



# Speech from the Throne 2018

Delivered on the Occasion of the Opening of

The Third Session of  
the Twenty Eighth Legislature  
Province of Saskatchewan

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

The Honourable W. Thomas Molloy  
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

*STANDING UP  
FOR SASKATCHEWAN*

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MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,  
HONOURED GUESTS, PEOPLE OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

Welcome to the opening of the Third Session of the Twenty-Eighth Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan.

This time of year, many families in our province gather to share a meal together, celebrating what we are thankful for, and for many in our agriculture industry, reflecting on another harvest.

This year, the true Saskatchewan spirit came through when one family needed help.

Brian Williams, a father of three who farmed near Milestone and was known as a pillar of his community, passed away just as harvest was beginning.

Milestone mayor Jeff Brown put out the call for help to harvest a section of Brian's wheat.

Expecting six or seven combines might show, he was shocked when 20 combines, four grain carts and 100 volunteers showed up.

Working in a V-formation, with Brian's favourite Case International Harvester combine leading the way, the section of wheat was finished in just a few hours.

Those of us in this great province know, Mayor Brown should not have been surprised by this community effort.

We see this kindness and strength across our province, but not only in times of tragedy.

Strength is built as challenges are faced head on, and that is what my government will continue to do as it stands up for Saskatchewan's interests, our economy and most importantly, our people.

Three years of low resource prices created both economic and fiscal challenges for our province.



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Today, our economy and provincial finances are showing clear signs of improvement.

However, many challenges remain.

These challenges are being created by world economic conditions, continued US trade sanctions against our steel and uranium industries, and unfortunately, in some instances, by our own federal government.

My government will continue to meet these challenges by standing up for Saskatchewan, by working to protect and grow our economy, and by carefully managing taxpayers' dollars, while delivering important government programs and services to the people of this province.

## ***FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT***

My government's three-year plan to reduce the province's dependence on resource revenues and return the budget to balance remains on track.

After a \$1.2 billion budget deficit in 2016-17, my government made some difficult, but necessary, decisions in the 2017-18 budget.

Those decisions reduced the 2017-18 deficit to \$303 million.

This past spring, the Finance Minister delivered the 2018-19 budget, which kept my government's three-year budget plan on track, while also making important investments for Saskatchewan people.

Moody's recently reconfirmed a triple-A credit rating score for Saskatchewan, making our province one of only two Canadian provinces to achieve Moody's highest credit rating.

During this session, my government will deliver the 2019-20 budget, and it will be a balanced budget.

## ***THE SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMY***

Strong financial management provides a solid foundation for the province's economy, and this year, Saskatchewan has seen clear signs of an improving economy.

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Our population continues to grow, reaching 1,162,000 people as of July 1, an increase of more than 11,000 in the past year, and 160,000 in the past 11 years.

During that time, Saskatchewan has enjoyed the second-fastest rate of job growth in the country, with 62,700 more people now working in our province.

The population and number of jobs has grown because our economy has grown.

Saskatchewan's gross domestic product has grown from \$49 billion in 2007 to more than \$60 billion in 2017 – an increase of 22 per cent in a decade.

During that time, public and private capital investment grew at five times the national rate, increasing by 70 per cent to more than \$14 billion.

The Fraser Institute's 2017 survey for mining investment ranked Saskatchewan second out of 91 jurisdictions in the world for mining investment attractiveness.

To encourage further growth, the new four-year Mineral Development Strategy announced this spring creates an incentive program to encourage mineral exploration and will increase the amount of geophysical data available.

My government will continue exploring ways to maintain and improve the competitiveness of our oil and gas industry.

This will be done by expanding existing incentives and introducing new oil well drilling and production incentives.

Technology and innovation play a critical role in growing Saskatchewan's economy.

This includes the new Saskatchewan Technology Startup Incentive, which is a non-refundable tax credit designed to encourage investment in early-stage technology companies.

