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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 4 March 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 4 mars 2014

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Agency review: Metrolinx

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Examen des organismes
gouvernementaux : Metrolinx

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 4 March 2014

Mardi 4 mars 2014

The committee met at 0905 in committee room 1.

AGENCY REVIEW: METROLINX

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We're here in government agencies, and we'll call the meeting to order.

The first item of business is to vote on the motion that is currently on the floor. When the committee was adjourned last week, I put the question on the amendment by Mr. Bartolucci to the motion by Mr. Marchese, the text of the amendment being as follows:

"I move that the following sentence be struck from the main motion:

"That these documents be produced within 30 days of this motion passing, and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable PDF."

"And replaced with:

"That these documents be produced within 60 days of this motion passing, and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable PDF."

A 20-minute recess having been requested at 10:13, the committee adjourned until this morning. Without further debate, I will now take the vote on the amendment by Mr. Bartolucci.

All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? Okay, that does not carry.

Just before we resume debate on the main motion, could I have agreement to quickly consider the one subcommittee report we have on the agenda, dated February 27, 2014? Would someone please like to move adoption of the report?

Miss Monique Taylor: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you, Monique. Anyone second—discussion?

Miss Monique Taylor: Sorry. I found it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): My apologies.

Miss Monique Taylor: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated February 27, 2014.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you, Monique.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, could we just have a little bit of time to read the subcommittee report?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): On intended appointments, I think we just vote either in favour or not to adopt the report.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I think you should read it in full.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): So just—all those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

And before we resume debate on the main motion, could I also have agreement to deal with a number of extensions? There are currently five intended appointees selected by the committee whose deadlines or extensions expire before our next meeting. We would require unanimous consent of the committee to extend the deadlines so that we may interview these individuals who were selected at a later date. They are:

(1) Richard Patten, nominated as member, Ottawa Convention Centre Corp.

(2) Joe Vaccaro, nominated as member, Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee.

(3) Egya Sangmuah, nominated as member and vice-chair, Landlord and Tenant Board, Social Justice Tribunals Ontario.

(4) Jeff Kehoe, nominated as member and chair, Ontario Capital Growth Corp.

(5) Mary Anne McKellar, nominated as presiding officer, Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Mr. Richard Patten, nominated as member, Ottawa Convention Centre Corp., to April 16, 2014?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, can we have a five-minute recess to consider this? You've asked for unanimous consent.

Interjections.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Well, what?

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): It's just to extend the deadline. We're not going to get to it today, I don't think.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: None of us were on the subcommittee—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes, we just don't know. Some of the names that you have mentioned are not on my sheet, so we just need a five-minute recess.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): It's just to extend the deadline, so I think you will have time to read that. I think, as Chair, that in the past experience of this

committee we do agree to extend always, so I'm going to rule that we do the vote now.

Mr. Frank Klees: Call the question. If it's not unanimous, it's on their back.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. I'm going to rule that out of order.

0910

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Richard Patten—I mean, Joe Vaccaro? Agreed? Okay.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Egya Sangmuh, nominated as member and vice-chair, Landlord and Tenant Board, Social Justice Tribunals Ontario, also to April 16, 2014? Agreed? Thank you.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Jeff Kehoe, nominated as member and chair, Ontario Capital Growth Corp., to April 26, 2014? Agreed? Okay.

There's one more. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Mary Anne McKellar, nominated as presiding officer, Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal, to April 16, 2014? Is there agreement? Agreed? Thank you.

We'll now resume debate on the motion by Mr. Marchese. Further debate? Dipika.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I have an amendment to the main motion that I'd like to move.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): You have an amendment that you would like to move to the main motion.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I move that the main motion be amended to define market studies as “a study that gathers and evaluates the data regarding consumer preference of the service in question. Market studies do not include public consultations or submissions around routes or any considerations of specific projections around fare structure.”

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Right. Do you have a copy you can provide to the Clerk, myself and members of the committee?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I can give this to the Clerk. If the Clerk could make copies.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Is this the amendment here?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Thank you.

Is there any debate on this? Dipika.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Chair. As we can see, what we're really doing is we are trying to narrow—not narrow, but define exactly what “market studies” means to the original—

Miss Monique Taylor: “Narrow” is a good word.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Well, the scope, yes. Actually, I have no problem saying that, to scope it out, because to just say “market studies” leaves it so wide open that it would be very difficult for officials to decide what pertains and what doesn't pertain. It's always good to

know what one is looking for, to define what one is looking for. If you're not happy with that definition, that's what we're here for: to talk about it. As MPP Klees was suggesting, we need a conversation to define “market study.” Bring it on. I'm happy to have that conversation, and we can talk about it for some time. But what we are suggesting—I think it's a pretty robust definition, a very fair definition.

The intent, quite simply, is, I think we want to be helpful to the committee. Just the term “market study” can be incredibly vague and very difficult to define. If we do not tell our officials exactly what we want, we cannot expect them to give us what we are looking for. Defining this word and telling Metrolinx what we exactly mean will allow them to properly search for the documents and provide them by the deadline. This is particularly pertinent given that we had wanted to extend the deadline from 30 days to 60 days. Given that that motion was struck down, and officials have only 30 days to provide this information, I think it behooves us to ensure that we are quite clear in asking for exactly what we want.

