Canada Activities

Federal Activities
Prime Minister Trudeau will finish a two-day virtual cabinet retreat on July 7. During the retreat, the cabinet was set to discuss concrete actions needed to fight racism in Canada, prepare for a potential second wave of COVID-19, and safely restart the economy. Finance Minister Bill Morneau will present a “fiscal snapshot” to the House of Commons on the afternoon of July 8.

The Procedure and House Affairs Committee has received an extension until July 21 for their report on remote voting for MPs. In a meeting on July 6, House staff said that they could have a remote voting app ready for September, although support from opposition parties is not yet clear. Parliament is currently slated to return on Sept. 21, with a small number of special sittings slated through the summer on July 8, July 22, Aug. 12, and Aug. 26.

The Canada Border Services Agency is temporarily reducing service hours at additional land, air, and marine ports of entry (POE) as a result of COVID-19, effective July 3 2020 at 11:59pm. The locations and hours are available here.

On July 2, Natural Resources Minister Seamus O’Regan launched a call for proposals for two funding programs in the forestry sector. The Investments in Forest Industry Transformation (IFIT) program will invest almost $83 million to bridge the gap between new product development and commercialization and ensure a more competitive and resilient forest sector, and the Indigenous Forestry Initiative (IFI) will invest almost $13 million to support Indigenous participation in forestry-related opportunities, businesses, careers, and governance.

Also, on July 2, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed the application for leave to appeal on the Trans Mountain expansion project. The decision was welcomed by the federal government.

Canada extended its travel restrictions and quarantine requirements for foreign nationals from June 20 to July 31. This is for foreign nationals other than the United States, whose separate restrictions are currently set until July 21.

Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced $28 million for three projects in Vancouver aimed at improving the movement of goods to market, including improving the Ray-Mont off-dock transload facility in Richmond, doubling on-site rail capacity at the Fibreco terminal in North Vancouver, and improving the competitiveness of the gateway industry on Annacis Island in Delta.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on June 29 that the federal government will work with the provinces and territories to extend the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) Program by another month to include July.
For any questions related to who is exempt from the 14-day mandatory quarantine upon entry to Canada, including about the interpretation of the recent addition of technicians specified by manufacturer or the manufacturer warranty to maintain or repair equipment necessary to support critical infrastructure, contact the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) at 1-833-784-4397 (interpretation services are available in multiple languages) or at phac.emergencyorder-decretdurgencecovid19.asp@canada.ca. For more information, you can also consult PHAC’s website.

On June 26, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal today made a re-determination regarding certain exclusion requests made by Fluor Canada Ltd, Suncor Energy Inc. and Fort Hills Energy L.P., and LNG Canada Development Inc. The Tribunal revised its finding to exclude certain fabricated industrial steel components.

On June 26, Prime Minister Trudeau made an announcement on the work of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in long term cares (LTC) homes in Ontario and Quebec. The remaining CAF members at one LTC home in Ontario will be leaving in the coming days. In Quebec, the Red Cross will be taking over for the CAF, with 150 personnel by July 6, and 750 more by July 29. Federal officials were clear to highlight that no CAF members will leave an LTC home until the situation is stabilized.

Global Affairs Canada cautioned Canadians to continue to follow official travel advice. The border restrictions for countries other than the USA are set to expire on June 30. We can expect to have an extension of the restrictions announced before then, although no information has yet been made available by the government.

The government announced the results of $109 million in funding for COVID-19 research. This investment will support 139 research teams from across the country that will focus on accelerating the development, testing, and implementation of measures to mitigate the rapid spread of COVID-19 and its negative consequences on people, communities, and health systems.

On June 23, Public Services and Procurement Minister Anita Anand announced that the government will be moving, where possible, to a competitive bid process now for COVID-19 related protective equipment.

On June 23, Labour Minister Filomena Tassi announced changes to extend time periods for temporary layoffs to allow employers more time to recall laid-off employees. For employees laid off prior to March 31, 2020, the time period is extended by six months or to Dec. 30, 2020, whichever occurs first. For employees laid off between March 31, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2020, the time period is extended until Dec. 30, 2020, unless a later recall date was provided in a written
notice at the time of the layoff. These changes, which came into effect on June 22, 2020, do not apply to employees who are covered by a collective agreement that contains recall rights.

