In June, I participated in a Wildlife Wednesday Instagram Live with @worldanimalprotectioncanada to raise awareness on ending the wildlife trade globally—Check it out on their page!

JUNE TO JUNE — A PARLIAMENTARY YEAR IN REVIEW

My participation in Parliament by the numbers:

SPOKEN INTERVENTIONS IN THE HOUSE	474
SPOKEN INTERVENTIONS IN COMMITTEE	257
AMENDMENTS PUT FORWARD IN COMMIT-	38
EMERGENCY DEBATES REQUESTED	2
BILLS/MOTIONS SECONDED	25
FEDERAL CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS	16
PETITIONS PRESENTED	62
VOTES	150
CORRESPONDENCE TO CONSTITUENTS AND	20k+
PUBL;IC COMMUNITY MEETINGS WITH CON-	8
DAYS ABSENT IN THE HOUSE	5
PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILLS TABLED	2

TAPE

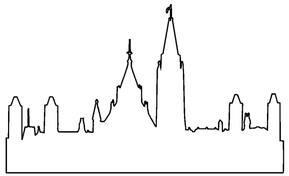
ELIZABETH MAY
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CONFEDERATION BUILDING
ROOM 349
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A6

No postage required

FOLD

I am happy to share that I am fully vaccinated, receiving my first vaccine above at the Mary Winspear Centre!

Register for yours here:
https://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca/



CONFIDENCE CONVENTIONS

THE THORNY ISSUE OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A PRIME MINISTER DECIDES TO CALL A SNAP ELECTION

It is likely a surprise to many readers that the rules around the Prime Minister calling an election remain unclear. Similarly, the rules around forming government after an election are also a bit foggy. That is because we have far too many politicians and media commentators who treat Canadian elections as though they were the same as US elections. Unlike the US, we do not elect a Prime Minister. We elect individual Members of Parliament who collectively determine our government. If we were not all members of political parties, we would have to meet after an election and figure out who should be Prime Minister. That is what happens in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, neither of which have political parties. The Premier and Cabinet are chosen from among the elected and the others sit in opposition.

For most of Canada, the vast majority of those running for office, other than in local government, are clearly branded as belonging to a political party. The leaders of those parties are chosen by their membership. The leader with the most seats is presumed to be the "winner."

But those assumptions mask a whole lot of unwritten rules, known as "conventions." In a Parliament where no one party holds a clear majority, the question is always if the ruling party can hold the "confidence of the House." That term is also part of the convention of how we form – or hold onto – government.

Some confidence votes are really clear. A Prime Minister whose proposed budget fails will have failed to hold the confidence of the House. The last time that happened was in 1979 to the Right Hon. Joe Clark (one of my favourite people by the way. Truly a Right Hon!). His minority government fell. And in the immediate election, the Liberals won a majority under Pierre Trudeau, who had returned from retirement to lead his party to victory.

Generally, all votes involving money are considered confidence votes. So too is a vote on the Speech from the Throne. But the rules on confidence votes are not clear. Sometimes the government itself can declare a vote to be about confidence even though it has nothing to do with money or large issues. That happened earlier this year on a vote about forcing some of the Prime Minister's staff to appear before a Parliamentary committee. So, there are "unwritten rules" and there are "unwritten loopholes."

For academics, these questions are not academic. They pose critical issues for our democracy. Professor Hugo Cyr, a leading political scientist from Laval University, has proposed that following an election – resulting in a minority or majority government - Parliament should vote to determine who should be Prime Minister. The results would be a foregone conclusion in most cases, but Professor Cyr sees a value in reminding all Canadians that we do not elect a Prime Minister. We have a representative and responsible government in a Constitutional Monarchy in the Westminster tradition. When we forget our roots and traditions, politicians can get away with outrageous things – such as in 2008 when Stephen Harper claimed that the opposition parties were attempting to overturn the results of the election by working in coalition.

The confidence conventions not only cover when a government falls and how it forms, but how a Prime Minister can call a snap election. The issue was recently raised in Parliament by one of my favourite colleagues. I am chair of the Democracy Caucus, a group of MPs who share a commitment to Parliament operating within our traditions and rules. My vice-chair is Daniel Blaikie, NDP MP from the Winnipeg district of Elmwood-Transcona.