Innovation Saskatchewan will also continue to invest in the technology incubator Co.Labs, which has helped more than 50 companies receive programming support and mentorship, resulting in more than \$5 million in private investment for those companies.

A growing economy and strong financial management has allowed my government to make important investments that improve the quality of life in our province and make life more affordable for Saskatchewan people.



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This includes the creation and enhancement of the Saskatchewan Low-Income Tax Credit, tripling the Seniors Income Plan benefit for low-income seniors and increasing personal, spousal and child tax exemptions to the point that 112,000 more people no longer pay any provincial income tax.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

A strong economy also provides the resources to improve the quality of life for our citizens through important infrastructure investments.

This fall, thousands of students in the province started another school year in a brand-new school, built for them and thousands of future students.

One year ago, my government completed 18 new joint-use schools that will provide space for more than 11,000 students and remain in like-new condition for the next 30 years, thanks to my government's innovative P3 contracts.

Two more schools will be built using traditional methods, contributing to the \$1.6 billion my government has invested in education infrastructure in the past decade, including 40 new schools and 25 major school renovations.

Using both P3 and traditional models, my government will continue to support our education system and our students by using the model that makes the most sense with each new project.

My government remains committed to modernizing healthcare infrastructure with approximately \$1.5 billion invested over the past decade.

This includes completion of two new hospitals and 14 long-term care facilities and ongoing capital contributions to the construction of two additional hospitals.

My government is nearing completion of the new provincial psychiatric hospital in North Battleford.

Once complete, the new state-of-the-art hospital will be among the most innovative mental health treatment centres in the country and ensure those facing significant mental health needs receive the best treatment available.

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Through a phased-in approach, 188 mental health beds will be available to deliver mental health care and support and an adjoining correctional facility will provide 96 beds for offenders living with mental health challenges.

The new long-term care facility in Swift Current and Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford both used a P3 model, allowing my government to save more than \$100 million throughout the life of these two contracts – money that instead can be invested in other projects or to improve frontline services.

My government understands the importance of ensuring all Saskatchewan residents are connected through accessible and reliable internet and cellular services.

This year, SaskTel expanded its High Speed Fusion Internet to 35 additional rural locations in the province, completing Phase 1 of my government's plan to provide communities with enhanced access to high speed internet services.

As part of Phase 2 of this plan, SaskTel is working to improve 4G LTE cellular services in 100 rural Saskatchewan communities through the deployment of a small cell site solution, with the first 50 communities expected to be complete this spring.

My government understands the significant role transportation infrastructure plays in the success of Saskatchewan, enabling growth and making travel safer for everyone.

That's why more than 13,000 kilometres of highways have been built or improved and 275 bridges have been repaired or replaced since 2007.

Just this month, the Chief Mistawasis Bridge in north Saskatoon was opened to traffic.

One of the most significant projects is the Regina Bypass, which offers a long-term safety solution for Regina and the surrounding area.

The Regina Bypass will be completed next October, on time and on budget.

New interchanges at Warman and Martensville, two of the fastest-growing communities in Saskatchewan, will be open to traffic this fall, approximately a full year ahead of schedule.



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These projects reduce congestion, improve traffic safety and support future growth.

My government is moving to a single procurement service for the nearly \$2 billion worth of goods and services procured every year.

This is estimated to result in significant savings thanks to increased coordination, while ensuring the best value for taxpayers and fair treatment for Saskatchewan suppliers.

My government recently signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada to provide nearly \$900 million for infrastructure projects over the next decade.

This agreement will result in long-term infrastructure investments that will create jobs and enhance the quality of life for people around the province.

## ***SAFER COMMUNITIES***

Improving safety for Saskatchewan people is a priority of my government.

The Protection and Response Team (PRT) was created one year ago to reduce crime, particularly in rural areas, by bringing together highway patrol officers, conservation officers, RCMP and municipal police officers.

The PRT has improved response times and enhanced officer visibility in rural Saskatchewan.

Since the operational launch of the PRT in April, conservation officers and highway patrol officers have assisted with more than 1,300 PRT-related actions – including responding to 83 emergency 911 calls.