On June 22, Tiff Macklem gave his first speech as the new governor of the Bank of Canada. He stated that there would be long-term economic damage resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The interest rate remains at 0.25%, which is aimed to help support spending and borrowing as business reopen, so demand can return to normal over time. The bank is buying at least $5 billion of Canadian government bonds a week until the recovery is well underway.

Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos made a statement on the easing of restrictions related to COVID-19 on June 22. Reopening access to federal worksites will be gradual and will vary from organization to organization, each according to their own operational circumstances.

On June 17, Prime Minister Trudeau announced the Canada-U.S. border to remain closed to non-essential travel until at least July 21.

Despite mounting pressure from business interests and border communities, however, Trudeau is offering no clues about how the border restrictions will be eased when the time finally comes. While the measures prohibit discretionary travel like vacations and shopping trips, essential workers, trade shipments and temporary foreign workers are still allowed to cross the border.

On June 9, the government launched a new web hub to bring together available resources for organizations buying and selling personal protective equipment (PPE). The Supply Hub connects Canadian organizations with federal, provincial, territorial and other resources and information about PPE. Buyers will find PPE supplier lists, in addition to guidance to help plan their PPE purchases.

Alberta
The province announced on July 3 that 20 million additional masks are available for distribution at restaurants and other organizations.

Also, on July 3, the province announced that the Alberta portion of the Keystone XL pipeline had begun construction, and is slated for completion in 2023.

Construction on the twinning of Hwy 3 is set to begin in 2021 after an announcement on July 2 by the province.

As part of the recently announced recovery plan, the province is investing $27.8 million in an agri-food hub at Exhibition Park in Lethbridge.

On June 29, Alberta launched a new online service meant to simplify the registration process across provincial lines and make it easier for owners to grow their business.
More details are available on Alberta’s Economic Recovery Plan, which includes $75 million for agriculture supports and forestry protection.

On June 29, Premier Kenney launched Alberta’s recovery plan, including the province’s largest-ever spending on public infrastructure - $10 billion in projects. This represents a 40 percent increase from what was forecast earlier in the year. Also planned is a 2 percent reduction in corporate tax rates from 10 percent to 8 percent. A new investment agency is also being set up. More details on programs will be released in the coming days.

Application intakes open June 29 for small- and medium-sized businesses, cooperatives, and non-profits. The organizations must have 500 or fewer employees for up to $5,000 to offset the costs they are facing as they reopen their doors. The program has a budget of $200 million and will remain open until Aug. 31, or for four weeks following the start of stage three of Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy.

On June 25, the province approved a disaster recovery program (DRP) for the cities of Calgary and Airdrie, and Rocky View County, following a severe storm in early June. Also on June 25, the province expanded access to COVID-19 testing at community pharmacies, making it easier to access testing.

On June 22, Albertans were invited to provide input to help develop the Alberta Infrastructure Act, as well as government’s 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan. People can visit alberta.ca until Aug. 10 to share their feedback.

British Colombia

A new stream of support is being added to the B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program to help Indigenous entrepreneurs with up to $8,000 in specialized planning and coaching services to develop and plan their food and agricultural businesses. Applications are on a first-come, first-served basis.

BC has created a new business option for corporate structure. A “benefit company” is a for-profit corporation committed to conducting its business in a responsible and sustainable manner, as well as promoting public benefits in addition to serving the interests of its shareholders.

On June 26, the province announced that it would be reducing the Agricultural Land Commission costs for farmers. Updates to regulations will lower costs for multi-generational farmers to apply to build housing that meets their needs.

On June 25, the province extended the temporary layoffs provisions to a maximum of 24 weeks, expiring on Aug. 30, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
On June 24, Premier Horgan announced BC’s transition to Phase 3 of reopening. This will see more openings with safety precautions in place, including the film industry, hotels, and spas.

On June 22, the provincial government introduced the COVID-19 Related Measures Act, legislation that will allow for the provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the pandemic to be formalized and unwound as appropriate after the provincial state of emergency ends.

On June 20, the province extended deferral of electricity costs for industries impacted by COVID-19. To protect jobs in communities throughout B.C. and support a return to normal operations, BC Hydro will allow eligible industrial customers to continue to defer a portion of their bill payments for another three months, to the end of Aug.

