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Wednesday 3 June 2015

Mercredi 3 juin 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 June 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 juin 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES GRANDS LACS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 2, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant la protection et le rétablissement du bassin des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I'm glad to come back and finish the debate I started last night. I only have a few minutes left, and I hope to just review what I spoke about for the last 15 minutes in the House. That's basically discussing that this legislation, unless fully utilized and brought out to the people of Ontario, might only amount to photo op legislation, where the government can pass this bill, have the Great Lakes Protection Act, get a good photo with it and make the headlines. As we've seen with other bills this government has brought forward, there's usually no action after instituting them. I'm hoping that we can look back at this bill three years down the road and see some tangible results, instead of it just being passed at one part of this year.

As my constituent Mark Wales has said, we need qualitative and quantitative end points so that we can look back and see how we've achieved this. I've outlined the fact about the funding model that isn't present to ensure that some of these initiatives go forward. I refer back to the Invasive Species Act where, in speaking with many conservation authorities throughout the province in my critic portfolio, they're concerned that no money is going to follow the Invasive Species Act. While the powers might be there to deal with invasive species, there's no funding to actually carry through and deal with much of the invasive species that the conservation authorities are looking to deal with, especially in my area near Long Point, where phragmites has basically taken over the entire area that was once a beautiful place to go duck

hunting. They had a great habitat for ducks to come, but unfortunately the phragmites is slowly just diminishing the habitat.

There was a bit of talk on the other side of the House about nutrient runoff, mainly blaming the farmers of this province, that I'd also like to quickly talk about. That's kind of concerning, considering these guardians' councils are supposed to be composed and decide what's going to go on around the Great Lakes. We need to ensure that farmers are adequately represented on these councils, because you can't just blame the farmers for nutrient runoff. They're trying to do their part with improving their farming practices to minimize nutrient runoff. In particular, they usually have moved away from tilling the property, which greatly enhances the maintenance of nutrients in the soil. However, with the neonic ban coming forward from this government, you might see that practice diminish and therefore increase the nutrient runoff.

However, we've got to look at other sources of nutrient runoff in this province. As I mentioned before, when developers come in and build a new subdivision, the first thing they do is take away all the good soil on top of the land, build their subdivision and then only replace a small amount, which prevents proper runoff of rainwater, in washing their lawns, because the ground underneath is usually clay, and it doesn't soak in quite well. So you'll see a lot of the nutrients that they do put on with fertilizers and such run right off into the catch basins, into our water systems and out into the lakes.

We also have to look at municipalities and ensure that their sewage treatment facilities are on par and working well. Too often you might see a bad rainfall, or flooding in some instances, that overruns sewage maintenance plants and unfortunately ends up in our lakes and streams, causing quite a bit of the increased nutrients in our Great Lakes.

Of course, we've got the Americans on the other side of the border, who have their own farming practices that aren't as superb as the ones in Ontario.

In culmination of all the various items I have mentioned, you can't just blame the Ontario farmer. I would hope that the government moves away from focusing on the Ontario farmer. They are the economic engine of this province; the only industry that seems to be able to make a go of it at this point in time. Particularly in my riding, they are definitely keeping our area employed, per se, as they are the ones who are able to buy new trucks and equipment and spend money in the cities, because this government hasn't found a way to destroy their industry yet, although I'm sure they're looking to do so.

As I said earlier, just to recap: the funding model is not there; there's no local autonomy being returned to the municipalities—we'd like to see them stop putting up industrial wind turbines without the permission of local municipalities; there's no respect for landowners—being able to go on anybody's property without a warrant is a slippery slope to head down; again, I mentioned the guardians' council—the Ministry of Natural Resources can't even form a fishing management zone council over the last seven years. Zone 16 is still unformed, per se. It's a smaller council than the Great Lakes council.

I look forward to questions and comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to respond to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I was in the House last night, and I heard him do the first 15 minutes. He was quite articulate and touched on a lot of issues that I think we share, in terms of our concerns about this bill.

The member and I also share close geographic locations. He's in Elgin–Middlesex–London; I'm in Essex—a lot of rural agricultural land. We are adjacent to Lake Erie, and so we understand the complexities of living near a lake and also living in a very high density of farmland. We have to understand and know the impacts this bill potentially could have on our agriculture community. That's why, as New Democrats, we've called for this bill to not only have broad consultation, given that it is broad in its scope and far-reaching, but also to travel this bill to all quadrants of the province so that we have good information from those who will be impacted by the bill and we can collect the right amount of data.

0910

Last night, I heard the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change talk about the fact that this will be a mechanism to collect further data and to address some of the issues related to climate change and to new processes coming about, whether they be industrial or agricultural, and to ensure that we can mitigate against those processes and ensure the protection of the Great Lakes. Now, that's all well and good; however, if we don't have the resources tied to this bill—meaning money, frankly—then our fear is that it won't have the desired effect and certainly won't carry the protection that the title of the bill states.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I enjoyed the remarks of the member because he wove into his speech the fact that it has implications for his particular riding. I think, ultimately, all of us look to our own ridings, first of all, when legislation is passed and ask, "What kind of effect would this have?" I would recommend that he consult with Yvonne Harris, who is a well-known spokesperson in his riding on matters related to the Legislative Assembly. She will see her name now in Hansard and be pleased with that.

We have to look at all of the sources. I think the member is correct in saying, "Don't concentrate on just

one source or another." There are significant sources everywhere. But governments, and particularly environment departments, wherever the jurisdiction happens to be, must be prepared to take significant action, because those who do reside on Lake Erie, for instance, in the case the member mentioned—when you have Lake Erie nearby, you know the problem that the algae is having along there. It's not just the odour and the look of it, which is very unattractive, but it's the fact that it can become quite toxic as well.

