



Funded by:



State of Environmental Governance: Addendum #1



Heather Fast

Manitoba Eco-Network

November 22, 2024

Updated Ministerial Responsibilities (By Heather Fast)

This Addendum to the SOEG Report reflects the political and legal changes that occurred as a result of the Cabinet shuffle of the Government of Manitoba on November 13, 2024.¹ The changes to Cabinet updated a number of Ministerial portfolios that include legal responsibilities and powers related to the environment, natural resources, and environmental governance generally.² This document provides an overview of these changes and the resulting adjustments to Manitoba's environmental governance framework.

A Cabinet shuffle involves making changes to the appointed Ministers who lead government departments and play other key roles in government leadership. Cabinet shuffles happen in political systems like Manitoba's for a number of reasons. Sometimes a Minister needs to be replaced because they've resigned, retired, or died. More often, changes to the Cabinet occur in response to adjustments in government priorities. By updating the responsibilities of the Cabinet Ministers (and often corresponding changes to the departments they run), the government can publicly identify the issues and policy changes they plan to focus on moving forward. For example, a Cabinet shuffle can involve the creation of a new Cabinet position and a corresponding new government department to focus on a specific policy area or issue that wasn't getting enough attention or has only recently emerged as a topic of significant public interest.

There are no timelines or requirements associated with Cabinet shuffles in Manitoba. Therefore, changes to the Cabinet can occur at any point during the term of an elected provincial government. Normally though, Cabinet appointments and shuffles tend to occur around main events in the political and policy cycles, such as the start of a new session of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. This means that the changes in priorities of government that triggered the adjustment of Cabinet may also be communicated through other corresponding political mechanisms, such as the issuance of new Ministerial Mandate Letters and the delivery of a Throne Speech at the opening of a new Legislative Session.

Current Ministerial Responsibilities

Within Manitoba's overall governance framework, there are many departments of the provincial government that play a role in protecting the environment and human health, determine how natural resources are used, and bear responsibility for processes that have potential to cause significant environmental harm. These Departments are each led by an elected official, i.e., a Cabinet Minister, responsible for the following portfolios:

- Agriculture
- Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation
- Environment and Climate Change
- Finance
- Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
- Innovation and New Technology
- Justice
- Labour and Immigration
- Municipal and Northern Relations
- Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures
- Public Service Delivery
- Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism
- Transportation and Infrastructure

¹ Government of Manitoba, News Release "[Refreshed Manitoba Cabinet Moving Forward for a Hopeful Future](#)" (November 13, 2024)

² Government of Manitoba, Order in Council [249/2024](#) (November 13, 2024)

Each of these departments run by Cabinet Ministers also include a hierarchy of public service individuals. The Ministers responsible for leading the various departments are appointed by the Premier through an Order in Council. The table below indicates the range of environmental responsibilities currently assigned to different provincial Cabinet Ministers in Manitoba, as of November 13, 2024.

Current Ministerial Responsibilities (as of November 13, 2024)

	Land Use and EA	Water and Health	Energy and Climate	Mines, Minerals, Oil and Gas	Forestry	Fish	Biodiversity	Toxic Substances and Waste Management	Parks and Recreation	Agriculture	Animals	Reconciliation and Indigenous Gov.	Government and Legal Structure
☐ = Nov 2024 changes													
Agriculture	X						X	X		X	X		X
Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation	X		X	X			X					X	X
Environment and Climate Change	X	X	X				X	X	X				
Finance			X	X									
Health		X						X					
Innovation and New Technology													X
Justice	X			X				X		X	X		X
Labour and Immigration		X	X	X									
Municipal and Northern Relations	X	X											X
Public Service Delivery	X												X
Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism									X				
Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures	X				X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Transportation and Infrastructure	X	X	X						X				

Table 1: Updated Environmental Responsibilities of MB Ministers (Fast, 2024)

What Has Changed?

The updates to the Government of Manitoba's Cabinet include the redistribution of legal responsibilities formerly assigned to the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources, the Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services, and the Minister of Indigenous Economic Development. These positions no longer exist within the Government of Manitoba's Cabinet. Four new Ministerial portfolios were created instead, including:

- Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation,
- Innovation and New Technology,
- Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures, and
- Public Service Delivery.

This means that the responsible Minister has changed in a number of different areas of legal responsibility associated with environmental governance including:

- Land Use and Environmental Assessment
- Mines, Minerals, Oil, and Gas
- Forestry
- Fish
- Biodiversity
- Parks and Recreation
- Reconciliation and Indigenous Governance
- Government Structure and Function of the Legal System.

See the updated [SOEG Companion Document](#) for an overview of the legislative powers assigned to each Minister in each of these areas.

The Hon. Jamie Moses is the new Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (formerly the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources). Minister Moses retains legal oversight of activities associated with carbon capture and storage, mines, minerals, oil, gas, and peat mining (i.e., peatlands stewardship). In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Implementing the new critical minerals strategy and developing new mines with the support and participation of Indigenous nations.
- Growing Manitoba's economy.
- Creating new jobs in electric transit manufacturing.
- Overseeing and supporting the oil and gas industry.
- Working with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to develop Churchill and Centrepont as transportation and supply chain hubs.

