

Backgrounder: 2016 Teddy Waste Awards

Federal Nominees

2015 COP Paris Conference Delegation (Winner)

Nominated for: Most Carbon-Intensive Participation at a Climate Change Conference

Cost: TBD

As one its first acts in office, the new Trudeau government greatly expanded Canada's summit-attendance carbon footprint by quadrupling the size of the Canadian delegation at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015.

Environment and Climate Change Canada stated that all Canadian participants, including provincial delegations, totaled 283 participants, while the UNFCCC participation statistics for the Canadian delegation adds up to a total of 270 Canadian participants. By comparison, the United States listed 124 participants, the United Kingdom 96 and Australia 46. UNFCCC documents from the 2014 conference in Lima list just 69 members in the Canadian delegation.

Full costs for the 2015 conference are not yet available, but in response to initial cost questions, a spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change Canada said the government is providing up to \$4,500 to cover transportation and accommodation for the 25 non-government participants—a total of \$122,500, while costs for the delegation from Global Affairs Minister Stephane Dion's office alone cost \$282,000.

British Columbia Green Party MLA Andrew Weaver and lead author of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, declined to an invitation to attend. He called the size of the Canadian delegation "really over the top, especially when you consider the vast majority of these people will have no direct input into the actual negotiations." Weaver noted that "It's bitterly ironic to be flying hundreds of people across the Atlantic on 747s and, honestly, how are they all contributing? By enjoying Paris and going to outside events? It's become a big circus."

Links:

<http://www.ezrelevant.com/exclusive-taxpayers-spent-282000-to-send-just-17-delegates-to-paris-climate-conference/>

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/the-price-of-paris-canada-sends-more-than-300-delegates-to-climate-talks-1.2686239>

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/inf03p01.pdf>

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/cop20/eng/inf02.pdf>

<http://www.hilltimes.com/news/2016/02/11/federal-delegation-to-paris-climate-talks-numbered-almost-300-but-more-than-half-were/45217>

<http://www.theprovince.com/technology/Smyth+Canada+massive+delegation+Paris+waste+taxpayer+money/11555508/story.html>

<http://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-have-sent-the-most-delegates-to-cop21>

The Canadian Museum of Human Rights

Nominated for: Most Expensive Party Held at a Museum

Cost: \$1.89 million

The Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) has been a boondoggle from the start. In 2007 the budget to build the museum was \$265 million, but ultimately ended up being \$357.5 million, the majority of which has been public funds.

In 2008, former [Premier Gary Doer 'encouraged' Manitoba's crown corporations](#) to make a donation towards the project. Like obedient subordinates, the crowns obliged, donating a total of \$4.5 million – a fact the public only found because someone on the inside leaked the information.

However, when it opened in September 2014, this over-budget museum opted to spend \$1.89 million on opening-weekend events. Initially the plan had called for private sponsors to help offset the cost – but when they were unsuccessful they went ahead and spent the money anyway.

They museum spent \$613,000 on the opening ceremonies; \$365,000 on a two-day “Rightsfest” that included concerts and family events; \$802,000 on a concert featuring Bruce Cockburn, Ashley McIsaac and Buffy Sainte-Marie; and \$109,000 for free guided tours.

Ongoing operating costs for the CMHR are also substantial: In 2014-15, total expenses (ignoring the amortization of various contributions and assets) were \$25.5 million, while operating revenues were only \$1.8 million. The CMHR relies heavily on \$21.7 million in annual funding from the federal government – but was unable to balance its budget even with this assistance.

Links:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/museums-2-m-tab-for-opening-ridiculous-critic-294785201.html>

<http://www.winnipegssun.com/2012/01/06/brodbeck-cmhr-price-tag-keeps-rising>

http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/392/huma/03evb-e.htm?comm_id=77&Language=E&Parl=39&Ses=2

https://humanrights.ca/sites/default/files/media/2014-2015_annual_report_en.pdf

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/memory-becomes-a-minefield-at-canadas-museum-for-human-rights/article555660/?page=all>

<http://www.taxpayer.com/media/CMHR.pdf>

The “Severance Seven”: MPs Kent Hehr, Darshan Kang, Stéphane Lauzon, Jennifer O’Connell, Amarjeet Sohi, Dan Vandal and Len Webber

