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THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

With new electoral map coming into effect April 22, MPs and candidates preparing for next election

BY ABBAS RANA

The new federal electoral map will come into effect in two weeks' time, and MPs and electoral district associations across the country are already strategizing, analyzing, and preparing for the next election based on the newly rejigged and renamed ridings.

"It's a whole different geographical footprint," said a Liberal MP, who spoke on a not-for-attribution basis, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "It's pretty much a transition point into a whole new ballgame of new ridings with new people [who] will be emerging and ... different personalities merging with each other. And it represents a shift towards the harsh reality that the [next] election is coming."

According to Elections Canada, if the next election is called after April 22, it will happen under the new boundaries. But if one is called before, it will occur under the current ones. With that deadline just 14 days away, it's safe to say the Oct. 20, 2025, election will take place based on the new boundaries.

The House of Commons will increase to 343 ridings. Of the current 338 ridings, only 45 are

Continued on page 4

NEWS

Liberal ridings raised more cash in 2022, but Conservatives had \$12-million more in the bank

At the end of 2022—the most recent publicly available filings with Elections Canada—the federal Conservative riding associations had \$25.4-million in the bank, compared to the Liberals' \$13.4-million. All riding associations must file their 2023 financial statements with Elections Canada by May 31.

BY ABBAS RANA & PETER MAZEREEUW

Liberal riding associations across the country raised more money in 2022 than their Conservative counterparts, but at the end of the year, the Conservative electoral district associations had \$12-million more cash on hand, according to a *Hill Times*

analysis of annual filings with Elections Canada.

At the end of 2022—the most recent publicly available filings with Elections Canada—the federal Conservative riding associations had \$25.4-million in the bank, compared to the Liberals'

\$13.4-million. All riding associations must file their 2023 financial statements with Elections Canada by May 31.

The Hill Times reported two weeks ago that the Liberal riding

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The ridings represented by Conservative MPs Scott Reid, top left, Ed Fast, Chris Warkentin, John Barlow, and by Liberal MPs Chrystia Freeland, above left, Mark Gerretsen, Marie-France Lalonde, Taleeb Noormohamed and Randy Boissonnault had the largest amount of money in the bank at the end of 2022. *The Hill Times* file photographs and courtesy of PMO, and Taleeb Noormohamed

NEWS

As illiberal regimes spread in a year of elections, Canada must defend vision of democracy as 'best guarantee' of freedom, says Ignatieff

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

As authoritarian regimes increasingly use a veneer of democracy to legitimize their actions, former federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff has warned that Canada and other liberal countries must "narrow the gap between what democracy promises and what it delivers" if the concept is to survive in its current form.

"Our best hope of defending democracy to the general public is that it's the best guarantee of their freedom," said Ignatieff. "It's not a guarantee of perfect justice or perfect equality, but it must be a guarantee of their freedom—freedom from executive overreach, media tyranny, bureaucratic incompetence or malice."

The remarks were made during a talk at the University of Ottawa's Centre for International Policy Studies on March 27, headlined "What if democracy's greatest enemy is democracy itself?" It was part of the centre's workshop, titled, "What the rise of authoritarian middle powers means for global politics."

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Mike Lapointe

Heard On The Hill

CPAC's Omayra Issa recognized as young global leader by World Economic Forum



CPAC's on-air presenter Omayra Issa has been recognized by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader in 2024. Photograph courtesy of CPAC

CPAC's on-air presenter **Omayra Issa** has been recognized by the World Economic Forum in 2024, a title given out to honour "the world's most promising leaders under the age of 40 who are committed to shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future," CPAC announced in a press release on March 27.

"As part of this community, Issa will join her peers from around the world in a multi-year program that aims to support members

engaging with initiatives addressing the most pressing challenges of our time, while leveraging her platforms and skills to foster positive change globally."

"Omayra's recognition as a Young Global Leader is both a professional achievement and a moment of pride for CPAC," said **Christa Dickenson**, CPAC president and CEO, in the release. "This recognition highlights Omayra's contributions to journalism within Canada and on the international stage."

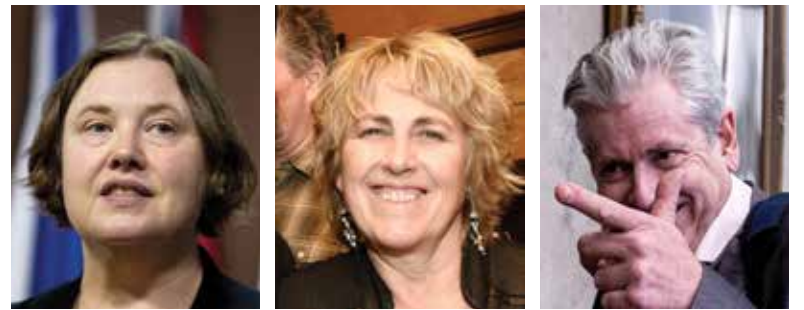
Angus, Blaney, and Hughes not running in next election

Three New Democrat MPs—including the party's longest-serving incumbent—announced late last week that they will not contest the next election.

Natural resources critic **Charlie Angus**, party whip **Rachel Blaney**, and House Deputy Speaker **Carol Hughes** announced in a joint statement on April 4 that they would not seek re-election, citing their desire to "spend more time with their families after years of dedicated public service."

Angus, who was first elected to the House of Commons in 2004, won the Northern Ontario riding of Timmins-James Bay by a 7.9 per cent margin against the Conservative candidate during the 2021 election.

Hughes, who represents the neighbouring riding of Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, Ont., entered federal Parliament in 2008, having previously run twice unsuccessfully for the party in that riding. She held a 12.7 per cent winning



NDP MPs Rachel Blaney, left, Carol Hughes, and Charlie Angus announced last week that they will not stand in the next federal election. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Cynthia Münster

margin against the Conservative candidate in the 2021 election, but her riding has been abolished as part of a redistribution process, and will be folded into neighbouring ridings in the next federal election.

Blaney, meanwhile, joined the House as part of the Class of 2015, and represents the British Columbia riding of North Island—Powell River. In addition to her role as NDP whip, Blaney is the party's veterans affairs, seniors, and rural economic development critic. She won by a margin of 3.5 per cent against the Conservative candidate in 2021.

The New Democrats are already down one MP compared to 2021: **Daniel Blaikie** resigned at the end of March to take up a role in the office of Manitoba Premier **Wab Kinew**. A byelection for Blaikie's former seat of Elmwood—Transcona has not yet been called.

The search for Parliament's cutest pets begins

It is not often in this newspaper that the word "cute" appears, especially in the same sentence as "Parliament Hill" and "contest."

But June 11 marks one of the more unconventional—but no less

heated—ballot questions that will be put to Ottawa's political class: who has the cutest pet?

The Canadian Animal Health Institute is back for another year with its "Cutest Pets on Parliament Hill" photo contest, in which MPs, Senators, staffers, journalists, and anyone else working on the Hill submit photos of their best (animal) friends for judgment.

Between now and May 3, contestants may enter photos of their pets, alongside a biography, to cahi-icsa.ca for the chance to win bragging rights. Something to do with Canada, Parliament, or the Hill should also be included in the picture.

There are separate categories for Cutest Dog, Cutest Cat, and Cutest Other Pet.

Cuteness is not the only factor in judgment, however: the pets will also be assessed according to creativity and personality, as well as their connection to Canada.

No word yet on whether last year's inaugural winners—**Clinton Hsieh's** dog **Matteo**, **Alison Mah's** cat **Shohei "Meowntani" Ohtani**, and Conservative MP **Karen Vecchio's** chicken **Petunia**—will re-enter to defend their crowns.



Say what? Penelope was a finalist in last year's Cutest Pets on Parliament Hill contest. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster



Monday's photo

In the spotlight:

Commissioner Justice Marie-Josée Hogue presides over the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa on April 3, 2024.

The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Thibedeau makes move to Global Public Affairs

Veteran political journalist **Hannah Thibedeau** has made the move to the PR world with Global Public Affairs, the firm announced last week.

Thibedeau is the company's new executive communications officer, which Global said means she will support "clients from coast-to-coast with their communications, media relations and public affairs needs."

She has covered Parliament Hill for more than 20 years, most

ROAD TO 2050



Government and grain farmers working hand-in-hand for a sustainable future

The Road to 2050 for Canada's Grain Sector, led by the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), guides federal government programming to enable the grain sector to sustainably intensify production to feed a growing world population while addressing climate change and supporting grain farmers' economic prosperity.



GGCRoadto2050.ca

Watch the official launch on **April 9th at 10am**,
live from the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

News

With new electoral map coming into effect April 22, MPs and candidates preparing for next election



Liberal MPs, including Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, centre, pictured at the party's caucus retreat last January. Because of the redistribution of electoral boundaries, the House of Commons will have 343 MPs after the next federal election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Salma Zahid, to come up with an equitable formula to divide assets and liabilities between the two constituencies.

"We've just kind of agreed among ourselves that everybody keeps their own money," McKay said, whose riding has been rejigged and renamed Scarborough-Woburn.

Liberal MP George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Alta.) said his riding has changed by more than 40 per cent, and his EDA board has already had a new founding meeting under the guidance of the party headquarters. The new riding in which he will seek re-election will be called Calgary-McKnight.

Continued on page 5

Unchanged Ridings

1. Labrador, N.L.
2. Cumberland-Colchester, N.S.
3. Abitibi-Baie James-Nunavuk-Eeyou, Que.
4. Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Que.
5. Beauce, Que.
6. Bourassa, Que.
7. Brome-Missisquoi, Que.
8. Brossard-Saint-Lambert, Que.
9. Côte-Nord-Kawawachikamach-Nitassinan, Que.
10. Drummond, Que.
11. La Pointe-de-Île, Que.
12. Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.
13. Laval-Les Îles, Que.
14. Longueuil-Charles-LeMoine, Que.
15. Longueuil-Saint-Hubert, Que.
16. Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Que.
17. Papineau, Que.
18. Pierre-Boucher-Les Patriotes-Verchères, Que.
19. Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que.
20. Richmond-Arthabasca, Que.
21. Rosemont-Le Petite Patrie, Que.
22. Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot-Acton, Que.
23. Saint-Jean, Que.
24. Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.
25. Shefford, Que.
26. Trois-Rivières, Que.
27. Ajax, Ont.
28. Algonquin-Renfrew-Pembroke, Ont.
29. Barrie-South-Innisfil, Ont.
30. Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Ont.
31. Burlington, Ont.
32. Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.
33. Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.
34. Humber River-Black Creek, Ont.
35. Huron-Bruce, Ont.
36. Kitchener South-Hespeler, Ont.
37. Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes, Ont.
38. Oshawa, Ont.
39. Perth-Wellington, Ont.
40. Willowdale, Ont.
41. York Centre, Ont.
42. Lethbridge, Alta.
43. Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.
44. Vancouver East, B.C.
45. Victoria, B.C.

Only 45 of 338 ridings remain unchanged while 293 have updates ranging between a minor tinkering to a riding totally disappearing, according to Elections Canada.

Ontario, three in British Columbia, and one each in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Alberta.

Canada's constitution requires a review of electoral boundaries every decade to reflect population movement and changes in riding boundaries. In 2013, when the last redistribution took place,

the country's population was about 35.1-million, according to Statistics Canada. Currently, the population is approximately 40 million. Independent and non-partisan commissions in all provinces redraw geographical boundaries.

This time, according to Elections Canada, five new ridings

will be added to the 338-member House. Of these, Alberta is getting three more, and Ontario and British Columbia get one more seat each. With the addition of these new seats, Alberta will have a total of 37 seats, Ontario 122, and British Columbia 43.

Currently, Ontario has 121 seats, Quebec 78, British Columbia 42, Alberta 34, Manitoba and Saskatchewan 14 each, New Brunswick 10, Nova Scotia 11, Prince Edward Island four, Newfoundland seven, with Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut one each.

To help riding association volunteers decide how to divide assets and liabilities because of the redistribution process, all federal parties are working with grassroots members to guide them. Some parties have also held online meetings to consult these riding associations, and to answer any questions they may have.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.) told *The Hill Times* that 30 per cent of his riding has changed as a result of the redistribution process. For this, his riding executives worked closely with the neighboring Scarborough Centre riding, represented by Liberal MP



Stéphane Perrault is Canada's Chief Electoral Officer. The new electoral boundaries are coming into effect on April 22. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1
unchanged under the redistribution, while 293 have undergone updates in boundaries and population. Depending on the movement of population, a riding may have undergone a negligible adjustment, or a significant change where a riding's name, geography and population may have been greatly modified. The change in riding boundaries could range between a minor tinkering to a constituency completely disappearing.

Of the 45 ridings that are unchanged, 24 are in Quebec, 15 in

Continued from page 4

“The party has got a whole structure around that,” said Chahal. “The party has put in the right policies in place to ensure fairness when it comes to the redistribution, and how all that with the assets will be distributed.”

To hold nomination meetings for the next election, all federal parties will take the redistribution factor into consideration, especially in the ones where there has been a major change in population. The fights are going to be particularly divisive in winnable ridings for each party.

The divisiveness will be more intense on the Conservative side because the current polling trends are suggesting a strong blue wave on the horizon that could sweep across the country whenever the next election is called. So, if the current trends do not change, the Conservative candidates will be odds-on favourites to win in all regions of the country. Some polls are suggesting that the party under leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) could win as many as 200 seats. This is the reason why a lot of potential candidates are showing interest in seeking the Conservative Party nomination.

Both the Liberals and Conservatives are protecting their incumbent MPs from nomination challenges by providing them with easy-to-meet conditions. Unless an MP is not interested in seeking re-election, almost all will likely be nominated for the next election. In some cases, however, there will be some ridings where, because of the redistribution, two MPs from neighbouring ridings would want to run in the same riding. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives have not made it public so far if there are any situations where two



Liberal MP Gerge Chahal, who represents the riding of Calgary Skyview, will run in the new riding of Calgary-McKnight in the next election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MPs may have to run against each other for the nomination. Usually, all parties hold these discussions behind closed doors, and do not make it public unless they fail to come up with a solution that's acceptable to both candidates.

In 2022, the Conservative party had put in place a nomination rule for incumbent MPs to deal with the possibility of a snap election, as in a minority government an election could happen at anytime, and the party was in the midst of electing a new leader. To be shielded from a nomination challenge, each caucus member had to raise \$15,000 by the end of that year, and donate a combined \$3,350 to the riding and the party.

The maximum annual individual donation limit in 2022 was \$1,675 to a registered party, \$1,675 to a riding association, and \$1,675 to a leadership contestant. Currently, the limit is \$1,725 for a registered party, and the same to a riding association and leadership contestant. By December, there were about a dozen MPs who had not met this criteria. Since then, according to a source, some MPs have fulfilled the conditions but the party has not made any name or number public.

On the Liberal side, in late 2022, the party set criteria for their MPs who want to seek re-election without facing nomination challenges. To do so, each MP had to

have at least 65 per cent of the anticipated expense limit in their respective electoral districts association bank accounts by March 1, 2023; had at least 40 more Victory Fund members compared to the number they had on July 1, 2022; or attempted to knock on at least 3,500 doors or make 7,500 phone calls along with their team of volunteers.

As of last month—a year after the deadline—only 89 of 154 MPs had met the criteria. The Liberal Party told *The Hill Times* last week that MPs who had not met the conditions can still request an extension from the party.

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 **ROGERS**

News

Democracy Watch wants lobbying commissioner's office to probe firm with links to top Conservative adviser Jenni Byrne

The federal Lobbyists' Code of Conduct applies only to federal registrants, and political activity is a constitutionally protected right, says lawyer W. Scott Thurlow.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

A democratic watchdog organization is calling for the federal lobbying commissioner to investigate a lobbying firm with ties to a top Conservative adviser, adding to a similar call already issued by NDP MPs last month.

On April 1, Duff Conacher, the co-founder of Democracy Watch, sent a letter to Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger requesting a probe of the activities of lobbyists from the firm Forecheck Strategies, which he said has "several interconnections" with the lobbying firm Jenni Byrne + Associates, which engages in lobbying in Ontario.

The *Globe and Mail* reported on March 21 that Forecheck is located in the same office as Jenni Byrne + Associates, and employs some of the same staff. This quickly led to NDP MPs Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, Ont.), his party's ethics critic, and Charlie Angus (Timmins-James Bay, Ont.) sending a letter to Bélanger later that day, arguing the report raised serious questions about



Ottawa-based lawyer W. Scott Thurlow says 'political activity is a constitutionally protected right. We should not have rules that disincentivize an individual's right to vigorously participate in the democratic process.' Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Jenni Byrne + Associates, a company owned by Jenni Byrne, left, is the subject of a letter by NDP MPs Matthew Green, second left, and Charlie Angus, second right, to Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger, right. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

"potentially inappropriate involvement in federal lobbying activities" by Byrne, as well as concerns about how the lobbying activities for the two firms were kept separate, and whether Forecheck's federal lobbying activities had all been properly registered and reported under the Lobbying Act.

In the letter, Green and Angus argued Byrne is well known as one of the closest and most important advisers to Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.), and that the Jenni Byrne + Associates firm is built off of Byrne's name recognition as a "well-connected Conservative strategist."

In an emailed statement to *The Hill Times* on March 27, Conacher raised concerns about the appearance of a conflict of interest when anyone from Forecheck lobbies the Conservatives. The current Lobbyists' Code of Conduct prohibits lobbying an official where the official could reasonably be seen to have a sense of obligation towards the lobbyist due to a close relationship.

In his letter to the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying (OCL), Conacher cited several news reports, such as a story published by *Politico* in September 2022, and a story published by *Maclean's* in March 2023, which he said indicate that Byrne has served as a top adviser for Poilievre both during and following his party leadership campaign in 2022.

The *Globe and Mail* story reported that Poilievre's office issued a statement denying that

Byrne was paid by his office, but did not confirm whether she is paid by the Conservative Party.

"If Ms. Byrne is a paid or unpaid adviser to Mr. Poilievre, her provision of advice to Mr. Poilievre assists him [to] further his private interests and the aligned private interests of the Conservative Party of Canada and its Members of Parliament," said Conacher in his letter to the OCL. "If Ms. Byrne is an unpaid adviser, it is even more of a favour for Mr. Poilievre and the party and MPs, and this creates a sense of obligation on the part of all of them to return the favour."

W. Scott Thurlow, an Ottawa lawyer who advises clients on issues relating to the Lobbying Act and regulatory policy, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on March 27 that the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct applies only to federal registrants.

The code sets out standards of behaviour for individuals who must be listed in a registration as required by the Lobbying Act. Therefore, if a person is not a registrant under the act, the code does not apply to them, according to Thurlow.

Jenni Byrne + Associates does not engage in federal lobbying, and Byrne herself is not listed as an active lobbyist on the federal lobbyists' registry.

In a statement published in *The Globe and Mail* story, Byrne stressed that her firm only lobbies provincially, and that she has no role in Forecheck Strategies "in any capacity."

Byrne told *The Globe and Mail* she has not received financial

compensation from Forecheck, and does not "speak to clients or do business development."

Andrew Kimber, president of Forecheck Strategies, also provided a statement to *The Globe and Mail*, which said, that given Byrne's political work, they sought legal advice "in order to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest" with their federal work. Kimber said that he and Simon Jefferies, Forecheck's senior vice-president, established Forecheck Strategies as "its own entity," and that Byrne is not involved with Forecheck, adding that Jenni Byrne + Associates also "has not and does not receive any resources or financial compensation from Forecheck Strategies."

Byrne also told *The Globe and Mail* that her firm only lobbies provincially. "I have no role in Forecheck Strategies in any capacity. I have not received financial compensation from Forecheck. I do not speak to clients or do business development."

"There is no rule against having more than one job," said Thurlow in the emailed statement. "Political activity is a constitutionally protected right. We should not have rules that disincentivize an individual's right to vigorously participate in the democratic process."

In regards to the rules in the lobbyists' code concerning an appearance of a conflict of interest, Thurlow argued that Forecheck has taken steps to ensure that there is no reasonable apprehension of a conflict of interest by creating a separate company.

"Section 4.3 of the code could prevent the registrants from lobbying their business partners, but that doesn't seem to be the case here," he said in the emailed statement. "The fact that we are even talking about this is proof that the registry of lobbyists is achieving its primary obligation, [which is] ensuring that the public knows who is lobbying and on what issues."

The Hill Times reached out to the OCL to ask how requests for investigations are handled. Manon Dion, the OCL's manager of communications services, responded in an emailed statement on April 2 that Bélanger can initiate a preliminary assessment whenever she suspects potential non-compliance with the Lobbying Act or the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.

"She reviews every allegation at the preliminary assessment stage to determine the appropriate next steps. The office conducts a variety of proactive compliance monitoring activities to ensure lobbyists comply with Lobbying Act, including monitoring various sources of information, and verifying a sample of communication reports each month," said Dion in the emailed statement. "The office also reviews allegations reported by third parties, whether or not they contain references to specific sections of the act or the code. All allegations of non-compliance are taken seriously."

Forecheck Strategies was incorporated the first business day following Poilievre's election as Conservative Party leader in September 2022.

Clients who booked meetings on Forecheck's website were previously redirected to the booking system for Jenni Byrne + Associates, but that function was removed following inquiries by the *Globe and Mail* about the connection between the two firms, according to the *Globe and Mail* story.

Forecheck is currently active on the federal lobbyists' registry with three clients: TekSavvy Solutions Inc., Little Warriors, and PECO Pallet, Inc.

Lobbyists currently listed on active files for Forecheck Strategies are consultants Cassandra Duncan, Claudia Gallant, Michaela Johnson, and Simon Jefferies.

Duncan and Gallant are listed as employees on the website of Jenni Byrne + Associates, but not on the website of Forecheck Strategies. Johnson and Jefferies are listed as employees on the websites for both firms.

Conservative MPs who have communicated with Forecheck's consultants include Matt Jenneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, Alta.) on Feb. 14; Kelly Block (Carlton Trail-Eagle Creek, Sask.) on Feb. 13; Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.) on Feb. 9; and Mark Strahl (Chilliwack-Hope, B.C.) on Jan. 30, the registry shows.

The Hill Times reached out to Forecheck Strategies and to Jenni Byrne + Associates to inquire about the call for an investigation by the OCL, but did not receive a response by press time.

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The Hill Times

Sponsored by IKEA

Ending HST on second-hand items is a win-win – for wallets and the planet.

This Earth Month, we're talking SHT.

No, that wasn't a typo. To kick off Earth Month, IKEA Canada is shining a light on an issue that impacts every Canadian: the double taxation on second-hand goods. IKEA Canada's Second-Hand Tax (SHT) initiative offers a novel solution that aligns with both financial responsibility and environmental stewardship.

By providing a discount equal to the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on pre-owned items in its As-is departments across Ontario, IKEA Canada's initiative effectively eliminates the HST on these goods, making sustainable living more attainable for all. It's simple math: HST = 13%, SHT = -13%.