I have to say that I've been serving on another committee, and I was shocked when I heard that the way the original request had been defined would result in a million documents showing up. The question to the committee was, “Would you want the Ministry of Health to be dumping a million documents?” It serves nobody's purpose, and the reason we were in that state was because many, many attempts by the government side to scope down the relevance or what was being asked were blocked. We went with the original motion, and here we are in a situation where there's a potential for a million documents to be presented to committee. We do not want to be in that situation with Metrolinx.

I don't know how many of you drove yesterday; maybe MPP Holyday did. Coming eastbound along the Gardiner in the morning was just impossible. For somebody like me coming in from Mississauga, I left my house around 9:15, and I did not get here till 11:15—two hours on the Gardiner Expressway. That's just the sort of thing that reminds you of the important work that is ahead of us here in the GTA in terms of building not just public transit but everything to do with transportation, whether it's our highways, our roads, our subways or our GO trains.

This is important work that Metrolinx ought to be doing, and anything we can do to ensure that they have their eye on the ball, and they're actually working towards building something as opposed to just doing paperwork and just bringing up and doing searches that may be redundant—I think yesterday's example is a timely reminder of what an important issue building infrastructure in Ontario is and the important role that Metrolinx can and will play if we allow them to play it, as opposed to spending their time trying to figure out what exactly the committee means by the word “market study.”

So I'm just giving a little bit of that background, just to underscore why the amendment that I have proposed is

so important, because I don't want it to get caught in the idea, well, why is the government side proposing—or that it's opposed just because one side is proposing it. I'm hoping that we can actually come together and have a real agreement that, perhaps, there is some merit to defining very clearly what it is that MPP Marchese is looking for in the original motion.

One of the things that we know is that market studies can sometimes refer to economic or social or a number of other factors. Are we looking for a market study that looks at a social component? Are we looking at an economic driver? What my amendment does is, it says very, very clearly that it is “a study that gathers and evaluates the data regarding consumer preference of the service in question,” because that is the whole intent of the original motion: to get some sense of what the consumer preference is, going forward, on this air-rail link. The definition goes on to very clearly preclude some things by saying it does “not include public consultations or submissions around routes or any considerations of specific projections around fare structure,” because we don't want the original motion to be bogged down by distracting factors which would not only take up the time of Metrolinx officials but would also make it difficult for us here at committee to sift through those documents.

0920

One of the things that I have to ask myself is, I'm sitting on another committee where, honestly, there have been—I forget the number, but I did very quick math. The math that I came up with is that the amount of documents that the committee had asked for would require somebody, if they wanted to actually go through all of the documents—my last calculation was every single day, including Saturday and Sunday, eight hours a day, that's all you do, and you'd still need nine months to get through all of that. And that is just one committee; there are a number of committees running.

As a relatively new MPP, I have really learned through the committee process that sometimes we can just ask for all this information, which is wonderful, but how many of us at the end of the day will actually read through all of those reports? I can only hope, given all of this background, that all of you will concur and agree.

I'm open to any suggestions if you think that rewording my amendment a little bit might make it more robust; I'm absolutely open to that idea. This is one suggestion, one way of making the request more relevant, making it easier not just for officials but I think making it easier for us here in committee to do our work. I've always believed in the idea of asking for something. If it's not enough, then ask for some more rather than asking for who knows what—I'm not entirely sure what we're asking, but just asking for everything in the hope that, once it's there, we'll find something. I think there's a word for it. I forget, but I think it's called—help me with that. You know when you're just looking for something in the dark? What's the word—fishing, going fishing. That looks a bit like fishing. You ask for all the documentation that is possible, and then you start looking at

it, and you hope you find something. That is not an efficient use of taxpayer dollars at all. That is not an efficient use of our officials' time.

Before I got elected as a member of provincial Parliament, I worked in a minister's office. I worked very closely with officials, and I know this much: The Ontario public service has some outstanding, very, very hard-working officials with a lot of merit. We really need to be very respectful of their time and their talents as we go about our committee work. I have the utmost respect for them.

In my time working in the minister's office, I was very, very careful about the information I asked them for to ensure that there wasn't any duplication, that I wasn't asking for information that I already had, because I was very mindful that they do some very important, very productive work. Every time we ask for all of this, they don't stop doing their everyday 9-to-5 jobs; they're not going to stop working, hopefully, on adding more trains on the Milton line. All of that continues, and this is extra that we ask of them. It is not like Metrolinx has an entire department sitting and waiting for committee officials and saying, “Okay, what requests do they have today?” Once this request goes forward, they would be doing their 9 to 5, trying to do everything that they would always do plus, on top of that, this.

Keeping that in mind as well, I think there's a very strong case for first asking something, and if at the end of that the committee feels that that was not enough, we can always build on that. But to just ask for very vague market studies—I wish it had originally been scoped out properly, because had it been more scoped out originally, we wouldn't be spending the time right now, here in committee, having a conversation and trying to figure out how we can make this motion more robust.

But what's done is done. There's always room for improvement. So at this point, I think we can certainly work towards trying to make the original motion better. I think that is part of working collaboratively as a group: something comes forward, and how can we, together—as they say, two heads are better than one. And surely—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven and, including the Chair, eight—eight heads would be better than one. I really, really look forward to hearing everybody else's thoughts on the motion that I have put forward. As I've already said, I'm more than happy to entertain any amendments to my amendment. If that makes it better, I would be more than pleased.

I wish MPP Marchese was here, because it is his motion, and I would be very interested to hear his feedback at some point on some of the changes that we are suggesting.

I do want to link this back to the very important work that Metrolinx does. One of the things that Metrolinx was originally created to do was to ensure that we have one seamless transit plan for all of Ontario. One of my pet concerns for my constituents—I have a riding that actually abuts the city of Toronto. What my constituents often have to do is they get off a bus, because MiWay

Transit, which is Mississauga Transit, ends in Mississauga. Then they have to get on a bus. They have to walk exactly three metres to another bus stop, which happens to be the TTC bus stop and get on that bus to get to Toronto. All you're doing is transferring from one city's bus transit to another, but then you have to pay the fare two times.

As you can imagine, if you lived at the eastern edge of Mississauga, you'd think going into Toronto should be easy. Well, it isn't because there is no bus that goes directly. They force you to get off the MiWay bus and get on the city of Toronto bus. The whole purpose of Metrolinx is to take those anomalies away. That sort of thing was okay 50 years ago when Mississauga was a city of its own and Toronto was a city of its own. But now that we are seamless—if I get on the GO, nobody's saying to me that the border of Mississauga is done and now you're going into Toronto. But for the bus service, we don't have that seamless thing. It's one of the things that I'm working on. In fact, it's something that maybe MPP Holyday would be interested in working on with me, with Metrolinx, to see if he can get this sort of seamless thing going so that somebody who lives in the east end of Mississauga doesn't have to buy two tickets and—

Mr. Frank Klees: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Hold, please. Mr. Klees?

Mr. Frank Klees: Chair, with all due respect, is there not some sense of understanding at this committee that when a motion is put forward for discussion that we actually speak to that amendment? The member—we know what she's doing. She's ragging the puck here. She wants to waste our time. I would say, we've heard her explanation. She's now far beyond explaining her reason for bringing the amendment forward. I would say, we've heard her; I would like to see the question called so that we can express our opinion on it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. As Chair, and I've been consulting with the Clerk and with the standing orders, I have to be—and I'm being totally unbiased here—convinced that there has been enough debate on the issue itself. And so I'm going to let her speak. If nobody else speaks, then we'll vote on her motion. If there's someone else who wants to speak to it, I'm going to allow them to speak to it at least one time, and that'll be it.

I'm basically following the rules that are followed in the Legislative Assembly. We've seen it happen in there, and when I first got elected in 2003, it happened with the NDP. Everyone spoke to a lot of the bills there. We've seen it this term with some of the bills that have been put forward—or some of the government bills, I should say, that have been put forward, that have been very straightforward, in my opinion; for example, the seniors' tax credit, and a lot of members did speak to it.

So I think we'll let her speak one time, and it's a 20-minute time limit we have—we are watching the clock here. Then, if nobody else wants to speak to it, we'll vote. But at some time, I'm going to say there has been

sufficient debate on the motion and we're going to vote. I'm trying to be—

Mr. Frank Klees: Fair enough. I was just trying to help the honourable member. She's made her point very well, but if she wants to carry on, of course, she has the right to do so.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Chair. Could I just get a sense of how much time I have left to speak?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I couldn't hear you. What was that?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I just needed to know how much time I have left to speak. I have a few more points to make.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): About eight minutes.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Eight minutes. Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You take your time, Dipika. Don't you be bothered by the opposition.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you so much, MPP Marchese. That's very, very kind of you.

There was a reason, MPP Klees, that I was illustrating—I wouldn't say the anomaly but what needs to be fixed—a simple example of why we need an agency like Metrolinx. In my opinion, my constituency gives a stark example of what was okay 40 years ago, which was to have the TTC in isolation to the Mississauga Transit. But in today's world, where there is actually no official line that demarcates my riding from the Toronto riding, because all it is is the Etobicoke Creek. The roads, the streets, are seamless. One side of the street is my riding; the other side of the street is somebody else's riding in the city of Toronto, and we've just crossed municipal jurisdictions.

0930

We need an agency that recognizes that now, in the GTA, whether you're the city of Mississauga, whether you're the city of Vaughan or whether you're the city of Markham, there is no buffer; we are all living together. Our transit systems need to recognize that and make it seamless. That is one of the reasons Metrolinx was created: to ensure that municipalities don't protect their own turf at the cost of one seamless, workable, efficient transit system.

It is this work that impresses me so much about Metrolinx. That is why it is so important for this committee here to work well with Metrolinx and ensure that what we are asking of them is reasonable and ensure that our requests make sense to this very important agency.

I'm glad that MPP Marchese is back, because I'm not sure if MPP Marchese had a chance to listen to some of my earlier comments as to why I think it is important that I amend his motion. Now that he's back here, it's unfortunate, but I'm going to have to reiterate some of the things that I've already said for the benefit of this committee because the main person who actually wrote the original motion unfortunately was missing during a portion of the time during which I explained why it is so

very important that we scope out the definition of “market study”—MPP Marchese, just because you’re such a good friend. You’ve been a great mentor, even though you’re across the aisle. You’ve always been there with great advice for me, especially on the condo stuff. Keeping all of that in mind, I’m happy, absolutely, to restate once again a few of the reasons, for your benefit, as to why the government side is proposing a few—one, actually; one amendment to your original motion.

As you may recall, your original motion makes a reference to market studies between January 1, 2010, and December 3, 2013. Any reasonable person is going to ask, “Well, what exactly does ‘market study’ mean?” I’m just trying to think: I’m a junior official at Metrolinx; my boss has called me in and said, “The committee has this request for us. They’re asking that we provide them with market studies that have been conducted by Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation between January 1, 2010, and December 3, 2013.” I can only imagine the conversation that would ensue once the boss talks to his junior associate at Metrolinx and says, “Could you find all relevant documents?” At this point, if I was the junior person, I would say, “Well, sir”—or whatever his or her name is—“what exactly is the definition of ‘market studies’ here? How do I know which reports to include or which reports not to include?” That’s where the rubber hits the road.

It’s easy for us to say, “Go get every market study that was ever done between January 1, 2010, and December 3, 2013.” But if we just pull back and ask ourselves, if I was that official at Metrolinx who has been charged with going through all the electronic records and all the physical hard-copy records to find all the market studies, you’re going to be looking at a pile of reports and ask, “Is this a market study or not?” That’s the practical reality that this motion rubs up against or comes up against: How do you define a market study? What about that study from three years ago where we looked at consumer preferences? What about the one where we talked about whether we should make this more accessible or not? Are all of those market studies to be included?

At that point, the senior person at Metrolinx would say, “I have no idea, so let’s do one thing: Let’s just gather up every last report that we have.” Lo and behold, they have to do this in 30 days, so they probably have to dedicate not one but maybe two or three people to this task, which means quite surely, unless they’re working overtime, that something else is not getting done. So they collect all of these market reports, whether they have any relevance or not to the work at hand. The next thing you know, they’re dumped here, and then you and I are going to be looking at all of these market reports to figure out what’s pertinent and what’s not pertinent.

MPP Marchese, I hope you can appreciate where I’m coming from, and I hope that this live illustration that I tried to put before you of the conversation that would take place within Metrolinx if the motion was to pass as is—I think once we think this through and drill down somewhat as to the practical implications of the way this

motion is worded, I can only hope that all sides would agree that defining exactly what the market studies should mean, given the overall context of what is being asked and the overall context of what this committee is trying to study—I think it would make sense.

MPP Marchese, I don’t think you were here when I originally also said that I’m happy to entertain an amendment to the amendment. If you don’t like the way we have phrased this, perhaps we can work together and wordsmith this to make the amendment to your original motion more robust.

I want to take us all back one more time to what we are trying to accomplish here: I believe that what we’re trying to accomplish in the big picture—I think all of us—is figure out a way that we can build more transit here in the GTA. I think that is the 10,000-foot view. I think, at the end of the day, that is what this committee wants, to ensure that Metrolinx goes ahead and continues to hit its goalposts and continues to build on the transit projects.

I can speak, for example, for my own constituency. One of the things that we would definitely like to see is enhanced GO service on the Milton line. It’s something that I’m working very closely with Metrolinx on. I have learned more about signalling and track capacity and congestion and exactly how trains are scheduled than I would ever have imagined before I got elected. It’s been a fascinating journey—pardon the pun—to actually learn about what goes into trying to put more trains on a particular line.

That’s the sort of constructive thing that I think we all ought to be working with Metrolinx on. If I was to have an opportunity to talk to senior brass at Metrolinx, my first priority would be, how could I get more GO buses into Mississauga? How can I get more GO trains onto the Milton line? How can I get a connection to the airport? Those are the sorts of things—one of the things that surprises me is that the airport is in Mississauga. Although I know it’s on the border, our mayor insists that it’s in Mississauga, and I think that the vast majority of that airport is in Mississauga—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I’m going to interrupt you right here. It’s about 19 minutes in, so you’ve got about a few minute to wrap up—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Okay. I’m going to wrap up. Anyway, the point that I was trying to make with that was that even though the airport is in my city, we don’t have a link to the airport, a direct public transit link. I have to take a cab every time I have to go on committee business. So it would be nice to have Metrolinx work more on building things and less on building paper and creating paper files for all of us here.

With that in mind, with that big picture in mind, I submit to the committee the rationale for these amendments. I look forward to hearing everybody else’s views, and I believe my colleagues here may have something else to add.

Thank you so much, Chair, for your indulgence.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you. Any further discussion?

Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to move to call the question, please, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. I'm going to allow everyone to have at least one time to talk on this issue, and that's it. If nobody wants to talk to the issue—there are two more members here. If they want to speak to it, I'll give them 20 minutes and that's it, and then we'll move to the—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just a quick comment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just to allow the other two members something to think about as they take their 20 minutes to speak to this motion.

I'm happy that Ms. Damerla had the opportunity to repeat her arguments, because I'm sure the Conservative members and the others, while they were sitting here, needed to have a repeat of what she said, because it was illuminating for you—wasn't it?—that she repeated the stuff, because it was new stuff that I didn't hear or that you hadn't heard.

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes.

0940

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So it was useful for her to repeat the nonsense that she repeated.

Second, I'm so happy that we have the intellectual Liberal caucus talk about how complicated this motion is and that it requires a number of PhDs on the Liberal benches to interpret this motion correctly because it's complicated. I am persuaded by the general public intelligence to understand the motion, and the motion, for the general public, is quite simple. It says, "That they produce all documents and correspondence related to any market studies conducted between January 2010 and 2013 related to ridership projections for the air-rail link." In my mind, and in the mind of many, this is a very simple motion.

I know that the bright lights on the Liberal caucus are having a difficult time with this, but all I can say to her and the other members: It's the most embarrassing thing that I have witnessed in a long, long time. They ought to know as this information goes out that it embarrasses them. It's clear they don't want their government to deal with a very simple motion. It's clear that what the Auditor General said about this air-link and the possible cost may be indeed true, that the government may have to subsidize it, and so they're afraid about this information coming out. This is absolutely the issue, and that's what they're afraid of.

I am embarrassed by the three members who have delayed this motion since we dealt with it in early December. The fact that they've had three months to deal with this and the fact that they're debating, hoping not to have this dealt with and hoping that there's going to be

an election so this doesn't get dealt with, is embarrassing to the utmost.

Please take your 20 minutes to do your speeches.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I would just like to register an objection. I do take great offence by anybody suggesting that what I spoke was nonsense. I just don't think that's parliamentary, and I think it's insulting. We all have to work here together. Perhaps not everybody is as intelligent as MPP Marchese, but I found the entire tone of his comments very offensive. Any embarrassment is entirely yours, MPP Marchese, the tone and all of that. We're all here to do our work to the best of our abilities without being judged.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Point well taken. Any further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: Again, as we have to repeat, whether it's in committee or in the House, we have the right to speak. It's kind of rich for the NDP or the Conservatives—I think they stated they agree that we should have the right to speak—because we've seen hours and hours and days and days of questions and discussions on motions that have been going through the House and in committee for weeks at a time. So for them to stand up and say, "Well, you can't do what we did," is kind of rich.

We have the right to do it. You may not agree with our right to do it, but we have the right to speak on the motion, and 20 minutes is what we have, by procedural bylaw, that right. We could have been casting personal attacks on people in the House every time they stood up to say, "Well, that's nonsense"—yes, because it's the other party. But we have the right to speak to these motions. It's as simple as that.

I've sat here through hours and hours of things, whether in opposition or in government. That's our right. So I just find it offensive to basically call the member's intervention on a motion—you may not agree with it, but to call it in a disparaging tone is not really appropriate, I think. I just want to put that on the record.

Who is to judge what is intelligent and what is understandable? Certainly being around this place, we realize that there are many things that seem to be intelligent that aren't intelligent on a daily basis, so I just don't want to judge intelligence around Queen's Park. It's a very, very difficult task.

In that context, I just want to put some things on the record about this motion. As you know, it's about a very complex situation, as I mentioned the other day, and that is, as we speak, there's some of the most comprehensive infrastructure constructions taking place in the GTA, and a lot of it is being spearheaded by Metrolinx, our provincial agency. They are charged with unprecedented projects and demands on their time and attention. That was why we originally said, "Give them 60 days and the motion can go," but even a refusal at that time to go from 30 to 60—the information would have been out there; instead, you object to the 60 days. Well, now you've got your 30 days, and we're just saying to look at what

you're asking for, to make sure the definition is clear of what you mean by "market studies."

What is a market study? Is it a look at the impact and the reaction and the response by people living in the old town of Weston as relates to the air-rail link and the local BIAs there, the residents and the BIAs and what their uptake will be on the potential ridership etc.? Do you want all the background information undertaken by all the examinations of the impact this would have on Weston? Because there was a very complex situation there where there used to be a net grade crossing, and they have now had to go with a tunnelling alternative. So it's been a very, very difficult transition in that determination of putting some tunnelling in the old town of Weston that the local residents and the local small businesses wanted. Is that part of the market study? I don't know.

Or let's look at Mount Dennis. There's another very complex series of situations that occurred in terms of the air-rail link because of the impact this had on the Kodak lands, it had on the need for a station or the extension of the Eglinton Crosstown to Mount Dennis, and should it interface with the air-rail link? Metrolinx has been dealing with all these complex related issues demanded by the public, and they have tried their best to satisfy the public in this regard. There have been all kinds of public meetings, consultations, studies done. Is that what this motion calls for? Do you want all the Mount Dennis information related to the Kodak lands etc. included in this motion?

What about the Union Station point? As we've said before, Union Station is one of the most challenging engineering and construction projects ever undertaken in Canada. If you go down there and see the challenges they've had with the flooding, and they've had to rebuild Union Station into a 21st-century transportation hub while service is still in place—it's an incredible demand on Metrolinx. It's an incredible demand on the construction engineers that are there. If you go down to Union Station, you get an idea of how difficult this is. The trains are still coming in. The CN trains come in every day, all day. The GO trains are in and out of there. The subway is loading and unloading hundreds of thousands of people 24/7.

Metrolinx is asked, "Well, you're supposed to make sure that the air-rail link is cohesive with this work, and don't delay people's arrival times to and from Union Station while you're doing this massive reconstruction of Union Station." I just invite the members to go down to Union Station and take a look and see what's transpiring.

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Miss Taylor?

Miss Monique Taylor: Can you please ask the member to stick to the amendment?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. I'm going to rule that he's speaking to the issue.

Mr. Mike Colle: As I will repeat again, we're asking Metrolinx to come up with this wide-ranging information-

gathering on market studies. I say that Metrolinx is a little bit involved in massive construction projects like the air-rail link that they are doing as we speak, and I'm saying, just give them a bit of focus: "Here's what we want. Here's what we mean by market studies."

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So there is a connection because, believe it or not, there are people working 24/7 in construction and delivering GO service and delivering subway service at Union Station, at the interchange of those air-rail links. So that's the connection. And if you can't see that and you think that there's some kind of group of people just sitting around an office, there are people—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Chair, on a brief point of order to the members.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, Mr. Marchese?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The connection that he makes is incorrect. There is no link between his arguments and what we are talking about. What we are talking about is market studies related to ridership. That is the issue. He's not speaking to any of that. Market studies connected to ridership: That's the issue.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Colle, can you please—

Mr. Mike Colle: That's why I said, do you want the market studies done in Weston? Do you want them done in Mount Dennis? Do you want them done to Union Station? I said, "What market studies do you want?" Because these are the main stations. So you have to determine what studies related to ridership you want, because that's where the riders come from. They come from Union Station.

If I could just finish, the other thing is that at the same time, Metrolinx is deeply involved, taking the lead on building the air-rail link—which has been demanded because of the fact that we are the only major city in the civilized world without rapid transit to our major airport. We're asking them to deliver that, and as they're delivering it, just keep in mind that we need to encourage them to basically get this done on time. What are their priorities? Their priorities should be getting that rail link operating. And if you're going to ask them for additional stuff, at least focus it so that they can get on with their real job, which is providing that air-rail link from the airport to Union Station.

On top of that, we're also, just off the top of our heads, saying, "Oh, by the way, build the Eglinton Crosstown while you're at it, Metrolinx," which they're doing. The largest transit project in Canada's history is being built by Metrolinx, connecting Black Creek—an Eglinton Crosstown all the way to Scarborough. That's been done by Metrolinx. "Oh, well, you don't have enough to do, so here, go on this undefinable search here," which could easily be accommodated by just defining what you mean, so they can get it done and give it to us. But instead, there's no appreciation.

I came down on the subway this morning, walking along Eglinton, and if you go along Eglinton, you can see

the massive construction that is being done on Eglinton to the Allen; it's unprecedented, what it's doing to traffic, the construction material that's going on. And then the construction people tell me, "I wish they had not poured in the concrete cement at Eglinton West when they cancelled the Eglinton subway. We could have had this done in 1995 for one tenth the cost, but they poured concrete"—they wouldn't mothball the Eglinton subway at that time, and the Eglinton subway would have gone to the airport. We would have had a line to the airport for \$800 million. Anyways, that's a bit of a side issue.

But this is the complexity that Metrolinx is dealing with on a daily basis, so just be a bit cognizant of the complexity that we have given them as a government, as a Legislature, to just define what you mean. We asked you to give them 60 days; you refused to give them 60 days. You said, "No, no, no." And now, all of a sudden, we're saying, "Well, at least define what you mean by 'market studies.'" What is included in it? What is a market study? Market what? Shopping patterns? Modal splits? How it's going to change the modal splits? Modal splits where? Along Eglinton, along the Union Station GO route?

It's very wide-ranging. All we're saying is, give it a bit of focus; define the term "market study." As my friend from Mississauga said, define the term and then this would be a heck of a lot easier. Instead, you're refusing to define the term. You just throw it out there as "a market study." That's basically what we're trying to put on the record.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just to give the next speaker something to think about: It is fascinating, if we had agreed to 60 days, the Liberals would have understood the motion, been happy with the motion and supported the motion. Because we stuck to the idea of 30 days, and almost three months have passed since, the fine Liberal members on this bench here are flummoxed by the motion, contorted like pretzels on this motion, utterly confused by the motion and don't know quite what to do with the motion. I just thought I would help them for their next 20 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. Just before we do—and there's time here—can I get any agreement on whether to put any intended appointees on the next committee agenda, which is March 18, two weeks from today? Any agreement that we can put some people on the agenda?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Could we wait to see if the motion passes?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. We'll do it—

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Chair, I think it would be a good idea to ensure that we manage the regular business of this committee.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Let's do that. After the next speaker, I'll ask the question again.

Any further debate? Ms. Hunter?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to join my colleagues in asserting the opportunity for all members to speak to the amendments on the floor and to have the ability to do that. It's something that, in the House, members from all sides have had their right to speak, and we're all here to represent our communities and to ensure that we do our best.

In terms of the amendment that's on the floor, we had proposed the first amendment, which is to move from 30 to 60 days to give the agency an opportunity to gather the required information with the required software and legal research that they would need. That amendment did not pass.

My colleague Ms. Damerla has submitted a further amendment that would seek to define the scope of what we mean by "market research," so that the agency will have specific information in terms of what we're looking for as a committee and that that information is going to be useful for the consideration of this committee.

The air-rail link and the work that is under way is a very important step forward in the transportation network in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It's the first of its kind in North America. It's providing a dedicated route for travellers who are coming to one of North America's major international hubs, visiting the GTHA for all kinds of reasons, whether it's personal reasons to connect with family and friends or for commercial reasons to connect with business.

So this hub is one that we know is a major contributor to our region's economy and we want to ensure that this project opens this year. We know that next year we will be hosting the Pan/Parapan Am Games here in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. We know that we need to have this major project completed. It's in fact an opportunity to welcome the world and to welcome all of the athletes and visitors who will be coming and utilizing the air-rail link.

The timeliness of this project is very important because these major events and major initiatives are an opportunity for us to promote the services that we have here and all of the good things that we have to offer here. So the focus that we have on the completion of this project has to be rigorous, it has to be intense, and ultimately, I think we can agree that we want it to succeed and that we want it to be a major, major accomplishment.

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We are a global city. We talk about that. We talk about being a world-class city. Well, most major cities have a link from their airport to their downtown, and we are now on the cusp of getting that done, and we want to ensure that this first of its kind in North America is done right. So I believe that the amendment to the motion on the table that seeks to clarify the scope of what we mean by "market studies," which is quite broad, has specified it in terms of a study that will gather and evaluate the data regarding consumer preferences of the services of the air-rail link. That's really, at the end of the day, what it is that we want to find out, what it is that we need in terms

of our appropriate assessment of the agency and its work, and it can certainly inform and make productive the work of this committee to have that information in a much more defined manner.

We know that the investments that we're making in these new transit and transportation corridors are important contributors. We know that this air-rail link alone will take 1.2 million car trips off the roads, because people will now have a predictable, dedicated way to get from the downtown Union Station all the way to the airport, regardless of weather, what's happening along the routes.

The agency, at the beginning of this committee, provided each member of the committee with a very detailed briefing on their projects, on their initiatives, and that's one of the things that we have to consider: the scope and the breadth of all of the initiatives that are under way at this time. The air-rail link is set to open in 2014, and we've heard about that. I've certainly seen public updates on that, and we know that the investment in this project will definitely ease congestion, give people an alternate route, a reliable, dedicated route of getting from Union Station out to the airport. As my colleague Mike Colle says, it also provides a key piece to the network, the network that we're building in the GTHA to strengthen our transit routes and to strengthen our transportation routes.

What my colleague has put on the floor is absolutely reasonable in terms of defining the wording, telling the agency precisely what we mean, allowing them to do the proper research and compilation of the documents within the time that we've given. Market studies can be defined very, very broadly. They can be economic, they can be social, they can be cultural—I mean, there are so many different ways of defining it, and being specific really allows this committee to eliminate that vagueness and to produce the right information that we need to do our work.

These studies tell us what the riders need in Toronto, what specifically the value is, the benefit and in terms of the expected use of the new extension, the air-rail link, the UP Express, the Union Pearson Express route. This is a route that will be dedicated for travellers. I think that that's a key aspect of this, that it is all about providing the hub that we have—and gateway, in fact—at Pearson and linking that to the hub that we have for all rail corridors that come through Union Station. Bridging those two things is a major milestone for us here in Ontario, in this region. It's the first of its kind in North America. We know that Pearson is one of the major air-rail gateways, really, in North America. We can see, when we look at the travel patterns globally, that so many flights come in to this region. With the introduction of this air-rail link, it's actually making travel more predictable and easier for those travellers, whether they're coming here on business or to visit friends and family.

One thing we know is that every traveller invests in Ontario's economy. We know that. So we should be supporting the advancement of this project and the advancement of this network being developed in this

region so that we can realize our full potential in terms of the economic impacts—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm just going to interrupt. I've been listening very carefully to what you said. I would just ask you to address the motion that was brought forward—

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Certainly, Chair. The motion that Ms. Damerla has put on the floor is really looking to define the scope and definition of market studies. It's simply an attempt—we had talked, you know, quite at length about the need to give the agency the appropriate length of time. That was something that was not supported by the other members, even though it was a reasonable request—to move from a 30-day request of the agency to 60. As a result, we're now looking at how do we look at the market studies component, which is very broad, very general and very vague, and make it much more specific to the information that we require and to what it is that we're requesting.

So, as the amendment says, the study will allow the agency to gather the information and data about consumer preferences of the services in question. Those services that I was talking about are really the value to travellers. At the end of the day, the people who are going to be benefitting from this service are people who are going to be in need of that service. So I do think that that consideration is important. It's important that we talk about the timing of this project and how these studies, at the end of the day, will benefit the people of Toronto, of the Toronto region and of the entire GTHA region and in fact the whole economy in the region, because we know that airport travel is a very important component of our region's economy.

So this is certainly a reasonable motion that is on the floor. We want to ensure that when we ask our agencies for information, that we're not just getting information for information's sake, but that it's specific to our evaluation here as members of this committee, and that the documents and correspondence searches, which we know that inevitably they will have to do at the request of the committee, are productive and that it's a productive use of our agency's time.

I completely agree with MPP Colle in terms of recognizing the other projects that are under way and the complexity of the environment in which this agency is operating. They are delivering on a number of projects, really, in all regions in the GTHA right now. Recently, I was speaking to my colleague and we were talking about the improvements being made on Highway 7 and the dedicated bus rapid-transit routes and how those routes are really improving the accessibility of those regions. They are all part of an integrated system. We can't really speak about these types of improvements without looking at their impacts on the system as a whole.

1010

Specifically, the air-rail link is a key corridor in the whole network. It's something that will open up travel in terms of the speed at which people get from our downtown to the airport. My colleague talked about Weston as

a key part of this. It will become a major transit hub as well. What about the market studies there? How will it impact those neighbourhoods and those communities and businesses?

So the definition and the specificity that this amendment is asking for is really intended to keep us on track as we do our own evaluations, and as we look at: What is really the question here?

At the end of the day, we want to see this agency perform at its best. We want to see projects delivered in a responsible manner, and ultimately, we want to take cars off the road. We want to create a more efficient transit system and transit network that's seamless, that's integrated and that's efficient.

So I don't support at all asking for a broad, unstructured definition of market studies as it relates to the air-rail link. I believe that we need to be as specific as possible. The amendment on the floor is an attempt to do that. If there are ways that we can improve that, make it much more defined so that the agency can really gather and put together this information in as useful a way as possible for the benefit of this committee—and answer the important questions that our members are asking—I think that that's something that I would certainly support and believe that it is the best use of the time of our agency and its staff.

A comment that was made earlier is that they've had all of these months. Well, without the committee making this request and being very specific about the request, I believe that the agency is going on with its regular business, which is delivering everyday service on GO. We know that hundreds of thousands of people use that service. We're seeing improvements with the two-way all-day GO service on the Lakeshore line—

Mr. Mike Colle: Thirty minutes.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —30 minutes, very, very much becoming a much more frequent and reliable service. We know that there is the need and the pressures on the organization to expand service and to make improvements, to open up and to redefine certain stops and hubs. Well, the air-rail link is a part of all of that, because remember, these networks are going to connect at Union Station.

The revitalization of that initiative is also under way. Travellers will be able to get right on the UP Express, get out to the airport in a reliable, consistent and timely fashion, and then connect on their way from there anywhere in the world that they need to go, without having to get in their cars. I think the impact of reducing those car trips is very important.

I certainly see that, in terms of the way that the question has been redrafted, gathering and evaluating the data regarding consumer preferences of the services in question—so the services that will be available as it relates to the UP Express and the air-link link—making sure that we are getting back information that's not broad based but that is specifically related to the improvements being made to UP and to the air-rail link expansion. And also, perhaps, even the connecting points: That has to

also be considered, because we know that that affects people's decisions. How easily can they transition from one mode to the next? How quickly will that be facilitated with the links at Union, Bloor and Weston? Those are also very important considerations. I would like to certainly see that information brought forward in any market studies that we will review, and to ensure that that is defined to the work that's being done with the air-rail link.

Oftentimes, when searches are done, and they're done for a variety of reasons, we want to ensure that the information we're getting is information that is relevant to the question that we're asking, and that can only be done if we are specific in how we're defining that information. We've talked at length about the searchability of the information and ensuring that there is the opportunity to have that information in the right form.

I still believe that the 30 days is a very short turnaround time. I know we've already voted on that, but I think that one of the reasons why we're here with this second amendment is because we weren't able to get your consensus on that. So what we're trying to do here is to narrow the scope and to be specific about what this information, at the end of the day, will be used for.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Your 20 minutes are over. Any further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'd like to have a two-minute recess—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, a two-minute recess. My clock has 10:16, so till 10:18.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Mr. Chair, you didn't recognize—I wanted to add a little bit more to the debate before the vote.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm sorry?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I still have a few things to say, to add to the discussion.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. Let's have the two-minute—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to know if I would be given an opportunity to speak, because—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Mr. McDonnell, you want to move—he just wants to move a two-minute—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: But you're not going to call the question, because I just want to make sure that I get my opportunity to—there were a few things that I was not able to add last time that I would like to add.

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order, Mr. Chair: There's no limit on the number of 20 minutes that you can speak to a motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm allowing each member to have 20 minutes to speak to it right now.

Mr. Mike Colle: The proceedings say that there's no limit to the 20 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes.

Mr. Frank Klees: Are you challenging the Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): The Clerk has told me that people can go back and forth for 20 minutes each. I'm trying to get some order in this and get this dealt with and the motion dealt with as well. That's all.

Mr. McDonnell just wants to move a two-minute recess. All right, so you have a two-minute recess. We'll start it now. I have 10:18. We'll come back at 10:20. That's two minutes.

The committee recessed from 1018 to 1020.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, the two minutes are up. We're back. I'm going to recognize Mr. McDonnell and then Ms. Damerla.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Chair, I move that the motion now—that they both be put.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, I'm going to allow Ms. Damerla to speak.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: But we have to vote on this, though.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, but it's up to the Chair to decide if there has been a sufficient debate. Are you moving closure on the amendment?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm moving closure, that they both be put.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): On the amendment?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. One moment, I apologize.

If you move closure, there's no more debate on this amendment, and Ms. Damerla wants to speak.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Okay, but this is on the floor, so I think we have to vote on it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. I'm going to take some clarification from the Clerk here. I want to just get this right.

We've allowed each person 20 minutes. Mr. Colle only used 15 minutes of his time, so I'm going to allow Ms. Damerla to speak.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: But does my motion not have to be voted on. I think the—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, I'm going to rule it out of order at this point in time.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: But I think that procedurally you have to vote, you have to move this vote on this motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I don't feel there has been sufficient debate on the matter. Therefore, pursuant to standing order 48, I will not put the question right now.

Ms. Damerla?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I think we need some clarification once and for all. Last time, at the last committee meeting when I wanted to speak, an opposition MPP said I couldn't, and I didn't say anything at that point. But my understanding is that, according to standing order 109, a member can speak more than once. After they're finished their time, somebody else speaks, and then the member has an opportunity to speak again.

I really want a clear ruling from the Clerk, and if the Clerk would also read out standing order 109, because this thing happened last time as well where I wasn't allowed to speak, and that's perhaps because members don't have a full understanding of committee procedures, that I do have the right to speak even though I've spoken before. Perhaps if we could just get a ruling on that, and after we have that ruling, I'm happy to proceed and speak to the amendment to the main motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Basically, the Clerk is telling me that any member can speak more than once after one member has spoken. I'm trying to get this wrapped up.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Yes, but you also, before we started, said you'd give everybody 20 minutes as a maximum. Everybody has had their chance to talk. Some of them didn't use the full 20, but almost all of the 20. It's time to call the question.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): The Clerk has directed me to the standing order rules right here, and a member is allowed to speak a second time if someone else speaks before them.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: But Chair, we asked you for closure on this. Do you not feel that there has been sufficient debate after almost an hour and a half of debate on this amendment that is clearly just a stalling tactic? We've been here over 90 days waiting for this motion to pass. There is a limit, Mr. Chair, and I think that we're well beyond that. I mean, this idea of not allowing public consultation in a market study—I mean, what is a market study but public consultation? It's an absurd—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Now you're speaking to the amendment that's before us right now.

Mr. Mike Colle: Could we have a copy of standing order 109, please?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. It's 10:25. I'm going to be adjourning the meeting, and there will be a copy provided to everybody of the standing order you requested. We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1026.

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