal near Vancouver.

Kicking off a fivefold increase in crude shipments, the new TMX has been a major boost for the oil sector and the Alberta treasury. And TMX is not yet operating at full capacity.

As for another pipeline through northern B.C., no company has volunteered to put up the likely \$30-billion or more to build it. And the financing

prospects in an era of questionable oil demand are dubious. Crucially, it's unclear if large oil producers are willing to support Smith's proposal by signing long-term contracts to use her proposed pipeline. And the "grand deal" linking increased oil output with emissions reductions that Carney views as a prerequisite for approving a pipeline remains in limbo. That's because the country's oilsands companies are dragging their heels waiting for more government financial backstops before going ahead with their much-promoted \$16-billion Pathways Alliance carbon-capture-and-storage project.

Beyond the questionable economics, a bitumen conduit through B.C. to the province's cherished northern coast would face fierce opposition. As I've said before, you'd probably need the Army to build it. Many First Nations and environmental activists are adamantly against the idea, and Eby wants nothing to do with it. He argues rightly that forcing an oilsands pipeline to the coast at Kitimat or Prince Rupert would destroy the social licence essential to B.C. government-supported infrastructure projects like the \$50-billion LNG Canada export terminal in Kitimat.

And asking Carney as Smith is doing to scrap one of the Liberals' signature environmental policies—the tanker ban on the northern B.C. coast—is just a political stunt. But Smith seems to see her move as a win-win. If Carney somehow agreed to jam another pipeline to tidewater in B.C., it would open the way to construction of her legacy project. If he turns her down, it will provide more ammunition for Smith's anti-Ottawa grievance circus back home.

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

Canada's moves on procurement overshadowed as the U.S. prepares for war against its citizens

Continued from page 7

laughable was the sinister undertone of their actual message.

The farcical bit was Hegseth denouncing the assembled generals for being overweight and un-warriorlike, only to be followed on stage by the obese commander-in-chief, who used the excuse of bone spurs to obtain deferments from his Vietnam draft request.

It was also ironic that Hegseth and Trump—both wearing more make-up than their wives—would use the opportunity to shun "dudes in dresses" as part of their anti-trans campaign.

Unfortunately, that staggering example of a lack of self-awareness was dampened by the



U.S. President Donald Trump told a group of assembled generals that their country was 'under invasion from within' on Sept. 30. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube/PBS NewsHour

staggering threat made by Trump to use the U.S. military against American citizens.

Trump told the assembled generals that they would be crucial to his fight against "the enemy from

within," and that they could use the homeland as a "training ground."

"We're under invasion from within," Trump said. "No different than a foreign enemy, but more difficult in many ways because they don't wear uniforms."

Trump added ominously, "In our inner cities—which we're going to be talking about because it's a big part of war now—it's a big part of war."

Trump advised the generals that he had already given marching orders to his war secretary. "I told Pete, we should use some of these dangerous cities as training grounds for our military ... Because we're going into Chicago very soon. And San Francisco, Chicago, New

York, Los Angeles. They're very unsafe places. And we're gonna straighten them out one by one. It is gonna be a major part for some of the people in this room. It is a war, too. It is a war from within."

The assembled generals—as is the custom for what is to be non-partisan military assemblies—did not applaud nor condone their commander-in-chief's statements. However, it would appear that the U.S. is proceeding on a course that could only result in civil war.

That being the case, the discussions about Canada getting new submarines in 2035 and Carney establishing a new procurement agency in Ottawa were overshadowed by the very real threat of our neighbour—the world's largest super-power—plunging itself into existential danger. As important as Canadian defence issues might seem, what happens south of our border will have a far greater impact on our future as a nation.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION

Carney has no choice but go global to save face for Canada

Carney's travels are about more than just trade agreements and security co-operation. This is an apology tour, with a promise to do better.

Adam Chapnick

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney must really believe in diplomacy.

Over the last six months, he has travelled to 11 countries, and some more than once.

First came France and the United Kingdom. Then the United States, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. He has been to Ukraine, Germany, Poland, and Latvia. He has mended fences in Mexico, met global leaders

at the United National General Assembly's annual meeting in New York, and returned to London to meet with others.

Next up will be Malaysia, South Korea, and South Africa.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has accused the prime minister of embarking on an "illusion tour" with nothing to show for his "globetrotting."

And while his criticism suggests an overly simplistic, transactional understanding of international relations, the prime minister has failed to refute it as convincingly as he might have.

To put it bluntly, Canada no longer has any real friends in the world, it cannot prosper in the global commons on its own, and the cost of friendship has gone up significantly.

The Liberals campaigned in the spring on a platform to end Canada's laggard status at NATO by reaching the alliance's obligatory target of two per cent of GDP spent on defence by 2030. Almost immediately upon taking office, however, they promised to do so right away.

The decision was the first firm indication that the prime minister had grasped how far Canada's international stature had declined.

Canadians should have seen this coming.

In January 2008, when the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan recommended that Canada extend its responsibilities in Kandahar indefinitely, contingent on NATO or other allies contributing an additional battle group in support, no countries stepped up. It was left to the U.S. to fill the gap.

Former European, Asian, and Latin American friends and allies actively opposed Canada's campaign for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2010.

Small island and African states were hardly impressed when the Conservatives withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol and then the UN Convention to Combat Decertification, cut foreign aid, and boycotted the Commonwealth.

European countries were furious when Ottawa considered withdrawing from the Organisa-

tion for Economic Co-operation and Development, and abandoned two NATO surveillance programs.

The disappointments continued under the Trudeau Liberals. Canada promised to recommit to UN peacekeeping, but hardly delivered.

It imposed itself on a contested UN Security Council election to the frustration of its Irish and Norwegian peers.

Soon after, Saudi Arabia's unprecedented diplomatic attack on Canada in response to a tweet by then-foreign minister Chrystia Freeland was met by complete silence abroad. Former allies ducked when the Two Michaels were detained by the Chinese government. And that Security Council election was lost.

The Trudeau Liberals hardly seemed to notice. Instead, the prime minister not only refused to meet NATO's defence spending target but allegedly told the Americans that Canada never would.

Not much later, no one came to Ottawa's aid when the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump announced punitive tariffs on Canadian goods and threatened to annex the coun-

try. Nor was any country willing to join Canada in imposing counter-tariffs.

Seen in this context, Carney's travels are about more than just trade agreements and security co-operation.

This is an apology tour, with a promise to do better.

Canada is a trade-dependent country with a small population and a limited national security apparatus.

It has a well-trained professional military, but a small one. Its foreign aid budget is significant in absolute numbers, but hardly so in terms of percentage of gross national income.

It had a reputation for being a reliable ally; but, apart from the commitment to Ukraine, that reputation has been devastated.

A once globally regarded foreign service has been ground down by a revolving cohort of foreign ministers, embassy closures, budget cuts, and a lack of clear and explicit direction.

Carney has to travel lest Canada be left even more alone than it already is. He has to commit to massive increases in military spending because that is the cost of friendship in an increasingly inhospitable world.

And he has to keep doing so, because his predecessors left the country in diplomatic shambles.

Adam Chapnick teaches defence studies at the Canadian Forces College.

The Hill Times

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OPINION

Africa is rising, and a generational budget is on the table. Canada must deliver



African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry Albert Muchanga. The African continent holds some of the most promising markets in the world, despite Canada's tendency to overlook them, writes Anthony Salloum. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada must now decide what kind of global leader it will be. With the right amount of emphasis on the African continent, the fall budget will mark that legacy.

Anthony Salloum

Opinion



While parliamentarians are preparing for the tabling of the fall budget this November, Canadians are hoping for change. This budget will answer a defining question: will we carve bold paths for global leadership, or remain stuck in old habits?

Billed as a “generational investment” by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, the budget promises to cut operational spending by 15 per cent in 2028-29.

This budget arrives in a context not lost on anyone: geopolitical and economic upheaval is forcing provincial and federal governments to find new friends and new markets.

With the world in flux, Canada must now decide what kind of global leader it will be. With the right amount of innovation, disruption, and emphasis on the African continent, this gener-



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne's Nov. 4 budget and the feds' trade agenda should break out old habits and tap into the African continent, writes Anthony Salloum. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ational budget will mark that legacy.

Canada can start by keeping its promises to the international community. ONE is calling on Prime Minister Mark Carney to at least maintain—if not increase—its international assistance commitment, not just as a moral imperative, but as a critical economic strategy as well.

Globally, funding to critical health programs has become constricted by many key leaders, most acutely from the dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development and large cuts to the American foreign aid budget, including for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The consequences of these cuts are already hitting the world's most vulnerable. As the largest global funder of HIV and AIDS programs, PEPFAR once

provided lifesaving funding to more than 85 countries. This cut not only threatens the physical health and safety of millions of people, but the economic stability of their communities as well.

A critical way for Canada to fill this gap will be continued investment in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Since 2002, the Global Fund has saved 70 million lives from these diseases by supporting local prevention and treatment programs. The Carney budget must put forward at least \$1.37-billion over three years to support the Global Fund's initiatives, which include distributing Lenacapavir, a new game-changing HIV drug with the ability to strengthen prevention efforts and potentially end the epidemic altogether.

But we can't drive global progress by reinforcing aid

alone. Trade diversification will be a critical factor in Canada's economic future, and ONE is also calling on Canada to look to Africa for new markets.

The African continent holds some of the most promising markets in the world, despite Canada's tendency to overlook them. Home to the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world, the African continent is projected to experience more economic growth than any other region in the next decade. By 2030, half of the world's new entrants to the global workforce will be African.

But Canada is under-trading with Africa. Canadian businesses could earn \$2.7-billion more by 2030 if we were to prioritize the continent. Canadian importers could source \$3.3-billion more from African countries, diversifying their supply chains and

contributing to the continent's economic transformation.

With or without our investment or partnership, the African continent will be fundamentally important in global economic prosperity. While Canada falls behind, countries like China, the U.S., India, and blocs like the European Union are already recognizing Africa's global importance and scaling up their investments.

Canada has free trade agreements across the Americas, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, but none with Africa: a region of 54 markets, 1.4 billion people, and more than \$3-trillion in GDP. This absence makes Canada a weak competitor against the global players already active under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Time is running out for Canada to establish itself as a strategic and innovative global leader. Here are some specific and urgent ways Canada can articulate its course on Africa in the upcoming fall budget, starting with the African Development Fund (ADF). A key part of the African Development Bank Group, the ADF provides countries with low-interest loans and grants to reduce poverty and support economic and social development. It will hold its next meeting for the upcoming replenishment in Lusaka, Zambia, from Oct. 7-9. Canada must step up and continue its commitment to the ADF, ensuring the funds are allocated in the budget.

Second, Canada can't waste any more time hesitating on its commitment to the Global Fund. As I write, donor countries are already announcing their next three-year pledges to the Global Fund. To maintain Canada's legacy as a global health leader, we need to see that \$1.37-billion commitment on Nov. 4.

Third, the government must put money behind its recently announced Canada-Africa Strategy. The strategy outlines intentions to engage on the continent, but real, actionable funding benchmarks are necessary to stop trailing and start leading.

Finally, Carney should add a few additional African countries to his trip during his expected visit to the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, this November. His presence would be a strong precursor to opening trade talks with countries on the continent.

In this dynamic moment in history, a more just world is possible if we find innovative ways to build it. Creating better health outcomes and economic stability in Africa will require a multifaceted approach that protects our most effective aid programs while also supporting the continent's long-term economic prosperity and autonomy. Aid, trade, and development are intrinsically linked because healthy economies start with healthy lives.

We can begin by changing the narrative around Africa from one that only sees the continent as a charity recipient, to one that sees the full potential it holds.

Anthony Salloum is ONE's associate director for Canada – government relations.

The Hill Times

OPINION

When social justice becomes abnormal: the rise of ‘anti-woke’ politics in Canada

As evidence-based reforms are consistently framed as politically contentious, institutions are constrained, democratic deliberation narrows, and public trust is eroded.

Malinda S. Smith

Opinion



The word “woke” has evolved dramatically. Originating in African-American communities, it initially signalled vigilance against systemic injustice and inequality. In the 1930s, blues musician Lead Belly urged audiences to “stay woke” to the threat of white supremacy. During the civil rights era, it echoed in movements resisting segregation and police brutality. By the 2010s, Black Lives Matter revived the term as a call to remain conscious of systemic racism, gender violence, and inequality. In each instance, woke was a serious ethic of awareness and civic responsibility.

Today, in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, the term has been repurposed. It is often deployed not as a call to vigilance, but as a rhetorical tool



Canada needs a politics in which reconciliation, rights, inclusion, and evidence-based policy are core elements of a healthy, pluralistic democracy, writes Malinda S. Smith. *Unsplash photograph by Clay Banks*

to delegitimize policies, programs, and cultural initiatives. Communication scholar Bart Cammaerts calls this the “abnormalization of social justice”—the strategic reframing of routine fairness and equity work as politically contentious or outside mainstream debate. In Canada, anti-woke rhetoric illustrates how language can reshape the boundaries of legitimate discussion, turning evidence-based policy and institutional reform into objects of suspicion.

From vigilance to caricature

The semantic inversion of woke in Canada is deliberate. Political actors have redefined it from a marker of social awareness to a label for illiberal, anti-Canadian, or elite-driven practices. Parliamentary debates and media coverage show a consistent pattern: Indigenous reconciliation efforts—land acknowledgments, curricular reforms on

residential schools, and representation policies—are portrayed not as legally or ethically grounded obligations, but as politically contentious interventions. Gender and sexuality policies, including gender-neutral pronouns and 2SLGBTQ+ workplace initiatives, are similarly reframed as controversial, producing public concern over social change.

The reach extends beyond social justice programs. Environmental and science policy initiatives—integrating sustainability into education, promoting climate mitigation, or funding evidence-based public health measures such as vaccines—are sometimes dismissed as “woke.” By framing empirically justified policies as contentious or ideological, public discourse shifts attention from evidence and legal obligations to rhetoric and political perception. Cultural programming, from literature and media to arts initiatives addressing race, colonialism, or gender, is similarly trivialized. Even adminis-

trative reforms—diversity audits, anti-bias training, inclusive hiring—are caricatured as managerial performance, undermining institutional governance. Across domains, programs grounded in the Charter, legal obligations, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) can be framed as debatable or partisan rather than legitimate exercises of governance.

Strategic deployment and media amplification

Analysts show that anti-woke rhetoric functions as a populist strategy, simplifying complex policy debates into high-salience grievances. Labeling initiatives as “woke” transforms technical and legally grounded issues into flash-points for political or cultural contention. Media ecosystems amplify this effect: the term’s vagueness allows it to attach to almost any initiative—Indigenous reconciliation, climate action, equity programs, or public health campaigns—turning isolated events into generalized narratives of societal decline. This elasticity reinforces the abnormalization dynamic Cammaerts identifies, and shapes public perception before evidence or outcomes are considered.

From rhetoric to anticipatory obedience

Words have consequences. Universities, cultural organizations, and public agencies increasingly engage in anticipatory obedience—adjusting, delaying, or avoiding programs to pre-empt potential backlash. Decisions on research, equity, or inclusion initiatives are filtered through political considerations rather

than evidence or legal obligations. Funders and institutions self-censor; proposals to reduce support for research labeled “woke” demonstrate how rhetoric translates into institutional caution.

Most critically, by framing equity, reconciliation, or inclusion programs as politically contentious, anti-woke rhetoric risks constraining the implementation of Canada’s legal and human rights obligations. Charter protections, Sec. 35 Indigenous rights, and UNDRIP commitments are grounded in law and institutional practice, yet discourse portraying these programs as controversial can influence policy choices and institutional action. Simultaneously, the label is increasingly applied to evidence-based science, climate, and public health policies, creating pressures for anticipatory obedience, even when programs are legally justified and empirically sound.

Why this matters

Canada has long upheld anti-racism, equity, reconciliation, and human rights as pillars of governance. Yet the abnormalization of social justice shows that public support does not shield initiatives from discursive attack. When evidence-based reforms are consistently framed as politically contentious, institutions are constrained, democratic deliberation narrows, and public trust is eroded. Recognizing the evolution of “woke” clarifies that this backlash is not spontaneous—it is a strategic deployment of language, designed to pre-empt debate, mobilize political support, and shape policy environments.

Canada does not need an “anti-woke” politics. It needs a politics in which reconciliation, rights, inclusion, and evidence-based policy are core elements of a healthy, pluralistic democracy. Institutions should advance these initiatives guided by law, evidence, and ethical responsibility, resisting rhetorical pressures that encourage anticipatory obedience. By doing so, they reinforce democratic deliberation, institutional integrity, and public trust.

Dr. Malinda S. Smith is a professor of political science, and associate vice-president of research at the University of Calgary.

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NEWS



The Red Chamber's office management policy has been updated so that spouses of Senators can no longer claim expenses related language-immersion training and trips. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Senate changes language-study trip rules, cancels perk permitting spouses to claim classes

Senators also agreed to review the 'co-ordinated travel' policy to potentially bring in new rules after recent 'familiarization' tours to provinces during peak tourism season drew media attention.

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

The Red Chamber is changing its rules around language-immersion trips, requiring Senators to get approval for any out-of-home province or National Capital Region programs, and stopping their spouses from expensing such classes.

Senators adopted the motions at an Oct. 2 Senate Internal

Economy Committee (CIBA) meeting where they discussed changing the policy that entitles them to reimbursement for official-language training and related travel expenses.

They also agreed to put a moratorium in place on spouses travelling with a Senator for these trips while a subcommittee reviews the practice. And, they decided Senators should opt for classes offered in the Ottawa area or in their home province where possible, with official language training now requiring the approval of the Senate's Human Resources Directorate if it isn't offered by the House of Commons. The changes have all been reflected in the updated office management policy.