On June 11, the province announced that changes to the Manufactured Forest Products Regulation (MFPR) and the Coast-wide implementation of the variable fee-in-lieu of manufacture on log exports that were scheduled to come into force on July 1, 2020, are now postponed until Sept. 30, 2020, and December 2020 respectively.

Manitoba

Manitoba released its economic and fiscal update assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, citing an expected deficit for 2020-21 in the range of $2.9 billion. The 2020-21 summary net debt is projected to exceed $29 billion with a net debt to GDP ratio at nearly 41 per cent. This is up from 34.2 percent forecast in Budget 2020. Manitoba’s economy is expected to decline by approximately five percent this year with an expected loss of revenues in the range of $1.5 billion this year and over $1 billion next year.

On June 29, Manitoba launched a new online service meant to simplify the registration process across provincial lines and make it easier for owners to grow their business.

The Manitoba government is introducing the Manitoba Job Restart program, which will provide direct payments to a maximum of $2,000 to help qualified Manitobans return to work, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

The Manitoba government is asking for feedback on conceptual designs for personal care home shelters. The shelters will be outside, but close to personal care homes year-round. They must be accessible, protected from the elements, easily cleaned, and provide a space for quality connections. Feedback can be provided at http://EngageMB.ca.

Manitoba moved to relax more of its restrictions on June 21. Restaurants and bars no longer have to operate at half capacity. Larger public gatherings are also permitted, including filling up to 30 percent of the capacity of any venue as long as they can be split into groups of 50 indoors or 100 outdoors.
The Manitoba government is extending the province-wide state of emergency for COVID-19.

The news comes as provincial health officials reported no new cases of the virus as of Monday. In a release the province said the state of emergency, in place since March to help stop the spread of the virus, will be extended for another 30 days till July 8th.

**New Brunswick**
On June 29, the province lifted all restrictions on Crown land that had been put in place earlier in the month.

On June 26, with no new COVID-19 cases, all areas of the province, now including Zone 5 (Campbellton), have entered into Yellow level, which allows for the reopening of more businesses and activities.

New Brunswick joins the other three Atlantic provinces in opening a travel bubble among themselves beginning on July 3.

**Newfoundland and Labrador**
The province has launched a call for Proposals for the Development of Regional Abattoirs and Beef Industry Enhancement initiatives. These initiatives, announced earlier on June 19, include: $2.5 million to support Requests for Proposals to establish secondary beef processing facilities in the province; and $1 million to provide 10 beef cows to 20 beef operations in the province to improve the quality and number of animals produced in Newfoundland and Labrador, support industry expansion, and increase food self-sufficiency. The application form can be found online and the deadline for proposals is July 17, 2020.

On June 24, the Premier announced that the four Atlantic provinces would open up a travel “bubble” among themselves starting July 3. In the press conference, he noted that if this goes well, it could be extended to visits of Canadians from other provinces on July 17.

On June 8, the province announced measures to assist the mining, mineral exploration and quarry industries, including deferring rental and fee payments and waiving mineral expenditure requirements for 2020.

**Nova Scotia**
The province announced an application deadline extension to July 17 for the Small Business Reopening and Support Grant. The $25 million program provides grants of up to $5,000 to help eligible small businesses, non-profits, charities, and social enterprises to resume operations. It also includes a business continuity voucher of up to $1,500 that can be used for advice and support to help them become more resilient in the coming months.

On June 26, Nova Scotia announced a further lifting of restrictions. As of July 3, if a recognized business or organization is planning an event outdoors, 250 people can attend with physical
distancing rules in place. For an indoor event, the limit is 50 percent capacity to a maximum of 200, again with physical distancing. Gatherings not run by a recognized business or organization, for example a family event in the backyard, are still subject to the 50-person maximum limit with physical distancing, unless you’re in your close social group of 10. Nova Scotia joins the other three Atlantic provinces in opening a travel bubble among themselves beginning on July 3.

