Month In Review – Alberta



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Oct 19: Residents of Alberta overwhelmingly expressed their desire to remain in a united Canada, rejecting separation by a vote of 75% to 25%. While not an official vote on provincial independence, adoption of the separation referendum would have put Alberta on the path to a future binding referendum on separating from Canada.

New Laws

Oct 7: Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) is investing more than $8.4 in seven defence-related projects in Alberta. Recipients include Jones Microwave, Pegasus Imagery, Fidelity Manufacturing, GKD Industries, MRO Electronic Supply, and Defence Drone Initiative Marketplace, and the Village of Foremost.

Employment Benefits

Oct 1: The Alberta Superintendent of Pensions officially increased the annual pension plan filing fee rate for the 2026 – 2027 fiscal year by 25 cents to $2.75 per plan member, effective today. The increase applies to all private plans registered in Alberta.

Action Point: Find out about the perils of poor pension plan governance and how to avoid them.

New Laws

Oct 31: Barring another extension, today is the deadline for residents to apply for the one-time $100 Alberta Energy Rebate. Eligible two-adult households can receive $200 in flexible relief that can be used for any household need. Families may also benefit from additional $100 rebates for each eligible adult family member or child age 18 or older living in the same home.

New Laws

Oct 15: Newly effective Winter Rules ban utilities from fully disconnecting

residents' electrical services for failure to pay until April 16, 2027. Similar bans against disconnection of natural gas services by retailers take effect on November 1. The rules protect vulnerable Albertans from having critical utility services cut off when winter weather hits.

New Laws

Oct 1: Alberta suspended the full provincial fuel tax, effective through the end of the year. The government says the measure will save families 13 cents per litre on gasoline and diesel each time they fill up. As of Sept. 21, retail gas prices in Alberta averaged at 175.5 cents per litre, the lowest in Canada.

New Laws

Sep 28: The federal government agreed to support Alberta's high-speed rail project connecting the Calgary-Red Deer-Edmonton corridor. Alberta will launch a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process inviting private-sector proponents to submit proposals for a downtown Calgary-Red Deer-downtown Edmonton high-speed rail project that also includes service to the province's two largest airports and the City of Airdrie.

New Laws

Oct 13: After decades, Alberta reopened the registration process for eligible historical agricultural water use on unpatented Crown land. Alberta closed the registration program in 2001, meaning that grazing leaseholders on Crown land couldn't apply directly because they didn't own the land. Instead, registrations had to be submitted on their behalf, leading to errors and omissions in historic records that may have left eligible agricultural water use unrecognized. Reopening of registration will give ranchers an opportunity to correct the record, have eligible long-standing water use reviewed, and receive the recognition and priority associated with that historical use.

New Laws

Oct 1: From now through November 19, Alberta communities and organizations seeking to boost regional economic growth can apply to the Northern and Regional Economic Development (NRED) program for grants ranging from $10,000 to $300,000 per project lasting as long as three years. The program provides up to 50% of total eligible project costs—75% for projects led by Indigenous communities.

New Laws

Oct 1: Alberta became the first Canadian province to ban solar panels from landfills, effective today. There's also a new environmental fee of $14 for each new solar panel supplied in the province. Alberta will also operate a solar panel recycling program, which is important given that the province has the second-largest installed solar capacity in Canada, with over 95% of the solar panels currently installed expected to reach the end of their lives by 2045.

Health & Safety

Sep 25: Alberta issued new School Critical Emergency Standards requiring school boards to create emergency management frameworks that address emergency planning, threat and hazard identification, standard response protocols, staff training, communication, drills and exercises, supports for affected individuals, and post-incident reviews. While the vast majority of Alberta schools have strong core safety

practices in place, a recent review found inconsistencies and gaps across the province.

Action Point: One key aspect of an accessible workplace is ensuring that fire and other emergency evacuation plans accommodate employees with mobility impairments or other disabilities. Find out how to make your own emergency response plan accessible.