Just days before the meeting, Radio-Canada revealed Progressive Senator Amina Gerba (Rigaud, Que.) had claimed nearly \$22,000 in expenses related to two such trips where her husband also took part in the English classes. Their fee for the Vancouver-based classes in the summers of 2023 and 2024 amounted to

\$1,521 each trip, with accommodations, first-class flights, and per diems punching up the bill.

Gerba defended the expense claim, telling Radio-Canada the travel was "important" as an "opportunity to improve my English and better understand the realities and issues facing the different provinces," and included other parliamentary activities. She noted that she followed the rules set out in the office management policy.

Under the new rules, Senators are still eligible for travel costs for language-training trips once every three fiscal years, using their travel points. But to take part in an immersion program they must have first completed two years of official-language training. The Senate will now cover a maximum of two weeks of this immersion training.

Before the vote on the motion, Canadian Senate Group Senator Jim Quinn (New Brunswick) urged colleagues to make an immediate decision to address "low-hanging fruit" to find cost savings.

"That is: stop executive-class or first-class travel. ... Stop support for spousal language training. Stop spousal travelling outside the National Capital Region," he said.

"I'm sure people watching this are saying that surely there are things that can be done now ... that there are low-hanging fruit which are not controversial, and that should be done."

During the discussion around this and broader savings, Independent Senators Group Facilitator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.) suggested general travel rules around business class be reviewed to potentially update criteria so that shorter flights aren't subject to reimbursement.

"I think savings could be found there," said Saint-Germain, speaking in French.

Conservative Senate Leader Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.) agreed.

"It's not a huge sacrifice to go from business travel—especially domestic flights—to economy," he said, adding there are "plenty" of "luxuries" Senators enjoy that could be worth reviewing.

"We would save a small fortune on that. At some point we'll have to revisit our designated traveller policy as well in this institution. It's a privilege we all have, but it's a privilege, quite frankly, that no other institution or organization outside the Parliament of Canada has in this country. There's an enormous cost to that."

Housakos questioned whether a "designated" traveller—which refers to a spouse or partner unless otherwise approved by CIBA—should be "travelling around the country" or if their travel should be limited between the Senator's home province and the National Capital Region.

"These are just some small steps and adjustments that I think would bring huge savings to the institution without impacting the work that we've been brought here to do."

Housakos asked the Senate administration for details on what the cost savings would be for halting business travel, and eliminating designated travellers either entirely or just across the country, but that data was not readily available.

Several Senators addressed the issue that public perception plummets when Red Chamber appointees are seen to have been irresponsible with taxpayer funds.

ISG Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario) said the Upper Chamber is affected when the privileges—"perceived as blandishments"—are seen as Senators' "getting too much."

"We're in the news again, and that takes away from our institutional reputation and, indeed, our effectiveness," he said, adding that while the body can gain public respect through action on a bill or when Senators are vocal on "important national issues," the body will still "lose when there's a perception that we are getting too much."

"I don't need business travel to fly to Calgary or Halifax," he added, calling a review of that policy "a good starting point."

'Familiarization' trip rules under review

The debate comes as some Senator expenses have raised colleague eyebrows in recent months. Over the summer, CBC News reported on 15 Senators visiting Alberta—including stops at the Calgary Stampede, tourist hotspot Banff, and visits to oil-sands and beef farms—at a cost of \$118,000.

ISG Senator Éric Forest (Gulf, Que.), who chairs the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets (SEBS), said it recently surveyed Senators to get their feelings on "familiarization" tours, and about 54 per cent responded. There are currently 100 appointees in the 105-member body.

"The poll clearly indicates the will and the strong consensus to authorize this type of trip as long as the rules around it are tightened," said Forest, speaking in French.

CIBA tapped SEBS to study "co-ordinated travel," also known as regional familiarization tours, and a press release later that day said consultations revealed "Senators recognized the need for a strong governance policy to ensure transparency and value for money."

That report is expected this fall, with the release also stressing Senators "strive to ensure a balance between the need to support their parliamentary work" and show "money is being spent effectively and with rigorous oversight."

In a statement, Conservative Senator Claude Carignan (Mille Isles, Que.), the subcommittee's deputy chair, said Senators are expected to be "responsible stewards of public money."

"Senators taking part in co-ordinated travel must be able to show that expenses incurred are justified."

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The Hill Times

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | October 8, 2025

INFRASTRUCTURE



The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

- Do Canadians need new houses, or new homes?
- The promise and perils of nation-building projects
- Below the surface: Canada's hidden infrastructure crisis is a climate reckoning

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and many more.**

INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Overcoming infrastructure challenges requires better data sharing, say experts

Canada is facing an infrastructure deficit for new housing, and a funding deficit to manage the core assets already in place, says Canadian Infrastructure Council chair Jennifer Angel.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Addressing an infrastructure crisis in Canada—including the need for climate resilience and the fact assets are aging faster than they are being replaced—will depend on factors such as finding better ways to share data to enable long-term planning, according to infrastructure experts.

“We’re hearing from industry a keen interest in outcomes-focused procurements with more risk sharing, and I think if we want to unlock ingenuity and get at some of the solutions we need, there needs to be much greater risk tolerance and partnership in getting at solutions,” said Jennifer Angel, chair of the Canadian Infrastructure Council (CIC). “We need to ... make that data and evidence more widely available, [and] speak to the outcomes we’re trying to achieve through infrastructure.”

Canada is facing an infrastructure deficit when it comes to building new housing, as well as a funding deficit to manage the infrastructure already in place, according to Angel. In some cases, those gaps are “very significant,” and indicate an urgent need to mobilize and direct capital towards solving infrastructure problems, she said.

In preparation for Canada’s first national infrastructure assessment, the CIC released a report on Sept. 16 summarizing input on Canada’s infrastructure challenges gathered from builders, developers, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous leaders and organizations, climate experts, and others between this past January and April. Major obstacles contributing to Canada’s infrastructure woes identified in the report included an “unnecessarily complex” infrastructure planning and delivery system, and inadequate data to help guide infrastructure projects. Planning infrastructure



Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson said the new Build Canada Homes agency marks a turning point in how affordable housing is delivered in Canada, in a Sept. 19 press release. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Canadian Infrastructure Council chair Jennifer Angel says, ‘in some urban centres there’s a great deal of data and capacity, but the nature of funding programs’ may leave the highest priority items off the table. *Photograph courtesy of the CIC*

projects requires data including population trends, and information about climate change-related hazards, such as flood risks.

Angel told *The Hill Times* that, in some cases, the data exists, but isn’t made available to the people making infrastructure decisions.

“In some cases, even when it exists and it is made available, there is an absence of capacity to actually benefit from it, and I think it’s uneven across the country,” she said. “What we’re hearing, for example, is in some urban centres there’s a great deal of data and capacity, but the nature of funding programs may not enable the highest-priority items to be prioritized, and in other



Civil engineering professor Hossein Bonakdari says unlike federal or provincial governments, cities don’t have access to broader tax bases, and ‘this creates structural imbalance.’ *Handout photograph*

instances ... in smaller, rural and remote communities, quite often even when the data exists—if it exists—there was insufficient capacity in the teams tasked with managing public infrastructure to be able to use it.”

When it comes to climate-resilient infrastructure, major barriers included a lack of up-to-date hazard data, and inconsistent consideration of climate change in planning frameworks, funding parameters, or design standards, according to the report. Possible solutions recommended by experts include more integration of forward-looking climate risk and relevant social data into infrastructure planning, design

standards and funding parameters, as well as full infrastructure lifecycle costing and climate finance tools, such as green and climate bonds.

“I think we are buoyed by some of what we’re hearing, in terms of the interest by governments and working more strategically around infrastructure, in accessing, for example, multi-year funding so that they can prioritize infrastructure that suits needs of their communities,” said Angel. “I think investing in data and evidence, and linking funding to evidence-based solutions would itself be a pretty fundamental shift, and a necessary one ... to build infrastructure that actually responds to what we need now and also to what we’re going to need down the road.”

Hossein Bonakdari, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Ottawa, told *The Hill Times* in an Oct. 4 emailed statement that Canada’s infrastructure faces a “perfect storm” of challenges, including assets aging faster than renewal efforts can keep pace, fragmented governance and infrastructure funding, and “woefully inadequate climate resilience” that leaves communities vulnerable to escalating risks.

To upgrade or maintain existing assets in good condition, owners of core public infrastructure in Canada estimated that \$294.4-billion was required for rehabilitation or replacement at the end of 2022, according to Statistics Canada. In 2019, Can-

ada ranked second worst among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member countries for the length of time required to obtain a general construction permit.

Bonakdari said in the email that proactive reinvestment isn’t optional, adding that without it, infrastructure failures will become more frequent and costly.

Infrastructure delivery involves federal, provincial/territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments, and the challenge is that each have their own mandates, timelines, and funding criteria. This fragmentation creates inefficiencies such as delayed approvals and construction of projects, according to Bonakdari.

Municipalities own roughly 60 per cent of Canada’s core public infrastructure, including water and wastewater systems, local roads and bridges, public transit, waste facilities, parks, and libraries. Municipalities fund this infrastructure primarily through property taxes and development charges, which are narrow and inflexible, Bonakdari said.

“Unlike federal or provincial governments, cities don’t have access to broader tax bases like income or sales tax,” he said in the email. “This creates a structural imbalance: cities are responsible for the largest share of public assets but have the least capacity to finance long-term renewal, climate adaptation, or system expansion.”


Bonakdari argued that the imbalance between the municipal and federal levels is “especially visible” in the federal Housing Plan, which includes leasing underused public land to developers to help build nearly 3.9 million new homes by 2031.

“The land may be available, but without upfront investment in water, sewers, stormwater, roads, and transit, estimated at \$20-[billion] to \$50-billion annually for enabling infrastructure, the housing cannot function,” said Bonakdari in the email.

Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson (Vancouver Fraserview–South Burnaby, B.C.) said that Build Canada Homes—a new federal agency intended to build affordable housing at scale that launched on Sept. 14—marks a turning point in how affordable housing is delivered in Canada, in a Housing press release on Sept. 19.

“By combining bold investments with innovative construction methods and strategic partnerships, we’re not just building homes—we’re catalyzing the growth of the housing industry. And with the additional \$1.5-billion for the Affordable Housing Fund, we’re making sure that projects keep moving forward while Build Canada Homes ramps up. Canadians deserve housing that is accessible, sustainable, and built for the future,” said Robertson.

Mary Rowe, president and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute told *The Hill Times* that her definition of infrastructure includes everything that is part of a “healthy, functioning built environment,” which encompasses not



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INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Overcoming infrastructure challenges requires better data sharing, say experts

Continued from [page 16](#)

only roads and bridges, but also libraries, street fronts and parks.

She said a major challenge in addressing infrastructure problems is unsustainable funding.

“We have an infrastructure deficit, and that is the result of deferred maintenance and just not quantifying and maybe not having the right formulas to figure out how do you actually raise revenues to be able to invest in infrastructure?” said Rowe. “We need a new formula. We need new ways of capturing revenue at the right order of government, because municipal governments don’t have enough pathways to accumulate revenue, and that puts pressure on their system.”

Rowe argued that urban downtowns, especially for smaller communities, are among the most important forms of infrastructure in Canada, since these areas are “incubators for innovation and for economic growth.”

“They are critically important to how not only a city or a region functions, but to how regional economy—and therefore a national economy—functions. And we need investments in those downtowns,” she said. “As we always say, an apple rots from the core, and this is never going to be wasted money ... because downtowns create economic opportunity, and they build wealth and equity, and they’re critical to the resident economy, to the newcomer economy, and to the tourist economy.”

Rowe said that developing community infrastructure requires “hyper-local solutions,” and so the challenge for the federal government is in finding fixes that work at that local level.

Related to infrastructure development, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) on Aug. 29 launched the federal Major Projects Office (MPO). The office is intended as a single point of contact so that so-called “nation-building projects” may be built faster.

Rodrigue Gilbert, president of the Canadian Construction Association (CCA), told

The Hill Times that he considers the MPO to be a step in the right direction.

“We are expecting that these announcements will help developing the infrastructure that we need. I think it’s going to speed up the process, and we are absolutely willing to work with the federal government to make these new steps even better,” he said.

On Sept. 11, a list was released of the first projects being referred to the MPO for consideration, which included a proposed expansion of an existing LNG Canada liquefaction and export terminal in Kitimat, B.C., that would double its production capacity; and the Darlington New Nuclear Project, in Bowmanville, Ont., which is a proposal to build and operate up to four new small modular reactors at the existing Darlington site to generate clean energy for Ontario’s grid.

In a press release following the list of projects, the CCA argued that the selected projects sends “a strong signal from the federal government of their commitment to national infrastructure and a long-term plan for critical infrastructure.”

Another challenge for infrastructure in Canada is the current trade war with the United States, according to Gilbert. The worst enemy when it comes to building anything in Canada is uncertainty, and tariffs affecting the cost of building materials puts Canada “in a very bad position,” he said.

“Construction is not an export business. We import product. The tariffs, they have an impact as it slows down our own economy, but in the end it’s the counter-tariffs that Canada puts on goods that are coming in Canada that [have a] real effect,” he said. “I will give credit to the federal government on that. They are willing to work with us and they understand these issues, and I think more and more, we see them interested in working with us on the contract management and making sure that, in the end, we can still build what we have to build without putting at risk our industry.”

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The Hill Times

The climate is changing faster than Canada’s infrastructure—ignoring it is not fiscally responsible



According to the Canadian Climate Institute, the growing cost of disasters already consumes the equivalent of five to six per cent of Canada’s annual GDP growth, writes Sen. Rosa Galvez. *Photograph courtesy of the Province of B.C./Flickr*

Extreme weather is already reshaping our economy, destabilizing our energy supply, weakening our ecosystems, and testing our infrastructure.

ISG Senator
Rosa Galvez



Opinion

Canada’s infrastructure, much of it designed for a stable 20th-century climate, is struggling to withstand today’s extreme weather. The consequences go far beyond damaged roads and buildings—they extend to our economy and finance systems, energy security, and preservation of ecosystems.

The financial burden of extreme weather

Insured catastrophic losses in Canada have risen steadily for more than a decade. In 2024, they reached a record \$9.1-billion,

making it the costliest year on record for climate-related damage. Over the past five years, the average annual cost has been \$4.3-billion. These figures capture only insured losses; the real economic toll—lost productivity, uninsured damages, disrupted trade, and public health costs—is significantly higher. And according to the Canadian Climate Institute, the growing cost of disasters already consumes the equivalent of five to six per cent of Canada’s annual GDP growth.

Energy security depends on renewable energy infrastructure

Our energy systems are especially vulnerable to extreme weather. Wildfires threaten transmission lines, as seen in Jasper in 2023, and floods have exposed pipelines to dangerous washouts leading to interruptions, like the 2021 shutdown of the Trans Mountain pipeline—the longest shutdown in its 70-year history. These events not only jeopardize energy security, but they also drive up consumer costs and weaken Canada’s competitive advantage in clean energy exports. Pressure from the oil and gas sector on the federal government to build more pipelines across provinces to take oil to new ports and new clients is worrisome.

Before the Building Canada Act (Bill C-5) came into force, 504 major projects

Canada infrastructure statistics



—Source: Canada’s Core Public Infrastructure Survey: Required renewal budgets, 2022, released on June 24, 2025, by Statistics Canada

- At the end of 2022, owners of core public infrastructure estimated that \$294.4-billion was required for the rehabilitation or replacement of existing core public infrastructure in Canada to upgrade or maintain assets in good condition.
- In 2022, while \$31.3-billion was invested to renew existing assets (11 per cent of required renewal budgets), there was a decrease in the share of assets in good or very good condition from 59 per cent in 2020 to 55 per cent in 2022.
- At \$160.8-billion, transportation infrastructure—including roads, bridges, tunnels, active transportation networks, and public transit assets—accounted for more than half (55 per cent) of the required renewal budgets in 2022. That share was higher in rural municipalities (61 per cent) than in urban municipalities (48 per cent).
- Rural municipalities require more investments per capita to maintain their assets in good working condition. While less than one-fifth (18 per cent) of Canada’s population lived in rural areas in 2021, these areas accounted for almost one-third (32 per cent) of municipalities’ required renewal budgets in 2022.

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INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Nation-building in an uncertain world: why Canada must invest in public infrastructure now

With economic uncertainty mounting and a recession looming, Canada must invest strategically to support long-term prosperity while addressing immediate challenges.

NDP MP
Don Davies

Opinion

Public infrastructure is the foundation of a resilient economy and a connected society. It shapes how we live, work, move, and interact. When thoughtfully built and consistently maintained, it becomes a lasting expression of national ambition and collective purpose.

After the Second World War, Canada embraced a nation-building vision, investing heavily in public works. Infrastructure spending peaked at three per cent of GDP in the late 1950s, but by the end of the century, that commitment had faded, dropping to just 1.5 per cent. Decades of underinvestment have left us with aging systems and growing gaps.

Much of the infrastructure that Canadians rely on today was built more than half a century ago, and since then, our population has more than tripled. Yet investment has not kept pace. Canada's infrastructure deficit is estimated at \$270-billion just to maintain existing assets. That figure does not include what we must build to meet future needs, adapt to climate change, and strengthen our national resilience.

These pressures are particularly acute in Indigenous communities, where decades of federal neglect have created a staggering infrastructure gap. An estimated \$425-billion is needed to end disparities in access to essential infrastructure by 2030.

The time to act is now. With economic uncertainty mounting and a recession looming, Canada must invest strategically to support long-term prosperity while addressing immediate challenges like rising unemployment and weakening growth. Public infrastructure can stimulate local economies, create good jobs, and strengthen communities.

Moreover, with United States President Donald Trump openly challenging Canada's sovereignty and destabilizing our economy, the need to reduce our dependence on the Americans has become urgent and unavoidable. Our supply chains remain heavily oriented toward the U.S., leaving us vulnerable to the whims

of an increasingly unreliable partner. The solution lies in building self-sufficiency through infrastructure that connects our provinces and territories, strengthens internal trade, and expands our global reach.

