



# Building Alberta Together


## Speech from the Throne

Second Session of the  
Twenty-Eighth Legislature  
March 3, 2014

DELIVERED BY

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To the people of Alberta, Honourable Premier and honourable members of the Legislative Assembly, distinguished visitors and guests: it is my privilege to deliver the Speech from the Throne as we celebrate the opening of the Second Session of the Twenty-Eighth Alberta Legislature.

Today, we live in the most open, unabashedly confident and forward-looking province in Canada – an Alberta asserting itself proudly on the world stage.

You told your government to work with determination to build an even stronger, safer, healthier, more innovative and prosperous Alberta.

You chose a clear path forward, grounded in our proud Western values that have built the Alberta we know today:

Where hard work and bold, innovative ideas are rewarded;

Where we enjoy well-paying jobs and continue to have the lowest taxes in Canada, while at the same time supporting our most vulnerable citizens;

A place where being a good neighbour still matters – where we work together to build caring communities that are as tolerant and welcoming as our people;

And a place where families have confidence that their government will stay true to its word and be there with the education, health care and infrastructure they need.

Your government has an unwavering belief that while our quality of life is great, it can be even better. And that core principle is the very foundation of the Building Alberta Plan.

## The Building Alberta Plan

Almost two years ago, I delivered this government's first Speech from the Throne. It contained the following passage:

“Over the next four years, this government will...deliver and fulfill a clear, focused, target-driven mandate. Albertans will know where the province is headed and how progress is being made, because this is a government that will stay true to its promises.”

The Building Alberta Plan is your government's answer to that commitment – the blueprint for action focused clearly on the three priorities you told your government are most important:

Investing in families and communities;

Opening new markets for Alberta's resources; and

Ensuring government lives within its means.

Since 2012, your government has made tremendous progress on all three fronts, despite the challenges our province faced from the worst flood in Canadian history, and the deep discount Alberta receives for its oil and gas.

But neither nature's wrath, nor economic fury stood in the way of your government's plan to build an even better quality of life for Albertans.

Investing in families means your government is making good on its key promise to build 50 new schools and modernize 70 more over

the next three years – keeping class sizes low with over 86,000 new spaces for our children.

Your government is already working with communities across Alberta to develop the first wave of Family Care Clinics that are open later and provide health care closer to home. More FCCs will follow.

Just last month, new neonatal intensive care beds at the Alberta Children's Hospital were opened to help give parents peace of mind and more newborns a healthy start in life.

From the Calgary Film Studio, the new seniors' care home in Strathmore and the new training labs in Lethbridge...

...to the new nurse training program in Grande Prairie, the Final Mile initiative to connect our rural and remote regions, and our partnership on affordable housing with Habitat for Humanity in Edson – the largest rural build in Canada – under the Building Alberta Plan, your government is making the investments today that matter to Alberta's families.

Last fall, your government signed an agreement 50 years in the making to complete Calgary's ring road.

This government is three years ahead of schedule in finishing Edmonton's ring road, and will twin Highway 63 from Grassland to Fort McMurray – in full and on time – by 2016.

To support these initiatives and investment in the quality services Albertans expect, your government is opening new markets.

Key to the Building Alberta Plan, new markets mean higher royalties, better jobs and fairer prices for our products.

In November, the Governments of Alberta and British Columbia signed a landmark agreement to move Alberta's oil and gas to the B.C. coast, while protecting Alberta's royalties.


The first ever provincial energy agreement with China was signed last year.

To increase agriculture exports – already Alberta's second largest industry – we signed trade agreements with the States of Meghalaya and Punjab in India this January.

Over the last year alone, this government's focus on building new markets in Asia resulted in at least \$460 million in new investment and trade for Alberta – in addition to major new investments in our province by companies like CNOOC and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

Your government will continue to fight for Alberta's producers and against unfair country of origin labelling rules in the United States; while leading the charge for better rail service so our rural farm families can get their grain to international markets.

This includes pushing the federal government to impose real penalties for those shippers who fail to meet their grain-delivery obligations to our producers.



