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Letters from the LCC President

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Early one sunny morning in late July, four trucks moved slowly along the shore road leading to a small Prince Edward Island beach. Drawn to the action, I discovered an impressive pothole repair operation: a painstaking process of filling the large hole in front of our rental cottage, leaving behind a dark black patch carefully rolled until smooth and shiny.



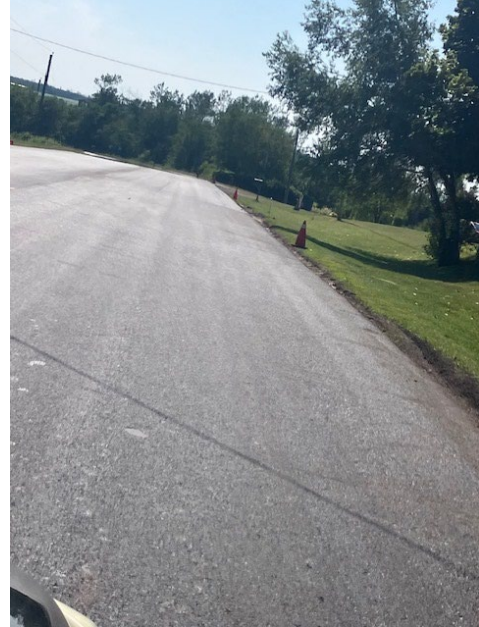
That morning event invited heightened awareness of potholes over two weeks of summer vacation in PEI. I started to pay close attention not only to the existence of potholes but also to evidence of generations of pothole fixing. I took photos of roads that were patchworks of countless shades of gray and black, often layered over each other. I wondered how operations have evolved and whether the materials and mechanisms have become more effective and long-lasting. I noticed when roads were freshly paved, replacing their past patched-up versions. And I thought about how pothole repair can serve as a metaphor for addressing gaps in law that appear over time.



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The phenomenon of potholes serves as a source of much frustration and fascination for many people in many places. Recent in-depth reports and reflections on the nature of the challenge and the spectrum of responses include articles in [The Guardian Weekly](#) (June 2026) and [The Walrus](#) (August 2026). In the first, readers can learn about a citizen in England who fills potholes with soil and flowers to make a point; the second showcases a Montreal man on an unofficial mission to fill the ubiquitous potholes that have overwhelmed and outpaced the city's repair capacity. Marked by both creativity and civic obsession, these individual efforts underscore a perpetual and widespread pothole problem.

Everyone has favourite examples of bad potholes in their neighbourhoods or along their regular routes. Indeed, potholes can easily become the target of highly specific and even competitive outrage. "My" pothole should be high on the list of priorities; "someone" should do something! Each hole needs to be filled, and the quality of the materials and procedures employed needs to be effective. This is work that is both constant and crucial. At the same time, everyone knows that non-stop, repeated short-term repair is insufficient in the long run. The patchwork that renders a road passable simply can't last forever.

While in pothole identification and repair mode, there is a constant need to figure out how to muster sufficient resources and time and people to do this kind of work on a regular and ongoing basis. But trying to keep up requires different energy and focus than complex planning and creation of sustainable systems. If all our attention is directed at pothole-fixing, we risk losing our ability and motivation to design a road for endurance and long life. All of this holds lessons for the work of repair in law: jurists and lawmakers know well the phenomenon of adding, fixing, smoothing, filling in holes, and producing an increasingly complex quilt of rules and regulations. They also know that the whole road eventually calls out for replacement and repaving.

I write this letter from Winnipeg where the 108th annual meeting of the “Uniform Law Conference of Canada” (ULCC) is taking place: a meeting with respect to which the resonance of pothole repair for lawmaking and law reform is particularly striking. The ULCC describes itself as a body that “provides independent analysis and resolutions for the harmonization and reform of law in Canada.” Over the course of an intensive week in August of reports and deliberations, participants have focused on a wide range of issues under study – from sentencing considerations to communications in criminal justice proceedings, from guidelines for publication of the names of accused individuals to protection from defamation in the age of the internet, from effective procedures for complex class actions to treatment of animals in the context of criminal and family law.

Committing to, and collaborating in the work of, the ongoing development of law and laws throughout Canada is precisely what members of the ULCC do. They aim for uniform approaches to law or the harmonisation of laws across this country’s jurisdictions, knowing that agreement is not always realistic or possible. Sometimes, and even often, their work consists of the careful repair of potholes and the ongoing stewardship of an obviously and continuously patched road. When an opportunity does arise for a repaving operation, these are people – supported by the right equipment, mechanisms, and materials – who are ready to take that on. Like drivers or cyclists, they know the pleasure of turning from a road full of potholes or patches onto one freshly renewed and smoothly finished.

As ULCC participants return to Ottawa and the capitals of all provinces and territories, they prepare to share their work with others, including individuals with lawmaking responsibilities and powers in Parliament and legislative assemblies. To support those lawmakers, the Law Commission of Canada is proud to announce the creation of a Foundations of Canadian Law resource guide. The guide introduces its readers to the traditions, constitutional organization, and systemic frameworks of law in Canada. Just as ensuring the upkeep and safety of roads demands familiarity by many actors and institutions with appropriate materials and processes, so too does successful and sustainable repair of law. In response, Foundations of Canadian Law, as one element of the Law Commission’s “Rule of Law Commitment”, offers an accessible toolbox of pertinent vocabulary, structures and principles. We look forward to sharing the guide’s inaugural edition!

A few days after watching the pothole repair process and allowing it to lead to reflection on the forms and approaches that exist in the evolution of law, I visited beautiful Singing Sands beach at Basin Harbour in northeast Prince Edward Island. As a detailed information sign explains, this is a “Marine Protected Area”, and the evidence of systemic care, collective commitment, and sustained oversight is striking. Everything is connected; challenges are addressed within and in support of the ecosystem rather than in what might be described as a “one pothole at a time” manner. The beauty, life, and longevity of the dunes,



the sand, and the water in relationship with each other are supported by people whose footprints are gentle and indeed musical. Everyone engaged in ongoing law reform might find motivation in this remarkable and inspiring model.