But this initiative is more than a clever play on words, it's a critical step toward making sustainable living more accessible and affordable.

We're ready to make SHT happen. As cost-of-living pressures build, embracing the second-hand economy is becoming a widespread choice for Canadians seeking value. The practice of applying HST on second-hand items is not only outdated but also overlooks the value these items continue to offer. By removing the financial barrier, we're facilitating smarter consumers choices and championing a more equitable approach to taxation.

The inconsistency in applying HST across various second-hand goods creates unnecessary complexity and unfairness. While certain essentials are exempt from HST, many other basic necessities often found at second-hand stores are not. This policy inconsistently affects Canadians across the economic spectrum, making it harder for everyone to choose affordable, sustainable options.

We're committed to finding big and small everyday solutions to making sustainable shopping more

approachable. The SHT initiative underscores the importance of environmental responsibility by encouraging the reuse and repair of goods. This effort significantly contributes to waste reduction, as it diverts items from landfills, thereby supporting a more sustainable and less wasteful consumption pattern that benefits everyone.

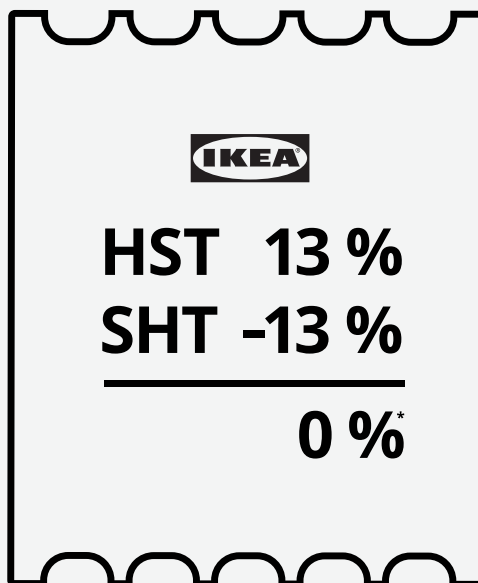
For a more inclusive economy that supports environmental and fiscal sustainability, collaboration among businesses, social enterprises, and charities is crucial. Such partnerships help minimize waste, create employment opportunities, and foster a circular economy. IKEA Canada's commitment, including the employment of dedicated product recovery workers for second-hand items, highlights the transformative potential we can have in providing solutions for the many people.

Public policy should reflect the collective interests and evolving habits of Canadians. Our SHT initiative exemplifies how innovative

approaches can harmonize economic affordability with environmental sustainability, offering a blueprint for how policies can evolve to support sustainable consumer choices.

As stewards of our environment and economy, we owe it to ourselves and future generations to foster a more sustainable and affordable lifestyle. By rallying behind our SHT initiative, we can drive meaningful change that benefits all Canadians, ensuring a healthier planet and more vibrant economy for years to come. Let's embrace SHT and make sustainable living a more affordable reality for every Canadian.

Let's make SHT happen!



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Editorial

Important choices face our leaders. Will they step up?

MPs return to Ottawa on Monday after a two-week break, and they have two options.

They can either continue to personally attack each other and mindlessly recite annoying partisan talking points, or they can choose to engage in healthy and important debates about the top issues facing the country, and maybe even find solutions, especially right now. They can be leaders.

It's unlikely, however, that they will choose the latter option since the closer we get to a federal election, the worse the behaviour. It's become so polarized and divisive—especially in the House—that former politicians, academics, artists, religious leaders, and human rights advocates are officially appealing to political leaders to smarten up. In a letter published on April 2 in *The Globe and Mail*, they called for civility in the public sphere for the sake of peace and security in Canada.

“Perhaps a growing number of us no longer consider it part of a common Canadian value system to put aside our differences and work alongside those with whom we disagree in the broader interests of Canada. Or perhaps such negative tendencies were always present in Canada and it has taken the increasing ubiquity of social media to reveal them fully,” states the letter.

“Whatever the reasons for the increasingly belligerent nature of many of the current interactions between Canadians with different perspectives

on hostilities in the Middle East or other divisive issues, we believe that no Canadian should ever be fearful because of their identities or their beliefs.”

Former Liberal MP Barry Campbell told *The Globe and Mail* that he thought about the letter last summer after the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia, and violent eruptions between Eritrean groups at community festivals. “I think political leaders have to take responsibility for where we find ourselves now as a nation and if, in that examination, they consider that they've contributed in some fashion, either knowingly or unknowingly, then it's time to take stock,” he said.

The letter's signatories made eight recommendations to political leaders, including for action to research the causes, scale, and impact of issue-driven tensions and conflict; back national and local initiatives to confront hate and reaffirm mutual respect and peaceful engagement; instil a sense of constructive inter-community dialogue among all Canadians; enforce laws that prohibit harassment, threats, or intimidation against people because of their identity, beliefs, or opinions; and speak out wherever and whenever they can about the values binding the country.

Politicians should do everything they can to “address hate at its origins,” and pipe up about the “values that bind us together as a country.”

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Canada needs a national housing standard to protect migrant agricultural workers: KAIROS

KAIROS echoes the call for the establishment and enforcement of a national housing standard to protect migrant agricultural workers. This must include ending indentured labour in Canada, which, for decades, has driven substandard living quarters and other workplace abuses such as underpayment, physical and sexual abuse, and unsafe working conditions, to name a few.

Government attempts to address these abuses fall short. For example, during the pandemic, the auditor general issued a scathing report regarding the state of housing for temporary foreign workers in the agricultural sector. It found that “Employment and Social Development Canada did little to meet the commitments to improve living conditions for agricultural temporary foreign workers that it had made in previous years.”

The department was quick to respond to the report, and agreed with its recom-

mendations; however, it increased the number of migrant workers under the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) by 68 per cent from 2021 to 2023, exacerbating crowded conditions.

While the government recently announced that it plans to reduce the share of temporary residents by 19 per cent by 2027, it must also work with relevant departments, other governments, migrant workers, and migrant support groups to develop a national housing strategy in support of an essential worker immigration policy. But it must also address the TFWP's root problem which is tying workers to employers. It is imperative that a housing strategy coincide with offers of permanent residency and open work permits to all workers upon arrival to Canada.

Leah Seble Shifferaw
 Migrant justice team lead
 KAIROS Canada
 Toronto, Ont.

Pharmacare pivotal to ensure vital medications for all Canadians: CML Society of Canada

Re: “First phase of pharmacare must not ‘create new gaps’ in existing coverage, says lobbyists (*The Hill Times*, April 1). I strongly endorse the Pharmacare Act as a pivotal measure to ensure universal access to vital medications for all Canadians. Its multi-faceted approach—including collaboration, policy development, and strategic initiatives such as national pharmacare and bulk purchasing—is crucial for addressing the deficiencies in our current health-care system.

The existing patchwork system imposes a significant administrative burden on physicians, and fosters disparities in health-care access. Transitioning to a national pharmacare plan, fully funded by medicare cards, would relieve this burden and guarantee equitable medication access nationwide.

Moreover, establishing an expert panel with patient representation is imperative to ensure inclusivity and responsiveness to diverse needs. Contrary to claims by Innovative Medicines Canada, a single-payer system would not impede access to innovative treatments. As a pa-

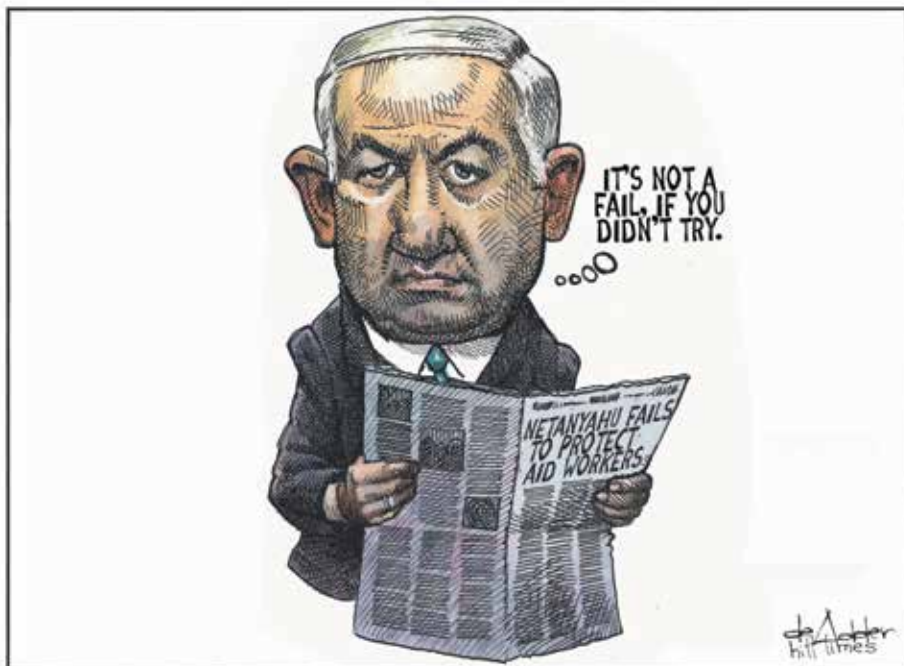
tient with 23 years of experience, I attest that efficacy, not cost, should drive access decisions.

Urgency is paramount given the pressing funding priorities in our current system. The fragmented status quo siphons away funds from public health care, and inflates administrative costs. Pharmacare implementation promises expanded access, cost reductions, and fairer health-care distribution.

Claims from the MEI that private drug plans offer superior coverage are baseless. Private plans often privilege the affluent, perpetuating inequality. Government plans, conversely, ensure risk pooling, sustainability, and public accountability.

Enacting the Pharmacare Act is indispensable for enhancing essential medication accessibility and fostering equity in our health-care system.

Cheryl-Anne Simoneau
 Founder, board member
 The Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia
 (CML) Society of Canada
 Montreal, Que.



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Has Poilievre peaked too soon?

Thanks to their agreement with the New Democratic Party, the Liberals now have a year to aggressively sell their vision to Canadians. And that doesn't involve an axe-the-tax.

Sheila
Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—I woke up to a news item last week that said Liberals had experienced a big spike in national popularity while the Greens and the Bloc were on the uptick.

Hardly believable, but in the world of politics, you are on a roller coaster. And six months is about the time-frame for either a dip or rise in popularity.

Then I had a coffee and realized it was April Fool's Day. I was the fool. Because for a brief second, I thought Liberals' flagging fortunes had turned around.



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured March 20, 2024, addressing his national caucus on the Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Both the Liberal and Conservative leaders seem to be in campaign mode.

Whether it's an orthodox synagogue in Montreal, or a rally in Newfoundland or British Columbia, Pierre Poilievre is everywhere. And on his 'Axe the Tax' campaign, he really seems to be enjoying himself.

Finally, it looks as though the prime minister is also moving into campaign mode.

In a series of pre-budget announcements, Justin Trudeau and some of his key ministers have peppered the country with funding and programs.

From children's school lunch funding, to a renters' bill of rights, to carbon pricing, the governing party has finally realized that in government, you can control the agenda.

And they are definitely shaping a narrative that could play in their favour in the next election.

Poilievre is focusing on individual pocketbook issues. By pushing his anti-tax view, he is sending the message that under a Poilievre government, there would be cuts in government spending that would end up in your wallet.

He may be on to something. As altruistic as we would like to think ourselves to be, Canadians usually vote for what is in their personal self-interest.

Up until last week, not too many Canadians actually knew that 80 per cent of the population will receive a carbon rebate which exceeds the additional cost of the pricing program.

The frenetic pace Poilievre was keeping climaxed on April 1 when the new pricing regime went into effect.

He pulled out all the stops, including engaging oil-producing provincial premiers in a fight

to roll back the carbon price increase.

But by associating so closely with leaders like Danielle Smith and Doug Ford, who are not universally admired across the country, he may be digging himself a petroleum hole from which he cannot get out.

Smith was hard-pressed to explain why, on the same day she was trashing carbon pricing, her government was hiking Alberta's gas tax by a total of 13 cents a litre. Her supporters defended the hike, saying the money would be used to build roads and infrastructure, not to reduce carbon emissions.

When you compare the building of roads to the fight against global warming, which is more critical to our survival?

The younger generation—or NexGen as they are euphemistically known—consider global warming the challenge of our times.

Poilievre has been successful in attracting young voters on the basis that his policies will make housing and daily essentials more affordable.

Just like Trudeau rode the marijuana wave to victory in his first election in 2015, Poilievre hopes to ride the affordability train.

But on global warming, he has been strangely silent. His communications people say that the Conservative plan to fight climate change will come out when an election is called. That will be too

late. By then, his image as a petro-politician will have solidified.

That will help in Alberta, but he certainly won't become prime minister on the basis of that province alone.

His anti-environmental positions do not play well in Quebec or British Columbia, both provinces which were critical in getting the Liberals over the line in the last election.

Because Poilievre's political message has been so tightly identified with carbon pricing, it will be hard for him to build any credibility on global warming.

His axe will also be used to cut government spending. But where will he start? Will he cancel dental benefits, pharmacare, or \$10-a-day childcare? Something has to go.

The Axe-the-Tax campaign has finally created an opening for Liberals to start talking about what they have achieved, and asking the pertinent question: what will Poilievre axe?

Thanks to their agreement with the New Democratic Party, the Liberals now have a year to aggressively sell their vision to Canadians. And that doesn't involve an axe-the-tax.

With April 1 come and gone, if the sky doesn't fall, Poilievre could be left looking like Chicken Little.

A campaign that promotes dental care, pharmacare, rental rights, and daycare sound a lot more interesting than one involving an axe.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister and a former deputy prime minister.

The Hill Times

Poilievre's grand strategic plan

When the next federal election rolls around, Pierre Poilievre won't be hoping a stronger NDP will weaken the Liberals. He'll be hoping a weaker NDP will benefit the Conservatives.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—According to a headline I saw recently, Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre's non-confidence motion over the Liberal government's carbon tax had "failed."

But I think that headline got it wrong; I don't think Poilievre failed at all.



As Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre said after the non-confidence vote, for 'true change, common sense change,' voters have only a Conservative choice. Expect to hear that a lot, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In fact, in my view, his non-confidence ploy was a big success.

Now, before I go on, let me say that I fully understand that, factually speaking, the headline I mentioned above was correct; Poilievre's motion failed to garner enough votes to topple the Liberal government.

That's to say, the Liberals, NDP and Bloc Québécois all teamed up to outvote the Conservatives.

But, despite losing the vote, I'd argue Poilievre ended up winning a key political battle.

Certainly, CTV journalist Don Martin recognized something along these lines when he noted, "In one move, he [Poilievre] has lumped the NDP, BQ, and Liberals into an unpopular trio of tax-loving, inflation-boosting, unrepresentative, leader-whipped MPs who fail to feel the pain of the average voter."

I agree with Martin, but I don't think his analysis goes quite far enough since I'd argue that Poilievre's true end game with his confidence vote stunt wasn't just to score points off the carbon tax, but also to rewrite the NDP's place in Canada's traditional political equation.

What do I mean by that?

Well, somewhat ironically, the standard theory of Canadian politics is that the right-leaning Conservatives have always benefited from a strong left-leaning NDP, since, supposedly, a strong NDP would sap votes away from the left-leaning Liberals.

In other words, from a tactical point of view, it would sometimes make sense for the Conservatives to build up the NDP.

Heck, I did this from time to time.

Back in the 1988 federal election, for instance, while working for a conservative advocacy group called the National Citizens Coalition, I helped put together an ad campaign which attacked then-NDP leader Ed Broadbent as being "too socialist" and "too left-wing."

On the surface it sounds like an anti-NDP message, but its true purpose was to persuade NDP voters who were thinking about voting Liberal to go back home.

Yes, it was a sneaky attempt to help the NDP and hurt the Liberals.

After all, the natural reaction for partisans is to rally around a leader who's under attack from an ideological enemy.

Anyway, I think Poilievre wants to do away with this sort of three-dimensional strategy so he can play a much simpler game.

In short, he'd rather operate in a "bi-polar political universe," where instead of having three choices—the Liberals, the NDP

and the Conservatives—Canadian voters would only have two: the Conservatives, who want to change things for the better, and all the other parties who just want to maintain the status quo.

To put that another way, Poilievre will lump the NDP together with the Liberals, framing them as two identical parties, both of which are hopelessly out of touch with the needs of regular Canadians.

So, if you don't like what the Liberals are doing, don't vote for the carbon-copy NDP.

My point is Poilievre's non-confidence vote was part of a much larger plan.

It wasn't just about forcing the NDP to support the carbon tax, it was also about demonstrating Canada's new bipolar political order.

To sum it all up, when the next federal election rolls around, Poilievre won't be hoping a stronger NDP will weaken the Liberals; he'll be hoping a weaker NDP will benefit the Conservatives.

As he put it after the non-confidence vote, for "true change, common sense change," voters have only a Conservative choice.

Expect to hear that line a lot.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Politics

Who can stop Benjamin Netanyahu?

Netanyahu's political pot is boiling over. If and when the public decides a politician is more concerned about his political survival than the national interest, his time is up. Not even being at war can save him.

Michael
Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—The staggering death toll of Israel's war of rage and vengeance demands an answer before the region is knee-deep in innocent blood.

Netanyahu's six months of slaughter in Gaza has been his response to the atrocity of Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas butchered 1,200 innocent Israelis.

There are now 33,000 dead Palestinians, more than half of them innocent women and children. Add to that 75,000 more who have been wounded.

Last week, Netanyahu's forces killed seven aid workers from the World Central Kitchen, one of the last aid groups still operating in Gaza. They had just finished unloading a barge carrying 50 tonnes of badly needed aid for starving Gazans when their convoy was attacked.

Despite the fact that the aid workers had been in communication with the Israeli Defense Forces, and despite the fact that their vehicles were well-marked, their convoy was hit by multiple Israeli air strikes. If it was a mistake, the IDF kept on making it.

This indefensible attack brings back memories of what happened

to a Turkish aid mission to Gaza in 2010.

Heavily-armed Israeli special forces from the elite navy unit Flotilla 13 stormed the Mavi Marmara in international waters. The raid was a bid to enforce Israel's crushing blockade of Gaza. Ten tonnes of aid the Turkish vessels were carrying never made it to Gaza. When the pre-dawn raid was over, nine people on the aid ship were dead, and another 50 were injured.

Back then, Israel's attack sparked international outrage, just as this latest killing of aid workers has now.

And with good reason. More than 500 medical and aid workers have been killed by the IDF since the Gaza war began six months ago. Journalists have also died going their jobs in Gaza, a staggering 138 of them, mostly Palestinian.

Prime Minister Netanyahu confirmed that Israel was indeed responsible for the deaths of the aid workers from World Central Kitchen. A bitter irony. That is the same organization which was first on the scene to feed needy Israelis after the ghastly Oct. 7 attack by Hamas.

Netanyahu initially brushed off the tragic incident with a promise to be more careful about unintentionally taking innocent lives—noting that these things happen in war. He later said that Israel “deeply regrets the tragic accident,” and said, “our hearts go out to their families and to their countries.”

The Israeli PM thinks it's okay to bomb civilians in order to kill Hamas fighters, even when those civilians uprooted themselves and travelled to the places the IDF told them were safe.

He thinks it's okay to go into hospitals with guns blazing.

He thinks it's okay to level Gaza's infrastructure, inflicting \$18.5-billion of damage in a place that was already dirt poor to begin with.

And he thinks it's okay to consign more than a million innocent people to famine in the name of winning the war against Hamas. Food as the ultimate weapon.

None of these things is okay. Given the violent lengths to which Netanyahu has gone, his war is a macabre exercise of collective punishment and the use of disproportionate force.

U.S. President Joe Biden has denounced Israel's “indiscriminate” bombing, and said that he was “outraged” and “heartbroken” by the recent killing of the aid workers.

As for IDF attacks on hospitals, that is out of bounds. Under international humanitarian law, health establishments and units, including hospitals, should not be attacked. This protection covers the wounded and sick, as well as medical staff, and means of transport.

Netanyahu's conscious decision not to open more land border crossings so that aid trucks can stave off a mass starvation in Gaza is heartless and appalling.

It is also a violation of the duties of an invading force. Pottery barn rules apply when it comes to playing the part of the invader. If you break it, you own it.

Having destroyed so much of Gaza, Israel's obligation is to see that the civilian population has the necessities of life. Netanyahu has failed utterly to do that.

If Netanyahu persists in his policy of allowing a trickle rather than a torrent of aid to enter Gaza, the dreadful casualties on the battlefield will pale compared to the ravages of mass famine. Twenty-seven people in Gaza have already succumbed to the slow and cruel death of starvation, 23 of them children.

As things now stand, unless negotiators can pull off a miracle, unless they can cobble together a cease-fire-for-hostages deal, Netanyahu has every intention of proceeding with a full-scale military operation in Rafah.

Jammed with more than triple its normal population, Rafah would become a killing ground where thousands more civilians would die. So the question is: who can stop Netanyahu?

The answer would normally be the United States. The U.S. is Israel's most important ally. It supplies money and the military might to make Israel a regional



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. An angry mob recently surrounded the prime minister's residence, demanding a deal to release the remaining hostages, and a change in government. It was a protest that turned into something approaching a riot, writes Michael Harris. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

super power. But from the very beginning of this war, Netanyahu has thumbed his nose at his American patrons.

The Americans urged Israel to fight a targeted battle against those responsible for Oct. 7, not a universal bloodbath. Biden warned that too many civilians were dying in Netanyahu's war. If that ghastly trend continued, he said that Israel would lose the world's support.

How desperate is Netanyahu to keep the Middle East on the brink? Last week, Israel bombed the Iranian embassy in Damascus, killing seven military advisers, including three senior commanders. Not only does Israel's PM not want to end the Gaza war, he wants to extend it.

So why would an Israeli prime minister imperil the most important relationship his country has? Why would he drive one of the staunchest supporters Israel has—Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer—to publicly declare that Netanyahu has lost his way, and that Israel can't survive if it becomes an international pariah?

Simply because when the war ends, Netanyahu will have to face a series of reckonings that don't end in a good place for him.

How will he explain the massive security failure that took place on his watch and led to Oct. 7?

Why didn't Netanyahu act on intelligence that surfaced long before the attack, or did he just fatally discount it?

Why did it take so long for the IDF to come to the aid of those Israelis attacked by Hamas on that fateful October day?

According to a recent iPanel poll done for Bar Ilan University, just four per cent of Israelis believe that Netanyahu is a reliable source of information on the war with Hamas. With such low trust

levels, will he be able to justify a war policy that has seriously damaged Israel's standing in the world, and alienated a key ally?

On the post-war political front, there is also an election the polls say Netanyahu can't win, and his clouded legal situation. Netanyahu has already been indicted on corruption charges. The day is coming when he will no longer be able to avoid his day in court. And the end of the war will hasten that day.

In the meantime, Netanyahu is in charge of Israel's formidable war machine. So the question remains. Who can stop him?