So looking for all ways to be able to deal with this is important. The Great Lakes, as we know, are a real gem that we share with the United States. They're exceedingly important. We've made some progress over the years in terms of the cleanup, but population increases new substances that are introduced to it. When this bill was introduced a few years ago now, it seems to me, when I happened to be Minister of the Environment, we were looking at all of those opportunities to deal with this.

I think the comments of all members of the House have been valuable in dealing with this particular piece of legislation, and I thank the member for his contribution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always great to hear my colleague get up and talk about some of the real issues. It's funny; I've been here going on four years. We see legislation go through. I think that summing it up as just another opportunity for a photo op is kind of interesting, but that seems to be what it is. They have something that they talk about as being so important, but there's no funding in it, so what are the real plans?

My riding runs along the St. Lawrence. We have five or six water treatment plants that draw their water from the St. Lawrence River in our area, so water is very important.

But it is also a collaborative affair. We're one of many jurisdictions on the water, on the Great Lakes, that have an input, but certainly, the neighbours to the south—we have committees where they're already involved, and I wonder if it wouldn't be better to work more with that instead of just forming another committee to look after the Great Lakes. How many applications and how many expert panels do you have?

I was somewhat surprised when my colleague talked about the possibility of not having an agricultural rep on it, but I guess when you look at the track record of this government, there's good reason why the agricultural community is somewhat concerned that they won't have a rep on it. They get mentioned many times as being one of the causes, although when you drive along the Great Lakes, you see many good farms being bulldozed and houses being put up, so I don't know if you look at the total picture. Really, the impact of agriculture—agriculture is a green industry, and it's probably our number one industry. I think that if you are going to go with a guardians' council, they should be a very big part of it, in a percentage that's reflective of the industry and the impact they have on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House, and to follow today the comments by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London and his take on Bill 66. I had the opportunity to listen, both this morning and to the first part. He brought up a lot of concerns about agriculture, and they were valid concerns.

We're in favour of this bill, but this bill has the potential, depending on how it's handled, of being a photo op and window dressing, or being a good bill, or being a devastating bill for agriculture, depending on how it's interpreted and on how the government actually uses it.

I've heard a lot of other members speak about how their ridings are close to the Great Lakes, but this bill covers the Great Lakes basin. That's 95% of the agricultural land in Ontario. This bill covers the majority of my riding, and I'm six hours straight north. Eight hours straight north of here: This bill covers it. So it's a very important bill for agriculture, depending on how it's implemented.

I've seen some of the press releases, and reading the bill—sometimes they're acting like this is the first step to protect the Great Lakes, and that's patently untrue. Specifically, the agriculture sector has been working for years with the government—with various governments—to do their part to protect the environment, and specifically the Great Lakes, with nutrient management plans. Most farmers have environmental farm plans. We have to be crystal clear that those are taken into account, and that they're not simply superseded when someone comes up with a bright new idea out of nowhere, and thinks they're going to solve all the problems. That's where this bill is dangerous. We have to make sure that the regulations under this bill actually make sense for the industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has two minutes.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank everyone who commented on my remarks.

The member from Essex—I had a tour of Pelee Island, down in his area, just a few months ago. It's a great place to visit. The fishing industry in that area is quite concerned about the health of the Great Lakes; it does affect them. I know that you've talked about your pickerel and walleye up north, but I do want to mention that the perch out of Lake Erie is probably some of the best fish I've ever had. We have a great time in our riding, enjoying our perch fish fries.

Thanks to the deputy House leader for his remarks.

Members from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Timiskaming–Cochrane, thank you very much. I appreciate your comments.

The Great Lakes Protection Act is a great title for this bill. However, we've got to ensure that it's definitely a bill that's actually going to do something other than create a photo op for this government. We do have to remember, when they create these local councils to oversee areas—these guardians' councils—the fact that this bill is giving them the power to supersede so many other laws in

our area, including planning bylaws. This could actually affect the development of certain cities and areas, which we do have to be concerned about. Hopefully, these guardians' councils do not become like the LHINs have become in our health care system, where they're these far-off groups of people who are making decisions about health care.

On our local LHIN, one person out of all of Elgin county is the voice for the people of our area with local health care concerns. They're not in touch with the people of this riding; they don't have their finger on the pulse. They're basically just doing what the government's bidding is. Hopefully, the guardians' councils that this government is going to create, which are going to supersede so many bills and regulations and laws, don't become that model.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Good morning to all my colleagues. I'm really happy to have the opportunity to speak to this bill. I obviously represent the riding of Essex, which borders Lake Erie, one of our Great Lakes. Also, in the north end of the riding, we have Lake St. Clair, a wonderful, beautiful lake that is fed through the St. Clair River into the Detroit River. It contains some of the most beautiful scenery, exciting fishing opportunities and water sports opportunities.

0920

I grew up in Belle River and I was always drawn to the water. Even though we didn't live on the water, I was drawn there. As a kid it was where I sought—not refuge, but my entertainment. Many of my friends, we would go fishing and swimming and skiing and do all the other great things that living around a lake affords. It's something that you develop a deep understanding about in terms of how important it is to protect that natural resource.

We knew that we gained our drinking water from the lake. We had economic opportunities—seeing the freighters roll through the Detroit River coming and parking in front of the Windsor Salt mine to send salt around the world.

So, Speaker, we understand and are connected, certainly, with our Great Lakes system—all the more reason to ensure that we, as legislators, do everything that we can do to protect its health and its use and maintain a healthy environment for those who use the Great Lakes and live around the Great Lakes.

It's been said in this House that, of the 107 ridings that we have represented in the Legislature here, there will be four that aren't directly affected by this bill, meaning, I would imagine, that they aren't a part of a watershed system. It's interesting—

Mr. John Vanthof: I wonder which four.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I wonder which four.