Ontario
On July 7, Ontario announced that it passed legislation aiming to speed up the delivery of subways, including the all-new Ontario Line, the Yonge North Subway Extension to Markham and Richmond Hill, the improved three-stop Scarborough Subway Extension, and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension to Pearson airport. The government argues that Bill 171 will expedite the planning, design and construction process by:

- “Enabling relocation of utilities more efficiently, while treating businesses fairly, and ensuring costs are not passed on to consumers;
- “Better enabling the assembly of land required to construct stations, conduct tunneling and prepare sites, while treating property owners fairly;
- “Ensuring timely access to municipal services and rights-of-way;
- “Allowing the province to conduct due diligence work and remove physical barriers with appropriate notification to property owners; and,
- “Ensuring nearby developments or construction projects are coordinated so they do not cause delays.”

The provincial Solicitor General Sylvia Jones will introduce a bill on July 7 that would allow the government to extend some emergency orders by a month at a time, with the law expiring a year after it’s passed.

On July 6, the province announced a plan aimed at economic recovery, including establishing an exemption from the Hearing of Necessity process, which normally occurs 5 to 10 times per year on average for provincial highway projects. The exemption is meant to accelerate key provincial highway construction and priority transit projects. The province is also looking for new commercial agreements to build housing around transit points.

On July 3, the province launched a new online training course for job seekers to promote safe workplaces in light of COVID-19. There are 10 courses on offer, which include topics such as infection control, conducting health and safety incident investigations, ladder safety, slips, trips and falls prevention, and preventing workplace violence and harassment. Job seekers should contact an Employment Ontario service provider in their area to enroll.

The province is launching consultations in an effort to improve elevator safety, performance, and availability in multi-story buildings. The province is seeking input on proposed regulatory
changes under the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000. Ontarians can share their input online until Aug. 4.

The province is providing an additional $10 million in funding for the Connecting Links program. The 2020-21 program supports municipalities across the province to help them build, repair or replace municipal roads and bridges that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a community or to a border crossing. Eligible municipalities are also encouraged to apply for funding for the 2021-22 Connecting Links Program, which will be open to applications later this year.

The province is providing an additional $150 million to continue to protect vulnerable people from COVID-19 by improving homeless shelters and creating opportunities for longer-term housing. Municipalities and urban Indigenous community partners will be able to use this funding for long-term housing solutions resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. They can renovate shelters or purchase new facilities that will help with physical distancing in the short term and support longer-term, more sustainable solutions to homelessness. In addition, this funding could also be used to provide vulnerable people with food, shelter and supplies.

On June 29, the province announced that it would be overhauling the towing industry to improve provincial oversight and shut down illegal towing.

On June 27, Ontario extended Emergency Orders until July 10. As more communities enter Stage 2, maintaining health and safety protocols remains a top priority.

On June 26, the province announced help for large industrial and commercial companies to return to full levels of operation without the fear of electricity costs spiking by providing more stable electricity pricing for two years. Effective immediately, companies that participate in the Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI) will not be required to reduce their electricity usage during peak hours, as their proportion of Global Adjustment (GA) charges for these companies will be frozen.

On June 26, Ontario reported its lowest rate of new COVID-19 cases in over 3 months.

As of June 25, all regions of Ontario have entered into stage 2 of reopening, with the exception of Leamington and Kingsville in the Windsor-Essex region.

Also on June 24, Ontario extended the declaration of emergency until July 15.

On June 22, the province announced that Toronto and Peel regions would enter into Stage 2 on June 24. The Windsor-Essex region remains under Stage 1. Premier Ford took a tough tone with farmers that he sees as not cooperating in getting migrant workers tested for COVID-19.
The Ontario government is providing employers with a new general workplace guide, which will help them develop a safety plan to better protect workers, customers and clients. The new downloadable toolkit offers tips on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as more people get back on the job during Stage 2 of the reopening of the province. The new guide can be found here.

On June 12, the province announced it is significantly expanding the Agri-food Workplace Protection Program and committing up to $15 million to enhance health and safety measures on farms and in food processing facilities.

**Prince Edward Island**

Prince Edward Island will move to further relax covid-related restrictions as Phase 4 begins on Friday, June 26. This will include more business opening, as well as larger gatherings.

PEI joins the other three Atlantic provinces in opening a travel bubble among themselves beginning on July 3.