The answer is the same force that decides issues big and small in all democracies. The people. Only the Israeli people can deal with Netanyahu. Only the Israeli people can stand up to the current PM and say: “Not in our name.”

That process is already beginning.

Tens of thousands of people have flooded onto the streets of Jerusalem protesting the war. Families of the remaining hostages have joined forces with them, and a tent city has sprung around the Knesset.

An angry mob recently surrounded the prime minister's residence, demanding a deal to release the remaining hostages, and a change in government. It was a protest that turned into something approaching a riot.

Netanyahu's political pot is boiling over. If and when the public decides a politician is more concerned about his political survival than the national interest, his time is up.

Under those circumstances, not even being at war can save him.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on July 12, 2023. The more NATO alliance members and allies do to help Ukraine, the sooner we will see freedom and peace rise again in Europe, write envoys representing NATO's class of 2004. Photograph courtesy of NATO

NATO stands stronger together 20 years after its biggest expansion

March 29 marked 20 years since Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO. And as the alliance celebrates its 75th anniversary on April 4, it is key to protect that united front, say a group of ambassadors to Canada.

Plamen Georgiev, Margus Rava, Kaspars Ozolins, Darius Skusevicius, Bogdan Manoiu, Viera Grigová & Andrej Rode

Opinion

Twenty years ago, our seven European countries—Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—became members of NATO, the transatlantic defence alliance, co-founded by Canada. Thus, our countries significantly contributed to both the future security and the consolidation of democracy, human rights, and accountable governance in Europe. The vision of Europe “whole, free and at peace” was accomplished, at least for a while.

Only a week after that March 29 milestone, the alliance itself celebrated its 75th anniversary on April 4. Over the 75 years since its inception, NATO has grown from 12 to 32 members with more countries willing and welcome to join. This landmark anniversary reminds us that NATO is the strongest and most successful defence alliance in history. And we deeply treasure it.

Indeed, from its creation in 1949, based on Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, NATO as a political-military alliance has been relentlessly pursuing the goal to keep the Euro-Atlantic area at peace and free, so as to enable our societies and economies to grow and prosper. As

then-Canadian secretary of state for external affairs Lester B. Pearson said at the signing ceremony 75 years ago: “This Treaty is not a pact for war, but a pledge for peace and progress.” NATO is a defensive alliance, bound by shared history, common values and goals. Together with its partners it stands united in collective defence of freedom, democracy, and the rules-based international order.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia shared a strong historic wish for political changes in the late 1980s: aiming to return to European family, and to actively contribute to security and stability of Euro-Atlantic area. Our active participation in NATO operations and missions has always been an important demonstration of our commitment to burden-sharing, as well as in to collective defence and co-operative security, the core tasks of the alliance. Canada in particular plays an outstanding and clear role at NATO's eastern flank, whether as a lead nation of multinational brigade in Latvia, air policing in Romania, or maritime patrolling in the European seas.

In an ever-changing international environment, with Russia's ongoing brutal and unprovoked

war of aggression against Ukraine, a strong and united NATO remains essential for transatlantic collective defence against all threats from all directions. These threats cannot be addressed by any single nation alone; it is essential to tackle them collectively by all 32 members.

In the current unpredictable security setting, we face two main goals: first, to deter and defend NATO's own territory against any potential aggressor; and second, to provide all necessary military and financial support to Ukraine in its just and defensive war against Russian invaders. Both are equally important for our own security since our collective support to Ukraine to win this war lends necessary credibility to our own deterrence efforts. And here we have work to do. On both accounts every ally—big or small—must lean in. Every effort counts, and every contribution is needed now and in a long term to keep members of the alliance as safe as in its first 75 years. NATO security is the same from Vancouver to Varna to Narva.

Allies are determined to support Ukraine until victory. The more we do to help Ukraine, the sooner we will see freedom

and peace rise again in Europe. Fulfilling our commitments is a clear expression of our solidarity with Ukraine. Ukraine's future is in NATO, and we are collectively making efforts to assist Ukraine.

In 2004, at the flags-raising ceremony for seven new member states, then-NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said: “Nothing could illustrate better the enduring value of the transatlantic link.” Russia's war against non-aligned Ukraine confirms that our decision to join NATO was the right one. We are convinced that the NATO Summit this coming July in Washington, D.C., will yet again send a strong message of unity, solidarity, and cohesion, and enduring value of our alliance for the peace and security of its members.

Plamen Georgiev is Bulgaria's ambassador to Canada, Margus Rava is Estonia's ambassador to Canada, Kaspars Ozolins is Latvia's ambassador to Canada, Darius Skusevicius is Lithuania's ambassador to Canada, Bogdan Manoiu is Romania's ambassador to Canada, Viera Grigová is Slovakia's ambassador to Canada, and Andrej Rode is Slovenia's ambassador to Canada.

The Hill Times

Politics



The oil sands in Fort McMurray, Alta. The delivery of federal climate measures has been so bungled and half-hearted that the fact-free enemies of climate action—various premiers, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—are winning the communications war, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

be hard to discern through the wildfire smoke.

That said, the federal Liberals cannot be accused—like the Conservatives—of not having a climate policy. They have one. It has several elements, all too wordy for an election placard: financial help for purchasers of new electric cars (which remain too expensive for many), some relief for those switching from oil and gas to heat pumps for home heating, public transit funding, and other niche offerings. But you need to act quickly while supplies last.

A popular green home-retrofit program, for example, which offered grants and low-cost loans to anyone intrepid enough to navigate the paperwork, was so popular it was halted last December. A new version, tailored to low-and-middle income earners, is in the works, but, meanwhile, installers and homeowners have been left dangling.

This is an example of what had been called “short-termism”—quick fixes that lack the bureaucratic scaffolding, administrative expertise, and sustained political support to survive for long, and certainly not to survive a change in government. In the lead-up to next week’s federal budget, more new programs are being plucked from a shelf in the PMO marked “election winners,” and hustled out the door.

Last week, it was a national school meal program, not normally a federal pre-occupation. Various Liberal ministers continue to make housing announcements accompanied by big numbers. There is the child dental subsidy, introductory pharmacare, a summit on car theft, and one that may survive although the implementation has been ragged: \$10-a-day child care.

For most though, the devilish details are still to come, and all these offerings, however worthy, haven’t yet helped the Liberals in the polls—not enough, at least. Maybe voters are done with ambitious promises and fitful delivery, with programs—senior dental care, anyone?—whose criteria they never quite meet.

As for Poilievre, his few policy proposals—housing, criminal justice reform—mostly take the form of bullet points: snappy slogans and vengeance. His first job, clearly, will be demotion: English CBC, the carbon tax, the crucial cap on oil sands emissions, even that useful tariff on large emitters. And will he really go after Loblaws?

Today’s politics, more than ever it seems, is entirely personality and performances. The bickering plays out like an annoying soundtrack at the edge of our consciousness, and the temptation to tune it out can be overwhelming—and unwise.

Politicians can invent—and evade—facts all they want. Climate change doesn’t care. But we should.

Susan Riley is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

How to navigate post-fact politics: skeptically, but attentively

Today’s politics is entirely personality and performances. The bickering plays out like an annoying soundtrack, and the temptation to tune it out can be overwhelming—and unwise. Politicians can invent and evade facts all they want. Climate change doesn’t care. But we should.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—Anyone looking for evidence that we live in a post-policy, post-fact, increasingly incoherent political moment only needs to look at the

war against the federal carbon tax. It isn’t just that it appears to be succeeding; worse, it is drowning out serious conversations about climate change and other urgent issues.

It is a case study in how politics works now: how ambitious attempts—or claims, if you prefer—to improve the economy and life of Canadians become a bludgeon, or an albatross, in a war for political power.

Fact one: the tax, as has been amply documented, contributes less than one per cent to the national inflation rate, which itself has been steadily declining. It is expected to reach the Bank of Canada’s preferred two per cent level this year. And, as is repeatedly noted, some 80 per cent of households that pay the carbon tax get a quarterly rebate—the Canada carbon rebate—which more than compensates for increased costs at the pump or for home heating.

Less well-advertised fact: according to one recent study from the independent Canada Climate Institute, the carbon tax on individual consumption will lower greenhouse gas emissions from eight to 14 per cent in coming years—a modest gain, especially compared to the less visible levy on big industrial polluters. That one will be responsible for 20 to 48 per cent of reductions by 2030. However, the same report

says both measures—and others, including levies on methane pollution, and a long-awaited cap on oil sands emissions—are required to reach a desired 50 per cent reduction by the end of the decade.

And, for those wondering, the institute says emissions have been on a downward trend since 2005, with a slight uptick last year. According to its analysis, Canada is on track to meet 90 per cent of the current government’s emissions reduction target by 2030—which should be a useful fact to exploit. But why isn’t Justin Trudeau and his cabinet letting Canadians in on the secret?

The delivery of federal climate measures has been so bungled, so half-hearted, that the fact-free enemies of climate action—various conservative premiers, federal Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—are winning the communications war. Poilievre’s schoolyard chants (*Axe the Tax/Spike the Hike*) drown out the clear-eyed consensus of some 300 “so-called experts”—prominent economists of all persuasions—who explained recently that the hated carbon tax is the least costly, most effective, way of pricing pollution, and, by extension, of moving consumers away from fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives.

And the Trudeau government is complicit in burying the compensating carbon tax rebate

which applies in every jurisdiction but Quebec, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories, which have their own climate plans. Initially, Ottawa hid the rebate in annual tax filings. Then it deposited it directly into bank accounts as the Canada Climate Initiative Payment—which probably left as many recipients puzzled as pleased. It finally hit upon the more accurate Canada Carbon Rebate, delivered at regular intervals, but it may be too late to penetrate the mesh of lies surrounding the mostly innocuous carbon tax.

No one wants facts. They spoil a good protest.

While Poilievre has preferred rhyming couplets to impartial analysis, many premiers and other actors are feeding the bonfire of inanities so successfully stroked by Poilievre. They have bought into the lie, too—even though some, including Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, are on record as once touting a consumer carbon tax as the most effective way of reducing emissions. But public opinion has shifted, and so, apparently, have the facts.

Not all premiers reject climate action outright; Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Manitoba are talking about producing their own climate plans that probably will not include a consumer tax—but, in the meantime, climate progress could

The only poll that counts is on election day, so let's act like it

Until we next go to the federal ballot box, beware of people say they know how the story ends. In every election there are candidate upsets that prove the final say happens in the ballot box—not in a polling summary. As it should be.

George Soule

Opinion



OTTAWA—The next federal election will be held some time between a month-and-a-half and year-and-a half from now. But if you're following the political coverage and commentary, you'd be forgiven for wondering if we should even bother with the whole voting thing at all.

Predictions abound about where “all blue-collar workers” will park their votes, which new NDP program like free prescription drugs, dental care, or childcare will be ignored by everyone except the millions who are being helped, and how everyday people will automatically follow a career politician just because they want change. As if change can only come one way.

The polls will chop us up into demographics and groups, and the tighter they chop, the bigger their margins of error become.

This isn't new. Politics isn't always interesting. And, like the long list of detailed and obscure statistics that colour commentators lean on during lulls in a baseball game, peace-time political commentary relies on polling—often without much context. Those polls are then often reported on as if they will not change.

I get it. People like the horse race. Who's up? Who's down? It's far more interesting than “which amendment on which bill was debated for three hours yesterday.” The problem is that it skews reality, and makes people think their vote doesn't count as much as it does. It makes them think they can't change things.

As tempting as it is, we can't let the polls be read today as if they will necessarily predict the future. The truth is these predictions are almost always wrong.

In 2011, for example, when then-NDP Leader Jack Layton said that his party could not support the federal budget and the government subsequently fell, the predictions in and around Ottawa generally varied between which of the Liberals or Conservatives would eek out another minority government. The one thing on which nearly all non-New Democrat onlookers could agree was that this was a fatal mistake by Layton. Many saw the NDP losing at least half of their 37 seats. That thinking even lasted well into the campaign. If there was someone who would entertain a pre-



As tempting as it is, we can't let the polls be read today as if they can predict the future. Truth is these predictions are almost always wrong, writes George Soule. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

diction of the caucus growing, they weren't saying so out loud.

In the lead up to that same election, Michael Ignatieff was praised as the leader the Liberals needed to regain their dominance. By the time the election-day dust settled, Layton had led his party to the first-ever New Democrat official opposition with 103 seats, and Ignatieff had lost his own seat as the Liberals fell to third place in the House of Commons.

Not long before the 2013 provincial election campaign in British Columbia, the cover of a local paper had a photo of provincial NDP leader Arian Dix with a headline that read, “If this man kicked a dog, he'd still win the election.” Two months later, the NDP were down two seats and still in opposition.

In 2015, leading a weak and diminished Liberal Party stuck in third place, Justin Trudeau was (too) widely criticized as a lightweight. Conventional wisdom was that

Tom Mulcair was poised to quite possibly become the first New Democrat prime minister. Instead, the NDP lost nearly 60 per cent of its seats, and Trudeau jumped from third place to first, with a strong majority.

The list goes on, and will—I'll bet—one day include this next federal election.

Until we do go to the federal ballot box, beware of people telling you they know how the story will end. Even at the

local level, in every election there are local candidate upsets that prove the final say happens in the ballot box—not in a polling summary.

And that's as it should be.

George Soule is a member of the NDP federal executive and a labour representative. He also used to work for the federal party, the leader, and the caucus.

The Hill Times



FleishmanHillard HighRoad (FHR)

is proud to announce the appointment of Nancy Cruz as Vice-President, Public Affairs based in our Ottawa office. Nancy's expertise strengthens FHR's whole-of-government perspective in building public affairs strategies.

“Politics isn't always interesting. And, like the long list of detailed and obscure statistics that colour commentators lean on during lulls in a baseball game, peace-time political commentary relies on polling—often without much context. Those polls are then often reported on as if they will not change.”

Nancy's journey in public affairs has put her at the forefront of some of the most high-profile domestic policy debates of the past decade. Her diverse background includes working in the House of Commons, the Senate, the civil service, and in the private sector. She has served as a trusted public affairs advisor to organizations across the sustainability, natural resources, healthcare, non-profit, and technology sectors. Most recently, she worked as the Associate Director of Government Relations at McGill University, managing the institution's federal government relations. Nancy's expertise strengthens FHR's whole-of-government perspective in building public affairs strategies.

Over the last decade, Nancy has actively participated in federal, provincial, and municipal election campaigns in Ontario and Quebec, ensuring our clients can confidently navigate the complexities of today's political landscape. Nancy is bilingual and holds a bachelor's in Public Affairs and Policy Management and a master's in Sustainable Energy Policy from Carleton University.

Opinion

Foreign investment rules designed for an economy that no longer exists

Most of Canada's young businesses with growth potential and proprietary technology can easily be acquired without consideration of the wider consequences for the country's future.

David
Crane

Canada &
the 21st Century



Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada appears to be more fixated on the “wheat and steel” economy rather than the intangibles economy, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

TORONTO—Canada is selling off its future—and we will pay a big price in lost jobs, in lost exports, in lost innovation, in lost productivity, in lost wealth creation to finance our healthcare and education, and in lost potential.

In fact, we already are, leaving us ill-prepared for the new world of knowledge competition and data ownership. A big reason is a hopelessly outdated Investment Canada Act, which makes it far too easy for foreign investors to buy up our best start-ups and our most promising small and mid-sized companies. We even welcome these takeovers.

When these businesses are scooped up by foreign investors, their prized intellectual property and much of the top talent then belongs to people elsewhere who will use these assets for their advantage, not ours.

Yet our country's future depends greatly on scaling up our most promising companies so that they can carry us forward into sustained prosperity in a new technological age. Ownership does matter.

In a presentation for the Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy, former Global Affairs Canada senior economist Dan Ciuriak argued that Investment Canada is designed for an

economy that no longer exists, in fact, one that has not really existed for the past 25 years.

“It has become progressively ill-adapted to the contemporary issues facing Canada,” argued Ciuriak. “Seen in this light, Canada is in effect considering an Investment Policy 2.1 when it needs to be engaging in developing an Investment Policy 5.0.”

While the leading economies and countries have been rapidly transitioning to a new economy, where wealth and competitiveness is based on ownership of intangible assets—such as the patents, trade secrets, copyright resulting from research and development and ownership of data—Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, which is responsible for Investment Canada, appears to be more fixated on what might be called a wheat and steel economy rather than the intangibles economy, where control of technology is a more important consideration than mere size. For Investment Canada, the screening of foreign takeovers is limited to the largest Canadian firms.

For example, foreign investors from countries where Canada has preferential trade agreements—this includes the United States, Mexico, all members of the European Union, and Japan—that taking over Canadian companies with an enterprise value of less than \$1.989-billion is essentially automatic. So most of Canada's young businesses with growth potential and proprietary technology can easily be acquired without consideration of the wider consequences for our country's future.

But, as Ciuriak argues, firm size is not the relevant issue when “the important factors for the economy are the intellectual property controlled by the foreign firms, the implications of the foreign investment

for freedom to operate for Canadian firms, the connectedness of target firms within the Canadian innovation ecosystem, the importance of the nodes they occupy in the ecosystem, the value of their data as a capital asset, and as a risk factor for national security, and their AI capabilities from the perspective of securing a foothold for Canada in the emerging era of machine knowledge capital.”

“Much worse,” Ciuriak contends, “in perhaps the most remarkable policy mistake in the history of industrial policy, Canada allowed its technology sector to be effectively wiped out as the intangibles era matured.” The technology share of the Toronto Stock Exchange index fell from roughly 40 per cent in 2000 to near-zero with the 2008 financial crisis.

“Canada not only allowed its crown jewels, which were fabulously well-positioned to profit from the mobile age just as it was dawning, but allowed the patent portfolios to be sold off, ceding freedom to operate to foreign companies, and raising the hurdles for the next generation of Canadian start-ups.” The sell-off of Nortel divisions and their IP was of no concern. Investment Canada did not look at foreign takeovers of Canadian IP.

So when DarwinAI, a high-potential AI company in Waterloo, Ont., is scooped up by Apple, as happened recently, or Fusion Pharmaceuticals, a highly promising cancer treatment company in Hamilton, Ont., is purchased by AstraZeneca, as happened last month, no Ottawa concerns are heard. Their IP and talent are now owned by non-residents. They are now branch plant investments, not future Canadian champions.

Yet scale-up companies really matter. It is the transition from start-up to scale-up that marks commercial success. As a Massachusetts Institute of Technology report on scale-ups argues, the failure to scale-up means many of the potential benefits of private and public investments in start-ups are lost. “How well an innovation-oriented economy fares in this dimension of performance is no less important than its initial success in encouraging the formation of new companies in the first place,” it said.

The MIT report defined firms that had reached US\$400-million in sales as “companies of scale,” and those with annual sales of US\$100-million to US\$500-million in sales as businesses “on the pathway to scale”. Scaled-up companies are much better positioned to produce new products, pursue new markets, can afford R&D, and acquire smaller companies to expand into new technologies or markets, making the investments that drive the capability to innovate and pursue competitive advantage. As anchor firms, they can encourage cluster communities, building ecosystems of local suppliers and encouraging start-ups.

Ciuriak argues that we need to redefine national security so that it includes economic security, giving Investment Canada the opportunity to challenge even foreign takeovers of our small but highly promising young companies. Canada would also need to have an office staffed by officials expert in the new economy, and new technologies to advise on takeovers of firms with important economic potential regardless of size. These changes would go a long way to helping build a stronger Canadian economy.

But to match this power to block some takeovers of smaller companies, we would need to ensure that we have much better arrangements to ensure that promising growth companies have much better access to long-term or patient capital in Canada that they need to scale up for success. That's the other challenge.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.

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The Hill Times Policy Briefing
April 8, 2024

BETTER CLIMATE

RISK MAPPING DATA

NEEDED, SAYS EXPERTS:

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Time to take
trade-enabling
infrastructure
SERIOUSLY

Time to get serious about
**CLIMATE
ADAPTATION**

Stop building
infrastructure for
**YESTERDAY'S
CLIMATE**

**INVESTMENTS IN
TRANSPORTATION**
ports to net-zero goals

**FACING EXTREME
WEATHER**
and filling in the gaps

Investing in
**PLASTICS
RECYCLING**
infrastructure

**SOCIAL
RESEARCH**
infrastructure
urgently needed

Crafting Canada's
**CUSTOM CLIMATE
STRATEGIES**

Focus on
infrastructure
maintenance needed

Infrastructure Policy Briefing

Better climate-risk mapping data a must as Canada addresses housing crisis, says experts



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault announced a \$5.5-million call for proposals to fund projects in flood mapping science, hydrologic prediction, and climate adaptation on Sept. 21, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The state of flood and hazard mapping across Canada is varied, with some of the available data around 30 or 40 years old, according to Sarah Miller, research lead for adaptation with the Canadian Climate Institute.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Building more homes to address the housing crisis must take in consideration extreme weather events, and that requires better climate mapping data which Canada is currently lacking, according to climate and housing experts.

“We’re seeing governments at all levels really start to move to increase housing supply more than we’ve seen in many decades,” said Sarah Miller, research lead for adaptation with the Canadian Climate Institute. “We think this is a really important move and critical for improving affordabil-

ity, but there is a risk that if the policy regime doesn’t adapt to really take into consideration the worsening climate hazards that we’re seeing—so, particularly flooding and wildfires—that a lot of this new housing could get built in areas that are fairly high risk.”

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) estimated in June 2022 that about 3.5 million new housing units would be needed by 2030 to help achieve housing affordability for everyone living in Canada, in addition to the 2.3 million units already projected based on current rates of construction. This

projection was maintained by the CMHC in an updated report released on Sept. 13, 2023.

To help address the housing crisis, Ottawa has implemented initiatives including the \$4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund. However, the federal government could potentially undermine its own affordability agenda if too much new housing is built in high-risk areas, according to Miller.

Flooding, the most common and costly natural disaster, has caused approximately \$1.5-billion in damage to households, property and infrastructure in Canada annually in recent years, with res-

idential property owners bearing approximately 75 per cent of uninsured losses each year, according to a report by a task force on Flood Insurance and Relocation, released in August 2022.

To help get a sense of where best to build, better mapping data related to climate change and extreme weather risks is critical, but Canada lacks up-to-date data in that area, according to Miller.

The state of flood and hazard mapping across Canada is varied with some of the available mapping data being around 30 or 40 years old, she said.

“This is a problem for a number of reasons. Obviously, there are major gaps in terms of the areas that are covered, the science might be out of date, [or] the mapping tends not to be publicly accessible. That really undermines the ability of people to go into a housing purchase decision, for example, with their eyes open about what the risk facing that property actually is,” she said. “Most mapping in Canada doesn’t incorporate climate change. It doesn’t incorporate the changes that we’re likely to see in terms of the extent of flood and wildfire risk from a worsening climate.”

The federal government’s Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program (FHIMP), in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, is intended to gather data to help inform decision-making in support of land use planning, flood mitigation, and resilience building.

