



ISSN 1180-4386

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Second Session, 40th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Thursday 7 November 2013

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Jeudi 7 novembre 2013

**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Hawkins Gignac Act
(Carbon Monoxide Safety), 2013

**Comité permanent des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Loi Hawkins Gignac de 2013
(protection contre
le monoxyde de carbone)

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRSCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Thursday 7 November 2013

Jeudi 7 novembre 2013

The committee met at 0902 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, we're going to start the meeting. Good morning. We're the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We're here today to address Bill 77, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, to provide safety requirements related to the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises.

Now, I believe there's a report of the subcommittee on committee business. Mr. Prue, would you like to read on record about the subcommittee?

Mr. Michael Prue: Surely. Your subcommittee met on Monday, November 4, 2013, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 77, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, to provide safety requirements related to the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises, and recommends the following:

(1) That, pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, the committee meet on Thursday, November 7, 2013, to conduct public hearings.

(2) That the hearings begin at 9 a.m.

(3) That the Clerk of the Committee post information regarding public hearings on Bill 77 on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the committee's website and on Canada NewsWire.

(4) That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Wednesday, November 6, 2013.

(5) That the Clerk of the Committee provide the list of all interested presenters received at the deadline to each caucus.

(6) That all witnesses be offered 15 minutes for their presentation.

(7) That the deadline for written submissions on Bill 77 be 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 7, 2013.

(8) That, pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, the amendments to the bill be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 12 noon on Wednesday, November 20, 2013.

(9) That, pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 77 on Thursday, November 21, 2013.

(10) That clause-by-clause consideration of the bill begin at 9 a.m.

(11) That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized prior to the adoption of the report of the subcommittee to commence making any preliminary arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

I would move adoption of those recommendations.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, are there any comments or questions to the subcommittee report? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much, Mr. Prue.

HAWKINS GIGNAC ACT
(CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY), 2013
LOI HAWKINS GIGNAC DE 2013
(PROTECTION CONTRE
LE MONOXYDE DE CARBONE)

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 to provide safety requirements related to the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises / Projet de loi 77, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie pour prévoir des exigences en matière de protection contre la présence, dans des lieux, de niveaux dangereux de monoxyde de carbone.

INSURANCE BUREAU OF CANADA

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Now, I guess we're going to start the business of the committee, right? Today, I think we have the first witness, the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Matt Hiraishi, manager of government relations, please have a seat.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Good morning.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Good morning.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Soo Wong): Now, you heard from the subcommittee report that you have 15 minutes for your presentation. Then, each of the parties will have an opportunity to ask you questions. I believe the first round is usually the opposition party. Thank you. Welcome.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Thank you. I certainly won't need the 15 minutes. I'll keep it nice and short, but thank you for having me here today.

Good morning. My name is Matt Hiraishi. I'm the manager of government relations for Ontario for the

Insurance Bureau of Canada. On behalf of IBC and its members, I appreciate this opportunity to present to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in support of Bill 77, the Hawkins Gignac Act (Carbon Monoxide Safety), 2013.

This bill, if passed, would amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act to enable the government to make carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in homes built prior to 2001. This is indeed an extremely important measure. Despite the serious threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, many Canadian families do not have CO detectors in their homes.

This is a huge concern. Why? Simply because carbon monoxide is a silent killer. It has no colour, no taste and no smell. It can be produced by appliances that use gas, oil, wood, coal or any other kind of fossil fuel—appliances that are found in almost every home across Ontario.

While having a detector is vital to protecting one's family against the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, homeowners also need to conduct simple safety checks throughout the year, such as making sure that their vents and chimneys are connected, in good condition and not blocked. Additionally, they should have all fuel-burning appliances inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Not enough people realize this, which is why the education is so important.

As a member of the Ontario Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, IBC is committed to increasing awareness and understanding regarding the dangers of fire and other household hazards, including carbon monoxide. In 2006, IBC applauded the move to make smoke detectors mandatory on every storey as well as outside all sleeping areas of homes. Since then, we've been encouraging consumers to also purchase carbon monoxide detectors.