A central pillar of this strategy must be the construction of a clean east-west electricity grid. For too long, Canada's energy infrastructure has been fragmented and oriented toward exports to the U.S. By linking renewable energy sources across provinces, we can build a truly national system that lowers costs, improves reliability, and strengthens our independence.

This project reflects a fundamental difference in the NDP's approach to infrastructure compared to the Liberals and Conservatives, who often treat it as a vehicle for corporate subsidies or a path to privatization. New Democrats see infrastructure as a critical nation-building tool that can improve daily life and prepare us for the future. Our focus is on public assets that serve people directly such as health care and education facilities, reliable transportation, climate-resilient infrastructure, and essential systems such as sewage, water, and telecommunications.

The NDP also believes that public infrastructure should be built by Canadian workers using Canadian materials, companies, and expertise. This strengthens domestic industries, supports family-sustaining jobs, and ensures public dollars stay in Canada. For this reason, federal procurement policies must be reformed to prioritize Canadian suppliers and end the outsourcing of major contracts to foreign firms.

To help fund this ambitious agenda, the NDP is proposing a modern version of Victory Bonds. These bonds would allow Canadians to invest directly in public infrastructure, offering secure returns while supporting national priorities. This approach avoids the pitfalls of privatization.

Too often, Liberal and Conservative governments have relied on privatization and public-private partnerships that erode public control and drive-up long-term costs. These models shift decision-making toward profit-driven interests, leaving communities with tolls, user fees, and deteriorating services. Victory Bonds, by contrast, would keep infrastructure publicly owned and democratically accountable.

Canada's future depends on infrastructure that is inclusive, resilient, and nationally co-ordinated. We must move beyond fragmented planning and short-term fixes. It's time to renew our public infrastructure and shape a future that reflects our values and aspirations.

Don Davies is interim leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada, and the MP for Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.
The Hill Times

A critical moment for the climate emergency, and a green infrastructure deficit

An alternative vision is not only possible but necessary to secure Canada's economic future.

NDP MP
Jenny Kwan

Opinion



Humanity faces unprecedented danger from climate change and biodiversity loss. Eight thousand forest fires occur in Canada each year with 2.1 million hectares on fire on average. To put it in perspective, that's nearly half the size of Nova Scotia in flames each year.

Canada saw the worst wildfires in the country's history in 2023, engulfing more than 17 million hectares of land, and requiring approximately 232,000 people to be evacuated. The cost: nearly \$10-billion, with \$3.1-billion in insured damages.

In 2024, Canada suffered another \$8.5-billion in losses, and we saw Jasper, Alta., engulfed in flames. In 2025, while all the figures are still being tallied, as of July, there were more than 3,500 wildfires spanning over six million hectares.

Toxic air pollution, respiratory problems, and communities in a state of constant anxiety. Annual wildfires have evolved from occasional events into recurring disasters.

Instead of doubling down to address the impact of the climate crisis, Prime Minister Mark Carney's first act was to cancel the carbon tax. He put a pause on the zero-emission vehicle sales mandate, and—with the help of the Conservatives—rammed through Bill C-5, legislation that will bypass environmental reviews for what Carney and his cabinet will decide are major projects of national interest. All of this as Canada is poised to miss its 2030 climate target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40-50 per cent below 2005 levels.

No matter the spin, Canada's actual emissions are currently sitting at 8.5 per cent below 2005 levels. The Liberal government's inaction is equivalent to pouring gasoline on the flames. CEOs of big oil companies raked in billions of dollars while communities across Canada were ravaged by forest fires over successive summers. These companies are taking no responsibility for their decades-long polluting practices—they just want to maximize profits. Meanwhile, Canadian banks are among the largest investors in the fossil fuel sector worldwide.

In 2015, on the eve of COP21, well before he became prime minister,

Carney outlined the global financial risks of a climate crisis. He said climate change is an existential threat to the financial system, and he called for major banks to include climate crisis risks in their investments to align with the Paris Agreement.

A decade later, all of Canada's major banks have pulled out of their climate commitments now that United States President Donald Trump is at the helm. Now that he is prime minister, Carney is backtracking on Canada's commitment to climate action to appease Trump.

An alternative vision is not only possible but necessary to secure Canada's economic future—a vision that grows the economy, creates jobs, supports communities, and helps the country meet its emissions goals. Here are some examples of the type of nation-building major projects that can transform Canada:

1. Close the infrastructure gap for First Nations. As identified by the Assembly of First Nations, this will boost Canada's economic output by \$635-billion, create and sustain more than 338,000 jobs per year, and generate more than \$87-billion in government tax revenue.

2. Fast-track nation-wide infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations across the country. This would add \$48-billion and up to 250,000 jobs to Canada's economy through the expansion of a domestic electric battery supply chain.

3. Make massive investments in a built-by-Canadians-for-Canadians public transit system. In the next 10 years, Metro Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver's transit systems will need at least 5,000 new buses and more than 200 trains.

4. Upscale and expand retrofit initiatives to existing homes to make them low carbon and resilient to the effects of climate change. A deep energy retrofit program can reduce energy by up to 90 per cent, and cut operational carbon emissions by as much as 99 per cent.

5. Establish permanent wildfire protection measures with permanent teams who receive training for community defence and ecosystem protection similar to those implemented by California, Australia, and elsewhere.

6. Establish a Youth Climate Corps. With youth unemployment in double digits, this will revolutionize our approach to fighting fires, address climate change, and instill hope for the future.

Canadians demand innovative solutions and investments instead of partial solutions and half measures at this critical moment of a climate emergency and a green infrastructure deficit.

Jenny Kwan is the NDP critic for housing, immigration, refugees and citizenship, public safety, national security, infrastructure, and Pacific Economic Development.
The Hill Times

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INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

As digital transformation reshapes our world, our expectations for physical infrastructure must evolve

In cities, the digital economy interacts with physical and publicly funded infrastructure, often in unexpected ways.

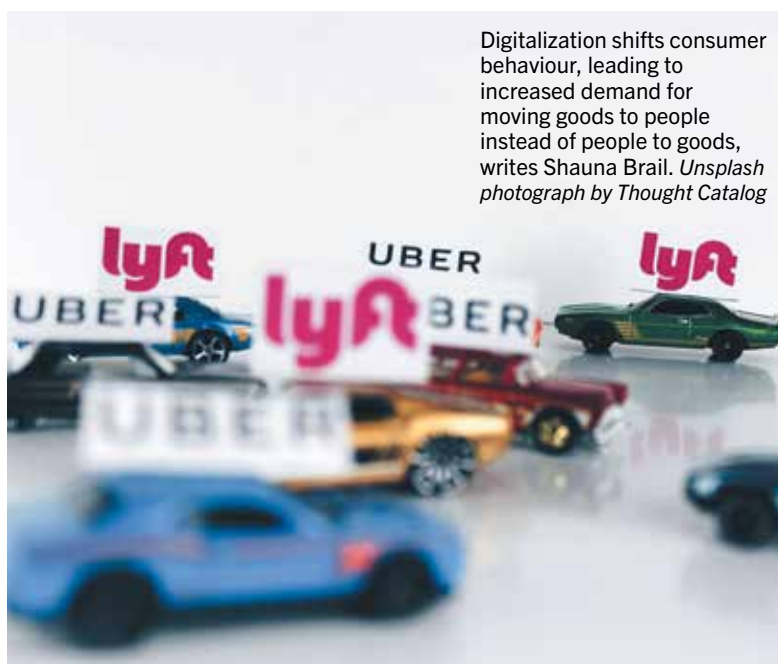
Shauna Brail

Opinion



The Canadian government aims to advance its nation-building goals through the pursuit of infrastructure building. To achieve priorities focused on speed amidst global change, building economic capacity and resilience, and growing jobs, policymakers must recognize two critical realities. First, that infrastructure investments are also urban investments. And second, that a rising reliance on digital platforms and digital technologies affect publicly provided infrastructure.

Public infrastructure projects, in addition to—usually—leading to the development of needed infrastructure, generate highly desirable spillover benefits and multiplier effects. These serve as opportunities to attract invest-



Digitalization shifts consumer behaviour, leading to increased demand for moving goods to people instead of people to goods, writes Shauna Brail. *Unsplash photograph by Thought Catalog*

ment, commercialize nascent and home-grown technologies, train workers, and increase employment. Infrastructure investments contribute to improvements in productivity, and produce a return on investment that tends to outperform most other public investments.

As such, the federal government's announcements related to fast-tracking nation-building projects like the expansion of the Port of Montreal and the development of small modular

reactors in Bowmanville, Ont.—alongside greenlighting projects including the strategic work to develop a national high-speed rail network—make sense. These are economically transformative projects, selected as a way of setting Canada on a path to what the government called a “stronger, more competitive and prosperous economy for Canadian workers.”

Cities are where most Canadians live—and where the country's economic and population growth is most concentrated. Our six

largest cities are home to just less than half of Canada's residents, and more than half of the country's jobs. In cities and city-regions, Canadians experience the physical transformations and economic opportunities that come with infrastructure investment. Examples include the remediation of public waterfronts and park spaces, the rise of entire mixed-use neighbourhoods, and the addition of new transit lines. The impacts of infrastructure investments in cities can be measured through increases in productivity, the creation of new jobs and businesses, or the buzz generated by the concentration of people and ideas. It is relatively easy to “see” how physical infrastructure transforms a place.

It takes more effort to recognize the ways that digital transformations impact—and are affected by—physical infrastructure and infrastructure investment.

While digital infrastructure like data centres is essential, this is a call to recognize how digital platforms and technologies are reshaping the physical infrastructure needs of our cities.

In cities, the digital economy interacts with physical and publicly funded infrastructure, often in unexpected ways. For instance, Canadian cities have seen an acceleration of people working in the gig economy over the past decade. Statistics Canada

estimates that in 2023, nearly half a million people earned income through work on digital platform firms.

In our cities, the rise of digital platforms and digitally driven labour produces a physical trail. Ride-hail vehicles are visible in waiting areas at airports, train stations, and throughout downtowns; delivery drivers concentrate on sidewalks and curb spaces awaiting their next job. Digitalization shifts consumer behaviour, leading to increased demand for moving goods to people instead of people to goods. These shifts challenge traditional infrastructure planning, demanding new approaches to curb space management, transit integration, and energy use.

Not only does this mean that we need more physical capacity—or infrastructure—to move goods, but also the warehousing capacity to store products, and the ability to transport items from embarkation to destination. Digital activity also demands energy and storage space. Moreover, in a world of fluctuating geopolitical tensions, made-by-Canada solutions are a political, economic and social priority.

As digital transformation reshapes our world, our expectations for physical infrastructure must evolve in tandem. Public investments in infrastructure don't just yield economic returns, but they also spark ripple effects that strengthen cities, fuel the digital economy, and expand access to digital opportunity. Recognizing and embracing these broader digital impacts is essential to building a stronger, more resilient, and future-ready Canada.

Shauna Brail is a professor at the Institute for Management and Innovation, and holds a cross appointment at the Munk School for Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto.

The Hill Times

Bill C-8's moment of truth: draw the line on what's 'critical'

Bill C-8 establishes a protection regime for federally regulated sectors, and should be treated as a generational opportunity to replace chalk lines with mathematics.

Tyson Macaulay

Opinion



Up to the late 1500s, ships were not built to a plan. Craftsmen relied on rough guidelines, drawing lines on the floor to eyeball dimensions. This practice created major drawbacks for fleets of commerce and war: vessels were difficult to reproduce, maintain, and supply; performance and stability varied; hidden weaknesses slipped through construction; and standardized spares or repairs were impossible. Operational risk was high.

In the 16th century, ship-building became standardized. Mathematical hull geometry and naval classifications made safety, quality, and resilience measurable. Data from Lloyd's insurance dating to the 1600s show marked reductions in losses to life and property as formal standards emerged.

Canada's critical infrastructure (CI) protection still resembles that pre-plan era. Deciding what counts as “critical” within the 10 official sectors remains more craft than science. The result is predictable: perceptions of risk vary, regulatory expectations are uneven, and national awareness blurs when clarity is needed most. Jurisdictions often rely on instinct, while CI operators apply inconsistent methods—some depending on institutional memory, others on *ad hoc* thresholds. The outcome is inconsistency: an asset may be “critical” locally but invisible to interdependency analyses intended to tie the system together.

The 10 sectors—energy, finance, telecommunications, food, water, health, transportation, manufacturing, safety, and

government—provide scaffolding, but determining who is “in” or “out” often looks like chalk lines on a shipwright's floor: subjective, mutable, and hard to defend under stress. Some industries occupy grey zones, intuitively critical in some circumstances but not in others. This ambiguity seeps into regulation, emergency planning, and cross-border co-ordination, where foreign definitions are often tighter. A taxonomy that cannot be applied consistently cannot be managed consistently.

The consequences are practical. Regulators must know exactly whom they regulate and why. In a crisis, decision-makers must justify how power, bandwidth, medicines, or fuel are triaged and restored—ideally on criteria that survive public

scrutiny and after-action review. Post-incident reporting likewise requires clean definitions to compare events across time and geography. Without methodical definitions, we generate noise: incompatible risk registers, outage metrics, and assessments that cannot be pooled or trended.

Bill C-8, An Act respecting cyber security, establishes a protection regime for federally regulated sectors: telecommunications, finance, energy, and transportation. The intent is sound: align oversight with systemic risk, sharpen reporting, and develop detailed guidance. But effectiveness depends on crisp, quantitative scoping that reflects how goods and services are delivered in 2025. Legacy definitions risk regulating the core while systemic vulnerabilities linger at the edges.

Consider telecommunications. Last operationally framed in the early 2000s, it included radio, broadcasting, and print when carrier networks moved voice, video, and data separately. Two decades later, everything runs

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Policy Briefing **INFRASTRUCTURE**

The climate is changing faster than Canada's infrastructure—ignoring it is not fiscally responsible

Continued from page 18

were already under construction or planned over the next 10 years in Canada's energy, forest, and mining sectors, with a combined potential capital value of \$632.6-billion. In Quebec with its strict Office of Public Hearings on the Environment, the Plan Québécois des infrastructures 2024-2034 announced \$153-billion for infrastructure, including \$87.6-billion to ensure the sustainability of public infrastructure. Ultimately, projects that are good for the environment are good for the nation, and nation-building infrastructure projects rooted in best practice shouldn't fear a serious environmental assessment.

Experts are clear that we must accelerate the pace at which we build renewable energy infrastructure and adapt existing energy infrastructure. This requires smarter grids, diversified renewable sources, and policies that anticipate rising demand and volatility. We must also consider the higher frequency of wildfires, and the projected decline in demand for oil and gas. Consider for a moment the notion of building new pipelines to transport highly flammable liquids through wildfire-prone regions—we must honestly weigh the risks against the promise of increased revenues. And we must ask for transparency and assurance so that projects are technically, economically, environmentally, and socially sound and efficient.

Ecosystem resilience lessens the impacts of extreme weather

Without resilient ecosystems, Canadians become even more vulnerable to climate extremes. The United Nations has repeatedly emphasized that protecting ecosystems is a frontline adaptation strategy. Yet, much of Canada's core infrastructure has been designed for the climate of the past. Roads, bridges, and water/wastewater systems are not built to withstand the conditions of our rapidly changing climate. Urban drainage is overwhelmed by intense rainfall, while northern buildings are destabilized by thawing permafrost.

Adapting our infrastructure for the climate of the future

Building codes and land-use planning have not kept pace with the risks of a changing climate. Too often, homes and businesses continue to be constructed in flood plains or wildfire-prone areas. These areas must be identified, and information must be shared with provincial and municipal authorities. The Insurance Bureau of Canada has urged governments to adopt stronger building standards, integrate FireSmart practices, and discourage development in high-risk zones. Yet updates remain slow.

Adapting infrastructure is not just a technical challenge; it is a governance challenge. Evidence shows that for

every dollar spent on adaptation and resilience, more than \$10 in benefits over 10 years is generated yet federal disaster assistance spending is ballooning. Furthermore, studies estimate that even a low-emissions scenario could

lead to climate impacts that may cost the Canadian economy \$78-billion annually by mid-century. Despite the promise of proactive adaptation cutting these costs in half, political will remains uneven, and funding fragmented.

The UN's latest *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* calls for governments to shift from managing disasters after they happen to preventing and preparing before they occur. Indeed, studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on disaster risk reduction there is an average return of \$15 in terms of avoided future disaster recovery costs.

Extreme weather is already reshaping our economy, destabilizing our energy supply, weakening our ecosystems, and testing our infrastructure. We have a choice: continue to absorb mounting losses or invest strategically in resilience. The costs of inaction are clear; the benefits of foresight are proven. Canada must adapt its infrastructure now—not only to protect our economy and environment, but to also show citizens that their leaders are committed to safeguarding their future.

The Honourable Rosa Galvez is a civil-environmental engineer, and an Independent Senator for the province of Quebec.
The Hill Times

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INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing



The laudable goal of a Team Canada approach to accelerating nation-building infrastructure opens the risk that the federal government will buckle to unworthy pet projects, writes Matti Siemiatycki. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Do Canadians need new houses, or new homes?

We should embrace a broader public vision that supports families in accessing affordable homes integrated into local community infrastructure and services.

David Watters, Ryan Deschamps & Rahim Rezaie



Opinion

Prime Minister Carney set seven national missions for his government, including “Making housing more affordable.” To this end, on Sept. 14 he announced a new agency, Build Canada Homes, and provided \$13-billion in initial capital “to increase the housing supply in Canada” starting with 4,000 factory-built homes. However, the direction and scope of this new program raises several public policy concerns: is it ambitious enough, is it focused on providing the right outcomes, is it comprehensively funded? We suggest it falls short on all three counts, and needs adjustment.

Is it ambitious enough?

