Canada Activities

Federal Activities
On August 18, Chrystia Freeland was named Canada’s first female Finance Minister after the resignation of Bill Morneau. The same day, Prime Minister Trudeau asked the Governor General to prorogue Parliament until September 23, when a new Speech from the Throne will attempt to reset the government’s agenda, while also giving an opportunity for a confidence vote that the Opposition members could use to topple the government, if they wanted.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has released the e-course Pandemic Planning: Reopening for Business, to help organizations across Canada safely return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canada’s border restrictions with the United States are being extended until at least September 21.

August 17 marked the opening for applications of period 5 for the now-enhanced Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Eligible employers can apply for period 5 of the CEWS through My Business Account or through the CRA’s web form application.

The federal government has connected their electric vehicle expansion initiatives in Parks Canada to how the COVID-19 pandemic reminded Canadians of the importance of connecting with our natural environment and spending time in nature beneficial for human health and well-being.

Ottawa has declined Ontario and Quebec’s request to intervene in the Port of Montreal strike, now in its second week. CBC reports that Labour Minister Filomena Tassi says there has been progress in negotiations.

On August 13, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released projections that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) will actually cost $14 billion less than budgeted. The PBO estimates the program, which lasts from March to December, will pay out $67.9 billion in wage subsidies.

On August 13, Infrastructure Minister Catherine Mckenna announced that the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative will provide up to $31 million in federal funding to support community-led solutions that respond to immediate and ongoing needs arising from COVID-19 over the next two years under three main themes: creating safe and vibrant public spaces, improving mobility options, and digital solutions. The goal is to fund projects that quickly help
communities adapt to the new reality of COVID-19. Additional details on the application process will be available soon.

**Alberta**

The province is expanding COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic Albertans at pharmacies, in addition to the province-wide testing at AHS assessment centres.

The province saw employment gains in July, with more than 67,000 jobs added. This is the third straight month with an increase, with 187,000 Albertans returning to work over this period.

The province has signalled the intent for Alberta to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Ontario, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick to support the development of versatile and scalable small modular reactors (SMRs).

Alberta’s government has provided businesses with more than $25.7 million since the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant was launched one month ago. In the first month of the program, almost 7,700 applications have been processed, with more than 6,700 grants issued.

**British Colombia**

The province has extended the state of emergency until the end of the day on September 1.

A new chair has been appointed to the WorkSafeBC board of directors, effective August 14. The new chair, Jeff Parr, is a former deputy minister in multiple provincial governments.

On August 13, the province warned that with only two weeks until the application deadline, employees and employers who need to extend temporary layoffs beyond the August 30 expiry date are entering a critical phase to meet deadlines.

As of August 12, BC opened the second intake for funding applications for projects that manage renewable energy, improve access to clean-energy transportation, improve energy efficiency of buildings or help generate clean energy to reduce community reliance on fossil fuels. The funding will come from the Province and the Government of Canada through the CleanBC Communities Fund. Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine Mckenna pointed to examples such as electric-vehicle charging stations or clean-energy projects. More information on the CleanBC Communities Fund, including program and eligibility criteria and how to apply, is available at: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/investing-in-canada-infrastructure-program/green-infrastructure/cleanbc-communities-fund](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/investing-in-canada-infrastructure-program/green-infrastructure/cleanbc-communities-fund)

The Labour Force Survey for July showed British Columbia created another 70,200 jobs in July. Added to the employment gains we saw in May and June, B.C. has recovered about 58% of the jobs lost in March and April.
Through a $402,105 Community and Employer Partnership (CEP) project, the Surrey Board of Trade will develop a back-to-work strategies playbook that can be adapted and used by other communities and tailored to specific industry sectors. The playbook will help employers prepare for workforce-related impacts and opportunities resulting from the pandemic and will help people who have lost their job to find re-employment, redeployment, retraining and sustainable employment opportunities.

**Manitoba**
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

The B2B Manitoba health and safety online marketplace is being expanded to allow businesses and not-for-profits to contract health and safety services. The B2BManitoba.ca app was developed by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), the Manitoba and Winnipeg chambers of commerce and North Forge Technology Exchange. B2B Manitoba was launched in May to help connect Manitoba businesses with non-medical grade personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies needed to operate safely.

The Manitoba government is calling on the federal government to finalize details of the Pan-Canadian Sick Leave Program so that workers can stay home from work when needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 without financial hardship. The Pan-Canadian Sick Leave Program was announced about a month ago as part of the Safe Restart Agreement between Canada and all provinces and territories. The Manitoba Employment Standards Code does not require an amendment to make this federally delivered program function. However, if the province is asked to deliver the program on behalf of the federal government, the province will review the legislation to determine if provincial changes are required.

The province has extended the state of emergency for another 30 days, as of August 12.