To meet the commitment under the Building Alberta Plan to live within its means, your government made difficult decisions in Budget 2013 – decisions that helped Alberta turn the corner, putting our province on the path to a balanced budget.

Some 375 programs have already been reviewed under Results-Based Budgeting, with the third phase set to begin and be fully completed this year.

Last year, MLAs froze their pay for four years, following an eight-per cent MLA pay cut in 2012.

Your government negotiated long-term wage agreements with Alberta's hard-working teachers and doctors to ensure stability in learning and care.

Through a new single energy regulator, a new environmental monitoring agency and a re-focused Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission, your government has acted on many years of consultation and hard work to make Alberta more competitive.

With the commitment to keep royalties steady and partner with our oil and gas industry on innovative solutions to enhance Alberta's position as a responsible energy producer, your government continues to build our competitive advantage.

And clearly, the Building Alberta Plan is working.

## The Building Alberta Plan is Working

Alberta is Canada's economic engine.

We led the country in economic growth for the last two years.

TD Bank says we will do so again this year.

Statistics Canada shows we have the highest rate of job creation and the highest family incomes in Canada, with the lowest taxes.

And the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says we have the friendliest small business climate in Canada.

It's no secret why Alberta saw our highest rate of population growth since 1981 last year – when we proudly welcomed over 100,000 new Albertans to our province.

Our population will grow from four million people today, to five million in the next decade.


That's equivalent to adding a new city the size of Red Deer to our province *every* year for the next 10 years.

While new Albertans bring skills and innovative new ideas, pressures will continue to mount on our schools, health facilities, roads and transit systems.

The actions we take today under the Building Alberta Plan will have a direct bearing on life in Alberta 20 years from now.

Building nothing would sacrifice Alberta's future. That's clearly not an option.





Today marks the beginning of the next phase of the Building Alberta Plan, focused on meeting Alberta's enormous growth head-on, while having the courage to invest in innovation and in future generations, to set our province up for long-term success.

## The Next Phase: Investing in Families and Communities

Our cities and towns are at the forefront of dealing with Alberta's explosive growth.

And we know that Alberta's success depends on all regions of the province – no matter how small – being able to meet that growth head-on.

To keep building communities, your government will complete the review of the Municipal Government Act, working with municipal leaders and partners like Bob Barss, President of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, and Helen Rice from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association who have joined us today.

Your government recognizes the unique challenges faced by our two largest cities and will finalize the Calgary and Edmonton city charters with Mayor Nenshi and Mayor Iveson, who is also here today.

To help our rural towns and urban communities keep up with growth, your government will renew the long-term funding commitment to the Municipal Sustainability Initiative and GreenTrip funding in Budget 2014.

Standing with those communities hard hit by last June's floods, this government will make firm the commitment to build community mitigation projects and to undertake new flood hazard mapping throughout the province, starting with southern Alberta watersheds.

The next phase of the Building Alberta Plan will continue to invest in families.


This government will invest in better seniors' care, focusing funding on aging-in-place and on innovative new technology that allows patients to recover in their own homes.

Your government will consider options, including using provincial land, to meet the commitment to build new continuing care beds.

For a healthier and more prosperous Alberta, your government will implement Alberta's Wellness Strategy to lower acute health costs and improve quality of life, working closely with champions like Jim Gray who have done much to promote the importance of wellness in our province.

To give Alberta's kids the best start in life, your government will invest in additional newborn screening, support for parents and child mental health, working across government departments to ensure our families receive the help they need.

To ensure Alberta's kids are able to compete in a dynamic, highly-competitive world, your government is developing a new, student-centred curriculum that will ensure a strong understanding of basic literacy and numeracy.



Your government is replacing Provincial Achievement Tests with new Student Learner Assessments to better identify areas of strength and areas where children may require additional supports, throughout the school year.

Your government is committed to building a culture of transparency, quality care and continuous improvement in Alberta's child intervention system, on the foundation of changes made to date and the recent childcare roundtable.