On June 17, the province presented the 2020-21 budget, with $2.2 billion in spending. The budget includes a tax cut for small businesses, as well as funding for clean energy such as $2 million towards the Solar Electric Incentive Program, $1 million for the Climate Challenge Fund, and $5 million Active Transportation Fund.

**Quebec**

On June 29, the province announced that it was making some changes to certain fiscal measures for individuals and businesses, including an ad hoc adjustment to the calculation of remunerated hours, and temporary discretionary power to the departments and agencies responsible for administering parameters to receive stimulus during the COVID-19 pandemic so that they may, on an exceptional basis, authorize these corporations' eligibility.

As of June 26, nearly all sectors of Quebec's economy have re-opened. This includes bars, spas, water parks, and casinos, on the condition that people adhere to sanitary regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

On June 26, a report was made public by the Office of Public Hearings on the Environment (BAPE) on the Matawinie mining project in Saint-Michel-des-Saints by Nouveau Monde Graphite. This investigation and public hearing mandate began on January 27. The commission notes that the Matawinie mining project would bring an interesting economic diversification to Haute-Matawinie and would answer a demand in graphite in strong growth for several years.

New energy efficiency standards come into force in Quebec on June 27 aimed at improving the energy performance of commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings as well as large homes.
As of June 22, Quebec, is reopening several sectors, impacting the Montreal area in particular. Restaurants can open again in the greater Montreal and Joliette areas, while indoor gatherings of up to 10 people from three households are now permitted in these regions, as they have been elsewhere in Quebec since last week. Day camps, along with gyms, arenas, cinemas, concert venues, and places of worship can reopen across the province with a maximum capacity of 50 people for indoor gatherings.

Quebec Premier Legault fails to secure agreement on construction bill fast tracking projects across the province. Quebec’s parliament adjourned on June 12th without reaching agreement on the bill which would have fast tracked over 200 projects including road work, schools and public transit.

On June 8, the province announced that it intends to compensate landlords who subscribe to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for 50% of their losses.

Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan has launched a 10-year, $4 billion irrigation project at Lake Diefenbaker. The project is beginning with an immediate $22.5 million investment in preliminary engineering and initial construction, and is set to irrigate up to 500,000 acres of land.

The province announced that over the next four years $31.5 million federal/provincial funding will be directed to improvements on 100 rural bridges.

On June 30, the province announced the final results for 2019-20 fiscal year show a $319 million deficit attributed to a steep revenue decline in the fourth quarter largely caused by the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and resulting market downturn.

Saskatchewan has launched a mobile app aimed at helping improve farmer’s mental health, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The app – called ‘Avail’ – analyzes wellness data supplied by the user and offers supports including articles, videos and online tips, or more immediate help from a personal support network.

On June 26, the province announced that it is moving forward with plans to open three new international offices to facilitate investment and trade efforts. The offices will be located in Tokyo, Singapore, and New Delhi, and are expected to open in early 2021.

Saskatchewan formally approved the first initiative under the provincial government’s Saskatchewan Petroleum Innovation Incentive (SPII). Proton Technologies will deploy its patented process to extract hydrogen from existing oil reservoirs, while carbon dioxide will remain trapped in the ground. This technology is the first commercial deployment of its kind in the world. It also has the potential to repurpose abandoned wells, fields, and facilities.
On June 24, the province announced the creation of a Nuclear Secretariat. The development and execution of a strategic plan for deployment of clean energy small modular reactors will be the primary mandate of the Nuclear Secretariat.

On June 22, the province announced that the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) is gradually re-starting services that were paused due to COVID-19. Journeyperson certification examinations and psychoeducational assessments will be scheduled again, beginning this week.

On June 22, Standard and Poor’s (S&P) Global Ratings Affirmed Saskatchewan’s AA Rating.

On June 19, the province announced that it was showing the lowest decline in retail sales in Canada.

On June 5, the province announced amendments to The Mineral Tenure Registry Regulations that grant relief to the mining sector in response to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. These amendments will provide mining exploration companies more time to raise necessary capital and access mine sites to carry out exploration activities, work programs and engage with local and First Nations communities.

The province also announced temporary commercial eviction protection for small business tenants during the COVID-19 emergency. The moratorium on evictions applies to landlords that are eligible to apply for the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program but choose not to.