It just goes to show you, Speaker, that this is far-reaching in its implementation.

Here are some stats on the Great Lakes for members' information.

The Great Lakes contain nearly 20% of the Earth's surface fresh water.

There are over 4,000 species of plants, fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes basin.

The Great Lakes replenish slowly, at a rate of less than 1% each year, and it takes 300 years for a drop of water to travel from Lake Superior through Lakes Huron, Erie, Ontario and the St. Lawrence and into the ocean.

The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River shoreline is the largest freshwater shoreline in the world, and Ontario has over 10,000 kilometres of this—more than all eight of the Great Lakes states combined.

Ontario's population is growing at a rate of 6% per year, mostly concentrated around the Great Lakes. It's the fastest-growing Great Lakes jurisdiction.

If the Great Lakes regions, including Ontario, Quebec and the eight Great Lakes states, were treated as a single economy, it would be the fourth-largest in the world, with a GDP of \$5.1 trillion and 56 million jobs.

The Great Lakes waters help generate 80% of Ontario's electricity, including hydroelectricity and cooling for power plants.

Ontario's commercial Great Lakes fisheries contributed about \$234 million to Ontario's economy in 2011, and Great Lakes regional anglers—of which I'm proudly one, Speaker—contribute more than \$600 million annually to Ontario's economy. I can attest to that on how many lures I lose.

In 2010, Ontario's Great Lakes region attracted over 73 million tourists. These tourists spent approximately \$12.3 billion.

Great Lakes shipping routes stimulate nearly \$16 billion in annual economic activity in Ontario and Quebec.

The watersheds of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin include all of southern Ontario and a large section of northern Ontario, as well as large sections of the United States, including eight Great Lakes states, and Quebec. These watersheds are home to 40% of Canadians, 75% of Canadian manufacturing, and one third of Canada's agriculture and processing jobs.

Over the last 400 years there have been accelerated stresses on our Great Lakes ecosystem. These main stresses include overfishing; nutrient loading; excess phosphorus and nitrogen due to human waste and urban and agricultural runoff; toxic chemicals; land use practices—for example, filling in wetlands and modification of shorelines; invasive species and animal species—the sea lamprey, Asian carp, zebra mussel; hydrologic alterations—diverting water flows with dams and channels; and climate change, of course, where we see higher volumes of climate-related weather patterns. Those stats should show us quite clearly that our Great Lakes are literally our lifeblood not only to our own personal and communal health but to our economic health as well. We rely on them maybe more than we even know. All the more reason for us to do everything that we can.

As I stated in my previous hit, this bill is far-reaching. As my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane stated, it has the potential to be either a really, really good bill, and

something that can be incredibly functional, or it could be a waste of time, and potentially disastrous if it isn't done in the right way with the right consultation and the right emphasis.

We, certainly, as New Democrats support this bill and we support the Great Lakes. We believe that access to water is a basic human right, and the Great Lakes are a shared public good. I don't think anyone in this House would disagree with that. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin is obviously hugely important to our ecology, tourism and economy, and we need lakes and rivers that are drinkable, swimmable and fishable.

In terms of being potentially comprehensive legislation, we would say that this bill is long overdue. However, if you look at what exists in Great Lakes legislation and protection, we have several mechanisms that prescribe different controls and acts of law to protect the Great Lakes. We have the Ontario Water Resources Act that dates back to the 1950s, we have the Environmental Protection Act which is Ontario's main pollution control legislation, we have the Environmental Assessment Act which is Ontario's main environmental planning legislation and we have the Conservation Authorities Act that was enacted in 1946.

My colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh, who spent many years previously on Windsor city council—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Your speaker is right behind you and you guys are having a loud conversation in front of your own guy who's speaking.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was House stuff.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If you've got House business, feel free to go outside and talk about it, not in front of the guy who's speaking right in front of you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I truly appreciate your intervention; thank you. Sometimes I want to say the same thing. It's tough to carry on two conversations at once so I certainly appreciate the role you do.

I was going through some of the various acts that we currently have on the books that deal with environmental protection and Great Lakes protection. The Conservation Authorities Act—I was talking about my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh who spent many years on town council and also sat on the Essex Region Conservation Authority board and dealt with some of those issues in our region. He mentioned some of the great work that ERCA has done over the years to enhance our Great Lakes area and the surrounding areas of Windsor and Essex counties.

I just want to give a shout-out to those who work at ERCA and who continue to endeavour to protect our Great Lakes and our watersheds, specifically Tim Byrne who is a long-standing member and conservation officer with ERCA; he does a great job. He's a wonderful spokesperson for our region and is very knowledgeable and has a lot of experience in rural affairs as they pertain to the health of our Great Lakes. He's someone who has put a lot of thought into the effects of human activities

and what they do to our Great Lakes and our water systems. He comes from a farming family—the Byrnes are well-known, long-time farmers in Essex county—so he gets that juxtaposition of the protection of water as well as ensuring that we have economic development in our agriculture development. He certainly would take that balanced approach.

What we're asking and calling for the government to do, certainly within the context of this bill, is to find that balance. We would propose that the balance could be found through broad consultations. Travel this bill; get it out there. It's too far-reaching to just contain it in this House with the knowledge that we have and that our researchers can dig up for us. We have to talk to people like Tim Byrne. We have to talk to farmers out there who have been ensuring best practices—not only ensuring them but actually were the innovators of them: no-till practices that contained nutrients and ensured that we were able to avoid runoff into our watersheds. There are a lot of lessons to be learned out there that we can take from those on the ground. I hope that the government is confident enough in this bill and the prescriptions of this bill that they can go out and talk to people. We certainly would appreciate that and would support that in all measures.