These calls include assisting with a high-risk takedown which resulted in multiple arrests, locating a theft suspect, finding a missing 82-year-old woman who had left a farm on an extremely warm summer day, and responding to the Humboldt Broncos bus crash.

PRT vehicles are also equipped with Automated License Plate Readers, funded by SGI.

As these devices scan license plates, they alert officers if a vehicle is stolen, is connected to a crime or if the vehicle is connected to a driver who has been suspended for impaired driving or other reasons.



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To help with safety on our roads, my government has introduced a number of measures to reduce impaired driving rates in Saskatchewan.

This province has some of the toughest impaired driving laws in the country.

These laws were strengthened in 2014 and again in 2017, and most recently, stronger new laws came into effect last month.

These most recent changes specifically target drug-impaired drivers and those caught driving impaired while transporting children.

This fall, my government will be proclaiming *The Vehicles for Hire Act* that will allow ride-sharing services to begin operations in communities across Saskatchewan, which will provide another option for a safe ride home.

My government is seeing results, while recognizing there is still more to do.

Preliminary data shows a 40 per cent decrease in alcohol-related fatalities between 2016 and 2017.

This fall, the Minister responsible for SGI was awarded the MADD Canada Citizen of Distinction Award for government efforts to reduce impaired driving injuries and fatalities.

During this session, my government will introduce changes to commercial driver training to improve safety on Saskatchewan roads.

Saskatchewan has been working closely with other western provinces to improve commercial driver training and ensure consistent standards between provinces.

The Ministry of Highways is implementing an intersection safety strategy to reduce the potential for collisions at highway intersections.

Highways has already conducted a preliminary review of more than 900 intersections and has dedicated \$700,000 this year to clearing sight lines and improving intersection safety.

The budget for the Safety Improvement Program, which funds projects like turning lanes, lighting, guardrails and rumble strips, has increased from \$1.1 million in 2007 to \$7 million in 2018.

My government is committed to further increasing funding for these important safety initiatives in next year's budget.

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Cannabis is now legal across the country and my government has implemented a framework and retail model to prioritize public health and safety, while balancing the need to provide legal access.

A competitive private model for the distribution and retail sale of cannabis in Saskatchewan has been chosen to ensure a safe, regulated supply of cannabis and minimize the upfront cost to taxpayers.

My government has also chosen the legal age of consumption to be 19 and has taken a zero tolerance approach for drug-impaired driving.

My government recognizes the benefits regional policing services provide for our communities.

During this session, my government will amend *The Police Act* to enable rural municipalities and municipalities with populations under 500 to join regional police services.

My government is also taking steps to make crime less profitable by introducing changes to *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act*.

These changes will make it easier for property to be seized if it has been acquired due to or used in unlawful activities such as serious firearms offences or sexual offences involving children.

The federal government has committed at least \$10 million over the next five years towards Saskatchewan's Guns and Gangs Strategy, that will merge and enhance investigative and enforcement efforts to make our communities safer.

My government recently undertook a process of public consultation on trespassing laws, and expects to introduce legislation to better address the appropriate balance between the rights of rural land owners and members of the public.

During this session, my government will introduce legislation to address domestic violence by bringing Clare's Law to Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan will be the first province in Canada with this legislation.

It was introduced in the United Kingdom and named in honour of Clare Wood, a woman who was murdered by her partner and was unaware of his violent past.

Clare's father fought for more disclosure by police to protect domestic violence victims.



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This legislation will provide a framework for Saskatchewan police services to disclose relevant information about someone's violent or abusive past to intimate partners who may be at risk.

To help victims of sexual violence in our province, interpersonal violence leave will be expanded to include sexual violence of any kind.

This amendment to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* will allow employees to access up to 10 unpaid days of leave to seek medical attention, access supports, get legal or law enforcement assistance or relocate if they or their children are victims of any type of sexual violence.

## **HEALTH CARE**

My government continues to place a strong emphasis on recruiting and retaining medical professionals.