Sadly, there have been a number of tragedies in Ontario resulting from carbon monoxide poisoning, many of which could have been prevented if a detector had been present. IBC believes that Bill 77 will not only raise awareness of the risks associated with carbon monoxide, but more importantly, it will help prevent future tragedies from occurring.

As part of the effort to increase awareness of the risks related to carbon monoxide, IBC has been proud to partner with MPP Ernie Hardeman, the sponsor of Bill 77, to donate carbon monoxide detectors to local fire departments across Ontario. This past October, in conjunction with Mr. Hardeman and MPP Randy Pettapiece, IBC donated more than 100 carbon monoxide detector units to the Wellington North Fire Services and the Stratford Fire Department.

In speaking with members of those fire departments, the importance of having a carbon monoxide detector was certainly reinforced. Stratford Fire Inspector Roddy MacDonald noted that in 2012, his department responded to 92 carbon monoxide-related calls, 10 of which were discovered to have traces of carbon monoxide on site. Other fire departments have noted similar statistics. The

Barrie fire department, for example, has responded to more than 200 carbon monoxide-related calls so far this year.

If there's one message that people need to hear, it's that no call is too small. If they have concerns about possible carbon monoxide in their homes, they should call 911 and leave that home immediately.

In conclusion, I'd like to reiterate IBC's wholehearted support of Bill 77. We congratulate Mr. Hardeman for the leadership he has shown over the past five years on this issue, and we look forward to working with him and others to help make Ontario's homes safer.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I'd be happy to take any questions.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Thank you, Mr. Hiraishi. We have 12 minutes remaining. We will divide that time—four minutes equally. We'll begin with the opposition.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Matt, for your presentation. I also want to say that I want to thank you for the work that, through you, the insurance bureau has done to get the message out. I think that somewhat points out the challenges that are out there if people don't have a carbon monoxide detector.

0910

One of the things that I found very interesting—you mentioned the visit to North Perth and Stratford. One of the things that I was quite surprised with when we got there was that they already had a program in place so that, if they got a carbon monoxide call, and they went there and found they didn't have a detector or they had a non-functioning one, in fact, the fire departments had a loan program: They would leave a carbon monoxide detector behind in that house and tell the people, "When you get a chance to go and purchase one, bring this one back to the fire department," so they could then give it to someone else.

Obviously, when the Insurance Bureau of Canada provided 100 of them to put in people's homes or to use as they saw fit, they all looked at it as, as opposed to designing a new program to distribute them, they in fact would distribute them the same way as they were presently doing with the dozen detectors they had in the department to use: ask people to do the same thing again, take these and—

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Yes.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: So it really expanded that program.

Of course, there will be cases where the people will not—as they've already experienced, people were not bringing them back. In this case, then they will have a greater supply to keep the program going. I really want to thank you for doing that.

The other thing I just wanted to mention is that for those who are watching or are part of this hearing—because we have a day of hearings and we have just three delegations to hear this morning, I don't want the com-

mittee to think that that's because of a lack of interest. This is not the first time we've had these hearings. This process has been going on for a number of years. In fact, it will be the fifth anniversary of the first introduction the first week of next month. So at this point, we're three weeks short of five years that we've doing this. It's actions like the Insurance Bureau's and the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation's and others—some of the manufacturers—who have been helping us for those five years, trying to get the message out on the importance of carbon monoxide detectors in the home that have, I suppose, done more public awareness in those five years than we could have if we'd passed it on the first go-round. So I want to thank all the people who have taken on that challenge and helped us get the word out over those past five years.

I guess the only thing is, I say that I am a little sorry that we didn't get to everyone's home and all those who have perished in the last five years from that in Ontario. I wish we could have found a way to figure out which ones they would have been so that they could have had one of those detectors in their home.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): We do need to move on and—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Oh. Well, thank you very much. Again, I thank you. Obviously there was no question in there, because you agreed with everything we're doing. But thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Thanks, Mr. Hardeman. Moving on to the third party: Mr. Prue.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you so much. As you heard when you sat down and we read out the subcommittee report, this is in fact in two parts. Today is to hear three deputations. The next time is to consider amendments to the bill. Do you have any amendments you want, or do you think the bill is good as it is?