In June 2021, Daniel Blaikie tabled Motion 93 to clarify the rules about when a Prime Minister can call an election. The motion's preamble is a great distillation of the key issues:

> "it is a prerogative of the Crown to dissolve Parliament at its pleasure,
>
> (ii) the confidence convention is an important cornerstone of the Canadian political system,
>
> (iii) the confidence convention has never been clearly codified and this has sometimes led to confusion among members and the general public as to the nature and significance of certain votes,
>
> (iv) governments have sometimes abused the confidence convention to reinforce party discipline or influence the outcome of a vote that is not explicitly a matter of confidence or that would not be considered a matter of confidence by convention."

If the motion is passed by Parliament, the rules would be clear and it would be the House itself, not the Prime Minister, that would determine whether the government enjoys the confidence of the House. The motion lays out a clear and predictable procedure to test confidence with a vote of all Members of Parliament.

I fully support Daniel Blaikie's efforts. But, as of now, we have no such rules.

The House is in summer recess, so no vote will bring on an early election before September 20 when we reconvene. Theoretically, that should mean we will all be back in Parliament, doing our work, in September. In spite of that, rumours of a late summer or fall election abound. It remains the Prime Minister's decision, just as it was Premier Horgan's last year, to claim some difficulty in governing requiring that the Governor General (referred to as "the Crown" in Daniel's motion) to oblige the Prime Minister by dissolving the House and calling an election.

There is always the possibility that our new Governor General, our first ever Indigenous Governor General, the Hon. Mary Simon, will decline and ask Trudeau to continue as Prime Minister. Looking at the number of difficult issues, in a pandemic emergency, that were dealt with in Parliament, it is hard to make a case that nothing is working and we need an election. While it is a theoretical and constitutionally valid possibility that the Governor General could refuse, the likelihood is that, if asked to move to allow an election, she will do as requested.

Our Democracy Caucus will keep working to create more accountability and greater clarity around confidence conventions.

CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

ELIZABETH MAY

Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands

ElizabethMayMP @ElizabethMay Elizabethmaymp.ca

August 2021

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
LOOKING BACK ON PARLIAMENT IN PANDEMIC

It is my hope that this newsletter, bringing you up to date on a range of issues, will reach you in a happier, healthier August. I hope it arrives in your mailbox when you and all your family have double vaccinations, are able to gather (and hug!) and can enjoy clean air, free of the smoke that drove us back indoors last August. As I write this, wildfires are blazing all over British Columbia. The climate emergency is upon us (as I describe further into this report.)

Some of the most fractious debate in Parliament was about the "failure" of Canada in vaccine procurement. Things shifted. At this writing, we have overtaken the United States in our national vaccination rate. Still, we are not out of the woods. Most health experts I rely upon continue to urge caution. We are still at risk of variants. Social distancing and masks still make sense when encountering people who may not be fully vaccinated or are not in your own immediate bubble. But things have definitely improved.

I really hope this reaches you with no federal election campaign underway. Under our fixed election date law, the next federal election is set for October 16, 2023. But in a minority Parliament, that can be taken with a grain of salt. Just as John Horgan did in 2020, the Prime Minister could call a snap election. He would only need to persuade our new Governor General and ask for Parliament to be dissolved and a new election to take place. I discuss in this newsletter some of the technicalities and calls to improve democracy around what are called "confidence conventions."

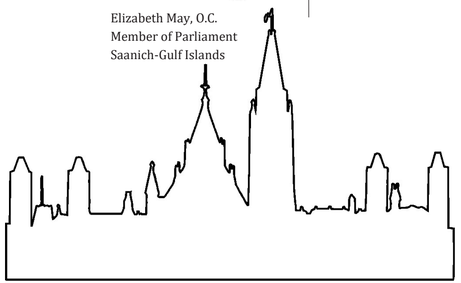
There is no need to have an election. Since the October 2019 election, despite their minority status, the governing Liberals have had an unprecedented degree of cross-party support. In fact, in spring of 2020, the approval of over $80 billion in emergency COVID-19 response measures was carried by unanimous consent of all MPs in the House.