That program is a step in the right direction, but it isn’t ambitious enough, according to Miller.

“We’re not seeing enough investment. We’re not seeing the timelines being as ambitious as they should be,” said Miller. “Those programs can be more systematic about where the mapping happens first—so, really targeting the highest risk areas in a systematic way across the country.”

The final version of Canada’s National Adaptation Strategy was released on June 27, 2023, intended to provide a blueprint for reducing the risks that come with climate change impacts. To help gather more data about hazards related to extreme weather, the strategy included a \$164.2-million boost towards the FHIMP.

Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.) also announced a \$5.5-million new call for proposals to fund projects in flood mapping science, hydrologic prediction, and climate adaptation on Sept. 21, 2023. This follows more than \$3-million in funding already awarded to universities and non-profit organizations under the FHIMP.

“As we have felt this past summer, climate change is affecting us all in Canada. The devastating impacts of flooding are a clear sign that we need to invest in flood science and mapping as part of Canada’s National Adaptation Strategy. This funding will leverage the expertise of Canadian universities and researchers to collaborate with our own scientists to build stronger flood maps



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Infrastructure Policy Briefing

Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan co-chaired a meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial ministers in Ottawa on Feb. 21 to discuss progress on the work to build resilience across Canada for future emergencies, focusing on prevention and mitigation initiatives. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



From coast to coast: crafting Canada's custom climate strategies

Last year marked a tipping point in our ongoing battle with climate change. The degree of devastation experienced across the nation was unprecedented both in scale and intensity.

Hossein Bonakdari

Opinion



The increasing frequency of extreme weather events—from coast-to-coast wildfires to unprec-

edented floods—has put a spotlight on the urgent need to adapt our infrastructure for resilience and sustainability. This op-ed explores the pivotal infrastructure needs that Canada must address to withstand the challenges posed by climate change.

Current state of Canadian infrastructure

Last year marked a tipping point in Canada's ongoing battle with climate change. The degree of devastation experienced across the nation was unprecedented, both in scale and intensity. This country endured its hottest summer on record, a stark manifestation of global climate trends. The scorching temperatures, coupled with prolonged dry conditions in Western Canada, set the stage for a catastrophic wildfire season. More than five per cent of our forests—an area sprawling across millions of acres—were con-

sumed by flames. The relentless fires destroyed ecosystems and wildlife habitats, and blanketed vast regions in dense, hazardous smoke affecting not only air quality, but also public health.

In stark contrast, the east grappled with extreme precipitation leading to widespread flooding. The combination of these extreme weather events caused a staggering \$3.1-billion in insured damages, underscoring the economic toll of climate change, but barely scratches the surface of the total cost, including uninsured losses and profound ecological damage.

Canada's struggle with these climate extremes reveals a critical adaptation blind spot. While efforts have been directed toward mitigating climate change through emission reductions, less attention has been given to adapting our infrastructure and communities to withstand these new climate realities. The events

of 2023 serve as a harrowing preview of what the future could hold if comprehensive measures are not taken to enhance this country's climate resilience.

Infrastructure needs in the context of climate change adaptation

• **Resilient construction and retrofitting:** Canada must prioritize new resilient construction, and retrofitting existing infrastructure to withstand extreme weather, utilizing durable materials and innovative designs. This involves assessing vulnerabilities in aging structures, and updating urban planning to integrate climate resilience at its core.

• **Adaptive energy systems:** The transition to renewable energy necessitates upgrading the aging energy grid for greater flexibility and resilience. This includes integrating energy storage solutions and smart grid technologies to manage decentralized renewable energy sources, and ensure grid stability.

• **Comprehensive water management upgrades:** Facing altered precipitation patterns, Canada's water management systems require upgrades to expand capacity and implement natural solutions like room for rivers, green roofs to manage runoff. Innovative water reclamation and recycling technologies based on a new integrated watershed management action plans are essential for water availability during droughts.

• **Benefit from technology for infrastructure health and innovation:** Technology is crucial for extending the life of aging infrastructure. Internet of Things sensors, AI-driven analytics, and

advanced materials science can predict failures, optimize maintenance, and ensure infrastructure adapts to changing conditions in real time.

• **Addressing the aging problem:** Tackling the aging infrastructure challenge requires maintaining and upgrading existing structures for longevity and future-proofing new constructions against climate change. This involves a shift in regulatory and funding frameworks to prioritize adaptability and resilience.

Canada's diverse landscapes and climates necessitate region-specific strategies to address the infrastructure challenges posed by climate change. Tailoring these strategies to local conditions—incorporating climate data, Indigenous insights, and community input—is crucial for their effectiveness and sustainability. In the wildfire-prone Western Canada, resilient construction and forest management are key, while the Prairies focus on withstanding extreme temperatures and water management to combat drought and flooding. Central Canada's urban centres demand smart technologies for emergency response, infrastructure monitoring, and aging water system upgrades to handle increased rainfall. Coastal defences in Atlantic Canada need bolstering against rising sea levels and storm surges, coupled with advanced warning systems for extreme weather events. The North faces unique challenges, such as permafrost thaw, requiring innovative construction techniques and reliance on microgrids and renewable energy for resilience. This multifaceted approach ensures that Canada's infrastructure not only withstands current climate threats, but is also prepared for future challenges, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and community well-being.

Canada must adopt a more holistic approach that balances mitigation with robust adaptation strategies to navigate this new climate era. This includes investing in resilient infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme weather, adopting smart technologies for real-time monitoring and disaster Prevention/ Prediction/Response/Recovery, enhancing natural defenses such as wetlands and forests, and fostering community resilience through education and preparedness programs. The lessons past are clear: the cost of inaction far exceeds the investment in adaptation.

Dr. Hossein Bonakdari, a distinguished professor at the University of Ottawa, is a luminary of intelligent adaptation strategies for mitigating climate change effects on infrastructure. Renowned for his pioneering use of stochastic models and artificial intelligence algorithms, Bonakdari has a significantly advanced understanding of climate resilience in infrastructure systems, securing his position within the top two per cent of scientists worldwide across various disciplines for four consecutive years, from 2019 to 2023.

The Hill Times

Better climate-risk mapping data a must as Canada addresses housing crisis, says experts

Continued from page 16

and account for the certain effects of climate change,” said Guilbeault in an Environment Canada press release.

The Housing Accelerator Fund is intended to help build 100,000 new homes in Canada by September 2026. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced on April 2 that the 2024 federal budget would include a \$6-billion infrastructure fund to support homebuilding, as well as a \$400-million top-up to the housing accelerator fund, as reported in the *Financial Post*.

“It’s really critical that governments are deliberate and proactive about reducing risk facing new housing as far as possible,” said Miller. “To do that, we need better information. That’s where the mapping piece comes in, and we also need stronger program criteria and funding criteria to really ensure that the funding from different levels of government is going to build housing in the right places and keep it safe for decades to come.”

Matti Siemiatycki, a professor of Geography and Planning and director of the Infrastructure Institute at the School of Cities at the University of Toronto, told *The Hill Times* that the housing affordability crisis and the cli-

mate crisis intersect, and must be addressed at the same time.

He said that a publicly available national data set that can provide the locations of various climate risks is hard to come by in this country.

“This is a microcosm of a bigger issue in Canada which is that information is very hard to come by in the public realm and is often carefully guarded when it is produced,” he said. “We have an information gap, and it’s creating significant risks for people as they choose where to live, and as they think about what the issues are that might arise with the homes that they live in today.”

When asked why this information gap exists, Siemiatycki said “it’s the story of Canada,” and that similar data gaps exist across many sectors, including infrastructure, climate change and the environment, the criminal justice sector and the education sector.

“We have tended to be a place where information is carefully protected and guarded, and where either we don’t collect the data, or it’s not released transparently,” he said. “When our peers from other countries come, they’re often surprised at how little data there is or how hard it is to access.”

“In various parts of the United States, for example, they have rules and regulations that require that the data that is collected to

be not just publicly available, but publicly reported, and so that they can go and find it in ways that are much easier. In our case, it’s either that the data is not collected, or that it is time consuming and sometimes costly to get access to it,” he added.

Siemiatycki said that Canada needs to do more to collect data in a systematic way.

“The problem is not a shortage of land. We don’t have to go outwards into areas that are either forested or agricultural land, or into areas that are floodplains, or at risk of other climate-related issues,” he said. “Within our cities, we have more than enough land ... to accommodate our current population and growth for the foreseeable future.”

Kevin Lee, chief executive officer of the Canadian Home Builders Association, told *The Hill Times* that there’s no question that climate change impacts are happening, and “we really need to get a better sense of exactly what the lay of the land is.”

He said there is a hunger for more data related to flood risks in different locations partly because of how rapidly the hazard risks are changing.

“I would say that there is not enough good information, but I would add too that that is in large part because of how quickly things are changing. It’s not just



Kevin Lee, CEO of the Canadian Home Builders Association, says ‘the changes are happening quickly, and so the data and the mapping and the science needs to catch up.’ Photograph courtesy of Kevin Lee

a question of nobody was paying attention,” said Lee. “The changes are happening quickly, and so the data and the mapping and the science needs to catch up,” he said. “The national building code, historically, has been based on the past 30 years of climate data, which has served fine when climate wasn’t changing as quickly. Now, there’s work going on for the national building code to assess what the future looks like, and instead of designing the building code [based] on the past, how do we design it for the future?”

Lee said that mapping data helps when deciding where to build, and the national building code helps for deciding how to build.

“I think we just need the proper science to say what can we do to protect these existing communities. Once they’re protected, can we safely have other homes added?” he said. “In most smart policies, it can’t be just black and white. You have to look at the exact situation and figure out what makes the most sense over the long term.”

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The Hill Times

Climate change and infrastructure info

- Canada’s warming climate will accelerate climate- and weather-related damage to some of the country’s most important infrastructure. As sea levels rise and rainfall increases, flood damage to homes and buildings could increase fivefold in the next few decades, and by a factor of 10 by the end of the century, with costs as high as \$13.6-billion annually.

- Temperature- and rainfall- related damage to roads and railways could increase by up to \$5.4-billion annually by mid century, and by as much as \$12.8-billion annually by end of century.

- Heat and rainfall damage to electrical transmission and distribution infrastructure could more than double by mid-century, and triple by end of century, costing utilities and ratepayers up to \$4.1-billion annually.

- Building and moving homes out of high-risk areas can reduce the costs of coastal flooding by 2100 up to 90 per cent, or up to \$1-billion every year.

- When repaving roads, using asphalt mixes and base materials selected to withstand the climate two or three decades into the future can reduce costs by over 90 per cent, saving as much as \$4.1-billion annually by the 2050s.

- During regular maintenance for electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure, replacing components with new ones designed to withstand increases in heat and rainfall for several decades to come can reduce damage costs by 80 per cent by the end of the century, or up to \$3.1-billion each year.

Source: *Under Water: the costs of climate change for Canada’s future*, released on Sept. 29, 2021, by the Canadian Climate Institute

Canada Climate Change Adaptation Actions:

- On June 27, 2023, Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault released Canada’s first National Adaptation Strategy.

- The federal government has invested \$6.5-billion in climate change adaptation since 2015. This includes \$2-billion committed since fall 2022.

- The Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program is the federal government’s primary mechanism to distribute investments intended to provide financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments to respond to, and recover from, natural disasters. As of March 2023, the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program has contributed more than \$7.9-billion to provinces and territories since its inception in 1970.

- As of May 2023, the Disaster Mitigation and

Adaptation Fund has invested \$2.3-billion in 83 built and natural infrastructure projects across the country to help communities better prepare for, and withstand, the potential impacts of natural disasters.

- The Canadian Centre for Climate Services, launched in 2018, is intended to provide useful and timely climate data. The centre includes a collaborative climate information portal, ClimateData.ca, along with a national Map of Adaptation Actions.

Source: *Funding climate change adaptation*, release June 27, 2023, by Environment Canada



Sarah Miller with the Canadian Climate Institute says there are major gaps in climate change-related hazard risk mapping because ‘the science might be out of date, [or] the mapping tends not to be publicly accessible.’ Photograph courtesy of Sarah Miller



Matti Siemiatycki, director of the Infrastructure Institute at the School of Cities at the University of Toronto, says ‘we have an information gap, and it’s creating significant risks for people as they choose where to live.’ Photograph courtesy of the University of Toronto

Social research infrastructure is urgently needed to build a culture of resilience in our communities

Building resilience requires a holistic approach because the post-event efforts from one disaster becomes the preparedness for the next one.

Haorui Wu

Opinion



Canada, situated in a part of the world considerably prone to climate-induced extreme events (Public Safety Canada, 2015), has entered an era of frequently occurring billion-dollar disasters. The population growth and infrastructure sprawl will increasingly expose more and more communities across this country to vulnerable situations (Bush & Lemmen, 2019), causing tremendous tragedies and enormous human and economic loss. Indeed, according to the Government of Canada, the 2023 wildfire season was marked as the most destructive in Canadian histo-

ry. The Canadian Climate Institute reports that more than 600 people died during the 2021 heat waves in British Columbia.

Low awareness plus societal consequences, such as uneven economic and social development, have delayed the building of resilience capacity. Resilience capacity refers to the entire disaster lifecycle: prepare for (pre-disaster preparedness), respond to (emergency response), adapt to and recover from (post-disaster reconstruction, recovery, and mitigation). In fact, although communities in the Pacific Northwest are increasingly aware of the seismic risks related to the Cascadia subduction zone, only 13 per cent of British Columbians have completed preparedness plans (Engqvist, 2019). The primary takeaway from the current COVID-19 pandemic is that communities and organizations across Canada need emergency response plans (Wu, 2022).

Building resilience requires a holistic approach because the post-event efforts from one disaster becomes the pre-disaster preparedness for the next one. Establishing a culture of resilience is urgently needed throughout Canada to reduce the vulnerability of communities that are facing the onrushing surge of disasters.

International communities are now increasingly and continually investing in building resilience through academic, practical, and

political approaches. Accordingly, different countries have been investing in establishing their national research infrastructure to support their hazards and disaster research physically (e.g., experimental facilities, data and information portals) and socially (e.g., educational and training programs and researcher coordination). Although Canada has established a certain degree of physical and virtual facilities, the development of the social parameter of the required infrastructure remains in the initial stages due to following challenges:

Unidentified national hazards and disaster research workforce

According to the 2018 hazards and disaster census, there were 37 social science hazards and disaster researchers in Canada versus 515 in the United States, and 683 globally. Although the original concept of resilience was developed in engineering, no data is available regarding the number of Canadian engineers and other professionals who work in this field. The unfortunate result of this incomplete database of researchers is urgently needed to partner with affected community pre-, during, and post-disaster, to support initiatives that would build community resilience.



The 2023 wildfire season was marked as the most destructive in Canadian history, writes Dr. Haorui Wu, the Canada Research Chair (Tier II) in Resilience and an assistant professor in the School of Social Work, Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University. Photograph contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data [2023], processed by Pierre Markuse, and originally posted to <https://flickr.com/photos/24998770@N07/52874954105>. Shared under a cc-by-2.0 license

Unclear overall development of hazards and disaster education

In a 2004 report prepared for Public Safety and Emergency Prepared-

ness Canada, authors James Bruce, Kenneth F. Donovan, Monica J. Hornof, and Susan Barthos illustrated that disaster and emergency management education in Canada had not been established due to a significant shortage of qualified scholars. So far,

there are only two Canadian universities—Royal Roads and York—offering a master's program of Disaster and Emergency Management; no doctoral degree in disaster and emergency management is awarded in Canada. Although different traditional

disciplines in the fields of science, engineering, health science, and social science in Canada have already created their disciplinary-focused research streams to address various dimensions of disaster science, the overall Canadian landscape of

existing disaster-related education remains unclear. This further jeopardizes the identification of academic strengths, and the coordination of national resources that would promote hazards and disaster research and evidence-informed practice.

Inadequate community-driven research guiding frameworks at national level

There is no existing community-driven research framework to guide the hazards and disaster research that would ultimately contribute to and move forward towards the national priorities of building community resilience. In 2016, Public Safety Canada prioritized the achievement of resilience in the federal policy and initiated financial support for related research. Identifying resilience within federal policy and providing financial support for resilience research are both steps in the right direction, yet, a community-driven guiding research framework is needed to advance this mission.

These challenges represent real systemic barriers to community development approaches of building a culture of resilience for Canadian communities. A nationally-focused social research infrastructure for hazards and disaster studies is urgently needed to 1) identify the Canadian hazards and disaster research workforce, developing a coordination framework building community resilience pre-, during, and post-disaster; 2) to comprehensively asset map the existing hazards and disaster educational programs, modules, and courses in Canada, serving the next generation of researchers and practitioners; and 3) to systematically analyze hazards and disaster research priorities in this country, informing related decision making.

The social research infrastructure would support hazards and disaster research and practice at home and abroad in primarily four aspects:

- **Quick teaming in emergency response:** when disaster hits, this infrastructure would enable

governmental, non-profit agencies, and other stakeholders to swiftly identify and coordinate community-based researchers, research teams, and resources to conduct rapid response research by addressing urgent practical local demands;

- **Improving community-based disaster mitigation strategies:** During pre/post-disaster periods, this infrastructure would engage local professionals in disaster-mitigation-oriented community development, aiding affected communities to adapt to and recover from current disaster event, and prepare for potential ones;

- **Stimulating international collaboration:** This infrastructure would encourage research cooperation and knowledge mobilization by connecting researchers and practitioners throughout Canada and abroad, informing research, practice, and policy; and

- **Promoting hazards and disaster education:** This infrastructure would promote the general public's understanding of the scientific basis of disaster risk reduction and the vital need to build community resilience, and raise the general public's interest in career possibilities in the rapidly growing hazards and disaster field. Ultimately, these endeavours will enhance community disaster coping ability, advance community resilience in Canada and abroad.

Dr. Haorui Wu is the Canada Research Chair (Tier II) in Resilience, and an assistant professor in the School of Social Work, Faculty of Health, at Dalhousie University. His research focuses on exploring human-animal-environment interplay through the lens of environmental justice and social justice in the global context of climate change, disasters, and willful acts of violence.

The Hill Times

It's time to get serious about climate adaptation

The federal government must ensure that Canada's infrastructure is prepared for extreme weather events driven by climate change.

Gerard McDonald & Jeanette Southwood

Opinion



In recent years, Canadians have been shaken by the frequency and scale of extreme weather events that have devastated communities and infrastructure. Over the past 50 years, the costs of extreme weather events have ballooned by 1,250 per cent.

When extreme weather events damage infrastructure, professional engineers work overtime to repair it. Take the Sumas River Dike in British Columbia, which breached during the 2021 atmospheric river events in the province, and was the costliest single disaster in Canadian history. The breach quickly flooded the old Sumas Lake, causing catastrophic damage to homes and farm activi-

ty. Professional engineers in British Columbia sealed the breach within one week, preventing further damage.

As they were then, engineers will always be there to protect the public and repair infrastructure when disasters occur. But after the atmospheric river, taxpayers, insurers, and households are on the hook for more than \$9-billion in repairs. Canada lost millions more dollars in economic activity from the damage caused to roads, bridges, railways and other trade-enabling infrastructure.

While extreme weather events have always happened, changing climatic conditions have made them more frequent and more

intense, and they are only getting worse. The Canadian Institute for Climate Choices projects that over the next few decades, flood damage to roads, homes, and buildings will increase five to 10-fold, and the lost economic activity from this damage will be in the billions of dollars.

As extreme weather events become more common, Canadians are asking tough questions of all levels of government about what they are doing to adapt and safeguard our infrastructure to withstand future damage. The only way forward is to take preventative action.

The good news is that the engineering profession—on the front lines of designing, building, and safeguarding infrastructure

in Canada—has been asking these questions for decades, proposing adaptation policies to government, engaging in risk assessment, and incorporating climate vulnerability into their professional practice.

In 2016, Engineers Canada's Canadian Engineering Qualifications Board (CEQB) published a national guideline on sustainable development and environmental stewardship for professional engineers which aids engineers in incorporating sustainability principles into their work. In 2018, the CEQB provided the regulators with a second public guideline on principles of climate adaptation and mitigation for engineers. These efforts inform



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault launched the federal government's National Adaptation Strategy in June 2023. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

standards of professional judgment and practice to anticipate and prevent climate- and weather-related degradation of infrastructure.

Canada's professional engineers have also been urging the federal government to collaborate with the engineering profession to

develop the government's National Adaptation Strategy and other policies related to climate change and extreme weather events. But

while the release of the strategy is commendable, including measures to adapt to extreme heat, wildfire, and flood risk, the federal government has not thoroughly considered the role that provincial and territorial engineering regulators must play. Moreover, significant new funding is necessary to ensure the strategy's objectives become reality.

For example, the strategy sets a target that by 2027, "70 per cent of the members of relevant professional associations have the capacity to apply climate change adaptation tools and information." While this is a desirable goal, achieving it will require ongoing collaboration and direct support for the relevant professional associations.

Luckily, the federal government has an opportunity with the 2024 budget to cement the role of adaptation frameworks in driving the development of Canada's infrastructure. While the flagship Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) has prioritized green projects that include adaptation, the program has not focused enough on adapting infrastructure

to withstand extreme weather. As the government looks to roll out the ICIP's successor programs, they are likely to be more targeted and focused on infrastructure that supports Canada's housing construction needs, like water and wastewater management and public transit. These are important goals, but the government cannot lose sight of the importance of investing in adaptation more broadly.

Now is the time for the government to ensure it is leveraging every tool at its disposal to prepare Canada for the reality of a changing climate. They can start by taking steps to implement the National Adaptation Strategy in partnership with the engineering profession, and ensuring that new infrastructure spending prioritizes the necessity of adaptation to extreme weather events.

Gerard McDonald, MBA, PEng, ICD.D, is chief executive officer of Engineers Canada. Jeanette Southwood, FCAE, FEC, LLD (honoris causa), PEng, is vice-president, Corporate Affairs and Strategic Partnerships at Engineers Canada. The Hill Times

Infrastructure Policy Briefing

Focus on infrastructure maintenance needed amidst building boom

While building new infrastructure is politically attractive, maintenance and rehabilitation is an expensive chore. But it's one that's critical to our future success.

Matti Siemiatycki

Opinion



Canada is in the midst of a major building boom. From coast to coast to coast, new roads, hospitals, schools, rapid transit lines, energy projects, and homes

are being built at a scale and pace not seen in decades.

This should be cause for celebration. Safe and affordable housing serviced by high-quality infrastructure is the foundation for prosperous, resilient communities.

However, a troubling pattern is also emerging. Amidst all the new assets being built, the huge amount of existing infrastructure already in place is aging. In some cases, it is crumbling before our very eyes, and risks becoming a safety hazard or being decommissioned entirely.

A variety of recent news stories highlight the scale and urgency of the challenge, from the local scale to the mega-project.