This past June, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported that up to 4.8 million new houses will need to be built by 2035 if housing affordability is to return to the reasonable levels last seen in 2019. But this means doubling housing construction from its current levels of about 245,000 units in 2024 “to between 430,000 and 480,000 housing units” per year. So, while the 4,000 new units is a laudable start, it is only 0.08 per cent of the 4.8 million new units that are forecast to be needed by 2035 to achieve affordability. Where are the annual housing targets and plans to achieve them?

Is it providing the right outcome?

With an average family size in Canada of 2.9 people, 4.8 million

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The promise and perils of nation-building projects

Getting swept up in political hype and hubris can lead to the wrong projects, poor priorities, and terrible outcomes.

Matti Siemiatycki

Opinion



“Make no little plans” is the classic invocation from the American architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham to dream big and be bold.

Prime Minister Mark Carney is channeling the same energy with his call to “build, baby, build.”

Amidst the current economic upheaval, affordability crunch, and tensions around national unity, nation building through mega-projects has become the order of the day.

There’s no doubt Canada needs to get on with ambitious nation-building projects, in a country that has increasingly felt sluggish, timid, and risk averse.

But getting swept up in political hype and hubris can

lead to the wrong projects, poor priorities, and terrible outcomes. To truly benefit from the push for nation-building infrastructure, Canada must ensure that evidence is used to select the best projects, and that they are effectively delivered.

The first wave of proposed projects revealed thus far lean heavily on energy, ports, trade corridors, and resource-extraction projects, as well as major federal investments to boost housing construction.

On the positive side, from the outset there appears to be efforts between the federal, provincial and local governments to align nation-building priorities and streamline processes and financing. The introduction of the Major Projects Office is a good step forward, with more work still needed to meaningfully engage and partner with Indigenous Peoples.

A key question is the criteria and evidence being used to pick the priority projects, and how this information is publicly reported. How are economic goals being balanced with environmental and social impacts, both at the individual project level and across the entire portfolio of nationally significant projects?

Transparent reporting of rigorous project business cases is especially important since alongside

accelerated approvals, there is an expectation that governments will provide significant investment in at least some of the projects on the national priority list. In a context of scarce resources and large government debts, there is no money to waste on costly white elephants.

The laudable goal of a Team Canada approach to accelerating nation-building infrastructure opens the risk that the federal government will buckle to unworthy pet projects, siphoning money and political will away from other national priorities.

Even if the best mega-projects are selected, they still need to be well executed. Canada has struggled mightily with effective delivery of just the types of projects that are now being eyed for acceleration, whether led by the public or private sector.

There is a litany of transformative mega-projects that have recently gone off the rails with catastrophic cost overruns and delays: the Muskrat Falls and Site C Dams, the Trans Mountain and Coastal GasLink pipelines, the Bipole III electricity transmission line in Manitoba, and numerous recent transit projects delivered through public-private partnerships.

When nation building is invoked and projects are too

big or too politically important to fail, governments too often become the backstop of last resort. This poses a huge risk that nation-building projects that are seen today as economic winners become tomorrow’s financial albatrosses, with higher-than-expected user fee rates or elevated debt levels.

For Bent Flyvbjerg and Dan Gardner, the authors of *How Big Things Get Done*, being deliberate in studying the merits of a project and rigorous in producing project designs and delivery plans enables construction to go quickly.

Canada also needs to ensure there is a sufficient construction workforce in the face of a coming wave of retirements, and develop a core of modern mega-project leaders that can shift the culture of project delivery from brute force to more collaborative, creative problem solving.

If done well, Canada’s current wave of nation building will usher in a period of inclusive prosperity and community benefits. If not, we will be further burdened by financial debt and failed promises when we most need a win.

Matti Siemiatycki is director of the Infrastructure Institute at the University of Toronto School of Cities. He is also the host of the Good for Cities podcast.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Building more homes is a shared vision. Now we need the infrastructure to make it real

Everyday infrastructure like roads, bridges, pipes, public transit, stormwater management is critical to turning housing aspirations into reality.

Rebecca Bligh

Opinion



If we don't plan for infrastructure critical to creating vibrant neighbourhoods from the start, housing projects can face significant delays or may never get off the ground at all, writes Rebecca Bligh. *Pexels photograph by Harry Thomas*

is the critical infrastructure that will turn these housing aspirations into reality.

We're talking about everyday infrastructure like roads, bridges, pipes, public transit, stormwater management, and essential community spaces like parks and recreation centres. These are fundamental in creating vibrant,

livable neighbourhoods that connect people with jobs, schools, and green spaces. If we don't plan for them from the start, housing projects can face significant delays or may never get off the ground at all. Not only will these investments help build new housing, but they will also grow local economies, support businesses, and improve trade routes.

Across Canada, local governments are unlocking land for housing, fast-tracking permit processes, and planning for growth. However, they're running into a common hurdle: crumbling infrastructure.

For example, in a growing Ontario town, a new subdivision sits idle because the wastewater system can't be upgraded. In a bustling Prairie city, transit expansion lags behind rising housing demand. Coastal communities face aging roads and outdated stormwater systems that can't support new construction—especially as climate change is a daily challenge affecting lives.

Infrastructure might not be the trigger for the housing crisis, but it's a major piece of the puzzle

we can't ignore. It goes beyond a simple funding issue; it's about timing, co-ordination, and the ability to get the job done.

Municipalities are stepping up, but they need the right tools to match the urgency of this issue. Municipalities also face limits in their revenue tools, which contributes to the infrastructure deficit and limits their ability to support new housing. We need a dedicated and consistent fund that supports the infrastructure essential for housing development. This funding should go directly to municipalities, so local governments can make the most impact. It's imperative that all orders of government co-ordinate effectively, ensuring communities have the necessary systems in place for home construction to proceed smoothly.

Provinces and territories are essential partners, especially to ensure the success of supportive and transitional housing developments. Aligning policies, streamlining permitting, and supporting local priorities can help unlock stalled projects, especially for small and rural communities who

struggle to access major funding because of a lack of resources. A successful national housing initiative depends on all orders of government working together to empower communities and deliver results.

When we build, we must build resilient infrastructure. The ability to withstand floods, fires, and severe weather is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. Communities across Canada are already facing these real threats, and we need to ensure that the systems we build now can withstand the challenges of the future.

Municipalities stand ready to help close the gap. They can work collaboratively with other communities and non-profits—many of whom may not have the resources to present full project proposals—to elevate their ideas to the federal level.

With appropriate tools and support, municipalities can transform local aspirations into substantial national progress.

Rebecca Bligh is president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The Hill Times

Bill C-8's moment of truth: draw the line on what's 'critical'

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over internet protocols. Where do data centres, cloud platforms, or AI clusters fit? This matters: up to 50 per cent of cloud and software as a service consumed by Canadian CI—especially in finance—are imported and controlled abroad. Canada has no domestically owned content delivery networks (CDNs), yet these CDNs underpin delivery of nearly all e-government portals, online banking, and cultural platforms such as the CBC and CTV. In 2024, more than 65 per cent of Canadians relied on a mix of online streaming and linear TV, while more than 20 per cent streamed content exclusively via CDNs. Definitions that ignore such realities create rules and regulations with diminished effectiveness.

Like modern ships, CI definitions must rest on reliable systems, not rules of thumb. Using trusted sources such as Statistics Canada's supply-chain metrics, we can identify industries and regions that are most consequential under different scenarios. Additional indicators of criticality and interdependency such as data-flow sensitivity, geographic proximity, or goods-versus-services distinctions could be correlated to expose strengths and gaps. These metrics turn intuition into evidence, making "criticality" a reproducible property rather than a label of tradition.

The same logic applies to risk assessment. Today, municipal and provincial

offices expend heroic effort, but outputs rarely interlock. Differing templates, scales, and consequence categories frustrate analysis across jurisdictions. A standardized national toolkit with common definitions, hazard libraries, and risk scales would enable aggregation. When every assessment and after-action report speaks the same language, trends emerge and priorities can be set by evidence, not anecdote. Standardization is not centralization; it is the grammar that allows a federation to reason collectively.

Bill C-8 should be treated as a generational opportunity to replace chalk lines with mathematics. Systematic, definitions rooted in transparent and quantitative methods can anchor regulatory scope, security targets, and emergency practices on a defensible foundation. In parallel, Canadian standards bodies should publish a canon for risk assessment: definitions, data standards, scoring scales, dependency questions, and reporting templates. With interoperable methods and open guidance, thousands of local assessments become national intelligence. As with the evolution from chalked floor lines to naval architecture, the payoff is practical: fewer surprises, faster recovery, and a resilient, more prosperous Canada.

Tyson Macaulay is the deputy director of the National Centre for Critical Infrastructure Protection, Security, and Resilience at Carleton University.

The Hill Times



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INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Below the surface: Canada's hidden infrastructure crisis is a climate reckoning

Canada needs a forward-looking National Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act to establish a framework for co-ordinated investment, standardized data collection, and climate resilience.

Ali Bayat

Opinion



More critical infrastructure networks are being buried to shield them from storms and wildfires. Yet the very ground that offers protection is becoming less stable due to climate change, writes Ali Bayat. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube/City of Calgary

aging pipes, accelerating their degradation. We are caught in a dangerous paradox: relying more heavily on underground systems just as they become more vulnerable.

The time for reactive crisis management is over. We already recognize pipelines and railways as strategic national assets, protecting them under federal legislation such as the Canadian Energy Regulator Act and the Railway Safety Act. It is time we treated our water and wastewater systems with the same gravity. Canada needs a forward-looking National Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act to establish a framework for co-ordinated investment, standardized data collection, and climate resilience across the country.

This does not mean a federal takeover, but a federal partnership. Through a coherent national strategy and dedicated resiliency funding, municipalities can be empowered to conduct the unglamorous but vital work of inspection and renewal. Industry, researchers, and governments must collaborate to deploy innovative technologies—AI-enabled inspection, trenchless renewal methods, and digital mapping—that make this generational task more effective and less costly.

Neglecting what lies beneath threatens more than water security. It jeopardizes economic competitiveness, housing development, trade, and Canada's ability to meet its climate commitments. The Calgary crisis was a wake-up call, but it should not take more billion-dollar failures to drive action.

Canada's resilience depends on what lies unseen. Investing below the surface is how we secure prosperity above it.

Dr. Ali Bayat is a professor and senior engineering research chair at the University of Alberta, and the director of the Canadian Underground Infrastructure Innovation Centre where he focuses on advancing research and education for underground infrastructure.

The Hill Times

The 2024 water crisis in Calgary was more than an inconvenience; it was a stark warning of a national vulnerability we can no longer afford to ignore.

For weeks, a single pipe failure held a major Canadian city hostage, disrupting more than a million lives. The direct repair costs are estimated to be more than \$40-million, but the total economic damage to the city's GDP from throttled business operations is far greater. This event pulled back the curtain on the fragile state of the vast, invisible infrastructure network beneath our feet.

This subterranean world of pipes, cables, and conduits is the backbone of our daily lives. The creation of modern sewer and water systems has arguably saved more lives than any single medical advancement in history by eradicating waterborne diseases. Today, our reliance has only deepened. Every time we turn on a tap, flip a switch, or connect to the internet, we are trusting assets that are largely out of sight and—tragically—out of mind.

The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card has repeatedly sounded the alarm: a significant portion of our municipal water, wastewater, and stormwater

systems are in fair to very poor condition. These assets were placed underground decades ago under a dangerous assumption of permanence. But ruptures, sinkholes, and catastrophic failures tell a different story. These are not simply maintenance issues; they are serious risks to public health, safety, and economic stability.

Two challenges compound the problem. First, neglect is the norm until failure strikes. Condition assessments are expensive and technically difficult, leaving municipalities trapped in a reactive cycle of emergency repairs that are exponentially more costly than proactive maintenance. Sec-

ond, governance is fragmented. These systems are managed city by city, with uneven resources and priorities. This patchwork approach prevents a unified national strategy for assessing risks and allocating investment.

Climate change multiplies these risks. As extreme weather intensifies, more critical infrastructure—power lines, fibre-optic cables, communications networks—is being buried to shield it from storms and wildfires. Yet the very ground that offers protection is becoming less stable. Shifting freeze-thaw cycles, intense rainfall, and prolonged droughts place unprecedented stress on

Building Canada's infrastructure for resilience and sustainable development

Infrastructure is not only concrete, steel, and wood. It is about people, places, and possibilities.

Jeff Rankin

Opinion



Canada is at a crossroads. With much of our public infrastructure aging and under strain, the decisions we make today will shape our communities, economies, and environment for generations. It is no longer enough to focus solely on building quickly or cheaply at a reduced initial cost. The true measure of infrastructure is its ability to serve people equitably, to protect the land and water, and to secure a better future for all.

This reflection comes at an important time, one of looking

both backward and forward, acknowledging and reconciling the lessons of the past while envisioning the future we must build. This recognizes that infrastructure is not static, it evolves with the needs of our communities, and it carries the impacts of our choices long after budgets and political cycles fade.

As president of a learned engineering society—the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering—I appreciate that our profession is intertwined with the lands, waters, and communities

that have sustained Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. When we acknowledge that our work takes place on Indigenous homelands and we affirm treaty rights, this is our commitment to uphold principles of mutual co-existence rooted in humility, wisdom, honesty, and love that must guide how we plan and build. This means listening carefully and ensuring infrastructure advances reconciliation and respect as much as it serves economic development, especially as we grow into

undeveloped lands and waters to the North.

Infrastructure is more than meeting technical performance. Under the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, it should not merely deliver services; it should empower the under-privileged, reduce inequities, and create inclusive opportunities. Roads, bridges, water systems, waste treatment facilities, and housing are the foundations of participation in society. If built without

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Policy Briefing **INFRASTRUCTURE**

The price tag on housing-enabling infrastructure is prolonging our housing crisis

The cost of infrastructure expansion is typically covered through development charges paid by developers when they build new housing, which exacerbates Canada's significant affordability crisis.

Olha Sotska

Opinion



With the fall parliamentary sitting now underway, all eyes are on Nov. 4—Budget 2025 is the long-awaited first fiscal update under Prime Minister Mark Carney. Although details

remain under wraps, the government has signalled a focus on “once-in-a-generation” investments in housing and infrastructure.

Such investments would be more than welcome given the reality we face. For the past decade, Canadians have been grappling with a severe housing crisis, characterized by a shortage of homes. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's latest estimates, we need to build 430,000 to 480,000 new housing units annually by 2035 to meet projected demand—that's double our current construction rates, which are declining at an alarming pace across urban markets.

The concept is straightforward—“build, baby, build”—but the execution promises to be complicated. Numerous other aspects come into play, including the critical role of infrastructure.

The availability of adequate housing-enabling infrastructure, from utilities and roads to community services, is essential to ensuring new housing developments can create functional, connected and livable communities. In most Canadian jurisdictions,

the cost of infrastructure expansion is typically covered through development charges paid by developers when they build new housing—an approach introduced by municipalities to not rely exclusively on the property tax base, and to ensure that growth pays for growth. This, however, exacerbates Canada's significant affordability crisis.

One issue is the alarming rate at which these development charges have risen, particularly in large urban centres, becoming one of the most significant expenses associated with building new housing. For instance, in the Greater Toronto Area, development charges increased by approximately 400 per cent between 2015 and 2024 to nearly \$140,000 per a detached or semi-detached home. In Vancouver, rates are scheduled to increase by more than 250 per cent between 2023 and 2027, with a new 700-750 square foot condo unit already reaching charges of more than \$130,000 per unit.

Developers must pay these charges upfront, creating a capital requirement before construction even begins. To cover it,

developers borrow, which comes with interest costs and double taxation. Yes, that's correct—provincial and federal governments are charging taxes on these fees. At a time when we need to significantly increase housing supply, all efforts are being constrained by taxes and fees that represent as much as 36 per cent of the purchase price of a home.

Developers are in a cost-of-delivery crisis—development charges are piled on top of high land prices, capital availability, regulatory bottlenecks, persistent building code changes, labour shortages and supply chain disruptions—making projects extremely expensive or unviable. Developers pass the financial burden down the line to renters and buyers or choose not to build. Either scenario has serious consequences for a) individuals hoping to buy a home, and b) workers in residential construction. If developers can no longer afford to build because the public can't afford to buy, then there is a serious risk to construction and other housing-related jobs.

The magnitude of the issue has elicited some action by the federal

government, mainly through the introduction of a \$6-billion Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund. Municipalities with a population of more than 300,000 people have to implement a three-year freeze on development charge increases, starting from April 2, 2024, in order to be eligible for federal funding related to housing infrastructure.

While the fund is a step in the right direction, more is needed. Freezing charges is not sufficient. Charges have reached exorbitant levels for both developers and homebuyers, and maintaining current levels is neither sustainable nor efficient. Without meaningful reductions in development charges, the financial strain will persist and affordability will remain out of reach.

During the election campaign, the Liberal Party pledged to “cut municipal development charges in half for multi-unit residential housing for five years, offsetting those revenues by federal investment in housing infrastructure like water, power lines, and wastewater systems.” Another potential step toward progress, but they must get it right. To create long term home building viability, those cuts need to be permanent.

The time for action is overdue. The affordability crisis is enormous, and lowering development charges is only part of the solution. There is an urgent need for Budget 2025 to turn federal pledges and promises into actions with real, lasting impact.

Olha Sotska is a policy adviser responsible for the housing file at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The Hill Times

Nation-building starts with builders

This country urgently needs to invest in skills training, take action to scale apprenticeships, and work with us to destigmatize careers in the trades.

Rodrigue Gilbert

Opinion



At long last, Ottawa is putting construction at the centre of Canada's economic strategy. In the past few weeks alone, the federal government has launched the Major Projects Office, released its first list of nation-building projects, stood up the Build Canada Homes agency, and introduced new measures to support sectors affected by tariffs. These consecutive policy moves are more

than hopeful statements—they are tangible steps signalling that nation-building and infrastructure investment are moving forward.

The Canadian Construction Association welcomes this focus. Construction is more than buildings and roads; it is the backbone of communities and Canada's economy, defence, and sovereignty.