There are 3,700 more nurses and nearly 900 more doctors practicing across the province since 2007.

Saskatchewan continues to lead the country in developing innovative solutions to blend the delivery of health care services with public and private providers.

Our province's innovative two-for-one MRI policy, introduced in 2016, has enabled nearly 1,400 additional MRI scans to be provided to patients at no additional cost to taxpayers.

A focus on more effectively delivering health care services led my government to transition 12 health regions into the Saskatchewan Health Authority last December.

By moving to a single authority, my government expects to save between \$10 and \$20 million annually, while providing more coordinated care.

Work is underway to establish performance-based ambulance contracts, with the goal of reducing rural response times and ensuring the closest ambulance available is dispatched.

Today in our province, nearly 90,000 surgeries are performed every year and there are 44 per cent fewer patients waiting more than three months for surgery than a decade ago.

My government remains committed to reducing wait times in hospital emergency departments.

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In addition to the four Accountable Care Units already in operation in Saskatoon and Regina, my government is in the process of establishing three more units.

These units bring together a variety of health professionals to create a team approach to care, which has reduced wait times for inpatient beds.

Two Community Health Centres will also be established this year in Regina and Saskatoon to help patients with complex needs and reduce emergency department visits and hospital stays.

My government will also increase investment in individualized funding for home care to reduce the wait list and provide support for additional individuals.

The new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon is now 92 per cent complete and is expected to open in 2019.

This facility will provide world-class health care to our province's children, expecting mothers and their families.

As part of a strong commitment to healthcare and its future in the province, my government continues to invest in the College of Medicine and its full accreditation.

The College of Medicine and the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital will enhance my government's ability to attract pediatric specialists, sub-specialists, and surgeons to our province.

A focus on improving access to mental health services continues, as crisis teams pairing a police officer with a mental health professional will be fully operational this winter in Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Yorkton and Prince Albert.

Multi-disciplinary Community Recovery Teams, made up of 40 new full-time employees, will be offering services in eight communities by the end of this year, to support people with complex and persistent mental illness.

This winter, a pilot program to engage youth in mental health promotion will be launched in schools located in the communities of North Battleford, Sandy Bay, Regina and Balgonie.

To help address opioid-related overdose deaths, my government introduced the Take Home Naloxone kit program, which has been established in 23 Saskatchewan communities to date.



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The program has distributed more than 1,100 kits and trained 2,800 people.

Saskatchewan's HIV rates remain high, which is why my government introduced universal drug coverage for HIV medications and is providing additional funds to community-based organizations working with vulnerable populations.

My government has fulfilled its commitment to provide individualized funding for children under six who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In 2018-19, \$2.8 million has been allocated to provide up to \$4,000 annually per child, giving parents more choice and flexibility to access the supports that best meet their child's needs.

Annual funding of \$500,000 will continue for the use of cutting-edge technology to improve care in remote and northern locations.

Remote Presence Technology enables health care providers to perform real-time assessments, diagnostics, and patient management through tools including a mobile robot or a smaller portable device known as a Doc-in-a-Box.

Saskatchewan is one of the world leaders in this technology, thanks to Dr. Ivar Mendez and his team at the University of Saskatchewan.

Through the use and expansion of Remote Presence Technology, residents located in Stony Rapids, La Loche, Pelican Narrows, English River Dene Nation, Fond-du-lac, Clearwater River Dene Nation and Hatchet Lake will continue to benefit from these services.

## ***EDUCATION***

My government is standing up for future generations with investments in students of all ages.

In 2018-19, my government will provide \$2.5 billion in education funding to support Prekindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms, early years, libraries and literacy.

This includes an increase of \$30 million this year for school operating funding, which was used to hire up to 400 teachers and educational support staff this fall.

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My government also recognizes the importance of investing in children who need extra support and has created two new pilot programs to help children with additional needs before they enter school.

For students living in northern Saskatchewan, funding for northern school divisions has increased by more than \$14 million annually – a jump of nearly 25 per cent from a decade ago.

