

Separation...If Necessary

Canada is failing Alberta. Period.

Our province is under economic attack from the political leadership of our very own country. And let's not just blame the politicians like we don't understand how democracy works. The majority of Canadians voted for these individuals, who are, therefore, a mere reflection of the majority of the Canadian people.

How are we being attacked you ask?

Attacks on Alberta

We now have every major political party, other than the federal Conservatives, actively campaigning and implementing policies overtly designed to, as Mr. Trudeau put it, "phase out" Alberta's primary industry and job creator. The only difference between these same parties regards how long that planned "phase out" of the oil sands will take. Some want it now (the NDP and Greens); the Liberals over the next 10 to 20 years; and ironically, wish to use the wealth created by that same industry during this period to facilitate its very demise.

And this is no empty rhetoric. The Liberals have commenced this phase out plan through the passage of Bill C-69 making it, as the Liberal's newly elected star MP, Steven Guilbeault, bragged during the recent campaign, virtually impossible to build any further interprovincial pipelines after the TransMountain expansion is completed (if it is built at all).

The Liberals have also passed Bill C-48, the "No Oil Tanker bill", which effectively bans the transport of any Alberta oil to Asia or elsewhere from off the vast majority of BC's coastline, thereby killing any hope of the Northern Gateway pipeline or meaningfully expanding our customer base to Asian markets, and thereby ensuring our energy commodities are forever discounted to the Americans.

The above two laws alone virtually guarantee that no new oilsands projects (and the hundreds of billions of investment that would otherwise flow to Alberta and Canada) are ever built, as no thoughtful company will make a 20 year investment with no guarantee they can even ship what they produce to market long term.

It doesn't end there. How about the fact Alberta has sent \$600 billion in predominantly energy-sourced equalization payments, primarily to Quebec and

Atlantic Canada over the last 55 years --- and those same provinces won't even let us build a pipeline to sell our energy to their provinces and Europe. But don't worry, they'll still take the equalization money. Do you think Alberta could have used that \$600 billion for its hospitals, schools, roads, our current sky high deficit and debt, or the Heritage Savings Fund?

There's more...Alberta, with a population of 4.4 million, has as many seats as Atlantic Canada with a population of 2.4 million. Yup - the same Atlantic Canadians that have voted for predominantly anti-Alberta Liberal and NDP governments and policies while sending so many of their population to work in the Alberta oilsands and to send their earnings back home, with Albertans welcoming them all along the way.

And I won't even get started on the carbon tax (aimed disproportionately at Alberta's economy and businesses), the runaway tax increases to the middle class, the massive deficit and debt, etc, etc, etc. It just goes on and on and on.

Do I need to continue to list the special kind of crazy this country has become? Quebec and Toronto would rather buy oil from countries that stone girls for being raped and don't give a damn about any environmental regulation of any kind, rather than buying oil and gas from Alberta. Let that fact settle in for a moment.

Alberta is clearly under full assault from within its own country. And the Trans Mountain Pipeline or a federal election victory here and there by a federal Conservative party kowtowing just enough to Ontario and Quebec that they slip into power, is going to change absolutely nothing as we have seen time after time.

This is where you and I must shoulder some of the blame and responsibility moving forward. If Albertans do nothing after all of the above, and we continue to watch our primary industry (and all the industries that stem or benefit from that industry) bleed out over the next 1 or 2 decades; if we sit idly by and allow hundreds of thousands of layoffs, and the broken families, crumbling infrastructure, moribund social services, and our children moving elsewhere for work; if we allow this to continue any longer, we can only point the finger in one direction...ourselves.

The time for talk and wrapping ourselves in the Red and White flag is long past. We've started reform movement after movement to let the West in. We've elected a PM from Calgary. We've elected an NDP Premier who uselessly spent billions on purchasing a so-called "social license" to develop our resources. Absolutely nothing has worked.

Albertans must stop asking nicely and take control of our destiny.

We must demand a new and equitable deal within the Canadian confederation under

an updated constitution; or failing that, we must separate and form a new country with those of our neighbours who wish to join with us.

I don't know of one Albertan that wishes this to be the case. We want Canada to include Alberta. But the economic tyranny over our province by the majority of Eastern Canada...and that's exactly what it has become...cannot be allowed to continue.

If it does, what other reasonable choice do we have? The answer: None.

