

## Alberta Weekly Review

Thursday, August 3, 2017

### Session Schedule & Activities

- Fall session is scheduled to begin October 30.
- United Conservative Party (UCP) leadership vote on October 28.

### Government of Alberta News & Announcements

- Service Alberta Minister Hon. Stephanie McLean announced a review of Alberta's consumer protection laws. Albertan's can participate through an online survey or a series of open houses until September 15. Issues include warranties, cancellation rights, pricing transparency and reward points as well as household moving services and auto repairs.
- The Sole-source Service Contract database has been updated with quarter one service contracts awarded outside a formal competition process. The update includes 769 contracts with start dates on or before June 30, 2017. [Click here](#) to view sole-source service contracts.
- Last Friday new economic forecasts placed Alberta's GDP growth at 2.9 percent this year and 2.4 percent in 2018. Should those forecasts hold Alberta will lead the country in economic growth for the next two years. Alberta also leads the country in employment growth and consumer spending growth. This of course follows the significant recession of 2015/2016.

### Political News

- A recent poll commissioned by Postmedia and conducted July 27-28, a week after the UCP ratification vote, has the UCP at 57%, NDP at 29% and Alberta Party at 7% and Liberal Party at 3% provincially, with 27% of Albertan's undecided. The NDP still has a lead in the city of Edmonton.
- Elections Alberta has approved the use of the name the "Alberta Advantage Party", for a group made up of former Wildrose Party members who do not want to join the UCP. To form a party the members, must collect 7,868 signatures from supporters, have 3 MLAs cross the floor, or register 44 candidates in the next provincial election.

### Panel rules on Alberta's Craft Beer Tax Policy

A three-person trade panel, representing the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) has found the Small Brewers Development Program, which introduced graduated beer mark-ups and a rebate program designed to benefit the provinces small brewers, violated the national trade agreement. The complaint was laid under the Agreement

on Internal Trade by Calgary based Artisan Ales. The panel has given the government six months to either change the policy or file an appeal. Two other companies have separately filed court challenges against the program, Toronto-based Steam Whistle Brewing and Saskatoon-Based Great Western Brewing.

In October 2015, the Government introduced a lower markup for beers produced inside the New West Partnership, made of up Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. That policy was rolled back 10 months later with a markup policy of \$1.25 for all beer. Prior to October 2015 markup was applied based on a brewery's total production, regardless of product origin.

### Jason Kenney Launches Leadership Campaign

Over the weekend, Jason Kenney officially launched his bid for leadership of the UCP and resigned as leader of the PCAA. In the speech, Kenney said he believes the leader of the UCP needs to be "consistent (with) conservative conviction" with the political skills to unite the party and broaden its support to win the next election. Kenney believes his experience including his 18 years as a Member Parliament, and track record as Federal Cabinet Minister are assets to his leadership campaign.

On Tuesday Kenney announced a "grassroots guarantee" that he will consult with UCP party members and Albertans on policy issues and as such will not be releasing a detailed policy platform during the leadership campaign. Kenney said while he will express opinions on certain issues he believes the members of the new party need to develop the detailed policy platform. To date Kenney has mentioned repealing the carbon tax, reducing the tax burden, balancing the budget and fighting for school choice as priorities he would like to see.

### Enmax PPA Dispute Continues

Enmax has filed a lawsuit against the Balancing Pool, the provincial agency responsible for handling power purchase agreements (PPAs). Enmax, owned by the City of Calgary, has been at odds with the provincial government for over a year on the issue.

Last year Enmax and three other utilities notified the Balancing Pool of their intention to return PPAs, per an opt out clause, which stated if government changes the law to make the deals unprofitable buyers can hand the PPA's back to the balancing pool which would then pass the loss to consumers. The move was made following the government's increase of carbon levy on large emitters. The government tried to block the move and later reached settlements with the three other utilities.

In the lawsuit Enmax claims the Balancing Pool failed in its requirement to assess and verify the termination of any PPAs in a manner that is efficient and required per the legislation. Enmax also alleges the government of Alberta has interfered in the Balancing Pools mandate. The Balancing Pool has said the agency is reviewing its options.

## BC News

- Former BC Premier, Christy Clark resigned as leader of the BC Liberal Party (effective August 4) and will also resign her seat as MLA for Westside-Kelowna. Longtime MLA and former cabinet Minister, Rich Coleman will serve as interim leader. Coleman informed caucus he would not run for leadership but would step down should he change his mind and decide to run. The leadership race could take 3 months to one year and with Clark resigning her seat the opposition in the legislature will go down to 42 seats. Premier Horgan has six months to call a by-election. Clark was first elected as an MLA in 1996, she later served as a key minister under Premier Gordon Campbell and subsequently left politics in 2005 before returning and becoming leader in 2011 and Premier that same year.

## Other News

- The federal government has created a 13-member advisory panel on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The 13 member panel includes former Conservative Party of Canada interim leader Rona Ambrose; former federal cabinet minister James Moore; Brian Topp, NDP strategist and former Chief of Staff for Premier Rachel Notley; Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff; Linda Hasenfratz, CEO of Linamar Corp.; Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations; Annette Verschuren, former president of Home Depot; and Phyllis Yaffe, former chair of Cineplex Entertainment and CEO of Alliance Atlantis and Canada's consul general in New York City. The diverse membership of the panel is designed to demonstrate a non-partisan, unified approach to the negotiations set to start Wednesday, August 16.
- Rick George, former Suncor Energy Inc. President and CEO died of leukemia on August 1. George was a pioneer in oilsands mining and helped build Suncor into the largest integrated oil company in Canada. He later joined Obsidian Energy Ltd. and Osum Oilsands Corp as chairman and served as a board member at the Royal Bank of Canada.