Nominated for: Most Lucrative Transition Between Jobs

Cost: \$780,000

Seven newly elected Members of Parliament pocketed sums ranging from \$30,000 to \$324,000 in various transitional allowances from former roles in municipal or provincial politics – in spite of the fact they are now earning substantially more as federal MPs. The seven MPs are:

- Kent Hehr, Liberal MP for Calgary Centre and Minister of Veterans Affairs (\$131,000)
- Darshan Kang, Liberal MP for Calgary-Skyview (\$132,000)
- Stéphane Lauzon, Liberal MP for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation (\$67,471)
- Jennifer O’Connell, Liberal MP for Pickering-Uxbridge (\$48,000)
- Amarjeet Sohi, Liberal MP for Edmonton Mill Woods and Minister of Infrastructure and Communities (\$46,150)
- Dan Vandal, Liberal MP for Saint Boniface-Saint Vital (estimated \$30,000)
- Len Webber, Conservative MP for Calgary Confederation (\$324,000)

Taxpayers are on the hook for these “severance” or “transition” payments even though all seven of these individuals voluntarily left their old positions. This clearly runs counter to what most Canadians expect “severance” to be for: temporary support to assist those who involuntarily lose their jobs.

Links:

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2525923/seven-mps-accepted-nearly-780000-in-transition-allowances/>
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2498495/minister-accepted-46k-severance-package-from-edmonton-city-hall/>
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2501286/golden-handshakes-continued-for-alberta-politicians-moving-to-ottawa/>
<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/02/10/teat-for-tat-and-double-dipping-entitlements>

Global Affairs Canada

Nominated for: Most Expensive Shipment of Wine and Most Expensive Typo

Cost: \$209,000

Canada's High Commission in London, Canada House, celebrated its reopening following extensive renovations by spending \$200,000 of taxpayer's money on a party.

CBC News obtained information from an *Access to Information Act* request that shows costs included:

- Shipping Canadian wine by sea to London cost \$9,716
- Breakfast buffet cost almost \$2,400
- Canadian ribeye beef cost \$1,273.
- 3,000 invitations cost \$10,606
- Six commemorative gold plated pewter keys cost \$1,470.
- Four Mounties in red tunics cost \$4,745.
- A commemorative Canada House publication cost \$46,296

Global Affairs (then Foreign Affairs) confirmed the total cost of the party at \$209,000.

There were also problems with a \$16,000 plaque unveiled by the Queen at the event. John Baird is incorrectly listed as foreign affairs minister on the plaque which is dated February 19th, but Baird hadn't been minister since February 3rd. Even worse, the bilingual plaque had an error in the French spelling of "Prime Minister." The plaque had to be removed and sent back to the British manufacturer, where the three letters were ground down and three new letters were printed and glued to the plaque, at a cost of \$4,000.

Links:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/lavish-canada-house-reopening-in-london-cost-taxpayers-more-than-200k-1.3101187>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-house-in-london-reopened-today-by-queen-elizabeth-1.2962948>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/plaque-queen-baird-canada-house-1.3375286>

Provincial Nominees

PEI Department of Tourism and Culture (Winner)

Nominated for: Most Uplifting Tourism Guide

Cost: Unknown

Prince Edward Island's Department of Tourism and Culture printed 180,000 copies of their 2015 tourism guide. The cover features a man and a woman relaxing on a sandy PEI beach, with the woman reading a book and the man in shorts laying back and relaxing. Unfortunately, the department clearly failed to notice a bulge in the man's shorts that appears to be an erection.

The online version of the guide had its cover immediately replaced with an image of a lighthouse, but the 180,000 printed copies remain in circulation.

Links:

<http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/News/Local/2015-05-09/article-4141163/Visitors%26rsquo%3B-guide-photograph-raises-eyes-brows/1>

<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/is-that-a-banana-in-your-pocket-or-are-you-just-happy-to-be-in-p-e-i-bulging-brochure-prompts-redesign>

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1991782/pei-tourism-guide-redesigned-after-apparent-bulge-on-cover/>

Alberta School Boards Association

Nominated for: Most Expensive (Adult) Easter Egg Hunt

Cost: \$41,000

An Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) document obtained by the CTF revealed that ASBA staff members receive \$50 birthday gift cards on top of cake days celebrating office birthdays each month, in total costing \$4,850 over the last three years.