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: I'm not the expert on the legislation. I can't remember everything off the top of our head, but when we had looked at it, I think we were quite pleased with it. Certainly I can pass it along. If our policy department hasn't had a look at it quite yet, I can pass it along to them to have a look to see if they require any suggestions for potential revisions, but as it stands, I think what we've been focused on is just the importance of raising awareness. We're in the business of managing risk; I mean, that's what insurance is all about. This is just a logical extension to help make homes safer and take care of that risk.

Certainly we can have a look, but as it stands, I think it's fine.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay. I think we all share the concern that you've stated because this is a silent killer and it need not be. A carbon monoxide detector is not an expensive proposition for most homes.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: No.

Mr. Michael Prue: I don't have any other questions, unless my colleague does, but I did want to take a minute or two to thank Mr. Hardeman for his perseverance. I know I spoke a couple of times to this bill in previous

attempts. Sometimes around this place things just take so desperately long, when you know from the outset that it's the right thing to do, so thank you for persevering. That would be my question. That's it.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Okay, so we'll move on to the government.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for coming to present to SCOFEA. In terms of data, because often the government is looking for data, can you share with the committee the amount of insurance claims associated with unsafe levels of carbon monoxide?

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: I don't have any of those figures with me. I certainly would be happy to go back to the office, see if there are some numbers and provide them to the committee.

Ms. Soo Wong: I think that would be important data to have, not to delay any more review of this bill.

Similar to Mr. Prue: Do you have any additional comments to strengthen the bill, given that the subcommittee will be going through clause-by-clause of the bill next week? I will be very interested to know from IBC if there is any kind of amendment to strengthen the bill.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: I don't have any at this time, but certainly, to Mr. Prue's question, I can go back to the office and talk to our policy people and see if they do have any recommendations.

Ms. Soo Wong: And I want to thank you for your organization, for donating and working so hard with Mr. Hardeman, and donating those carbon monoxide detectors, because one life is worth saving for all of Ontario. I want to pass on that message of thanking your organization for reaching out to the committee.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: It's our pleasure, and this is going to be an ongoing effort. It certainly doesn't stop with this bill receiving royal assent. This is just an ongoing public education process that we're more than happy to be a part of.

Ms. Soo Wong: Now that you mention public education, given that our community is very diverse, what extra measures is your organization prepared to do in reaching out? I'm going to give an example: I was saying to staff earlier, before this committee met—do I have some minutes?

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Yes, you have a few minutes.

Ms. Soo Wong: I just wanted to share on the record, to let the committee know, that I had an almost-critical incident within my own family. My mother—this is going back a couple of years ago, Mr. Hardeman, about your bill. It was ringing all night. She phoned me at about 5 in the morning and said, "The darn machine is making so much noise." She yanked it out of the wall and she said, "I want you to go buy a new one." Meanwhile, her home was filled with carbon monoxide.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Wow.

Ms. Soo Wong: So it's not that she didn't have the carbon monoxide detector; she wasn't aware or educated.

I told her a million times, but with frail seniors—you know, that kind of stuff. Is your organization going to be working with the fire marshal's office to improve the communication with the various diverse communities? Because we will have constituents like my own mother, who have the machine, take it off the wall and say, "This is a defective machine." Meanwhile, that should red-alert you that you need to call in the authorities to do some more additional stuff.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Yes. It's an extension of what we will be doing. What we've been starting to do is really starting to communicate with a lot of those communities where a lot of new Canadians are found, where English may not be their first language. Whether it would be us coming together to produce an op-ed that we would pitch to various community newspapers or advertisements advocating for the passage or the fact that it has become law and that carbon monoxide detectors are mandatory in homes, that would be part of our effort to increase public awareness and education across all languages and communities, for sure.