These changes will include extending support for young adults in care by two years, to age 24, to help youth transition more successfully to adulthood.

And your government will challenge Albertans, including businesses, non-profit organizations and employers to provide mentorship opportunities for young people, and connect those who are already driving these initiatives to ensure our kids have positive influences to help shape their future.

To better protect families, this government reaffirms its commitment to projects like I-Trac to bring together police, specialized court officers and counselling for Albertans facing domestic violence – including immediate protection for victims and punishment for offenders.

Your government will take the long view when it comes to investments in higher education, working on innovative new ways to ensure Albertans have the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge they need – to become the entrepreneurs, skilled workers and researchers we need to thrive.

To ensure rural residents have quality education opportunities, without having to leave home, your government will work to ensure that distance education is an important part of Campus Alberta.

With the support of industry partners, your government will build Canada's first and only dedicated pipeline training facility to train more heavy equipment operators, and those who work in pipeline construction and land reclamation.

Your government will also work to diversify Alberta's own domestic energy mix, and will introduce an alternative and renewable energy framework that empowers consumers to exercise choice within the market-based electricity system.

## The Next Phase: Living Within Our Means

And while this government will continue to invest in programs, services and infrastructure to build a better quality of life for Albertans, it reaffirms the commitment under this next phase of the Building Alberta Plan to live within its means and balance the budget.

By expanding the Results-Based Budgeting process and holding spending below population and inflation growth until 2016, your government is keeping its commitment.

The first bill of this session will create new supports – funded from Alberta's growing savings – for research and world-leading innovation to drive growth and economic diversification for decades to come.

The Agriculture and Food Innovation Endowment will fund research in rural Alberta and help new, made-in-Alberta agricultural solutions get to market.

The Social Innovation Endowment will invest in new research and coordinate action between small businesses, cultural organizations and non-profits to address social issues including poverty and family violence.

The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund will be expanded to support excellence in the apprenticeship, trade and technology systems and encourage training to build the skilled workforce Alberta needs.

To further set our future leaders up for success, your government will fund the creation of the Lougheed Leadership Institute, working with the University of Alberta and the Banff Centre.

And your government will create the Alberta Institute for Research and Commercialization as a clearing-house to help solve challenges and turn Alberta's best ideas into tomorrow's solutions.

## The Next Phase: Opening New Markets

What makes all of this possible – indeed, what your government has deemed 'job one' – is an unrelenting focus on selling Alberta to the world.

The next phase of the Building Alberta Plan continues to build new markets for our products and welcomes the world's investment in Alberta so your government can keep investing in what matters most.

Building on the success of the Premier's Canadian Energy Strategy, your government will advocate for a Canada Free Trade Zone, seizing the opportunity to have provinces reduce internal trade barriers that often make it more difficult to trade within our own borders, than outside.

To increase trade, business and tourism, this government will support open skies, building on the work being done by both the Calgary and Edmonton airports.

This week marks the inaugural Icelandair flight out of Edmonton International – an initiative led by the airport's past president Reg Milley. Alberta's doors are open and we are ready to welcome the world and tell our story.

To support rural families in communities like Peace River, Slave Lake and Whitecourt, your government will continue to support innovation in the forestry sector – Alberta's fifth largest industry that today employs 13,000 people. By opening new markets for our forestry products, even more jobs will be created.

The Government of Alberta will continue to work with the federal government on areas of shared interest, making sure Alberta has the skilled workers it needs, while standing up for our province by seeking clarity on foreign direct investment rules and improvements in aboriginal consultation and care.

And no matter where or when it arises, your government will continue to advocate for important projects like Keystone XL, which are so vital to our long-term prosperity, while meeting misunderstanding with fact in promoting our record as a responsible energy producer.

## Conclusion

Under the next phase of the Building Alberta Plan, our province will continue to stand as a beacon of opportunity, where we work every day to build a stronger, modern, *better* province, together.

Your government will rise above the daily fray and remain squarely focused on what truly matters to Albertans.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. May God bless you all.

God bless Alberta. God bless Canada. And God save the Queen.