But, if Canada is going to—as Prime Minister Mark Carney says—“build, baby, build,” it must also be paying attention to the plans that are put in place. It's not just about infrastructure, it's also about adequate investment for those projects to succeed. Big investments will only succeed if we get the how right.

How do we guarantee our materials? Supply chain disruptions—whether from recent tariffs, Buy Canadian rules, and North American trade frictions—are real risks. The construction industry is vulnerable to fluctuations in construction materials. So how do we fortify supply chains and build in resilience?

How will we build it? Infrastructure doesn't magically construct itself. Canada's construction sector already employs some 1.6 million people, and

contributes about \$162-billion to the GDP. But we are staring down a worsening labour shortage. Every year, skilled tradespeople retire, and not enough young workers are entering the field, according to the latest figures from BuildForce.

This country urgently needs to invest in skills training, take action to scale apprenticeships, and work with us to destigmatize careers in the trades. We need government to modernize recognition of foreign credentials to ensure that new Canadians don't face barriers to entry and reform immigration streams so that they better align with Canada's infrastructure needs. Without an adequate workforce, even the most ambitious construction agenda will stall.

What procurement models will we use? How we organize and execute major projects matters almost as much as which projects we pick. The current, outdated approach—where government designs, then contracts out to the lowest bidder—often leads to adversarial relationships, added unforeseen costs to taxpayers, and delays. To encourage innovation and long-term thinking, we

need procurement that emphasizes value over price, encourages collaboration, and shares risks with private partners. Collaborative delivery models can align incentives more closely.

How do we properly share risk and plan effectively? Even a modern delivery model will struggle under unpredictable regulation, shifting funding, or fragmented jurisdictional timelines. We must remove barriers and create as much predictability as possible. Canada needs the promised comprehensive national infrastructure assessment to move forward quickly. And infrastructure plans must take the long view, planning for a 25-year horizon, not an electoral cycle.

Procurement reform, regulatory alignment, and predictable, long-term funding will reduce risk. But success depends on continuous dialogue with those on the ground—builders, contractors, municipalities, trade associations—so that policies reflect reality, not theory.

We're ready—if you call us. We are the ones on the front line of building Canada: housing infrastructure, roads, transit, energy, ports, defence infrastructure. We know where the potholes

and bottlenecks are. We know which permit rules are outdated, which procurement clauses hurt innovation, and which workforce gaps threaten delivery.

On Nov. 18, more than 100 construction leaders from across Canada are coming to Parliament Hill. We'll be there with a simple message: you've got big plans, and we're ready to help you build them. But let's be clear: government can't do this on its own. Don't leave the people who pour the concrete, run the cranes, and keep the lights on out of the conversation. Talk to us. Work with us. Build with us. That's how we turn promises into projects, and projects into real communities.

If Ottawa's vision is to usher in a new era of infrastructure delivery, then the industry must be at the table from Day 1. We can help you get this done—and get it done right.

Because building Canada isn't just about breaking ground. It's about laying a foundation that lasts.

Rodrigue Gilbert is the president of the Canadian Construction Association, which is the national voice for the construction industry in Canada, representing more than 18,000 member firms in an integrated structure of 57 local and provincial construction associations.

The Hill Times

INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing



Prime Minister Mark Carney. Policymakers must resist the temptation of short-term cost savings and instead see infrastructure as a generational investment in resilience, sustainability, and social justice, writes Jeff Rankin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Building Canada's infrastructure for resilience and sustainable development

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care, they risk deepening divides rather than bridging them.

This requires a shift in mindset. We must deliver infrastructure that consumes fewer materials, less energy, and less water across its life cycle, while incorporating green infrastructure solutions. We must also measure success not only in terms of efficiencies, but also in terms of who benefits and who might be negatively impacted.

Canada's engineering ecosystem—our codes, standards and practices—is recognized worldwide as a leader in sustainable and resilient practices. Our practitioners, researchers, and professional organizations are advancing knowledge and solutions that others look to replicate or adopt. From designing climate-resilient communities to integrating natural systems into the built environment, Canadian civil engineers are shaping the global conversation about how to renew and adapt infrastructure in ways that advance both sustainability and equity. This leadership is a strength we must push further, not take for granted. As one practical example, the Envision sustainability and resilience framework offers an approach and measurable criteria to align projects with community values across planning, design, construction, and operations.

Leadership also means resisting the pressures that can distort priorities. Recent reflections by a Canadian Nobel laureate in another field warn against allowing corporate gains to dominate agendas at the expense of public good. The same caution applies to infrastructure planning: public policy must guide investment in infrastructure and align with long-term national interests, and keep equity, sustainability,

and resilience of its peoples at the centre of every decision.

This month, the civil engineering societies of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States are jointly issuing a Declaration on Resilience and Sustainability in Infrastructure. The root of this declaration is the recognition that conventional incremental responses are no longer sufficient. With infrastructure renewal already underway, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild smarter, safer and fairer. Yes, now is the moment for Building Canada Strong: investing not only in durable solutions, but also in equitable communities, sustainable systems, and shared prosperity. Policymakers must resist the temptation of short-term cost savings and instead see infrastructure as a generational investment in resilience, sustainability, and social justice.

Infrastructure is not only concrete, steel, and wood. It is about people, places, and possibilities. The choices we are making today will determine whether future generations inherit outcomes that empower them or burden them. If we choose wisely, the legacy will not be measured by the projects completed but by the opportunities created.

Jeff Rankin is the president of the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering, a professor of civil engineering and research chair at the University of New Brunswick, and the executive director of the Off-site Construction Research Centre. Rankin's practical experience has included various project and construction management roles in many types of construction projects including high-rise buildings and larger infrastructure projects such as the Confederation Bridge.

The Hill Times

Do Canadians need new houses, or new homes?



Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson. The Build Canada Homes funding is a start, but it's a question whether the government has considered all of the costs to connect millions of new houses, write David Watters, Ryan Deschamps, and Rahim Rezaie. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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new units could house as many as 13 million people by 2035. As a result, all of these occupants—wherever they're located across Canada—will need their houses connected to accessible and affordable local community infrastructure and services like transportation and energy grids, hospitals, schools, employment, food and retail stores, telecommunications systems, water and sewer utilities, recreation facilities, and other services including, police, fire, ambulance services, and garbage collection. Just promising more housing units does not go far enough.

As a result, the federal plan to build a "modern housing industry" to increase the number of countable housing units is clearly a key first step. But houses are for people, and people need access to essential and affordable local services for any new house to truly become an affordable home. So, where are the plans to assess the adequacy of the critical infrastructure and local service capacity in these communities in order to serve the needs of 13 million new occupants? We found no evidence of such an undertaking in the federal housing initiative.

Is it comprehensively funded?

While the \$13-billion in new funding for Build Canada Homes is a start, to be truly affordable we question whether the government has considered all of the costs to connect these millions of new houses. For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has estimated the cost to connect each house to municipal services will be about \$107,000. (They identify nine categories of connecting infrastructure, including roads, bridges, public transit, recreation, water and wastewater, etc.) For the projected supply of 4.8 million new homes

by 2035 to achieve affordability levels, this means a new cost of \$513-billion for these community services. Who will pay for these? Can municipalities—with their limited tax base—afford this? Will municipal taxes increase for citizens?

In conclusion, to achieve affordable housing, we need to move beyond means to ends. We should not focus narrowly on just creating a new "housing industry" to supply units (things). We should embrace a broader public vision that supports Canadian families accessing affordable homes integrated into local community infrastructure and services. It is only then that a house becomes a home. In short, let's shift our national aspiration from building houses to building communities for citizens to prosper.

Perhaps the writer Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best, "A house is made of walls and beams; a home is built with love and dreams." Which path will Canada choose?

David Watters is a former assistant deputy minister for economic development and corporate finance in the Department of Finance, the founder and former CEO of the Global Advantage Consulting Group, and the founder and current president of the not-for-profit Institute for Collaborative Innovation.

Ryan Deschamps is a professor of computer science at Conestoga College, and co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Data Analytics program. For the past three years, he has conducted funded research on the social and financial implications of housing in Canada.

Rahim Rezaie is the executive director of ICI Canada, and a multidisciplinary expert in technology innovation, science and innovation policy, sustainable industrial strategy, and international development.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Turning commitments into capability: the need for industrial strategies

The new Defence Investment Agency should be complemented by a clear defence industrial strategy and true collaboration.

Mike Mueller

Opinion



For more than a century, Canada's aerospace sector has punched above its weight, cementing itself as a cornerstone of national defence and as an economic driver. This was no accident, but rather the result of political leadership, vision, and sustained collaboration between government, industry, and the Canadian Armed Forces. All political leaders and parties recognized aerospace as a strategic industry essential to Canada's sovereignty and economic prosperity. With parliamentarians back on the Hill and a federal budget coming this fall, it's time again for that leadership and recognition.

The new federal government has returned to the House of Commons with a priority focus on defence and significant commitments to defence spending: two per cent of GDP by the end of this fiscal year, and five per cent by 2035. This represents a generational opportunity to strengthen Canada's defence industrial base, secure the country against military threats, and bolster the economy as we adapt to a changing landscape of global trade.

Bold steps will be needed, and we are very encouraged with Prime Minister Mark Carney's recent announcement of a new Defence Investment Agency (DIA). Industry welcomes this move toward a single point of accountability, especially the strong signal that industry will be engaged early, formally, and in an ongoing manner. We look forward to working with Secretary of State Stephen Fuhr and the new CEO Doug Guzman to strengthen Canada's industrial base, and accelerate delivery of capabilities to the CAF and create

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The best energy is the energy we don't use, and studies show that every \$1 invested in building retrofits can generate about \$7 in GDP growth, writes Liberal MP Eric St-Pierre. Pexels photograph by Ksenia Chernaya

Energy efficiency: unlocking Canada's superpower potential

Energy efficiency is the 'first fuel' we must rely on to build a more prosperous, resilient, and competitive Canada.

Liberal MP
Eric St-Pierre

Opinion



Oct. 1 marked National Energy Efficiency Day. Across Canada, organizations are shining a spotlight on one of the most powerful and often overlooked tools we have to strengthen our economy, create jobs, protect our climate, and make life more affordable for Canadians: energy efficiency.

At a time when middle-class Canadians are feeling the weight of rising costs—and when geopolitical tensions and trade uncertainties remind us how fragile global markets can be—prioritizing energy efficiency isn't just an option. It's a necessity.

Building prosperity through climate action

Too often, Canadians are told we face a false choice: prosperity or climate action. Energy efficiency proves that they are, in fact, absolutely compatible—lowering costs for households and businesses, strengthening the Canadian economy, and reducing emissions all at once.

According to a report published by ECO Canada, the energy efficiency sector generated \$126.3-billion in operating revenues in 2023—a sharp uptick from the \$82.6-billion estimated in their 2018 study. And according to a Natural Resources Canada report, efficiency improvements in 2021 alone avoided 48.5 megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions while improving national energy efficiency by 13.5 per cent—saving \$27.2-billion in energy costs.

These are not abstract benefits: they show up in more competitive industries, in cleaner air, and in stronger communities, including my own riding. And because the benefits are so broad, energy efficiency stands out as a non-partisan, common-sense solution—one that should unite economic and environmental priorities instead of pitting them against each other. It's about climate competitiveness.

But efficiency also requires structural change that lasts beyond election cycles. That's why Canada joined 133 other nations in pledging to double the pace of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. It's a global commitment—and one that must be lived out here at home, starting with one of the areas Canadians feel most acutely: housing.

Building smarter, more efficient homes

Energy efficiency is also a powerful tool to tackle Canada's housing crisis. With the government's Build Canada Homes initiative now underway, we can't keep building homes the same way we have for generations. We need to promote innovation

and support modern methods of construction. Wherever possible, we need to prioritize the use of low-carbon, climate resilient, and net-zero approaches in our homebuilding and reduce the carbon footprint of projects.

And it's not just about new homes. Most of the buildings that will stand in 2050 already exist today. Working at all levels of government, we need to engage and understand how we can make our existing buildings more energy efficient, lower bills, and cut emissions for generations to come. The best energy is the energy we don't use—and studies show that every \$1 invested in building retrofits can generate about \$7 in GDP growth. That's why energy efficiency in housing is not just climate policy—it's smart economic policy that delivers affordability, jobs, and growth while cutting pollution.

The Canada Greener Homes Affordability Program is a first step towards this objective. It provides no-cost retrofits to homeowners and tenants. This program will be rolled out across the provinces and the territories, starting with Manitoba, which was announced a few weeks ago.

Efficiency: made-in-Canada—for Canada

Energy efficiency is a home-grown Canadian resource built on Canadian technologies, expertise, and innovation. From smart thermostats to geothermal systems, from carbon-sequestering insulation to advanced heat pump systems, these solutions are largely designed, manufactured, and installed in Canada. They keep dollars circulating in our

communities and strengthen the self-reliance we need in a volatile global economy.

It's also a sector that employs 466,000 Canadians. With continued investment, it has the potential to create up to more than two million clean energy jobs in the coming years—spanning contractors, engineers, tradespeople, researchers, and clean technologists. These are the jobs of the future, and they're being built—right here—today.

At the heart of Canada's superpower future

In a changing world, energy efficiency should not be treated as a side project or an afterthought. It's the "first fuel" we must rely on to build a more prosperous, resilient, and competitive Canada, and the key to becoming the world's next energy superpower.

On this National Energy Efficiency Day, let's recognize the essential role efficiency plays in creating a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future. Canadians don't have to choose between protecting the environment and growing our economy. With energy efficiency, we can, we must—and we will—do both.

Elected in 2025 as the Liberal MP for Honoré-Mercier, Que., Eric St-Pierre is a longtime climate advocate, co-founder of the new Liberal Environment and Climate Caucus, and member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. He previously served for nearly a decade as the founding executive director of the Trotter Family Foundation.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Canada has influence—it's time to use it to stop genocide

There are still so many economic and diplomatic levers that Canada can pull to pressure Israel to end the carnage in Gaza.

Lauren Ravon & Bushra Khalidi

Opinion

As part of Oxfam's *Not In My Name* campaign, our leadership was in Ottawa meeting with government officials to do more to end the genocide in Gaza. In those conversations, several senior officials shrugged off our calls with one meek line: "Canada has no real influence over Israel."

Well, that may be so. But in the face of genocide, resignation is not an option. And Canada certainly does have the power to influence the course of history.

Canada is one of the wealthiest nations on earth. We are a G7 country with trade clout, diplomatic reach, and a long legacy of defending international law. Prime Minister Mark Carney has pledged to restore Canada's global influence. If there was ever a time to deliver on that promise, it is now.

For nearly two years, Palestinians in Gaza have endured

Protestors gather outside the Israeli Embassy on O'Connor Street in downtown Ottawa to call on the Israeli government to end its genocide in Gaza on July 30. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



relentless bombardment, forced displacement, and deliberate starvation. Neighbourhoods have been erased, hospitals and schools destroyed, and more than half a million people pushed into famine.

Leading genocide scholars and the United Nations Commission of Inquiry have confirmed that Israel's actions meet the legal definition of genocide. Images of starved Palestinian children and small bodies wrapped in white shrouds stream onto our phones, 24-7. No one can say they didn't know.

Yet Canada has not enforced a complete ban on arms exports

and continues to trade freely with Israel—including with companies operating in illegally occupied territories in the West Bank.

There are still so many economic and diplomatic levers that Canada can pull to pressure Israel to end the carnage. We must use every single one now. Failing to do so is not just resignation—it's complicity.

This is not only about Palestine. If international law does not protect Palestinians, it will not protect anyone. If civilians and journalists and humanitarian workers are not safe in Gaza, they will be safe nowhere.

That is the message at the heart of Oxfam Canada's *Not In My Name* campaign. More than tens of thousands of Canadians—including more than 100 prominent actors, academics, business leaders, artists, and activists—have signed on. In a political climate where voices for Palestinian rights are chilled or silenced, this campaign has given people a space to speak. Canadians are saying clearly "not in my name will Canada enable genocide."

Canada has recently recognized the State of Palestine. This matters symbolically as it reaffirms the right to self-determina-

tion of the Palestinian people. And yet, in the meantime, Israel has pummeled Gaza to the ground, is ethnically cleansing parts of the West Bank, and has intensified its annexation, including the advance of the E1 road that would split the West Bank making a Palestinian state impossible. Israel has threatened to indefinitely close the Allenby Bridge—the only gateway between the West Bank to Jordan—on numerous occasions, and did so the other week before partially reopening it, underscoring its ability to seal borders at will. Israel's actions point to a clear policy of collective punishment intent on strangling the Palestinian economy, blocking aid, and cutting off Palestinian families from the rest of the world.

Soon there will be no land left upon which to build a Palestinian State.

Carney has said he is under no illusion that recognizing the State of Palestine is a panacea. Indeed, recognition without holding Israel accountable for its crimes is hollow. But there is still time to act.

Not with more words of condemnation. But by completely banning all arms exports and military co-operation with Israel, reviewing the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, and immediately ending all trade with illegal settlements. By complying with the rulings of the International Court of Justice, and supporting investigations into war crimes. And by rallying Canada's allies to do more, together because recognition alone risks becoming symbolic only if not matched with concrete steps to end impunity.

Canada does have influence. Let's use it when it matters most.

Lauren Ravon is the executive director of Oxfam Canada. Bushra Khalidi is Oxfam's policy lead for the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Hill Times

Turning commitments into capability: the need for industrial strategies

Continued from page 29

Canadian jobs and innovation. This new procurement structure alone will not deliver capability, jobs, or innovation; success will only come if the effort is guided by a clear defence industrial strategy (DIS) and true collaboration—with industry and the CAF at the table out of the gate, and with ongoing and meaningful engagement.