Ms. Soo Wong: That's great. I also want to, on record, thank Mr. Hardeman for your tenacity and persistence, because this is what's very, very important for all Ontarians. Thank you, Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Madam Chair, could I just make one other comment, if there's a little bit of time left of the 15 minutes? I just wanted to say to the comments about the losses: I think that it's very important that we all recognize that this isn't about insurance losses at all, because there is no loss from carbon monoxide poisoning. It's just human health that disappears. When insurance bureaus think it's important to make sure we have smoke detectors, there's an indication that we can maybe lower the damage, but carbon monoxide is not causing property damage. It's just causing damage to life, and that's why I so much appreciate what the insurance bureau is doing.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Thank you. I just want to thank Mr. Hiraishi for coming forward. Our time is up.

Mr. Matt Hiraishi: Great. Thank you for having me.

HAWKINS-GIGNAC FOUNDATION FOR CO EDUCATION

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): I'd like to now call on Mr. John Gignac. If you could come forward, please, sir. I want to remind you that you'll have a total of 15 minutes. Within that time frame, you can make your presentation. Whatever time is remaining, that time will be divided equally amongst all three parties, and we will begin with the third party. Please go ahead.

0920

Mr. John Gignac: Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to appear before you to share my views on Bill 77. My name is John Gignac: Yes, the same name as found in the Hawkins-Gignac Act that we are all here to discuss today.

It was Christmas 2008 when carbon monoxide gas killed four members of my family: my niece, Laurie Hawkins, an OPP officer; her husband, Richard; and their two children, Cassandra and Jordan.

They were a typical Ontario family living in a typical Woodstock house, just like many of us. They died because a blocked chimney vent forced invisible, tasteless and odorless carbon monoxide from their gas fire-place back into their home. They never knew what hit them because, like most people in the province, they did not have that simple, inexpensive device that could have prevented this unimaginable nightmare. I'm talking about a carbon monoxide alarm.

I spent 34 years in the Brantford Fire Department, so I saw the benefits of smoke alarms and how they save lives. From my perspective, I see the same thing happening with CO alarms.

Back in 2008, I didn't know much about carbon monoxide, but after the accident I came out of retirement to speak up about CO safety because my brother Ben, Laurie's dad, asked me to. After the deaths, in his grief, he said: "John, you need to warn people so that this never happens again."

Why did he pick me? I guess because I was wearing a firefighter's vest he felt I was best to represent the family. On that day I began a new mission: to educate people as much as I could about the sources and symptoms of carbon monoxide. I created the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education so that no family would ever have to endure the hell we've been through.

We also, as a committee, have raised money in our community to donate CO alarms throughout Ontario. We're trying to save everybody, not just in Ontario but right across Canada. We've made over 2,000 CO alarms available to the different fire departments in our community to distribute to the people who can't afford to buy them.

I wish I could tell you that we haven't had any more CO deaths or incidents, but I can't say that. Since we lost Laurie, Richard, Cassie and Jordan, more Ontario people have died from CO poisoning in their homes. Despite all the attention these tragedies get in the news, people are still dying. That's why this bill is so important. Without a carbon monoxide law, many more people will continue to put their families in danger and many more innocent lives will be lost.

This bill was first introduced four years ago. Yes, I have been working with Mr. Hardeman for four years—and I'd also like to commend Mr. Hardeman for his tenacity—four years since Mr. Hardeman introduced his private member's bill in my family's honour. My family feels deeply indebted to him for his presence and his perseverance with this life-saving cause.

For four years, I have also been walking these halls, pleading with members of all parties to vote this bill into law to make citizens of Ontario the safest in the country. We got trumped on that one.

This past May, I was invited to be present in the Yukon Legislature as it became the first jurisdiction in

Canada to pass a CO law—I applaud them—one year after five people died of carbon monoxide poisoning in Whitehorse. But this is the one time that I don't mind being in second place.

Education goes hand in hand with passing this law. It is critical that we make people aware of how dangerous carbon monoxide is. If this bill passes, the foundation's job has just begun.

Carbon monoxide comes from a surprising number of devices in our homes—wood, gas and propane fireplaces; gas water heaters; gas, oil and propane generators; furnaces and appliances; and car exhaust. And yes, I've had many examples in four years of every one of these incidents taking lives.

When this law passes, I promise you that I will continue to be a vocal advocate for CO safety and the absolute need to install a CO alarm in your home if you have a fuel-fired device or an attached garage or carport.