For Christmas, ASBA staff members are each treated to a gift costing up to \$150 – totalling \$7,803 over the past three years, while three years of staff Christmas dinners cost over \$5,000.

The document also outlines an adult staff Easter egg hunt, costing over \$900 in 2014.

Additional ASBA perks included *Taste of Edmonton* tickets for staff costing \$1,600 in 2014, and around \$1,000 each of the two years prior. "Team Building/Staff Appreciation" lunches also cost \$2,696 over the past three years.

Despite having 'lovely' offices in Edmonton, the publicly-funded ASBA had staff planning events were held at some of Edmonton's most upscale locales, including a December 2012 planning session was held at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, and a January 2014 planning session was held at the Royal Glenora, which cost nearly \$8,000 each.

Links:

<http://www.taxpayer.com/news-releases/ctf-questions-alberta-school-boards-association-for-spending--41,000-on-staff-gifts,-events-and-easter-egg-hunts>

<http://www.taxpayer.com/media/ASBA%20Staff%20Recognition%202012%20-%202014%20-%20Good.pdf>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alberta-school-boards-association-spent-41k-on-team-building-events-watchdog-says-1.3316783>

Pan Am Games

Nominated for: Most Expensive Free Salon

Cost: \$140,000

TO2015 contracted the high-end Allan Parss hair salon at \$4,000 per day from July 1st to August 30th to run a temporary salon for Pan Am athletes. The salon provided free hair cuts and manicures that included nail art of their countries' flag. In total, the temporary salon for Pan Am athletes cost taxpayers \$140,000.

Sadly, this amount was just one example of a massive drain on public funds from the Pan Am Games: ticket sales and corporate sponsorship revenue only amounted to \$205 million, with taxpayers on the hook for the remainder of the Games' \$2.4 billion cost.

Links:

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/01/18/pan-am-games-salon-cost-taxpayers-140gs>

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/01/19/wynne-defends-140gs-for-pan-am-salon>

Thunder Bay Biomass Plant

Nominated for: Most Expensive Norwegian Wood (Isn't It Good?)

Cost: \$40 million (annually)

Ontario's Auditor General uncovered the wasteful conversion of a Thunder Bay coal plant into a biomass facility. In 2013 the Minister of Energy Bob Chiarelli decided that the Thunder Bay coal plant would be converted to burn forestry by-products. The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) advising the government against it after a review that showed the conversion wouldn't be cost effective.

The plant is a peaking resource that only operates the equivalent of five full capacity days a year while employing 60 full time staff. At a cost of \$40 million a year it will only generate 15,000 MWh, putting electricity costs from that plant at \$1,600 per megawatt hour, which is approximately 25 times more expensive than electricity from the average biomass facility.

Originally, the hope was that jobs would be created in Ontario's forestry industry – but the biomass plant was not able to use ordinary wood chips readily available in Northwestern Ontario, so it is required to import special wood chips from Norway.

Links:

http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_en/en15/3.05en15.pdf

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/06/ontarios-green-energy-botch-up-a-lesson-for-those-fighting-climate-change-walkom.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ontario-s-auditor-general-report-slams-use-of-thunder-bay-atikokan-generating-stations-1.3349523>

<http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2015/12/03/ontario-liberals-politically-motivated-in-converting-plant-to-biomass-fuel-says-pc-leader.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunder-bay-generating-station-to-burn-biomass-1.2428035>

Municipal Nominees

City of Calgary (Winner)

Nominated for: Most Expensive Sewage-Related Art

Cost: \$246,000

The City of Calgary requires that one per cent of public spending on projects up to \$50 million be spent on public art. So when it came time to replace the Forest Law Lift station – a shed on a hill containing pumps that bring waste water to the top so it can flow to the waste treatment centre - they decided to spend an extra \$246,000 on a project to embed LED lights that change color depending on how fast the station is pumping waste water.

Unveiled by the city in September of 2015, the new lift station proved immediately controversial. Whereas the previous lift station was built on the side of a hill, the new lift station sits on the top of a hill, blocking the views of some area residents. The lift station soon became known locally as the “poop palace.”