0930

One of the things that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change spoke about yesterday—he hit on a lot of issues. He came in for a two-minute hit and he kind of elaborated on why we need this bill. I appreciated the information that he delivered to us. He talked about nutrient runoff. He talked about some of the invasive species that are micro-organisms that we don't even know about. We talk about the zebra mussel, the round goby and the Asian carp as being invasive species, maybe because we can see them, but there are potentially other micro-organisms that we don't even know exist that have a detrimental effect on our water system.

He hit on one that I don't think we have paid enough attention to: the increased use and volume of pharmaceuticals that are found in our water treatment centres or facilities, municipal water treatment facilities. Our water treatment facilities are quite high-tech; they can do a lot of things. They use ozone. They use chemicals. They treat our water. By and large, you have seen that the drinking water quality in Ontario is among the very best in the world. However, when it comes to pharmaceuticals in our water system—when you go to your doctor, your doctor may prescribe you a certain medicine. They'll give you the prescription, and maybe you might even get another prescription for another ailment. But what they'll say, what they'll clearly tell you, is, “You can take this pill, you can take this pill, but make sure you don't mix it with this third pill, because that can have some detrimental and contraindication effects within the pharmaceuticals.”

What we're doing is, we are all pouring our own various pharmaceuticals into our water system, and it is having some very serious effects on the various eco-

systems within the Great Lakes. We're seeing reptiles in certain areas feeling the effects and having various potential mutations because we're not able to treat pharmaceuticals. We just don't know how to do that; the science isn't there within our water treatment system.

It's something that I would love to see this government take a clear focus on and be the leader in Canada and around the world in terms of how we deal with this huge problem, the increased use of pharmaceuticals through human activity—how we're going to deal with that, going into the future.

The bill prescribes a lot of regulation through the Lieutenant Governor in Council, so we need to ensure that those are given due consideration. It's always tough when we see a bill come through that prescribes so much to regulation, because there's so much that is unknown. I think you heard it here today during the debate: We don't know how much potential downloading of responsibility onto municipalities this bill will prescribe. There's some concern out there within the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that this will, again, be another job that they will have to take on and find the resources to be able to do that. That's certainly not a partnership that our communities in and around our Great Lakes are looking for. They're looking for some leadership, through the provincial government, to actually tackle some of the issues that we see.

Many have talked about nutrient runoff and its effects. We know that in other jurisdictions, mainly in the United States, they're just starting to tackle this problem. We've had the Nutrient Management Act since 2002. It's a statute that was enacted following the Walkerton inquiry. It requires farmers and those operators to develop nutrient management strategies as part of source water protection, and large livestock operators in Ontario have had to be in compliance with the act since 2005.

We've been ahead of the curve on this, and our agricultural community has done a lot of work in ensuring that they maintain the nutrients that are on their fields. We've heard why. Certainly, as stewards of the environment and of the land, they understand that they have a vested interest in maintaining not only the health of their plots of land but the health of their communities so that we can all enjoy, ultimately, the fruits of their labour. They get that circle of life, or that economic circle.

What they also do not want to do is waste any money. They would literally, if they didn't embark on those best practices, be flushing it down the drain. We understand that in the New Democratic Party, and we certainly want to support those farmers and recognize them when they are utilizing those best practices. That's something we don't do.

Of course, we understand what happened in Toledo, Ohio—I believe it was close to two years ago—where they had such massive agricultural runoff that it actually shut down their water treatment system and they had to have bottled water for a number of days, potentially weeks. It gave them cause to enact legislation to ensure that farmers were not spraying nutrients onto their fields

when there was a high level of saturation or when there was an anticipated level of saturation due to the forecast.

Speaker, we've been doing that in Ontario for years now. We understand that, and it's certainly something that we see our farmers in Essex county utilizing, that type of nutrient management system.

There are some things that the bill talks about that are new and potentially innovative, and one is geographically focused initiatives. We're not quite sure what that specifically means. I guess it gives the minister the ability to identify specific projects in areas that they want to tackle. So whether they be acute issues in some areas—I don't know how they plan on funding that or supporting that, through which mechanism, through the Ministry of the Environment, whether they'll have sort of a SWAT team to go out and actually address these specific, geographically focused initiatives, because there is currently no type of body that does that.

The other aspect that I guess is novel in this bill is the implementation and establishment of the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, which will be made up of the Minister of the Environment as well as other stakeholders with connections to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. The council will meet at least once a year to discuss priorities for action, funding measures, targets and initiatives. This is a great idea. We should all get together and talk about the health of the Great Lakes. But what teeth will it have? We know the IJC, the International Joint Commission, is solely focused on the health and maintenance of the Great Lakes in an international context. They've done a lot of great work. There is a ton of research that comes out of the IJC. Will this council have the ability to embark on research projects? Will they have, again, legislative teeth to uphold some of the laws that are currently on the books? We're not quite sure.

What we do know is that the stakeholders who make up the Great Lakes Guardians' Council should be very broad. We should see a broad segment of those who are in the agriculture industry, municipal leadership, and some laypeople too. Let's just hear from normal people about what their effects are. Let's bring in our community members who can spread that message about the fact that we may actually be doing something tangible to support the health of our Great Lakes.

Speaker, I think I'm nearing the end of my time here. I want to thank the members for listening intently, specifically my colleagues here, who have been good and quiet for the remainder of the time since your intervention. I want to thank all the members for their attention here this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to thank the member for Essex for his comments on this bill.

I couldn't agree more with everyone who has spoken to this bill about the importance of clean water. It goes without saying. Growing up in the township of King, where I did, I witnessed first-hand a degradation of the water, primarily the East Humber River that flows

through King township and eventually makes its way to Lake Ontario. When my father was a young boy, he'd fish for speckled trout in that lake. As a young boy, I was able to fish for bass in that river system.