Chair and members of this committee, I've been waiting four long years to finally know that my family's deaths were not in vain. There is no reason to delay this bill any longer. Laurie keeps touching me on the shoulder every time I go to bed, warning me to keep moving forward, just like she did. She educated everybody in her community. Her family was well involved in the community and she worked with the kids in her community. I think she's telling me to do the same thing, only to take this carbon monoxide bill and run with it—but I never forget smoke alarms, either.

Carbon monoxide alarms are not expensive and they last between five and 10 years, depending on the brand. Please do the right thing and honour my family's memory and protect all families in the future by voting Bill 77 into law. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzi Hunter): Thank you, Mr. Gignac.

We have three minutes remaining, so we will start with the third party. Ms. Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you very much for coming in today. I'm sure it's still difficult.

Of course, we will be supporting this bill. I am curious, though: In the work that you've been doing through your foundation over the years, what have people told you? Does it come down to just education and knowledge? Is cost a factor for families? When you talk to people, what do they tell you back? What are the real stories from people who don't have carbon monoxide devices in their homes?

Mr. John Gignac: Of all the people that I've met in the last four years, it seems to be a combination. But the major thing seems to be the education. People don't know how carbon monoxide is going to affect them in their homes.

Also, to get a law passed, or—we passed the bylaw in the city of Brantford. We went from 25% to 30% of people having carbon monoxide detectors in their homes—after the bylaw was passed, we went to well up over 70%. I don't think you'll ever get full participation,

because there's always that one person who we need to get to make sure they pass it.

But it never came down to expenses or anything like that. It came down to the fact that people never really gave it a lot of thought, and they didn't really know what carbon monoxide—just like when I was on the fire department in 2008. When this tragedy happened to my family, I didn't have a CO alarm in my home. I went to work on nights as a firefighter and left my wife home unprotected. Believe me, as soon as this happened, the very next thing I did was, I purchased three of them. I put them in my home. At Christmas, I bought CO alarms for all my friends and all my family members and put them in their homes.

It was a tragedy. It woke me up. Waking me up made me want to dedicate more time to saying—I'm thinking to myself, "I didn't know about it. Obviously, nobody else knew about it."

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much. I think the idea of giving CO detectors as gifts is actually a life-saving gift, really. So thanks for that idea.

I'd also like to congratulate Mr. Hardeman. It takes a lot of resilience and tenacity to get things done around here. Hopefully this can happen sooner than later.

Mr. John Gignac: I think Mr. Hardeman needs to be commended. I'm sure he'll be glad to see the bill passed so he doesn't have to face me anymore.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzi Hunter): Thank you. Moving on to the government: Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so much for your leadership, sir, and for not just educating Ontarians about the carbon monoxide, but across Canada. I also want to applaud your work with Mr. Hardeman in bringing this awareness, but also in continuing to educate our community.

My only question for you, sir: As you know, if the legislation is passed, the fire code amendment will still need to be necessary before carbon monoxide detectors become mandatory in terms of residences dealing with fuel-burning appliances. So can I get your comment on it? Because there are several parts to this, as you know, as a former firefighter. There needs to be some kind of fire code amendment. There's a technical review by the professionals. Sometimes that gets seen as a further delay. Can you give us some comments on how we can expedite that process so that we can get this bill going forward, as you have been so strong in advocating to us?

Mr. John Gignac: I think that we've reviewed this bill; it has been worded as closely to perfect as I can see. I've reviewed the bill several times. To delay any more is totally unnecessary. Every day we delay is another incident that's going to happen in the province of Ontario. I think that what we should do is take this bill, pass it and get it into law so that it's doing its job as soon as possible. We've delayed it for four or five years now. I think it's way too long; way overdue.

Ms. Soo Wong: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzi Hunter): Okay. Moving on to the official opposition: Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, John. I want to thank you very much, not so much for my perseverance but for yours and your family's. Obviously, each time that it died on the order paper, we had to resurrect it by reintroducing it. Each time, there was a question: Do we want to do the same bill over again, or do we want to use what we say are scarce opportunities to have a private member's bill for the same thing again? Each time you even think about that, you think about why you did it in the first place. It's people like yourself that has kept us doing that.