CASES

Termination: Probationary Employee Was Fired for Poor Performance, Not Indigenous Roots

The company knew perfectly well that I was of Indigenous origin when it hired me, claimed a Mechanical Specialist after he was let go from his probationary position. The company denied having any such knowledge. The Alberta Human Rights Commission dismissed the Specialist's discrimination claim. What the company did or didn't know of the Specialist's racial and ancestral roots was irrelevant, the Commission explained, because the evidence showed that there were legitimate concerns about his performance and suitability for the position, including his technical assessments, understanding of plant processes and equipment, willingness to perform field work, communication, and workplace relationships [*Punko v MEG Energy Corp*., 2026 AHRC 110 (CanLII), September 14, 2026].

Action Point: While an employer's knowledge of an employee's race, pregnancy, or other trait or circumstances protected by human rights laws is evidence of employment discrimination, it's not proof. The issue that determines liability is whether that trait or circumstances factored into the employment decision—even if there were also other nondiscriminatory reasons for the decision, such as poor performance. Find out how to create and implement a legally sound Non-Discrimination Policy at your workplace.

Workers' Compensation: OK to Award Personal Care Allowance Retroactively, Says Top Court

A worker received workers' compensation benefits for the physical and psychiatric harms he suffered as a result of losing his arm in a 1983 work accident. In 2018, he also applied for a personal care allowance paying for in-home care services. The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) said no but the Appeals Commission awarded the worker a Level 3 allowance for certain windows between 1983 and 2002 based on the WCB policy in effect in 2018, the time of the claim. The WCB claimed that the Commission had no authority to apply the 2018 policy retroactively, setting up a final showdown in the Alberta Court of Appeal. The high court dismissed the WCB's appeal finding the Appeal's Commission's ruling reasonable and justifiable [*Alberta (Workers' Compensation Board) v Alberta (Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation),* 2026 ABCA 286 (CanLII), September 4, 2026].

Health & Safety: Seeing Suicidal Coworker's Dead Body Isn't a Traumatic Incident

A worker goes to the home of a missing coworker to check if he's okay. Upon arriving, he's told that the coworker committed suicide. He goes inside to find information for the co-worker's family and sees the dead body. He later submits a workers' compensation claim for the psychological injury he suffers as a result. The WCB denies the claim, finding that the incident, while no doubt highly distressing, didn't qualify as a traumatic incident under the agency's psychological injury

benefits coverage rules—he neither witnessed the suicide nor discovered the body after it happened. And he continued working for 10 more years after the incident. The worker appeals but the Alberta court finds the decision reasonable and refuses to overturn it [*Fewer v Alberta (Workers Compensation Board)*, 2026 ABKB 652 (CanLII), September 15, 2026].

Action Point: Historically, workers' compensation didn't cover psychological injuries unless they arose from discrete traumatic events. But the rules have expanded to include gradual onset psychological injury, such as continued workplace bullying or abuse. Find out about workers' comp coverage of gradual onset mental stress claims across Canada.

2026

March 2026 Month in Review

2025

December 2025 Month in Review
February 2026 Month in Review
November 2025 Month in Review
January 2026 Month in Review
Ocotber 2025 Month in Review
April 2026 Month In Review
September 2025 Month in Review
May 2026 Month In Review
August 2025 Month in Review
June 2026 Month In Review
July 2025 Month in Review
July 2026 Month In Review
June 2025 Month in Review
August 2026 Month In Review
May 2025 Month in Review
September 2026 Month In Review
April 2025 Month in Review
October 2026 Month In Review
March 2025 Month in Review
February 2025 Month in Review
January 2025 Month in Review

2024

December 2024 Month in Review

2023

December 2023 Month in Review
November 2024 Month in Review
November 2023 Month in Review
October 2024 Month in Review
October 2023 Month in Review
September 2024 Month in Review
September 2023 Month in Review
August 2024 Month in Review
August 2023 Month in Review
July 2024 Month in Review
July 2023 Month in Review
June 2024 Month in Review
June 2023 Month in Review
May 2024 Month in Review
May 2023 Month in Review
April 2024 Month in Review
April 2023 Month in Review
March 2024 Month in Review
March 2023 Month in Review
February 2024 Month in Review
February 2023 Month in Review
January 2024 Month in Review
January 2023 Month In Review