More controversial bills have also been carried, as I will describe in this report. Still, the rumours of an election are persistent. It would be a cynical move, just as was the case with provincial premiers in New Brunswick and British Columbia where snap elections converted minority governments to majority.

So fingers crossed this reaches you without campaigning underway. If a campaign has been called, this will be my last communication through my MP resources. I will be running again, but this newsletter is provided to all constituents as part of non-partisan outreach. I truly appreciate the feedback from constituents to these little newsletters. We have a very engaged citizenry in Saanich-Gulf Islands. It is an honour to serve you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands



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C-12 — CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Liberal platform in 2019 promised to bring in a climate accountability law. It promised a robust set of climate measures, including a commitment to legislate a target of net-zero emissions by 2050, and a plan to set interim targets of every five years to get there. Now, you might think after so many elections, so many promises and so many broken ones, I would not be so gullible. But, I actually believed this platform pledge.

Part of the reason I believed in this plan was that this was exactly the model that has worked in many countries around the world, beginning with the UK. The British government brought in a Climate Accountability Act in 2008. It set its first goal for five years later – 2013. The government of the day was Labour, but when it shifted to Conservative, the climate plans and targets stayed in place. Targets were met. Indeed, they were ratcheted up to be more ambitious. Other governments have followed UK's lead, including France, Denmark, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Mexico and most recently New Zealand. Key features of best practices have been setting 5 year measurable goals – generally set as carbon budgets - having an independent science based body set the targets and having a real level of accountability, such as legal or financial repercussions for failure.

It was a real shock to read the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act when it was tabled last November. It did not include any of the best practices found around the world. It set its first "milestone year" for 2030. It did not establish an independent expert body, but rather a multi-stakeholder group to advise the Minister of the Environment, who need only take the best available science into account. It rejects carbon budgets. My amendment to require that the plans and targets must be based on the best available science was defeated by the Liberals with NDP support. There is no accountability, just a requirement to explain why a target was missed.

What most politicians are missing, as is made manifest by the so-called Climate Accountability Act, is an understanding of the necessary urgency. They have missed the reality that the window on 1.5 degrees C is closing. And once it closes, it closes for good.

The end goal is that Canada achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. That is consistent with climate science, as expressed in the bill's preamble:

> "… the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that **achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050** is key to keeping the rise in the global-mean temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and minimizing climate-change related risks;" (emphasis added)

Fatally, the bill fails to note that in order to hold global mean temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C, it is not the 2050 target that requires urgent attention. It is what we must do by 2025 and by 2030. There is no mention in the bill of the clear warnings of the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees C, available here: **https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/**

We have been warned that failure to hold to 1.5 degrees C places the survival of human civilization at risk. And that we are running out of time to do so:

> "In model pathways with no or limited overshoot of 1.5°C, global net anthropogenic CO2 **emissions decline by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030…** reaching net zero around 2050…" (emphasis added)

Translation: If we want to get to net zero by 2050, we first have to get to roughly half as many emissions in 2030 as in 2010.

The bill sets a starting point that could well be past the point of no return. The first "milestone year" in the bill is 2030.

Ignoring the more urgent IPCC advice creates a fiction in which we have plenty of time to get around to a deadline three decades from now. Choosing 2030 as the first target year for action is appalling. This is a dream world of unending timelines for further procrastination.

Worse, our current target is incompatible with our Paris commitments. On Earth Day, April 22 at the Climate Summit organized by US President Joe Biden, Canada, at long last, boosted our climate target. What has generally referred to as our "Paris target" was the target set by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper in May 2015 – 30% cut in GHG below 2005 levels by 2030. That target had nothing to do with the commitments in the Paris Agreement, agreed to six months after Harper set a target. On Earth Day, the US announced its target of 50% below 2005 by 2030. Paris calls for a limit on the increase in global average temperature, compared to what it was before the Industrial Revolution. Under Paris, the world committed to hold global average temperature to as far below 2 degrees C as possible, and preferably to hold to no more than 1.5 degrees C. The most Trudeau would announce was 40-45% below 2005 by 2030. Since then, Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson has clarified that our real target is "closer to 40%."

If we are to fulfill our fair share of the global effort, since we are so far behind, Canada should have set our commitment at a 60% cut in GHG emissions by 2030.