My government recognizes the importance families play in their children's development.

A great example of this is the Sandy Bay Family Resource Centre, which provides young families with free activities, advice and supports and has seen nearly 4,000 visits in 2017-18, the equivalent of every member of that community visiting five times.

More than 42,500 students are enrolled in credentialed programs at Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions, an increase of more than seven per cent over the last four years.

More First Nations and Métis students are attending and graduating from Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions.

The number of credentials awarded to First Nations and Métis students has increased 35 per cent since 2013.

To support students pursuing an education at our province's universities, colleges and technical schools, my government has provided \$9.1 billion since 2007 to support post-secondary education, including nearly \$1 billion in direct student supports.

This includes the Graduate Retention Program, which has benefited nearly 70,000 students who have decided to stay and build their career in Saskatchewan after completing their post-secondary education.

My government is expanding opportunities for students to improve their understanding and skills in financial literacy through the development of new curricula, which will be piloted in Saskatchewan schools in 2019.

To help prepare our students for careers in science, math, engineering and technology, new opportunities in coding and robotics will be incorporated into middle years and high school classrooms during the next school year.



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## ***SUPPORTING SASKATCHEWAN PEOPLE***

My government understands that working people in Saskatchewan must balance their job responsibilities with taking care of their family.

This session, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* will be amended to create a new critically ill adult leave.

This will enable family members of critically ill adults to take a 15-week leave to care for their family member in their time of need.

The arrival of a child is an exciting time for a family, and one that requires planning and time to care for the newest family member.

My government will further amend *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to expand parental leave from 37 weeks to 63 weeks and add an additional week of maternity leave, providing up to 13 weeks prior to the expected date of the birth of the child.

These changes will provide parents with additional time to prepare and care for the newborn children before returning to work.

It can be difficult for individuals who have been on Income Assistance to transition into the work force.

To help alleviate the gap between Income Assistance and transitioning to a career, my government will review the income exemption and consult with stakeholders to look at increasing the amount of income clients can receive before their benefits are adjusted.

This means those accessing Income Assistance will be able to work in a job of their choice to gain valuable experience to help them transition into a self-sustaining career.

## ***RECOGNIZING THE PAST***

My government recognizes the invaluable contributions and sacrifices our nation's veterans have made protecting Canada.

It is a debt we can never fully repay.

As a small act to show our appreciation to these brave men and women, my government will offer free fishing and hunting licenses to all Canadian veterans.

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My government will make moving to Saskatchewan easier for military personnel and their families.

Members of the military and their immediate family members will be eligible for an exemption for a first-time registered vehicle inspection for a vehicle brought to Saskatchewan from another jurisdiction.

This session, my government will apologize to those in our province impacted by the Sixties Scoop.

This practice occurred across Canada and involved taking Indigenous children from their families and communities for adoption or placement in foster homes.

My government is working closely with the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Saskatchewan to prepare an apology.

This work will provide those affected by the Sixties Scoop an opportunity to share their stories, and to work together towards a path of reconciliation and healing.

## ***STANDING AGAINST THE CARBON TAX***

While both Saskatchewan's economy and our provincial finances are showing signs of improvement, serious threats remain.

My government will continue to show strong leadership by standing up for Saskatchewan in response to these threats.

A very real challenge to our province is a federal carbon tax.

This tax is an ineffective policy that will not significantly reduce emissions.

Instead, it will harm our economy and make life less affordable for Saskatchewan people.

Recent research from the University of Regina confirms a carbon tax would reduce our provincial GDP by \$16 billion by 2030.

At the same time, Ottawa's plan would only reduce emissions by one per cent.

My government is taking action to stand up for Saskatchewan communities, families, businesses and jobs by challenging the federal carbon tax in court.



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Saskatchewan believes Ottawa does not have the constitutional authority to impose a tax on some provinces, but not others, based on whether or not the federal government agrees with the province's climate change plan.