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YZ7CBIMK7Y>

<http://www.calgarysun.com/2015/09/27/calgarys-latest-public-art-is-a-pretty-poop-palace--and-a-waste-of-taxpayers-money-says-tax-watchdog-paige-macpherson>

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Recreation/Pages/Public-Art/Forest-Lawn-Lift-Station-Public-Artwork.aspx>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-watershed-plus-sewage-art-1.3247778>

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/calgary/2015/09/20/forest-lawn-lift-station-gives-insight-into-calgary-underground.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/09/29/forest-lawn-lift-station-calgary_n_8214600.html

City of Victoria

Nominated for: Most Superfluous Stairwell Upgrade

Cost: \$10,000

In September 2015, the City of Victoria announced that they would create a “musical stairclimbing experience for parking customers” by installing sensors in the hand railing on the back stairwell railing at Bastion Square Parkade. When touched, the railings play music and LED lights are activated – with different music on each of the parkade’s six levels.

Links:

<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/meta/news/news-archives/2015-archive/musical-railing-and-mural-series-coming-to-two-city-parkade-stairwells.html>

<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/parks-rec-culture/culture/art-culture/public-art/bastion-square-parkade-stairwell-public-art.html>

http://www.victoria.ca/assets/City~Hall/Media~Releases/2015/2015Sep02_MR_Musical%20Railing%20and%20Mural%20Series%20to%20Make%20Parkade%20Stairwells%20Come%20to%20Life.pdf
<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/bastion-square-parkade-stairwell-sensors-will-trigger-songs-lights-1.2048706>
<http://monkeycinteractive.com/musical-railings-at-tedxvictoria/>

City of Saskatoon

Nominated for: Most Prolific Parking System Fail

Cost: \$5.3 million

In June 2014, Saskatoon city council awarded Cale Systems a \$5.3 million contract to replace its 2,800 parking meters with 325 solar-powered stations. The new system would allow customers to pay for parking with cash, credit, a smart card or with an app. The city expected to an revenue increase of between \$1.1 and \$1.3 million from the new system.

Unfortunately, the system has not worked as advertised. The city lacks the legislative authority to mail out parking tickets, so tickets have to be written out by hand, rendering the automatic license plate recognition system useless, and the system often has difficulties dealing with Saskatoon's winters. Coin slots are often frozen shut, screens are slow to respond, and snow accumulates on the solar panels preventing them from generating any power.

Parking and parking ticket revenue are now expected to fall by a combined \$1.7 million.

Links:

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1415005/saskatoon-replacing-parking-meters-with-pay-stations/>
<http://ckom.com/article/194469/saskatoons-new-parking-system-about-six-weeks-away>
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/macpherson-citys-messed-up-parking-system-also-freezes-up-in-the-cold>
<http://www.ipick.ca/saskatoon/council-approves-parking-meter-overhaul>
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/letters/0123-edit-letters>
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-frozen-parking-stations-1.3411459>
<http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/just-three-parking-pay-stations-reported-malfunctioning-over-frigid-weekend>
<http://ckom.com/article/503745/city-saskatoon-acknowledges-cold-weather-issue-new-pay-stations>

City of Saskatoon

Nominated for: Most Short-Lived Bridge Decoration

Cost: \$462,000

Saskatoon's Traffic Bridge first opened on October 10th 1907. In November 2005 the bridge was closed to vehicle traffic and in February 2006 an engineering report warned the city that it was taking a risk by even letting pedestrian use the bridge. The bridge was then repaired, and reopened in September 2006, with a renewed life expectancy of 20 years. In September 2007 the city spent \$462,000 (twice the original estimate) to install decorative LED lights on the bridge. Unfortunately, the lights had to be repaired on five separate occasions the following year, requiring the closure of the bridge.

In August 2010 the bridge was closed once again with the city's infrastructure services manager stating "It's still standing, but I can't tell you exactly how it's standing,"

In January and February 2016, three spans of bridge were demolished (with one span to be demolished later this year) – all with the \$462,000 worth of LED lights still attached.