CityNews reports that the City of Waterloo, Ont., is at risk of its roads falling into a state of disrepair without a significant increase in spending on maintenance. A City of Waterloo report shows that the current condition of road infrastructure is fair. Without an

additional \$23-million investment in annual maintenance, the analysis found that within 25 years, over 80 per cent of the transportation infrastructure would be in either poor or very poor state of repair.

In Toronto, while the provincial government spearheads the construction of much needed rapid transit lines to all four corners of the region, the existing system owned by the cash-strapped municipal government deteriorates. In 2023, the Scarborough Rapid Transit line was decommissioned months ahead of schedule after a derailment that was attributed to poor maintenance. And trains on the Bloor-Danforth subway line are currently traveling below their regular speeds because of the poor state of the tracks.

Even between governments there can be disagreements about prioritizing spending on new builds or maintaining existing assets. Indeed, just last month, a story emerged that the

federal housing minister sent a letter threatening to withhold \$357-million of funding from Ontario for failing to meet its affordable housing construction targets, while the province countered that it was being unfairly evaluated because it is prioritizing spending to repair the aging existing housing portfolio. In the absence of more public information about the details of the dispute, both positions can be directionally correct: in Ontario there is an urgent need to invest in both the maintenance and expansion of the affordable housing stock.

The examples presented above are part of a larger story of deferred infrastructure maintenance, and a lack of a plan for the rehabilitation and the end of life of infrastructure in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, in 2020 while the overwhelming majority of public infrastructure was in fair condition or better, 12 per cent of all infrastruc-

ture nationwide was in poor or very poor condition, with a whopping replacement value of \$264-billion.

Where will the money come from to cover this massive infrastructure upgrade, maintenance, and replacement bill? And will Canadians have the patience to tolerate years of construction related delays and frustration on maintenance projects that yield no new shiny asset at the end, just the quiet reward of safe, functioning infrastructure?

Therein lies the political conundrum. While building new infrastructure is politically attractive, maintenance and rehabilitation is an expensive chore. But it's a chore that is critical to the future success of Canada.

Deteriorating infrastructure is a drag on the country's economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

All levels of government must plan and budget not only for new infrastructure, but also for the maintenance of the existing stock over its entire lifecycle.

The alternative of unsafe infrastructure or facilities repaired after major breakdowns is far worse.

Matti Siemiatycki is a professor of geography and planning, and director of the Infrastructure Institute at the University of Toronto. His work focuses on delivering large-scale infrastructure projects, evidence-based infrastructure investment decisions, and the effective integration of infrastructure into cities.

The Hill Times

Roads, horses, and carts, oh my! Time for Canada to take trade-enabling infrastructure seriously

The economy doesn't work without trade-enabling infrastructure, which includes roads.

Pascal Chan

Opinion



In February, Environment and Climate Change Minister Steven Guilbeault caused a stir by stating that Canada's current road infrastructure was sufficient, and that Ottawa would not fund any work to enlarge the road network. This prompted a reaction from stakeholders seeking



The road to a more prosperous life for Canadians is paved with strategic investments in infrastructure that improve our competitiveness and unlock our potential, writes Pascal Chan, senior director of transportation, infrastructure, and construction at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

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clarification, as well as significant backlash from several premiers and mayors across the country.

Guilbeault's statement highlighted the problematic and zero-sum paradigm that defines the way many policymakers think

about economic, environmental, and social issues, believing that investing in roads is somehow mutually exclusive from saving the environment.

A great metaphor comes to mind, thanks to Manitoba

Premier Wab Kinew, who has repeatedly stressed that the "economic horse pulls the social cart" with his government stating in the speech from the throne that fixing health care and restoring affordability for families is depen-

dent on growing the economy, not antithetical to it.

It was a rare and welcome recognition that the economy doesn't work without trade-enabling infrastructure, which includes roads.

And while, according to the World Bank, trade accounted for more than two-thirds of Canada's GDP in 2022, we don't seem overly committed to preserving or growing trade. But we should be, given that moving goods across the country effectively using trade infrastructure is so critical to the health of our economy, opportunities for our businesses, and ultimately, the quality of life we enjoy.

Canadians would likely agree, and could not be blamed for assuming that a long-term strategy to grow and protect trade-enabling infrastructure exists in our country, particularly given trade's importance. However, a 2021 European Court of Auditors' comparison of frameworks for large transportation projects in Canada, Australia, the United States, Switzerland, France, Norway and the European Union, highlighted that Canada is alone in lacking an overarching transport infrastructure strategy framework.

This was just more bad news following the 2019 global competitiveness index which underlined the serious decline in Canada's transport infrastructure over the

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In the air or at sea: how investments in transportation ports can support a transition to net-zero goals

Airports are not the only commercial transportation industry impacted by the push to net-zero targets. Ocean-based ports support the over 90 per cent of global trade that rely on ships as the most cost-effective means of transporting goods.

Kerry Black

Opinion



A year ago, the World Economic Forum released a statement on the necessary investments

in airport infrastructure that they deemed were necessary to support hydrogen and electrification of the aircraft industry by 2050. According to the report, global demand would require airport infrastructure to support carbon-free propulsion options as early as 2025, with these aircrafts accounting for up to 38 per cent of all flights by 2050. Globally, the report highlighted a need ranging from \$700-billion to upwards of \$1.7-trillion in investments.

Airport electrification will require new configuration and design to account for hydrogen liquefaction and storage, including additional land which is something most airports globally will struggle with accommodating. These investments are also necessary largely in off-airport infrastructure, including energy storage, which will require significant cross-sectoral partnerships. These partnerships could be further fuelled by federal investments with policies and programs incentivizing partnerships as a means to encourage the energy transition within the airport industry.

In many countries, investments in airports signal a connection to a country's ambitions and desires. In the Canadian landscape, airports lease land and recoup costs from airlines and passengers, with many airports contributing positively to local and regional economies. Now the industry is expected to modernize its approach to support a net-zero economy, which is something that could ultimately cripple an industry that sits on precarious ground already. Post-pandemic, Canada's airports faced significant cost-cutting in the face of extreme debt as a result of significant borrowing during and pandemic lockdowns. The industry is already laden with debt, and is largely unprepared for the electrification models that the World Economic Forum has been championing.

But airports are not the only commercial transportation industry impacted by the push to net-zero targets. Ocean-based ports support the more than 90 per cent of global trade that rely on ships as the most cost-effective means of transporting goods.

According to recent reports, without sustained investments to

support an energy transition, shipping emissions could increase up to 130 per cent by 2050. And while we typically focus discussions on zero-emission transport vehicles, ocean port-side electricity and clean fuel infrastructure investments are necessary to support a zero-emission marine industry. Investments in ocean ports infrastructure would significantly reduce emissions from ships at-berth through the use of shore power (whereby a ship plugs into the electricity grid, turning off their diesel-powered engines). Advocacy agencies, like Oceans North, have called for a mandated use of shore power for all vessel by 2030, and have further called on Canada to develop regulatory measures requiring at-berth connections for all vessel types. This requires investments in our ocean-port infrastructure to support these at-berth connections. It's not simply the transformation of port-side infrastructure that will support the energy transition; investments in ocean ports can also support Canadian ports in becoming hubs for the distribution of low- or zero-emission fuels.

Recent investments like the Green Shipping Corridor Program are important ways to support the decarbonizations of the marine sector, but will require significant additional investments in order to be successful. The Clean Ports Stream of the funding program commits only \$127.2-million over four years to port-side infrastructure. Increased investments in ocean ports and enhanced regulations are the only way to support the necessary energy transition in the marine industry. Federal investments in ports—whether air or marine—have direct impacts on the economy, supporting a diverse supply chain and bolstering economic activity across the nation. But investments need to also be supported by flexible funding agreements that allow for industry partnerships, and ease the burden of infrastructure investments through creative equity partnerships or joint ventures. These funding investments need to be timely and quick in order to achieve ambitious climate goals.

Canada's air and marine ports are critical to achieving net-zero targets, but they will require significant investment if we want to achieve these targets by 2030.

Kerry Black, PhD, PEng, is an assistant professor and Canada Research Chair in the department of civil engineering at the University of Calgary's Schulich School of Engineering. Her work focuses on sustainable infrastructure and community development.

The Hill Times

Time to stop building infrastructure for yesterday's climate

Climate change impacts have a high price tag. The Canadian Climate Institute has estimated that key climate change impacts are already costing households in Canada roughly \$720 per year.

Ryan Ness

Opinion



Spring used to be the best time of the year, bringing both light and lightness as the winter receded. Increasingly, it ushers in an extended season of anxiety as many of the most serious impacts from climate change occur in Canada in the spring and summer months: floods, wildfires, and heat waves, followed by a stormy fall.

Last spring and summer were like no other: unprecedented wildfires stretched across the country while smoke blanketed the continent. The year before that, Hurricane Fiona was the most intense storm on record to hit Canada's East Coast.

Canadians are already bracing for what spring and summer 2024 has in store, particularly after a strong El Niño made it an unusual winter, and increased the likelihood of persistent drought and prolonged wildfires.

These and other climate change effects have profound

consequences for this country's infrastructure with price tags in the billions of dollars, and very real impacts on people and communities. Simply put, Canada's infrastructure isn't prepared for the climate crisis.

The good news is that there are things we can do to get ready for future events, and these actions will save us money and hardship in the long run.

Climate change is already having impacts that will get worse in the future

First, it's worth taking stock of the bad news. Climate change is already supercharging the extreme weather events we've seen across the country: unprecedented wildfires, extreme flooding, one-in-1,000-year extreme heat, and prolonged drought.

Climate change impacts have a high price tag. The Canadian Climate Institute has estimated that key climate change impacts are already costing households in Canada roughly \$720 per year. Overall, our economy could see costs from these climate change impacts of between \$78-billion and \$101-billion annually by 2050.

Similar, but different: climate change will impact every region uniquely

A big chunk of the costs of climate change is due to impacts to built infrastructure: our roads, railways, ports, and much more. Regions from coast to coast to coast have faced climate-driven disasters and infrastructure damage.

Last summer, parts of Nova Scotia received about three months worth of rain in a day. The ensuing floods damaged buildings, washed away roads and bridges, and cut off the sole rail link connecting Halifax to the rest of Canada.

Something similar happened in British Columbia in 2021 though on a much greater scale. There, atmospheric rivers dumped huge volumes of water across much of the province, which led to catastrophic floods and landslides that washed away bridges and critical highway connections. The Metro Vancouver

region and Canada's largest port were cut off from the rest of the country.

In remote northern communities, one of the biggest challenges is damage to critical winter access roads and other infrastructure like runways and buildings. Our research found that the costs of road damages could exceed \$50-million in the Northwest Territories, and \$70-million in Yukon every year over the next two to three decades—a major hit to government budgets and a threat to northerners' way of life.

Building resilient infrastructure will save money and protect communities

Governments need to start building resilience into infrastructure decisions now to avoid locking in climate vulnerability for future generations. All orders of government must take a long-term, coordinated approach to regulating, planning and funding infrastructure.

That means rapidly updating codes and standards so that infrastructure and buildings are built to withstand future floods, wildfires, windstorms, and other extreme weather driven by climate change—an area where Canadian governments are lagging. It means producing up-to-date

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Infrastructure Policy Briefing

Infrastructure needs in Canada: facing extreme weather and filling in the gaps

Three major areas where government initiatives are needed to address climate change risks in supply chain are federal assets and operations, capacity building, and coordination and collaboration.

Muntasir Billah & Ranjan Datta

Opinion



What is the role of roads and railway infrastructure in Canada's supply chain? What kind of federal government support is needed to ensure resilient infrastructure for road and rail transportation?

An efficient and reliable transportation network inclusive of trade corridors is key to Canada's economic growth, and serves as the backbone of our supply chain network. Canada owns one of the largest rail networks in the world with over 49,000 route-kilometres of track. As a primary mode of

freight transportation, the railway system plays an important role in the Canadian business sector and supply chain.

Although over the last decades, the federal government has invested over \$3.7-billion towards more than 120 projects to date to ease bottlenecks in our supply chain, climate change risks to roads and railway infrastructures have rarely been accounted for in their decision-making. Growing climate risks will impact the entire transport value chain, from its location, design, and construction standards to the services it provides. The federal government should invest in climate resilient infrastructure solutions which include investments in roads and railway infrastructure, new technologies, and community-based adaptation, all designed to ensure that the transport system is robust, redundant, and resilient. Three major areas where federal government initiatives are required to address climate change risks in the supply chain are: federal assets and operations, capacity building, and coordination and collaboration.

What is the infrastructure gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Canada? How can that gap be closed?

From our ongoing research from various Indigenous communities in Western Canada, we learned several major infrastructure gaps persist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Western Canada, particularly concerning essential services like access to clean drinking water,

transportation, healthcare, food security, and internet connectivity. In terms of infrastructure, Indigenous communities often face inadequate road and transportation networks, limited access to reliable electricity and network communications services, and insufficient housing. As many Indigenous community members explained to us, they have been facing a lack of access to safe, clean drinking water which poses significant health risks and undermines overall well-being.

Disparities in healthcare infrastructure and services, such as healthcare facilities and medical professionals, contribute to poorer health outcomes for Indigenous populations compared to non-Indigenous communities. Closing the infrastructure gap in Indigenous communities requires a multifaceted approach that addresses systemic inequalities, and prioritizes community-led solutions. As we learned about many aspects of infrastructure gaps, some of the perspectives that were most significant include:

- Meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities is essential to understanding their specific infrastructure needs and priorities. This involves recognizing Indigenous land rights and sovereignty, and collaborating with communities to develop culturally appropriate and sustainable infrastructure projects.
- There needs to be increased investment in infrastructure development and maintenance in Indigenous communities, including funding for constructing and upgrading roads, bridges, water treatment facilities, healthcare centers, and broadband networks.
- Indigenous self-governance initiatives need to be imple-

mented for self-determination so Indigenous communities to take ownership of infrastructure projects, including training and employment opportunities for community members.

• There must be greater coordination and collaboration between governments, Indigenous organizations, industry stakeholders, and non-profit groups to ensure that infrastructure investments are effectively targeted and implemented to address the unique needs of Indigenous communities in Western Canada.

With prioritizing Indigenous voices, Treaty rights, and self-determination, the infrastructure gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can be gradually closed, leading to more equitable and prosperous outcomes for all Canadians.

What infrastructure challenges face Canada's airports and ocean ports? What can the federal government do to support these sectors?

The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events have already caused significant damages or disruptions to infrastructure, such as ports and airports. Transport Canada identified two northern airports experiencing permafrost thaw, and nine ports that are highly sensitive to sea-level rise.

Record-breaking high water levels in Lake Ontario in 2017 had a number of negative effects on Ports Toronto's operations and assets, including localized flooding at Billy Bishop Toronto

City Airport. Ports across Canada face the risk of high-tide flooding and storm surges, and some face long-term irreversible inundation due to sea-level rise. The extent of precipitation and risk of flooding, the highest and lowest annual temperatures, the fluctuation of freeze-thaw cycles, and the variation of permafrost are all posing serious risks to Canadian airports. Permafrost degradation resulted in degradation at Iqaluit International Airport and the resulting runway damage affected airport operations with socio-economic implications.

The time is now for Canada to look at ports and airports not only as a key sector for managing Canada's trade, but also as a critical line of defence for protecting Canadians against extreme weather. The federal government should support development of climate-secure port and airport design and maintenance codes, and facilitate code implementation by provinces and communities to help make adaptation a priority.

Dr. Muntasir Billah, PEng, is an assistant professor in the department of civil engineering at the University of Calgary, and is a former assistant professor in the department of civil engineering at Lakehead University. Ranjan Datta, PhD, is Canada Research Chair in Community Disaster Research at the department of humanities, Mount Royal University, Calgary. Datta is a senior scientist for the International Science Council and the United Nations Environment Program, and a senior research fellow at the Earth System Governance Research Fellow Network at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

The Hill Times

Time to stop building infrastructure for yesterday's climate

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information about climate risks across the country—for example, addressing our out-of-date and incomplete flood mapping. And it means investing more up front to make new roads, bridges, transmission lines, and other infrastructure resilient in our future climate.

Investing in adaptation costs money up front, but pays off

down the road. Our research shows that every dollar invested in climate adaptation today returns \$13 to \$15 in future savings, including \$5 to \$6 in avoided costs of infrastructure repair, and a further \$6 to \$10 in avoided disruption to the economy.

Positive stories are emerging in Canada about more resilient infrastructure. Six of the bridges that were washed out by the 2021 floods on British Columbia's

Coquihalla Highway have been rebuilt to withstand higher water levels using deeper piles and longer bridge spans. Saint John, N.B., is raising roads and upgrading sewers to prevent damage from more frequent flooding.

A similar ethos should be applied to all new infrastructure in Canada. Without action now, rapidly increasing impacts from climate-driven extremes will cost governments and communities.



Coquihalla Highway 5 in British Columbia was closed to regular vehicle traffic on Nov. 14, 2021, due to damage caused by an atmospheric river, but permanent repairs were completed by November 2023. Photograph courtesy of Flickr.com, distributed under a CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 DEED license

The only fiscally responsible response is to prepare now. Our future climate will be more unpredictable, and new infrastructure that is not adapted to that world won't protect people and won't support Canada's economy.

Ryan Ness is director of adaptation at the Canadian Climate Institute, an independent climate policy research group. Previously, he was the lead for climate adaptation programs

and corporate strategy at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and also directed the Ontario Climate Consortium. He is a professional engineer, holds bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental engineering and water resources engineering from the University of Guelph, and is completing a PhD in environment, resources and sustainability at the University of Waterloo.

The Hill Times

Investing in plastics recycling infrastructure to create a circular economy

For Canada and the world to successfully scale recycling as part of the global solution to reduce plastic waste, we need four key actions that span the recycling chain from material design to market demand. Here they are.



As the world comes to Ottawa, now is the time for Canada to lead in building a circular economy for plastics by putting recycling infrastructure investments, minimum recycled content policies, and mandatory design standards at the core of its commitment to reduce plastic pollution and carbon pollution, writes Kate Bailey. *Image courtesy of Pixabay*

recycled content policies must be included as a standalone section in the agreement to ensure companies buy recycled first, and improve the economic viability of recycling.

Additionally, we need to build on best practices to design for circularity. Effective recycling requires that brand owners design packages that can actually be recycled. There is extensive expertise in organizations such as the Association of Plastic Recyclers and Europe's RecyClass to align packaging design with the recycling infrastructure. It is paramount for the UN to recognize and build upon these proven existing standards and technical guidance.

Finally, we must scale recycling beyond household packaging. Nearly 55 per cent of all plastic is used in non-packaging applications—such as electric vehicles, wind turbines, medical supplies, drainage pipes, and more. It is critical to build a circular economy for these plastics as well—not just packaging—and also to expand recycling services for industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) generators. Canada has just begun to look at ways to integrate ICI sectors into its provincial recycling regulations, and has the potential to lead on this groundbreaking work.

Survey data overwhelmingly finds that Canadians and citizens around the world want to recycle more. As the world descends upon Ottawa, now is the time for Canada to lead in building a circular economy for plastics by putting recycling infrastructure investments, minimum recycled content policies, and mandatory design standards at the core of its commitment to reduce plastic pollution and carbon pollution.

Kate Bailey is chief policy officer at the Association of Plastic Recyclers, an international non-profit and the only North American organization focused exclusively on improving recycling for plastics.

The Hill Times

Kate Bailey

Opinion



The global pact will be a comprehensive suite of policies, data collection, best practices, and stakeholder engagement to guide actions for each country for decades to come. There is clearly no silver bullet, but there is also global consensus that improved recycling and a circular economy for plastics is an essential solution. While Canada has much to be proud of in its current recycling systems, there remains substantial room for improvement. In this country alone, the lost opportunity cost of plastic material not being recovered is \$7.8-billion per year, and this is estimated to rise to \$11.1-billion by 2030. Plastic waste is not only an environmental catastrophe, it is also an economic failure.

For Canada and the world to successfully scale recycling as part of the global solution to reduce plastic waste, we need four key actions that span the recycling chain from material design to market demand.

First, it's vital to invest in recycling infrastructure in order to reduce CO2 emissions. Improved recycling is not just a solution to plastic pollution, it's also directly tied to Canada's commitment to address climate change. Using recycled content to make new products, in place of virgin plastics, will substantially reduce energy consumption and carbon pollution, making it a prime solution to decarbonize the economy. In Canada alone, it is estimated that a circular economy for plastics will

lead to 1.8 megatonnes of CO2e emissions reductions every year. It is essential for our government and all United Nations countries to unlock clean energy and decarbonization funds to be used for recycling infrastructure.

Secondly, we must increase market demand for using recycled plastics in products. In its *Turning Off the Tap Report*, the UN recognized the challenging economics of recycling compared to virgin plastic production, and cautioned that global targets would not be met unless "recycling becomes a more stable and profitable venture." Unfortunately, the current draft text of the UN agreement does not go far enough to prioritize recycled content over virgin plastic. Minimum

Roads, horses, and carts, oh my! Time for Canada to take trade-enabling infrastructure seriously

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past decade, with our ranking falling from its peak of 10th in the world in 2008, down to 32nd in 2019. While such a plunge in our global standing is certainly concerning, the even more alarming barometer of our economic prospects is the widening gap

between Canada and our largest trading partner and competitor, the United States, which has doubled down on investment in transportation through its \$1.2-trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Fortunately, not everyone is asleep at the stirrups. Our provincial premiers have repeatedly acknowledged the need for long-

term infrastructure planning, first by endorsing the principles of a Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan at the Council of the Federation's summer meeting, then calling for an in-person first ministers' meeting dedicated to the linked priorities of competitiveness and strategic infrastructure, and have now written to the prime

minister to reiterate their infrastructure priorities. Clearly, the lack of clarity around whether any infrastructure funding plan is forthcoming continues to fuel uncertainty.

That's no surprise given that our supply chains have been under constant strain in recent years due to floods, wildfires, blockades, strikes, and the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting that they are only as strong as its weakest link. Which is why now is the time to encourage investment in transportation infrastructure that enables Canadian businesses to get goods to market, grow our economy, establish our nation as a reliable trading partner, and ensure Canadians and their communities have reliable access to goods and services.

There have been positive developments in this regard, such as the National Trade Corridors

Fund. But with those dollars mostly allocated, more is needed. In alignment with premiers, the private sector has also been calling for a collaborative approach and a forward-looking, long-term Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan, which would signal to the world the Canada is, indeed, open for business and invested in being so.

And now, as we turn our collective attention to next week's federal budget, we can only hope that the economic horse is appropriately placed before the cart. Because the road to a more prosperous life for Canadians is paved with strategic investments in infrastructure that improve our competitiveness and unlock our potential.