While some have called our court challenge a pointless crusade and suggested that Saskatchewan should simply give in to Ottawa's demands, a recent poll showed that 88 per cent of Saskatchewan people, and 72 per cent of all Canadians, support my government's decision to fight the federal carbon tax in court.

Not long ago, Saskatchewan stood alone in defending our citizens against the federal carbon tax.

Not anymore.

The new Government of Ontario has also shown its support in fighting the federal carbon tax by cancelling its cap-and-trade program, joining my government's reference case against the carbon tax, and launching its own.

The Government of Manitoba recently announced that it has cancelled its proposed carbon tax and will resist the imposition of a carbon tax by the federal government.

The Government of Prince Edward Island is also against a federal carbon tax and like Saskatchewan, has its own plan to reduce emissions without a harmful tax.

Should the government change in New Brunswick as expected, the new government will also join our fight against the federal carbon tax.

## ***TAKING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE***

At the same time that my government is fighting the federal carbon tax, it is also taking meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by implementing the *Prairie Resilience Climate Change Strategy*.

This plan includes commitments to reduce annual emissions by nearly 12 million tonnes by 2030 by reducing emissions from electrical generation by 40 per cent, decreasing methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production by 40 per cent and implementing output-based performance standards for heavy industry.

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This session, my government will introduce *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act* to establish intensity-based performance standards for large emitters and enable compliance mechanisms, including a technology fund, offset system and best-performance credits.

These measures are in addition to the strong work Saskatchewan is already doing to address climate change.

Our agriculture industry has annually sequestered nearly 12 million tonnes of carbon in recent years and the carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary Dam 3 has removed more than two million tonnes of carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

My government has taken action to increase renewable energy capacity and flare gas energy production from oil and gas facilities.

The Blue Hills wind power project recently received approval to proceed.

Saskatchewan's first utility scale solar power project will be in service next year through a 20-year agreement between SaskPower and Saturn Power.

An improved Power Generation Partner Program was recently announced to help industry capture flare gas for power production and SaskPower and the First Nations Power Authority have signed an agreement to source energy from flare gas power generation projects.

This session, my government will also renew programming to help Saskatchewan residents generate renewable power for their own use and will announce further actions to increase renewable generating capacity in 2019.

Saskatchewan's plan will accomplish our goal of addressing climate change, result in real emission reductions and ensure our industries remain competitive, without the harm to our economy caused by a costly and ineffective federal carbon tax.

## **TRADE CHALLENGES**

Our province relies heavily on trade and recognizes the importance of attracting new investment.

Saskatchewan exports are up significantly, from \$19 billion in 2007 to around \$29 billion in 2017.



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Our exporters are also diversifying their markets.

Exports to China have tripled to \$3.5 billion over the past decade, while exports to India have grown by 94 per cent to \$1.1 billion last year.

While Saskatchewan has seen significant growth in exports and the jobs it creates over the past decade, today our province is facing challenges in this area.

Burdensome regulations being brought in by the federal government, combined with tax reform in the United States, have resulted in a dramatic loss of investor confidence in our nation.

Foreign direct investment in Canada has declined by more than 74 per cent in the past decade, from \$125.5 billion in 2007 to only \$32 billion in 2017.

Canada's level of competitiveness on the world stage has gone south.

So has investment.

At the same time that resource companies are making record investments and creating thousands of new jobs in the Permian Basin in the United States, higher federal taxes, overregulation and the large oil price differential caused by a lack of new pipelines is causing many of those same companies to reduce their investment in Canada.

The largest trading market for our nation and this province is the United States.

Our interconnected economies see millions of dollars of goods cross the borders daily, benefitting businesses and consumers, and supporting jobs on both sides of the border.

While the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will ensure continued access to US markets for Saskatchewan products, protectionist threats from the US administration remain.

Our province continues to face the threat of tariffs on Saskatchewan softwood lumber and steel.

This is in addition to the United States Department of Commerce's spurious investigation of Saskatchewan uranium as a threat to US national security, and possible tariffs that may arise from that investigation.