I just wanted to make one other comment, in saying thank you, on the timeline. I think it's so important, as we've been talking about, that this about public awareness.

0930

I think if the Legislature passes this bill and gives it third reading, for its purposes, the fact that some of the work has to be done yet putting it into the fire code and so forth is going to take a little time. We will be able to tell the people that it is the law of the land, even though we do not have the fire department around forcing people to do it, but at the same time, fire departments will be out there explaining to people how important it is. The timeline: I think you made a great point, John, that five years is long enough. I think now we make it the law so people can get on with getting it out there.

One last comment: one of the most important parts of the bill is that the bill also depicts who is responsible for doing it in rental units. Presently, even people that are made aware, should it be the landlord that has to do it or should I put it in the landlord's home? Under those circumstances so often, it doesn't happen. This bill will actually say that the landlord becomes responsible to make sure that there's a working carbon monoxide detector in the home.

Thank you very much, again, John.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Mr. Gignac, I want to thank you for the work that you and your family have been doing and for appearing before our committee this morning. Thank you very much.

Mr. John Gignac: I want to thank you for having me. Thank you very much.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Our final speaker is Mr. Jim Jessop, who is the deputy fire chief of the London Fire Department.

As you get settled in your seat, I just want to remind you that we have a total of 15 minutes, and that includes your presentation. Whatever time is remaining, we will divide it equally amongst all of the three parties, so you may begin.

Mr. Jim Jessop: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. As Madam Chair stated, my name is Jim Jessop. I am the deputy fire chief for the city of London, and I'm speaking on behalf and with the full authority of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, or shortly the OAFC, is the association that represents the 458 municipal fire departments that serve Ontario. We represent the chief officers, the fire chiefs and the deputy chiefs that are tasked with managing and implementing all legislative changes under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act and the Ontario Fire Code, so it is our association and our members that will be the ones tasked with implementing any of the proposed changes.

I'd like to start very quickly with a local story. Mr. Hardeman is going to remember this from two weeks ago. It was a Saturday morning and I had just returned from my son's basketball practice. I was the acting fire chief for London at the time and I got a call from dispatch. Mr. and Mrs. Moore were living in an older home and their carbon monoxide alarms had been going off throughout the morning and they didn't know what was wrong.

Their neighbour was having their ducts cleaned and the cleaning company had two Honda generators set up outside in the driveway. Mr. and Mrs. Moore's furnace intake pipe ended up serving as a conduit through which the products of combustion from the generators flooded their home with carbon monoxide.

London Fire responded. Our initial readings were so high, the firefighters had to go on SCBA, with the masks, to breathe. The readings exceeded 200 parts per million. This was a Saturday morning.

I can state, after 18 years in the fire service, and Mr. and Mrs. Moore absolutely would state that if they were here, that if those alarms had not been installed and had not activated that morning, it could have been tragic, including fatalities. Under the present system, the only requirements under the Ontario building code, Mr. and Mrs. Moore were not required, by law, to have carbon monoxide alarms installed.

On behalf of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, I spoke at this committee a number of years ago in support of it on behalf of the OAFC. The OAFC, again, fully supports Mr. Hardeman's private member's bill. As the responding emergency services that are called to these kinds of calls throughout the province on a daily basis, we see the tragic results, but what we have also seen is the success that smoke alarms have had in drastically reducing needless deaths and injuries, and we believe that this is the same with carbon monoxide alarms. So you have the full support of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

A couple of things just to touch on very briefly: public education. We absolutely agree with that and the OAFC fully supports the office of the Ontario fire marshal in their emphasis on public education for all fire safety issues. We believe this a natural fit, and we believe this would fall into the public education programs that we currently implement on behalf of the Office of the Fire Marshal and the fire marshal's public safety council. To us, this is a natural fit and a natural evolution.

Secondly, the inspections and the enforcement: Again, it is our officers, our firefighters and our fire prevention

officers who are in homes on a complaint and a request basis, an emergency basis and on daily events. We are required by law to inspect for smoke alarms. It is certainly not too much to ask for our officers and our staff, while they're in a house, to glance over to the wall to look to see if they have a carbon monoxide alarm. We also suspect that with technology, we will see a lot more combination units of carbon monoxide and smoke alarms installed together.