0940

I would challenge people in today's world to even find where that creek is, because it has dried up, the fish are gone and it's nothing more than an algae-filled series of little ponds. So we see first-hand what happens when we don't take care of our water systems.

I'm hoping—and I believe—that this proposed legislation will go a long way to making sure that the water within the Great Lakes is protected and that future generations don't see the degradation of water systems that I witnessed and my father witnessed over, really, a fairly short time of probably only 80 years or so.

I know that in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, even though we sit on the Oak Ridges moraine—known as the rain barrel—about 75% of our water in our riding is pumped from Lake Ontario and makes its way up to our distribution system. So even though we're a number of miles away from Lake Ontario, it's very important we make sure that that water quality is maintained.

It is good to see that we're going to have the support of all three parties as we move this bill ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to make a few comments on the member from Essex's comments.

I agree with everything people are saying here today as far as water being probably the most important resource that we have. However, this Great Lakes Protection Act—I have some real problems with how this will actually be implemented.

When you look at an act like the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, we're talking about a watershed, and we actually worked with the municipalities and the federal government around the watershed. That's how we protect Lake Simcoe. Of course, it works, and it slowly is improving. However, when you look at the multiple jurisdictions that are on both sides of the border on the Great Lakes, I think it's almost an impossibility to ever properly implement this bill. Someone said it sounds like a great photo op, when you cut the ribbon to say the bill was introduced or you have a fancy evening at some fancy suite somewhere and everybody brags about how wonderful things are, but the reality is the whole implementation process, I think, is going to be a real problem.

The International Joint Commission, in my opinion, is the group that should be leading the actual charge on this Great Lakes Protection Act. That's who is responsible. That takes in people from all across North America. As well, we have the Great Lakes mayors, who are also a group that's trying to protect the Great Lakes. However, one province creating legislation when there are probably 75 other jurisdictions that are impacting this I think is a cause for concern. How will this actually be implemented over a long period of time?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm always pleased and honoured and privileged to rise on behalf of the voices in Algoma–Manitoulin and speak to this bill this morning.

The introduction of the Great Lakes act is something that I want to see and that people across the riding want to see as well. But the concern that was raised by my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane earlier was that if there's no follow-through on this, once again—and this is a theme that I've used over the years that I've been here—it's a plan to implement a plan to make a plan. And that plan might go in two different ways: It might be a positive one or it might be a negative one.

What the member from Essex so eloquently brought up in his remarks is the importance of reaching out: the importance of reaching out to all stakeholders, gathering the information, travelling the bill to various communities and listening to the agricultural sector, the tourism sector, the marinas—everyone. Everyone needs to have the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to tell you that just a couple of years ago, we had to fight in order to get the IJC committee meetings to be heard on Manitoulin Island. It was great that we finally got it rescheduled, but why wouldn't we have meetings on the largest freshwater island in the world? That's Manitoulin Island. It's right in the basket. So getting that meeting was absolutely imperative.

My colleague so eloquently talked about flushing pharmaceutical products down into our waterways. You know what? You flush it; you forget about it.

But there is another big problem that we're hiding, that we're not speaking enough about: the hiding of nuclear waste in Kincardine, putting it a mile away from our biggest freshwater body of water that we have across this country—and we're doing it. We need to question ourselves and challenge ourselves—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: Good morning. I'm very pleased to stand this morning to speak in support of Bill 66. We are very fortunate here in Ontario to have one of the best great lakes systems in the country but also in the world.

As a former nurse, I was visiting Kenya back around 2008. The last day I was leaving Kenya, six little persons died from drinking dirty water. We know water can kill. It is our collective responsibility in this chamber to protect the clean water that we have for the next generation.

A bigger piece of this proposed legislation that I want to speak to is that the proposed legislation has been strengthened in the following area: dealing with the First Nations and Métis communities. We don't have to look far. Yesterday, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission told us all the wrongs the government of Canada did. And now we need to do more. I'm very pleased our government is committed to working with the First Nations and Métis communities in engaging in the development of the proposed act.

We also know that the strengthening of this act provides provisions on the earlier versions to help Ontario to continue to build the partnership that we have with the

First Nations and Métis communities. This includes the First Nations' and Métis' participation in the guardians' council and early involvement in the development of geographically focused initiatives involving the revision of Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy. More importantly, we need to make sure that the traditional ecological knowledge, as well as their consideration, is being considered in this particular bill.

I'm very pleased this morning to hear from the third party, the member from Essex and his eloquent remarks, at the beginning of this portion of the debate, of his support, but also the member from the official opposition party. At the end of the day, it's our collective responsibility to protect the Great Lakes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex has two minutes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to thank the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Simcoe North, Algoma–Manitoulin, and Scarborough–Agincourt for their comments.

My colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin raised a point that I wanted to touch on but I didn't get a chance to. The proposal by the federal government to create a nuclear waste depository along the basin of Lake Huron, miles under the ground, is frightening. That's a nightmare waiting to happen, literally. Those who are opponents of this have been quite vocal. There are a lot of folks in the bordering United States who are making a lot of hay of this issue. We have yet to hear anything tangible from our environment minister, specifically, about the role that Ontario can play. That's discouraging.

I would like to see a clear plan on this issue, specifically. We cannot afford to have our entire Great Lakes system contaminated by nuclear waste because we figure we can just bury it. We have to come up with something more complex and something more functional than just burying our problems. I don't know whether that specific issue can be dealt with or will be dealt with within the context of this new Great Lakes Protection Act. I hope it is.

I hope it can be, but given the standoffish nature of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change at this point in handing that responsibility solely off to the federal government—we know they're not going to take it seriously. They're the ones who are proposing that we deal with this in that way. Let's take some leadership on that file.

I certainly appreciate the comments from all of my colleagues, and I welcome further debate.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I will speak to Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act, which I strongly oppose as a very wrongful piece of legislation that will hurt Ontarians.