As Fuhr has said: "Industry doesn't invest money on 'maybe.' They want more surety ... and that's what the DIS is supposed to provide—clarity on where we're headed." We agree; the industrial strategy must act as the roadmap to align capabilities with long-term priorities, giving industry a clear view of where to invest and ensuring Canada can

develop the capabilities to build our defence industrial base, safeguard citizens, support our allies in response to new and emerging threats, and, in the process, grow the Canadian economy. This will necessitate a comprehensive assessment of the country's key industrial capabilities—taking stock of our domestic strengths, gaps, and opportunities—while setting clear goals and facilitating innovation, exports, and employment.

The newly announced DIA will need to prioritize these key industrial capabilities identified through the DIS—capabilities in aerospace; space; in-service support; drones; and maintenance, repair, and overhaul, to name a few—and, when possible, serve as a first buyer of Canadian solutions. Every investment made

towards defence should drive strategic outcomes that both build Canada's defence industrial base and deliver capability our Armed Forces urgently need.

Then-NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said it well during the 2023 NATO-Industry Forum in Stockholm, "Without industry, there is no defence." Indeed, the government cannot deliver on its NATO commitments without the support of our industry—aerospace companies of all sizes operating in all regions of Canada. Beyond supporting the government in delivering new capabilities, the industry is an essential partner to sustain, upgrade, and repair the technology and systems Canada's Armed Forces rely on while sustaining and creating jobs in every region of the country.

That is why the defence industrial strategy must be complemented by a broader aerospace industrial strategy. A strong civil sector enables a strong defence sector and vice versa. By connecting defence and civil aviation priorities, Canada can solidify its global competitiveness, pursue innovation for the longer term, and create high-value jobs across the country.

Canada's aerospace industry already generates \$34-billion in GDP, and supports 225,000 Canadian jobs. While defence drives a significant portion of revenue, a world-class civil sector is essential to commercialize dual-use technologies and unlock the industry's full potential as Canada looks to expand to new markets while also building on

our existing relationship with the United States.

Canada's aerospace and defence companies are ready to step up. To partner with government and the CAF in new ways. To act fast, to take risks, and to build a defence industrial base that deters threats to Canada's sovereignty and security by sending a message around the world to our adversaries that the country has the capability and capacity to defend itself.

We look forward to imminent developments on the industrial strategy, working together on the DIA, and the tabling of the federal budget Nov. 4. In the meantime, our active engagement on these issues will continue and these topics will be front and centre as we convene the Canadian Aerospace Summit and Transport Canada Delegates Workshop on Oct. 28–29 at the Rogers Centre Ottawa.

Mike Mueller is president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada.

The Hill Times

Officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Auditor General's office appeared before the House Public Accounts Committee on Oct. 2. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



MPs press officials on underused office space as feds struggle to standardize tracking

'It's not that departments are holding out or resisting, but it's challenging for departments to align and modernize space,' says Public Services and Procurement Canada's Michael Mills.

BY MARLO GLASS

Public Services and Procurement Canada officials maintain there is plenty of office space for public servants to work in-office three days per week, despite two departments admitting last week that they don't have sufficient space to comply with the government's in-office requirements.

Michael Mills, associate deputy minister of PSPC, said current "footprint" of office space in the public service "is sufficient to accommodate the amount of employees with the current



Auditor General Karen Hogan's June report showed there is currently no standardized way for departments to track how much of their existing office space is being used. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

requirements of prescribed presence in the office."

There's even enough office space to accommodate an increased number of in-office days, he added during his appearance before the House Public Accounts Committee on Oct. 2.

But last week, officials from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities

Canada (HICC) told the same committee they lack the space for staff to work in-office three days per week, in line with the Treasury Board's mandate for public servants as of fall 2024.

Nathalie Bertrand, PSPC's associate assistant deputy minister, told the committee only a few departments within the public service don't have sufficient office space, and HICC is one of

them because it grew during the pandemic.

PSPC had initially committed to cutting the government's office space in half over 10 years by 2034, selling off surplus land to build affordable housing, but has since revised that to selling off one-third of offices during that time frame.

The core complication is that the bureaucracy has no standardized way for departments to track how much of their existing office space is used, a problem that Auditor General Karen Hogan highlighted in her June report on the government's current and future use of office space.

What's more, The Canadian Press reported last week that the government's push to increase the number of days public servants have to work in office has hindered efforts to sell off its surplus office space. The Treasury Board has mandated employees to work in-office three days per week, and executives in-office four days per week.

A ministerial transition binder prepared for Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.) said "recent developments" undermined the initial goal of offloading half of its office portfolio by 2034.

Liberal committee member Tom Osborne (Cape Spear, N.L.) noted the AG report says there's sometimes no financial incentive for departments to reduce their office space, as many of them don't pay rent out of their own budgets.

The report found some federal tenants reimburse their rent to PSPC, while others follow a different model and the amount of space they occupy has no impact on their budget. Additionally, 15 departments did not agree to the reduction of the space they occupy, and of them, most did not have a financial incentive to reduce their space.

Mills acknowledged it's "really disruptive" for departments to move to a new location, or to move to temporary accommodations while their existing space is renovated. While 15 departments weren't co-operating as of the time of Hogan's report, Mills said that since then, seven departments have changed their tune, and PSPC is "working very hard" to get the remaining eight departments on board.

"It's not that departments are holding out or resisting, but it's challenging for departments to align and modernize space," Mills told the committee.

He added prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government didn't track office space use at all, and current methods run into both privacy and data quality concerns.

Hogan's report found there is no standardized method of tracking attendance from department to department: some use key-pass swipes or IP addresses, while others don't track day-to-day attendance at all.

Bertrand said the department is working with Shared Services Canada (SSC), which is the public service's technology hub, to find a solution to standardize tracking attendance across the government.

"We are working hand in hand with our SSC colleagues because we truly believe that technology is going to be the piece that actually helps us drive this forward," Bertrand said.

There are currently "three or four" different solutions being assessed, and department officials committed to returning to the committee with a final proposal by the end of the spring.

The feds have committed to transforming surplus federal offices into 4,000 units of affordable housing by 2027-28 under the Federal Lands Initiative, but progress is slow on that front, and about half of those units are expected to be ready for occupancy by then.

Conservative MP Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, Alta.) who is her party's public service critic, noted the auditor general's report shows that the government has only reduced space from six million square metres to 5.9 million square metres since 2019.

"I find it hard to believe that PSPC will reach the new 33 per cent reduction plan," she said. "What gives you the belief that you can reach this target?"

Mills replied that PSPC didn't have an approved policy or budget to meet these efforts until 2024, five years after the initiative was first announced. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a "severe disruption" to the portfolio.

"So I can appreciate at the moment that the progress has been relatively modest," he said, but pointed to modernized office spaces in the National Capital Region.

"We have hundreds of thousands of square metres of office space to modernize today, which will enable reductions two to three years down the road. So we have made progress over the past year."

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NEWS

Hegseth's attack on rules of engagement could limit Canadian operations with 'lawless' U.S. military, says former House Defence Committee chair McKay

Pete Hegseth described past American rules of engagement as 'politically correct and overbearing,' and has indicated that rules of war will be loosened to allow U.S. soldiers to 'intimidate, demoralize, hunt, and kill the enemies of our country.'

Continued from page 1

engagement, just common sense, maximum lethality, and authority for warfighters."

McKay said the U.S. is almost raising the flag that their military will be a "lawless organization."

"The ethos will be: ask no questions and they will bury their crimes. There will be no accountability to anyone throughout the ranks," said McKay, who co-led the Canadian section of the Canada-U.S. Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which serves as the main strategic advisory body for bilateral defence co-operation.

"I thought that was about as blunt a message that you could deliver," he said. "Now in conflicts that the United States is involved, the Hague convention won't apply [and] the Geneva convention won't apply. Civilians will be at greater risk. Medical personnel and facilities will be at greater risk. Non-combatants will be at greater risk. [And] prisoners of war will be at greater risk."

"It will be wild—the U.S. military will quickly join the ranks of the Russian military," said McKay, who chaired the House Defence Committee in the last Parliament and served as co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group.

In February, Hegseth fired the Pentagon's top lawyers, which experts believed was done to loosen American rules of war.



Former Liberal MP John McKay says the Trump administration is positioning the U.S. military to be seen as no different that that of the Russian forces. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Former chief of the defence staff Wayne Eyre says Canada-U.S. military communication and co-operation 'remain strong.' *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

McKay said that he wouldn't want to be the Canadian soldier that is fighting alongside an American deployment.

"It's going to create a lot of ethical/moral/legal dilemmas," he said.

"I'm sure that the lawyers at [the Department of National Defence] are examining what Hegseth said, and trying to figure out what the appropriate response is," he said. "My view is that the appropriate response is that there will be more circumstances now where Canadians cannot participate with Americans in joint operations."

Retired colonel Chris Kilford, who had a 36-year career in the Canadian Army, said that it is "very dangerous" to go down the path to which Hegseth is alluding.

"That is a gloves-off approach to future combat," he said. "The enemy might suffer, but you'll suffer just as much because whatever rules that might be in place, the enemy will just say, 'You don't respect the rules of war, you've done horrible things, and we're now going to do just as horrible things to you.'"

The U.S. will be losing whatever moral high ground that it

might have had when it starts to play loose with the rules of war, he said, remarking that the American military should be holding itself to a higher standard than those it faces on the battlefield.

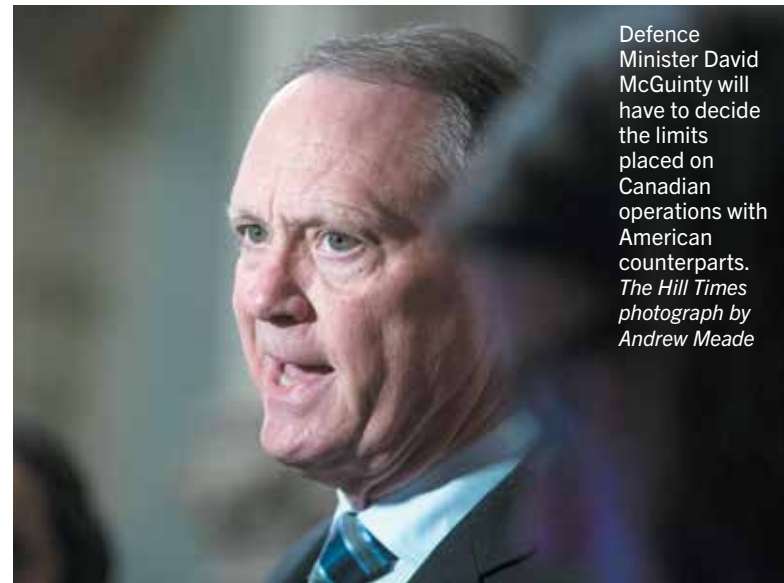
Kilford said it could raise questions about whether Canada should allow its personnel to be embedded and deployed within American units.

He also noted that an enemy combatant is unlikely to distinguish between a Canadian and an American soldier on the battlefield, and the differing rules of engagement being applied.

"It does create an issue when your allies are not upholding some level of respect for the Geneva conventions and rules of engagement [and] general laws," he said.

Carleton University professor Stephen Saideman, an expert on civilian-military relations, said that American comments aren't just rhetoric.

"They have not followed international law whatsoever," he said, referencing the U.S. strikes on alleged Venezuelan drug vessels. The Trump administration has argued the attacks are in self-defence, but legal experts argued they lack legality.



Defence Minister David McGuinty will have to decide the limits placed on Canadian operations with American counterparts. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

"We see the United States military basically following illegal orders. This whole thing is not theoretical, it's actually happening right now," Saideman said.

He said the actions make it "very hard" for Canadian personnel to be on the same battlefield as their American counterparts.

"You don't want to be present where war crimes are taking place, you don't want to be involved in that," Saideman said. "It gets your own military in trouble. It gets your own political leaders in serious trouble."

He said the Canadian government has to be thinking about the "consequences" of the current moment, adding that it also has to worry about whether the U.S. will show up when needed, such as if a conflict ignited in Latvia where Canadian troops are deployed.

Canada-U.S. military ties 'remain strong': Eyre

Former chief of defence staff Wayne Eyre said that relations between the two neighbouring militaries remain solid.

"Based on recent interactions with those that are embedded in each other's military, our military-to-military relationship remains very strong," said Eyre at an Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada panel on Oct. 1.

"It has grown from decades of working together—in many cases—in combat," he said. "Those lines of communication and co-operation remain strong, but always subject to political direction."

Retired Canadian Army major-general Denis Thompson said the U.S. military is governed by the law of armed conflict, which will continue to put restraints on the military and how they can deploy their rules of engagement.

He said the U.S. already has a "robust" system of rules of engagement, which is unlikely to change.

"These officers are professional and they are not going to colour outside of what their professional lines are," Thompson said, noting that the "stony-faced" reaction of those assembled indicates what they thought of the gathering.

Thompson said he doesn't foresee the U.S. military operating

outside the lines, as if it did, the enemy would do the same.

"If the enemy is already doing it then you've got the upper hand, and you can use that in the information domain in order to move your cause along," he said, remarking that civilian control of the military has limits as unlawful orders won't be followed.

Thompson said that military officers know that once a government turns over then they could be held responsible for what they do.

But he added the real deterrent is the professionalism of the U.S. military.

Hegseth's attack on military diversity

Charlotte Duval-Lantoine, an expert on culture change in the Armed Forces, said Hegseth's attack on diversity and inclusion in the military could complicate the ongoing process domestically, especially as it emboldens critics of the effort.

"The Department of National Defence needs to be ready to make difficult decisions when it comes to people that do not align with values that they say the organization embraces," she said.

Hegseth has consistently attacked the motto of "diversity is our strength," a slogan frequently employed by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Duval-Lantoine said that the changes being made in the U.S. military aren't ones that will bolster operational effectiveness.

"People are missing the point sometimes of diversity in the military—it's not to undermine the military as an organization," she said, remarking that diversity in the ranks creates a situation that improves operational readiness and effectiveness.


She said any changes in the American military will have a lesser impact on the Canadian Forces given that this isn't period of heightened operational co-operation with the U.S. as it was during the Afghanistan War.

But she said that the domestic military is still influenced by the Americans and the resurgence of the warrior ethos.

"We should expect an effect, but more at the informal cultural level," she said.

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NEWS

Canada's submarine purchase has new 'sense of urgency' with possible selection by end of year, says German envoy

The clock is ticking to replace the aging Victoria-class submarines before they are taken out of the water in the 2030s, leaving the Canadian Navy without a submarine capability.

Continued from page 1

ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)—jointly bid with Norway—and South Korea's Hanwha Ocean Co., Ltd.

"We feel there's a sense of urgency also in the Canadian government to speed up the processes. The original timelines with which we started the work [don't] seem to be followed 100 per cent anymore, which is not a problem at all," German Ambassador to Canada Matthias Lüttenberg told *The Hill Times* during an Oct. 2 interview at the German Embassy.

He described the "sense of urgency" as "new," and "more palpable than before."

"We expect this process to lead to some sort of results—maybe already before the end of the year," he said. "That is something that I don't know yet because it all depends of course on our Canadian friends, but we are getting ready for this scenario."

Asked if those results would be a decision, Lüttenberg said it could be a selection of the winning bidder, but not necessarily a finalized contract.

"We only have two companies left which are competing, so a decision could be—of course—decisive," he said.

This past August, Navy Commander Angus Topshee told CTV News that there is a "path" for the Navy to get information to the government so it can make a decision by the end of the year, remarking that it is an "aggressive timeline, but achievable."

The government said the Navy needs a new fleet that will be "deployable in the Arctic with extended range and endurance that will provide stealth, persistence and lethality as key capabilities."

TKMS's 212CD is a medium-size—roughly 73 metres, 2,800 tonnes—diesel-electric,



Canada's fleet of Victoria-class submarines are expected to be decommissioned in the 2030s. DND photograph by Kenneth Galbraith



Norwegian Ambassador to Canada Hanne Ulrichsen emphasized the Arctic links of the TKMS bid. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

quiet submarine. It is built with hydrogen-fuel-cell air-independent propulsion technology that allows it to stay submerged for long periods without surfacing. It is pitched as being suited for under-ice, high-latitude operations. The German-Norwegian design is in production, but it is building on the 212A subs used by the German and Italian navies.

Hanwha's KSS-III is larger—about 89 metres long, and 3,600 tonnes—and its design is in

service. It combines fuel-cell air-independent propulsion with lithium-ion batteries to extend underwater endurance. It is built to launch heavyweight torpedoes and cruise missiles and carry out surveillance and special-forces missions.

The Navy's current Victoria-class submarines will remain operational into the mid-to-late 2030s. To ensure a smooth transition without a capability gap, the Navy wants its first new

submarine to be delivered by the mid-2030s.

'Incredibly aggressive' timeline

David Perry, defence procurement expert and president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said the idea of Canada making a decision by the end of this year is unrealistic considering it is one of the biggest defence procurements in the country's history.

"That would be like hypersonic speed ... That seems incredibly aggressive to me," he told *The Hill Times*.

Perry argued that the process had already been moving at lightning speed by Canadian standards. A decision by the end of the fiscal year—March 2026—would still be hard to pull off, given statutory holidays, he said.

"That would still be incredibly fast ... But to me that is an aggressive but achievable timeframe," he said.

If the government aims to make a decision by the end of the year, suppliers and partner governments would need to receive further guidance sometime between now and the next few weeks on exactly what Canada is asking for, he said.

Philippe Lagassé, associate professor at Carleton University whose research focuses on defence policy and military procurement, said such a timeline can be realistic if the government wants it to be, but the question then becomes about what criteria the government is using to assess the bids, and whether it's applying more of a strategic lens to that assessment, he said.

"If they're looking at a more comprehensive economic partnership, that might make it a little bit more complicated. But anything's possible now that they've decided that the technical requirements for both boats are met," he said.

The speed of the process shows that the government can go faster when it chooses to, Lagassé said, adding that once the government picks the supplier, ironing out the details will probably take a lot longer.