The deadlines out to 2050 and 2030 work against our survival. They leave out the urgency of acting now.

A very clear explanation of the urgency is found in the recently released book by former Governor of the Bank of Canada, Mark Carney. I found his book, *Values: Building a better world for all*, well worth reading. It is a serious work spanning a history of economic thought, through to a deep dive into the 2008 financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and then a very useful analysis of the climate crisis. His plain-speaking explanation of the current urgency of climate is very useful:

> "The carbon budget to limit temperature rises to below catastrophic levels is rapidly being exhausted....
>
> If we had started in 2000, we could have hit the 1.5 degree C objective by halving emissions every thirty years. Now we must halve emissions every ten years. If we wait another four years, the challenge will be to halve emissions every year. If we wait another eight years, our 1.5 degree C carbon budget will be exhausted." (p.273)

Clearly, a Climate Accountability Act with a first milestone year at 2030 is not acceptable or accountable. The only reason I was able to vote for it, after all of my amendments failed, was thanks to a last minute change to require a Parliamentary review in five years to determine how the act is working and pass required changes to strengthen it. That amendment was supported by all parties

PROGRESS REPORT: TRACKING LEGISLATION BETWEEN DECEMBER 2019 AND JUNE 2021

LEGISLATION THAT RECEIVED ROYAL ASSENT— PASSING BOTH HOUSE AND SENATE

- ✓ C-3 – Judges Act amendments, which started in the previous Parliament as a Private Member's bill from former interim Conservative leader, the Hon. Rona Ambrose, to ensure training of new judges in sexual assault cases, amended to include diversity and anti-racism training
- ✓ C-4 – More emergency response COVID-19 measures, adopted unanimously
- ✓ C-5 – Legislating a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- ✓ C-7 – Amending the Medical Assistance in Dying legislation, originally passed in 2016, now allowing advance directives and creating a five year review process to develop rules and procedures for applying MAID to those with irremediable mental illness
- ✓ C-8 – Amending the oath of citizenship to include acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples and inherent rights, fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Report's Call to Action 94
- ✓ C-9 – Emergency COVID-19 measures, which included rent relief, adopted unanimously
- ✓ C-12 – Climate bill - "Net-Zero Climate Accountability Act"
- ✓ C-14 – Implementing the Fall Economic Statement
- ✓ C-15 – Act to bring the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into effect in Canadian law
- ✓ C-16 – Appropriations bill to ensure flow of funds to government activities
- ✓ C-17 – Another appropriations bill before end of fiscal year
- ✓ C-18 – Continuing trading relations with Great Britain and Ireland – post-Brexit – a temporary fix
- ✓ C-24 – Improvements to Employment Insurance to help workers affected by COVID-19
- ✓ C-26 – Support for government operations, public administration
- ✓ C-27 – Public administration funding
- ✓ C-29 – Forced back to work legislation – Port of Montreal dockworkers
- ✓ C-30 – Implementing the April 2021 Budget
- ✓ C-33 – Public administration funding
- ✓ C- 34 – Public administration funding

STALLED WITHOUT MUCH PROGRESS IN THE HOUSE

- × C-11 – Privacy Act amendments – Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
- × C-19 – Amendments to the Elections Act for safe voting in a pandemic
- × C-20 – Act to extend one time only equalization payments to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland-Labrador under the Off-Shore petroleum agreements
- × C-21 – New firearms legislation, highly controversial – Awaiting Second Reading
- × C-22 – Legislation on controlled drugs and substances – Awaiting Second Reading
- × C-23 – Amendments to Criminal Code and identification of criminals – Awaiting Second Reading
- × C-25 - Approving payments to provinces and territories for assistance in vaccination costs
- × C-28 – Amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act – Awaiting Second Reading
- × C-31– Amending the Criminal Records Act –"Reducing barriers to reintroduction," awaiting Second Reading
- × C-32 – Amendments to Official Languages Act - Never got to Second Reading
- × C-35 – Act to alleviate poverty and assist people with disabilities - Awaiting Second Reading
- × C-36 – An act to deal with hate crimes, amending Human Rights Act – Not even introduced until June 23, 2021

LEGISLATION PASSED BY THE HOUSE, BUT NOT THE SENATE

- ◊ C-6 – A bill to ban conversion "therapy"
- ◊ C-10 – Amendments to the Broadcasting Act

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

We have had summers with bad wildfires before and we have had summers where temperature records were broken. But we have never seen anything like the combination of extreme record-breaking heat driven by the heat domes and the dramatic loss of virtually the entire town of Lytton.

