

Session recap: Progress, priorities, and what's next

Carney's first session

On June 20, 2025, the House of Commons rose for summer recess, signalling the adjournment of a short, but intense, parliamentary session. Following the chaos of Trudeau's resignation, prorogation of Parliament, and the 2025 federal election, this note will provide an update on the Carney administration's first steps in achieving its mandate for this first parliamentary session.

The theme of Carney's campaign and administration can be summed up under the sentiment: "Build, baby, build." His messaging has consistently reinforced the need for domestic investment to build Canada into the new global economy. This was subsequently reaffirmed through the Speech from the Throne, where the Government repeatedly referenced construction as the catalyst to boost our economy through nation-building initiatives, providing construction with an opportunity to leverage its expertise in driving Canada's economic innovation and prosperity.

Since the Speech from the Throne, CCA has engaged with Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Parliamentary Secretaries on key files and cabinet committees and inviting them to mark their calendars for our upcoming 2025 Hill Day event on November 18, 2025.

Bill C-2: The Strong Borders Act

Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree tabled Bill C-2: *The Strong Borders Act* on June 3, 2025. While the initial scope is to address illicit products and activities crossing between the United States and Canadian border, the area addressing immigration may have broad-reaching implications for construction. As of this note, Bill C-2 is in its second reading in the House of Commons.

Immigration and workforce amendments – The proposed legislation would make amendments authorizing Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to have broad-sweeping abilities to share client information, immigration documentation, including the ability to withdraw, suspend, and cancel applications in the 'public interest or national security'. This is problematic because there is a chronic workforce shortage in construction, and the potential powers proposed to cancel, suspend, or pause immigration applications abruptly, including those already being processed in inventory, has the potential to cause chaos, resulting in more project delays.

Cash transactions over \$10,000 – This new amendment has introduced restrictions on cash payments and donations up to and over \$10,000 for all businesses and charities in the Canadian economy. Specifically, the language notes that if there is a "cash payment, donation, or deposit of \$10,000 or more" in a single or repeated "prescribed series of related transactions" equating to the sum amount or more, it would now violate the Proceeds of Crime and Terrorist Financing Act. While construction workers or adjacent employees are unlikely to be paid five figures in cash in one lump sum, many construction businesses still operate on a cash basis, and instituting installment-based cash payments could pose issues. Additionally, this does not consider the various types of work, such as seasonal, contract, part-time, rural jobs, and so forth, that may require payment or that operate on a cash basis.

Bill C-5: One Canadian Economy

On June 6, 2025, Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc tabled Bill C-5: *One Canadian Economy*. The legislation, split into two parts, addresses interprovincial trade barriers and accelerating major nation-building project approvals. On June 16, 2025, the Government passed a closure motion to speed through study and debate of Bill C-5 by the end of last week, citing public buy-in to justify the accelerated timeline. The third reading was conducted on June 20, 2025. All parties voted for part one; meanwhile, part two was passed with the combined support of the Liberal and Conservatives, as the Bloc Québécois, NDP, and Green MPs voted against. C-5 is now headed to the Senate, which is scheduled to sit until June 27. The following points are salient to the industry:

Labour mobility: This new bill will provide a framework for recognizing provincial and territorial licenses and certifications for workers. The federal government aims to streamline its processes and eliminate red tape by immediately recognizing credentials from existing provincial or territorial authorization, rather than having individual licensing for different jurisdictions.

Nation-building projects: This section of the bill references trade-enabling infrastructure and the development of Canada's economic and trade corridors. The bill notes opening a five-year window, before the legislation expires, to approve specially selected development projects considered nation-building. The criteria to qualify as a nation-building project are vague and are as follows:

- Strengthen Canada's autonomy, resilience and security
- Provide economic or other benefits to Canada
- Have a high likelihood of successful execution
- Advance the interests of Indigenous peoples
- Contribute to clean growth and Canada's objectives regarding climate change

After selection of projects are complete, they go through a "Major Projects Office" for authorizations, with wide latitude given to the federal cabinet to determine which laws and regulations apply to the approval process including the power to exempt projects from "any provisions" in existing federal laws and regulations, and to "amend or delete" references to other laws within the bill.

A policy implication is that the lack of clarity around authorizations for applicable laws and regulations, such as environmental standards, can create inconsistency with how this act is applied. Additionally, the concentrated power at the federal level to determine what is of the 'national interest' is relatively broad and unclear and does not consult the public or the industry.

Defence spending announcement

On June 9, 2025, Carney outlined his vision for Canada's security and defence, declaring that the U.S. era of dominance on the world stage is over, instead choosing to align with European allies for defence capacity. The Prime Minister unveiled a plan to boost defence spending to meet NATO's two per cent target by March 2026 and exceed two per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030. The estimated \$9.3 billion in new defence spending includes significant upgrades and investments in military infrastructure, and the design of a new framework to reform defence procurement, among other

expenditures. This provides a strategic opportunity for construction to upgrade the infrastructure to boost military capabilities and better secure Canadian sovereignty.

Conclusion

The House is now adjourned and set to return on September 15, 2025, for the second parliamentary session. In the meantime, CCA will continue to monitor any developments on these files, including engagement with parliamentarians to ensure that construction is at the table and to collaborate with the government to help realize their repeated commitments to construction and building Canada better.

For more information on CCA's advocacy work, please contact our Associate Vice-President of Public Affairs and Industry Practices, [Louis-Philippe Champagne](#).