Renewed Alberta Agenda

We, as a people, must call on the Federal Government to immediately implement the following reforms. These are the non-negotiable terms Canada must concede to should it wish to keep Alberta as a provincial member of a reformed confederation:

1. Repeal and make unconstitutional all federal and provincial legislation that specifically targets and taxes, limits or otherwise restricts the production or movement of Alberta's resources to both interprovincial and international markets. This includes the immediate repeal of the federally imposed carbon tax, oil tanker ban and 'no new pipeline' laws.
2. Amend the constitution to end all equalization payments between provinces...full stop. It's a failed program that rewards poor government and penalizes growth. It is unjust in every way imaginable. It must end.
3. Alter representation in the House of Commons to be entirely proportional to the population of each province.
4. Establish a national resource corridor that allows for the construction of any pipelines, electrical lines and other infrastructure required for the complete free flow of Canada's resources and energy to the east, west and northern coasts and to our southern border. Other than ensuring safe and proper construction, no further regulatory approvals should be necessary to undertake these projects.
5. Transfer Alberta's proportional share of all federal transfers and spending in provincial areas of jurisdiction (such as for health, education, infrastructure, social spending, etc) directly to our province through the transfer of a portion of federal taxation rates into Alberta's provincial tax rate.

Here at home, we must require our Provincial Government to immediately undertake all of the following 5 initiatives to protect the current constitutional rights of our province and prepare us more fully for the option of separation should the Federal Government fail to implement the previously outlined demands.

1. Withdraw from the Canadian Pension Plan in favour of a newly established Alberta Pension Plan just as Quebec and Ontario have done, and guarantee Albertans that their pension benefits earned under the CPP shall be fully transferred to the new APP.
2. Just as Quebec and Ontario have done, establish an Alberta provincial police force to replace the RCMP and offer our Alberta located RCMP officers an opportunity to take positions therein.
3. Just as Quebec has done, have Alberta immediately begin the collection of its own provincial taxes.
4. Just as Quebec has done, establish our own immigration protocols to attract the skilled workers from other countries that we need to meet the specific and unique needs of our economy, while ensuring current unemployed Albertans are offered first crack at new employment opportunities.
5. Commence immediate outreach to our provincial and territorial neighbours and the United States, in order to facilitate trade agreements that shall be enforced whether Alberta remains a province within confederation or not.

When Alberta completes the above initiatives, and if the Canadian Government continues its failure to implement the previously outlined federal reforms necessary to Alberta's continued participation within Canada, the next step is obvious; the Province of Alberta must hold a referendum on separation from Canada and the formation of a new and independent nation.

Taking Action

The above renewed Alberta Agenda plan is obviously a large undertaking and many will have to be involved to have it successfully implemented. So how can you help being as busy as you are?

I would suggest that you (and any of your interested friends and family) join both the federal Conservative and provincial UCP parties and become a member of their local constituency associations. Attend those parties' AGMs and local meetings. Meet with your elected Conservative and UCP MPs and MLAs. Be vocal. Don't apologize. Don't take no for an answer. These policies, as outlined above, need to be the official policies of these parties moving forward if they aren't already. If they are rejected or ineffectively pursued by those parties, new political parties will be necessary.

Let's hope our conservative parties and leadership don't make us go down that road. There are great leaders within those parties, and ideally, they would form, and even lead, this movement.

It is also incumbent upon those of us with political experience, business acumen and financial means to come together and organize at a grassroots level a political action group that organizes efforts towards the above plan in all 87 provincial and 34 federal ridings.

This Alberta Agenda Action Group should raise funds for the purpose of performing any necessary public policy research furthering this agenda and to influence all levels of government to implement the renewed Alberta Agenda. It should act to hold our provincial and federal conservative parties to be accountable and strong in the face of the opposition they will face from the plethora of anti-Alberta, anti-oil, pro-socialist and special interest forces that have been attacking our province for most of the last 30 years.

If those same provincial and federal parties refuse to implement and fight for the above policies, or are defeated in their efforts to do so but refuse to take the next logical step of holding a referendum on separation, it may be necessary to transform this Alberta Agenda Action Group into federal and provincial parties.

Again, let's hope that doesn't have to happen and that our current leaders in these parties are up to the challenges ahead. We should support them in a united effort until we have no other choice. But time is limited - and we can't postpone what needs to be done any longer.

As for me personally, I'll be working locally in Airdrie, and with like-minded Albertans across the province, to move this renewed Alberta Agenda forward. Let me know if you would also like to be involved.

Enough anger and talk. It's time to get to work. The very economic survival of Alberta and the future of our people hangs in the balance. I hope you'll join me and hundreds of thousands of your fellow Albertans in this fight!

Yours Truly,

Rob Anderson
Former Airdrie MLA and Provincial Opposition House Leader