There are a number of points that I would like to make, and I will begin with speaking to the loss of local autonomy. The implementation of this bill will result in the further erosion of local autonomy for communities

across Ontario. The continual destruction of local autonomy by the provincial government is based on the demonstrably false premise that the environment continues to degrade, that local municipalities and private landowners are the cause of that degradation, that municipalities are either incapable or unwilling to successfully address environmental issues, and that a minister in Toronto and his hand-picked people know what is best for them and needs to set them straight.

Many, many rural and northern Ontario residents and municipalities disagree with that flawed and, quite frankly, insulting assumption. To that end, in an effort to inform policy-makers of the needs of rural and northern Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association developed the Rural and Northern Lens to assist policy-makers to evaluate proposed policies. I want to focus on three specific questions included in the Rural and Northern Lens to illustrate a number of my misgivings with this bill:

(1) Does the proposed initiative benefit or hinder the fiscal realities of rural and northern Ontario?

(2) Does the proposed initiative have a business case that accounts for low and sparse populations?

(3) Does the proposed initiative have adequate human and financial resources to be effective?

The truth is, we don't know the answers to any of those questions. Funds have not been allocated to Bill 66. In fact, the bill instructs the guardians' council to recommend potential funding mechanisms—that would be the taxpayer, because we know one way or the other that is the one who will pay, whether through higher taxes or through higher product prices.

In addition, there are no assurances that rural and northern municipally elected representatives or residents will be invited to participate, and even if they are invited to participate, that they will be listened to.

Lastly, designated policies and regulations included within geographically focused initiatives will override the decisions of local elected officials, including local official plans and zoning bylaws.

The structure of this bill is eerily similar to another provincial government boondoggle called the Green Energy Act. If the industrial wind turbines are so wonderful, why did the provincial government remove municipal decision-making authority with respect to wind turbines? Even after promising to stop imposing industrial wind turbines on unwilling hosts, the provincial government continues to do so, deaf to scientists, deaf to residents, deaf to taxpayers and deaf to municipalities.

Given the open-ended nature of this bill, the question must be asked: What surprises does the provincial government have in store for residents that they feel it necessary to remove local decision-making authority? Time will tell, I'm afraid.

Existing legislation: The provincial government claims that they need new legal tools to deal with emerging priorities. Yet when asked what those priorities are, the government states that the guardians' council will identify priorities sometime in the future. So the provincial

government needs legislation to address priorities that they cannot currently identify. That sounds very suspicious.

The provincial government is in the habit, when introducing legislation, of insinuating that a hole exists with respect to environmental protection. This claim could not be further from the truth. Legislation, policies, regulations, agreements and organizations protecting the environment, and the Great Lakes specifically, have been in place for decades, including the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Nutrient Management Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Water Opportunities Act, the Water Resources Act, the Conservation Authorities Act, the Planning Act, the provincial policy statement, the International Joint Commission, the Great Lakes committee of the Canada-Ontario Agreement and the US-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, to name just a few.

To say that this bill will create overlap, duplication and conflict is an understatement, and all without the oversight of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. This is a very concerning trend: open-ended, vague, arbitrary legislation that allows the minister to consolidate power and essentially legislate on his own with little, if any, oversight.

Accountability brings me to another concerning trend: the increased creation and/or use of outside groups. Groups that are unelected and unaccountable to the electorate for regulatory functions is not an innovative governance tool. It is nothing short of the creation of a shadow corporatist governance structure, the function of which is to bypass the legitimate legislative process.

We have very telling examples of what happens when outside groups are given power and authority with too little or no oversight. For example, the lack of oversight and accountability of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that resulted in an organization run amok, an organization that destroys people's lives because they can, because they do not face the consequences for bad behaviour.

The inherent conflict of interest created by delegating police powers to an organization that relies on fundraising, while addressed by the courts, still has not been addressed by the provincial government. In fact, despite their blatant abuse of power, the provincial government has recently decided to give the OSPCA more power—this heavy-handed, biased, unaccountable government.

What conflicts of interest will be created by Bill 66? We don't know yet, but we do know that NGOs are not above using their lobbying power and appointments to target political enemies, including local businesses. An appointment to the guardians' council could potentially be used to encourage and legitimize politically motivated attacks.

Centralization and private property rights: Private property rights are the foundation of western civilization and democracy. Private property rights are the underpinning of our prosperity. Private property rights and the resulting prosperity are the reason our environment has

improved and continues to improve. Centralized collective control of land inevitably leads to a worse environment. This is demonstrable. Unfortunately, in Ontario we have seen the incremental destruction of private property rights by all levels of governments over the last several decades.

I fear that this bill, with its ill-defined and arbitrary authority, is the final nail in the coffin of private property rights in Ontario and, therefore, our prosperity and our environment, because without the wealth to fund investments into the environment, they won't happen.

A self-evident truth is that private property owners are the best decision-makers with respect to their property as they have a vested interest in investing in and improving their property compared to remote, centralized decision-makers who are unaccountable for the outcomes of their decisions. The best decisions for communities and the environment are made at the local level, whether by a local municipality or a private landowner.

We know that increased centralization of decision-making and collective control of property results in decreasing prosperity and a degraded environment.

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One of the best, most visible examples of this phenomenon is just a couple of kilometres east of Queen's Park, in Cabbagetown. In the 1940s a large swath of Cabbagetown was torn down to build Regent Park, a collectively owned and centrally controlled public housing project. It is true that Cabbagetown was a slum at the time, but it wasn't because the residents were lazy or didn't want a better environment but because they lacked resources.