Pascal Chan is the senior director, transportation, infrastructure, and construction at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.
The Hill Times

Climate



Liz Pijogge, a northern contaminants researcher for the Nunatsiavut government, collects plastic samples in the Nunatsiavut region. Image courtesy SuliaKaKatigelluta: Community Monitoring of Plastic Pollution in Nunatsiavut

Inuit at the UN plastic talks

The global community is coming to Ottawa at the end of April to continue key talks on a global plastics treaty, with a goal to have a completed treaty text at the end of 2024. But we're up against 'Big Plastic'. For them, billions of dollars are on the line.

Lisa Koperqualuk



Opinion

There's a sequence in a YouTube video Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) produced last year on contaminants. It shows what happens to a piece of plastic dropped into a gutter in a big city. The sewer system carries it out to sea, through ocean currents, and it makes its way to the Arctic. We called our video "Pristine Arctic?" because plastics, along with other contaminants, pollute our pristine environment.

Plastics is a global issue. As a contaminant, plastic takes hundreds of years to break down. The oceans are choking with tons of plastic. The international community is taking action. In March 2022, the United Nations body, known as the UN Environment Assembly, adopted a historic resolution to develop an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. We hope that this future 'plastics treaty' will be a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal. To date, there have

been three negotiation sessions held in Uruguay, France, and Kenya. The fourth session will be held in Ottawa from April 23-29, 2024.

Our role at the ICC is to bring the Inuit voice to the international arena. ICC obtained Economic and Social Council observer status at the UN in 1983. We were there at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 sounding the alarm about climate change. ICC is also very active in other contaminant conventions, and took a critical role during the negotiations for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, as well as the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

We brought a consistent voice to those meetings, and we will be doing the same at the plastics negotiations. Our message is that there must be a human rights focus, including the recognition and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples throughout the plastics treaty. We also bring a holistic

worldview. Climate change and the melting sea ice, for example, is speeding up the release of contaminants into the Arctic, and needs to be a part of this conversation.

The Stockholm and Minamata Conventions recognize the Arctic and Indigenous Peoples as vulnerable in the preamble of the treaty. It is important to have the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and our rights in the operative texts of the plastics treaty. The monitoring of plastics in the environment must also be included, and be based on the best available knowledge, including science and Indigenous knowledge on an equal footing.

While I am bringing my political voice as the ICC vice-chair to these talks, our team includes two Inuit who have experience doing research on the land in Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR). They work with scientific researchers very successfully, and the research brings important contributions to regional,

national and international policy making.

For example, Liz Pijogge and her Nunatsiavut colleagues have been collecting samples from marine mammals over the years. Their data shows the increased presence of plastics in the stomachs of marine mammals in the Arctic. Gerald Lennie Inglangasuk is from the ISR. He is a member of the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, and is very familiar with the beluga monitoring program and research activities in the ISR. Their technical expertise will show how Inuit are leading the way and need to be included in these negotiations.

The international community is coming to Ottawa at the end of April to continue important negotiations on a global plastics treaty. The goal is to have a completed treaty text at the end of 2024.

The Ottawa sessions will be critical. We're up against 'Big Plastic'. For them, billions of dollars are on the line. In Canada, our federal government tried to designate some plastic products as 'toxic' under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to be able to regulate and ban some of the problematic plastic products nationally. Big Plastic took the Government of Canada to court, and won. We hope Canada will appeal and win this fight, but this is just one example of how we are fighting against a tidal wave of plastic, including the industry titans. We all have a part to play in it.

Lisa Koperqualuk is vice-chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), and president of ICC Canada.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Trudeau should abandon his quest to regulate free speech, argues Robert Sopuck



Justice Minister Arif Virani pictured on the Hill on Jan. 30, 2024, is the federal cabinet minister responsible for the Online Harms Bill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

dents leaned more to the left since that ostensibly represented individual freedom. Little did we know what the repressive left would morph into in the coming decades. We had aggressive debates between ourselves and others with whom we did not agree on all manner of topics. Debates and questions were part of almost every class.

I was studying zoology at the University of Manitoba, and many of my classmates, myself included, were passionate conservationists/environmentalists. We were appalled at the construction—and ensuing ecosystem damage—caused by Manitoba's Hydro's dams in the north of that province. We invited a government cabinet minister to attend a forum on hydro development. After his speech, we peppered him with aggressive questions on ecosystem damage which he skillfully parried. None of us were convinced by his answers, but it never crossed our minds to not have such debates.

But the current climate of fear regarding free speech at universities has now moved into the mainstream, and hence Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's attempt to write laws to regulate speech with which he does not agree. I recently viewed a political panel as they discussed this proposed new law, and one panellist noted that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's opposition to this bill is because many in the Conservative party are pro-free speech. I kid you not. A commitment to the freedom of speech is now a bad thing.

Too many people conflate criticism with hate speech. Take Islamophobia. While it is clearly wrong to advocate violence against any group, are we still free to have intellectual debates about religion? Renowned atheists such as Bill Maher, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and the late, great Christopher Hitchens have been ferocious critics of the tenets of Islam. It must be noted that these men were equal opportunity atheists, strongly criticizing all religions. Many are offended by these criticisms, and one only has to view some videos to see the passion such critics engender. Real free speech always offends someone; otherwise, it would not be free.

Trudeau should abandon his quest to regulate free speech, and reflect on John Diefenbaker's statements on freedom as he moved to pass the Canadian Bill of Rights: "I am a Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind."

Robert Sopuck was the Conservative Member of Parliament for the Manitoba constituency of Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa from 2010 to 2019.

The Hill Times

Real free speech always offends someone; otherwise, it would not be free.

Robert Sopuck



Opinion

SANDY LAKE, MAN.—When it comes to laws and regulations, the devil is always in the details. Goals are easy to enunciate, but

actually putting pen to paper and developing enforceable laws that still protect personal liberty and freedom are very tricky. When it comes to so-called "hate speech" laws, this problem is magnified since few can articulate a definition of what constitutes "hate speech." Is it speech that offends you? Is it speech that you don't like? Or is it speech that advocates for violence against a group or individual? On this third point, we can all readily agree that such speech does constitute hate speech. But what about the others?

Interestingly, it is the socialist left that has developed terms such as "political correctness," "micro aggressions," and "safe spaces" in

order to protect delicate young college students from hearing anything they deem offensive. Conservative speakers have been shouted down at American and Canadian college campuses. This has often caused campus police to intervene to prevent left-wing violence.

The socialist left has coined the phrase "speech is violence" as if words have the power, by themselves, to cause physical harms. In a 2017 *Atlantic* article, Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff note: "Of all the ideas percolating on college campuses these days, the most dangerous one might be that speech is sometimes violence. We're not talking about verbal threats of violence, which

are used to coerce and intimidate, and which are illegal and not protected by the First Amendment. We're talking about speech that is deemed by members of an identity group to be critical of the group, or speech that is otherwise upsetting to members of the group."

I am a child of the late 1960s and 1970s. Those were times of great intellectual ferment. Free speech was a big deal, as exemplified by the Free Speech Movement on the University of California Berkeley campus. There, students demanded that political activity be allowed on campus, and they prevailed. Like most college students of that era, I and my fellow stu-

News

Liberal government faces test defending royal prerogative as opposition MPs vie for say in Canada's foreign policy

While Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly said 'we cannot change foreign policy based on an opposition motion,' she also noted that the amended and non-binding NDP motion on the war in Gaza is a 'real thing,' and 'that this is clearly the intent of this government, to make sure we follow what is written in this motion.'

BY NEIL MOSS

With opposition MPs pushing motions to direct Canadian foreign policy—whether out of ideology or symbolism—pressure is being put on the cabinet's exclusive control over the management of Canada's place on the world stage.

Over the last two Parliaments, Conservative and NDP MPs have moved a number of such opposition day motions, most of which have passed, including three with the cabinet's support in the current parliamentary session.

The most recent test for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and his cabinet was a motion moved by NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.), her party's foreign affairs critic, who forwarded a plan to address the worsening crisis in Gaza amid the fallout of the Israel-Hamas war.

After negotiations, the great majority of the Liberal caucus—including cabinet—joined the NDP and Bloc Québécois in supporting a watered-down motion to stop arms exports to Israel, continue funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and to demand an immediate ceasefire, among other conditions. Before it was amended, the original motion that was moved by the New Democrats called for



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, left, and NDP MP Heather McPherson. After negotiations with the Liberals, McPherson acceded to a more watered-down proposal that didn't include recognizing the state of Palestine. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Canada to formally recognize the state of Palestine.

During parliamentary debate on the motion, prior to a Liberal amendment being moved on the NDP motion, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) said that "we cannot change foreign policy based on an opposition motion."

Opposition motions are non-binding and don't force the government in a specific policy direction. They only state certain provisions are the opinion of the House, if they pass, as the Crown prerogative gives the executive branch absolute jurisdiction over foreign policy matters.

But after the amended motion passed, Joly told *The Toronto Star* that the non-binding provision is a "real thing." Canada's top diplomat told reporters "that this is clearly the intent of this government, to make sure that we follow what is written in this motion," according to a CBC News report. Two days later, Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) told the public broadcaster the government's policy on arms exports hadn't changed, and remarked that the non-binding provision is a "continuation of existing government policy."

Former Conservative staffer Garry Keller, who served as chief of staff to then-foreign affairs minister John Baird, said the government shouldn't be allowing the House to dictate foreign policy even when it votes in favour. "I don't think the government of the day should be pushed around by an opposition day motion," said Keller, now vice-president at StrategyCorp. "The government has to be almost resolute to say, 'We don't care what the outcome of it is.' If it is contrary to

a government's foreign policy and longstanding Canadian foreign policy, then ... it should not result necessarily in an immediate response like the Israel-Palestine motion did."

"At the end of the day, the government of the day has the royal prerogative over foreign affairs, and the expression of the view of the House of Commons is not what sets the policy of the Government of Canada," he said, remarking that is also the case for defence policy, which is also a Crown prerogative.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) indicated that the motion will bring added difficulty to bring hopeful asylum-seekers from Gaza to Canada.

"The adoption of that motion doesn't help getting people out," said Miller, according to a Canadian Press report, as it has been met with ire by Israel. "We can't be naive as a country as to the actions that we take and the impact that can have on the ground and for actual people's lives."

Keller said there is nothing wrong with parties expressing a view in the House during a vote on an opposition motion, but it gets "a bit sticky" when a government takes direction based on the outcome of a vote in the Chamber.

"The executive has to divorce, sometimes, its role from what is happening in the House of Commons and the powers that it has to make certain decisions," he said.

In 2022, Conservative MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey-White Rock, B.C.) moved a motion calling for Canada to meet its NATO commitment of spending two per cent of its GDP on defence. It passed with the support of the Liberals, including the cabi-

net, as well as the Bloc Québécois, with the NDP voting against.

While defence spending has risen slightly by then, its spending as a portion of its GDP remains stagnant at 1.38 per cent. DND has also pledged \$2.5-billion in cuts over the next three fiscal years.

In 2018, Conservative MP Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.) moved a motion on Iran, which included a call to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity. The Liberal cabinet supported the motion, but nearly six years later the government still hasn't made the listing.

In the last Parliament, Conservative MP Michael Chong (Wellington-Halton Hills, Ont.), his party's foreign affairs critic, forwarded a motion to label Beijing's persecution of Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims as a genocide. The motion was supported by all parties, but the cabinet abstained. Canada's foreign ministry has highlighted its "grave concern" over "gross and systemic human rights violations" in Xinjiang, but hasn't declared that a genocide is taking place.

Former diplomat Colin Robertson, who is now vice-president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said Chong's motion left an impression that MPs were not always willing to follow their cabinet anymore.

He added that foreign policy matters are increasingly being viewed through a domestic lens, noting that will likely bring more division within governing parties as parliamentarians are pulled in different directions.

"The public is much more sensitive now to international events because they have a dog in a fight," he said.

In turn, Robertson said he expects the number of opposition motions driving foreign policy to rise.

"I think it will make foreign policy-making less driven from the civil service and the executive," he said. "Parliamentarians are going to have more influence."

Former NDP staffer Cameron Holmstrom, now principal at Niipaawi Strategies, said with the opposition having few options to influence debate in the House, forwarding a motion shows the role of an effective opposition.

But he said for the New Democrats, their motion on Israel and Palestine will accomplish little.

"What is it going to do to advance anything? There are a lot of Canadians on either side of this who have lost family or are losing family, and what [has this] accomplished to end that or arrive at the goals that are laid out in the motion itself?" he said. "From my mind, the motion itself—pass or fail—was going to do nothing along those regards."

Holmstrom said even while forwarding the motion, Canada's current role in the world doesn't give it much sway to influence events.

"I don't think it actually improves the situation abroad. If anything, it's more likely to antagonize," he said, remarking that the motions err when they focus on partisanship and only assuage a party's own constituency, and not address the actual issue at play.

In general, he said that opposition parties should be readily involved in the formation of foreign policy.

"This idea that opposition parties shouldn't be making foreign policy is one that I've always bristled against because it always comes to this idea that somehow opposition MPs are somehow lesser than," he said. "The prime minister is not a president, he's the first among equals. The members of government are just as equal as every other party in that House, it doesn't matter if you have 100 seats or one seat. To my mind that means you have the right to be making policy across the whole board."

Carleton University international affairs professor David Carment, editor of the *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, said the opposition motion allowed for consultation to take place within Parliament, so it wasn't a matter of the Liberal government implementing a policy on its own.

"Even if it is unbinding, it contributes to an enlightened debate about a very complex policy problem," he said.

Carment said with policy coming from the executive, the opposition motion allows a "public discussion" with "wide-ranging viewpoints," when it is valuable to show the public what is at stake, and where Canada can make a contribution.

"Parliament has to stand for something and one aspect, which is very important, is an educational one," he said.

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Liberal ridings raised more cash in 2022, but Conservatives had \$12-million more in the bank

At the end of 2022—the most recent publicly available filings with Elections Canada—the federal Conservative riding associations had \$25.4-million in the bank, compared to the Liberals’ \$13.4-million. All riding associations must file their 2023 financial statements with Elections Canada by May 31.

Continued from page 1

associations collectively raised \$2-million more than the Conservatives associations did in 2022: \$5.6-million versus \$3.6-million. Riding associations have several sources of income, including their own fundraising, rebates from Elections Canada, and transfers from their respective party headquarters. They often save money raised in one year for use in another, for example, when an election is called. While MPs and riding associations raise money for themselves locally, party leaders and headquarters raise cash at the national level. That’s where the Conservatives have consistently bested the Liberals.

In 2023—the first full year under new party leader Pierre Poilievre—the Conservative Party raked in \$35.3-million at the national level, according to data released by Elections Canada. The Liberals brought in \$15.6-million; the New Democrats \$6.9-million; the Bloc Québécois \$1.8-million; the Greens \$1.9-million; and the People’s Party of Canada \$1.6-million.

In 2022, the Conservatives raised \$23-million at the national level; the Liberals \$14.9-million; the NDP \$6.9-million; the Greens \$2-million; and the Bloc and the People’s Party \$1.5-million each.

The 10 Conservative riding associations that had the highest amount of money in the bank at the end of 2022 include Lanark-Frontenac—Kingston, Ont.; Abbotsford, B.C.; Grande Prairie-Mackenzie, Alta.; Foothills, Alta.; Edmonton Centre, Alta.; Lethbridge, Alta.; Edmonton-Riverbend, Alta.; Medicine



The riding of Don Valley East, Ont. represented by Liberal MP Michael Coteau, had the eighth-largest amount of money among Liberal EDAs at the end of 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Hat-Cardston-Warner, Alta.; South Surrey-White Rock, B.C.; and Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.

The 10 Liberal ridings that had the largest amount in the bank were: University-Rosedale, Ont.; Kingston and the Islands, Ont.; Orléans, Ont.; Vancouver Granville, B.C.; Edmonton Centre, Alta.; Ottawa Centre, Ont.; Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.; Don Valley East, Ont.; North Vancouver, B.C.; and Parkdale-High Park, Ont.

On the Liberal side, five of those 10 ridings are represented by senior cabinet ministers, three by parliamentary secretaries, and two by backbenchers.

The riding of Edmonton Centre falls in the top 10 for both the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Liberal riding association had \$177,809 in the bank at the end of 2022, while the Conservative EDA had \$321,794. Currently represented by Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault, this riding has swung back and forth between both major parties in recent elections. Boissonnault won the 2021 election by 612 votes, besting then incumbent Conservative MP James Cumming. Boissonnault had first won this riding in 2015, but lost to Cumming in 2019.

“James Cumming has been our candidate for 10 years, and he gets out in the community, he fundraises, he spends a lot of time out there, and people want to see him win,” said Robyn Henwood, vice-president of the Conservative EDA in Edmonton Centre, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “As you know, we are a target riding, it is highly competitive. It takes money and volunteers to win, and so we do spend a lot of time, and particularly James spends a lot of time making sure that our campaign is fully funded to win.”

Henwood said that Cumming is planning on running again in the next election. She said that it takes money to undertake any campaign activities, and the rid-

ing is ready to do that within the spending limit set by Elections Canada. In a minority government, an election can happen at any time, so riding associations have to make sure they are ready if a snap election is called.

“Money is important to run a campaign because literature takes money. [Being] able to make phone calls, just even providing snacks for your volunteers,” said Henwood. “So it is a requirement. There are limits to what you can spend, as there should be. But making sure that you have money in the bank particularly [when] an election can be called at any time.”

Liberal MP Taleeb Noormohamed represents Vancouver Granville, B.C., which had the fourth-highest amount in the bank nationally on the Liberal side. He said that raising funds is an ongoing part of politics. To do it, he focuses on building relationships with grassroots party members, and trying to address their concerns, he said.

Noormohamed said that all political activities cost money, from purchasing lawn signs, to advertising, to renting campaign offices. In order to run a winning campaign, riding associations must have enough money in the bank to finance this work. He said his riding association also transfers money to other ridings that may need help, or to Liberal candidates in byelection campaigns. Noormohamed’s riding was also on the list of Liberal EDAs that raised the most money in 2022.

“I look at it in the context of... are we doing the right thing in our communities? Are we building local support? And that’s important,” said Noormohamed, who was first elected in 2021 by a narrow margin of 471 votes. “So I’m very lucky to have really a very strong base of support of donors, of volunteers, and that’s a reflection of the work that my team and I do to make sure [we serve our community].”

Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Ont.), a former Ontario justice minister and attorney general, said that once one campaign ends, he start to raise funds for the next, a model he has followed throughout his political career. He represented the same riding provincially, winning three elections between 2007 and 2018.

“We work hard in making sure that we are ready for an election, and I’ve got a really good team that focuses on fundraising, and really supportive constituents who support my candidacy and riding association,” said Naqvi, whose riding association had \$172,857 in the bank—the sixth highest in the country for the Liberal Party—at the end of 2022.

“We have a very steady way of raising money. In Ottawa Centre, we’re really privileged to have a solid list of monthly donors who give us money through [the]

Victory Fund. In fact, Ottawa Centre is the top riding among Liberals to have the largest number of Victory Fund members year after year, and that allows us to have the resources that we need to fight the election whenever it’s called.”

The Victory Fund membership for the Liberal Party starts with a minimum monthly donation of \$5, though members can give as high as the maximum annual donation limit of \$1,725. Naqvi said his riding has more than 260 Victory Fund donors, the highest number in the country for five years.

Naqvi said that during the last election campaign, he not only raised enough money to finance the 2021 federal campaign, but also saved a significant chunk that has given him a good head start for the 2025 campaign.

“I have always lived by the by the model of when you finish one campaign...make sure that you have raised enough money to fight the next campaign,” he said. “And so I always try to be a step ahead.”

Liberal MP Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Ont.), a former Ontario cabinet minister, said that he started out in politics as a school trustee, and later moved into provincial politics before jumping to federal politics. So far, he has won seven elections—three as school trustee, three at the provincial level, and one federally. Throughout his political career, Coteau said, he has tried to be a grassroots politician, which has allowed him to build a strong support base. Fundraising is never easy, Coteau said, and the best way to do it is to get small, regular donations from your support base. At the end of 2022, Coteau’s riding had the eighth highest total in the Liberal Party with \$167,624 in the bank.

“It’s nice to have money in the bank; campaigns and politics cost money, right?” said Coteau. “We raise money, and we don’t spend a lot, and at the end of the day we’re looking at a four-year cycle to ensure that we have money to go into an election by 2025. So that’s been our plan all along.”

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Top 10 Conservative Riding Associations with the largest amount of money in the bank in 2022

Riding Name	MP	Amount
Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, Ont.	Scott Reid	\$438,670
Abbotsford, B.C.	Ed Fast	\$403,298
Grande Prairie-Mackenzie, Alta.	Chris Warkentin	\$393,353
Foothills, Alta.	John Barlow	\$384,834
Edmonton Centre, Alta.	Unheld by Conservatives*	\$321,794
Lethbridge, Alta.	Rachael Thomas	\$305,487
Edmonton Riverbend, Alta.	Matt Generoux	\$303,354
Medicine Hat-Cardston-Warner, Alta.	Glen Motz	\$293,434
South Surrey-White Rock, B.C.	Kerry-Lynne Findlay	\$280,390
Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.	Leslyn Lewis	\$274,422

*The riding of Edmonton Centre is currently represented by Liberal MP Randy Boissonnault. James Cumming was the candidate of record in 2021, and will run again in 2025.

Feature

A closer look at the federal carbon tax

As of April 1, the federal carbon tax that applies in nine provinces and two territories rose from \$65 a tonne to \$80 a tonne.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Carbon tax. Carbon price. Tax on pollution. It goes by many names, but the government's primary greenhouse gas reduction mechanism remains a perennial issue as both cost of living and environmental concerns are front of mind for Canadian voters.

The opposition Conservatives are calling for it to be scrapped. Seven premiers want it paused, or at the very least amended. The Liberals are determined to see through their plan.

Here's a rundown of how this political hot potato works, and what it means for Canadian consumers.

What is the carbon tax?

Also known as carbon pricing or a price on carbon pollution, there are two forms of federal carbon tax in Canada. One is industrial, in which companies pay a price for their share of greenhouse gas emissions. The other is a consumer levy which is applied to purchases of fossil fuels by individuals, small and medium-sized businesses, and institutions.

The levy is based on the amount of greenhouse gas that is emitted when those fuels—including gasoline, diesel, propane, and natural gas—are burned, and is determined on carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per tonne.

Natural Resources Canada estimated in 2014 that a vehicle burning a litre of gasoline resulted in 2.29 kilograms of carbon dioxide tailpipe emissions, while burning a litre of diesel fuel resulted in 2.26 kilograms of tailpipe emissions.

The carbon pricing regime is intended to encourage Canadian consumers and businesses to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels, and to seek cleaner alternatives to energy. The federal government first introduced the carbon tax in 2019, and its price has increased year-on-year since its implementation.

What is the current price?

The minimum price, as of April 1, 2024, is \$80 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says provincial premiers calling for changes to the carbon tax are 'playing politics.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

emissions. That price will increase by \$15 a tonne annually between now and 2030, when it will be \$170 a tonne. The carbon price was first established in 2019 at \$20 per tonne.