As those managers and supervisors who will be tasked with allocating resources to any proposed amendments, we do not see this as something that cannot be overcome. We see this as part of a natural evolution of the job that our staff do on a daily basis anyway. In terms of concerns about increased workload, there may be some minor changes, there may be some education that we have to provide to our staff, but at the end of the day, this is not going to drastically increase the workload of the municipal fire services that are currently responding.

Currently, the majority of large municipal fire departments have acted on their own. In fact, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs passed a resolution that was submitted to the fire marshal's office in 2011 unanimously calling for the retroactive requirement of installation of carbon monoxide alarms. In the absence so far of that provincial legislation, we have acted on our own. In fact, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs has set up a separate subcommittee of fire chiefs and deputy chiefs who have collected municipal bylaws. We have set up a separate link on our website, and we are assisting other municipalities right now as they draft their own municipal bylaws in the absence of a provincial standard. So we, right now, are taking action into our own hands, and we have been for a number of years because we have seen the tragedies that have resulted.

As chair of the fire prevention committee, I am currently working with three large municipal fire departments as they are bringing council reports forward to pass more municipal bylaws in the absence of a provincial standard. Right now, the municipal fire departments have been taking the lead and will continue to take the lead. That being said, we fully support a provincial retroactive standard and requirements and amendments to the Ontario Fire Code. But again, I think it's important to know that we feel so strongly about it—and municipal councils have felt so strongly about it, dating back to Toronto being one of the first cities that did this years ago—that municipal governments are continuing to this day to pass municipal bylaws requiring the retroactive installation of carbon monoxide alarms. I think that's a very important point to remember.

Finally, I just wish to make a comment before taking questions with regard to the next steps in the process. As the representative who worked very closely with the Office of the Fire Marshal and all of the stakeholders for what we still consider the seminal piece of fire safety in this province, the passing of the vulnerable occupancies legislation with the senior citizens' homes and the retirement homes and the sprinklers that the Premier just

announced back in April or May, it is very important that the Office of the Fire Marshal and all stakeholders be available and be able to go over the legislation so that all amendments and all views are observed.

As someone who worked closely with a number of MPPs on all sides of the aisle trying to bring private member's bills forward on sprinkler legislation in retirement homes throughout the years, I can tell you that the technical advisory committee is an absolute must. We noticed slight language changes that would have affected how we delivered the service and how it impacted different stakeholders, so I absolutely would request, on behalf of the OAFIC, that the OFM be given the time to do this properly. The OAFIC will commit right now all resources to work collaboratively with all stakeholders, and we fully support the Office of the Fire Marshal for the technical advisory committee or any subcommittee work that they require to make sure that they engage all stakeholders and that all impacts of this legislation are looked at.

Barring any questions, those are the comments of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, and I thank you, Madam Chair.

0940

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Thank you, Deputy Chief.

To the government side: We have two minutes for each party. Go ahead.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Deputy Chief, for being here today and for protecting Ontarians every day. I want to say thank you to your association and to your colleagues.

I also want to preface my question to you to say that our government is not prepared for any more delay. This needs to go forward. That's our commitment; I want it to be on record as well.

I also want to go on record to say that I want to thank your organization for working closely with Mr. Hardeman, and also with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, in preparing this latest round of the bill, because I know MCSCS has been actively involved.

My question to you, Deputy Chief, this morning is that, as you know, if passed, Bill 77 will expand the scope of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act so that, in addition to fire safety, the FPPA would now provide authority to regulate the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide. In your professional opinion, do you believe that this amendment is the right thing to do?

Mr. Jim Jessop: Yes. Speaking with the full authority of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, we absolutely do. We unanimously passed a resolution in 2011, and we have seen the results and we fully support the proposed amendments.

Ms. Soo Wong: Okay. And in terms of the bill, are there any suggestions to strengthen it? Because next week we are doing clause-by-clause of the bill.