Over time, as the residents of Cabbagetown accumulated wealth, they invested their individually accumulated resources in their individual properties, and today Cabbagetown is a beautiful, green neighbourhood. Currently, homes in Cabbagetown routinely sell for well over \$1 million. Also currently, Regent Park, collectively owned and centrally controlled, is being torn down. Regent Park degraded over time because its residents did not own the land and so did not have an incentive to invest in and improve their environment. Centralized decision-making authority and collective control of private land will remove the inherent incentive of private property owners to invest in their land and will inevitably result in a degraded environment.

Censorship: What is rarely talked about in this House but what concerns me is censorship. This bill not only removes the decision-making authority of local authorities, including municipalities, it requires public bodies to support the decisions of the minister. In other words, elected officials, land use planners and other professionals working for a planning authority or local municipality cannot submit a dissenting view, even if the public is in disagreement, even if in their professional opinion, a designated policy is unwarranted and will result in bad outcomes. The question needs to be asked: What ugly surprises does the provincial government have in store for residents and municipalities that they felt it necessary

to remove the ability of local decision-making authorities to dissent?

Public consultations: Notice for the public hearing for Bill 6, the predecessor to Bill 66, was given approximately 36 hours prior to the hearing taking place. The hearing was held for one day, in a committee room at Queen's Park. The short notice period limited hearing time, and the location of the hearing disenfranchised many resource user groups, landowners, municipalities, residents and other interested stakeholders who were unable to attend due to time and travel constraints.

Given that the scope of this bill spans 105 of the 107 ridings in the province and so could potentially adversely impact the well-being of the vast majority of residents, municipalities, people and businesses in Ontario, I strongly recommend that the hearings be held in a variety of locations across the province and that ample notice be provided to the public prior to public hearings being held. People have a right to be heard, not simply to send in a submission which can be safely ignored, but to be heard by MPPs and other citizens alike, particularly rural and northern residents, who routinely feel ignored by this government.

Again, I will refer to ROMA's Rural and Northern Lens. There are just three questions that need to be answered prior to this bill being passed:

Does the proposed initiative ensure that rural and northern communities are receiving equitable treatment or services relative to other parts of the province?

Does the proposed initiative accommodate the aspirations of residents from rural communities and the north?

Does the proposed initiative build upon the input and advice of rural residents, communities and municipalities?

The provincial government needs to hear from a whole lot of people prior to passing and implementing this bill, so that Ontarians may ask questions and hold the government to account.

In conclusion, a constituent sent me a very powerful quote the other day that sums this bill up quite nicely: "If you can't trust people with freedom, how can you trust people with power?" The centralization of power in this bill, similar to the Green Energy Act, will not just disenfranchise private landowners, but also local communities. Rural Ontario doesn't trust this government, and for good reason: Past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. We have witnessed communities devastated by the imposition of industrial wind turbines, which chop up birds, devalue property and make people sick.

The arbitrary nature of this bill begs the question, what further environmentally destructive policies is the provincial government planning to impose on rural Ontario through this bill? Rural people are tired of being bullied by this government, whether it's the utter mismanagement of Hydro One, the Green Energy Act, the imposition of industrial wind turbines on unwilling hosts, high and rising energy prices, the loss of 300,000 good manufacturing jobs, the Caledonia land dispute, the unnecessary College of Trades, the eco tax, the HST added

to hydro bills, the cancelling of the OLG slots program at horse racing tracks, the carbon tax, the Ontario pension plan—the list is endless.

Here is my last question for the provincial government: Crown land already comprises 85% of the province of Ontario. How much more of our private land and wealth is the provincial government going to seize for itself?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

The member who spoke before me has a lack of confidence in the bill for reasons that would be very different from mine. I don't think it's a bad thing at all to take on an ambitious goal to protect the Great Lakes. In fact, I would say the people of this province want that to happen.

The concern that I and others have is whether or not the government actually would act to protect the Great Lakes, given a number of events and initiatives on their part: the deep geologic repository that my colleagues from Algoma–Manitoulin and Essex have mentioned, putting a major nuclear waste dump along the shores of Lake Huron, using a technology that has already failed in the United States—there was a substantial fire and a release of radioactivity to the surface. We have to recognize that if we're going to protect the Great Lakes, we have to do it in partnership with the other Great Lakes jurisdictions: Michigan, Illinois, Ohio. Frankly, they object to us threatening the Great Lakes with this deep geologic repository. They're the people we're going to have to depend on if we're going to have a cohesive, comprehensive plan to actually protect the lakes.

The other concern I have is that there was an oil spill this winter in Gogama. A CN train went off the rails; large amounts of oil were spilled; there was a substantial fire. There has been a cleanup going on, but to this point there has been no talk, no indication of an investigation that would lead to charges against CN for irresponsibility.

I haven't investigated it all. Proper investigations have to be done. But if this government isn't willing to prosecute in those circumstances, when will it stand up for water quality in this province?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, I want to address two points in the debate. First of all, I listened to the Conservative member opposite, and he seems to feel that there is no role for government in the environmental protection of our Great Lakes. But when we think of it, we have five Great Lakes. We have a huge population base. We have the cities of Toronto, Cleveland, Chicago, Thunder Bay, Detroit and numerous other towns in numerous jurisdictions—Ontario, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, a little piece of Pennsylvania, New York. The only way to coordinate a transnational response to this crisis is through what's contemplated in this legislation, and

that's the Great Lakes Guardians' Council. It's not just Ontarians who have an interest in this; it's all of those other jurisdictions and subnational jurisdictions, the Canadian government and the American federal government. If there ever was a place for government to play a role, it is in something like this.