For 2024, that means that consumers will pay a carbon levy of 17.6 cents per litre on gasoline, 21.38 cents per litre on diesel, 10.08 cents per litre on propane, and 12.4 cents per cubic metre on natural gas.

Where does the federal carbon tax apply?

The Canadian government collects the carbon tax in all provinces and territories that do not have their own carbon pricing system that meets a federal benchmark. The jurisdictions currently subject to this "backstop" are Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and Yukon.

British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and Quebec maintain their own carbon pricing regimes that adhere to federal standards.

British Columbia's and the Northwest Territories' carbon taxes are in line with the federal government's, at \$80 per tonne as of April 1, 2024.

Quebec, meanwhile, has a greenhouse gas emission cap-

and-trade system, which is a market-based approach in which a cap is set on permits that allow businesses to emit a certain amount of greenhouse gas pollution. Those emitting companies must hold permits equivalent to their emissions, or else buy permits from other businesses.

Quebec is part of the Western Climate Initiative, a shared emissions trading market, alongside the American states of California and Washington. That initiative, in turn, has established the Compliance Instrument Tracking System Service as a management and tracking system for the market.

The federal carbon tax on fuel took effect in Atlantic Canada in 2023 due to updated minimum standards for the federal benchmark published by Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2021. Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island proposed emissions reduction strategies to the federal government in 2022, but were deemed insufficient to meet the federal benchmark.

As a result, the fuel levy applied in those provinces as of July 1, 2023. New Brunswick opted for the federal backstop in February 2023.

What are the rebates?

In provinces subject to the carbon tax, individuals and families

receive quarterly rebates (recently rebranded as the "Canada Carbon Rebate"). These rebates vary by province, and include a 20 per cent top-up for rural residents. That rural top-up applies to the entirety of Prince Edward Island.

In 2024-25, the quarterly rebate is \$225 for an adult in Alberta, \$188 in Saskatchewan, \$150 in Manitoba, \$149 in Newfoundland and Labrador, \$140 in Ontario, \$110 in Prince Edward Island (including the rural top-up), and \$95 in New Brunswick.

For a family of four, the base rebate is \$450 in Alberta, \$376 in Saskatchewan, \$300 in Manitoba, \$298 in Newfoundland and Labrador, \$280 in Ontario, \$220 in Prince Edward Island, and \$190 in New Brunswick.

The Yukon and Nunavut governments provide their own rebates—known in Nunavut as carbon credits—to residents each quarter.

What are the exemptions?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced on Oct. 26, 2023, that deliveries of heating oil would be exempt from the charge from Nov. 9, 2023, until April 1, 2027.

The exemption primarily affects Atlantic Canada. According to Statistics Canada data from 2021, 40 per cent of Prince Edward Island, 32 per cent of Nova

Scotia, 18 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador, and seven per cent of New Brunswick residents used heating oil as their primary heating source. That compared to three per cent of households using heating oil and their primary source nationwide.

The Northwest Territories suspended the carbon tax on diesel for home heating, in line with the federal government's exemption on oil heating, on April 1, 2024.

In agriculture, farmers are exempt from the levies on gasoline and diesel to run their farm machinery.

Where do the parties stand?

The federal Conservatives have promised to abolish carbon pricing altogether if they form government at the next election. During this term of Parliament, the party has moved numerous non-binding motions in the House pushing for the tax to be eliminated, all of which have been defeated.

A private member's bill by Conservative MP Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, Ont.), C-234, proposes an exemption for farmers on propane and natural gas used for grain drying and on-farm heating. The bill passed third reading in the House with the support of the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and three Liberal MPs in March 2023. An amended version that removed barns and greenhouses from the exemption clause, and shortened a sunset period on the exemption for propane and natural gas in grain drying from eight years to three passed third reading in the Senate in December 2023.

The amended bill is awaiting consideration in the House.

The NDP has called for the Liberal government to remove the GST on all home heating, and for a windfall tax on oil and gas companies. A non-binding motion on the idea was defeated in the House, with all parties except the NDP, Greens, and Independent MP Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ont.) voting against.

The conservative provincial leaders of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island have expressed opposition to the federal carbon tax, as has Newfoundland and Labrador's Liberal Premier Andrew Furey. The seven premiers have called for a pause on the increase to the carbon tax that came into effect on April 1.

As for the governing Liberals, Trudeau insisted in October 2023 that there would "absolutely not" be any further carbon tax exemptions after the change to home heating oil. During a press conference last week, Trudeau said "all those premiers that are busy complaining about the price on pollution, but not putting forward a concrete alternative that they think would be better for their communities are just playing politics."

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Thibedeau makes move to Global Public Affairs

Continued from page 2



Goodbye Hannah: Hannah Thibedeau is executive communications officer at Global Public Affairs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster

recently for CBC, during which time she has reported on seven federal elections, four prime ministers, and international events including summits for the G7, NATO, and APEC.

Thibedeau announced her resignation from CBC News on March 30 on X (formerly Twitter), before officially announcing the move to Global on the same platform on April 3.

“As someone who has been at the centre of the Canadian political ecosystem and has both witnessed and covered major milestones and events that have defined Canada’s politics and media landscape, I am confident I can contribute significantly to the work of Global’s clients, while supporting the pursuit of new opportunities for growth and collaboration across the country,” Thibedeau said in the Global press release.

This just in: Crestview expands to Australia

Speaking of GR firms, Crestview Strategy has opened an office in a fourth country, spreading across the Pacific to Australia.

The Canadian lobby shop has recruited **Matthew Doman**, who has held senior positions in the oil and gas sector and been a staffer for Australian federal ministers, as a vice-president to lead the newly established Sydney office.

Doman has previously been the public affairs director of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, held a similar role on an interim basis at the International Gas Union, and was manager of communications and public affairs for Adelaide-based oil and gas company Santos Ltd.

Prior to his public affairs work, Doman was a press secretary to the trade and finance ministers in the Australian government of former Liberal prime minister **John Howard**, and a journalist for the *Australian* newspaper.

Australia is the third international market for Crestview, having previously opened offices in the United States and United Kingdom.

Justices and diplomat discuss ‘fight for liberal democracy’ talk at McGill

A retired Supreme Court judge will join the president of Brazil’s highest court, and a former Indian diplomat whose novel was

adapted into the film *Slumdog Millionaire* for a McGill University panel discussion about “the threat to civility and the fight for liberal democracy” on April 8.

Rosalie Silberman Abella, who sat on the Supreme Court of Canada between 2004 and 2021, is currently the Judith Pizar Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. She will be joined by **Luís Roberto Barroso**, who is currently the president of the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil, and **Vikas Swarup**, who was India’s high commissioner to Canada between 2017 and 2019, and whose debut novel, *Q & A*, was adapted into the Oscar-winning film *Slumdog Millionaire*.

The trio will discuss “the threat to civility, the erosion of institutional trust, the rise of authoritarianism, and how Canada and other countries can promote respect and protect liberal democracy,” according to McGill’s website. The panel discussion will be moderated by CBC host **Nahlah Ayed**.

The free event will be held at Centre Mont-Royal in Montreal, Que., from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.



Rosalie Silberman Abella, who sat on the Supreme Court of Canada between 2004 and 2021, will join a McGill University panel discussion about threats to liberal democracy. *Photograph by Philippe Landreville/Supreme Court of Canada collection*

Assembly of First Nations to hold nuclear waste transport and storage talks

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) will gather opinions from First Nations across the country in a series of events about the transportation and storage of used nuclear fuel starting later this month.

AFN is hosting four one-day sessions “to advocate for First Nations’ active involvement in decisions about used nuclear fuel, management, and transportation across Turtle Island,” according to its website.

The talks come as the Canadian government outlined its “adaptive phased management” plan for the long-term storage of used nuclear fuel, which will be stored in a “deep geological repositories.” Two sites are currently being considered as possible hosts for the storage, as are transportation systems to the repository.

The goal, according to AFN, will be to receive feedback and the priorities of First Nations about used nuclear fuel, and its transportation and storage in Canada, as well as to share details about the government’s plans. The AFN recommended

the events for First Nations community members, leaders, and governments, and environmental organizations, industry groups, and academics.

A session will be held in Fredericton, N.B., on April 22; Toronto on May 6; Thunder Bay, Ont., on May 22; and Vancouver, B.C., on June 3.



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak. The AFN is holding a series of dialogue meetings about the transportation and storage of used nuclear fuel. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Indigenous economic reconciliation discussion online

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada’s National Capital and Manitoba branches will hold a virtual event about Indigenous economic development and reconciliation on April 9.

The hour-long event will feature **Jamie Dumont**, the principal and owner of Chadwick Consulting, board member of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, and former chair of the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce; **Matthew Foss**, the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business vice-president of research and public policy; and **Matt Garrow**, senior director of Indigenous Services Canada’s economic reconciliation director. **Karine Duhamel**, the director of Indigenous strategy at the Social Sciences

and Humanities Research Council, will moderate.

“This virtual event will explore how current reconciliation efforts are influencing economic development of Indigenous communities,” according to a description on the event website. “Panellists will share Indigenous perspectives about reconciliation and economic development, including how communities and businesses may collaborate to co-develop and implement sustainable strategies that contribute to Indigenous self-determination in alignment with community values.”

The discussion will happen online on April 9 from 11:30 a.m.

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Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

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News

As illiberal regimes spread in a year of elections, Canada must defend vision of democracy as 'best guarantee' of freedom, says Ignatieff

Authoritarian regimes are increasingly exploiting democratic norms and language to justify government overreach and cronyism, warns ex-Liberal leader in speech to University of Ottawa.

Continued from page 1

The "deliberately provocative" title, Ignatieff said, was to draw attention to the fact that the term "democracy" was the reigning

principle of political legitimacy worldwide, regardless of whether elections were free and fair. He used the example of Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz's party has won four elections.

During that time, the European Union, media outlets, and global human rights groups have warned that the government has moved away from democratic norms, and has encouraged cronyism and the use of emergency powers at the expense of the rule of law. The Central European University, where Ignatieff is a professor, departed Hungary in 2018 amid what the institution categorized at the time as a government attack on academic freedom.

"[Orbán] then denounces any internal or external critique of the regime as undemocratic," said Ignatieff from the university's

campus in Austria. "This is what electoral illiberal democracy or electoral autocracy looks like: single party or single leader rule legitimized by elections."

More than 60 countries, constituting approximately half the world's population, will hold national elections this year. But not all of these elections will be free and fair. Global Affairs Canada has publicly raised concerns about the conduct of voting in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and outright denied the legitimacy of elections in Belarus and Russia.

Canada is not immune from concerns about democracy. The 2023 edition of the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual "Democracy Index" found Canada held a score of 8.69 out of a possible 10, ranking 13th out of all countries, and remaining one of the world's strongest democracies. But it is also the lowest score

Michael Ignatieff said democracy must be envisioned as 'a form of self-government in which power checks power to keep the people free.'

Screenshot via YouTube

Canada has received in the index since it was established in 2006—the highest was in 2020, when it received 9.24. The country remains North America's only "full democracy," which is defined in the index as countries that score greater than eight.

The downgrade was in part due to growing polarization in Canada, including



disagreements between conservative-led provinces and the Liberal federal government.

"Meanwhile, U.S.-style 'culture war' topics have become more prominent in Canadian political discourse, animating debates about individual freedoms—including over COVID-19 restrictions, gun control, and, more recently, transgender rights and parental rights," the report stated.

"They also have increasingly served as reference points for inter-party conflicts at the national level. The Conservative leader, Pierre Poilievre, accuses [Prime Minister Justin] Trudeau of

advancing a 'woke' agenda, while Mr. Trudeau frequently alludes to [Donald] Trump in the U.S. to frame Mr. Poilievre as a far-right radical."

The country's social cohesion indicator on the index dropped from 8.13 in 2022 to 7.50 in 2023 as a result. Social cohesion was the area in which Canada was weakest, behind functioning of government (8.21), civil liberties (8.82), political participation (8.89), and electoral process and pluralism (a perfect 10.00).

The civil liberties score was weighed down by the continued "marginalization of Canada's





President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed victory in elections earlier this year that Global Affairs Canada condemned as neither free nor fair. Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Indigenous population,” and Quebec’s ban on the wearing of religious symbols in certain public service jobs.

On April 2, *The Globe and Mail* published an open letter urging the country’s political leaders to “address urgently the rise of incivility, public aggression and overt hatred that are undermining the peace and security of Canadian life.”

“We are calling upon you, the senior political leadership of Canada, to put political affiliation and partisanship aside and demonstrate your shared commitment to fostering a safer, more

cohesive and respectful Canada, where hatred has no home,” said the letter signed by 51 people, including former Quebec premier Jean Charest; ex-Liberal MPs Barry Campbell, John English, and Francis LeBlanc; and former Toronto mayors John Tory and Art Eggleton, also a former Chrétien-era cabinet minister.

The signatories called for political leaders to partner with academia and civil society to research the causes and impact of issue-driven tension in Canada, to back national initiatives designed to curb hate, fund educational programs to foster greater inter-

cultural competency and community-level empathy, and speak out “wherever and whenever you can about the values that bind us together as a country.”

Another global index, this time by Washington, D.C.-based think tank Freedom House, awarded Canada 97 out of 100 in its measurement of political rights and civil liberties. The rating, declined from 98 the previous year, but still placed Canada as joint fourth for global freedom scores, alongside Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and San Marino.

The reason for the one-point drop, according to Freedom House, was inadequate federal and provincial compliance with the Access to Information Act, and for amendments to the Canada Elections Act included in last year’s budget implementation bill that “exempted political parties from having to comply with privacy laws in the collection and use of citizens’ data during election campaigns.”

Canada was among 52 countries to see a decline in their score this year, with overall global freedom declining for the 18th consecutive year in Freedom House’s report. “Almost everywhere, the downturn in rights was driven by attacks on pluralism—the peaceful coexistence of people with different political ideas, religions, or ethnic identities—that harmed elections and sowed violence,” the report said.

Fix ‘empty shell’ of House of Commons to revive debate

Ignatieff said countries such as Canada must go beyond the idea of defending “democracy” as a concept, and instead articulate the vision of democracy as “a form of self-government in which power checks power to keep the people free.”

To do so, these nations must improve accountability and transparency guidelines for ruling elites, whether in government, media, or academia; tighten rules around money in politics and lobbying; and maintain independent, nonpartisan control of elections, Ignatieff said. Whistleblowers, a free press, and freedom of information must be protected, he said, while rules against self-dealing and nepotism in institutions must be enforced, and democratic representation must be improved.

“Based on my experience in Parliament, this will mean loosening the power of the whips so that we can revive and recreate debate in the House of Commons,” said Ignatieff, who was a Liberal MP from 2006 to 2011, and who led the party from 2009 to 2011. “The House of Commons is an empty shell dominated by party discipline and, as a former party leader, I think the control that party leaders need over their caucuses is strangling parliamentary democracy.”

But most importantly, Ignatieff said, was committing to an equality agenda, which was essential to “sustain the legitimacy of political equality in a capitalist society.”

“We’re going to have to reinvent and reinvigorate our democracy, and we’ve done so in the past, we keep doing so, but we really need to do it now if democracy is to survive,” he said.

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Countries that have held national elections in 2024

Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Cambodia, Comoros, El Salvador, Finland, Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Taiwan, Tuvalu

Countries holding or expected to hold national elections in 2024

Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, India, Jordan, Kiribati, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, North Korea, Palau, Panama, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

Economist Intelligence Unit’s 2023 Democracy Index Top 50 Countries

Rank	Country	Score	Change in rank from last year
1	Norway	9.81	0
2	New Zealand	9.61	0
3	Iceland	9.45	0
4	Sweden	9.39	0
5	Finland	9.30	0
6	Denmark	9.28	0
7	Ireland	9.19	1
8	Switzerland	9.14	-1
9	Netherlands	9.00	0
10	Taiwan	8.92	0
11	Luxembourg	8.81	2
12	Germany	8.80	2
13	Canada	8.69	-1
14	Australia	8.66	1
14	Uruguay	8.66	-3
16	Japan	8.40	0
17	Costa Rica	8.29	0
18	Austria	8.28	2
18	United Kingdom	8.28	0
20	Greece	8.14	5
20	Mauritius	8.14	1
22	South Korea	8.09	2
23	France	8.07	-1
23	Spain	8.07	-1
25	Chile	7.98	-6
26	Czech Republic	7.97	-1
27	Estonia	7.96	0
28	Malta	7.93	5
29	United States of America	7.85	1
30	Israel	7.80	-1
31	Portugal	7.75	-3
31	Slovenia	7.75	0
33	Botswana	7.73	-1
34	Italy	7.69	0
35	Cabo Verde	7.65	0
36	Belgium	7.64	0
37	Cyprus	7.38	0
37	Latvia	7.38	1
39	Lithuania	7.31	0
40	Malaysia	7.29	0
41	India	7.18	5
41	Poland	7.18	5
43	Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	-2
44	Slovakia	7.07	-1
45	Jamaica	7.06	-3
45	Timor-Leste	7.06	-1
47	South Africa	7.05	-2
48	Panama	6.91	1
49	Suriname	6.88	-1
50	Hungary	6.72	6

Source: Democracy Index 2023: Age of conflict



‘Culture war’ debates over COVID-19 restrictions, gun control, and trans rights have become more prominent in Canadian political discourse, which is affecting social cohesion, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Stuart Benson
Party Central

How I spent Good Friday experimenting in multi-sensory perception with wine and Chopin at the swishy Rideau Club

Honens laureate Pavel Kolesnikov performed a private recital on March 29 at the Rideau Club.

To kick off the March long weekend, **Party Central** got a taste of high-society at the swishy Rideau Club on March 29 for a high-class night of wine and music hosted by the Honens Ottawa Laureate Circle.

While much of the Ottawa bubble spent Good Friday scoring social media points on an overly vague Veterans Affairs Canada greeting for the “March holiday season”, **Party Central** endeavoured to get above it all thanks to an invitation from **Shannon Day-Newman**, Honens Ottawa Laureate Circle chair, to catch a performance by pianist **Pavel Kolesnikov**, winner of the 2012 Honens International Piano Competition.

Arriving just before 6:45 p.m., with time to spare to prep before the VIPs began to arrive, **Party Central** rode the club’s private elevator directly to the top floor of 99 Bank St.—the elevator only has the two buttons, lobby and floor 15—before wasting most of that set-up time examining the black and white portraits of prime ministers, governors general, and monarchs in the front foyer. The remaining time was then spent marvelling at the fact the cloak room was both larger and nicer than this reporter’s apartment.

As guests began to arrive just after 7 p.m., Day-Newman, alongside her husband, former CBC parliamentary editor **Don Newman** who’s now an executive vice-president with Rubicon Strategy, were some of the first to arrive and were gracious enough to help make introductions to former prime minister **Joe Clark**; his wife, author **Maureen McTeer**; Honens president and CEO **John Kieser**; **Jennifer Weihmann**, Honens director of audience and donor engagement; and **Saleem Malik**, the Rideau Club’s general manager. Newman also provided an assist by turning on the anchor voice when Clark and Kieser were locked in conversation, unaware that the rest were waiting to take a group photo.

Joining the rest of the night’s guests in the Pearson Room—named after the late former prime minister and past club president **Lester B. Pearson**—**Party Central** spotted Reuters correspondent **David Ljunggren**; Italian Ambassador **Andrea Ferrari** and his wife **Maria Grazia Mattarella**; photographer **Peter Bregg** and his wife **Dianne Reigner-Bregg**; Carleton University’s **Larry Lederman**, a senior fellow at the Norman Paterson School

of International Affairs and retired diplomat; **Margaret Dickenson**, renowned Ottawa celebrity chef and cookbook author; and **Scott Heatherington**, the former Canadian ambassador to Latvia.

After acquiring a plate of assorted cheeses, charcuterie, rabbit pâté, and shrimp in solidified butter—the latter of which needed to be dug out of the bowl with a spoon—**Party Central** was offered a tour of the Yousuf Karsh Room by club member **Victor Duret**, an Ottawa Art Gallery board member, who correctly deduced I might be interested in seeing the collection of the famous works by photographer **Yousuf Karsh** hanging from its walls, including stunning portraits of **Ernest Hemingway**, **Margaret Atwood**, **Winston Churchill**, **Helen Keller**, and **George Bernard Shaw**.

Returning to the Pearson Room, Honens board member **Kimberley Sundell** gathered the guests’ attention to deliver a quick explanation for the night’s recital.

While wine and classical music are a pairing that needs no explanation, Sundell—who is both a Royal Conservatory of Music-certified examiner, and certified wine sommelier—informed the guests they would be participating in an “experiment in multi-sensory perception.” Each of the wines on offer—an Ironstone chardonnay, Bordeaux from Les Vieux Ormes, a Stratus merlot, and a Clare Valley shiraz—had been paired with the various waltzes, nocturnes, and mazurkas by the late Polish composer **Frédéric Chopin** that Kolesnikov would be performing. She encouraged the guests to take one or two glasses of wine into the performance and as each piece was played, asked them to sniff, smell, and swirl the wines to see how their perception of the wine was affected by the music. Fortunately, Sundell also told the guests that they needn’t observe the usual wine-tasting custom of spitting out the wine after each sip, as there is definitely such a thing as too multi-sensory. **Party Central** opted for the chardonnay and merlot so as to have at least one paired tasting option for each piece, though the finer points of both wines may have been wasted on this reporter’s gutter palette.

Yet, sitting in a throne-like leather armchair, surrounded by the smell of rich mahogany shelves and leather-bound books within the Jean Pigott Lounge overlooking Parliament Hill on a cloudless, starry night, while swirling a ruby merlot in a wine glass as Kolesnikov performed Chopin’s *Nocturne Op. 37, No. 1 in G Minor* on the Steinway grand piano, **Party Central** found it difficult not to begin formulating plans for world domination.

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Pavel Kolesnikov, the 2012 Honens Circle Laureate, warms up the ivories in the Jean Pigott Lounge at the Rideau Club in Ottawa on March 29. Photograph courtesy of Fred Chartrand



Former diplomat David Devine, left, and Rachel Ljunggren-Thomsen, KPMG.



Maureen McTeer, left, Joe Clark, Don Newman, Shannon Day-Newman, Kimberley Sundell, Karl Taylor, and John Kieser.



Former CBC parliamentary editor Don Newman, left, and former prime minister Joe Clark.



Victor Duret, left, Daniyal Zafa, Daisy Williams, and Hilary McCormack-Duret.



Kolesnikov receives a standing ovation following his performance, which the crowd sustained until he returned to for a final encore. Photograph courtesy of Fred Chartrand



Marian Devine, left, Mardi Dunn, Clara Wong, and Fasken’s Anna Tosto.



Italy’s Ambassador to Canada Andrea Ferrari, left, his wife Maria Grazia Mattarella, Don Newman, Shannon Day-Newman, and Larry Lederman.