Mr. Jim Jessop: We have reviewed the bill, and I have worked closely, on behalf of the OAFIC, with the

Office of the Fire Marshal, and we fully support what we have seen proposed by the fire marshal's office so far.

Ms. Soo Wong: That's great. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Thanks very much. We'll move to the official opposition.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you, Chief, for your presentation. I do want to say that we have had the opportunity to work with the fire marshal's office and the Ministry of Community Safety. There was a difference between this bill and what it was the last time that you made a presentation. From what we heard and what needed to be done, we've made those changes, particularly the part—as you mentioned—about how it can be implemented.

The bill now says it goes into the Fire Code, and that's where your committee would be involved, in the changes to the Fire Code, to make sure that it can be done in the most expedient way as it serves you.

I was also impressed with your comments—we heard the last time you presented about some of the questions about how much this was going to increase the costs to municipalities, and if it was really worth that. I want to point out that I appreciated that in your presentation, where it really isn't that much difference.

If you look at this legislation, carbon monoxide detectors are the same as the smoke detectors, so if someone goes into the house to enforce the rules as they apply, they apply to two detectors as opposed to one. It really shouldn't make much difference, and I really appreciated you coming in and bringing that forward.

Even more, having talked to you last time, the one interesting thing that has changed in this bill from the former one—I didn't even realize the first time that, in fact, the mandatory part of carbon monoxide, which was all homes after 2001, presently does not have any enforcement capabilities for the fire department. Even though they had to put them in under the Building Code, they didn't have to keep them working.

Mr. Jim Jessop: Correct.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This here will actually mandate that they all have to have working carbon monoxide detectors at all times.

We appreciate your input last time even more than this time, but thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Jim Jessop: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Okay. Thank you. Moving on to the third party: Ms. Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you for coming in.

I think the point that you made, that this is a natural evolution from smoke detectors to carbon monoxide detectors, is a very good point, and I think that needs to be stressed. I also appreciate the fact that your technical working group is willing to help us put this regulation into action where it's actually going to work, which is a very good offer.

You referenced something in your comments about how potentially, moving forward or going forward, there may be smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in the same device. I haven't seen that, but could you maybe comment a little bit on that?

Mr. Jim Jessop: Yes. Through the Chair, we have seen that technology now. There are combination devices that are currently on the market. Like all devices, as technology expands, the initial costs of those combination devices were a little more at the beginning, but we've seen the costs come down. We've certainly seen, as technology advances, that that would more than likely be another evolution towards a single device that would satisfy both the requirements of carbon monoxide and smoke alarms in family homes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jim Jessop: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): Okay. Thank you very much, Deputy Chief Jessop. I appreciate you coming forward to the committee today. Thank you for appearing.

Mr. Jim Jessop: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, committee.

The Acting Chair (Ms. Mitzie Hunter): That being the agenda completed, we adjourn the meeting until Thursday, November 21, for clause-by-clause consideration of this bill. This meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 0945.

CONTENTS

Thursday 7 November 2013

Subcommittee report	F-421
Hawkins Gignac Act (Carbon Monoxide Safety), 2013, Bill 77, Mr. Hardeman / Loi Hawkins Gignac de 2013 (protection contre le monoxyde de carbone), projet de loi 77, M. Hardeman	F-421
Insurance Bureau of Canada	F-421
Mr. Matt Hiraishi	
Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education	F-424
Mr. John Gignac	
Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.....	F-426
Mr. Jim Jessop	

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Chair / Président

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville L)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente

Ms. Soo Wong (Scarborough–Agincourt L)

Mr. Steven Del Duca (Vaughan L)

Mr. Victor Fedeli (Nipissing PC)

Ms. Catherine Fife (Kitchener–Waterloo ND)

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville L)

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday (Etobicoke–Lakeshore PC)

Ms. Mitzie Hunter (Scarborough–Guildwood L)

Mr. Monte McNaughton (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex PC)

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York ND)

Ms. Soo Wong (Scarborough–Agincourt L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford PC)

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans L)

Mr. Rob E. Milligan (Northumberland–Quinte West PC)

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. Katch Koch

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Anne Marzalik, research officer,
Research Services