The Hon. Ian Bushie is the new Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures (formerly Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations and Minister of Indigenous Economic Development). Minister Bushie assumes legal responsibilities under the majority of Manitoba's provincial natural resources legislation. This includes legal powers in the areas of Land Use and Environmental Assessment, Forestry, Fish, Biodiversity, and Parks and Recreation. Minister Bushie also retains the legal responsibilities associated with the former Indigenous Economic Development portfolio. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Implementing natural resource laws and policies that unite Manitobans and recognize everyone has a role to play in the responsible stewardship of the land.
- Expanding hunting opportunities for all Manitobans and support outfitters.
- Listening to Conservation Officers, Indigenous Land Guardians, and the communities they serve, and working with them to improve respect, relationships, and workplace culture in the spirit of reconciliation.

- Taking new steps to support commercial fishers in Manitoba.
- Supporting the forestry industry.
- Working with Indigenous nations and industry to establish good relationships that advance economic reconciliation.
- Protecting wildlife and the environment.
- Growing the economy.
- Advancing economic reconciliation through the Indigenous Economic Development fund.
- Working with Indigenous nations and industry to protect heritage resources and ensure the permitting process is efficient.

The Hon. Glen Simard is the new Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Implementing new legislation to give municipalities more freedom and increase collaboration and cooperation between municipalities and the province.
- Working with the city of Winnipeg and the Federal government to invest in the North End Pollution Control Centre with good, union jobs to build more affordable housing and protect Lake Winnipeg.
- Working with municipalities across the province on improving waste-water management.

The Hon. Lisa Naylor has retained the legal responsibilities already held as Minister of Transportation of Infrastructure. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Building infrastructure to grow our economy.
- Consulting with Indigenous communities and building the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Channels.
- Twinning the Trans Canada Highway in eastern Manitoba.
- Working with the department of Business, Trade, Mining and Job Creation to pursue initiatives to develop Churchill and Centreport as transportation and supply chain hubs.

The duties of the former portfolio for Consumer Protection and Public Services has been re-named and transferred to the Hon. Mintu Sandhu, the new Minister of Public Service Delivery. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Providing high quality and timely government services to all Manitobans.
- Bring in new P3 (Public-Private Partnership) accountability legislation.
- Working with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure in building new infrastructure including the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Channels and twinning the Trans Canada Highway.
- Working with the Minister of Business, Trade, Mining and Job Creation to pursue initiatives to develop Churchill and Centreport as transportation and supply chain hubs.

The Hon. Mike Moroz is the new Minister of Innovation and New Technology. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Helping Manitoba businesses use new technology to boost competitiveness.
- Support the development of AI in Manitoba while protecting Manitoba jobs and the privacy of all citizens.
- Creating a task force to solicit expert advice on how new technology can build Manitoba's future economy with a specific focus on the development and ownership of Intellectual Property.
- Empowering the public service to employ new technology to better serve Manitobans, making use of the resources and roadmaps already developed by other jurisdictions.

- Working with the Federal government to improve broadband and cellphone networks throughout Manitoba.

The Hon. Nellie Kennedy is the new Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism. In the new [Mandate letter](#) for this position, relevant priorities include:

- Supporting Manitoba's diverse cultural and geographic communities and our thriving tourism industry.
- Creating more recreation opportunities for young people so they can have safe spaces to play, develop their skills and find a good path in life.

A Throne Speech was delivered on November 19, 2024 at the opening of the new Legislative Assembly Session (Second Session, Forty-third Legislature), which outlined the Government of Manitoba's priorities for the upcoming legislative session. In the [Throne Speech](#), the main priorities and actions that will likely influence provincial environmental governance in Manitoba include:

- Cutting the gas tax.
- Freezing Crown land rents for the second year in a row.
- A new tax credit for rental housing construction.
- Freezing hydro rates for one year starting in 2025.
- Improving protections under *The Workplace Safety and Healthy Act* for workers whose jobs involve dangerous chemicals.
- The release of a new economic development strategy.
- Investing in sustainable aviation fuel in Portage la Prairie.
- Attracting new investment with industry-friendly policies.
- Speeding up home and business hookups to the power grid and lowering associated costs.
- Implementing the *Securing our Critical Mineral Future* Strategy to help Canada meet its NATO spending targets, help the United States meet its security needs, and attract new investment to Manitoba.
- Investing in the port of Churchill as a shipping port (e.g., transport of minerals).
- Growing the forestry sector.
- Moving forward with big infrastructure projects like the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Channels, twinning the Trans Canada Highway, and upgrading the Northern End Water Pollution Control Centre.
- Implementing the new *Affordable Energy Plan*.
- Building 600 new megawatts of wind power in partnership with First Nations and the Metis.
- Working with industry and home builders to improve Manitoba's building energy efficiency codes.
- Investing in grid refurbishments to meet our energy needs while keeping Manitoba Hydro rates low.
- Making progress on the goal of protecting 30 per cent of Manitoba by 2030.
- Modernizing *The Environment Act* to make big polluters pay and strive for the highest standards in water protection.
- Establishing a Lake Winnipeg stakeholder working group with producers, environmental experts, Indigenous nations and industry representatives to ensure the sustainability of the lake.
- Bringing in legislation to protect and defend Manitobans from strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP suits).
- Giving municipalities the freedom to choose participation in regional planning groups.