**New Brunswick**
A general election has been called in New Brunswick, to be held on Monday, September 14.

**Newfoundland and Labrador**
On August 19, Andrew Furey was sworn in as the new Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and his new cabinet was sworn in as well, including new Finance Minister Siobhan Coady.

**Nova Scotia**
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

On August 8, the province renewed the state of emergency to noon on Sunday, August 23.

On August 6, Premier Stephen McNeil announced that he was resigning after 17 years as an MLA. He will continue in the role of premier and Liberal Party leader until the party chooses his replacement.
Ontario
The province announced that it is moving forward with the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension and the Scarborough Subway Extension.

The Ontario government is launching the next round of applications for the Ontario Automotive Modernization Program (O-AMP). The $10-million O-AMP provides auto parts companies with funding to invest in new technologies and support innovation in Ontario's automotive supply chains.

The province has launched its first Climate Change Impact Assessment, which will be conducted by the Climate Risk Institute. As part of its work, the Institute will be reviewing a variety of information such as climate data, land use patterns, and socio-economic projections. They will also develop an engagement plan to ensure the final assessment reflects the views and perspectives of Indigenous communities, municipalities, key economic sectors, and the public. The assessment will be conducted over the next two years and it is anticipated that the final results will be released in 2022.

As of August 15, gyms and recreation centres are continuing reopening, with these facilities now being able to have up to 50 patrons for each indoor sport or fitness room, while ensuring physical distancing of at least two meters.

The province is supporting a plan by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to safely extend the life of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. The plan will keep Pickering's units 1 and 4 operating until the end of 2024 and units 5 to 8 operating until the end of 2025.

On August 13, the province launched consultations aiming to improve the province's privacy protection laws. The province is seeking advice on ways to:

- Increase transparency for individuals, providing Ontarians with more detail about how their information is being used by businesses and organizations.
- Enhance consent provisions allowing individuals to revoke consent at any time, and adopting an "opt-in" model for secondary uses of their information.
- Introduce a right for individuals to request information related to them be deleted, subject to limitations (this is otherwise known as "right to erasure" or "the right to be forgotten").
- Introduce a right for individuals to obtain their data in a standard and portable digital format, giving them greater freedom to change service providers without losing their data (this is known as "data portability").
• Increase enforcement powers for the Information and Privacy Commissioner to ensure businesses comply with the law, including giving the commissioner the ability to impose penalties.
• Introduce requirements for data that has been de-identified and derived from personal information to provide clarity of applicability of privacy protections.
• Expand the scope and application of the law to include non-commercial organizations, including not-for-profits, charities, trade unions and political parties.
• Create a legislative framework to enable the establishment of data trusts for privacy protective data sharing.

Prince Edward Island
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

Quebec
Minister of Transport Francois Bonnardel announced that by 2022, the province will invest $5.2 billion to maintain and improve the road, maritime, rail, and airport networks in all regions of Quebec. The enhanced Quebec Infrastructure Plan for 2020-2030 will invest $13.6 billion in public transit alone, which is a 50 percent increase compared to what had been forecast 2019-2029. In addition, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency financial assistance of $400 million was granted to allow organizations and public transport companies to ensure the continuity of their services, despite a marked drop in clientele.

The province announced its plan to prepare for a second wave of COVID-19. The plan includes, among others: prohibiting the mobility of labor, while strictly respecting the rules of infection prevention and control; reducing the time taken for the entire screening process; ensuring the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) by entering into agreements with Quebec manufacturers for the production of strategic products; and reaching the entire population through targeted communications tailored to different audiences.

The Government of Quebec announced a 12-week extension of the employer contribution credit to the Health Services Fund for employees on paid leave introduced following the implementation of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

The province has opened consultations on a ten-year dredging program at Port-Cartier, which primarily handles iron ore and iron oxide pellets.

On August 10, longshore workers at the Montreal port began an unlimited strike. No agreement has been reached on the renewal of their collective agreement, which expired on December 31, 2018. A preceding series of temporary strikes has already been diverting ships to other ports in Halifax, Saint John, and New York.
Saskatchewan
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

The province announced on August 13 that it will provide $15 million to help develop new technologies in agriculture and position the province as a global leader in the ag-tech sector. Innovation Saskatchewan will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) in the coming weeks to begin exploring fund options with the private sector.

Four sets of temporary Regulations created during COVID-19 that permit the remote witnessing of certain documents will be made permanent. These include: The Land Titles (Remote Witnessing) Amendment Regulations, 2020; The Powers of Attorney (Remote Witnessing) Amendment Regulations, 2020; The Electronic Information and Documents (Remote Witnessing) Amendment Regulations, 2020; and The Wills Regulations.

The province saw 13,300 more people working in the province in July compared to June. Unemployment fell by 2.8 per cent to 8.8 per cent (seasonally adjusted), the second-lowest among provinces.