Kolesnikov, left, Mark Hussey, and Clark. Photograph courtesy of Fred Chartrand



Margaret Dickenson, left, Liz Heatherington, Bente McAlister, Pavel Kolesnikov, Margaret Mitchell, and Shannon Day-Newman.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Pavel Kolesnikov speaks to Rideau Club members about the selected works of Chopin he would perform on the donated Steinway piano, courtesy of Honens sponsor Steinway & Sons. Photograph courtesy of Fred Chartrand

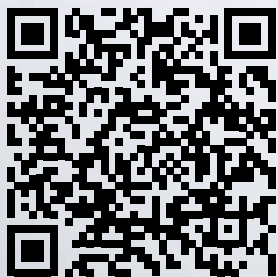


Caitlin Schlegel, left, Avery Schlegel, and Kolesnikov. Photograph courtesy of Fred Chartrand

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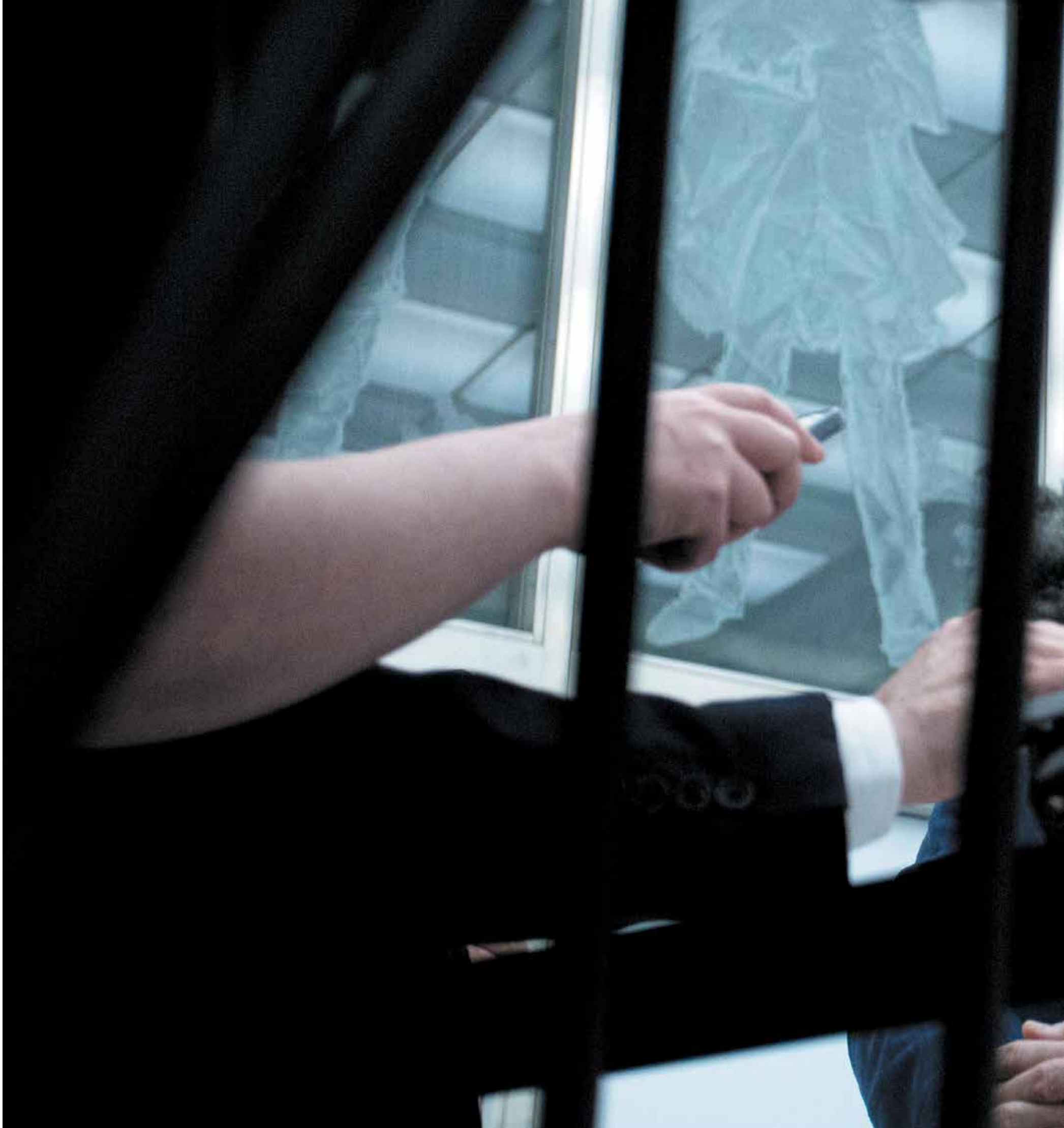
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**Inside
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The Big Photo



The Big Photo

Former Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole scurms with reporters after his appearance at the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference inside the Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa on April 3, 2024. O'Toole said China's interference cost his party up to nine seats in the 2021 election. *The Hill Times'* photographer Andrew Meade on taking this shot: 'The pen with reporters was crowded while photographing the scum with O'Toole, so I tried to use the space and lines between the pool camera's tripod legs to frame him while being questioned.'





Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers



Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left; Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal; and Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc have all recently welcomed new staff to their teams. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Ministers Champagne, Vandal, LeBlanc add to teams

For one, Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc has a new issues manager on board.

Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne welcomed a new assistant for communications and social media to his office last month.

Lekan Edwards started on the job in early March, and has most recently been working as a multimedia freelancer, according to his LinkedIn profile. He has experience as a former junior project officer with Infrastructure Canada between 2022 and 2023, and was a varsity sports and events photographer for the University



Lekan Edwards has joined Minister Champagne's team. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

of Ottawa where he earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences with a joint honours in communication and political science as part of the school's French immersion stream.

Edwards is now working under Champagne's director of communications, Laurie Bouchard, who also currently oversees press secretary and senior communications

adviser Audrey Champoux, and senior adviser for issues management and communications Laurel Lennox.

As reported a few weeks back, Nina Sartor left Champagne's office—where she'd been an Atlantic regional affairs adviser and executive assistant to the chief of staff—to become a policy adviser to Transport Minister Pablo Rodriguez, focused on the marine file.

A new executive assistant to chief of staff Ian Foucher has yet to be hired, but Ontario regional affairs adviser Simran Arulraj has since been promoted to take on the added responsibility of covering the Atlantic region.



Simran Arulraj is now a regional affairs adviser for both Ontario and the Atlantic to Minister Champagne. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Now a regional affairs adviser for both Ontario and the Atlantic, Arulraj joined Champagne's office at the beginning of this year. Before then, she'd worked for International Trade Minister Mary Ng since March 2023, starting as a special assistant for operations and ending as executive assistant. Prior to joining Ng's team, Arulraj did a roughly five-month-long public affairs internship at Crestview Strategy in Toronto. She has also previously worked part-time as a constituency assistant to Toronto Liberal MP Julie Dzerowicz, and full-time as a research assistant with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs' research and innovation branch over the summer of 2021.

Also currently covering regional desks in Champagne's office are Natalia Zhou, regional affairs adviser for the West and North, and William Messier, regional affairs adviser for Quebec. Pierre-Yves Bourque is director of operations to the minister.

There are two new names to note on Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal's ministerial staff roster.

For one, Teresa Buckshot has joined the office as executive assistant (EA) to the minister—an addition that Hill Climbers understands is a temporary until a permanent new EA is found. Previously, Carson Debert was Vandal's EA, but he was tapped to take over as press secretary to the minister last October. As noted at the time, he originally juggled both duties, but Buckshot has since been hired to fill in as EA.

Also now working for Vandal is policy adviser Jed Graham. A one-time assistant to then-Nova Scotia Liberal MP Rodger Cuzner in 2018, Graham was last working on the Hill as a policy adviser in the federal health minister's office, starting in July 2022 under then-minister Jean-Yves Duclos. Between 2019 and 2023, Graham's LinkedIn profiles notes he was in Glasgow, Scotland, working towards a PhD in political economy at Glasgow Caledonian University—he's expected to complete it in 2026—and while there spent time as an employment consultant with Global Personal Solutions, and as an associate lecturer at the university, among other things.



Jed Graham is a policy adviser to Minister Vandal. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Caroline Bourbonnière is director of policy to Vandal who is also the minister responsible for the Prairies Economic Development Agency and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. Along with Graham, she currently also oversees senior policy advisers Jonathan Alomoto and Anna Bodnar, and policy adviser Bradley Boudreau.

Kathy Kettler is chief of staff to Vandal. Jumping to Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc's shop, Danielle Racanelli has been hired as a new issues manager.



Danielle Racanelli is an issues manager to Minister LeBlanc. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Racanelli was previously working as a strategic adviser with Shared Services Canada since January 2023, and between 2021 and the start of 2023, she worked for the Public Health Agency of Canada, first as an executive assistant to the director and ending as a policy analyst.

Caroline Williams is director of issues management to LeBlanc, who has two chiefs of staff in place in his office—Jamie Innes, who oversees the democratic institutions and intergovernmental affairs files, and Cory Pike, who's focused on public safety—and one deputy chief of staff, Brandan Rowe.

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The Hill Times

Jane Philpott to discuss her new book with Paul Wells on April 9



Former Liberal federal health minister Jane Philpott, pictured, will discuss her new book, *Health For All: A doctor's prescription for a healthier Canada*, with journalist Paul Wells at an event hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival, on Tuesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, APRIL 8

House Sitting Schedule—The House is scheduled to sit for a total of 125 days in 2024. The House returns on Monday, April 8, and will sit until April 19. It takes a one-week break (April 22-26), returns on April 29, and will sit for two weeks (April 29-May 10). The House returns on Tuesday, May 21, after the Victoria Day holiday, and will sit for five straight weeks until June 21. The House resumes sitting on Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18-Dec. 17.

Inclusive Innovation and the Path to Net Zero—In Canada, most private sector employment is with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A successful transition to a net-zero economy will require action by them. New research by the Diversity Institute in partnership with Coralus, supported by the Future Skills Centre as well as extensive consultations, has led to a practical approach to supporting SMEs and a roadmap for an inclusive skills strategy for "greenification." Join the Diversity Institute and Coralus, Small Business Minister Rechie Valdez, as well as business leaders and entrepreneurs, to discuss how to move from words to action. Monday, April 8, 8 a.m. to noon ET, at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., 15th floor. Register via Eventbrite.

What is the Future of News Media in Canada?—This in-person roundtable, hosted by Senator Andrew Cardozo, Liberal MP Mona Fortier, and Senator Hassan Yussuff, will look at the news media in Canada and the rapidly changing world and layoffs from traditional news media. Monday, April 8, at 11:30 a.m. A meet and greet precedes the roundtable discussion at the Senate of Canada Building, 2 Rideau St., Ottawa, Room B-45. Simultaneous French/English interpretation and a light lunch will be provided. Contact Sharon.Fernandez@sen.parl.gc.ca.

Panel: 'The Fight for Liberal Democracy'—McGill University hosts a panel discussion on "The threat to Civility and the Fight for Liberal Democracy," the inaugural event of the series "Conversations: sponsored by Charles Bronfman." The CBC's Nahlah Ayed will moderate the discussion featuring Rosalie Silberman Abella, retired Supreme Court of Canada justice and human

rights law expert; Vikas Swarup, former Indian high commissioner to Canada; and Luís Roberto Barroso, president of the Brazilian Federal Supreme Court. Monday, April 8, at 7 p.m. ET at Théâtre Symposia, Centre Mont Royal, 2200 Mansfield St., Montreal. Details online: mcgill.ca/misc.

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

AFN Dialogue on Transport and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the first in a four-part series, "Regional Dialogues on the Transportation and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel," from April 9-May 22, to advocate for First Nations' active involvement in decisions about used nuclear fuel, management, and transportation across Turtle Island. Tuesday, April 9, at 8 a.m. PT at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 655 Burrard St., Vancouver. Details online: afn.ca/events.

Pathways to Indigenous Economic Reconciliation—The National Capital and Manitoba regional groups of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada host an online panel discussion on advancing Indigenous self-determination by strengthening economic opportunity. Panelists include former chair of the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Jamie Dumont, Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business vice-president of policy Matthew Foss, and Indigenous Services Canada senior director Matt Garrow. Online on Tuesday, April 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET. Details at IEC-REA.eventbrite.ca

Panel: 'A Better Digital Future for Canadian Transportation'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a panel discussion on "Imagining a Better Digital Future for Canadian Transportation." Shauna Brail, Institute for Management and Innovation, University of Toronto Mississauga; Jean-Sébastien Langelier, Infrastructure Canada; and Catherine McKenney, CitySHAPES, will discuss the policies needed to realize the benefits of "the new mobility era" in a way that is equitable, efficient, and effective. Tuesday, April 9, at 12 p.m. ET at the Delta Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details online: irpp.org.

Virtual Pink Tea with Justice O'Bonsawin—The Famous 5 Foundation hosts a virtual Pink Tea with Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin, the first and only Indigenous Justice on the Supreme Court. Tuesday, April 9, at 2 p.m. ET taking place online, register via Eventbrite.

Paramedic Chiefs Parliamentary Reception—Join the Paramedic Chiefs

of Canada and co-host Conservative MP Todd Doherty on Parliament Hill for an evening reception. Paramedic chiefs from across the country are looking forward to sharing their priorities and experiences with parliamentarians at this event. Tuesday, April 9, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET in Room 228, Valour Building.

National Public Safety Awards—The Union of Safety and Justice Employees hosts its annual National Public Safety Awards. Members of Parliament, Senators, and staff are invited to this catered reception featuring local cuisine and a prestigious awards ceremony celebrating the outstanding work undertaken by Canada's federal public safety and justice employees. Tuesday, April 9, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Room 310, Wellington Building, 180 Wellington St. RSVP: miya@kitpublicaffairs.ca.

Jane Philpott to Discuss Her New Book—Former Liberal federal health minister Jane Philpott will discuss her new book, *Health For All: A doctor's prescription for a healthier Canada*, with journalist Paul Wells at an event hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Philpott is currently dean of health sciences at Queen's University. Tuesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, 154 Somerset St. W. Details online: writersfestival.org.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

Bank of Canada Interest Rate Announcement—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate, and will release its *Monetary Policy Report*.

Minister Fraser to Deliver Remarks—Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Sean Fraser will deliver remarks on "Affordable Housing in Canada: What's Next?" part of a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Wednesday, April 10, at 12 p.m. at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details online: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Japan's Ambassador to Deliver Remarks—Japan's Ambassador to Canada Yamanouchi Kanji will speak about Canada-Japan relations and on Japan's perspective on security in the Indo-Pacific at an event hosted by the Canadian International Council. Wednesday, April 10, at 11:30 a.m. at the Union Club, 805 Gordon St., Victoria, B.C. Details online: thecic.org.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10—FRIDAY, APRIL 12

French Prime Minister to visit Canada—Prime Minister of France Ga-

briel Attal will visit Ottawa, Québec City, and Montreal from April 10 to 12, 2024. Contact media@pmo-cpm.gc.ca.

The Progress Summit—NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh will deliver remarks at the Broadbent Institute's annual Progress Summit from April 10-12. Other speakers include Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow; Manitoba's Deputy Premier Uzoma Asagwara; and Fae Johnstone, executive director of Wisdom2Action. Wednesday, April 10 to Friday, April 12 at the Delta Hotel City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details online: broadbentinstitute.ca.

Canada Strong and Free Conference—Canada Strong and Free hosts its two-day networking conference on the theme: "Leading with Conviction." Confirmed speakers include Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre; Conservative MPs Michael Chong, Tom Kmiec, Jamil Jivani, Shuvaloy Majumdar, John Williamson and Shannon Stubbs; Alberta Premier Danielle Smith; New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs; former United Kingdom prime minister Boris Johnson; and former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott, among others. Wednesday, April 10, to Friday, April 12, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

The Governor General's Symposium—Governor General Mary Simon will host "The Governor General's Symposium: Building a Safe and Respectful Digital World." This one-day symposium aims to promote respectful digital dialogue by raising awareness of toxic online discourse, bringing together people and organizations working to promote digital respect, creating partnership opportunities and amplifying co-operation. Thursday, April 11, at Rideau Hall, 1 Sussex Dr. Details online at gg.ca.

Canada Growth Summit and Annual Testimonial Dinner—The Public Policy Forum hosts the Canada Growth Summit 2024. The Annual Testimonial Dinner will take place this evening, honouring five distinguished Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to public policy and good governance, including former cabinet minister Marc Garneau, and former Privy Council clerk Janice Charette. Columnist Paul Wells will also receive the Hyman Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy Journalism. Thursday, April 11, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Details: pforum.ca.

CGAI's International Trade Conference—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts its annual conference on international trade. Speakers include Canada's former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul; Karina Häulsmeier, deputy head of mission, Embassy of Germany; André von Walter, head of trade, EU Delegation to Canada; Marie-France Paquet, chief economist, Global Affairs Canada; and Vincent Rigby, former national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister. Thursday, April 11, at 9 a.m. ET event at KPMG, Suite 1800, 150 Elgin St. Details online: cgai.ca/events.

OEA/CABE 2024 Spring Policy Conference—The Ottawa chapter of the Canadian Association for Business Economics hosts its 2024 Spring Policy Conference on the theme "Navigating Economic Crossroads in Canada." Former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge will deliver the lunch keynote address. Thursday, April 11 at 8:15 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details online: cabe.ca.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

Justice O'Bonsawin to Talk Mental Health—Supreme Court Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin will take part in a conversation about mental health in the workplace, "Mental Health: We Have Come a Long Way, But Are We There Yet?" hosted by the Empire Club of Canada. Friday, April 12, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St. W., Toronto. Details online: empireclubofcanada.com.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

Parliamentary Press Gallery Dinner—The Parliamentary Press Gallery hosts its annual gala dinner. Journalists, together with political leaders, diplomats, and other distinguished guests will gather for an evening of high spirits and satire that puts the spotlight on media's crucial role in our democratic ecosystem. Saturday, April 13, at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building.

MONDAY, APRIL 15 – THURSDAY, APRIL 18

AFN's Water Symposium and Trade Show—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual Water Symposium and Trade Show on the theme "Bridging the Gap: First Nations Water and Wastewater Equity" featuring panel discussions, plenaries and exhibits on addressing important water-related issues facing First Nations. Monday, April 15, to Thursday, April 18 at the Hilton Lac-Leamy in Gatineau, Que. Details online: afn.ca

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

Minister Freeland to Table Budget—Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland will table the 2024 federal budget on Tuesday, April 16 at 4 p.m. ET in the House of Commons. The Department of Finance will host an embargoed reading and press conference for media prior to the tabling.

Post-Budget Reception—Earncliffe Strategies and *iPolitics* host a post-budget reception. Tuesday, April 16 at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. Details online via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

Minister Sudds to take part in Post-Budget Breakfast—Families, Children, and Social Development Minister Jenna Sudds will take part in the Post-Budget Breakfast hosted by the Ottawa Board of Trade and the *Ottawa Business Journal*. Other participants include Heather Scofield, senior vice-president of strategy, Business Council of Canada; Gavin Miranda, regional tax leader, MNP; and Huw Williams, president, Impact Public Affairs. Wednesday, April 17, at 7 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details online.

Lecture: 'Canadian Studies in Turbulent Times'—Carleton University's School of Canadian Studies will hold its annual Vickers-Verduyn Lecture, featuring four notable Canadians: Adrian Harewood, associate professor, Carleton University School of Journalism and Communication; Dr. Jane Philpott, director of the school of medicine, Queen's University; Senator Yuen Pau Woo; and Frank Graves, founder and president, EKOS Research Associates Inc. Wednesday, April 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Teraanga (Residence Commons), Rooms 272-274. Register by April 12 online at carleton.ca.

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

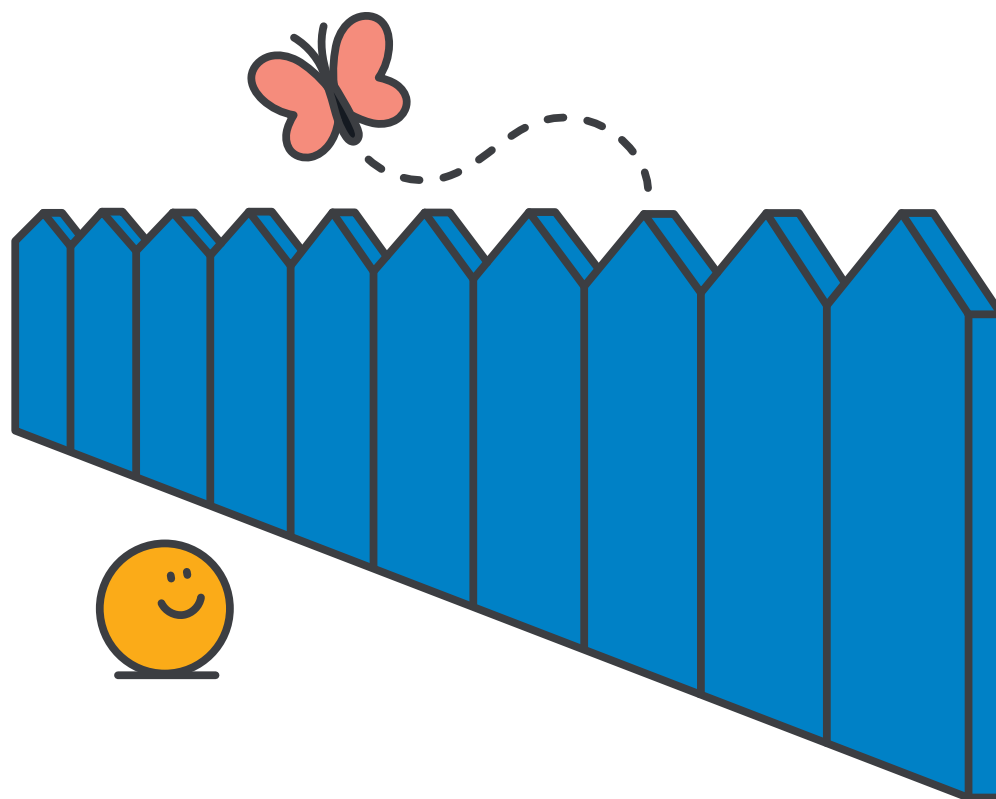
Denise Chong Book Launch—Library and Archives Canada, the Ottawa International Writers Festival, and the Ottawa Public Library host the launch of Denise Chong's new book: *Out of Darkness: Rumana Monzur's Journey through Betrayal, Tyranny and Abuse*, a tale of power and political influence, and of the Bangladeshi woman whose irrepressible spirit found light in sudden darkness. Thursday, April 18, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details online: library-archives.canada.ca.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Minister Miller to Deliver Remarks—Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Minister Marc Miller will deliver remarks in French to the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Friday, April 19, at 11:30 a.m. ET in Montreal. Details online: corim.qc.ca.

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.

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