There have been estimates in the media around the total projected costs ranging from \$20-billion to \$60-billion, but the price tag for the major procurement remains unclear.

While the public does not have access to what each bid has to offer Canada, ultimately, the decision is expected to come down to which supplier offers the best overall economic benefit to Canada, both experts agreed.

Perry said the costs beyond just acquiring the actual vessel including contingencies could be up to about \$10-billion per submarine. He noted that the maintenance and operation cost usually is three times the initial purchase cost over a vessel's lifespan.

The bids

Lüttenberg called the Germany-Norway joint bid "highly competitive," noting the strategic dimension of "joining a club within NATO," with joint training, maintenance, and innovation.

He said it is a ship that can be sailed off of all of Canada's coasts, including the Arctic Ocean.

He added that the bid also would advance the relationship between Canada and the European Union.

"We want Canada to come as close as possible to the European Union," Lüttenberg said.

He remarked that the procurement is "much more" than

Continued on page 36

'It's a new lens': Champagne unveils new budget framework that splits operating from capital spending

The finance minister also committed to a new fiscal cycle, with a fall budget as the new timeline going forward, and spring economic and fiscal update.

Continued from page 1

predictability" to provinces and territories and businesses.

Senior government officials, speaking to reporters on background ahead of Champagne's press conference, said the new budget method will ensure government dollars are focused on investing in major capital projects. That was a key plank in Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) election promises and has been emphasized as a way for Canada's economy to weather the storm of a protracted trade war with the United States.

In the press conference, Champagne repeated Carney's election slogans of "spending less to invest more," committed to balancing the operating budget by 2028, and said the way the budget reports the government's deficit and debt will remain the same.

He said the new format follows existing accounting principles, but the new presentation "provides greater clarity" on the difference between the government's day-to-day spending, like salaries, and capital investments, calling it "a new lens" that he said would provide greater transparency.

Champagne was summoned last month to appear before the Finance Committee, chaired by Liberal MP Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.), to answer questions about the federal government's budget cycle ahead of the pending fall budget. The last budget was tabled in April 2024, nearly a year and a half ago.

Under the new budgeting model, capital expenditures include government funding or tax incentives that contribute to public or private capital formation, regardless of whether the asset is held by the federal government, a business, an Indigenous community or another level of government, officials said.

Changes close 'embarrassing' gap, says former PBO

Former Harper-era parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page said the changes to the



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne says the new format follows existing accounting principles, but the new presentation provides greater clarity on the difference between the government's day-to-day spending and capital investments. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

budgetary structure closes an "almost embarrassing" gap that has existed in Canadian budget documents for decades.

"Even though we spend billions of dollars on capital, major capital transfers in big departments like Infrastructure and Industry, you won't find any line anywhere in the fiscal planning framework for capital," he said. "That's a gap that we've had in our budgets."

By splitting the budget into two buckets, "you'll be able to see how much of our overall spending is actually capital related," Page said.

He noted the pledge to split the budget into operating and capital was a part of the Liberal Party's election platform. The budget will still include the budgetary balance, which is currently in a deficit, he said, and the deficit will also be split into operating and capital components, providing additional information that wasn't included in past budgets.

Page noted Champagne's announcement didn't address concerns of fiscal planning constraints.

"What target is going to be set for the medium term?" he asked, noting the Liberal platform included committing to balancing the operating budget by the 2028-29 fiscal year.

Page argued the more important announcement was the updated budgetary timing, something he called a bold move and a fundamental change from past practices of putting out a spring budget.

"I think we got very sloppy, the past Liberal and Conservative governments, in terms of releasing budgets late in the financial cycle after the tabling of main estimates," he said, even sometimes releasing the budget after the start of the fiscal year.

Setting out a budget in the fall means departmental spending



Former PBO Kevin Page says splitting the budget into two buckets will make it clearer what in the overall spending 'is actually capital related.' *The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright*

plans will be more in line with the budget, he said, and will also help provinces in their own budget-setting.

"Hopefully the commitment will be that, when the budget is tabled, that we will have the release of the public accounts for the previous fiscal year, so we'll have final numbers," he added.

It's not the first time the Liberals have attempted to bring the budget and main estimates into alignment. From 2018 to 2020, the government introduced a temporary change to the Standing Orders to shift the tabling of the main estimates from the traditional March 1 date to April 16 to allow for more time to present an earlier budget. The approach was ultimately abandoned after the two-year pilot period ended.

Capital investments a 'national priority': officials

At the Oct. 6 technical briefing, officials said it's important to identify capital spending as sep-

arate from operational, because capital investments are key in sustaining economic growth and creating jobs, amid turbulence in Canada's economy and trade sector. The Carney government intends to make capital investments a "national priority" and a core element of fiscal planning, officials said ahead of Champagne's committee appearance.

Officials laid out six categories that qualify as capital investment: capital transfers to other levels of government and organizations that will be used to invest in infrastructure or a "productive asset;" corporate income tax incentives to build new capital; amortization of federal capital, or spreading out the cost of the government's capital asset over the course of its useful life; direct funding or tax incentives for research and development that boosts productivity; funding for large-scale private sector capital investment; and measures to grow the housing stock.

Transfers to provinces and territories for infrastructure projects

will fall under capital spending, officials said, while other transfers for funding health care and people-focused social programs like universal dental care and childcare are classified as operational, officials said.

The briefing did not include any information on what will be included in the Nov. 4 budget, and officials skirted questions regarding how the pledged boost to military spending will be classified under the new framework.

Officials said the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) and Auditor General's office had been "informally" consulted on the new framework. Interim PBO Jason Jacques has called current government spending levels "unsustainable" and has estimated the deficit will increase to \$68.5-billion this year, something Conservative MP Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, Alta.) seized on during Champagne's committee appearance.

"According to the PBO, there's higher deficits and the economy is shrinking," said Hallan, his party's finance critic. "How do you square that?"

Champagne replied that he had "more confidence in Canadians and the Canadian economy" than Hallan.

"It's pretty offensive to Canadians listening to your comments this morning," said Champagne during the heated appearance where the Conservatives and Bloc Québécois pressed the finance minister to offer a firm answer on the expected deficit and details on the government's fiscal guardrails.

A recent report from Jacques projects the deficit will "increase sharply" from \$51.7-billion in 2024-25 to \$68.5-billion in 2025-26 due to economic weakness, tax cuts, and planned spending. He also called the projections for increasing federal debt service payments "stupefying," and "shocking," and said his office is in the dark as to whether the government has fiscal anchors. The previous Liberal government's budget committed to reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio over the medium-term, and maintaining annual fiscal deficits below one per cent of GDP, and Champagne ducked these questions before the committee.

The PBO is expected to publish an analysis on the impact of the new financial framework "soon," his office confirmed following the announcement.

Finance officials said under the new calendar, budget consultations would take place over the summer ahead of the fall budget.

The budget will be the government's main fiscal event, officials said, followed by a spring economic statement. This means more budget information will be available in time to be submitted as main estimates, officials said. This new budget cycle is also industry-friendly, aligning with Canada's construction season to ensure shovels can hit the ground without delay.

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Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



How a former Hill staffer is lionizing a Canadian that helped end the Troubles

Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin remarked that a new scholarship named for John de Chastelain will ‘help foster peace and reconciliation worldwide.’

A former Hill aide is working to internationalize the legacy of a retired Canadian general who played a central role in the end of the Troubles in Ireland.

Chris Collette—a staffer for then-prime minister **Jean Chrétien** and past Liberal minister **Allan Rock**, and who is also the son of Chrétien-era minister **David Collette**—moved to Ireland in 2007, but he was back in Ottawa last month as Irish Taoiseach **Micheál Martin** crossed the Atlantic Ocean.

Collette, who is now a voluntary co-chair of the Ireland Canada University Foundation (ICUF), helped guide a joint scholarship initiative from conception to reality.

The idea was to use **John de Chastelain**’s legacy of peacebuilding on the Irish isle to cultivate peace and reconciliation around the globe.

De Chastelain, 88, is the former chair of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, which was responsible for disarming paramilitary forces and leading to the end of sectarian conflict with the Good Friday Agreement.

Building on that legacy, Collette and others at ICUF want to see de Chastelain’s peacebuilding efforts exported to other countries to resolve other conflicts.

Collette told *The Hill Times* he was tackling the initiative “off the side of my desk”—he is an executive at a digital health company in his day job—using the political knowledge that he had honed on the Hill.

While in Ottawa, one of Martin’s announcements was the scholarship in De Chastelain’s name.

“The program will help foster peace and reconciliation worldwide,” Martin told an audience assembled at Irish Ambassador **John Concannon**’s residence on Sept. 25, which included de Chastelain, a number of ambassadors, as well as Liberal MP **James Maloney**, chair of the Canada-Ireland Parliamentary Group.

Martin described de Chastelain as a “true embodiment of service and honour.”

“General, your service to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland has made the impossible possible,” he told the former two-time chief of the defence staff and past Canadian envoy to the United States.

The \$1.25-million initiative will be jointly funded by the Canadian and Irish governments.

It was an announcement that was a year in the making, starting with the ICUF first approaching de Chastelain to see if he would endorse it, and then the group moved on to spearheading negotiations between the two governments.



Chris Collette is a former a staffer in Jean Chrétien’s PMO and Allan Rock’s ministerial office. Photograph courtesy of Chris Collette

In total, it will finance 44 research scholarships and eight visiting professorships over the next three years, including a conference on peace and reconciliation.

Collette said the next step is to create an independent endowment under de Chastelain’s name so the program’s funding can continue without being reliant on the government.

A possible breakthrough on CETA

Ireland is one of the 10 European Union member states that has not ratified the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) that was inked in 2016.

In 2022, the Irish Supreme Court ruled ratifying CETA would be unconstitutional under current law, but that if the Arbitration Act was amended it would be legal.

As the past chair of the Ireland Canada Business Association, Collette has been advocating for the full ratification of the pact, including multiple appearances in front of the Irish Parliament’s committees.

Martin pledged to take action on CETA by 2026, remarking the intent is to fully ratify the agreement “over the coming months.”

A recent report on the Canada-Irish relationship found that trade between the two countries has doubled since CETA was signed, with Ireland being Canada’s 15th largest exporting country and Canada being Ireland’s 16th biggest.

“For Canada, it demonstrates that Ireland is an ideal gateway to the European market,” Martin said.

He said that he told Canadian Prime Minister **Mark Carney** that he hopes to return to Canada next year alongside a trade mission to “deepen sectoral partnerships in priority areas and enhance investment flows.”

Martin also said that he invited Carney to visit Ireland—having noted that the prime minister’s grandparents are from Aughagower in County Mayo in western Ireland.

“I look forward to welcoming him on what will be an historic visit,” he said.

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NEWS

Canada’s submarine purchase has new ‘sense of urgency’ with possible selection by end of year, says German envoy

Continued from page 34

a business contract, calling it a strategic question.

Norwegian Ambassador to Canada Hanne Ulrichsen—who also took part in the interview at the German Embassy—said that it is important to secure the northern flank.

“Norway’s an Arctic state and so is Canada, and we have a lot of experience working in that domain,” she said. “It would be very good if Canada would join this partnership.”

Lüttenberg said that the joint bid is “very, very attractive” when looking at the military targets alone, but added that he isn’t ruling out any additional investments.

The Korean Embassy did not respond to *The Hill Times* requests for comment before deadline.

Secretary of State for Defence Procurement Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna, B.C.) has previously indicated that both bids meet the Navy’s military needs, as the CBC reported last month, seeming to signal that the final decision will come down to economics, including industrial benefits for Canada, the cost, and when the submarines can be handed over.

If a contract is awarded by 2026, TKMS said it can deliver the first submarine “well in advance of 2035,” according to company spokesperson Julian Kloss.

While the company keeps the cost of the contract confidential, Kloss underlined that TKMS looks at this procurement as a strategic partnership, creating long-term economic benefits for Canada.

The company says its “modular design and production capabilities enable parallel manufacturing” would mitigate risks and program delays and cost overruns.

South Korean manufacturer Hanwha Ocean says it can deliver four of its KSS-III submarines to Canada by 2035—with the first one being in 2032—if a contract is signed in 2026.

The company says this accelerated timeline would save Canada about \$1-billion in maintenance and support costs since it would mean Canada can retire its Victoria Class fleet before 2035.

By this schedule, the additional eight submarines would be delivered at a rate of one per year, meaning Canada can have the entire fleet of 12 submarines by 2043.

Michael Coulter, president and CEO of Hanwha Global Defence, told *The Hill Times* in an email that the company has an active production line, “so we know exactly how long it takes to produce as well as the exact cost.”

The company says it is not currently negotiating a price with Canada.

“Of course, the total cost for a program of this scale and scope that will occur over several decades is very complex and involves a variety of factors and elements

of which acquisition of the submarines is only one,” Coulter said.

Coulter argued that “no other option can come anywhere close” to their delivery schedule.

“In South Korea, defence projects are never late and never over budget. Period. Full stop,” he said.

Hanwha says it would build the submarines in South Korea if it wins the contract to ensure Canada gets submarines as soon as possible. It also says its ships can operate in all oceans, including the Arctic, without any modifications.

The company also commits to establishing sovereign sustainment and training hubs in Canada on either the East or West Coast or both, according to the country’s preference.

Hanwha has teaming agreements with Babcock Canada and CAE for training and critical operations support, as well as a memorandum of understanding with Halifax-based Modest Tree for immersive training and digital in-service support solutions.

No discussions yet on strategic partnership

In an interview with *The Globe and Mail*, Topshee suggested that one option for a purchase is through a government-to-government strategic partnership. Australia took similar pathway though its trilateral security partnership with the United Kingdom, and the United States, known as AUKUS.

Lüttenberg said that Germany has never done such a procurement, but noted for the first time there is an openness to do something similar.

“It’s too early to say if we are able to do this in this case, but I think it would be a nice test case to see if this would be possible,” he said.

Asked if there have been any exploratory discussions on what a strategic partnership could look like, the German ambassador said that he didn’t think any had taken place, remarking that it is a conversation that the two countries can have in the future.

Lüttenberg said that it seems the economics of the purchase is currently a larger focus than the capabilities of the submarine.

“I get the impression that the economic benefits are getting more important than actually the question of who is building the better ship,” he said. “Our ship is not only meeting the requirements, but it is also going beyond that because it’s really a state of the art ship and the best TKMS has ever built.”

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Party Central



By Stuart Benson

20th Century Boys play tribute to former bandmate Peter Linkletter

A year after his death, Linkletter's bandmates, friends, and family packed the Rainbow Bistro on Oct. 2 to raise more than \$3,000 in his honour for St. Mary's Home.

The 20th Century Boys, past and present, returned to their regular roost at the Rainbow Room for a special tribute concert in honour of their former bandmate and friend, **Peter Linkletter**, on Oct. 2. The show raised more than \$3,000 for St. Mary's Home in honour of the late dedicated public servant, philanthropist, and community leader.

As the band's unofficial hype man, **Party Central** made an exception to the week-long recovery period to catch a very special performance by the Ottawa bubble's favourite troupe of musically inclined politicians.

Alongside the band's usual lineup consisting of former CPAC anchor **Peter Van Dusen** and McMillan Vantage's **Richard Mahoney** on lead guitar, vocals, and the occasional cowbell; **Kelly Craig**, Shine Group CEO and musical director, on bass guitar and back-up vocals; **Dave Fraser** on back-up guitar and back-up vocals; **Jonathan Cook** on the keyboard; **Chris Gerdei** on trumpet; **Paul Adjeleian** on trombone; **Mike Martin** on the baritone saxophone; and **Donovan Allen** on drums, the 20th Century Boys were also joined by several former bandmates and friends to play tribute to their late jam buddy.

However, to start things off, the band first passed the microphone to Linkletter's widow, **Marie McDonald**, and brother, **Bryan Linkletter**, as well as **Michelle Macland**, his protégé and successor chair of St. Mary's board of directors, where he previously served simultaneously as board chair for the Ottawa Cancer Society—another of the band's favoured philanthropic beneficiaries—alongside PAL Ottawa, which serves to connect the National Capital Region's senior artists with affordable housing and personal support services.

Linkletter, who died suddenly and unexpectedly on Sept. 30, 2024, at the age of 57, was assistant commissioner of policy at the Correctional Service of Canada, a cancer survivor, an accomplished marathon runner, a beloved husband, father, and certified rock-and-roller.

While the Boys usually headline their annual spring and winter concerts solo, last Thursday's show featured not one, but two opening acts, starting with the guitar, bass, and drums trio of **Bob Corson**, **Ken Gollan**, and **Martin Sergei** with a performance of **Nick Gilder's Roxy Roller** and **The Tragically Hip's Courage** to warm up the crowd. Then, the former 2011 federal Liberal candidate for Ottawa Centre, **Scott Bradley**, slowed things down with a sombre solo performance of **Bruce Springsteen's Thunder Road**, complete with hands-free-harmonica, before being joined on stage by Saramac Consulting's **Warren Everson** and the rest of the Boys for a rendition of The Band's *The Weight*, **Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison Blues**, and The Rolling Stones' *Beast of Burden*.

For the rest of the night, the Boys ran through their standard set of covers, including hits from The Beatles, **Tom Jones**, **Amy Winehouse**, **Tim McGraw**, and **Toby Keith**.

As always, it wasn't long until the crowd of more than 100 people was up on their feet to fill the dance floor at the foot of the stage where **Party Central** spotted several other regulars of the Boys' show, including most of the Van Dusen clan, including Peter's wife and kids; his sister, CBC's **Julie Van Dusen**; former CTV host **Don Martin**; former journo **Greg Weston**, now president of Searchlight Strategies; and Bluesky Strategy Group's **Susan Smith**; alongside plenty of regular Ottawa denizens and a handful of out-of-towners just looking for a good show.

For those who missed the show or haven't had the pleasure yet, the 20th Century Boys will be back at the Rainbow Bistro in early December for their regular Christmas concert, because yes, *winter is coming*.

