

November 2018 Newsletter

It has been another busy month in the North Okanagan – Shuswap and Ottawa and it is my pleasure to provide you an update of my work as your Member of Parliament!

Remembering Those Who Served and Sacrificed

One of the greatest honours of being your Member of Parliament is the opportunity to attend Remembrance Day events across the North Okanagan- Shuswap.

This year, there were at least sixteen Remembrance Day ceremonies across the constituency to remember those who served in the Canadian Forces. It was a true honour to lay a wreath in the 11th hour ceremony in Vernon, and then stop in at six other locations throughout the day. Remembrance Day ceremonies and events require months of planning and I thank all who gave of their time and resources to support Remembrance Day services in our communities.

Bruhn Bridge Announcement in Sicamous

On November 16, I participated in the announcement of the new R.W. Bruhn Bridge project in Sicamous that will replace the existing 56-year-old bridge with a single five-lane span and intersection improvements between Old Sicamous Road and Silver Sands Road.

With the Bruhn bridge reaching the end of its lifespan, this \$224.5 million project will enhance safety on this stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway for local residents and travelers alike.

Since being elected, I have consistently advocated for infrastructure improvements such as this in our region and I welcome the announcement of this project that will provide safer transportation and employment and training opportunities for residents.

Fall Economic Statement 2018

The federal government's economic and fiscal update on November 21 confirmed that Prime Minister Trudeau's fiscal policies are piling-up our public debt while his promise of balancing the budget by 2019 is nowhere in sight.

While Trudeau committed in 2015 to limiting himself to deficits no larger than \$10 billion, the fall economic statement informed Canadians that this year's deficit is expected to be \$18.1 billion with another \$19.6 billion deficit on the horizon for next year. What's more, a December 12 report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer states next year's deficit could increase to a staggering \$30 billion.

Running massive deficits today means higher taxes on young and future generations for decades to come. My Conservative colleagues and I continue to hold the Trudeau government to account and advocate for reasonable policies that will improve, not undermine, our collective future as Canadians.

Enhancing the Fight Against Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

On November 30, I introduced a motion at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans that received unanimous support for a committee study of the federal fisheries department's resources and programs dedicated to preventing the introduction, establishment and spread of AIS.

In Ontario alone, municipalities and the province spend tens of millions of dollars annually on efforts to manage one AIS, zebra mussels. A study by the Okanagan Basin Water Board has estimated that an introduction of these mussels to the Okanagan would cause significant damage to local ecology and economy including an annual cost of over \$40 million in lost revenue, maintenance of aquatic infrastructure, reduced property values, and permanent ecological damage.

Considering a large majority of federal resources for fighting AIS are allocated to activities in and around the Great Lakes, I hope the Committee's study will provide recommendations to help the government reassess and balance the allocation of federal resources because an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of remedy when confronted with the threats of zebra mussels in our region.

Pre-Budget Consultations

As you may know, every year the federal government introduces its budget that allocates government spending for the year ahead. Since October, I have been holding pre-budget meetings with representatives from local governments, First Nations and community organizations to receive their input on what the needs and priorities of the region are so that I can provide them to the federal government as I have every year since being elected.

As such, I advocate directly to the Minister of Finance on an annual basis seeking improved federal support for the needs and priorities of our communities in the North Okanagan- Shuswap. While recent announcements such as the Bruhn Bridge project are welcome investments in our region, much more work remains to be done and I continue to convey our needs and priorities to the Minister of Finance and Government of Canada.

With Christmas quickly-approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2019! I hope you have a chance to relax with friends and family and enjoy the season.

Sincerely,



Mel Arnold, M.P.
North Okanagan- Shuswap