Links:

<http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/lights-out-for-traffic-bridge-decorations>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/traffic-bridge-saskatoon-demolition-phase-two-1.3433575>

<http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/traffic-bridge-boasts-colourful-history>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/traffic-bridge-demolition-saskatoon-1.3397203>

<http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=62a3f6b7-b477-4baf-9913-6f851a8d5445>

http://www.canada.com/story_print.html?id=59f83c8b-d21f-4432-8e3a-a1de68888721&sponsor=

<http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=62a3f6b7-b477-4baf-9913-6f851a8d5445>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/traffic-bridge-saskatoon-demolition-phase-two-going-down-1.3437589>

City of Peterborough

Nominated for: Most Ridiculous Severance Payment

Cost: \$460,000

August 2008 Murray Rodd was hired as chief of the Peterborough-Lakefield Community Police (PLCP), and in April 2010 negotiated a new clause in his contract that gave him a year's pay if the PLCP is ever dissolved. In December 2012, Peterborough city council approved the creation of a new, city-only Peterborough Police. In April 2013 Deputy Tim Farquharson was hired by PLCP and his contract also contained the same "dissolution" provision as Rodd's, despite the planned change over already approved.

On December 31, 2014 the PLCP was replaced with the new Peterborough Police. Chief Rodd and Deputy Chief Farquharson then sought to collect pursuant to the "dissolution" clause in their contract – even though they immediately signed new contracts with the new Peterborough Police!

The Peterborough Police Services Board disagreed with Rodd and Farquarson, so the issue went to arbitration. In July 2015 an arbitrator ordered the Board to pay the Chief \$248,920.96 and the Deputy Chief \$210,329.46 in “severance” within 30 days.

Links:

<http://www.peterborough.ca/Assets/City+Assets/Media+Releases/2015/2015-07-30+City+Statement+on+Police+Arbitration.pdf>

<http://capg.ca/who-knew-what-about-the-impending-payouts-to-peterboroughts-police-chief-and-deputy-chief/>

<http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2015/10/15/court-orders-police-board-to-pay-severance-to-rodd-farquharson>

<http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2016/01/04/city-files-lawsuit-against-rodd-farquharson>

<http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/6264584-police-services-boards-added-to-suit-between-city-of-peterborough-and-police-chief-deputy-chief/>

<http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2016/02/08/police-boards-added-as-parties-to-city-lawsuit-against-chief-deputy-chief>

<http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/6264584-police-services-boards-added-to-suit-between-city-of-peterborough-and-police-chief-deputy-chief/>

<http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2016/01/16/rodd-farquharson-plan-to-put-up-a-fight-against-city-lawsuit-but-lawyers-want-more-time>

Lifetime Achievement Award

Bombardier Inc.

Nominated for: A Half Century of Suckling at the Public Teat

Cost: At least \$3.8 billion and counting

Montreal-based Bombardier is a multibillion-dollar aerospace and transportation company founded in 1942. It also holds the dubious distinction of being one of Canada's longest-running corporate welfare recipients, having taken at least \$3.8 billion in public funds (2015 dollars) since 1966. These include:

- \$1.1 billion from the federal government on 49 separate occasions between 1966 and 2009;
- \$1.1 billion from the federal government to de Havilland Canada (acquired by Bombardier in 1992) on 35 separate occasions between 1972 and 1996;
- \$300 million from the Government of the United Kingdom in 2008;
- \$1.3 billion from the Government of Quebec in 2015.

Bombardier is currently asking for \$1 billion USD from the federal government.

Bombardier is certainly not the only Canadian company surviving on taxpayer handouts, but it is one of the most prominent and long-term symbols of a fiscally wasteful, economically distorting and politically manipulative strategy of subsidizing failed private companies with public dollars.

Links:

<http://www.taxpayer.com/news-releases/ctf-urges-minister-bains-to-refuse-further-handouts-for-bombardier>

<http://www.taxpayer.com/commentaries/more-taxpayer-money-for-bombardier--just-say-no,-mr.-trudeau-22511>

<http://www.taxpayer.com/media/Bombardier.pdf>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/bombardier-bailout-neil-macdonald-1.3300764>

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/11/04/bombardier-exemplifies-the-pitfalls-of-corporate-welfare-goat.html>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/quebecs-bombardier-bailout-is-not-an-investment-its-corporate-welfare/article27081111/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/mark-milke/bombardier-corporate-welfare-trap_b_4705751.html