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Richard Mahoney, left, and Peter Van Dusen.



The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. McMillan Vantage's Richard Mahoney, left, and OpenText's Scott Bradley perform at a special 20th Century Boys tribute concert for their late bandmate Peter Linkletter at The Rainbow Bistro on Oct. 2. 2. Richard Mahoney, Scott Bradley, and Peter Van Dusen. 3. McMillan Vantage's Lauren Wilkinson, left, CEO Robyn Osgoode, Marisa Maslink, Victoria Lachane, Richard Mahoney, Lynn Kreviazuk, Laura Kurkimaki, and Matthew Gagné. 4. Mike Martin. 5. Bob Corson, left, and Ken Gollan. 6. Stuart Bradley, left, Scott Bradley, Fiona Smith Bradley, Jenna McClure, Susan Smith, Rob Ferguson, and Rob McClure. 7. Dave Fraser, left, Richard Mahoney, and Peter Van Dusen. 8. Peter Van Dusen, left, and Greg Weston. 9. Paul Adjeleian, left, Mike Martin, and Chris Gerdei. 10. Scott Bradley.

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



Meet the staffers supporting secretaries of state Sarai, van Koeeverden

Olga Radchenko is running policy for the secretary of state for international development, while Nathan Abdelnour is the senior-most policy aide in the sport office.

Secretary of State for International Development **Randeep Sarai** has a seven-member team at his back, among whom are staffers who have previously worked for the ministers of immigration, international trade, and natural resources.

As already reported, **Hursh Jaswal**—who served as deputy chief of staff to **Ahmed Hussen** during his time as international development minister, and was earlier chief of staff to Hussen as both then-families minister and then-housing and diversity minister—is running Sarai's office.

Olga Radchenko, a former cabinet chief of staff herself, is now director of policy to Sarai.

Radchenko was most recently running policy for Hussen as then-international development minister, but before then she'd spent roughly a year as chief of staff to then-immigration, refugees, and citizenship minister **Sean Fraser**, starting in January 2022 through to February 2023. Radchenko had worked on the immigration file since early 2016, beginning as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-minister **John McCallum**. She went on to be a parliamentary affairs adviser and issues manager, and later director of parliamentary to Hussen during his time in the role, and at the start of 2020, under then-minister **Marco Mendicino**, Radchenko was made director of policy.

Prior to joining McCallum's office, Radchenko had briefly tackled communications and pub-

lic engagement for the Canadian Red Cross. She's also an ex-consultant with Hill+Knowlton Strategies, among other past jobs.

Working closely with Radchenko is senior policy adviser **Gary Xie**, who joined Sarai's team fresh from almost three years working on the natural resources and energy file as a policy and British Columbia regional affairs adviser to then-minister **Jonathan Wilkinson**. In that office, Xie had been focused on forestry and energy-related policies. Xie worked on policy—under now-PMO policy director **Tim Krupa**—for Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** leadership campaign, and prior to joining Wilkinson's office in late summer 2022, Xie had been a visiting research fellow with the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies where his work focused on renewable energy markets. He's also briefly worked as consultant with The World Bank in Beijing, and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and has done internships with The Brookings Institution's **John L. Thornton** China Center and with the office of New Hampshire Democratic Senator **Jeanne Shaheen**.

Another carry-over from Hussen's old shop as then-international development minister is **Shanti Cosentino**, who is now overseeing communications for Sarai. Cosentino was previously hired to do the same for Hussen in March 2024, and before

then had worked for then-trade, export promotion, small business, and economic development minister **Mary Ng** for a little more than two years. Originally hired by Ng in January 2022 as a special assistant for digital communications and social media, Cosentino was promoted to press secretary and digital

communications adviser that fall. Prior to working for Ng, Cosentino had spent about two years working for National Public Relations, last as a consultant.

Also focused on communications is **Devan Minhas**, who's been hired as a special assistant for communications and operations to Sarai. Minhas marked her first day with Sarai's secretary of state office on Sept. 15, but before then she'd been a constituency assistant to Sarai as the MP for Surrey Centre, B.C.

Daniel Audet is a senior adviser for parliamentary affairs and issues management. Another ex-aide to Hussen as then-international development minister, Audet had joined that office as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs in late 2024. Before then, he'd been an assistant to **Beaches-East York, Ont., Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith**.

Finally, rounding out Sarai's team is **Nadia Saad**, who is executive assistant to both Sarai and Jaswal as chief of staff. Saad used to be an executive assistant and scheduler to Hussen as then-international development minister. Looking to Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeeverden's** shop, there's a five-member team currently in place led—as previously reported—by chief of staff **Lauren Hadaller**, who was most recently director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to then-foreign affairs minister **Mélanie Joly**.

Also already reported in this paper is **Alyson Fair's** hiring as van Koeeverden's director of senior communications. A former senior producer of CTV's *Power Play* during **Don Martin's** tenure hosting the show, Fair had until recently been working as a senior communications consultant with Bluesky Strategy Group since 2019. Along with various other past roles with CTV News, Fair has also been a publicist for The Canadian Real Estate Association. This marks her first job on Parliament Hill.



Secretary of State for International Development **Randeep Sarai**, left, and Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeeverden**. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade

Another staffer tackling communications for van Koeeverden is **Veronica Dhindsa**, who carries the title of communications and digital media adviser. Dhindsa previously worked for then-diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities minister **Kamal Khara**, starting in May 2024 as an assistant for parliamentary affairs and assistant to the parliamentary secretary. She was soon after given additional responsibility as a Quebec regional affairs adviser to Khara. According to her LinkedIn profile, Dhindsa was most recently a Quebec regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to then-jobs and families minister **Steven MacKinnon**. Dhindsa's online CV includes time spent working as a fundraising co-ordinator for the federal Liberal Party, and as an assistant to **Orléans, Ont., Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde**.

Nathan Abdelnour is the senior-most policy staffer in van Koeeverden's

office, working under the title of senior policy adviser.

Hired by van Koeeverden in August, Abdelnour was previously executive director of the Ontario Climbing Federation between 2023 and 2024, and has also been director general of Rugby Quebec and executive director of Dive Ontario. He wrote about taking on the job in van Koeeverden's office in a recent LinkedIn post. "It's time to pause my professional career in non-profit sport administration to try and make an impact in a different way," wrote Abdelnour. "The next challenge is one I've been looking forward to for a while."

Abdelnour is also a former manager with Rugby Canada, and, amongst other past experience, worked on the campaigns of then-federal Liberal candidates **Tracy Calogheros** and **Michelle Foxton** in 2019 and 2021, respectively. Last, but not least, is director of operations **Daniel Turner**.

Turner is a former strategic operations adviser in the Prime Minister's Office, and earlier this year served as the national Get Out The Vote director for both Carney's leadership campaign, and for the Liberal Party's national election campaign.

First hired to 80 Wellington St. under then-PM **Justin Trudeau** over the summer of 2024, Turner continued in the top office after Carney took over as Liberal leader in March. Turner is also a past assistant to then-Quebec Liberal MP and caucus chair **Brenda Shanahan**, operations managers to then-agriculture minister **Marie-Claude Bibeau**, field organizer for the federal Liberal Party in Montreal, and a former vice-president of communications for the federal party in Quebec.

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Gary Xie is a senior policy adviser to Sarai. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Daniel Audet is a senior parliamentary affairs and issues management adviser to Sarai. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Shanti Cosentino is director of communications to Sarai. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Alyson Fair is communications director to van Koeeverden. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Veronica Dhindsa is a communications and digital media adviser to van Koeeverden. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Daniel Turner is director of operations to van Koeeverden. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Olga Radchenko is policy director to Sarai. *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.

Minister Joly to discuss Canada's plan for industrial leadership in Toronto on Oct. 9



Industry Minister Mélanie Joly will deliver remarks on 'Unlocking Economic Potential: Canada's Plan for Industrial Leadership' during an event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto on Oct. 9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 8

World Mental Health Day—The Union of Safety and Justice Employees hosts its annual World Mental Health Day reception in support of Canada's frontline federal public safety personnel, and those who suffer from Occupational Stress Injuries. Members of Parliament, Senators, and staff are welcome. Wednesday, Oct. 8, in Room 310, Wellington Building, 180 Wellington St., Ottawa. RSVP: reem@kitpublicaffairs.ca.

Panel: 'Shadows over Canada'—Former Liberal cabinet minister Wayne Easter will take part in a panel discussion, "Shadows over Canada: Confronting foreign influence," moderated by former Independent MP Kevin Vuong, hosted by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 3 p.m. ET, at Kildare House, 323 Chapel St., Ottawa. Details: macdonaldlaurier.ca.

Webinar: 'Rearming the Fleet'—The Institute for Peace and Diplomacy hosts a webinar titled "Rearming the Fleet: Rebalancing the Royal Canadian Navy for Modern Sea Power." Panelists include Anthony J. Goode, retired captain, Royal Canadian Navy; Brian Santarpia, retired rear-admiral, Royal Canadian Navy; and Jeff Collins: assistant professor of political science, University of Prince Edward Island. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 4 p.m. ET. Details: peacediplomacy.org.

Bike Day on the Hill—Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin and Senator Marty Deacon host Bike Day on the Hill 2025, spearheaded by national cycling advocacy organization Vélo Canada Bikes. This non-partisan event engages parliamentarians, local and national leaders, and cycling supporters in a celebration of everyday cycling in Canada. There will be a group photo, Parliamentary Slow Bike Challenge on the Parliament Hill lawn, and a reception in the Valour Building, 151 Sparks St., Ottawa. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 5 p.m. ET. Register online. Contact: ed@velocanadabikes.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 8—THURSDAY, OCT. 9

Montreal Climate Security Summit—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute and NATO's Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence host the two-day, invitation-only Montreal Climate Security Summit. This year's edition will focus on strengthening military adaptation in the face of climate risks, including technical, scientific, and operational discussions exploring how armed forces can plan and execute

activities across all domains in an operational environment shaped by climate change. Wednesday, Oct. 8, to Thursday, Oct. 9, in Montreal. Details: cdainstitute.ca.

THURSDAY, OCT. 9

Bank of Canada Senior Deputy Governor to Deliver Remarks—Carolyn Rogers, senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, will discuss productivity, competition, and innovation in Canada's financial sector at a breakfast event hosted by the Canadian Club Toronto. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 7:15 a.m. ET at The Hyatt Regency Toronto, 370 King St. W. Register: canadianclub.org.

Climate at a Crossroads—The *Walrus* magazine hosts "Climate at a Crossroads," a day-long event exploring how climate disinformation is restraining progress, and how to ensure democratic governance in this new and contested climate crisis landscape. Participants include former Liberal environment minister Catherine McKenna, with a keynote featuring Charlotte Scaddan, senior adviser on information integrity, United Nations Global Communications. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 9:30 a.m. at 50 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

CDANXT: Advancing Canada's Health Economy Conference—Research Canada hosts its national conference, "CDANXT: Advancing Canada's Health Economy Conference," featuring key speakers and stakeholders from the health research and innovation ecosystem to explore how a thriving health economy can transform our economy, productivity, and competitiveness. Thursday, Oct. 9, at the MaRS Discovery District, Toronto. Details: researchcanada.org/national-conference.

EDC President to Deliver Remarks—Alison Nankivell, president and CEO of Export Development Canada, will deliver remarks in English and French on "Reimagining Canada's Trade for a New Global Era" at the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Le Reine-Elizabeth Hotel, 900 Blvd. René-Lévesque W., Montreal. Register: corim.qc.ca.

Minister Joly to Deliver Remarks—Industry Minister Mélanie Joly will deliver remarks on "Unlocking Economic Potential: Canada's Plan for Industrial Leadership" in a hybrid event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 11:45 a.m. ET. RSVP for venue details: canadianclub.org.

Panel: 'Stronger Together Against Wildfires'—The Delegation of the

European Union to Canada, and *Canada's National Observer*, host a panel discussion on co-operation against wildfires. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 2:15 p.m. ET at the Rogers Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

CPAC's Fall Parliamentary Reception—CPAC celebrates its legacy of connecting Canadians to their democracy with an evening of insightful conversation, refreshments, and entertainment. By invitation only. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 5:30 p.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. MacDonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa.

REEL Politics Film Series—Tonight is the opening of an eight-night fundraiser for the Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internships. The REEL Politics Film Series presents thought-provoking films and engaging discussions screening today, with future screening dates on Nov. 6 and Dec. 4, 2025; and Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5, and April 2, 2026. The first screening is on Thursday, Oct. 9, at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, OCT. 10

North America's Nuclear Renaissance—Canada 2020 hosts "North America's Nuclear Renaissance," a gathering of nuclear advocates, clean energy financiers, policy architects, and system operators working to bridge ambition and deployment. Speakers include Jigar Shah, former director of the U.S. Department of Energy Loan Programs Office; and James L. Connaughton, former chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8 a.m. ET, at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details: canada2020.ca.

ParlSec Sudds to Talk Mental Health—Parliamentary Secretary Jenna Sudds will take part in "Courageous Conversations with Politicians," discussion on mental health. Other participants include former Ontario MPP Lisa MacLeod, former Ottawa city councillors Mathieu Fleury and Keith Egli, and current City of Brockville councillor Katherine Hobbs. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8:30 a.m. at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Register via Eventbrite.

Superintendent of Financial Institutions to Deliver Remarks—Superintendent of Financial Institutions Peter Routledge will weigh in on Canada's rapidly evolving economic landscape, and how the financial system is adapting to the pace of change in a morning presentation hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto, 145 Richmond St. W. Details: economicclub.ca.

International Day of the Girl on the Hill—Elevate International host an International Day of the Girl celebration featuring students, emerging leaders, Members of Parliament, educators, and changemakers. Friday, Oct. 10, at 9 a.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. MacDonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, OCT. 14

Chief of Defence Staff at the Mayor's Breakfast—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carrigan will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the *Ottawa Business Journal*. Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Lunch: 'Reimagining Canada's Trade for a New Global Era'—Alison Nankivell, president and CEO of Export Development Canada, will take part in a roundtable luncheon hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Oct. 14, 12 p.m. ET at C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15—FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Toronto Global Forum—The International Economic Forum of the Americas hosts the 2025 Toronto Global Forum. Among the speakers are Congo's Ambassador to Canada Apollinaire Aya, Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, Canada Infrastructure Bank CEO Ehren Cory, Business Council of Canada CEO Goldy Hyder, National Aboriginal Council Corporation Association CEO Shannin Metatawabin, and former Canadian ambassador to China Dominic Barton. Wednesday, Oct. 15, to Friday, Oct. 17, in Toronto. Details: torontoglobalforum.com.

THURSDAY, OCT. 16—FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Vancouver International Security Summit—CSIS chief Caroline Xavier will take part in the second annual Vancouver International Security Summit. Other speakers include former CSIS director David Vigneault; Nicole Giles, CSIS's deputy director of Policy and Partnerships; Richard B. Fadden, former national security adviser to the prime minister (2015-2016), and Liberal MP Will Greaves. Thursday, Oct. 16, to Friday, Oct. 17, at the Coast Coal Harbour Vancouver Hotel, 1180 W Hastings St., Vancouver. Details: rebootcommunications.com.

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

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

MONDAY, OCT. 20

BDC President to Deliver Remarks—Isabelle Hudon, president and CEO of BDC, will deliver remarks in French on "SMEs and the 2025 Economy: Risks, Opportunities, and Growth Drivers," a lunch event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. Monday, Oct. 20, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, 900 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: ccmm.ca.

Lecture: 'Transnational Making of UN Peacekeeping'—Carleton University hosts this year's Shannon Lecture, "The Transnational Making of United Nations Peacekeeping." Brian Drohan, associate professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy—West Point, explores how Canada has shaped the course and conduct of peacekeeping beyond its commitments to individual peacekeeping missions. Monday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. ET at Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper St., Ottawa. Details: events.carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 21

Auditor General to Deliver Six Performance Audit Reports—Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver six performance audit reports to the House of Commons. The reports include: Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System, Canada Revenue Agency Contact Centres, Follow-up on Programs for First Nations, Housing Canadian Armed Forces Members, Recruiting for Canada's Military, and Cyber Security of Government Networks and Systems. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 10 a.m. ET. A press conference will follow at 12:30 p.m. ET in Room 200, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details: infomedia@oag-bvg.gc.ca.

Chrétien and Harper in The Regent Debate—Former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper will take part in the seventh Regent Debate hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. The topic of the debate is "Canadian Unity in a Fractured World." Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St., Toronto. Register: cdhowe.org.

Fireside Chat with Madelaine Drohan—The Canadian International Council's annual general meeting will be followed by a fireside chat with author Madelaine Drohan on her book, *Benjamin Franklin's Failure to Annex Canada*. Tuesday, Oct. 21 at 5 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800, Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Today's Famous 5 Ottawa Award—Famous 5 Ottawa will recognize four adults and one youth (up to age 35) who are blazing trails, challenging norms, and lifting others up in the Ottawa region. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5:30 p.m. ET in a location to be announced. Details: famous5ottawa.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22

We Grow to Build: FPAC's National Policy Conference—The Forest Products Association of Canada hosts its 2025 National Forest Policy Conference. This year's theme is "Canadian Forestry at a Crossroads: Navigating Turbulence, Unlocking Potential and Restoring Resilience." Wednesday, Oct. 22, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Contact rrogers@fpac.ca. Register via Eventbrite.

Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards—The Library and Archives Canada Foundation, and Library and Archives Canada host the 2025 Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards honouring outstanding Canadians who've left an indelible mark on our country's cultural, literary, and historical heritage. This year's recipients are: author Danny Ramadan, historian Margaret MacMillan, poet Rupri Kaur, playwright Tomson Highway, and writer Gabrielle Boulianne-Tremblay. Wednesday, Oct. 22, 5:30 p.m. ET, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. By invitation only.

INNOVATION

POLICY BRIEFING

Publication date:
Monday, October 20, 2025

Advertising deadline:
Tuesday, October 14, 2025

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