

## Alberta Weekly Review

Thursday, December 14, 2017

### Session Schedule & Activities

- Calgary-Lougheed by-election is today Thursday, December 14, 2017.

### Government News and Announcements

#### *Fall Session Ends*

After 22 days, the fall session at the Legislature ended on Wednesday at noon. In total nine bills were passed by the government including:

- Bill 30 *An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans* which brings changes to the Workers Compensation Board and occupational health and safety laws;
- Bill 31, *A Better Deal for Consumers and Business Act* which includes numerous consumer based laws;
- Bill 32, *An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy In Alberta*, introduces regulations for political action committees and changes some voting rules; and
- Bill 33: *Electoral Division Act*, amends electoral boundary rules including creating new electoral divisions for Calgary (2) and Edmonton (1) and also consolidates four slower growing rural electoral divisions into three. Changes were based on a report from the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Changes will come into force the day the writ is issued for the next general election. Maps of the ridings can be found [here](#).

The 2018 sessional calendar has not yet been released but per standing orders the session can start as early as the second Tuesday in February, unless otherwise indicated by the Government House Leader. The spring session in 2017 started on March 2, 2017.

#### *Liquor Markup for Small Manufacturers of Spirits and Refreshments Reduced*

Last week Hon. Joe Ceci, President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance announced the province would be reducing its markup rate for small manufacturers of spirits and refreshment beverages in the province. A small manufacturer produces less than 1,500 hectolitres of spirits. This includes small distilleries, cideries, meaderies and cottage wineries. The markup rate will be reduced by \$11.21 per litre to \$2.46 per litre for spirits and reduced by \$1.49 to \$0.32 per litre for beverages such as coolers and ciders. It is estimated the reduced markup will return \$1.4 million to manufactures in the next year.

## *Successful Bidders Announced in First Round of Renewable Electricity Program*

Three companies were successful in their bids for the first round of the Renewable Electricity Program which will result in nearly \$1 billion of private sector investment in green power generation in the province. Additionally, the winning bids have set a record for the lowest renewable electricity pricing in Canada and add 600 megawatts of renewable power through wind projects. The successful bidders are Capital Power, EDP Renewables Canada Ltd and Enel Green Power North America Inc. The Renewable Electricity Program is funded through the Climate Leadership Plan not consumer electricity charges. The projects will create approximately 740 jobs.

## Political News

### *High Voter Turnout Ahead of Calgary-Lougheed Byelection*

Turnout at advance polls in the Calgary-Lougheed byelection is higher than the advance voting in the 2015 general election. Seven candidates including UCP leader Jason Kenney are running in the byelection. Elections Alberta estimated 3,554 ballots have been cast prior to today's election. Advance voting locations did increase from one to three, and an Elections Alberta is also conducting a pilot program to speed up voting. Residents who bring their voter card or identification can have it scanned to bring up voting information which speeds up the process.

On election day today, electronic tabulators will be used to count paper ballots continuously as they are being cast which should allow officials to release results within 20-30 minutes of polls closing at 8:00 pm MST tonight. To use the tabulators for the next provincial election a legislative change would be required.

## Federal News

### *Cannabis Tax Revenue Distribution*

Federal Finance Minister Hon. Bill Morneau announced this week the Government of Canada has reached a two-year deal with the provinces on the sharing of annual tax revenues generated from the selling of cannabis. The deal will see the federal government getting 25 percent, up to a maximum of \$100 million, with the rest split between provinces on a per capita basis. Estimates currently place the revenue annually at \$400 million, and of that Alberta would receive approximately \$35 million.

Both the provinces and the federal government have said despite estimated revenues they expect to lose money in the first several years of legalization due to startup expenses required to create the proper enforcement and distribution systems. No firm cannabis price has yet been set but Minister Moreanu and the provincial finance ministers would like to keep overall consumer price around \$10 per gram.