



Alberta Weekly Review

Thursday, January 19, 2018

Session Schedule & Activities

- Legislative session is adjourned until 2018. Scheduled to resume Thursday, March 8, 2018.
- Alberta Party Leadership vote will be held on February 27, 2018.

Government News and Announcements

Spring Session Start Date Set

This week Hon. Brian Mason, Government House Leader, announced the 2018 Spring Session would begin Thursday March 8, 2018. Standing orders indicate session can begin as early as the second Tuesday in February (February 13) however the government can adjust as needed per their legislative calendar. The start is a week later than last year.

According to Mason this session will likely be shorter as Premier Notley has indicated legislative “heavy lifting” has come to an end. The bulk of this session will be taken up by the budget process. The budget date has not yet been announced, but in years previous it has been tabled in mid-March. This session will also see UCP Leader Jason Kenney take his seat in the legislature for the first time.

Alberta Health Services Capital Submission List Released

Each year Alberta Health Services (AHS) prepares a capital submission list that is part of the government budget process, which identifies key infrastructure projects that need funding. In previous years, this list has included at least 20 project identified as urgent.

The list submitted this year included only nine projects, none of which cost more than \$125 million. The scaled back list is the result of a request received by AHS from the government to reduce the number of projects and focus on projects that promote the transition of care to community settings or are deemed critically urgent. Projects from previous years that are not part of the list include a Red Deer hospital expansion and new hospitals for rural communities in Wainwright, Beaverlodge or Cardston.

Seven of the nine projects are for facilities in Edmonton and Calgary including:

- \$75 million expansion of the Royal Alexandra energy centre;
- \$97 million renovation at the Peter Lougheed Centre; and
- Brain centre at the University of Alberta for \$125 million.

Search for Election Commissioner Underway

Following the passing of Bill 32, *An Act to Strengthen and Project Democracy in Alberta*, the Legislative Offices Committee began its search to fill the newly created position of "Election Commissioner". The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices is an all-party committee that reports to the legislature. Per Bill 32 the commissioner will be appointed on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly under the guidance of this committee. The commissioner will be responsible for investigating any alleged breaches of election legislation and recommend prosecution.

The committee started to advertise the position on December 29 and the deadline for submissions was extended this week to January 19. At the same meeting the committee approved a \$1.3 million-dollar budget for the office to support three full time employees including the commissioner, an investigator and administrative support. Committee members will receive a briefing binder on applicants by next Thursday, January 25.

Water and Wastewater Services Projects Announced for Four Alberta Municipalities

On Monday the Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and Hon. Brian Mason, Alberta Minister of Transportation, announced federal-provincial funding of more than \$16.3 million for four water and wastewater projects in Alberta. The MD of Pincher Creek, Town of Barrhead, Town of St. Paul and Town of Vermillion all will receive funding for projects.

The federal funding is part of a Government of Canada commitment to invest \$180 billion over 12 years in public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation routes. To date the federal government has invested more than \$196.7 million in 66 water and wastewater projects in Alberta and the Government of Alberta has invested more than \$102.5 million in 17 of these projects.

Another Delay for Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project

Kinder Morgan Canada announced Wednesday that permitting delays have pushed the time line for the \$7.4 billion project behind once again. The estimate would put the project in-service by December 2020, nearly a year behind schedule. The announcement was made as the company released its fourth quarter results, reporting a net income of \$46.4 million for the final three months of 2017.

As a result, the company has scaled back 2018 spending to focus on securing the final approvals needed. The project needs more than a thousand permits before it can proceed. In early December, the National Energy Board ruled the company's favor allowing it to bypass bylaw issues it was facing in Burnaby BC. However, a process to deal with potential future permitting delays has not been established by the NEB. Additionally, the route of the expanded pipeline has not yet been finalized and this could result in further challenges.