The news of Lytton's three day record of smashing records, ultimately reaching a smidge below 50 degrees C, made headlines around the world. Climate scientists were shocked. It was fifty degrees C on the thermometer at my husband's family's place in Ashcroft. It is not a temperature for humans. The BC Coroner's Office has (at time of writing) not yet officially announced how many of our fellow citizens died over those days, but it seems to be close to half of all those who died of COVID-19 in BC over the last year and a half. We have no vaccine for the climate emergency.

This summer marks the first time we heard of pyrocumulonimbus clouds – clouds that rain down sparks and lightning, resulting in more fires. In a recent article in the New York Times, this phenomenon of weather systems that deliver fire was described as "spawning lightning from towers of smoke or generating a fire whirl, a vortex of air and flame that looks like a fiery tornado."

NYT Writer David Leonhardt quoted the head of Oregon's forestry department, Marcus Kaufman, "[n]ormally the weather predicts what the fire will do… In this case, the fire is predicting what the weather will do." (NY Times, July 20, 2021)

The increased and severe climate events have been global with devastating floods in Germany, Netherlands and Belgium, taking a huge toll in human life and damages, while fires burning throughout Siberia, Arctic sea ice is at its lowest and weakest extent ever, much of the US is at risk of flash flooding, and the Ontario city of Barrie experienced a severe tornado. The subways of downtown Manhattan flooded – and not for the first time.

We moved from the COVID-19 emergency to the climate emergency without much room to breathe.

We need to take action to save human lives, but also the lives of our fellow creatures. The drastic decline in Pacific Salmon is linked to the climate crisis. The challenges of acidification impacting our shellfish (mussel and oyster aquaculture industries) are directly due to burning fossil fuels. An estimated over one billion sea creatures died along the Salish Sea coastline, with untold numbers of other plants and animals, in the late June heat wave.

We do know how to respond to a climate emergency. We just do not seem to want to.

We need to do much more to protect communities from heat waves and fire. We need to build in resilience. We need to plant billions of trees, ecologically appropriate by area, and we need to stop burning fossil fuels, stop fracking and cancel fossil fuel infrastructure, like the TMX pipeline.

Seth Klein's book, *A Good War*, gives solid advice. We need to act like we are in an emergency, on the scale of our response to fascism in the Second World War. Seth quotes C.D. Howe, famously known as the Minister of Everything at the time. When asked about the rising costs of the war effort, he said, "If we don't win the war, nothing else matters."

JOBS IN ENERGY—BY THE NUMBERS

- ◊ **36,000—** Oil and gas jobs lost since 2013, mostly due to automation
- ◊ **172,700—** Job openings in Canada's environmental workforce expected between 2020 and 2025
- ◊ **61%—** Canadians who support a Green New Deal
- ◊ **$16.5 billion—** Estimated cost of a Just Transition in Canada, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- ◊ **69%—** Fossil fuel workers interested in switching to the clean economy
- ◊ **$5.5 billion—** Estimated cost to rapidly upskill the entire fossil fuel industry workforce
- ◊ **9 in 10—** Fossil fuel workers who say their skills can transfer to at lease one job in the net-zero economy with moderate training

QUESTIONS FOR CONSTITUENTS

Do you favour an early election? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Do you think governments are doing enough to fight the climate crisis?

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Do you think governments are doing too much to fight the climate crisis?

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

What is your top issue of concern as we pull out of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ☐ **The plight of small business?**
- ☐ **The increased debt load of Canadian governments?**
- ☐ **The threat of a fourth wave?**
- ☐ **The plight of seniors?**
- ☐ **The cost of housing?**
- ☐ **Access to health care, especially family doctors?**
- ☐ **Homelessness?**
- ☐ **Mental health issues/addiction?**
- ☐ **Indigenous issues, truth, justice and reconciliation?**
- ☐ **Increased cost of living?**

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Have more to share? We're excited to hear from you!
Please email our office: Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca