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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 21 April 2015**

**Mardi 21 avril 2015**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 April 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 avril 2015

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR  
COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE  
INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Mr. McMeekin moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant—the member from Northumberland–Quinte West—and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. What a team, I'll tell you. Before I turn the floor over to my parliamentary assistant and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, known as Bill 73.

Bill 73, if passed, would better ensure that as Ontario communities grow we are smart about managing that growth. To manage growth, we had to put the pieces together and build the framework—which reminds me, Speaker, that when my daughters were young we would spend many hours together at the summer cottage putting together a jigsaw puzzle. As a prank, one of my girls would often hide one of the pieces, giggling as Dad searched frantically around the house for that part that would finally complete our masterpiece. They would all deny they snatched the piece and then Dad would find it on the floor under the puzzle, and the work would be done. Obviously we couldn't get very far without all the pieces. But then, having decided as a family on our puzzle strategy, we'd start another puzzle by establishing the outside frame. Then we would fill it in towards the middle. In many ways that's a great analogy to describe what we're doing for land use planning here in Ontario.

It started with a landmark piece of legislation, the Greenbelt Act—the largest greenbelt in the world, Mr. Speaker. The Greenbelt Act went far beyond any previous effort to protect environmentally sensitive lands. It

signalled our government's desire to change the way we think about growth in Ontario. The greenbelt isn't just about protecting green spaces, as important as that is; it's also about creating a vision for the way Ontario's cities and towns realize their full potential. Well-planned communities offer citizens a high quality of life, opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and a great place to live, work, and raise a family. They attract industry and innovation and create jobs, all the while preserving our green spaces and protecting our agricultural sector.

Speaker, we want to grow Ontario communities in a way that curbs sprawl and creates vibrant urban centres. With the creation of the greenbelt we started building the outside frame of a very complex puzzle. That frame contains other pieces as well. We issued a provincial policy statement to guide municipalities in their planning process, one which, by the way, was really preferential to the agricultural community and some of the subsidiary uses of agricultural lands. Last year, we provided a clear, province-wide policy direction, in fact, through that 2014 provincial policy statement.

These policies help to promote strong communities, a strong economy and a healthy environment. In February, Minister Mauro and I launched a review of the four provincial land use plans, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. We were fortunate enough to have the Honourable David Crombie agree to lead that plan, which was really fortunate for us. He's a good person.

Bill 73, if passed, would be another important piece of our puzzle. It would help Ontario communities grow and thrive. During the consultation period for this legislation, we heard many perspectives. People told us about planning rules that are sometimes too complex and costly delays in appeals processes. Many were frustrated that more disagreements couldn't be resolved at the local level.

Speaker, Ontarians told us we needed to make thoughtful changes that promote accountability and sustainability. And that's what we did: changes to give the public greater say in just how their neighbourhoods will grow. That's why we're setting out clearer rules for land use planning. We are wanting municipalities to become more independent in making local decisions, including resolving disputes.

Some of our cities and towns are growing very rapidly. They've got booming populations and record levels of development. That also means more demands are being made on existing infrastructure, housing, highways,

water and transit. But with change comes opportunity. I remember my mom saying to me growing up, “Teddy, what’s a giant obstacle except a brilliant opportunity cleverly disguised?”

By creating the outer frame of our puzzle, we can ensure a higher quality of life now and for future generations. That means planning for more compact growth, and a more efficient and innovative use of infrastructure. That in turn creates jobs and helps build more vital and vibrant communities.

Bill 73 lays the foundation for how we start to fill in the inside pieces of our complex puzzle.

*Interruption.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Bless you, before the devil gets up your nose. Wasn’t that what you said the other day?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Yes, that’s the devil.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** That would give Ontarians a greater voice in how their communities grow, a substantive voice; for example, by including citizen representatives in municipal planning advisory committees.

Bill 73, if passed, would allow for more continuity and predictability and—dare I say it?—stability in our planning system. The proposed reforms would encourage an innovative way to plan and address local needs, involving community members in the process. Once established by a municipality, the community planning permit system would not be subject to any appeals of private applications for a period of five years. That means municipalities will be the only ones able to amend their plans during this timeout period.

**0910**

Bill 73 would also make the planning and appeals process more predictable by increasing the number of matters that get determined locally. We would do this by providing an option for an additional 90 days to resolve issues involving official plans and amendments. Municipalities would be allowed more time to engage in alternative dispute resolution. The ability to appeal some items would be removed. These measures would reduce the number of issues that make their way to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Now, I know there are questions about the Ontario Municipal Board itself and whether we’re planning to change its role. It’s another important piece of our puzzle. The Ontario Municipal Board’s operations, practices and procedures were not part of this first-stage review. To really complete our puzzle, however, I will work with my colleague the Attorney General in a review of the OMB’s scope and effectiveness. In the end, Speaker, we all want to see planning disputes resolved, wherever possible, locally.

We’re also going to be proposing changes to the Development Charges Act and address the costs of development. Increasing accountability and transparency in the development charges system is another big piece of our puzzle. We’ve had stakeholders right across the province indicate a desire for that. We would create more transparent reporting requirements for municipalities collecting money under section 37 of the Planning Act related to

density bonusing and related to parkland dedications, which would detail how funds are spent. Development charges would be payable at the time the building permit was issued so the developers and homeowners would now be more certain of the costs.

Growth is vital, but we also understand the importance of well-located parkland and green spaces. The greenbelt simply shouldn’t circle cities; it should run through cities as well. Our proposed changes would require more municipalities to put in place a parks plan to inform where resources are in fact directed. The plan would involve input from school boards and would be another opportunity for residents to have their say in how their communities grow. At the same time, the proposed changes would help communities recover capital costs—funds that were spent on important infrastructure like transit projects and waste diversion. Municipalities need to be able to plan ahead for their growing needs, particularly for much-needed transit priorities.

Speaking of infrastructure, the last piece of our puzzle, and perhaps the most important piece, involves the discussion around affordable housing. I’ve always believed that a truly complete land use planning picture—the whole puzzle—must indeed include affordable housing. Last week, we kicked off a public consultation to update our historic Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. We all need to understand that planning and housing are linked, and that we can’t complete this puzzle without making sure we have a healthy supply of affordable housing in Ontario.

We will look at the whole puzzle—every single piece—and create a complete picture of how Ontario will grow. All Ontarians need accessible, transparent and responsive tools to manage and pay for growth. All Ontarians should be able to count on a planning system that is predictable. All Ontarians should have a say on what is built in their neighbourhoods. This proposed legislation responds to the real and evolving needs of our Ontario citizens. I’m confident this piece of legislation is vital to complete the complex puzzle of land use planning in Ontario.

Getting it right means building strong communities across Ontario. We have more work to do, obviously, and we’re going to keep at it. But I urge all members to vote for the passing of this bill; it’s important.

Thank you, Speaker. Now I’d like to turn the floor over to Mr. Rinaldi, my parliamentary assistant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Continuing on with the debate, I’d like to recognize the member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. And thanks to Minister McMeekin for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Over the past nine months I’ve had the pleasure of working alongside Minister McMeekin. I have recently joined him in launching the review of our provincial land use plans to help shape communities in central Ontario.

Part of my responsibilities as parliamentary assistant is to ensure that we maintain a rural and agricultural focus

on the coordinated review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan. Agriculture represents over \$34 billion in revenue for our province. It also accounts for one in nine jobs across Ontario. Preserving our lands and building on rural and agricultural successes is vital to our province's continuous growth.

The proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act has been designed to help our small communities and rural municipalities grow and thrive, just as it aims at helping our urban centres. It would provide greater flexibility to meet the local circumstances. For example, northern municipalities will continue to have planning advisory committees at their discretion. This gives them the right to establish planning advisory committees depending on local circumstances.

During our review, we heard that flexibility was important to our diverse municipalities. With Bill 73, if passed, municipalities would have the flexibility to tailor their public engagement policies to meet their local needs. It would allow municipalities to expand their ability to tailor the form and delivery of public notices so that they are effective in each individual community.

This flexibility would also ensure that residents have a greater and more meaningful say in how their communities are growing. It would involve them early in the planning and development process. Municipalities would need to set out in their official plans how and when the public would be consulted, and explain how public input affected their planning decisions.

We want to help municipalities of all sizes engage Ontarians to ensure a more predictable planning system. That also means more control at the local level over official plans. Changes would provide more control and stability over planning documents for our local partners.

We know that official plan reviews take time and resources. This can be particularly challenging for smaller communities and rural municipalities. Less time on the farm or being away from a small business is just not economically viable, Speaker.

The fact is that things don't always change so quickly in smaller communities as they do in larger and more urban centres. That's why flexibility as to when to conduct reviews is particularly important in smaller communities. Under the proposed amendments, new official plans would now be reviewed on a 10-year basis, instead of the current five-year cycle. Once a municipality establishes a new official plan, it would not be subject to new appeals for two years, unless changes are initiated by the municipality itself.

The act will also allow for things to be worked out locally before being sent to the Ontario Municipal Board. That local control is particularly important to smaller communities.

We also know that streamlining the planning and development process just makes sense.

The changes we are proposing will give municipalities an enhanced tool that we would call the community planning system. Some communities have been using a per-

mit planning system for years, and it works. For example, the township of Lake of Bays was the first municipality to put in place a permit system. The township uses the system to better regulate development and protect water quality in environmentally sensitive shoreline areas.

**0920**

Hundreds of kilometres away, in the town of Carleton Place, the permit system is used to maintain small-town character. They also use the permit system to improve commercial areas and provide for a mix of employment and recreational activities. We are committed to establishing a stakeholder working group to provide advice on implementing the community planning permit system.

The group would also provide recommendations on minor variances. A minor variance is a small change from a zoning bylaw. It would further consider when local appeal bodies could be used for land use planning issues, because we know that streamlining the planning and development process attracts investment and creates jobs.

As Minister McMeekin pointed out, there are still pieces of the puzzle that we need to assess; however, I'm confident that if we pass the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act we would be well on our way to having a solid framework to better help our communities grow. Being smart about how we manage growth is the best way we can ensure that Ontario communities of all sizes, from all regions, are sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I join Minister McMeekin in supporting Bill 73, and I urge all members to vote for the passing of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

Continuing along with the debate, I'd like to recognize the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this morning in support of Bill 73. Before I begin my remarks this morning, Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of individuals who were here earlier from the Ontario Home Builders' Association: Joe Vaccaro and Vince Molinaro—they just left. And I believe there is another group, Neptis. Marcy Burchfield and Martha Shuttleworth are here today to observe the debate on Bill 73.

As I begin my remarks in support of Bill 73—you just heard from my colleague from a rural area of Ontario, Northumberland—Quinte West, about the importance of the proposed legislation in supporting rural communities. I'm from the city of Toronto—my riding is Scarborough—Agincourt—but I think this particular bill is good for all of Ontario. The proposed legislation, if passed—it was in 1997 when the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act were passed in legislation; now, almost 20 years later, we're looking at this particular legislation.

There are a number of amendments being proposed by this piece of legislation. I'm going to focus specifically on enhancement of transparency and accountability by all municipalities.

If the legislation is passed, it will require municipalities like the city of Toronto to reflect the capital projects

funded through development charges in more detail. I hear criticism all the time from residents and local businesses, saying, “They levy these developmental charges, but we don’t know what they are.” So they will require some transparency.

It also will require, if the legislation is passed, them to link the development charges to municipal asset management planning.

Furthermore, it will require developmental charges to be set as of the date an initial building permit is issued for buildings requiring multiple permits—because oftentimes there are multiple projects attached to a development.

More importantly, it will also restrict the payments outside the development charges regime for the capital costs associated with servicing new development and require municipal treasurers to certify that no payments have been received that are in contravention of this restriction. So there will be no surprises. Oftentimes you hear that halfway through the development you get these surprises. We hear that through the local paper oftentimes.

The other piece here is that it will give authority to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to investigate a municipality in relation to the compliance of the legislation. So through the creation of this authority it also means that the municipality will have to cover the cost of this investigation. There is a responsibility on the municipality that if the minister is asking for the investigation, the municipality will have to absorb the cost. I think that’s the right thing.

The other thing here about increasing municipal transparency is a concern. I hear a lot because of the urban aspect of the city of Toronto—but we often hear that we’re taking away good land for development, as opposed to protecting the farms.

I know the minister spoke earlier about the greenbelt and how important the greenbelt is for Ontario. Increasing transparency will mean that the municipality has to report municipal collection of density bonuses under section 37, as well as parkland fees.

Furthermore, the change in the alternative parkland dedication rate for cash-in-lieu payments to incent the acquisition of the physical parkland—I think most members in this House hear how passionate our Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is, and his advocacy work when it comes to protecting green space, especially in his riding in downtown Toronto. So it is the right thing to do.

Furthermore, the increase in transparency will require municipalities to prepare parks plans, in consultation with local school boards and the public, in order to facilitate planning for parkland/green space and park facilities.

I’m sure during this second reading debate my numerous colleagues who are members from the city of Toronto will be participating in this debate. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, when we are making significant changes to legislation going back to 1997, we need to make sure it’s not just good for urban cities like my

riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, but across the province.

The last part of my comments that I want to remind the members—in the beginning part of the proposed bill, Bill 73, the minister clearly stated in the explanatory note which regulations will be changed, which amendments. I think the piece that really interests my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt is the new section 59.1. It imposes a restriction on the use of charges related to development. When you have a very detailed, lengthy bill, these explanatory notes—and for those watching at home right now, you need to take the time to review this particular proposed legislation. But more importantly, this particular bill is about the future of Ontario. We have often heard the Premier, the Minister of Finance and different ministers across the province talking about building Ontario up. At the same time, building Ontario up means we have to protect those natural resources and make sure that development reflects the people’s needs and also make sure that the lands are being protected.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to speak on Bill 73.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you and good morning, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to listen to the minister and his parliamentary assistants this morning on Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. We do have a lot of issues in planning in our local municipalities. No one will question that. There are reviews that are currently under way. Yet we have this new piece of legislation coming forward from the provincial government.

We heard some platitudes from the minister. One of them: Planning disputes should be dealt with locally wherever possible. The member from Northumberland–Quinte West said we need to have more control at the local level. Let me tell you a little story about what happened yesterday at the appeal court of Ontario.

There was a decision that came down from the appeal court on a Prince Edward county industrial wind turbine project, a proposal for an IWT on the south shore of Prince Edward county. This government has been brushing aside the wishes of residents in Prince Edward county; they’ve been brushing aside that input from the municipal council. The court of appeal yesterday ruled in favour of local people in Prince Edward county. They ruled in favour of the municipality when it comes to this industrial wind turbine development, a project they don’t want in their community, a project that the government’s own Environmental Review Tribunal said was going to cause serious and irreversible harm to the habitat and the environment in Prince Edward county. But what is this government continuing to do? What is the Ministry of the Environment continuing to do? Continuing to force this project on this unwilling host municipality. It’s going to cause serious harm to the environment, according to the appeals court, according to experts. But what is this government doing? The Ministry of the Environment is con-

tinuing to support a project that everyone, including the experts, is saying is going to cause environmental damage. Does that not seem hypocritical to you, Mr. Speaker?

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to contribute to this part of the debate in questions and comments because the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing talked about transparency and accountability and he talked about policy with some clear direction.

There's an actual issue in my riding that is begging for clarity on a policy. They are the Forked River Brewing Company. They're entrepreneurs that started a couple of years ago and they've been very successful. They want to expand their business into a retail store on a parcel of land on the same site.

In that case, what had happened is that they went ahead and did the renovations and thought they were following the guidelines in this policy. It turns out that even though it's the same parcel of land where they're expanding into the retail store, because it's not the same address, they're going to have barriers or possibly even be denied.

I'm writing the Premier and giving her the letter today. What we're asking is for clarity on this. We're asking for more transparency so that when this craft beer brewery is actually going to start this initiative, they know what they are getting into. It was quite vague.

We know that we promote small business in communities. It's a healthy way to make a city grow. They support the community; they occupy storefronts and promote jobs. I know the government across the way wants to support local business and local agriculture.

I'm just bringing this to light because it was just interesting to hear about how we need clear direction on policies. I think this policy begs clear direction with regard to the Forked River brewery in my riding of London–Fanshawe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, which amends certain parts of the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act, and to make a few comments in relation to the minister's leadoff.

This is particularly important for the area I represent. Oak Ridges–Markham is in fact the largest riding by population in Canada, with some 250,000 individuals. Obviously we're facing huge growth—we have in York region.

When I first became the medical officer of health in York region in 1988, the population of York region was some 450,000; it's now 1.2 million. Through the years that I was the commissioner of health services, many discussions around the department head table were on this very topic: How to plan for growth? The infrastructure that is needed in a region like York is essential to the

needs of my constituents and to the other people in York region.

I see many parts of this bill that are going to directly reference those types of concerns—development charges now available for transit infrastructure. Knocking on doors some 10 months or so ago, transit, transportation and congestion were huge issues for the residents. This bill will allow municipalities to have a lot more say and allow for citizen engagement, which is, I think, absolutely crucial as well.

I think it's very timely, given that consultation is being engaged in by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the Greenbelt Act, because that is another very important piece of legislation that has been absolutely embraced by the people of York region. So I'm in full support of Bill 73.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to enter into debate today on Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act.

Earlier today, I flew in from the nation's capital, where I represent one of the fastest-growing ridings not just in Ontario, but in all of Canada. We have a high birth rate; we have a high rate of development in my community. In fact, a decade ago, when I first started out in politics, a great part of my riding had not been developed. Each time I fly into or out of the city of Ottawa, I look down and I see the vast growth that's happening in my own constituency.

That brings me to this piece of legislation. I don't think anyone here denies the fact that in order for growth to happen, growth must pay for growth. I had some time and experience working at the city of Ottawa for a councillor named Jan Harder, who is now the chair of planning and development for the city of Ottawa. When I was a young staffer for her, obviously, planning, growth and development were key issues. So I'm happy to say here that I have some experience in this.

That said, I want to say to this assembly today I am disappointed in this bill for two reasons. First, there was inadequate consultation; therefore, I don't think the members of the city of Ottawa council or municipalities across the province had adequate input into this piece of legislation, which will impact their communities. Second, the minister will admit here that his own mandate letter would require changes to the Municipal Act and a review of the Ontario Municipal Board. That said, this bill, in its tabling, actually talks more about some of these changes before that review has even taken place. I think that's incredibly important.

I would like, with the last few seconds that I have, to commend my colleague from Belleville. He talked about the industrial wind turbines and the fact that they're overriding municipal planning with respect to those. I applaud him for bringing that up. It is a very important point and it does indeed make the government hypocritical on this piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would ask the member from Nepean–Carleton to withdraw.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker. I would happily withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I take that as a yes.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Sure. I'm happy to withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'd like to thank my parliamentary assistant; the member from Scarborough—Agin-court; the member from Prince Edward—Hastings; the member from London—Fanshawe; the Minister of Community and Social Services; and the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Speaker, the best political advice I ever got was from the late, great Sterling Hunt, a farmer up in Lynden, who said to me, "Ted, do you want to get elected? Tell the people what's broke and how you're going to fix it." I've always taken that as pretty good advice.

We did an extensive—over a year long—consultation. We met with AMO and a number of other stakeholders about some of the changes before we introduced this bill. This bill doesn't try to boil the ocean. We're not trying to build Rome in a day; we're trying to build Ontario in a prudent and practical way, and that's different. The bill is seeking to provide some clarity, perhaps on the very kinds of issues that certain members on the other side mentioned. If we could get a handle on some of that, that would be great.

The appeal of the bill, I think, has to do with its desire to engage citizens in substantive, meaningful input—get them from perhaps a cynical frame to a more participatory frame, because that participation will mean something—to empower municipalities to be more innovative, creative and thoughtful in terms of how they work with their stakeholders; and finally to ensure that as much as can be resolved locally is in fact resolved locally. It's very expensive to go to the OMB and very wasteful in many cases.

We want to make sure that citizens have good input, that good planning is done and that municipalities can resolve their difficulties locally.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act.

First of all, I want to thank the minister and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the briefing on this bill and the need for it that they provided for me, our caucus and our staff. I want to say there's a lot in the bill, and there's a lot to be supported. But at the same time, as we go through it—and even with the briefing, and I'm sure the minister was advised—there are a number of things that cause some concern that I want to address today.

**0940**

The member from Scarborough—Agin-court mentioned the fact that the last time this bill was reviewed was in 1997. From 1995 to 1999, I was parliamentary assistant

to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In the first two years at the ministry, my responsibility was to do the review and the consultation for the changes we made to the Planning Act—two years of consultation, and then we introduced the bill, and we finally got it passed in 1997. So I not only have some understanding of it, but some insight as to the things that were the way they are and why they were that way and why some of the things that are presently being done didn't make sense at that time. I'm afraid they don't make much sense today either, so I think we want to deal with that.

I also appreciate that the government waited some time before they brought this bill forward for debate. As you know, this is a complex bill that will impact municipalities across the province. It will impact where people live and the type of neighbourhoods they live in, so we need to take the time to get it right. In fact, it seems that we're still debating this bill too soon.

When this debate was scheduled, we followed up with a number of our stakeholders to hear their concerns about the bill and found out that many of them have not yet completed their review and analysis. The minister mentioned that one of the major stakeholders that he consulted with was AMO. We consulted AMO on what they thought of this bill in the last three or four days, and we find out that they haven't completed their review yet to be able to tell us what's right and what they believe corresponds with what they said or whether they think it will help or hinder the municipalities. So I think it's fair to say that we may still be a little premature with the debate on this until we have all the facts coming in from all the stakeholders.

There were other stakeholders that, in fact, were also consulted that weren't finished. One pointed out that the deadline to comment on the bill on the Environmental Registry is June 4. That is the date that they have been working towards. It seems that people expected the government would consult before pushing ahead and debating this bill. Again, June 4—all the comments to the Environmental Registry. They would have hoped that the government would have waited for that before we have this debate. Obviously, it would have helped my presentation today if I'd known what the stakeholders believe needs to be corrected in the bill, which I could bring forward to the government.

Mr. Speaker, there's another reason that this debate is premature. According to his mandate letter, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Attorney General are to work together with stakeholders to "recommend possible reforms that would improve the OMB's role within the broader land use planning system." That review hasn't even started, but the minister has introduced legislation to amend the appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. If the minister is planning to hold a real review, and if he's planning to actually listen to stakeholders, then shouldn't that review take place before he introduces legislation? Shouldn't he take the time to hear from the stakeholders about what change is needed? I think we all agree that the system could work



better, but we need a proper review to ensure that we make the right changes, not just change for change's sake.

Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the review last fall, I filed a written question to the Attorney General, who is responsible for the operation of the Ontario Municipal Board. I asked in what percentage of cases the Ontario Municipal Board approved a development that the municipalities had previously denied; in other words, how many times did they tell the municipalities they disagreed with them and approved it anyway? The response that I received from the ministry said that neither they nor the Ontario Municipal Board actually tracks that information. That means that not only are we making changes before we hear about the problems with the current system, but we are making changes without knowing the results of the current system and how well it is balanced for both sides.

Mr. Speaker, municipal planning and the Planning Act is about balance. It's about ensuring that individuals, community groups and businesses have input into the future of their communities. It's about responding to concerns while ensuring that the good projects can move forward. It's about ensuring that families can have a new home and new businesses can be built and create jobs, while controlling sprawl, protecting our environment and preserving agricultural land.

As I said earlier, the minister mentioned the issue of extending timelines for appeals and so forth. Again, I think the system is really predicated on trying to make sure that everything can be completed in a reasonable amount of time, because—what do they say?—time's a-wasting, time is money and time is what stops productivity. We want to move things through properly.

Right now, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is conducting a review of the greenbelt, the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges moraine, and the growth plan, and those reviews are another reason the debate on this bill is premature. The ministry has actually named it the coordinated land use planning review. Wouldn't you think that you should complete that review before you change the Planning Act to incorporate all the things that we find out in this review? I suppose we could hope or suggest that maybe they want to review this on an annual basis, to review it and change it this year and then, when the other reviews are done, come back and do it another year.

In fact, one of the sections of this bill impacts both the greenbelt and the Oak Ridges moraine, because it removes the right to appeal these boundaries in the official plan. It also removes the rights of properties included in the source water protection areas, the properties restricted under the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and the growth plan.

We recognize that the official plan is not the most effective way to appeal, but right now people don't feel that they have an opportunity to appeal at all. I recently met with an individual who has a property that already has municipal services and is surrounded by develop-

mental area. During the first greenbelt consultation, this property was always shown in the settlement area where growth could occur, but when the final boundaries came out, his property was suddenly in the greenbelt and he could no longer build a house on it.

He questioned this decision, and apparently someone from municipal affairs and housing came out to visit the property. When they arrived, they discovered the mistake: Someone in Toronto had read the map wrong and thought that there was a river on his property that should be protected. The river actually wasn't on his property; it was on the neighbour's property.

The property owner tried and tried to get his property back out of the greenbelt, but he hasn't been able to get his concerns addressed. He told me that when he talked to a previous Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, he said he couldn't make the change for this property owner, or he'd have to make it for everyone who asked, to which the property owner replied, "Minister, if they were all mistakes like mine, you should make the changes for everyone."

I've heard from people who believe that there were mistakes both ways: municipalities that have land adjacent to a development area—where they've already spent the money to install services—which was included in the greenbelt, while environmentally sensitive land was excluded and could be developed. For example, we've heard from a community group in Belfountain that believes that the settlement area around their village is too large and includes environmentally sensitive land.

The problem is that currently there isn't a real appeal mechanism for these lands' land use designation, so it appears that some property owners, in frustration, are appealing their designation in the official plan to the Ontario Municipal Board. That is problematic for a few reasons. First, it puts the municipalities in a difficult position of being forced to defend decisions that they didn't make and that were given to them by the province. Secondly, the Ontario Municipal Board is restricted in the decisions that they can make, because they must conform with or have regard to provincial policy. In many cases, this means that the property owner would go through an expensive appeal process without the OMB having the ability to change their designation.

Removing the appeal of the official plan isn't the solution to the problem. It's like the house has a leaky roof, and the government looked at the buckets collecting water in the kitchen and said, "We'll solve the problem by taking away the buckets." The solution is to create a real appeal mechanism, Mr. Speaker, one that doesn't depend on the minister's political will and one that doesn't involve appealing to the same group that made the initial decision; an appeal process that gives property owners, municipalities and communities the opportunity to present their case to an objective third party and have a real objective decision, one that will correct mistakes if mistakes were made.

**0950**

I hope that the individual problems I've mentioned will be addressed through the land use review, but I also

hope that as a result of that review property owners will have a real system that will allow them to appeal future mistakes.

When the coordinated land use planning review began, I wrote the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to outline a number of items that we felt were essential in the review. One of those was that there should be an appeal process. Another was that the review should be public, open and transparent, and that members of the public must be able to participate.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock recently raised concerns that people in her riding who are directly impacted by the Oak Ridges moraine act and the greenbelt aren't being given an opportunity to participate in the public hearings. As the mayor of Brock township said in a recent article, "It's difficult to understand why all of these meetings are south of the (Oak Ridges) moraine.... We should have an opportunity to discuss what I call the unintended consequences of the greenbelt." Minister, these are people who want to have a say in planning decisions that directly impact their community. I ask you to give them that opportunity by holding a review meeting in north Durham.

One of the other points that I raised in the letter to the minister was that every person whose property is going to be included in the expanded greenbelt should be consulted. When the greenbelt was established, the government held consultations on draft boundaries. I think many of us remember that there were a number of changes following a \$10,000-a-plate Liberal fundraiser. But what wasn't as high-profile is that when the final version was released there were a number of changes, such as new properties being included, that weren't proposed to be in the greenbelt previously. That means that those people, like the one that I mentioned earlier, had no opportunity to voice their concerns or to explain why their property shouldn't be included.

I just want to explain that a little bit, Mr. Speaker. I remember that when the process was there they had the tentative lines drawn for the greenbelt and they went out to public consultation, sent a group out to do that. When they came back they came back with a report to put the final lines on. I remember being here at Queen's Park, at a committee meeting, and one of the reporters asked me what I thought of the final draft. I said, "I haven't seen it yet." She said, "There's a great area that was not in the previous study area that is now part of the greenbelt." I said, "Well, that's rather strange. We used to have a program like that at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and if you wanted to build a building on your farm, you could actually go to the ministry and you could ask them to do a study on where, wind-wise and from snow loads and so forth, would be the ideal place to put that building on your farm. This sounds like one of those cases where the ministry comes back with the wonderful solution that says, 'We found the perfect place to build your new barn.' The farmer says to him, 'Where is that?' and he says, 'It's on your neighbour's farm.'"

I think that's what happened here. These people that were put in when they weren't in the study area never

had a say at all as to what they thought of it and what impact that would have on them. I think it's very important that that is done.

As I said, we believe that people who are being impacted by the planning process should have the ability to participate in that process and have their views heard. I think the minister alluded to that in his comments, that this bill is to do that to get people the opportunity to be heard to help plan their communities. I really believe that the bill doesn't go far enough in that area.

In this bill the government is proposing to change the rules around community consultation. The example that the government gives is that the distance for notice requirements would be altered for rural municipalities. Now, the problem is, why is it for rural municipalities? Why is the distance not consistent for everyone?

Now, of course, in rural municipalities, the distances where the impact would be are much further apart, but the properties are not; the properties run side by side. I think what we need to do is we need to make sure that everyone gets notice when changes are being made.

However, this amendment also exempts municipalities from section 19, subsection (2), which states, "Every person who attends a public meeting required under clause 15(d) shall be given an opportunity to make representations in respect of the current proposed plan." Removing the requirement of this section weakens the public's ability to participate in the planning communities.

Again, we get to a certain point where they're going to be notified but they're not going to be allowed to speak to the application.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that you have worked with community groups who have concerns about the planning and development, just as I have. Many of them are volunteers. They have very busy lives working and raising families, but they make time to raise concerns about the issues because they believe that it will have a significant impact on the future of their communities.

I want to give you two examples from my riding. The first is a group of citizens who are opposing a proposed landfill site in Beachville. The proposal would locate a landfill on fractured bedrock in an old quarry near the Thames River. We're all concerned that this location would put our drinking water at risk. These citizens are working hard to make their concerns heard. They are sending postcards, letters and emails. They're signing petitions, which I've read—many of them frequently, and sometimes even more frequently than the Speaker would like—in this Legislature. They have come to Queen's Park. If there is a public meeting that impacts them, shouldn't we make sure that they have a right to be heard? Shouldn't we make sure that they have a right to voice their concerns about the safety of their drinking water?

The other group that I want to mention is one which has been working hard to oppose wind turbines in the Gunn's Hill area. They too have worked hard to make their concerns known. They have written and emailed. They did all their research and spent countless hours

trying to make everyone understand their concerns about wind turbines, from the impact on their health and the community to the danger they pose to planes flying into a nearby airport. Again, I believe that all the members of this group have a right to be heard at public meetings which impact them.

I know that the government had good intentions in reforming that section to allow consultation to be tailored to the individual municipalities, but I think we need to ensure that we maintain some minimum standards that ensure the public has the ability to voice their concerns.

The government is also proposing to create new planning committees through this legislation. It's another case of where we're trying to improve public participation but totally missing the mark. The proposal is to create a new planning advisory committee which would have at least one member that is not a municipal employee or a municipal counselor.

The flaw in the proposal is that many municipalities, such as those in Oxford, currently have planning discussions and make planning decisions at open council meetings which are regularly attended by the media and members of the public. Concerned citizens have the ability to see the agendas, attend the meetings and make presentations, and the local media is there to report those decisions.

This proposal would move these discussions to a separate planning committee that would likely have less public attending and less media attention. Since the majority of the committee would still be members of council, it is less likely that they will feel the need to repeat the entire debate and discussion when the issues come back to council for their final approval. The result would be that one member of the public would be involved in the committee and the rest of the public will have less information and input into the planning. For many municipalities it would also result in a new committee that simply duplicates what council is presently doing.

Sometimes government has a tendency to look at each idea individually without stepping back and looking at the impact as a whole. This legislation would require municipalities to produce a report on the use of money obtained through section 37 to create and make public a parks plan and it will require a more detailed report on development charge reserve funds, including an asset plan. It will also require the creation of the new planning advisory committee.

#### 1000

All of these things individually may be positive, but they also add up to an increased burden to our municipalities, many of whom are already struggling. Our municipalities have limited resources. Many of them are performing a significant amount of work with very little staff.

In his 2014 speech to the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook talked about the challenges faced by people like the mayor of Bancroft, Bernice Jenkins. Bancroft has a

population of 3,500, less than 2,000 households, but they are required to complete over 270 financial reports to the government a year.

The government designs legislation for Toronto, Mississauga and Ottawa without looking at the impact on many of our smaller municipalities. Many of our rural and northern municipalities operate with very limited staff.

Today, I want to issue a challenge to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'm going to ask him to review the paperwork and reporting requirements for our municipalities. For each new report the government requires, such as those in this bill, I'm hoping that he can find an unnecessary report or form to eliminate. It's something to do with a program of the government called Open for Business. I think we should apply it to this bill and make sure we remove as many unnecessary regulations and reports in that process as we're adding with this bill.

As I just mentioned, one of the changes in this bill is to require detailed assessment management plans for infrastructure and services that are funded through development charges. The Ontario Good Roads Association has been a huge advocate of asset management plans, but they have pointed out multiple times that consistent standards need to be developed for these plans.

While we should allow flexibility or phasing in for those municipalities that already have a system in place, I want to point out that the best time to create those standards is now, before the government expands the system. Once municipalities have set up a reporting system, changing the methods will be far more costly and time-consuming.

Again, we want the government to take the time to get it right. It seems that in many ways, they have rushed to introduce this legislation without having all the details ready.

This bill proposes a number of changes to the Development Charges Act. These are the fees that builders pay to municipalities to fund infrastructure such as sewers, water and roads. This is another area where the government doesn't appear to be ready. When they announced this legislation, they also announced that they would be forming a working group to look at "more complex land use planning and development charges issues, and propose solutions." We've set up people to look at how we should fix the problem, and here we are legislating the problem to be fixed, without having those answers.

To me, the best time to introduce legislation is after you've figured out the solutions, not before, especially when the changes you are proposing will increase development charges and, therefore, the cost of building a business or a new home.

Currently in the Development Charges Act, there is a section that lists the number of items that municipalities cannot charge development fees for. This includes cultural or entertainment facilities, including museums, theatres and art galleries. It includes tourism facilities,

such as convention centres, and it includes city halls. The government is proposing instead to move all of these excluded items into regulation. That means we don't know what new businesses and homeowners could be charged for. This section is in the Development Charges Act for their protection, to ensure that the development charges they pay are for services that are required to service their property and not for other services beyond what the community presently has. Removing these sections would allow massive increases in development charges, which would be a hidden tax on new homeowners and businesses.

This bill allows development charges to increase by allowing them to be calculated based on planned level of service rather than a historical average of what level of service they had been delivering. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a very important point to make, that with the change there, in fact, the municipality can look at where you have a fair amount of new development coming on stream—so we're going to add a number of items in the bylaw that we're going to charge for—services we don't presently provide, but we can ask new housing to pay for a higher level of service, so when that's built and we have all those development charges—in fact, a certain part of our community paid for services that everyone is going to use. That's why it was in the bill the other way, in the Development Charges Act, that they have to stay on the level of the services that they presently have, and then, as we increase the level of services, everyone pays their equal share of that, and new homeowners aren't paying it all.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that the people, particularly those at home, understand the levels of development charges that we're discussing here. This isn't, as it used to be, the price of a building permit is \$100 and the development charge is \$1,000, to provide all those services.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing reported that municipalities collected over \$1.8 billion in development charges in 2013 alone. They pay for sewers, roads, water and other infrastructure.

A 2009 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. study found that government-imposed charges, including development charges, represented up to 19% of the median price of a single detached home.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario commissioned a report called Alternatives to Development Charges for Growth-Related Capital Costs. It found that development charges are now \$30,000 to \$50,000 per single-family home in high-growth municipalities surrounding Toronto. By comparison, it found that development fees in Calgary and Edmonton are less than \$8,000 per unit.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario reported that a 2009 survey calculated that the average development charge or fee for single-family homes in the United States was \$8,328. Referring back to the other one: In the Toronto area, they're from \$30,000 to \$50,000. The average in the United States is \$8,328.

The state with the highest average fee is California, at \$21,648—half of the highest rate in the Toronto area—followed by Florida, with an average of \$8,000—again, from \$21,000 down to \$8,000. Florida is the next one down, at \$8,974.

In the report we also found this quote: “Upward pressure on development charge revenue is a result of fiscal pressure that municipalities face due to reduction in funding from senior levels of government.”

Maybe we know now why it is that this government is putting this in the bill to encourage higher development charges. It's because reduced funding from the province has forced the municipalities to do that.

When the government introduced this legislation, the Ontario Home Builders' Association said, “The Ontario Home Builders' Association is concerned that new transit taxes on development will disproportionately increase housing costs for residents and the cost of setting up new businesses.”

We need to recognize that those development charges are a cost that is passed on from the builder to the new homeowner. It is an added cost into building the home, but it is passed directly on to new people moving into the community.

There was a lot of media coverage recently when it was announced that the average cost of a detached house in Toronto is now over a million dollars. That puts a house out of reach for most young couples and families. In fact, many young people are struggling to buy a small condo, and this bill will only increase the cost of a new house.

Housing has become a real challenge for our province. There are 165,000 families on a waiting list for social housing—Mr. Speaker, 165,000. The minister mentioned in his presentation that this was going to help that, but I disagree. If we assume an average of even two people per family in the 165,000, that's more people than in the entire population of Kitchener or Windsor, and it's twice the size of Oshawa and Sudbury. Imagine that: As many people as the whole city of Windsor are waiting for housing.

In fact, Acorn, a community group that advocates for housing, said, “The new proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act (Bill 73) does”—and it emphasizes it—“nothing to solve the housing crisis in Ontario. We believe affordable housing is smart!”

Mr. Speaker, there are steps that we need to take to address this problem.

Last week the Legislature gave my bill, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, second reading, and it was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. I want to ask all members of this House to work with me to ensure that we move it through the committee and bring it back here for third reading quickly.

My bill would bring accountability and transparency to the rogue agency that has been diverting money intended to build, repair, and maintain social housing. Instead, the Housing Services Corp. has spent the money on world travel and questionable investments, such as

putting money into a company in Manchester, England, that only existed on paper and whose corporate address is a lawyer's office.

Taking action to address the wasting of social housing dollars is only part of the solution; we also need to address the cost of living for all Ontarians. Part of that is ensuring balance on development charges and ensuring they can't be used to pay for building things like a new city hall. I think that's the important part; that's why I emphasized it when I mentioned the items before. I think things like the city hall should not be put on the backs of new people coming in—they should be paid equally by everyone in the municipality at the time that it's being built. I think that would help keep the cost of housing down.

Part of that is looking at other factors in the cost of living, such as hydro. When I hear from people in my riding or across the province who can't afford to stay in their home the most frequent reason is the spiralling cost of hydro. Those costs aren't just impacting homeowners, they're impacting businesses as well, Mr. Speaker. I recently conducted an annual survey of Oxford businesses. The common theme was that respondents were worried about the increasing cost of doing business in Ontario; 94% of businesses said they had been impacted by the spiralling cost of hydro.

When new businesses are looking at which jurisdiction to locate in, costs are a significant factor. We heard that from many of the businesses that have chosen to leave Ontario. Businesses are already worried about the new costs that this government is proposing. In my survey, 90% of Oxford businesses said they would be impacted by the proposed pension plan and most of these said the impact would be significant; 86% of the respondents said they would be impacted by a carbon tax.

All of these costs, including development charges, are factors that businesses consider when they choose where they are going to build and create jobs. Increasing development charges has an impact that needs to be considered. A Metrolinx investment strategy found that increasing development charges “include the potential for increased housing and commercial development prices that may reduce housing affordability and increase business costs.”

The charges on new businesses have a direct impact on our economic development. But there's an indirect impact from the development charges on new homes. Builders are willing to pay their fair share for roads, water and sewers, but if these are allowed to increase too much it will slow the building industry.

A recent Maclean's article pointed out that the real estate sector makes up 13% of Canada's GDP and is a bigger employer than the mining, oil and gas sectors. It said, “The economy certainly relies more on what gets built above ground than what lies beneath” it.

Earlier I explained this bill would remove the section that prevents development charges from being increased to pay for city halls, art galleries and convention centres. That may be the worst way that it increases development

charges, but it's not the only one. Currently, development charges are discounted by 10% for a number of items, including transit, and this bill would remove that discount. It will add millions to the amount that the builders pay in development fees.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the time has almost expired. With that, I will leave this and hopefully we can come back to it the next time we meet to debate Bill 73.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Oxford.

Seeing that it is now 10:15, this Legislature is recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm very excited today to welcome a mentor and a great friend of mine, somebody who I'm honoured to serve in my great community of Ottawa Centre. I ask members to please welcome Penny Collette to Queen's Park. Penny, welcome and thank you for all your support.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of the member from Essex, I would like to congratulate our page captain for the day, Chloe Mastronardi, and introduce her mother, Sheila Mastronardi; her father, Terry Mastronardi; and her cousin Sylvana Mastronardi. They're joining us in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Today is the first day of the Ridvan festival of the Baha'i faith. I have two distinguished guests from my riding of Richmond Hill visiting the House: Mr. and Mrs. Missaghie. Please join me in welcoming them.

## MINISTERS' ATTENDANCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The House leaders for the official opposition—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The Speaker is standing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, member from Renfrew.

The House leaders for the official opposition and the third party have each provided me with a written notice of intent to raise a point of privilege, as required by standing order 21(c). The government House leader also provided me with a written submission on this matter. The notices relate to a decision by several ministers to attend an April 15, 2015, lock-up and press conference dealing with the report of the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets in a government building located outside the precincts. These events apparently overlapped with the timing of question period and therefore meant that those ministers would not be available to answer oral questions on that day.

I would like to thank the members for giving me sufficient time to carefully review the issues raised in their

notices. Given the thrust of our precedents on the issues, together with Speaker Carr's April 23, 2001, decision to rule on the matter of ministerial attendance at question period without hearing further from the member who raised it, I too will be ruling without hearing further from the members, as standing order 21(d) permits the Speaker to do.

Ministerial attendance at question period has been the subject of many previous points of order, but no Speaker has ever held that a member is required to be in this chamber at any specific time, let alone during question period. As Speaker Carr noted in his 2001 ruling, "The many and varied duties of being an elected member of this House often legitimately demand our attendance elsewhere. Honourable members are assumed by their honourable colleagues to have valid, defensible and justifiable reasons for being absent from the House when it is meeting. This is one of the principal reasons why it is prohibited by our traditions and practices to draw the attention of the House to the absence of another member."

With respect specifically to ministerial attendance at question period, as far back as April 19, 1977, Speaker Rowe stated the following: "It is surely the duty of the executive council to see that there are sufficient members of the council in the House during the question period to make it meaningful. Certainly, the Speaker cannot be expected to take on this obligation."

For similar approaches taken by other Speakers, I refer members to Speaker Turner's November 5, 1984, ruling; Speaker Edighoffer's April 24, 1990, ruling; Speaker Warner's May 13, 1992, ruling; Speaker Stockwell's April 21, 1997, ruling; and Speaker Peters's February 22, 2010, ruling. In short, it is well established that ministers cannot be compelled to attend question period on any given day, nor is the Speaker in any position to enforce such attendance.

Parenthetically, I will reference here the assertion made by the member from Leeds–Grenville in his written notice that there was no need for those absent ministers to attend the lock-up. I am not sure any member of this House really wants to be in the business of second-guessing the priorities of another honourable member, if they think carefully about the implications of doing so.

On the issue of policy announcements, previous Speakers have indicated that it is preferable for the government of the day to make them in the House before doing so outside the House. I agree with that position. In fact, past Speakers have indicated that members who object to policy announcements being made outside the House before being made inside the House have a legitimate grievance.

That being said, those same Speakers have also indicated there is no authority in the standing orders that would allow the Speaker to require the government to make such announcements in the House before doing so by other means.

Turning to the privilege arguments in the notices, the member from Leeds–Grenville contends that the absence of several ministers meant that members were deprived

of the ability to hold the government to account for its policies and were therefore obstructed and impeded in the discharge of their functions. Accordingly, the member asserts that the absence of those ministers was a contempt of the Legislature.

As previous Speakers have indicated, question period is an important part of the parliamentary day because it facilitates the assembly's accountability function. I accept that it can be frustrating for an opposition member who has an oral question for a specific minister to find that that minister will not be available on a given day. However, nothing prevents the oral question from being placed and answered because the principle of collective cabinet responsibility means that another minister can either answer the question or undertake to get one. That member's frustration does not equate to an inability to fulfill his or her parliamentary responsibilities, and it does not rise to a contempt of the House.

As noted on page 509 of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

"Questions, although customarily addressed to specific ministers, are directed to the ministry as a whole. It is the prerogative of the government to designate which minister responds to which question.... The Prime Minister (or the Deputy Prime Minister or any other minister acting on behalf of the Prime Minister) may respond to any or all questions posed during question period. Only one minister may respond to a question, and it need not be the one to whom the question is addressed who actually answers it. A different minister may, under certain circumstances, reply to a supplementary question.

"The Speaker has no authority to compel a particular minister to respond" to a question.

There is no authority for the proposition that a minister's absence from this chamber in order to attend to other responsibilities amounts to obstruction of the House or its members in the exercise of their parliamentary functions.

For his part, the member for Timmins–James Bay suggests that last Thursday's government announcement equates to a situation that happened in 2003, when the government of the day presented a budget-type speech outside the House at a time when the Legislature was prorogued. In that case, Speaker Carr had found that a *prima facie* case of contempt had been established because the government of the day might have been purposely circumventing parliamentary processes when it expressly indicated that the presentation was motivated by its desire to have a "direct conversation with the people of Ontario."

Unlike what happened in 2003, there has been no similarly explicit indication by the government relating to the intention of last Thursday's lock-up and press conference. In addition, whereas there is a tradition of making budget presentations in the House, no such tradition attaches to the tabling of a report or an announcement in respect of such.

In this instance, then, the government's policy announcement outside the House was rather similar to the

announcements that previous governments have often made outside the House.

With respect to the argument that restrictions were placed on the number of members who could attend the lock-up, the lock-up is not a proceeding in Parliament, and in fact did not even take place in the parliamentary precinct, so it is not a matter for the Speaker. The important point is that nothing prevented members from being in the House, if they so chose, to exercise their privilege of freedom of speech.

**1040**

For the foregoing reasons, I find that the member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Timmins–James Bay have not made a prima facie case of privilege or contempt.

In closing, I thank all parties for providing me with their submissions on this matter.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** One moment, please.

#### GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yesterday, the member from Leeds–Grenville provided me with an additional written notice of intent to raise a point of privilege, as required by standing order 21(c). The notice refers to the release last week of the report of the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets, and principally about the fact the announcement took place outside the Legislative Assembly and at a time that conflicted with the day's question period.

I have to advise the member that I cannot accept his notice. A point of privilege must be raised at the earliest opportunity after the alleged breach has occurred. Having received the member's notice only late last night, which relates to events that occurred four days previous, I do not believe the member has met the timeline's requirement.

However, I think the member will also see in the ruling I just delivered that the matter he sought to raise was fully addressed in my response to the notice provided by his colleague the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Point of order from the member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you for your ruling, Speaker. We're going to continue to hold this government to account.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the members for their attention.

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. The electricity system in Ontario is in a mess. You've

wasted \$2 billion on smart meters, \$1.1 billion on cancelled gas plants, and rates have skyrocketed by more than \$1,000 a year for the average homeowner since you took office. The people are fed up with your hydro mismanagement.

Now you're planning to sell a majority stake in Hydro One—60%, in fact—to raise money you can't come up with otherwise.

But don't worry, Mr. Speaker. The Premier says that rates might not go up because the Ontario Energy Board is there to protect consumers, the same energy board that just approved a rate increase of over \$68 a year.

Premier, why should ratepayers believe your line that the OEB will limit rate increases, when yesterday they did the exact opposite?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just address part of this question. I know that we will speak to the rates in the supplementary.

Let me just be clear that the reason we have undertaken the review of assets in this province, the reason that Ed Clark and his panel were asked to look at the assets that were built by and owned by the people of Ontario, and have served the people of Ontario very well, is that we need to build new assets. We need to build new infrastructure that will serve us in the current environment and in the future. If we don't do that, if we don't make those investments, then we actually hobble the ability of this province to be able to grow, we hobble the ability of communities to be able to thrive, and we restrict the attraction of Ontario to businesses from other places. So we must make these investments in infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the Premier: I don't think I'm the only Ontarian who's skeptical of your plan. After all, you never campaigned on it and you never held public consultations. You just did it. There's not even a cost-benefit analysis of the majority sale. Yet you and your trusted adviser Ed Clark assured Ontarians that rates won't go up with confident phrases like "We don't think so" and "I can't guarantee they won't."

Premier, you and I both know you don't care about what the ratepayer pays, just as long as you get your money.

A simple question, Premier: Would you still have sold the majority stake in Hydro One if you had balanced the budget?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have said repeatedly, and I will continue to say because it is the truth, what I care about is absolutely that we have an affordable and a reliable supply of energy. Quite frankly, when we came into office in 2003, the hydro system—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. I'm absolutely ready to bring people to order and I'll do so quickly. Very little interruption for question, and lots of interruption for answer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There was absolutely no reliability in the electricity system when we came into office. There were blackouts and brownouts. I can re-

member knocking on doors in 2003, and the number one issue was people not knowing whether their power supply was—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order. Thank you.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There was no confidence in the electricity system. There were brownouts and blackouts across the province. It was absolutely imperative, when we came into office, that we rebuild the system, that we do the upgrading that was necessary.

We've done that upgrading. As the member opposite knows, there is a cost associated with that. He also knows that the Ontario Energy Board sets rates and will set rates—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Premier, it's obvious that what has happened here is you promised a lot more than you can deliver. You drove the province into the ground for 12 years, and now the only way out is on the backs of ratepayers.

You continue to say that the OEB will regulate prices and that they won't go up, but every bit of evidence confirms the complete opposite. Ontarians have your word on one hand and the energy board's latest increase on the other.

Premier, as the PC caucus's fifth and final ask, will you commit to reducing energy prices so that all ratepayers and businesses no longer have to pay some of the highest energy costs in North America?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, let's be clear about the Ontario Energy Board. Rate applications go before the Ontario Energy Board.

Some of the history is, in 2010, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for distribution and received a 9% reduction. In 2012, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for transmission and received a 3% reduction. When Ontario Power Generation applied for a 6.2% rate increase in 2011, the OEB denied this request and lowered rates by 0.8%.

There is a history of the OEB refusing requests for rate increases, because they can—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The rates are going down, Bob. People are so happy that the rates are going down.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Stop the clock, please.

Now I will also remind you that I am not impressed when I hear people use anything else other than their riding or their title, when speaking—at all.

New question.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Ed Clark's report on the sale of Hydro One offers a handful of recommendations, the first being, "The province should proceed immediately with a sale or merger of its interests in Hydro One Brampton ... to or with EnerSource Corp., PowerStream ... and Horizon...."

The report simply speculates that the government would receive \$607 million for the sale. It offers no evidence on how the sale price was calculated. We are simply being asked to take the Premier's and Mr. Clark's word for it.

Premier, will you call for the Auditor General to help to review the Hydro One Brampton deal so Ontarians will have some assurance that they're receiving the best value?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment on the specifics.

But let me again remind the party opposite and their interim leader that what we are doing here is, we have made a decision and we ran on this decision—it was in our budget—to invest in infrastructure and, as part of that, to review the assets that were owned by the people of this province, to make sure that we were optimizing the value of those assets so that we could invest in the roads and bridges—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nepean–Carleton—second time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —in every riding across this province, because there is not a community, there is not a region of this province that doesn't need investment in roads, in bridges, in public transit.

Because of the neglect of government after government—because of the work that was not done before 2003—we need to continue to make those investments if we are going to be competitive in the 21st century. That's the commitment I made, and that's the commitment that we're following through on.

1050

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** That's not a very good answer for one of biggest asset sales in the history of the province.

This government's financial mismanagement has been embarrassing: billions of taxpayers' dollars wasted every time you take a turn.

For a Premier who came in preaching openness and transparency, something about this Hydro One Brampton sale simply does not add up. Why should the people of Ontario believe that a pre-arranged sale, organized in secret by the Premier's backroom, is the best deal for an asset that they own?

Premier, if you intend on selling Hydro One Brampton, will you put it on the open market to ensure Ontarians get fair value for the company that they own?



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The Premier set up the asset council with very experienced people, a mixture of people from different backgrounds, different parties, different philosophies, but headed up by Mr. Ed Clark. They created a revolving door of advisers and consultants coming in to explore all of the elements of the recommendations that they were making. At the end of the day, the selling price was close to twice as much as Hydro One had paid for it, a very significant uplift in value, which represents a very good investment of a previous government to do that.

The reality is we had seven municipalities, seven mayors and seven councils, we expect, who have supported this, because it improves it for the ratepayer and improves the revenue for all of those cities, including Markham and Barrie and many others.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Premier: We simply don't accept that your backroom political dealings and pre-arranged sale is the best value for this public asset.

You were wrong when you said the cost of cancelling gas plants was \$40 million when it really was \$1.1 billion. You were wrong when you said the Green Energy Act would cost hydro customers about the price of a cup of coffee when the real cost is \$1,100 per year.

With the last 12 years of fiscal mismanagement in this province, no one—no one—accepts that your deal is the best deal for this public asset. Why should they accept your word for it? Your word simply is no good when it comes to these transactions.

Premier, the people of Ontario deserve all the information respecting the value and sale of Hydro One Brampton, again, an asset that they own. Why won't you allow the Auditor General to review the sale before it goes through?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Energy?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The merger we're looking at is not a 407 deal. It's not a deal where we sell off to somebody and let them make profit out of it, and let them hold 100% control. That's what they did with 407.

We have created here—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It could be with you.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** We have created here a utility of one million customers which rivals Toronto Hydro, the second-largest in the province. There were seven municipalities involved, seven utilities, which came together to create this consolidation. It's good for the ratepayer. It's good for the shareholders, all of the councils, and every single mayor of seven cities endorsed it.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The Premier is planning to privatize Hydro One. She said she was going to govern from something she called the activist centre. It turns out that the activist centre is so far to the right that even the Tories are saying that the Premier's privatization plan for Ontario is bad. It's a bit rich for the Premier to insist she's leading a progressive government when she's right of the Conservatives.

Can the Premier explain exactly how it is that she lost her way so terribly?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, come to order.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said, I understand why the leader of the third party wants to go through a recalibrating exercise for herself to relocate herself on the political continuum, because who knows where she was in the election? Who knows what she stands for?

What we stand for is making practical decisions that are in the best interests of this province. Right now, across this province, we need to invest in infrastructure. There is no doubt. I have sat with groups of mayors after groups of mayors, whether it's in the north, whether it's in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, whether it's large urban mayors or rural mayors, and they have said to me unanimously that they need investment in infrastructure. That is a necessity, so that's what we're doing. We ran on that. We said that we were going to invest in roads, bridges and transit, and that's what we're going to do.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is creating a brand new beer ombudsman, so that people can complain if their beer is flat, but she's pushing the Ontario Ombudsman out of Hydro One. The Premier has a pretty serious problem with her priorities here. Why does she think that the people of Ontario deserve less oversight with their electricity system?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have been very clear, it was very much a concern of mine and ours that there be oversight, that there be control, that the province have a 40% share and have the controls in terms of regulation and price control that are in place right now, and that we continue those.

But let me just speak to the ideological bent that the leader of the third party is on right now, and just give her some feedback from some of the people who actually think this is a good idea. First of all, let me quote from the Power Workers' Union. This is Don MacKinnon, the president of the Power Workers' Union: "The Power Workers' Union welcomes and supports the decision by government to keep Hydro One whole in an IPO process that would, in partnership with government, broaden the ownership structure in Hydro One. This will position the

company to grow and provide further high-skill quality jobs for Ontarians.”

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is spending months and months, exhaustive amounts of time, to study whether she wants to sell 12-packs of beer in the LCBO—in 10 stores. On the other hand, she doesn’t need any time at all—no time whatsoever—to decide to sell off Hydro One to Bay Street, a plan that will mean higher electricity bills for every single Ontarian. That’s on top of the \$70, of course, that was announced as an increase yesterday by the Ontario Energy Board.

This plan is wrong. The Premier’s priorities are wrong. The Premier has lost her way. My question is, will she pull the plug on this wrong-headed privatization plan?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I understand that the leader of the third party is trying to find her way. I would suggest that supporting a plan that would invest in transit infrastructure, roads and bridges across the province might be a way to help her back to her way.

I will also remind her that the Ontario Energy Board, which sets prices now, will set prices after this deal is in place.

I want to just again remind the member opposite that this is also about creating jobs. Joseph Mancinelli, who is the vice-president and central and eastern Canada regional manager of LIUNA, the building trades, says, “The Wynne Liberal government is to be commended for today’s announcement implementing sweeping changes in our province which will greatly benefit all Ontarians. The \$4 billion these changes will introduce for investment in infrastructure projects, the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario’s history, is welcome news to LIUNA and our members. Job creation is one of the key components of this initiative and we welcome the much-needed infrastructure and the thousands of jobs that will be created for our members for years to come.”

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I hope that the Premier told Joe that \$4 billion won’t even get half of the downtown relief line built.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The Premier says that a privatized Hydro One won’t be under the Ombudsman’s—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Question, please.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier says that a privatized Hydro One won’t be under the Ombudsman’s oversight. Can the Premier guarantee Ontarians that the CEO of the new private hydro company will still be appearing on the sunshine list?

1100

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the member opposite might have been

interested in the transit that can be built, as a result of these announcements, in Hamilton for example, and in the GTA writ large. I would have thought that she would have been quite interested in the needs of the constituents around the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, but apparently not.

Mr. Speaker, we are building. The NDP basically is saying, “Don’t build. Don’t build this province up. Don’t invest in the infrastructure that’s needed. Don’t create 20,000 jobs a year. Don’t do that. Stay stuck in ideology. Don’t look at practical solutions.”

When I talk about the activist centre, that’s what I mean: looking for the answers to the problems that are presenting themselves today, not looking back a hundred years and deciding today what we should do, based on a hundred years ago. That’s not what we’re doing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order, and is very close to being asked to withdraw. I’m not amused.

Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier says that a privatized Hydro One won’t be under the scrutiny of the Ombudsman, under Ombudsman oversight. She’s not telling us whether or not the CEO and other executives are going to be subject to the sunshine list.

Can the Premier guarantee Ontarians that the freedom-of-information act will still apply to the new privatized hydro company?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Just a couple of facts that I’m sure the leader of the third party is aware of but has neglected to mention: There will be a new Hydro One ombudsman. She knows that, I think. She also knows that there is a different set of accountability measures for publicly traded companies. The CEO’s salary will be disclosed according to OSC rules. She knows that.

But I think the bottom line here is that the leader of the third party has no faith in the private sector. In fact, she made a statement to that effect. She said that she has no faith in the private sector. That is a fundamental difference between us.

I believe, and we believe, that it’s important that government partner with the private sector, that the private sector has done an enormous amount of good.

I was at an event just on the weekend that was a prime example of a private-public partnership, where a community centre is going to be built in conjunction—the city of Toronto working with the private sector. The NDP was there, and they were—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We have a watchdog at Hydro One: the Ombudsman, who looks after the interests of the public. But the Premier wants to pull his teeth.

We currently have transparency, through the sunshine list, at Hydro One. But the Premier wants to pull the shades on that.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Economic Development, come to order—second time.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We currently have accountability through freedom-of-information at Hydro One. But the Premier wants to slam the door on that accountability.

The Premier's plan will limit access to information. It will limit transparency. It will limit accountability.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Newmarket–Aurora, come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It will drive rates sky-high. The Premier's plan is wrong, Speaker. Why can't she see that? When did she lose her way?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just say again that I made a commitment to the people of Ontario that we would invest in them, that we would invest in the infrastructure that is needed in their communities, that we would work with them to create the conditions to bring business to this province and create jobs. That's what this is about.

What the NDP is saying is that we shouldn't make those investments, we shouldn't create those jobs and we shouldn't look for solutions.

The leader of the NDP said on April 16, "I don't have any faith whatsoever in the ... private sector." That's quite a statement, given that we, as a government and as a people, rely on the private sector. We rely on the private sector to create jobs, to innovate, to draw investment to the province. She chooses not to have any desire—or any understanding that we need to work with the private sector if we're going to thrive.

#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Minister of Education. Minister, today is the second day that 24,000 students in Durham don't have classes to attend. Yesterday, you said that you were mystified, you were perplexed and you weren't sure why the board was striking. Well, you can be perplexed and mystified no longer: The reason the board is striking and the reason that for a second day 24,000 students are out of the classroom is 12 years of Liberal fiscal mismanagement.

OSSTF in Sudbury could strike on April 27, and we just found out that OSSTF Peel announced they may strike on May 4. This isn't a local issue anymore. The buck stops with the Liberal government and with you, Minister. How many more boards need to strike before you realize why they walked away from negotiations?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Obviously, we're very concerned about the students who are missing classes. We understand that students and parents want the teachers back in the classroom. The kids want to get back in the classroom—which is actually great, that students are telling us that they want to get back into their studies.

But I think it is quite important to understand that the way the collective bargaining act is structured, some issues are discussed at a provincial level. The central

table includes the crown—so yes, I am responsible for being at that table—the trustee association and the provincial union. That central table continues to have talks. Talks are going on at the central table. Unfortunately, it's at some of the local tables where talks have broken down.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Back to the minister: You said yesterday that you hadn't heard a coherent explanation as to why Durham was striking. Mr. Speaker, the member from Guelph is the Minister of Education. If she hasn't heard a coherent explanation or been given a proper briefing, I hope she spends time today interviewing new staff.

But I suppose I can save her the trouble. The strike in Durham is because of your 12 years of Liberal fiscal mismanagement. You can't negotiate fairly and you're backtracking on election promises.

Minister, will you stop blaming—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. Order.

Please finish.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, will you stop blaming the local boards and take responsibility before more boards strike in this province?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I—I would quibble a little bit with the wording—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Thank you.

Minister.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** —because I think it's important that we don't get into a situation of assigning blame here or blame there or blame there. What's important is that we have talks at both levels—we do have talks going on—because the only way to reach an agreement is if we're talking. We are negotiating at the central table, where I do have responsibility, and we understand that we must arrive at a negotiated agreement. But we also know that at the local level we need the local parties.

I point out that these are the people whose last platform—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** To the Premier: Yesterday, Ontarians learned that they will be paying another \$70 a year on their hydro bill to pay for Liberal waste and mismanagement of the hydro system. But instead of trying to make things better and using our strategic energy assets like Hydro One to help people conserve, to help them get their bills under control, the Liberals are privatizing Hydro One and handing control over to Bay Street.

Privatization is going to drive up hydro bills, just like it's always done. The OEB just approved another rate increase starting May 1. Can the Premier tell Ontarians

how much more she expects rates to go up under her privatization plan?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

1110

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** In December 2013 we issued a long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker. There was one page in that that had particular attention from the opposition and others: That was our projected rate increases over the next four or five years.

The reality is, we've been reducing the costs in the sector. The announcement of a rate increase yesterday is less than what was predicted, because we're getting a better handle on the sector. We're reducing our costs in the sector and we're making efforts towards the ratepayer in many other ways as well. I'll deal with that in supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again, back to the Premier: Ontarians have bills almost twice as high as people get in Manitoba and Quebec, where their public utilities are owned by the people. We are watching our rates go up faster, and what you put in place will only make it worse. The Premier hasn't learned the lesson that public hydro is more affordable. Her privatization plan is going to be bad for conservation, bad for innovation, bad for jobs, bad for business and bad for the people of Ontario.

Premier, this is a lousy plan. When are you going to pull the plug on privatization?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, we can expect a lot of rhetoric coming from the opposition parties. The reality is that the electricity prices in Ontario are lower than in three other provinces—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carry on, please.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** They're lower than in three other provinces. Yes, Manitoba and Quebec are lower than us because they have legacy hydro projects that enable that. In Canada, we're in the middle of the pack.

We hear them also say that we've got the highest rates in North America. They should look at Detroit, they should look at New York, and they should look at Boston where it's 18, 19, 20 cents per kilowatt hour. We are lowering the pressures on price; we are lowering that, as well, by doing what we're doing with Hydro One. It'll be more efficient in the long run; the ratepayers will be protected. Our plan is working.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. It's always a privilege for me to bring to this House issues that are of interest to my constituents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and one of those issues that I regularly hear about, whether it's through meetings of talking to the mayors and councillors, is connecting links.

There are two connecting links in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell: There's one in the township of Champlain and one in the town of Hawkesbury. Since the

Connecting Links program ended in 2012, many in my community have felt the financial pressure of keeping these roads in good working order and condition.

Speaker, through you: Could the minister please tell the members of this House what our government is doing to help municipalities with their connecting links?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for the question, but also for his incredibly strong advocacy for his community.

The member is 100% correct, Speaker. We have continued to hear from Ontario municipalities about the need for additional funding for their connecting links. Municipalities have told us that making connecting links projects eligible under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund has not been sufficient. So we listened—the Premier listened, our government listened—and we have been committed to working with municipalities to address this issue. That's why I was extremely happy to be in Sault Ste. Marie yesterday, with the Minister of Government Services and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, to formally announce that the province is committing \$15 million annually to a new Connecting Links program.

This announcement is only one part of our government's plan to unlock the value of certain public assets which will provide approximately \$4 billion to build new transit and other priority infrastructure projects—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Minister, for that very comprehensive response and the great announcement that you did make yesterday.

Speaker, there are 352 connecting links in Ontario and 70 bridges in 77 municipalities across the province. As I indicated earlier, two of these connecting links are found in my community, in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. But I've also heard other members in this House talk about connecting links within their riding, often discussing the difficulties their local municipalities are having keeping these roads in good shape. I know those living in my community will be very pleased to hear more about the funding being offered through the new Connecting Links program.

Speaker, through you: Can the minister tell the members of this House when Ontario municipalities can expect to start receiving funding from the new Connecting Links program?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Again, I thank that member for his question.

As I mentioned previously, this new program is only one part of our government's plan to unlock the value of certain public assets, making more funding available for transit and transportation projects like Connecting Links through our Moving Ontario Forward plan. This means that what was announced in April 2014 as a nearly \$29-billion investment in Moving Ontario Forward is now a \$31.5-billion commitment over the next 10 years.

Through the Moving Ontario Forward plan, Connecting Links funding is expected to begin in the spring of

2016. But we want to make sure that we get this program right, which is why we'll continue to consult with municipalities to ensure the new program meets their needs. We look forward to continuing to work with our municipal partners on this incredibly important project.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, Ontario's Ombudsman's ongoing probe into Hydro One's billing fiasco is now the largest ever undertaken by his office, with more than 10,500 public complaints and an average of 10 new complaints each day still.

Residents of my riding have experienced this firsthand, with hundreds of customers, including small businesses, who have gone months without a bill only to be advised that they owe thousands and will be disconnected if they don't pay in full. Now, with your plan to sell off a majority stake in Hydro One, it will leave its customers without access to the Ontario Ombudsman's oversight.

Premier, is your government trying to run away from the accountability of the Ombudsman's oversight and another critical report on the energy file?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Energy will want to speak to the specifics, but let me just say that in fact we believe that Hydro One can be a much better run company. In the work that Ed Clark and his group did, they came to that conclusion and they believe that broadening the ownership in Hydro One and realizing the benefit of that—reinvesting in infrastructure—will be good for the people of Ontario on a number of fronts, including having a more efficient company.

But I also want to say that the announcement that was just referenced in terms of Connecting Links is part of this. I know that members opposite, particularly in the opposition, claim to have the concerns of people in small and rural communities at heart. They should be very, very supportive of a Connecting Links program because the members who come to the Good Roads conference and to ROMA talk about, over and over again, the need for infrastructure investment and connecting links. That's exactly what we're doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Premier, you have increased the Ontario Ombudsman oversight with Bill 8, only to turn around and take it away from Hydro One.

Just last week, you announced that a beer ombudsman would be created to watch over beer sales. Premier, families in Ontario are more concerned with their lights being on than their Bud Light being cold, even though one can't really happen without the other.

We have seen this before with other scandals like Ornge and the gas plants, where oversight has been created after the fact.

Premier, will you help protect the customers of Ontario's largest electricity provider by allowing proper oversight by the Ontario Ombudsman?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The Hydro One transformation is going to take a number of months. In the meantime, there's plenty of time for the Ombudsman to report.

With respect to the work that the Ombudsman has been doing: Yes, he has received over 10,000 complaints. They're generated out of the new billing system. There are about 3,300 complaints that have been referred to Hydro One for resolution. To date, Hydro One has successfully resolved 99% of the billing complaints it received from the Ombudsman. Refunds and credits are being given and accommodation is being given to all those who have been impacted.

Right now the level of complaint is less than what has normally happened over the course of the last five, seven or 10 years.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Minister of Education stated that she was perplexed about the current labour dispute in Ontario's education sector. What I find truly perplexing is that the Liberal government, the Premier, is considering removing a limit on class sizes—the signature education policy of her predecessor, Dalton McGuinty—and forcing students and teachers into larger classes.

Speaker, can the Premier please explain to Ontarians why the Liberal government is flip-flopping on class sizes and throwing our schools into chaos?

1120

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Yes, thank you very much. Let me just repeat what I said previously. The legislation is very clear: When you have central negotiations—we're talking about money issues that have to do with money, with finances, with provincial policy. Those are the issues that are being negotiated at the central table, and there could theoretically be a central strike on central issues.

When you have a local strike—and this is clearly a local strike in Durham—it is, by definition under the law, a strike on local issues. Those would be issues like transfer and surplus.

We believe that the only way you solve this problem is to negotiate, and that's exactly what we're doing at the centre table, where we sit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I thank the Minister of Education for that lesson. What she clearly doesn't know is that negotiations are a give-and-take, not just taking.

Again, to the Premier: Just yesterday the Minister of Education claimed that she hadn't heard a coherent explanation of what local issues prompted education workers to walk out in Durham, and that she is mystified by their actions.

Maybe if the Premier and minister actually consulted Ontario families and education workers before slashing education funding and forcing the closure of neighbourhood schools, they wouldn't be so mystified as to why Ontarians are so upset.

Speaker, when will this government finally admit that their policies of education cuts and forced school closures are failing Ontarians?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** As I said, the only way to solve a labour issue—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** The only way to solve a labour problem is to negotiate. We are committed to negotiating a collective agreement, and that's why, as we speak, people are sitting, negotiating, to arrive at a central agreement. That is the role that we will continue to play, because we are committed to achieving a central negotiated collective agreement.

With respect to funding, I'm sorry that the NDP doesn't think that a 56% increase in funding qualifies as an increase. They seem to think a 56% increase is a cut. I'm afraid I don't understand NDP math.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED SERVICES AUX PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** Ma question est pour la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires. Minister, in the 2014 budget, this government announced a significant investment in the developmental services sector and those individuals living with developmental disabilities. However, as you are aware, il existe des pressions considérables concernant les options disponibles en matière résidentielle pour les individus vivant avec une déficience comportementale et leurs besoins résidentiels à l'extérieur de leur maison familiale.

As identified by this Legislature's select committee on developmental disabilities, there are some well-known concerns regarding the access to residential services. Moreover, the Auditor General released a report last year that noted the number of people waiting for residential supports.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que la ministre peut nous expliquer ce que le gouvernement fait pour répondre à ces préoccupations?

**L'hon. Helena Jaczek:** Merci, la députée d'Ottawa–Orléans, pour la question. Le secteur des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle fait face à des pressions importantes en Ontario, en particulier les services en établissement.

As I announced last month, 525 adults have received new residential supports since budget 2014, moving toward our commitment of 1,400 new urgent residential supports over four years.

We are working with community partners in order to create a broader set of housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities. I had the opportunity to meet with my ministry's developmental services housing task force last week and discussed their progress so far.

Last month, the task force launched a call for proposals on innovative housing solutions.

I very much appreciate the work done by the housing task force and look forward to continuing to work with them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Merci, madame la Ministre. I know that organizations in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans appreciate that this government wants community partners to play an active part in finding the best solutions.

Minister, in the 2014 budget your ministry committed to timelines to eliminate existing wait-lists for people waiting for direct funding assistance. As you know, direct funding through Special Services at Home, for children until 18, and Passport, for adults, provides funding for individuals and families that can be used towards particular programming at agencies of their choice. Through these direct funding programs, this government is helping to support individual choice and encourage independence for those with developmental disabilities and their families.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que la ministre peut partager avec cette Chambre le progrès qui est fait en ce qui a trait au financement pour répondre aux listes d'attente?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm pleased to report that 14,000 people now have new direct funding to purchase supports and services; that is, 8,000 more children and 6,000 more adults since the 2014 budget.

I have visited many places across the province, including Ottawa, and have witnessed first-hand the need of those with developmental disabilities and the support that our front-line workers and agencies are providing.

Comme la députée d'Ottawa–Orléans l'a fait remarquer, pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle, ce financement direct fournit des soutiens qui les aident à vivre de façon plus indépendante, à participer à la vie de leur collectivité et à continuer de vivre avec leur famille. Notre gouvernement ne ménage pas ses efforts pour faire de l'Ontario un endroit plus inclusif pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle. Merci, monsieur le Président.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, I've been asking for the release of the special purpose account for over three years now. Legislation in this House would state that it must be tabled yearly. The SPA is generated from the fees collected from the hunters and anglers of this province, supposedly to be reinvested in resource management.

Your government insists that the SPA fund is decreasing. However, we cannot verify that assertion because you refuse to table the document. Hunters and anglers are facing increased fees and new service fees, and seniors may now have to purchase a fishing licence.

Minister, will you show some transparency and table the documents today?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I thank the member for the question. I do believe at least two of the reports that the particular member is referencing have been tabled. I'll double-check, but I'm pretty sure two have been tabled. There is one yet to come. I've been happy to make that offer of information that he's been looking for for some time available to him.

Speaker, in regard to the fees that the member continues to raise in this House, there was a significant consultation that was undertaken one or two years ago. Through that process, there were a variety of suggestions that came in through the consultation on what we needed to do to continue to keep the SPA whole. Many of those recommendations were dismissed.

The member keeps flying the attitude about a seniors' licence fee coming in. I've very publicly stated on a number of occasions that that was suggested through the consultation. It's not something that I have ever contemplated doing. I've said that in here before and I say it in here again, so the member perhaps, in his next supplementary or in the future, won't feel the need to reference a seniors' licencing issue on the SPA in this Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the minister: I will continually talk about that because we don't believe you on this side of the House.

Minister, you're increasing new fees, you're increasing the price of licences in this province and you're still behind in tabling the documents to this Legislature. I find it really interesting that the Out of Doors magazine is able to have information on this current SPA fund—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are a few on the edge, here.

Please finish.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker.

I find it interesting the Out of Doors magazine has information on the SPA fund that has yet to be tabled in this Legislature. Minister, I find that quite disrespectful to this chamber as a whole. Are you trying to manipulate the public by releasing snippets of incomplete information? You obviously do have the reports prepared. Why won't you release them in totality? What are you hiding from the people of Ontario?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, the SPA has approximately \$100 million a year in it; \$66 million of that comes from the licensing and fees that come into the ministry. It's a dedicated account that goes towards fish and wildlife management in the province of Ontario.

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By way of example, in the MNRF's Aylmer district, which I think is the member's riding, planned spending is \$873,000 on fish and wildlife management projects and

\$520,000 on enforcement in the 2014-15 year, all from the SPA.

As well, out of the SPA, we have been flying moose aerial inventories in the province of Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It goes both ways. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, you asked. Listen.

Carry on.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Almost every wildlife management unit in the province of Ontario has now been flown over the course of the last two or three years, to determine what the moose population numbers are.

We're taking the SPA money and we're using it for what it was intended to do. It's creating the databases upon which we can make reliable decisions on behalf of fishermen and hunters—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. A new study by two York University professors confirms what New Democrats have been saying all along: Auto insurance companies are making record profits while Ontario families are paying the highest auto insurance premiums in the country. In 2013 alone, Ontarians were overcharged for auto insurance by an estimated \$840 million. This is absolutely unacceptable.

The Liberal government has the ability to reduce premiums. However, time and time again, what they're doing instead is giving more and more profits to insurance companies. They're breaking their promise. The Liberal government had said very clearly—they promised to reduce auto insurance by 15%. But instead, they haven't even delivered half of that.

This is again another broken promise. Enough is enough. Will this government, in the upcoming budget, commit to following through on their promise?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Congratulations on being deputy of the New Democratic party. The man has delivered his very first question.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** And now, as deputy leader of the NDP, I expect you to support the resolutions and the work we're doing to lower auto insurance rates going forward.

Let us not get back to what you did before, and that was delay what was necessary to bring these rates down. We postponed legislation that was required. That delay has, as a result, delayed the opportunity for us to lower still the costs. As a result, work that has been done is now transforming into lower costs.

Now we're halfway there. We need to get all the way there—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I stand; you sit.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, you have sight.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** What we did is, we didn't support—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's enough. The deputy House leader is warned.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

New data from the Financial Services Commission of Ontario shows very clearly that the Liberal government are dragging their feet to support drivers in Ontario, yet they move so quickly to put more profits in the pockets of insurance companies.

The government has said that reducing auto insurance is a part of their economic plan for Ontarians, and that rates are coming down—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Natural Resources, come to order.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:**—but when we speak to people, we know that the rates aren't coming down. People are instead seeing their rates go up.

How is it possible that this government has been allowing insurance companies—individual ones—to increase their rates instead of bringing those down?

Two years ago, this government made a promise, and they've broken that promise. When will we see real action on this file? When will we see the government actually commit to reducing auto insurance by 15%?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Auto insurance rates must go down by cutting costs. As a result, we've taken actions to reduce the costs of claims.

It is true: Ontario costs of claims are far higher than they are in other provinces of Canada. Some of them require some tough decisions. We hope that the NDP will support some of the legislation, some of the work we're doing, to find ways to reduce costs.

We also know that there are a number of companies now that have reduced their rates by more than 15% already. We know that, working together with the competitive market that exists, we could further some of those reductions, but we need support from the NDP on this. I'm looking at you. I'm hoping that they'll look at you as well, recognizing that together we can get it done. This budget will enable us to do that. I look to them to support it as we go forward.

#### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Our government recognizes that the wealth of natural resources found in northern Ontario is vital to our northern economy. Forest harvesting and milling, as well

as mineral production and processing, are an incredibly important part of my community of Sudbury and continue to be pathways to prosperity for all northerners.

In 2014, the total number of direct jobs in mineral production was 26,000, with an additional 50,000 jobs associated with manufacturing and processing.

The forestry sector currently provides over 170,000 direct and indirect jobs in over 260 communities.

Can the minister please share the details of the recent Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program and how it will continue to ensure a stable business climate and protect jobs in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the question from the MPP from Sudbury.

We know that the best way to protect jobs for northerners is to ensure that northern Ontario remains a destination where major mining, forestry and manufacturing companies choose to do business. That certainly was one of the reasons why we were so pleased to introduce the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program back in 2010. This is a program designed to assist northern Ontario's major industrial electricity consumers to reduce their electricity costs and create and sustain jobs, maintaining global competitiveness.

That's why I was so excited, two weeks ago, alongside my colleagues the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the MPP for Sudbury, to announce an ongoing \$120-million commitment to investment in the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program. We have heard loud and clear that the program has helped position Ontario as an attractive destination for investment, and we look forward to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** I'd like to thank the minister for that response. We know that the cost and supply of electricity is a major consideration for companies when they choose where to operate.

This program continues to receive positive feedback across the north. We heard the president of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities state that this support is "maintaining global competitiveness and helping to sustain local jobs." The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association has also expressed that this is great news for industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the minister outline what the benefits are to companies operating under the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you again to the member for the question. This program is part of Premier Wynne and our government's commitment to support the north and build a very strong economy across the province. We just heard about the Connecting Links program and the \$50-million commitment by the Minister of Transportation—another piece of that commitment.

Since launching the industrial electricity rate program in 2010, we have demonstrated that it can reduce industrial electricity rates, on average, by up to 25%, and



industry is certainly telling us the same thing. Richard Garneau, Resolute Forest Products' CEO and president, said that the program is "a cornerstone of the electricity program in northern Ontario." Goldcorp's Bill Gascon said, "It reduces our costs significantly on our site." Marc Boissonneault of Glencore said that the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program is one of the puzzle pieces that will determine the company's future in Sudbury.

We are very proud of this program—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### PETITIONS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Premier today. Premier, for over two years, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly has been reviewing and debating electronic petitions. The mandate is simple—not whether we should change the role of petitions; just simply whether we should allow online petitions in this House—and yet for two years, despite countless research and presentations by the Clerk as well as by expert witnesses, the government committee members have ragged the puck.

Last week at committee, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River gave us our greatest insight as to why the government won't move forward. He said, "The worst thing governments do ... is give people hope." Premier, is your government preventing electronic petitions in this Legislative Assembly because you fear that they give people hope?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate the question.

I think we all know very clearly that this government stands for accountability and transparency. The amount of work we have done in terms of Bill 8 to ensure that government is more open, more accountable and transparent to the people of Ontario is exemplary—not to mention the work that—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Lanark will come to order.

Carry on.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** —not to mention the work that the Open Government panel has done in regard to opening up the government, making sure that there's more information that's available to Ontarians, that there is access to open data. It all speaks to ensuring that people have more information available.

The committee is looking into the matter, and we respect their deliberation in this matter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It looks like the House leader likes to rag the puck as well.

Premier, we've heard from expert witnesses that all three caucuses have the ability to implement electronic petitions immediately. That's because members from all

three caucuses already use electronic petitions. We have the opportunity to finally take a step forward to modernize this Legislature.

Premier, will you commit to this House that your government will move forward, and not rag the puck, and allow electronic petitions, or do you really share the member for Scarborough–Rouge River's opinion that the worst thing government can do is give people hope?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** My understanding is that in the committee there has only been one deputation thus far, and that so-called expert is a staff person of the member opposite who's asking the question. I don't think that really qualifies him as an expert on e-petitions.

We task members of the committee to do important work on behalf of this Legislature and of their constituents. This is an important issue. This government is very much open to ensuring that government is open, that there is more data that is available. If electronic petitions is something that the committee wants to explore, we should let them do their work, to hear from experts, to look at other jurisdictions, as to what the mechanism would be. I think we should not be second-guessing or doubting the members of the committee for the important work they do in the committee. I thank them for the work they have been doing on this very important issue.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Premier. Prior to the election, the Premier promised Ontarians that within 10 years she would deliver train service every 15 minutes on all GO lines. She promised Kitchener, Guelph and Brampton that they would see all-day, two-way service every 15 minutes within five years. But on Friday, the government drastically cut these transit plans. Instead of 15-minute service, people in Barrie and Newmarket will get 60-minute service. Instead of all-day, two-way service every 15 minutes, Kitchener, Guelph and Brampton will get peak-hour, peak-direction service every 30 minutes.

This government promised funding for rapid transit projects in Hamilton, Brampton and Durham, for a Toronto relief line, for the Yonge subway extension, and on and on. Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** It's not often in this House that I have the opportunity to stand and speak so proudly with a set-up like that from that particular member.

Last Friday in Barrie, I was very proud to stand alongside the Premier as she announced that over the next decade this government will invest \$13.5 billion in transforming the GO Transit network. What we talked about that day means that there will be more than a doubling of peak service and a quadrupling of off-peak service compared to where we stand today, reduced journey times for some cross-region transit trips across

this network and a much wider range of travel options right across the GTHA.

Just this morning, I stood alongside so many members and caucus colleagues from Peel region to announce the province's commitment to build the \$1.6-billion Hurontario-Main LRT that will run from Mississauga to Brampton.

That's the job that we're doing. We're going to keep building Ontario up. Get on board and join us.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LES RÉGIMES DE PENSION AGRÉÉS COLLECTIFS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 57, Loi créant un cadre pour les régimes de pension agréés collectifs et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 57, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1146 to 1151.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On March 25, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 57.

All those in favour, please rise one at time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Anderson, Granville	Hillier, Randy	Murray, Glen R.
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Baker, Yvan	Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Del Duca, Steven	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Wong, Soo
Dunlop, Garfield	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.

Fedeli, Victor  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fraser, John  
Gravelle, Michael

Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Miller, Norm  
Moridi, Reza

Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Bisson, Gilles  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy  
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France  
Gretzky, Lisa  
Hatfield, Percy  
Horwath, Andrea  
Mantha, Michael

Miller, Paul  
Sattler, Peggy  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Tabuns, Peter  
Vanthof, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 77; the nays are 17.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 16, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** A point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order, the member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** A point of order: In his response to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, the government House leader, I believe, impugned motive against an expert witness. It should be our three parties' choice who our expert witness is. The government House leader should not impugn anyone that we decide will come and appear before a committee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I appreciate the member's point of order. It is only a point of order when another member is impugned.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1155 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, Allah-u-Abha. Today is the first day of the festival of Ridvan. I have a number of members of the Baha'i community visiting us today. Please join me in welcoming members of the Baha'i community of the greater Toronto area.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ELECTORAL REFORM

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** With each passing election, we see an ever-decreasing amount of political participation at all levels of government. One of the main contributing factors cited by non-voters in their decision to not participate in elections is their belief that politicians simply pander to the electorate around election time and are not held accountable for their words or actions through their four-year tenure. Who can blame them when parties campaign on actions such as no cuts and a

balanced budget, only to find, a few months later, deep cuts and increased public debt?

My solution to this issue comes in the form of my legislation entitled the Election Amendment Act (MPPs' Recall), 2015, which I will be debating on May 7.

The purpose of this legislation is to give the people of Ontario a tool to keep their elected officials accountable, by giving constituents the power to trigger a by-election when they feel their elected official no longer represents their interests, rather than having to wait for the next election.

I believe that with the electorate empowered in this way, we would see a rise in people encouraged to participate in our democratic process, while simultaneously making the democratic process more direct, more responsible and stronger, and restoring much-needed integrity to this province's political system.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Today I stand in solidarity with members of OPSEU Local 294 in my riding of Welland and the ridings of fellow MPPs in the Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand and Brant (HNHB) region. These members have been on strike for 12 days.

My inbox has been flooded with emails from many of the constituents who are patients, or families of patients, who have come to depend on nurses for the irreplaceable health services they deliver day in and day out.

Donna Fobert, who suffers from a destroyed skull plate from a brain tumour, describes them not as nurses but as family. She fully supports their right to a fair and quality work environment, and would be on the picket line with them if she physically could. She says nobody wins when nurses cannot do their jobs, and ultimately, it's patients like her who are suffering the most. Donna is one of the 1,600 patients affected by this dispute.

The CCAC, responsible for contracting the work to the for-profit CarePartners, is a publicly funded agency, but there has not been a peep from this Liberal government about ensuring that the hard-working health care professionals and support staff are treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

I stand today to request that the Minister of Labour urge CarePartners, a for-profit agency, to put patient care before profits and ensure that patients go back to receiving the care that they need in the immediate future.

#### MILTON TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to rise today to tell you about a great charitable organization in Halton. Halton is one of the fastest-growing and most affluent communities in the province, and I can't think of a better place to live, work or raise a family. But we still have too many residents who face significant difficulties making ends meet in their day-to-day lives. These residents need a lifeline, a helping hand, to keep them in a warm home.

Since 2011, Milton Transitional Housing has been that lifeline. In fact, recently I attended a fundraiser, the Coldest Night of the Year, and also the Empty Bowls fundraiser, where they hold events to raise funds for this very important cause.

For years this dedicated group has worked tirelessly to build bridges between the short-term emergency shelter system and long-term affordable housing. They do an incredible job in building our community up and making sure that our neighbours don't fall through the cracks.

That's why I was so pleased to announce last Friday that Milton Transitional Housing had received a three-year, \$218,000 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. This funding will allow the organization to grow its staff, expand support services and provide greater access to affordable transitional housing in Milton by more than tripling the number of housing units from three to 10.

Nobody in Halton or this province should ever have to live without a stable roof over his or her head. Milton Transitional Housing provides more than just a roof over their heads; they provide a compassionate, human connection to those facing difficult times.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I want to share today some of the repercussions of this Liberal government's mis-managed energy file, in particular the Green Energy Act and the consequence that this act has had in my riding and possibly across the province.

The Green Energy Act was introduced in 2009 and since then it has wreaked havoc across Ontario. It has increased all homeowners' yearly bills by \$1,100. It has torn communities apart. Really, Speaker, it has been nothing more than an absolute disaster.

I want to refer to a release that I received earlier this week where it says "Wind Leaseholders May Be on the Hook for Billions."

It goes on to read: A recent visit to the registry office in Goderich, ServiceOntario, has received or revealed that a registration of \$1 billion—I'll repeat this: "A ... visit ... to the ... registry office in Goderich ... has revealed the registration of ... \$1 billion ... by" a wind company on approximately "100 wind leaseholder properties in Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh.... Certified public records indicate that some properties may be encumbered at 20 times" more than "their farmland value, or more."

This is of grave concern. I ask today if the Liberals really anticipated the results of their poor decisions back in 2009. It's time they repealed this Green Energy Act and the disaster that it's wreaked across this province.

#### LEADING WOMEN, LEADING GIRLS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Last Friday I hosted a celebration for the seven women and girls honoured this year by the Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities recognition program in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Melanie Baker was a core organizer behind Voices Carry, an event which raised \$10,000 for women in crisis in response to Bill Cosby's appearance in Kitchener.

Georgia Cunningham is a vice-president of S.G. Cunningham and mentors other women in construction while donating her time to numerous causes and fund-raisers.

Karley George is a writer, producer and director who made a point to hire women for traditionally male technical roles when producing her play Fool's Paradise.

Sarah Ingle is a We Day ambassador, student council and model UN member and was recognized for her potential by BlackBerry's Build a Village awards program.

Janice Lee is the city of Kitchener's 2015 Artist in Residence. She founded KW Poetry Slam, chaired Rainbow Reels queer film festival and runs workshops teaching girls to express themselves through poetry.

Fauzia Mazhar is the founder and chair of the Coalition of Muslim Women, KW, which has grown to include over 100 active volunteers. She works tirelessly to encourage other women as they become community leaders.

Kirsten Pendlebury is the founder of the Female Equality Matters club at her school, which fosters a passion for social justice and gender equity among her peers.

I would like to congratulate all the leading women and leading girls, recognize and thank them for the work they do to speak up, speak out and, as Janice said on Friday, live a life with dignity and integrity. It was a pleasure to honour them in my community.

#### BAHA'I COMMUNITY

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Today I rise in the House to say Allah-u-Abha and, joined by my colleague Reza Moridi, MPP for Richmond Hill, to wish the people of the Baha'i faith a happy Ridvan.

Ridvan is a 12-day religious festival and is one of the most important celebrations of the Baha'i faith. Often referred to as the "king of festivals," it takes its name from the Garden of Ridvan located near Bagdad, Iraq. The site is historically significant as it's where Baha'u'llah, the faith founder, spent 12 days prior to his religious journey to Istanbul before declaring that he was a divine messenger in 1863.

1510

Beginning at sunset April 20 until sunset of May 2, followers of the Baha'i faith honour the 12 days that Baha'ullah spent in the Garden of Ridvan by celebrating spring and renewal of spirituality. There are approximately 35,000 Baha'i living in Canada, with more than half of them living here in Ontario. In York region, which includes the great ridings of Newmarket-Aurora and Richmond Hill, more than 2,200 individuals practise the Baha'i faith and are celebrating the festival of Ridvan.

I would like to wish everybody celebrating this 12-day religious festival a happy Ridvan, including the residents of Newmarket-Aurora who celebrate this festival, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey and Farzaneh Peterson,

members of the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of Newmarket, who are here with us today.

#### JASON PETTAPIECE

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Today I am pleased to recognize my nephew, Jason Pettapiece. Jason is an avid runner, and, yesterday, he competed in the prestigious Boston Marathon. He completed the marathon in three hours, 22 minutes and 51 seconds. This is an outstanding accomplishment. We are all so proud of his fine finish and for all the work he has put in to make it to this point.

Perth-Wellington was well represented at this year's Boston Marathon. Local racers included Matt Feltham, Ercole Guidi, Julee Nickel, Pete Wilson and Tammy Storey.

I would like to congratulate everyone who participated in the 2015 Boston Marathon. Again, I would like to congratulate my nephew, Jason, on his remarkable accomplishment.

#### POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I rise in the House today to commemorate and remember those lost in the Katyn massacre of April 1940. The Katyn massacre was the mass execution of 20,000 Polish military officers by the Soviet Union during World War II. For the people of Poland, Katyn is a symbol of the criminal policy of the Soviet system against the Polish nation.

After Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union concluded their non-aggression pact of 1939 and Germany invaded Poland from the west, Soviet forces occupied the eastern half of Poland. As part of this occupation, 20,000 Polish military personnel fell into Soviet hands and were interned in prison camps inside the Soviet Union. However, when the Polish government in exile requested that the Polish military personnel be released in order to fight the Nazis, the Soviets said they couldn't be found. The fate of these missing prisoners remained a mystery until the Germans found the mass graves in 1943.

This crime against the Polish nation decimated the ranks of the Polish military, the ruling class and its intelligentsia. Soviet leaders insisted for decades the Polish officers found at Katyn had been killed by the invading Germans. It wasn't until 2000 that Russia admitted that the Soviet Union was responsible for this crime.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand with the families and the victims of Katyn, including my own family—having lost two great-uncles there—as well as with all Polish people who still feel the haunting cloud of this atrocity. We shall remember them.

#### SHOW CHOIR CANADA CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I have a very inspiring story I want to share with you from my riding of Kitchener Centre. It involves a group of talented young people who

won big at a recent national singing competition called the fifth annual Show Choir Canada Championship.

The KW Glee club was one of this year's 14 competitors. According to their artistic director Amanda Kind, KW Glee was definitely the underdog. While their competitors were costumed in a sea of sparkles, the KW Glee ensemble was not, as many of youth in the 72-member choir simply couldn't afford the flashy costumes. Instead, the students wore their own clothes and called it the "urban look". The theme of their performance was called School of Pop. The songs they belted out over 20 minutes included Pop 101, Uptown Funk, and Shake It Out. I can't say that I know any of these songs, but I'm sure it was fabulous.

It was clear that the audience and the judges were evaluating based on substance rather than sequins. On hearing their names called as the first-place winners, the young singers fell to the ground with relief, noting that this was a "wow" moment in life. In addition to winning a big trophy, KW Glee also received a gift certificate from Yamaha, which will help them buy microphones and other equipment.

I'm so proud of KW Glee's much-deserved title of grand champions, and I look forward to many more creative performances in the coming years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 21, 2015, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ELECTION AMENDMENT ACT (MPPS' RECALL), 2015

### LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI ÉLECTORALE (RÉVOCATION DES DÉPUTÉS)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to the recall of members of the Legislative Assembly / Projet de loi 89, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale en ce qui concerne la révocation des députés à l'Assemblée législative.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** This bill amends the Election Act to provide a process by which a member of the Legislative Assembly may be recalled and a by-election held to fill the vacant seat.

An eligible voter in a member's electoral district can apply to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issuance of a recall petition. No application for the issuance of a recall petition may be made during the year following a member's election or one year before the next scheduled general election.

A proponent of a recall petition has 60 days to return the petition to the Chief Electoral Officer with the signatures of eligible voters in the electoral district who represent at least 25% of the total number of voters who voted in the last election held in the district.

In that case, the seat of the member in the assembly becomes vacant. A by-election is then held to fill the vacancy. The recalled member is free to be a candidate in that by-election.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Children and Youth Services is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item number 48 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot item number 48 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### CURRICULUM

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** This is the first day that I'll be presenting a series of petitions entitled "Demand-

ing Public Input to the Sex Ed Content of the 'Grade 1-8 Health and Physical Education Curriculum.'

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2010 the people of Ontario rejected the sensitive, graphic, age-inappropriate sex education content contained in the 2010"—

*Interjections.*

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. I find it unique that I have to remind members not to heckle during petitions.

Carry on, please.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:**—"grade 1-8 health and physical education curriculum;

"Whereas, in 2010, the government responded to the public concerns by removing the sensitive, graphic and age-inappropriate content, and promised to provide 'opportunities for parents to lend shape to a (sex ed) policy' (Premier McGuinty, April 22, 2010);

"Whereas parents and the public at large have not been granted opportunity to provide input into the content of the proposed curriculum;

"Whereas the government survey process did not allow for broad public input, limiting input to one hand-picked representative per school;

"Whereas the government has announced they will fully implement a revised curriculum in September 2015;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour the 2010 promise to 'provide opportunities for parents to lend shape to a (sex ed) policy,' prior to implementation of said curriculum, by providing:

"(a) a four-month public response time;

"(b) opportunities for parents, and the public at large, to understand, and effectively respond in a way that shapes the said curriculum."

I fully support this, Speaker, and affix my name to it.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I have a petition here that was started by Val Kennedy from Englehart, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario communities are connected across long distances by bus service; and

"Whereas the ONTC bus service is the only form of public transportation available to many northern Ontario residents; and

"Whereas reduction of customer service and the closure of stations will cause deterioration of the overall system of public transportation of passengers and goods in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario committed to providing enhanced bus service to alleviate the loss of the ONTC passenger rail service;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Ontario Northland Transportation Commission bus service must be enhanced to ensure reliable and continuous accessibility including uniform provision of adequate public transportation for all communities and people of northern Ontario."

I wholeheartedly agree, and send it down with page Abdullah.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

"Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

"Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers."

I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to page Ethan to bring forward.

#### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here, again, that was presented by Community Living Tillsonburg and People First Tillsonburg.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

"Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

"Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015 shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost of transportation; and

“Whereas people receiving ODSP already struggle to get by, and incomes on ODSP provide them with little or no ability to cover these costs from regular benefits; and

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry’s goal of increasing employment and the provincial government’s poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government’s plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

#### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank Mr. Robert Melcher, who presented me with many signatures on this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Ashton to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

#### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you for the recognition, Speaker. I have a petition here for community school busing.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario spends nearly \$1 billion per year on student transportation; and

“Whereas ‘community enterprise’ could deliver the same or better service with surplus revenues being reinvested in education; and

“Whereas active participation of communities can be achieved by mobilizing ‘community enterprises’ to provide the service. This model provides a very high ROI for Ontarians by making certain that any surplus revenues are reinvested in education;

“Whereas a community enterprise act is necessary to overcome the hurdles to mobilization of community enterprises for student transportation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario consider the need for a community enterprise act to help facilitate the mobilization of communities and financial resources for the purpose of developing community enterprises for student transportation and other undertakings.”

I agree with the petition and leave it with page Ethan.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.”

I totally agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Ishika.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** J’ai une pétition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario keep the obstetrics unit open at Leamington District Memorial Hospital.”

I fully agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to Joshua to bring up to the desk.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I have a petition entitled “Elimination of Microbeads from Cosmetic Products.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas microbeads are tiny plastics less than one millimetre in diameter which pass through our water filtration systems and get into our rivers and the Great Lakes; and

“Whereas these microbeads represent a growing presence in our Great Lakes and are contributing to the plastic pollution of our freshwater lakes and rivers; and

“Whereas the scientific research and data collected to date has shown that microbeads that get into our water system collect toxins and organisms mistake these microbeads for food and these microbeads can move up our food chain;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Mandate the Ontario government to ban the creation and addition of microbeads to cosmetic products and all other related health and beauty products; and

“The Ministry of the Environment conduct an annual study of the Great Lakes analyzing the waters for the presence of microbeads.”

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Jae Min.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Misha.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Rita Boudreault for adding to this petition. It reads as follows: **1530**

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning ... a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas” since “October 2009, insured PET scans” are “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with” Health Sciences North, “its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through” Health Sciences North, “thereby serving and providing equitable access to the” residents of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Joshua to bring it to the Clerk.

#### LEGAL AID

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** “Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I agree with this petition and I will give it to page Joshua to bring to the Clerk.

#### LYME DISEASE

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I totally agree with this petition, and I’ll affix my name and send it to the desk with Samantha.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as ‘delivery fees’;



“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the ‘delivery fees’ looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Stop Algoma Power’s influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Joshua to bring it down to the Clerk’s table.

### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

“Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

“Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers.”

I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to page Ryan.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank all members for their petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 80, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animals for Research Act with respect to the possession and breeding of orcas and administrative requirements for animal care, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and,

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, May 11, 2015, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 80:

—notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2015; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2015; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, May 25, 2015, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Monday, May 25, 2015, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, May 26, 2015. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 20.

Mr. Bradley.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It is my honour to speak in favour of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015. As has been discussed over the course of, well, seven hours of debate,

the bill amends the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and makes related amendments to the Animals for Research Act. These amendments, if passed by the House, will prohibit the future possession or breeding of orcas anywhere in Ontario. It would also enable a framework for animal welfare committees which would ensure planning, protection and oversight of animal care. This includes access to veterinarians with expertise in marine mammals and enhanced record-keeping.

Marine mammals are complex animals, and our government cares very deeply for the welfare of these magnificent and complex creatures. It has been while looking closely at this issue and developing new standards of care that we concluded that orcas, sometimes referred to as killer whales, should be treated differently than beluga whales and dolphins.

**1540**

Mr. Speaker, as such, our proposed amendments to the OSPCA Act would immediately prohibit possession and breeding of orcas in Ontario. The people of Ontario demand high standards of care for animals anywhere in the province, regardless of their habitat.

With these amendments, our government is taking the next big step on stronger protections for marine mammals to ensure that these unique and complex animals receive the best possible treatment and care. These amendments build on our government's ongoing efforts to have and maintain the strongest animal protection laws in Canada.

I know there's a lot of support for members of all sides of the House. On April 13, the PC member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Mr. Miller, said the following: "I see that a poll was conducted in the Toronto Sun, March 23, 2015, and 89% of respondents agreed that Ontario should ban the importation of killer whales. I think that's probably generally supported, as it seems to be in the general public."

The member from Sarnia–Lambton is quoted as saying the following: "I will be supporting Bill 80 at second reading. I believe that the work that Dr. Rosen's committee has done is very thorough and that their suggestions form the basis for sound decision-making in moving forward."

The NDP member for Parkdale–High Park said the following: "Let's listen to the Rosen report and the recommendations therein, because they're good ones, and let's now finally put them into place, quickly."

The member for Kitchener–Waterloo has been supportive of the bill as well and has encouraged this government to pass it as quickly as possible. This is what the member for Kitchener–Waterloo had to say: "This piece of legislation, if passed—and by all accounts it will be; who could really vote against it?—should be fast-tracked. We should get it done."

I urge all my colleagues in the House to swiftly pass this legislation. In the last Parliament, the Legislature essentially ground to a halt and was not able to move forward as expeditiously as I think most people in the

province would want it to. Only 39% of government bills were passed in the last minority Parliament. That's a very low level of passage. That's compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed, going back to 1990.

Voters of Ontario really sent a substantially clear message last June. They wanted our government to get on with the business of governing in their best interests.

There has been considerable debate on this bill. We have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives, and they've been very valuable, in my view, to this debate. It is time we ended second reading and referred the bill to committee, where a lot of people think the real work happens to take place.

At the same time, the House can move to substantive debate on other matters. There are a number of important pieces of legislation that have already been introduced which the government would like to debate in the House and move through the legislative process. Examples that I know you'd like to hear: Bill 6, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act; Bill 9, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act; Bill 37, the Invasive Species Act; Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act; Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act; Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act; and Bill 85, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

We'd like to spend time debating some of the other important pieces of legislation currently before the House. We are unable to do so until Bill 80 is dealt with, and that is why I urge all members to proceed with it. That is why we have this motion before the House.

I can remember, as an opposition House leader, that from time to time the opposition, when I was there, would speak perhaps longer than it had to on some of the bills. It was alleged then by the government House leaders of the day from the Conservative Party that it was simply a stalling tactic. I cannot confess to that. It may have been other members who were involved in that. I don't ever recall being involved in that myself.

What we have here is a piece of legislation which, in principle, seems to have the approval of all members of the House. I'm one who happens to believe that where there are more contentious pieces of legislation, debate should go on for a longer period of time and committees should sit for a longer period of time, both to allow public input and for amendments and that where there is, in fact, pretty good consensus in the House, we should move forward.

So far, we've heard a lot of support for this bill but we've not seen the bill moving forward as I think most members, in their heart of hearts, would really like to see happen. So I'm helping them out with their heart of hearts by providing this particular motion to the House, which I am confident will be supported by the whip of the Conservative Party and certainly by members of the New Democratic Party as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the deputy House leader. Further debate.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I say to my friend from St. Catharines, that old expression, who are you and what happened to Jim Bradley in this last little while?

I enjoyed the minister's speech and the expression on his face while he was delivering the speech.

Speaker, I was one who didn't have an opportunity to speak to Bill 80 because of the time allocation motions. I regret that I'm speaking belatedly through a time allocation motion, but I nonetheless want to devote my comments to Bill 80 and express my concerns about the bill and what we like about an approach to enhance animal welfare and safety in the province in Ontario. But let's do so, and my point of view as a member of the assembly has been to do so, on a basis related to science and expertise, not emotion or political opportunism. That's what I worry about in this bill.

I know my colleague the talented and handsome member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has spoken on this bill. You may have paid close attention to that speech a while ago. It outlined, I think, in a comprehensive fashion the concerns that we have about the bill, the history around this. I'll probably repeat some of those points, but in the interest of time I'll try to be relatively brief.

Look, Speaker, I think we always have to be cautious in this chamber when we're intervening in legitimate choice by individuals, families and businesses to operate. Marineland and other aquariums, in my view, are a legitimate choice for entertainment and education. I was born and raised in Fort Erie. An annual summer trip to Marineland was just part of growing up. I enjoyed it. I'd take my own daughter Miller there, and when Maitland is old enough, she'll be coming too. I actually believe, and I know some members will disagree with me, that by actually seeing the marine animals up close, to touch the beluga whales, as you can do at Marineland, imbues in our children a value for nature and for life and an interest in marine mammals.

I know some colleagues in debate have said, "Well, they can watch the Internet." Other members have said, "Well, you go on an ocean cruise and see the animals in the wild." Truthfully, that's a rather elite opinion, because a lot of my constituents can't afford to do that. The Internet may be a choice for some, but over a million people each year make a choice to visit Marineland, to enjoy the activities at Marineland and to see the animals themselves.

I worry that the government may be winking and nodding at some rather radical opinion—there are protests on occasion at Marineland—that all aquariums and zoos should be shut down and the only place to see an animal is in the wild. It's a legitimate opinion; I don't share that opinion. But I think we have to be careful, as legislators, not to run down that course and either try to ban or, over time, regulate businesses out of business that offer legitimate choice to families and educational benefits. We need to be cautious.

What concerns me too, as a member from Niagara and somebody who is very open in saying I enjoy what Marineland does and I have a belief in a high standard that it upholds—I'll speak to that a bit later on—is that I'm a little worried that the government is using this opportunistically. There's the old expression in politics

about the channel changer: talking about an issue to deflect from the major issues of the province, for example, the unemployed families who can barely make ends meet, higher hydro bills, the fact that we are spending well beyond our means and have no serious plan to get our economy back on track or to make sure, like families have to do, that we spend only as much as we take in. Sometimes to change the channel they would talk about alcohol—that's common, and we've seen that in play; another one is to talk about killer whales, orcas and other marine life. It's part of the business, I guess, but I want to caution the government that in playing to a more radical opinion out there, and in trying to change the channel, that they may put an active business out of business, again, one enjoyed by a million men, women and children on an annual basis. They do have 700 employees who depend on work there. They are, I think, the single biggest advertiser to bring tourists to Niagara Falls and the region and the largest generator of overnight stays.

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I think, over time, my colleague from St. Catharines has known folks who had worked at Marineland. There are tens of thousands of families who have been able to pay the bills out of that work. I think we would agree, those of us who know the park and know the place, that it wasn't simply a job; they loved the animals. They actually cared deeply about them. People who would work there day in and day out wanted to make sure that the killer whales there, the dolphins, the sea lions—any of the animals—would have been taken care of. I simply don't believe the more radical view that somehow tens of thousands of Niagarans are in on the plot, abusing animals simply to get a paycheque. I don't believe that, nor do those like my family, who would go every summer.

Marineland's business depends on ensuring that the animals are treated well. Otherwise, they wouldn't be in business very long and would have a heck of a time attracting employees. The case is actually the opposite, Speaker.

I think the government needs to be very cautious in its approach when ensuring we have strong standards in the province and not to use this as a backdoor way to regulate a business out of business, as we've seen in the United Kingdom, where they have brought in standards that weren't about improving animal welfare; they were about closing down aquariums. I know there will be supporters of the Liberal Party that are pushing for that. I don't think that's right. I think Niagarans watching and listening would agree that the jobs only come about out of high standards for animal care. They get tickets sold and get people to work.

So how do you go about doing that? It just seems to me that the most sensible way forward is to base decisions on standards around the most modern science and expertise.

The government, to its credit, did commission a study by Dr. Rosen, a renowned marine biologist. Our friend from Chatham-Kent-Essex spoke quite a bit about Dr.

Rosen's report. It seems to be sensible that what they call the CCAC standard, the standard from the Canadian Council on Animal Care, should be the standard. It's nationwide. It is the highest level of care for animals, not only in Canada but I think worldwide-recognized. Marineland, I believe, would support that point of view. I know their employees would, and their patrons.

Why not, instead of allowing a minister who could be influenced for political means, or has already used this issue to distract attention from big issues around jobs and the deficit—I don't think they've earned our trust on their motive here. Instead, why not enshrine the CCAC standards, that high level that Marineland would support and patrons would support, as opposed to the arbitrariness of political decision-making behind closed doors?

When you look at, for example, neonics in the province and the decision around that, which has actually run from science and embraced emotion—it's going to cause hardship for our farmers and increase the cost of goods—or the way the government is using a climate change debate to hide behind, to increase taxes—even though the Premier did promise not to increase gas taxes, that's exactly what is going to happen through their new carbon tax initiative—I just don't trust them to give the ministry the authority to put something out of business. So let's use the CCAC standards.

The other comment I'll make on the animal welfare basis is particularly around the killer whale, the orca. The government says that this bill will ban taking orcas from the oceans and putting them in captivity. That was part of my colleague the minister's comments earlier on. But I think we actually know that it is pretty much impossible to do that. This was a practice decades ago. Kiska has been there for decades already, but international treaties have basically banned taking any more orcas out of the oceans into captivity. So this is not a reality. This does not happen. The notion of banning something that doesn't take place isn't really much of a true effort. It's actually a channel changer, as they say.

That issue aside, which, in practice, simply doesn't exist anymore in Canada and in the free world—the other aspect of this is, and I think my colleagues across the floor are going to listen to reason on this: We all recognize that Kiska, the killer whale currently there, cannot be put back in the wild. That would be a death sentence. But the government is also banning any kind of companionship down the road, so we're condemning it forever, until the animal perishes, to a life of isolation.

There may be circumstances where another aquarium has an extra killer whale. There may be circumstances where an aquarium does not continue in business and has a killer whale—to actually match them up. I believe the scientific community, as the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex put out there, wants to see companionship for these animals. So I do hope that a sensible change will take place in the legislation to allow that kind of sensible alternative.

We agree with the ban. That has actually been the practice for some time now. It's not because of this legislation; it's just a long-standing fact.

It will give that opportunity for Kiska the killer whale to actually have a companion.

I know I have other colleagues who want to speak on this bill, Speaker.

I want to, again, emphasize caution by the government in their approach; to use a science- and expertise-based approach to having high standards for animal welfare. And don't use the short-term political opportunism or catering to a radical vote to arbitrarily close down a business that employs 700 people and invests millions in the local economy. I think there's a much better way of doing it. That's the approach we'll take as the PC caucus.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you to the minister for the opportunity to speak to Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015.

I'd like to take a moment to speak to the fact that this is actually the very first opportunity that I have had, as critic, to speak to this bill. The government has scheduled debate at such times that I have always been fulfilling other legislative duties in committee. So it's interesting: This is the first time I can actually speak to this bill, and it's during a debate on time allocation. I've heard of speed dating, Mr. Speaker, but this Liberal speed debating is new, and I wouldn't say it's in the best interests of Ontarians.

Back to this bill: When I was appointed as the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services, I didn't expect that the first bill I would have the opportunity to discuss in my new role would be regarding animal welfare, or, in this case, "whalefare," but I very much appreciate the opportunity.

The origins of this bill predate my time at Queen's Park, which shows you how long the changes have been needed. Regardless, I appreciate that the changes are being made now, and I will be supporting this bill at second reading, and I look forward to helping to improve this bill.

Speaker, the intention of the bill is to strengthen the existing protections for marine mammals in Ontario's marine parks and aquariums, as well as to provide new regulations for how large marine mammals can be observed or utilized for research. The priority, of course, is animal welfare, an area where a number of improvements were needed, but there are also a number of other considerations that need to be taken into account, which I will touch on during my remarks today.

As members of provincial Parliament, we all attempt to become educated on the various topics that we discuss in this chamber. But regardless of how extensive our research is, we are not the experts. Rather, we are representatives of those experts, and so I will also touch on some of the reports that informed the creation of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act as well.

Speaker, I appreciate the intentions of this bill, and I look forward to working with the government during the

committee phase to ensure that when Bill 80 reaches third reading, those intentions are still reflected in the final product.

I will begin with a review of what is in the bill.

The first few schedules of the bill deal with establishing new limitations around the selling, acquisition or breeding of orcas for captivity in Ontario; namely, the prohibition of all three. However, there are some exceptions that are also established within the bill. I will refer to section 3, subsection (1), which states: "No person shall possess or breed an orca in Ontario." In section 3, subsection (2), however, there is a caveat established that, "Despite subsection (1), a person may continue to possess an orca in Ontario if the person possessed the orca in Ontario on March 22, 2015," or, the day before this bill was introduced for first reading. The reason for this exception, Mr. Speaker, is due to extenuating circumstances. Currently, there is a single orca in captivity in Ontario: Kiska, who is currently held at Marineland.

Orcas are the largest whale kept in captivity. They travel the farthest, the fastest, and they are uniquely unsuited to captivity. This is because there are unique challenges when it comes to keeping whales or dolphins, the biggest of which is attempting to replicate their natural environment. We can replicate a terrestrial environment for an elephant, but building a pool that would have enough space for a whale, or would, more specifically, be deep enough for a whale—these are the finite constraints of constructing a marine environment, and orcas and other types of whales are also uniquely susceptible to stress, all of which can be amplified by such a constrained environment.

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It has been noted that the average life expectancy of an orca in captivity is roughly 40 years. This also happens to be the age that Kiska is currently approaching. It's also worth noting that life expectancy in the wild is actually closer to about a century. According to the government, in their consultations with experts they were told that, because of Kiska's age, any attempt at relocation may ultimately do more harm than help and could seriously jeopardize Kiska's health, which is ultimately why they opted to maintain this exemption.

The part that does raise eyebrows, however, is subsection 3(3), which states, "Despite subsection (1), a person who first possessed an orca in Ontario on or after March 23, 2015, but before the day the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015 received royal assent, may continue to possess the orca in Ontario until the day that is six months after the day the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015 received royal assent."

What this means is that the government has created a small window of six months following the royal assent of this act which would allow other orcas to be possessed in Ontario. I will leave it to the government to explain the reasoning for this additional detail, as I would like some further justification from them on why this subsection needed to be included in this bill. There may be a reason-

able justification for the window, so we will await that explanation. Fortunately, this is what the committee stage is for, and I look forward to further discussion on this point.

Certainly the focus of Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, has targeted its impact to orcas in captivity, but the reach of the bill is broader than that. Under this bill, the minister's regulation-making authority would also be extended to include prescribing administrative requirements related to the keeping of animals, including the establishment of animal welfare committees, animal care plans, veterinary care programs and mandated record-keeping and disclosure, as well as regulating human activity around the care of the animal, not just what physically touches the animal.

The legislation would also amend the Animals for Research Act, which would allow the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or OSPCA, greater oversight over the condition of large marine animals used in research. This includes providing inspectors the power to look at enclosures that the animal is not currently in but may be transported to at a later time, to ensure that they, too, are up to standard.

The amended act would also provide for the setting of regulations around the keeping, care and use of other marine mammals, such as walrus and dolphins, and regulations surrounding enclosure sizes, limits to sound exposure to animals and water quality would all be strengthened. Speaker, you can see that the act covers a spectrum of topics, but ultimately the purpose remains central to ensuring that large marine mammals are given the respect and proper treatment they deserve as the incredible and impressive creatures that they are.

As I mentioned earlier, I am not an expert in the field. I do have a degree in biology, and I am well acquainted with creatures across the province and beyond; just as a fun fact, it does seem like a lifetime ago, but I did field research in the rainforest, studying frogs and tadpoles in Vietnam over a summer when I was a student at Queen's.

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Fun fact. I also did some fieldwork in intertidal marine biology, studying starfish in the Bay of Fundy. However, the marine mammals that this bill addresses are on a significantly larger scale. Therefore, I will lean on the true experts and refer to a few reports that helped to inform the creation of this bill.

In 2012, the government first announced its intention to address issues of animal welfare in Ontario. As we all know, this government doesn't exactly move too quickly with things, so it wasn't until 2013 that a panel was commissioned on the care and maintenance of marine mammals. The report of the expert panel was finally received the year following, in June 2014, and they reaffirmed the position of animal rights activists across the province that the current standards were insufficient.

The report that the expert panel tabled, known as Developing Standards of Care for Marine Mammals in Captivity and Recommendations Regarding How Best to

Ensure the Most Humane Treatment of Captive Cetaceans, or, for short, the UBC report, outlined extensive recommendations—124 pages in total—for the government to adopt.

As additional background, a cetacean is a mammal such as a whale, dolphin or porpoise that lives in the ocean. They are complex creatures with complex social interactions and complex needs—but back to the report.

Some of the recommendations included requiring facilities that hold marine mammals to meet their physical and psychological environmental needs, requiring that facilities ensure that marine mammals are not harmed in their contact with the general public and requiring that facilities must demonstrate commitment to the long-term care and well-being of marine mammals.

To provide an overview of the issues that the expert panel was evaluating, I will read from the summary of the report:

“There are several aspects specific to the aquarium environment that can potentially cause stress in captive cetaceans, although none are unique to this group, and most can be mitigated through proper husbandry and habitat design. The most critical issues identified are the need for adequate pool space and design, appropriate social groups, and environmental enrichment. Additional concerns relate to suitable light and sound exposure in the habitat.

“The relative survival rates of captive cetaceans in comparison to their wild counterparts seem to vary by species. However, there is an overall trend for wild-caught individuals to suffer higher rates of mortality during the capture process and upon the initial acclimation period in the facility....

“Studies have demonstrated that cetaceans show physiological responses to stress that are typical of other mammals, although the nature of the stress response varies considerably by species. Studies show that transport, arrival at a new facility, and the introduction of new ‘pool mates’ can cause acute stress in several species. Unfortunately, obtaining samples to monitor the health status of individual captive cetaceans can also lead to stress responses, although adequate training can reduce these negative effects. Behavioural observations can be used as an alternate, inexpensive means to assess some aspects of animal well-being....

“These findings suggest that ensuring the welfare of captive cetaceans presents unique challenges due to the psychological and physiological needs of these animals. While we have given special consideration to the welfare of captive cetaceans according to the objectives set forth for the committee, we have considered all marine mammals in our review of existing regulations. It is our opinion that the present standards of care that apply to marine mammals in public display facilities are insufficient under the current Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. It is our opinion, based upon our review of the regulations and the available scientific evidence, that adequate care in captivity requires the adoption of an additional set of standards of care to address needs specific to this group of animals.”

These are fairly straightforward asks—common sense, one might even say—and, regardless of the technical nature of the issue, we can all understand the need for increased regulations surrounding enclosures, interactions, water quality etc. So we are pleased that these broad concepts are reflected in this bill, but disappointed that it has taken so long to get here. We look forward to working with the government and animal rights experts in the committee stage to ensure that all of the necessary components of the bill are included.

Though this legislation will strengthen protection for large marine mammals in captivity in Ontario, both present and future, the provisions regarding orcas in captivity will most directly affect Marineland. I was pleased to learn that Marineland has been involved throughout the creation of Bill 80 and worked as a member of the technical advisory group for this bill, along with other industry groups and experts.

As we all know, Marineland has a long history as a significant tourist attraction, and as the tourism industry plays such a significant role in the community in Niagara, I was pleased to learn that Marineland has been involved in the creation of the legislation.

Following the government’s tabling of this bill at the end of March, Marineland issued the following statement, and I’ll read that into the record:

“Marineland supports the government’s commitment to seeking guidance and following the best advice from marine mammal experts regarding appropriate standards of care for marine mammals.

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“The technical advisory committee provides essential input from independent marine mammal veterinarians and scientists who have decades of experience rescuing marine mammals, and providing for their ongoing health and care.

“Marineland trusts that the committee members can work co-operatively to provide the government with clear advice and direction towards meaningful standards that will ensure the continuing health of all marine mammals.

“Marineland believes it is essential that the process remain focused on the health and welfare of marine mammals, the decades of scientific research and experience that should inform the setting of standards, and on achieving clear and enforceable standards. We support the government’s view that legal standards need to be based on science, not political ideologies or public relations, and the technical advisory committee and the government’s own expert panel report should provide the basis on which to proceed.”

They continue: “Marineland trusts the government will focus on the clear recommendations of its expert panel and its chairman, Dr. Rosen. Marineland supports the recommendation of Dr. Rosen that the recently released comprehensive, independent, and peer-reviewed Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines be adopted. The guidelines are detailed, comprehensive in scope, and provide clear direction to any facility that houses marine mammals. The guidelines represent over 10 years of

work by virtually the entire Canadian scientific community with expertise in the marine mammal field and represent the best practices of marine mammal care.

“Marineland meets or exceeds those standards and is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and care of all its marine mammals.”

Speaker, on top of consulting with experts, it is also important to consult with the parties that will be affected by legislation to ensure that the community as a whole is able to transition effectively following any changes. We appreciate that this has occurred with this particular piece of legislation and hope that the bill is stronger as a result.

That being said, there are areas where this bill comes up short. I have already touched on the fact that this bill took a matter of years to come to fruition, but in its current form there are still areas for improvement, primarily in terms of enforcement.

Currently, Bill 80 would only allow the OSPCA to apply to the courts to remove a marine mammal in contravention of the act if the facility fails to do so itself, rather than having the ability to enforce the act directly. Consequently, this could permit the continued mistreatment of animals, as any sort of lengthy court application process, wait time or extended case could immensely draw the process out.

As well, I noted earlier that the bill permits a six-month period where prohibited animals can be brought into the province temporarily before being removed, which the government will have to elaborate on. As always, the legislation remains vague in areas about how the OSPCA's powers will be extended, and we look forward to clarifying during the committee stage.

This bill deals with increasing protections and regulations for marine mammals living in captivity in Ontario, and as the new critic for community safety and correctional services, I would be remiss not to also bring to the government's attention the need for increased protections and standards for humans living and working in captivity in Ontario. I believe wholeheartedly in the importance of the intentions of this legislation, but it is also my obligation to remind the government that all things cannot be swept under the rug. So while we are talking about life in captivity, let's talk about all life in captivity.

At the Toronto South Detention Centre, inmates are living in deplorable conditions and lack access to adequate health care and adequate supports for mental health. In multiple facilities, infirmaries are being used as additional holding space for inmates because of overcrowding and understaffing, and across the province, corrections officers are being denied access to adequate training that plays a vital role in their safety and the safety of the inmates they protect.

We need to improve the conditions for all life in captivity, just as we need to improve the conditions for marine mammals. It has taken years for this bill to actually reach the Legislature, and I hope that it will not take the government as long to address other pressing concerns facing the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Just in case, I just wanted to start the discussion now.

I will finish up by thanking the minister for the opportunity to speak today; like I said, I didn't expect this to be the first bill I would speak to as the new critic for community safety and correctional services, but it is an important topic and I have appreciated the chance to share my thoughts. The priority of this bill must first and foremost be increasing protections and standards for large marine mammals in our province, and though it isn't perfect, I believe that this goal is reflected in Bill 80.

This is about setting minimum standards. The closer these minimums are to best practices, the better, but we need to guarantee a minimum standard of care for all animals in captivity, and we hope that this bill will do just that. Currently, too many things are left up to inspector discretion on what is adequate or appropriate. Minimums must be quantifiable and enforceable if the intent of the bill is going to be realized.

I appreciate that the relevant experts and stakeholders have been consulted and included throughout the process and hope that they will continue to be regularly consulted as this bill progresses through the Legislature. New Democrats welcome this legislation, and I am pleased to support Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act at second reading.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today. I look toward to working with the government and related experts during the committee stage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to rise again today to speak to Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015.

Before I get into what I have to say with regard to this bill, I honestly would like to compliment my friend and colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook for his compassionate appeal to this bill, specifically as it pertained to Kiska the orca and her need for companionship—this bill doesn't do that—and the fact that this bill could actually be shutting down businesses, especially in the Niagara area, leaving hundreds of people unemployed. You know, if there's something that this government is good at, that's it. They know how to force businesses out of this province and leave tens of thousands of people unemployed.

Thankfully for myself, and perhaps some of the members here present in the Legislature today, I'm not going to be delivering remarks for an hour again, so they can breathe easy for that. In a lot of ways, we do support this bill, but we have some concerns with how it is presently written. I'd like to take a moment to highlight what some of those concerns are.

Such legislation has never been passed before in the province of Ontario, so in my hour lead-off I made a comparison to other jurisdictions that have already introduced an orca ban or similar legislation designed to protect the welfare of marine mammals and specifically orcas.

In several US states, the keeping of a single orca by itself in captivity has been outlawed. These states have

decided that this constitutes animal cruelty. But these changes were supported by animal rights groups because it is universally agreed that orcas are social animals that should be with their own kind. Well, why, then, is Ontario seeking to legislate loneliness onto Kiska, the killer whale, at Marineland, for the rest of her life? What responsible jurisdictions outlawed as animal cruelty, Ontario is looking to set in stone in the case of Kiska. It may help whales in the future, but it will hurt Ontario's only orca as the bill is currently written, and we're concerned with that. We want to do what's best for all orcas, including Kiska.

What if there is eventually another orca that cannot be released into the wild but is currently living in a facility that is below the standards of Ontario's only orca facility? If it's agreed upon by experts that it would be in the best interest of both orcas to move the captive one to a better facility, with the welfare of both orcas being the criteria, why not allow the ministry to make an exemption in such a specific case?

In this example, I'm talking about an orca that, like Kiska, would already be in captivity where veterinarians have determined that they cannot be set free due to health reasons and that that particular orca is living in inferior conditions. Therefore, if there's ever a way to give Kiska some company while also improving the life of another orca, surely we would need to do so.

In California, a bill was introduced that would place some restrictions around orcas in captivity. Their government decided to take a measured approach and have thorough public consultation and feedback in the interest of making their legislation the best that it could be.

This is an example of responsible government that I hope Ontario follows.

**1620**

We want to make sure that Bill 80 will actually provide meaningful and helpful changes regarding animal welfare in the province. The government is stating that consultation has come before the presentation of this bill and the rest of the consultation will come after this bill is passed through a panel comprised of experts on all sides. Well, it's great that the government will be bringing a diverse group to the table, but why not have this consultation in committee, where the public can observe the discussion and participate if they choose?

Again, we wonder why Dr. Rosen and his committee specifically stated that the question of whether marine mammals should be kept in captivity at all was not within the purview of their report. For whatever reason, they were not given the authority to address this question. Yet, the orca ban is the only concrete part of the bill. The rest is like fill-in-the-blanks: You have a general idea of what it's going to look like, but until the dots are connected we have no idea what the final product will actually look like.

Consultation in committee is incredibly important. As written, the majority of the changes that Bill 80 will cause will come into effect well after the bill is inevitably passed, and with very little oversight. This is because the

meat of the bill comes through granting extra powers to bring in the actual changes through regulations at some point in the future.

On this side of the House, we feel that it's important that if the government is going to grant extra powers to any agency, it must also grant extra oversight. Anything else would be asking the opposition to simply trust the government and take their word for it in regard to extra powers, and quite frankly, that trust has not been earned.

We've seen this government dust off ancient laws for their own purposes, such as using the World War II-era Public Works Protection Act to secretly cause the largest mass arrests in Canada's history.

Now we're seeing the Liberal government rewrite laws so they can spend as they please. By law, any money raised from the fire sale of Hydro One must be used to pay off its \$27-billion debt. Well, helping the Ontarians who struggle to pay their hydro bills simply just won't do for this government, so they've announced that they'll simply scrap the law so they don't have to help provide a break on energy bills. Therefore, energy bills are in fact going to spike an average of an additional 5%—15%, actually—on May 1.

By the way, since October 2011, just as a matter of point—and I deviate just a little bit—energy prices in this province from October 2011 to effective May 1 will have gone up 49.1%. It's unbelievable. As I said earlier, to my previous point: This government is really good at driving business out of here and raising the unemployment rate.

To say that this government has a history of exploiting loopholes or changing policy behind closed doors to suit their own current political needs would certainly be an understatement. One simply cannot hand this government a blank cheque without also including accountability measures. It's a really sad state of affairs when that must be said when discussing a bill focused on such a specific issue, but that is the reality of the situation, and it speaks to the ill health of our democracy and this government.

Bill 80 was introduced back on March 23, it came up for second reading on March 31, and now, today, April 21, less than one month after the introduction of the bill, the government is pulling time allocation. Some may say that's not a very long amount of time to debate a bill. But it's clear that the Liberals are grasping at straws, trying desperately to change the channel from the numerous debacles that have occurred over the last few weeks.

This is a government that will go out of its way to ensure that Ontarians are focused on smaller issues instead of looking at the bigger picture. There was a textbook example of this last week when the government was pleased to keep the focus on grocery stores getting limited amounts of beer in a couple of years, with a new beer tax hike to boot, instead of focusing on the 60% sell-off of Hydro One that will have a massive impact on each and every person in the province.

One certainly could say that forcing massive energy bill hikes upon the many people in this province who are struggling to get by month to month is, in fact, inhumane. And perhaps this bill, as it relates to Kiska the orca at Marineland, is also inhumane.



Yes, the physical well-being of Kiska the orca whale is something that concerns each and every one of us here in this Legislature, and I'm sure it is a concern for the ministry staff, in addition to the staff who take care of her presently at Marineland. But the reality is that zero orcas were imported into Ontario in 2014 and zero orcas were in fact born in Ontario in the same year, 2014.

Just as a comparison, there is nothing in the law in Ontario to prevent anyone from owning exotic animals, so in Ontario you can't buy an orca, but if you want to buy 50 snakes, knock yourself out. Go for it.

This bill coming up again is channel-changing during budget week. The government very much wants the public to focus on how they heroically managed to reduce the number of orca imports to zero from a massive zero instead of worrying about the crippling debt that is piling up around each and every one of us every day. If Ontario's deficit last year was as low as the number of orcas that were imported or born in the province, then they would have something to talk about. Sadly, last year's deficit was not zero; it was in fact \$10.9 billion. It's a shadow that hangs over each and every one of us as we debate any bill right here in the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate? The member for Pembroke-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's good enough for me, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** I got Pembroke in.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You did. You did, Speaker. You got them all in; just sometimes the order gets a little mixed up. I do it myself sometimes.

It is, I was going to say, a pleasure to speak to this, but it's not. It's always difficult for me to speak to a time allocation motion because it's speaking to something that I know—I know the guillotine is waiting. The hangman is waiting for me just outside the door because in short order, folks out in TV land, this debate will be over. We know that it's going to be over very shortly. The sad part is that I never even had the opportunity to speak to this bill during the debate. I look at my colleagues here and I see them putting their hands up and saying that none of them had the opportunity to speak to this bill.

I listened to my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook earlier. I listened to my colleague from Chatham—Kent—Essex. And I was here when my colleague from Chatham—Kent—Essex spoke for an hour to this bill. It was a whale of a speech. No, I'm going to tell you, it was great. He hit on some very, very succinct points.

Speaker, there is not a member of this Legislature—in fact, there are not many people at all in this great province of Ontario who do not consider the protection of animals to be a priority. It is certainly a priority for members in our caucus. But we do rightfully question some of the reasoning behind this particular bill. My colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook articulated that very well, as did my colleague from Chatham—Kent—Essex.

I too have to ask some questions. Is this the beginning of something that could result in the end of any animals in captivity in the province of Ontario? Could it mean the end of the Toronto Zoo or other such institutions? I know that we've had all of our kids at the Toronto Zoo.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Don't be alarmist.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I know my friend from St. Catharines says that's alarmist. I'm not trying to be alarmist; I am legitimately questioning because there is an element of people out there who believe absolutely that no animal should ever be kept in captivity. They are there, I say to my friend from St. Catharines. He knows that. Will they look at Bill 80 and say, "Okay, battle number 1 has been won. Let's move on to battle number 2." I know that he wants to say that that's not the case, but he knows differently. They do exist out there and we want every legitimate concern for animals to be dealt with in the most reasoned and full way. No animal should ever be mistreated, whether they're in captivity or otherwise.

**1630**

But there are some things in this bill that cause us concern in that regard. I'm going to leave that, as my colleague from—I only have a certain amount of time, just like this bill only has a certain amount of time. The axe is about to fall on the bill and, perhaps, on me. I'm going to deal more with the motion itself from here on in, but I did want to put those concerns on the record, because a lot of people I talk to in the great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke also share those concerns. Sometimes something that is full of good intentions can have unintended consequences. We have to be careful about that.

I do want to speak about the use of time allocation itself and how difficult I find having these debates, because it amounts to a shutting down of debate, a stifling of debate, an affront to democracy. Every one of us who is elected here believes that we came here with the responsibility of standing in this chamber—this great, august chamber—and speaking on behalf of those people who, in the case of many of us, have repeatedly sent us here to speak on their behalf. That is an honour every time I stand in front of this microphone and do that.

I hate to single out my colleague from St. Catharines, and I hope he doesn't take this personally, but—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He didn't take it when I quoted from him—he didn't take it personally then.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —he has been here since the covered wagons came across the west. Actually, since 1977—he's been here since 1977, so he's been here a long, long time. He actually ran for a seat in this House in 1967, centennial year. In just a few years, Canada is going to be 150.

He's had some very, very strong opinions on time allocation. I just want to, if I may—if you would indulge me, Speaker, as to what the honourable member said on December 11, 2001. You know, that's 13 and a half years ago. Here it is. The quote comes up:

"Mr. Bradley: This is indeed an interesting bill, but what's even more interesting right now is the time

allocation motion that faces us. For the people who are watching this perhaps on their television sets at home, I should clarify that. That is the choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation.”

Well, you know what? The reality of that statement holds as true today as it did in December 2001. This amounts to “the choking off of debate,” because the government is deciding how much time they will allocate on a piece of legislation. “Choking off of debate”: That’s what Mr. Bradley said in 2001. I couldn’t have said it better, but perhaps he says it better himself here further on.

This is, again, from the member from St. Catharines, who spoke on this debate earlier: “We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions.” Boy, is he a prophet? My goodness—“exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That’s most unfortunate, because it’s what you would call”—oh my goodness, just what I said—“anti-democratic.”

I’m going to have to go home when I’m done here and get out the Bible and see if there’s a book of Bradley. It might be right next to Isaiah, because he is definitely a prophet, Mr. Speaker. He said in 2001 that this was called “anti-democratic,” and that the government was working on exclusively time allocation motions. Wow.

Is Kreskin still around? I think he passed away. We have our own Kreskin right here in the Legislature. Do not let him put his hand on your forehead, folks: He’ll read your mind. He’ll read your mind; he must have read mine, because he knew exactly what I was going to say. He knew exactly what I was going to say on time allocation.

Speaker, I wish I could continue, because there are other quotes, actually, from the member from St. Catharines.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I’ll get to them in my speech.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But I have every confidence that my colleague from the great riding of Leeds–Grenville is going to pick up where I leave off. I say to the prophet from St. Catharines: We’re not done with you yet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It’s a pleasure to rise in debate today. The deputy leader of the New Democrats may be a little shy of his new title, but I think he’s going to be speaking to this bill in a little while.

I again want to reiterate some of the complaints that I have about this government. We’re seeing in this Parliament an increasing shrinking of debate in the House. Bill 80, the bill that is being time-allocated, the marine mammals act, has only received seven hours and six minutes of debate. In fact, only four members of our caucus have had an opportunity to speak, one of which was your hour-long lead, Mr. Speaker, as critic for the party. So you have a situation now where—and I’m not

blaming the Clerks at the table. Obviously, when they work with you, they have a formula that the government can use to either have a closure motion, which appears, by my calculation, at about 10 hours of debate—at least that’s what I see; there are a number of other factors. And now we’re seeing these time allocation motions happening after about seven hours of debate, if my calculations are correct.

What we’re seeing, bill after bill after bill, is what the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and I are calling speed debating. You’re having a 20-minute rotation split between four, five, six, sometimes even seven members, very short speeches so that the government benches can have as many speakers as possible; and that, somehow, is used in a formula that you, Mr. Speaker, and other Speakers allow to collapse debate.

Again, I want to put on the record my concern that with every single bill this government tables, they either ask for closure after 10 hours or they’re starting to time-allocate all these bills. It’s a concern of mine. Here, the greatest issue that I have is that in this case, with Bill 80, we’ve only had four of our members—far, far too few members. In my entire five years as an MPP, to see a bill be time-allocated after four official opposition speakers—it’s unbelievable. So I want to put that on the record.

I think that you, sir, in your speech today, and the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook as well, have put a number of very important points on the record about Marineland and about what this bill does. I know other members in their speeches—and as I said, there was only four of them—also mentioned the OSPCA and their involvement in animal welfare in the province. One of the suggestions that I had when the government shuttered Kemptville College was that maybe we could provide some training for OSPCA officers in animal husbandry. I had that from a number of farm groups. So there’s a renewed interest in that organization.

I don’t think this bill has had enough debate. The member for Renfrew talked about the member for Niagara Falls, the Honourable Jim Bradley, who has made so many very, very eloquent speeches in this House. The one that I’m very fond of is one that he made during time allocation debate on November 24, 1993. That was, obviously, when Bob Rae and the New Democrats held the reins of power here in the Legislature. Here’s what—

*Interjections.*

**1640**

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I didn’t know I said something funny—Mr. Bradley said at the time, “I wish to speak to the closure motion which is before the House by once again indicating my concern at the number of closure motions which have been forthcoming from the government House leader and under the NDP government of Bob Rae.

“The reason I do that is that in many years gone past Mr. Rae entered the House in a by-election when Mr. Lewis resigned. Mr. Rae became the leader after Mr.

Cassidy stepped down as leader. I can well recall that he felt very strongly about the fact that the opposition should have the opportunity to fully canvass all the arguments on any of the bills before the House, and he was a very strong defender of that particular opportunity.”

It's just very ironic that the member from the Garden City now takes away that principle from the opposition that only four members of Her Majesty's opposition can actually question this bill or put the arguments on the table before the bill gets—using the words that the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke quoted Mr. Bradley “choking off debate.” Debate now is being choked off; the fact that this bill is yet another bill in a long line of bills that this government is railroading through the Legislature.

I'll go on and continue to quote the member for Niagara Falls back from that wonderful speech from 1993: “I'm concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate. I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that's been going on a very long period of time. But as I've indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening.

“All of us have experienced the situation where we have encountered our constituents and they've said, ‘What is this particular bill all about?’ or ‘How did this bill get passed and I didn't know anything about it?’ They are legitimate questions. One of the reasons is that the bills tend to get passed very rapidly in this House.

“Sometimes there are hearings. There is going to be a bit of an opportunity for hearings in this case. I think there should probably be more time provided for that, but also I think it's important to provide more time to discuss the amendments that might be brought forward by both the government and the opposition. If the hearings are going to be meaningful”—and with all due respect, this is a very important point that Jim Bradley made in 1993. I'll read it again, “If the hearings are going to be meaningful”—and this is a message to the government—“if the hearings are going to be worthwhile, then I think it's exceedingly important for there to be legitimate debate over the amendments that flow from those hearings. That's what makes a bill stronger.”

The reason I want to emphasize that point is that bill after bill after bill that's being put into committee, in this case for a very short period of time, the government doesn't hear the other side. The government does not allow reasonable amendments to be put forward. We had that debate on Monday afternoon in regard to Bill 31, where there were so many amendments put forward by the opposition that would have made and strengthened that bill and each and every time the government turned them down.

Mr. Bradley makes a good point in that speech in 1993. It's a point that I think is lost in this closure motion, this time allocation motion. I'll just, again, read one other excerpt from the speech. “If we want the

Parliament to work on a more or less consensus basis rather than a confrontational basis, it's important for the government to be able to accept amendments from its own members who may have some good ideas or from members of the opposition. Sometimes the members of the opposition put them forward at the behest of those who have made appearances before the committee.

“I think it's important to at least debate those adequately. The provision of this closure motion really means that there won't be an opportunity for that kind of debate which I think is very healthy for legislation of this kind.”

I agree with the member back in 1993. I believe this motion is not appropriate. It doesn't give us the opportunity to have those hearings, to allow people to make those presentations. Again, it's just another bill that this government has shut down without hearing the other side, without allowing us to put forward our members' arguments. Twenty-four out of 28 members of the official opposition have yet to speak to this bill. I think it's shameful that the government would only allow us the 40 minutes as part of this time allocation motion. Just the first two speakers for our party—the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook and yourself, Speaker—put forward some excellent points that I think needed to be debated here and, more importantly, needed to be put forward at committee.

So I leave that with you, Speaker. We're going to vote against this time allocation motion. We're going to stand up for democracy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** A point of order: I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I just want to help my colleague out. As much as I appreciate him trying to get Mr. Bradley into Niagara Falls—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** St. Catharines.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Yes, the member is actually from St. Catharines. I just want to correct his record.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'll correct my record: St. Catharines.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I will allow the member from Leeds–Grenville to correct his record.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It's a pleasure to join in the debate. Actually, like my colleagues have said, it's not actually a pleasure, because this type of debate isn't a pleasure. In fact, many people have already said what I'm going to add: that this is another example of a government stifling debate.

While there are some cases that the government can make—that a matter has been going on for so long; so many members have already spoken; all the critics have given their leads; and an exhaustive list of members have already added their voices—in this particular circumstance, it's quite different. In this case, our own member from Oshawa—our critic—hadn't even had the opportunity to give her lead.

Just think about that for a moment. The government is pushing for time allocation to end debate before the critic for this bill even had an opportunity to do her lead. And it wasn't like the member was dodging doing her lead. The member was simply, given the committee duties that she's rightfully to do as part of her duties as a member of this Legislative Assembly, unable to be here because of the limited time this government had allocated to this bill. The government hadn't provided enough opportunity for our own member to be able to give her lead, and the government is now moving towards closure. It's interesting: We've heard some quotations from the member from St. Catharines in the past, being such an opponent of this process, now saying that times are different. It doesn't matter.

I know members on this side of the House are very sure that there's nothing different about democracy, that the principles of democracy don't change because it happened 10 years ago versus today. If what the member from St. Catharines said in 2001—that time-allocating is choking debate and is effectively anti-democratic—then it's just as true then as it is now.

We are quite troubled by the government bringing forward this motion at this time. I mean, really, he said it himself, in the general sense of what we need to do in this House: If we want to govern effectively—this is advice from the government; this is not my advice; this is the government's own advice; this is the member from St. Catharine's own quotation—to govern effectively, to get even more bills passed in this House, time allocation isn't the tool. It actually doesn't speed things up as much as consensus-based decisions could.

The government, if it wanted to, could work with the opposition parties. Where there are some amendments that they can agree upon, work on those amendments, and where there are some agreements for bills that are, perhaps, private members' bills, allow those bills to come forward. There are ways to actually get more work done without time allocation. Time allocation is essentially a blunt tool to deal with as a solution. It's a blunt instrument that is not required. There are many more sophisticated ways to deal with this, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't have to be by using time allocation.

**1650**

In fact, let's talk about the concept of time allocation being anti-democratic. It absolutely is anti-democratic. The purpose of having elected officials from various parts of this province is so that everyone in this province feels that they have a voice. The representatives, very simply, in a representational democracy, are here literally as the voice for those individuals. People have elected and chosen their representative. That representative comes to this House, and on every bill they expect that their member will get up and talk and voice their concerns. Whether it's based on a particular region, whether it's based on a particular demographic, whether it's based on a particular interest, they will get up and advocate whatever those concerns are, because that is why they were chosen to be here and that's what we're here to do.

There's an interesting book. I was talking to the member for St. Catharines and he mentioned a book, *Tragedy in the Commons*. The book goes on to talk about the erosion of the individual members in this House, the powers that we once had as members of opposition and what has happened with those powers. What we're seeing over time is that as the government weakens the role of the opposition, as they use tools like time allocation to end debate, as they limit the ability for members in opposition to challenge and to have a voice in this House, we're seeing an erosion, not only of an individual member's powers but, really, an erosion of democracy. As an individual member's influence weakens, it actually detracts from the ability for us to have a fulsome democracy in this province. This is just one of the many things that are going on. The idea of time allocation, the fact that members don't have the same impact because majority government after majority government has weakened what each individual member can do: These are troubling trends that we're seeing.

My colleague brought up, I think, some very interesting points about the bill itself. To develop a strong piece of legislation requires the input of all people. We live in, and our society has created something that we refer to in the legal system as, an adversarial system. The concept is that through competing voices we come out with the truth. So in a legal setting, we have the defence and the prosecution, they argue the case and the judge makes the final decision.

In this case, we have the government, but we have a strong opposition that actually holds the government to account and also raises important issues that perhaps the government misses. That's the fundamental importance of these debates. It allows for us to inject another opinion, inject another perspective, and when the government time-allocates, they block out this perspective. They block out the ability to hear another point of view. They block out the opportunity to make legislation better, in fact, because when you're testing your legislation, when it's tested and held up to the scrutiny of opposition, the bill becomes stronger. Legislation can be stronger. When it's not held up to that scrutiny, when it doesn't receive that opposition, it's not as strong. So you're weakening your own bill by not allowing it to stand the test of opposition. You're doing not only yourself a disservice, but the province a disservice.

Again, it's not the most efficient way to govern, much like the member said. There are ways to address differences. There is a consensus-based decision-making model that would be more effective, but the government is simply not implementing that process. It's not using that tool, instead resorting to this blunt instrument, this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd just like to remind the member of Bill 80 that we are debating this afternoon—sorry, time allocation. That's what we're debating. I would just ask that you do your best to keep your comments specific to that which we are debating this afternoon.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much. It's really concerning that the government would implement time

allocation, would bring in this overly strong, overly harsh tool to end debate. It's not what we expect the government to do, particularly when there hasn't been very much debate on this bill. There really hasn't been that much. I don't understand why the government sees a necessity to end debate at this point by bringing in this time allocation motion which we are discussing at this point in time.

One of the issues that my colleague brought up, in just talking about the bill itself—of course we're all in support of the proper treatment of animals. Animal welfare is something that we all can agree upon. Whatever the party you're from, everyone agrees with the notion that animals should be protected and that there should be legislation to deal with these issues. My colleague suggested some very interesting points. Perhaps the government felt out of depth with this debate and wanted to end it. Maybe they were having a whale of a time with this debate and found that it was something they couldn't deal with. Perhaps they felt a little bit out of their league in dealing with this bill.

When we're talking about the concept of animals in captivity, I think it's important to discuss, in general, the concept of detention. I applaud my colleague from Oshawa for bringing up the issue of inmates in this province. I think this debate flows very naturally into the discussion of detention in general. It is an important issue that we need to address. In our province, we're seeing inmates being crammed into facilities that are overcrowded. There are not enough services with respect to those who are mentally ill. There's not enough in terms of correctional service officers, who are not being adequately trained, as well as adequate levels of staffing to ensure that people aren't being kept in deplorable conditions, in lockdown. That's an important issue that my colleague brought up.

In addition, when we're talking about the idea of animals being kept in captivity, the idea of animal welfare, it draws to me the concern around people who are being kept in captivity. It reminds me of a recent incident that's going on. Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa is on a peaceful protest in Punjab right now, protesting the illegal detention of sick political prisoners. He's being detained by the government unfairly, and it reminds me of the importance of—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from Scarborough—Agincourt on a point of order.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is not debating Bill 80. I believe that he started to talk about the time allocation issue, then he talked about everything but time allocation or the mammals act. I think the member needs to be reminded that this is what we're debating. I don't know what he's discussing. We're debating Bill 80.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member for her point of order. Generally speaking, that would be a point of order—although I would like to

remind the member that not only are we debating Bill 80, but it's a time allocation, and he is entitled to reference time allocation in his debate as well.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** A point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from—are you in your seat?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Stop the clock, please.

I now recognize the member from Nepean—Carleton on a point of order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate that, and you relocating me to my seat.

I just want to make the House aware that the federal government has just now announced that they have balanced their budget, and I would—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. That is not a point of order.

I would like to refer back to the deputy leader of the third party opposition, from Bramalea—Gore—Malton, to continue debate.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured by the title. Thank you, sir.

We're discussing two essential issues. The brunt of my discussion was around time allocation, the concerns around that. I challenge anyone to look at Hansard and to actually reference what I spoke about. I spoke about time allocation for the vast majority of my time.

Also, the bill talks about captivity and the treatment of animals in captivity. That concept of captivity does draw us to talk about what that notion is, broadly speaking. That's why I wanted to reference the fact that folks who are being kept in captivity in terms of detention centres in our province—that's an issue that relates to the concept of captivity.

As I was saying, I think it's important to reference the notion that people are struggling across this world against the idea of people being kept unfairly in detention.

As I stated, Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa is a peaceful protestor, an 82-year-old man fighting for the freedom of political prisoners who are kept unfairly in custody. His son Ravinder Jeet Singh has been unfairly detained and arrested simply for helping out his father. His father, Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa, again, is on peaceful protest. It's unacceptable that he has been treated this way, being force-fed through a feeding tube. He was on a peaceful hunger strike to release these inmates.

**1700**

The reason why I bring this up is because the concept of captivity is so offensive that at the minimum we have to ensure that people are treated with dignity when they're in captivity, whether it's inmates here in Ontario or animals in the way they're treated in captivity. It's absolutely important that we recognize that there is a responsibility for us to ensure that those laws around captivity, around the proper treatment of animals and around the protection and dignity of life are ensured.

When we talk about marine animals, a lot of attention has been drawn to Marineland. I think it's important for

us to clarify that our concern here is very clearly with the treatment of animals. Any organization that has proper treatment of animals or is following through with the law in a proper way—we have no issue with that. Our concern is where there are circumstances where animals are mistreated, where there are animals that are not meant to be kept in captivity, where there are certain criteria around the way they're being kept in captivity that are not being met.

I think my colleague from Oshawa really brought up some great points around the limitations and difficulties around captivity when it comes to orcas specifically. They're animals that are meant to roam thousands of kilometres of ocean. They are able to and meant to dive quite deeply in the ocean. Their particular makeup—the way they're designed and the way they've evolved to be—is something that is not well-suited to captivity. That's why those issues are quite important, and I'm glad my colleague brought them up.

Again, this is an important point to make: My colleague was only able to bring that up today, she wasn't able to do a lead on this and she had limited time to be able to discuss this issue. This weakens our ability to represent our constituents here, but it also weakens our ability to make sure that laws that are passed in this Legislature are strong and effective, and actually do the job they're meant to do.

In this case, when it comes to the proper treatment of marine mammals, we missed out on hearing more information and more debate from members in this House who could have talked about specifics around how this bill could be better, specifics around how we can ensure that the treatment of marine mammals is the best possible, discussions around how we can extend, if it's appropriate, this protection to other animals and what the appropriate conditions for those animals should be. These are areas that we could have debated, but the government has sought to time-allocate, ending that debate.

One of the interesting things that has been brought up, a new innovation that this government has developed—an innovation that, in my respectful submission, is not a good innovation—is the whole concept of speed debating. While there is certainly a place and certainly a need, I'm sure, in certain circumstances, for speed dating and maybe a certain recreational purpose for it, speed debating is neither recreationally beneficial nor something that benefits our society. This new implementation of speed debating is something that I question in terms of how this helps our democracy and certainly how it forwards the idea of allowing people to have their voices heard in this place. I think it absolutely does not.

One of the interesting figures we have is 20 speakers in 20 minutes, which may be some sort of record, but perhaps not the type of record that we'd want to be setting here in Ontario. We're setting a lot of records in this province. We set the record of having the highest auto insurance rates in Canada; some of the highest tuition fees in Canada. I guess here's another record: the most debaters in the shortest period of time, because of

time allocation. Again, this is an innovation and this is a record that I don't think our province should be proud of. I think this is something that we should be troubled by, and I think, indeed, we are troubled by it.

So what does time allocation do? The government is allocating how much time can be assigned to a particular debate. It is, in effect, silencing the ability for other members to speak. As the member from St. Catharines said, it's the "choking off of debate." It's also something—to quote, again, the member from St. Catharines—that is "anti-democratic" and it's something that is, again, quite troubling for us to see.

Really the question that arises is—and I asked the government this in this debate—what is the hurry for this particular bill? Why did this government see that, in the case of Bill 80, they needed to rush this legislation along? Was there any sort of concrete reason for it? Was there an evidentiary basis for that? Why did the government see fit, in this particular case, to end debate? What is the reason? I haven't heard any sort of concrete reason, any sort of concrete rationale. It's simply an attempt again to silence and end debate without any reason. I don't think there is, in most cases, any justifiable reason to silence debate, but I would have loved to have heard what the reason is. If this government could come up with one, I would be interested in hearing what that is. Perhaps in the remaining time the government may provide some of that rationale.

Again, what we're faced with here is a bill that many people in this House agree with many portions of, but there are some concerns with the bill. There are some concerns around the way that this bill would be enforced, the scope of the bill, whether the bill addresses a wide enough category of animal, whether it casts a wide enough net, in fact, regarding these sorts of animals and these sorts of conditions.

We're concerned about—does this bill deal with the notion of captivity of animals, broadly speaking? Can this bill address concerns around the captivity of animals in other circumstances, and what should, if any, changes be in those areas? These are areas that this decision to end debate has precluded us from discussing because there is no longer an opportunity to discuss these issues.

Again, in my closing seconds, I think it's clear that the government hasn't provided clear reasons for why this bill needed to be time-allocated. The bill hadn't been discussed for a very significant amount of time, and I challenge the government to prove to me why this is an efficient way of governing. It's not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Can we have some of their time?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Order, please.

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 20. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”  
All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”  
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

I have just received notice from the chief government whip to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 20 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.”

*Vote deferred.*

ENDING COAL  
FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2015  
LOI DE 2015  
SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON  
POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 26, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to join the debate today for Bill 9, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act.

As I rise here in the assembly today to talk about coal as the former energy critic, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the strong contribution of the previous Progressive Conservative government here in the province of Ontario as the first to end a coal-fired plant in this province, under the stewardship of my former colleague and former Deputy Premier Elizabeth Witmer. I think we owe her a great degree of gratitude as a trailblazer on that front.

This is a piece of legislation which effectively started to develop a year ago, perhaps a little bit more, when the Premier had invited Al Gore, of global warming fame, to this assembly down at the MaRS building, which has become quite an expensive endeavour for this assembly.

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In addition to that, the government made this grand commitment that they would phase out coal, that they would make it illegal to burn coal. I think the issue here is that this legislation is almost unnecessary if we're going to phase it out completely. Similar to the bill previous regarding marine mammals, this government likes to legislate things instead of just doing them, instead of just setting a good moral tone in terms of moving forward. Again, the government has already phased out coal. It started, of course, with Elizabeth Witmer, a former member of this assembly who sat in the Ontario Progressive

Conservative caucus. This obviously does not require new legislation.

In my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of many people across this great province, the Liberals' plan to legislate this phase-out of coal is nothing more than political posturing. I think, on a day that the federal government has announced that they have actually balanced their budget during these tough economic times and the government of Ontario is not able to do the same thing and is continuing to run up \$10-billion deficits, this government wants to change the channel. In fact, I believe that if this Liberal government were truly committed and concerned about the environment, it would be meeting its own targets on greenhouse gas emissions. That said, this is also a Liberal government that made a commitment to bring in carbon taxing in just these past couple of weeks, yet in the election said that they weren't going to do it.

Let's talk a little bit about Bill 9. The bill bans the burning of coal at power generating stations in Ontario by the end of 2014. We're already into 2015. I think we all recognize that this government has made this decision. I don't think it really requires legislation; it just requires commitment, dedication and action.

If passed, this bill will give the government the ability to impose hefty fines on any person or company that burns coal at a power plant for the purpose of generating power by the end of 2014—of course, we're into 2015—and exceptions are made for facilities that produce a product other than steam or electricity, where the generation of electricity is not its primary purpose, in facilities that use heat, steam or by-product gas from the said facility.

All parties in this assembly, dating back to effectively 2007, during that election, have made the same commitment: that they would phase out coal. What I think is a bigger issue here today—because I think we're all in agreement that we'd like to get away from what people will call “dirty” coal—is the energy mix in the province of Ontario and how we want more clean energy and green energy, and how the Liberals have gone about it at the very difficult rate of increasing hydro bills in the province.

I think that in any debate on energy and the environment in the province of Ontario we should have a discussion on the Green Energy Act. That is where I want to talk and take my time for the next few minutes as we relate this piece of legislation, getting rid of dirty coal, to the other extreme that this government has gone to with respect to the Green Energy Act.

Earlier today, for example, we spoke about legislation on development charges. When we were speaking about that, my colleague from Belleville—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Prince Edward—Hastings.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —Prince Edward—Hastings talked about how this Liberal government eroded locally based decision-making with respect to wind turbine developments. Those industrial wind turbine developments are very important, for example, to the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex. A couple of years ago, I went

with the member through his riding, and he showed me, during the evening, what he called the “red light district,” and that is literally hundreds of wind turbine developments with these little red lights, and how irritating they were to his community.

So I refer you back to the conversation that I had earlier today with the member from Prince Edward–Hastings in his debate on development fees, where he talked about the erosion of locally based decision-making because this government has this idea that it’s providing wonderful clean, green energy. So on the one hand, yes, I think they’ve done what has been called for by all political parties, started of course by ours under Elizabeth Witmer, which is removing coal; but on the other extreme, they’ve embarked on an over \$20-billion experiment with wind power, and that has driven up hydro rates across the province of Ontario. As a result of that, we’re finding that there is energy poverty in Ontario.

I believe that on the past weekend, my friend Jane Wilson—who is the head of Wind Concerns Ontario and who also resides in my home constituency of Nepean–Carleton—pointed out that there are over half a million people right now, in the province of Ontario, dealing with energy poverty. That is in large part because of this government’s energy mix; their inability to provide a coherent energy policy; and decisions like the one with the industrial wind turbine developments across the province that are spiking up our prices and which will never replace coal.

For us to have a coherent energy policy in the province of Ontario—and I know a little bit about this, having been the Ontario Progressive Conservative energy critic—I think we ought to be looking at a mix where nuclear is our breadwinner, and we augment that with natural gas as well as hydroelectric water power, that built Ontario, that allowed us to have cheap and affordable hydroelectric power, which then was a great economic job creator for this province, which actually drove people to come to this province. We were able to do two things in Ontario. We were able to have clean and reliable sources of energy and, at the same time, have affordable energy.

That’s the problem with this government. And when you see one-off pieces of legislation like this—which really aren’t required, because I think it’s obviously the general direction of the province in any event—you see that this government is looking at energy policy, again, as patchwork.

I can refer you again to the hydro policy that they’re going to be bringing forward on Thursday as part of their budget, where they’re going to divest 60% of the public holdings of Hydro One. This was something that, just nine or 10 short months ago, this government would never have done. In fact, they suggested that to break up Hydro One and to put that money toward the debt and public infrastructure would have been the wrong decision.

But now this government, on what I call its debt-bed conversion—because this government, of course, is so mired in debt, at \$10.9 billion—they’re forced to make decisions they otherwise wouldn’t have done, because

they always wanted to kick cans down the road. If you look at what’s going to happen with Hydro One, that is again going to spike the energy prices in this province.

On one hand, we’ve got coal. We’ve eliminated it; we phased it out. It’s good for the environment. It’s good for the health of our children. It’s something that we all agree on. I would imagine there are 107 people in this assembly with unanimous consent for phasing out coal, and we don’t need the bill.

Then you look at the industrial wind turbine policy, through the Green Energy Act, that this government brought in in 2009, and we see the public treasury being cost about \$20 billion, with no end in sight, and we see hydro bills spike as a result of it.

We see that even when we’re using this wind energy at the peak, we actually have to power down our nuclear facilities and we have to spill water and hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls. That’s costing Ontario about \$1 billion a year.

Then, of course, we’re going to break up Hydro One—or the government is going to—and we’re probably going to take a loss on market value.

All of this is to say, Speaker, that if this government is going to continue to tinker around the edges on energy policy, you’re going to see that number that Jane Wilson sent to me on the weekend—of half a million people in the province of Ontario in energy poverty—continue to increase.

We’re facing tough economic times in the province of Ontario, and I think it’s incumbent upon the government to ensure that they have one solid, full energy policy that the government and the people of this province can rely on. But that’s not the case.

As I said, this bill is over a year old. I was actually at the MaRS Centre when Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of Ontario, met the former vice-president of the United States, Al Gore—who, among other things, once suggested that he had invented the Internet—and they talked about phasing out coal.

I remember standing there that day. They actually tried to block me from attending, and I remember, because we had staff who said, “This is a member of provincial Parliament; she’s allowed to go inside.” They said, “No, she’s not,” and then, “Oh, wait. She can stand at the back.” Eventually they allowed me a seat at the very back.

I’m standing there, thinking to myself, “You know, I’ve run in enough elections now”—this is my fourth, by the way. I just turned 40 in October, and this is my fourth election I’ve been sent to this place. I remember my second election in 2007. The leader at the time, John Tory from our party—now the mayor of Toronto—stood here in our place and said he was going to phase out coal.

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The NDP leader at the time was Howard Hampton.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Howie.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Howie said he was going to phase out coal. This was 2007. Then Premier Dalton McGuinty also said he was going to phase out coal.



The Liberals said they were going to phase it out—I think at the time when they first formed a government in 2003, they were going to phase it out by 2007. Then they said they were going to phase it out by 2011. They didn't meet that target, and they said they would meet it by 2014.

Now here we are. The government of course was seven years late and over budget on all of these projects, but we're all at the same place and we have been since effectively in the early 2000s when a Progressive Conservative government under Ernie Eves decided that this was the way to go. It's something that we all agree on.

So this isn't new. It's something I've heard about for almost a decade. The fact that we're debating it here today like it's brand new news and it's revolutionary is a bit of a joke, because as I've stated, Speaker, everyone in this assembly agrees. If we all agree and we all believe that the best way to have clean air in our province is to eliminate and phase out coal, why would we need legislation for that? It's simply going to be something that we would move away from.

In addition to this, I must say that if we're going to talk about phasing out coal in terms of a piece of legislation, why doesn't the government table a comprehensive energy policy, a comprehensive energy plan for the province of Ontario that talks about how we can reduce prices while still at the same time meeting our greenhouse gas emission targets and ensuring that we have a good system in place that transmits and delivers our energy policy right across the province?

I'll be interested, for example, on Thursday, when the government puts forward its budget, in whether or not they have a plan in place to bring natural gas into rural communities across Ontario. That, to me, is something that's going to be very important; I'm sure it is to other members here.

I come from the city of Ottawa. My seat is in the middle of the city. Part of it is urban, part of it is suburban and some of it is rural. If you can believe this, some of my constituents in rural Ottawa don't have access to natural gas. So I'm looking forward to seeing what happens there.

The other thing I would like to know more about from the Liberal government is this: They plan on divesting Hydro One, which I think is a legitimate discussion for us to have in this Legislature; it's one that I think we need to have a significant debate on. But let me take it back to my own community in Nepean–Carleton. Let me talk about the city of Ottawa.

I'm a customer of Hydro Ottawa. My prices are going up, as are the rest. But I have constituents who are on Hydro One. Their prices for their electricity, their home heating, are double mine. It's double because they're with Hydro One.

We know, for example, that Hydro One has had massive challenges with its billing, its accountability and its transparency over the past year—probably even the past decade. That's why the Ombudsman did a report, and that's why we have been very critical of Hydro One on this side of the assembly.

Let me take this one step further as a member from the city of Ottawa and as a resident in the city of Ottawa. I would like to see this Liberal government put forward a plan in this assembly to look at my local distribution in the city of Ottawa, which is Hydro Ottawa, and offer them the ability to assume those Hydro One customers that are inside the city limits. I would think that that would be in the best interests of the ratepayers in my constituency, and I would say that it's probably in the best interests of the people of Ottawa.

My colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills is here. This is something he and I have both championed and both believe is necessary, because there are people in both of our constituencies—as in Ottawa–Orléans, a member of the government, I believe; and as well the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—who reside inside the city of Ottawa but do not have access to Hydro Ottawa. They are forced to go to Hydro One, at double the cost with less service.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** That's not fair.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** That's a bill—and my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills rightly points out that it's not fair. That is a bill that should be before the assembly. This should be a discussion before this assembly. Today, we're talking about phasing out coal, which, as I stated repeatedly, we all agree on. It doesn't require legislation to do the right thing, I don't think. I would imagine the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, who once showed me those industrial wind turbines in his community, would say it's not necessary to have this bill if we all agree with it. But what we do need is a piece of legislation for lengthy discussion in this assembly about our entire energy supply, about the grids, about transmission, about delivery, about cost.

We have to have that discussion in this assembly, and it has to encompass the Green Energy Act. It has to encompass what we're going to do with Hydro One. It has to encompass what we're doing with natural gas in rural communities like in Edwards, which I represent. At the same time, we should be talking about greenhouse gases. We should be talking about that cheap hydro-electric power that we have in Niagara Falls. We should be talking about nuclear energy as we have seen in Bruce and, right here, just outside of Toronto in Pickering.

We should, as a Parliament, as a Legislature, as a body of elected officials, have that discussion in this assembly because today, in Ontario, that is the number one issue confronted by our constituents. It is their ability to pay their power bills. Any parliamentarian in here today who refutes that is either not connected to their community or they are not sharing with you the true picture of what's happening in their constituency.

I'll give you an example before I close. Last year, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry brought me to his riding to meet with seniors in a little town called Long Sault. As I was sitting there, the seniors were shaking. Hydro One hadn't given them bills, and when they finally did, these bills were thousands of dollars. This senior looked at me and said, "This bill is

higher than my old age security.” That’s tough, Speaker, and that’s Ontario.

While I applaud the government for phasing out coal, and while I applaud the third party and my party for their leadership and our collective leadership in this assembly for wanting to phase out coal, I respectfully submit today to this assembly that the discussion we ought to be having on energy policy is a comprehensive plan for Ontario that encompasses the Green Energy Act, Hydro One divestment, the expansion of natural gas into our rural communities and the price of power in this province.

Speaker, that is what I came to Queen’s Park to debate after the 2014 election, and it is an issue that has consistently come up in the past four elections in the riding of Nepean–Carleton when the people of my constituency sent me to this place.

I urge all members of this assembly to have that discussion. I urge the government to come forward with a comprehensive bill, perhaps as an emergency debate or a take-note debate, but one where we will all have our say and provide input into the next decade of energy policy in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Nepean–Carleton. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It’s indeed an honour to be able to stand in this House and bring to the floor the voices of my constituents in Windsor and Tecumseh—making comments this afternoon from the member from Nepean–Carleton who just spoke on the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act.

She mentioned a friend of mine, Howard Hampton, who, as the former leader of NDP, said he would get rid of coal-burning plants in Ontario. Howard Hampton also wrote the book *Public Power*—an advocate for keeping Ontario Hydro in public hands, and I think that’s important to recognize.

I have respect for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, as he knows I do. I admire his passion for the environmental file and his almost religious fervour, if I can, on climate change. He brings that passion to the House all the time.

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However, I don’t have respect for this bill because there’s nothing new in this bill, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act. Perhaps it could be better known as “why are we spending time on this when we got rid of the coal-burning plants years ago and now why do we want to pat ourselves on the back?” I think that’s because the government wants to change the channel, if you will, put out a different spin cycle to the news agencies, saying, “Oh, they’re doing something on getting rid of coal-burning plants.” They did it years ago, Speaker.

As much as I admire the minister for everything else he’s doing on the environmental and climate change file, this bill—I mean, they’re bringing in time allocations on other things we could be talking about instead of this “pat myself on the back” bill. I can’t support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I recognize, for further questions or comments, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let’s just get right to the point: Many other jurisdictions have done what Ontario has done, and we’re the only jurisdiction over the last decade that has ever completely phased out coal. No one else in the world has done that. After the mess in Fukushima, countries like Germany and Japan have reintroduced coal. We are getting a lot of credibility for taking this stand internationally because if we look at this in Ontario, it may seem peculiar to people: Why would you put into law something that you’ve just finished doing? Part of it is because you have to come back to this Legislature to reverse-engineer, which has happened in other major jurisdictions which are seeing emissions.

What is also interesting is that in my days as mayor of Winnipeg we had our own hydro energy utility. I looked across the border at the Conservative government that was doing three things that caused a great deal of problems. We don’t have the highest energy prices in Canada, first; we have three provinces that have higher energy prices. And the two with the lowest were Manitoba and Quebec. I know the Manitoba situation really well because half the hydro utilities were owned by the city of Winnipeg in the time I was mayor.

But I saw three things happening. I remember the reports coming on my desk as mayor, saying that the Conservatives were doing three things wrong: Deregulating and stranding assets of the utility; and number two, underinvesting in a transmission system. For 40 years everyone in Canada knew that there were billions of dollars required to repair and replace Ontario’s aging transmission system. While they were underinvesting in infrastructure and trying to keep taxes down, they were just passing on a huge—we have had to spend \$8 billion refurbishing transmission. That’s what’s driving prices.

The other thing was a lack of investment in refurbishing nuclear, which they didn’t invest in. So now we’re playing catch-up with massive refurbishments, because what’s really driving prices is nuclear, transmission and stranded assets. That’s 80% of it. They like to talk about green energy as the problem when green energy is 3% of our investment. It’s pure hokeyness and nonsense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the minister.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Speaker. If I could correct my record: As I was sitting down and said, “I can’t support the bill,” I left out the word “wholeheartedly.” I will be supporting the bill but not with my entire heart and soul.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** That is a point of order. Okay. I will accept that. Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I would like to support the member from Nepean–Carleton wholeheartedly on her comments that she made here this afternoon. In 20 minutes she touched on all the important issues facing our energy sector in the province of Ontario. These are things that aren't being dealt with by the current Minister of Energy or the Premier, or the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, for that matter. She hit so many things that I don't know exactly which one to touch on.

I can tell you that there are many people in Prince Edward–Hastings who are dealing with energy poverty right now as a result of the decisions that have been made—ideological decisions, not good planning decisions—by this Liberal government.

My constituency assistants at my offices in Belleville and Picton and also up in Bancroft are constantly in tears because they're upset with the people who are calling in from the riding—seniors who are losing their homes and having their power threatened to be cut off in the middle of the wintertime by Hydro One. These stories are real in Prince Edward–Hastings, as they are in Nepean–Carleton.

I would echo the sentiments of the member from Nepean–Carleton when she says, "We've got a divide. We have the Ottawa hydro customers, and we have Hydro One." We have the exact same situation in Belleville, where we have Veridian power customers in the city of Belleville—and I nary get a complaint from people from Belleville about their hydro bill; it's very rare. But my constituency assistants are on the phone non-stop dealing with people who are struggling to find answers from Hydro One. They're going to the hydro ombudsman or our Ontario Ombudsman to try to get some answers, but they're not getting them from Hydro One. They would love the option to join Veridian. I would hope that maybe Veridian would pitch in and buy some of the shoulder areas around Belleville, like Thurlow, the north shore of Prince Edward county and other parts of the riding.

I would just like to congratulate the member for Nepean–Carleton. She's on the right track, and that's the discussion we need to be having here in the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The deputy leader of the third party opposition, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You're very kind.

I'm happy to add my voice to the debate. I think my colleague from Nepean–Carleton actually touched on some very important points. One of the points that was also built on by our colleague from Windsor was that we all agree on this. This is something that all parties have actually spoken about, that all parties are committed to. We've heard from the Progressive Conservatives. They've said very clearly that their leader indicated that that was an initiative he wanted to implement. Our party has long since indicated this. Our previous leader mentioned that he's committed to phasing out coal. The

Liberal Party is also committed to this. So we have all parties committed to this issue. At the same time, if we have a government that's time-allocating bills because it wants to push through legislation quickly, then why are we putting in a piece of legislation that really, substantively, doesn't do anything? There's really no purpose for this type of legislation. I mean, it's something that we're committed to. There are comments and there are questions. My question is, please, someone explain to me in more detail why this bill is necessary. I think that's the question that is essentially one of the points that was brought up by the member from Nepean–Carleton in her speech.

In my closing seconds, I also want to point out that when we're talking about energy, when we're talking about phasing out coal-produced energy—let's look at the energy file in general. What we do know is that we're doing something absolutely wrong.

I think one of the first steps in the wrong direction was the privatization of energy, which, instead of bringing rates down, which many people thought it would do, brought rates up.

And now this government is committing to another privatization, which is also going to increase rates. Once that privatization is done, we can't go back from that. Once you privatize and sell it off, it's not like we can say we want a do-over. It's gone; it's done. So we need to seriously think that through before we do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member.

Back to the member from Nepean–Carleton for final comments and questions.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My thanks go out to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, of course the Minister of the Environment, my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings, and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for participating in the debate.

Speaker, what is instructive about the questions-and-comments section that we just had was that everyone was more focused on general energy policy: pricing in the province of Ontario, the issue we're going to have with Hydro One, with wind energy policy, as well as our nuclear mix and our other mixes; for example, natural gas and hydroelectric power. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to continue that discussion. I note that even though the minister was the sponsor of this three-page piece of legislation, which effectively has no real merit because it has been already initiated without legal means, he started having that conversation as well.

I do want to point out that in the province of Ontario today, we have the highest industrial power rates in North America. That is why it is critical for us to have that discussion, a lengthy one, in this assembly and in committee rooms, on where we go from here with energy pricing. I'll tell you why. We have seniors and middle-class families across Ontario making a decision between heating or eating. We have businesses in Ontario that are being forced out of this province to other jurisdictions—mostly neighbouring jurisdictions. Just ask my colleague

from Leeds–Grenville, when he sees business owners from the Great Lakes across from him, and the Thousand Islands, come across from St. Lawrence county in New York and try to poach businesses away from his jurisdiction because we have serious challenges.

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So I would ask the government: Please bring forward a wholesome debate for us to have on the most critical issue in Ontario today, which is energy policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Mr. Speaker, sit back and enjoy. I've got 20 minutes to talk on this bill, all four pages of it.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to this bill today, Bill 9, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act. It has already been debated in this House a number of times by some extraordinary speakers, so you'll have to forgive me if I repeat some of their words.

Listening to those debates, I think a few things are clear. Really, the thing that is most clear is that everyone really seems to enjoy the title of the bill. It sounds good. It's something you can say you passed. After all, who would be against cleaner air? The title of the bill allows you to give yourself a nice pat on the back.

The problem is, the title is almost as long as the bill. In two pages, this bill seeks to ban the use of coal for energy-creating purposes. I guess the reason it's so simple is because it's basically already done.

Reading over the debates from the last time and listening to speakers, one thing is clear: The Thunder Bay Generating Station was the last place to produce coal as a source of energy, and it closed down last year. As the speakers made clear in the debates around second reading, this bill doesn't really ban anything that is currently happening in the province of Ontario. The sentiment would have been great 10 years ago, but today it really is an afterthought.

The things that really relate in our minds with coal—the smog, the lung issues, how dirty it is—don't really exist anymore in this province. Quite frankly, that's a good thing. So we're here today again debating a bill around banning coal for energy use in Ontario, where it doesn't happen anymore.

This bill stands to make us feel good about ourselves and show we're getting things done, but in the end, it doesn't really do anything. I know most of the speakers mentioned that the last time this bill was debated, but here we are once again talking about this bill. Mr. Speaker, the last time, I believe members from each party indicated they supported it as well, so I'll go a little more into depth about the larger problem that is highlighted in this bill—it's something I'm glad the minister is here for: our environment and climate change.

When I'm here in the House, I really try to focus on key issues and hammer them, again and again, to try to get a message across. One of the things I'm constantly talking about in this House is the need to make sure that we give Ontario to our grandchildren just as good as it is

today, if not better than the Ontario we have today. This means a number of things. It means an Ontario where people can live affordably, and a province that is clean and sustainable. I'm happy to say this bill at least indicates that this government is interested in handing over a clean and sustainable Ontario.

In the last round of discussions around this bill, I know the member who was here earlier from St. Catharines was thanked for his work on this file. I'd like to give him that thanks as well. When this was a major concern some years ago, he was a strong voice on the subject, which is worth noting. The problem is, today we're legislating long after it was necessary.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major errors here is that this bill does nothing proactive. Like we have mentioned time and time again, the coal plants are already closed down. Representatives before us, especially the NDP members, fought hard to make sure that this province's environment was clean; and because of their efforts in part, these coal plants have stopped being a source of energy production.

Though coal burning was a cheaper source of energy, it just couldn't be kept up in this province. It isn't hard to find someone who suffers from asthma because of these pollutants—kids who can't breathe and who struggle to get air because of this sort of pollution. When we have to balance our children's health with some minor savings on energy costs, I think the choice is clear.

Our province is one of the most natural, beautiful places in the world. Take my riding, for example. Right on Lake Erie, you have Sherkston Shores. It's an incredible beach with a great community that has built up around it. The clear blue skies bring in visitors from the area and from around the world. It's the exact same story with the Crystal Beach community.

On the other end of my riding—as I'm sure most people here and my colleagues who are here today know—is Niagara-on-the-Lake, with its beautiful wine country. With some help from this government supporting our local businesses, our local wineries, the wine country is going to continue to grow.

It's easy to see why we need to preserve this. Keeping our attention focused on issues of the environment and climate change needs to be a priority.

One of the good things that will come from this bill is that it will be able to stop future coal plants from operating in Ontario—and I think that was what the minister tried to mention in his response. Like we've mentioned before, right now it does nothing, because the kinds of coal plants it bans do not operate today in the province of Ontario. So at least it does a little good. Should a government come in and want to start burning coal for energy, they'll need to come before this House and the elected representatives here first; and I think that's good.

As we've seen over the past few weeks, governments can do some unreasonable things when they are strapped for cash and have an energy sector in their sights. Right now, banning coal-burning plants might seem ridiculous,

but to save a few dollars here or a few dollars on budget, a government might be persuaded to do it.

Just as this government is preparing to sell energy assets that belong to the people of the province to make some extra cash, a government may turn to coal to save money. At the very least, this bill will put a stop to that and require consultation with this Legislature. Right now, the best thing this bill does is prepare for a future situation that may or may not come. Other than that, it's a pat on our backs and nothing else.

There are far more important things we could be dealing with this afternoon rather than legislating a problem that doesn't exist. I'm not sure why this bill was prioritized by this government, but it was. Right now, we have teachers on strike in Durham. We have auto workers fearing for their jobs. In Niagara, we have home care nurses who are on strike because their employer won't recognize their union and won't pay them proper compensation. We could be talking about these issues, about the role the government could play. We could be moving to protect their jobs and secure their futures, talking about issues like that instead of passing a bill that bans something that isn't currently happening in the great province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, while we have the time today, we need to make sure that the discussion of this bill does not revolve around an issue that is already closed. Let's use this time to highlight what this bill means, what it represents and how it can be a force for good. Like my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth mentioned last time, there is a major issue around climate change. It's good to see this government put forward a bill that deals with major polluters and major contributors to climate change, but there are many reasons that more needs to be done beyond this bill.

**1750**

We're confronted with a massive challenge: the challenge of climate change. We hear many big things about this issue, but I'd like to just bring it home for a minute. We're seeing wild changes in climates around this province and around the continent. In places like Alaska, they're seeing record heat spikes. In my riding of Niagara Falls, we're seeing some of our coldest winters on record. I believe February of this year was the coldest February ever recorded in Niagara Falls. These weather patterns have a very real effect on us here in Ontario. The biggest indicator that proves this is our hydro bills.

In my riding, we're right next to Niagara Falls, one of the biggest sources of hydroelectric power in the entire world. At one time, Niagara Falls was able to produce cheap energy that fed our booming manufacturing sector in Niagara. It makes sense. We're right next door to massive generators. There was no line loss; it was delivered right there. Now people in my riding are having a hard time paying their hydro bills. Each month, more and more money is coming out of their pockets and going towards heating their homes.

There are two things at play here, and both are man-made; one is fluctuating weather patterns. When you

have unpredictable weather and cold winters, it means that people need to use energy to heat their homes. This isn't a choice. If people want to make it through the winter, they need to heat their homes. The other thing is the high cost of hydro in this province as a result of government policy. We see the government taking serious note of climate change; that's a good thing and something that is long overdue. We need them to also take note of hydro rates and what they can do to lower them.

I encourage the members opposite to think of the seniors who aren't getting more money as the months go by, but who keep seeing their hydro bills rising. Try to ask yourself: Is it right for a senior who has worked their whole life for this province to choose between heating their home and eating?

Hydro is an urgent issue. It's an emergency. Yes, we can take action on climate change, and yes, we can take action on hydro bills. Both can happen at the same time, and both need to happen.

Mr. Speaker, there's another major factor to all this that makes my riding so important with regard to the intent of this bill. When the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change stood and spoke to this bill, he mentioned time and time again legislation around emissions. He mentioned the lack of legislation at the federal level. He mentioned the work being done in California on emissions. He mentioned how Ontario can lead the world in reducing emissions.

Banning coal emissions is one way to do it. Certainly, if you have no coal-burning facilities, we'll be reducing emissions. I think that makes sense to those who are listening. That has already happened, so we don't need a bill for that, but we can agree it's good to reduce those emissions.

If this government is so committed to reducing emissions, why will they not look at the biggest factor in my riding: around transportation? Every single day, we have 50,000 commuters leave the Niagara region and head towards the GTA along the GO Transit line. That's 50,000 commuters. Even if half carpooled, which is an optimistic figure, we'd still have 25,000 cars on the road every day going down the QEW, heading towards Toronto. That's 25,000 cars polluting and adding to the problem of climate change. That's thousands of vehicles that are creating uncontrollable weather that contributes to rising hydro costs. If this bill is meant to signal this government's willingness to address climate change, then start right there.

Like it has been mentioned in this House numerous times, it is a bit cheaper to burn coal. So if the government is willing to forgo some money in order to protect our environment, then why would they not invest money that they would see a return on that will also reduce emissions? Emissions would be reduced by just removing the cars from the roadway. This doesn't even touch on the reduction of emissions that would follow not having large transport trucks idling in traffic for hours, which you see all the time when you drive down the QEW or the 401, or the people who commute within the region.

The honourable Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is our former Minister of Transportation. He knows how badly Niagara wants the GO train. Just reading through his words in this House, you can tell he is dedicated to the environment and committed to being a world leader in the fight against climate change. You'll also quickly figure out how intelligent the minister is, so nothing I'm saying here should come as a surprise to the minister.

There's a very clear tourism case for the GO train. There's a business case for the GO train that has been made, and it's going to be made in depth at the end of this month. But there is still something else as well. There's a clear environmental case for the GO train coming from Toronto to Niagara and Niagara to Toronto.

The people of this province want affordable public transportation, and in Niagara they're doing everything they can to make this clear. Think about that. We have an entire region, led by a grassroots movement, calling for an environmentally friendly solution to traffic. They're practically begging this government to follow through on its commitment and give them something that helps alleviate the emissions problem, yet we continue to hear nothing.

This government says it wants to be a leader in the world when it comes to climate change. It says it wants the world to follow in its footsteps with bills like these and its actions. What is the world to say when it sees an entire region continually asking the Premier and her ministers for an environmentally friendly solution to a transit problem? People who want to work in Toronto and live in Niagara or live in Toronto and work in Niagara have no choice but to buy a car and commute. They want an alternative. They want to put forward a case for an alternative, an environmentally friendly alternative, and yet the government continues to force them to purchase an automobile and make the drive. What will other jurisdictions say to us when they see that?

Let me say that Bill 9 is an opportunity—an opportunity to be an example to the world, to set off a chain of events that would see other jurisdictions and other countries also ban coal-burning facilities. But there's so much more we can do. By offering an alternative to the people who travel the QEW between Toronto and Niagara Falls, we can show the world how to reduce emissions, provide

better public service and even see an economic development boost, all in the same action.

We mentioned the great work the member from St. Catharines did on the environmental portfolio and how strong a voice he was against coal burning. We're highlighting that now after the coal-burning facilities have closed. Perhaps we could have reduced emissions sooner had we worked on the idea sooner. It's the exact same story with GO trains. The same member is advocating for an environmentally friendly solution to transit issues. Let's not wait 10 years to get this done; let's get it done now, in the year 2015.

There are other options this government has available to fight climate change as well. One is the auto industry. That may sound strange at first, because we know that cars create emissions, but working with the auto industry we can actually fight climate change.

General Motors was one of the first car manufacturers to commit to making environmentally friendly, fuel-efficient cars. Fuel-efficient cars are good for the people of Ontario. On one hand, it helps to reduce emissions that cause climate change; and on the other hand, it softens the blow of unnecessarily high gas prices in this province.

It's all related: the automotive industry, employment and fighting climate change. When companies like General Motors commit to making environmentally friendly cars here in Ontario, we should support them. Right now, we know it's hard to compete with the costs of building a car in other areas of the continent, but if we offer the right incentives, we can keep these car companies here, protecting tens of thousands of auto jobs right here in the province of Ontario. That is a win-win-win. With the government's support, car manufacturers will be able to experiment with cars that have far lower emissions and keep jobs in the province of Ontario.

Unfortunately, my time has run out. Thank you very much for listening. Take care.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Niagara for his contribution to the debate. The opportunity for questions and comments will be provided at a later date and time.

Since it is now 6 o'clock, this Legislature stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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Lou Rinaldi  
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Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde  
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow  
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Han Dong, Randy Hillier  
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi  
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon  
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler  
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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