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My government will continue to work with Ottawa to support the Canadian economy and this critical trading relationship, while supporting our own customers and connections in the United States to preserve Saskatchewan's relationship with our largest trading partner.

Saskatchewan's exports to India have also taken a direct hit since 2015, declining by nearly 40 per cent.

The Prime Minister's recent trip to India was not successful in achieving the elimination of trade barriers on Saskatchewan pulse crops.

My government will be part of a Saskatchewan business delegation going to India this November to encourage investment and strengthen the relationship with this large trading partner.

The Premier recently completed a trade mission to China.

Unfortunately, Saskatchewan remains reliant on our federal government to negotiate international trade agreements, and Canada's trade relationship with China has stalled as our country has not started formal free trade discussions as expected.

The Government of Canada has also not indicated a willingness to expand uranium exports to China – an initiative that would benefit northern Saskatchewan mines and workers.

## **TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES**

Saskatchewan is an export-driven province.

We produce many of the products in demand around the world in industries like agriculture, oil and gas and mining.

Saskatchewan exports have grown by 44 per cent over the last decade with nearly \$29 billion of exports last year.

Agriculture exports are the foundation of the province's economy, accounting for almost half of total exports.

In 2017, Saskatchewan's agriculture exports were the fourth largest in the history of the province with total sales of \$13.6 billion.

Because of Saskatchewan's location, our province is heavily reliant on transportation to get our products to the markets that need them in nearly 150 countries around the world.



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However, this journey from Saskatchewan fields to markets around the world faces bumps along the way.

This spring, our farmers once again faced a major backlog for their crops.

Farmers like Jim Wickett near Rosetown, who had 20,000 bushels of canola ready to go in January.

But when railways were unable to handle the capacity, his canola was left sitting in the bins until April.

My government pushed the federal government to address this problem.

Bill C-49, *The Transportation Modernization Act*, was passed by the federal government in May.

This Act allows for rail companies to be penalized if they do not deliver promised rail cars.

With the 2018 harvest wrapping up in most areas, we are hopeful this winter and spring will see our crop arrive on time to its many destinations around the world without any backlogs for our producers.

My government will continue to advocate on behalf of our farmers and ranchers to ensure what they produce reaches markets around the world in a timely and efficient manner.

In order to free up rail lines for our agriculture industry, we need to ensure rail lines are not an above-ground pipeline for oil.

An economist recently estimated without the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project or the Keystone XL pipeline, the demand for oil by train could increase 200 per cent by the mid-2020s.

My government will continue to advocate for pipelines as a safe, efficient and reliable method of transportation for energy products.

Saskatchewan and Western Canadian oil needs to get across our country and around the world.

Without pipelines, Saskatchewan is faced with economic challenges we cannot solve on our own.

This year, oil producers operating in our province would have earned an estimated \$4.4 billion more if they had access to international markets.

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My government would have received approximately \$300 million in additional taxes, royalties and other revenue.

This is lost revenue that could be spent on important programs and services.

Right now, more than half of the oil in Quebec and Atlantic Canada comes from foreign sources.

It makes no sense that so many Canadians rely on foreign oil because of roadblocks created within our own country.

Today, the courts have blocked the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion while the federal government is effectively ending the possibility of any future pipelines being built in this country through Bill C-69, which will make approval of future pipelines virtually impossible.

Without pipelines to get our oil across the country, Saskatchewan must sell nearly all of our oil to one market – the United States – for sometimes as low as half the global price.

My government will stand up for the jobs our oil and gas industry creates by continuing to press the federal government to take immediate action to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built and to withdraw Bill C-69.

## **CONCLUSION**

My government will always stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and the interests of our province.

While we face many challenges, Saskatchewan people are determined, resilient, resourceful and tenacious.

My government will always reflect those qualities as it stands up for our province and works to build a stronger Saskatchewan.

May divine providence continue to bless our province and guide this Assembly in all its deliberations.

God bless Saskatchewan.

God bless Canada.

God save The Queen.





