



An update from the West's think tank

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With energy decisions, it's all a matter of trust

Energy debates in Canada often lead to questions of just how much trust there is in regulators. Leaders at the centre of the debate tend to think the system is not broken, yet say more can be done to restore trust. These are among the issues identified in a report released by the Foundation. [*Fair Enough: Assessing Community Confidence in Energy Authorities*](#) is a joint project with the University of Ottawa's Positive Energy Project. It reports on interviews with environmentalists, regulators, policy-makers and energy executives and outlines a framework of possible reforms to guide policy and regulation. It also lays the groundwork for the next stage of research: case studies of six Canadian communities that have faced proposals for energy infrastructure projects.



Finding ways to build trust is essential to the prosperity of energy-driven economies in the West. Doing the right things, the right way will help restore that confidence, [Michael](#)

[Cleland, Trevor McLeod and Monica Gattinger write in this op-ed, published in the Vancouver Sun and Winnipeg Free Press.](#) The report and its findings were also [featured by Postmedia business columnist Deborah Yedlin.](#)

Rail report lays out ways to boost safety, service

Freight rail in western Canada remains an area of intense controversy. A report the foundation released in April says the system is basically working well but makes 25 recommendations that would improve safety, efficiency, service levels and flexibility. [A Smoother Track for Exports: A framework for Alberta rail policy](#) was commissioned by the Government of Alberta and focused on that province yet its framework has relevance to other provinces, as well.



As we observed, while a dual monopoly may be the only practical approach in the West, it contributes to the perception that the system is not fair. While answers don't come easily, the province has indicated our hard work has yielded insights that will assist in future transportation planning.

We shared the report widely with growers, shippers, government and other other stakeholders across the West. The report drew particular media attention in Saskatchewan, where growers are still smarting from the capacity problems associated with the grain surge of 2013–14. An [article in the Regina Leader Post](#) (reprinted in other Postmedia papers) keyed on the paper's recommendations to ease bottlenecks in the system.

The Western Producer farm publication also wrote about the report. You can see its story [here](#).

Manitoba votes for change

The new PC government of Brian Pallister will lay out its plans for Manitoba in the speech from the throne on May 16, and the newly returned government of Brad Wall in Saskatchewan delivers its plans the following day, on the 17th.



The foundation has reached out to all four western governments, offering to deliver the convening and non-partisan public policy advice that will help our legislators make the best possible decisions.

Interns take on busy summer

We are delighted to welcome a team of five interns to the foundation, who will help us complete an ambitious summer research agenda. They are:



Catherine Gao, who is completing BA at Montreal's McGill University (Political Science, History, and Environment).

Beth Miller, a graduate of Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy in Saskatchewan, where she completed a Masters in Public Administration.

Sarah Pittman, a Masters in International History student at The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. She has undergraduate degrees in History and Education from the University of Lethbridge.

Liam St. Louis, who is completing an undergraduate degree from New Brunswick's Mount Allison University in International Relations and Economics.

Luise Yang, a recent graduate of Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., where she holds a Bachelors of Science in Industrial and Labour Relations.

You can [read more about our summer 2016 interns, here.](#)

Poll: Should Manitoba joint the New West Partnership?

Take our [one-click poll here.](#)

Last month, we asked you if EI changes announced in the federal budget help employment woes in the West. Just more than half of you said the changes are OK for now, but EI reassessment should be done regularly. The rest of respondents believe the changes are unfair and exclude some places that need the help.

We welcome your comments

Want to talk about anything you read in this newsletter? Have an idea you would like to share? Send your comments to: feedback@cwf.ca

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