

# Those who created mess now want a reward

**JEROME GESSAROLI**

As Mark Carney and Chrystia Freeland position themselves to lead the Liberal party, recent polls suggest they could revive the party's fortunes.

But these potential saviours — Freeland as a cabinet minister and Carney as an adviser to Justin Trudeau — are offering solutions to problems they helped create. The same leadership circle that shaped Canada's energy policy, expanded deficits in normal times, and underfunded military readiness now presents itself as the remedy to these challenges.

Governing responsibly means preparing for future challenges, not scrambling to fix past policies. With rising global instability and U.S. trade pressures mounting, the same policy-

makers — Freeland, Dominic LeBlanc, Steven Guilbeault, Jonathan Wilkinson, Melanie Joly, François-Philippe Champagne and Carney — are reversing course at a dizzying pace.

Between 2015 and 2019, the Liberals repeatedly delayed or cancelled major energy projects. The Northern Gateway pipeline was scrapped. An oil tanker ban was placed on northern B.C. waters. The Energy East pipeline project was abandoned, forcing Quebec and Ontario to rely on foreign oil shipped through Michigan's politically precarious Line 5. Neither Freeland nor LeBlanc, who were both in cabinet at the time, voiced public opposition.

While the government did complete the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, one pipeline cannot offset years of can-

cellations and delays. Alberta has been forced to sell its oil at a discount to U.S. refiners, undercutting Canada's energy sector and leaving significant revenue untapped.

Later, the Liberals introduced the Impact Assessment Act, nicknamed, the "No More Pipelines Act" for its regulatory burdens, legislation the Supreme Court later ruled unconstitutional.

While U.S. policy shifts and environmental activism complicated cross-border projects, Canada's pipeline deficit stems mostly from domestic regulatory barriers. Wilkinson, who once defended these policies as parliamentary secretary to the environment minister, now admits Canada's pipeline deficit is a "vulnerability."

Since 2015, the Liberals have

also failed to balance a single budget. As finance minister, Freeland oversaw the 2023 deficit that grew to \$62 billion — 50 per cent above projections. Now, as U.S. trade threats increase, she preaches "fiscal restraint" and the need to keep our "fiscal powder dry."

Defence policy follows a similar pattern. For years, Washington pressed Ottawa to meet NATO's two per cent GDP spending target.

As recently as 2023, Trudeau dismissed the goal, prioritizing other spending and subsidies. Now, with Trump threatening to abandon "free-riding" allies, Freeland and Carney urge greater defence spending.

Where was this urgency as Canada's Arctic sovereignty and aging military equipment went largely unaddressed?

Carney, a climate champion who once aligned with activists like Greta Thunberg, now promotes scrapping the Liberal's signature carbon tax.

Rewarding these policy reversals with another mandate would endorse a decade of questionable governance, entrusting our future to the same people whose policies created these vulnerabilities.

This recycling of leadership — with new figureheads, but the same key players — offers rebranding without real renewal.

As the next election approaches, Canadians must ask whether political amnesia will erase accountability or whether we will demand real change?

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