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The second point that I wanted to address is the consultation with the First Nations and Métis communities. For thousands and thousands of years, the First Nations have been resident on the shores of the Great Lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Ontario and so on. In fact, Chicago is an aboriginal name; Toronto is an aboriginal name. Many other cities have aboriginal names. There are many, many First Nations that are situated along the various shorelines of the Great Lakes. They have built up knowledge over thousands and thousands of years about how to treat the water and how to manage these issues, and they should be consulted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always a pleasure to get up to respond to one of my colleagues. I disagree with the member opposite, because I think the best way to protect the Great Lakes is to get all the partners together. We have those committees already. We are a part of a US-Canada partnership. I think that that's where our voice needs to be heard, because, unfortunately, most of the industrial activity happens elsewhere. We are a big part of it—the largest part of it—but I heard earlier talk about the algae blooms in Lake Erie. That originates in Ohio, so we need to work with our partners to get those issues under control.

It's a great photo op. We can talk a lot about this. There is no funding in this. There is no money for any work to be done on the Great Lakes in this. There are no measurements. This is just another "Let's see what we're doing here. We've got another title here that we can stand in front of the camera."

Ontarians are looking for results. They're looking to work with their partners and get meaningful results that can be measured. They're looking for improvements, and we've had great improvements over the years.

It's time to get to work at getting Ontarians back to work. The people of Ontario are looking for more from their government and this province. It's unfortunate; it's another photo op. We've had a couple of pictures on the big staircase. Maybe we can do that tomorrow and say that we have another bill and we're out there working for Ontario, but we need results. Where are the measurements in this? We don't see that.

Anyway, it will be, I guess, a work in progress. We support the initiative, but there are tools that are at our command right now that we could be using but we aren't, and we think that's a mistake.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to add my comments to the member from Carleton–Mississipi Mills's

speech. He's quite pessimistic about the nature of the bill. I would take a different approach.

There are some things, of course—New Democrats believe that the government should, and has to, play a specific role in ensuring our protection, whether it be protection of one's self or environmental protection, or health and safety regulations in our workplaces. There are lots of areas where we need to play a role. My concern is that this bill allows them to potentially not play a role and download their responsibility to other jurisdictions. The municipalities, for instance, I think are concerned that this will just be another lever for the government to pull and to off-load responsibility for source water protection when it comes to the health of the Great Lakes.

We are in an age where we know the hazards to our Great Lakes system. We've seen them many times before, whether they be ecological spills or pollution, yet we still continue to embark on those types of methods.

I read an article yesterday that talked about line 5, which is a 62-year-old pipe. It's an Enbridge pipe under the Mackinac straits. Those who are informed about these types of things are calling on it to be immediately abandoned. It could rupture at any time, and if it does it will cascade oil down through the Great Lakes system in a way in which we could never imagine.

We have to change the way we do things, and hopefully this bill allows us to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills has two minutes.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to thank the members from Toronto–Danforth, Willowdale, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Essex for their comments.

I am strongly opposed to this piece of legislation. It should not pass. It is unnecessary. It is wrongful. We're identifying problems that don't exist that we think we need to fix. Actually, water in the Great Lakes system over the recent decades has been improving. We are better educated and better informed about the problems causing pollution. People know the damage it does. Private citizens and industry are doing a much better job in monitoring pollution and taking care of water, and the water quality has improved.

We already have a dozen pieces of legislation in this province that address water quality, including the International Joint Commission between the United States and Canada. That is there already. We don't need any more government regulations and legislation. We're over-regulated, if anything.

This bill is very vague, non-specific and hands power over to people who are unaccountable. This is an absolute assault on private property rights, which is the basis of our democracy and our freedom, and this must not pass. We have to have respect for the private landowner. This bill does not do that.

This guardians' council is an organization of independents. We don't know where they will come from and they certainly do not have, or may not have, the best interests of the private landowner at heart.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to—actually, past 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like everyone to welcome to the Legislature Jon and Susan Lazarus, the parents of Jordan Lazarus, who works in my office. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It gives me great honour today to introduce, from my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Shirley Parkin-Bobier and Brenda Miller. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Miss Monique Taylor: Once again, I want to welcome the family of our page Bridget Le Donne. Today we have her aunt Tanya Le Donne; her sister, once again, Gabrielle Le Donne—she was a former page; welcome back to Queen's Park, Gabby—her father, Dino Le Donne; and her friend David Maida. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to welcome to the members' gallery Nicolas Wolf, an intern in my office here at Queen's Park and a resident of my riding.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce our guests from Equal Voice: Jessica Brandon and Rita Komarova.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's National Access Awareness Week this week. I want to introduce Cassidy Smith, government relations, March of Dimes—they have their gala, I believe, tomorrow night—and Lorin MacDonald, disability advocate and special adviser for accessibility strategies at People Access. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your leadership.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome a guest in the west members' gallery. Christopher Poulos is joining us this morning.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to congratulate Maya Scott from London West, who is page captain today. She is joined today by her mother, Maria Calleja; her father, Ian Scott; and her brother Aidan Scott, who are in the public gallery. Welcome.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm pleased to welcome Mrs. Eliot and the grades 11 and 12 law students from Barrie Central Collegiate in my riding of Barrie. Welcome.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please welcome the Girls Government program from two schools in Dufferin–Caledon: from Princess Margaret Public School: Justice, Lily, Brooklynn, Madison, Noelle, Ashley, Jada, Paige, Hannah, Madilyne, Kaitlain, Acadia, Abby and teachers Laurie and Tracey, and from Island Lake Public School: Kylie, Renee, Vicky, Kaylee, Breanne, Maddie, Laura, Tia and teacher Amanda with my outstanding volunteer Lauren MacDonald. They just did a presentation to the Minister of Education, and they rocked it.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I would like to welcome a former educator and superintendent from the Greater Essex County District School Board, Rod Peterson.

I'd also like to welcome my daughter Morgan Gretzky and my nephew Duncan Jursic.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: In anticipation of something happening in this chamber today involving Terry Fox, the cast from Sheridan College's production of *Waiting for a Miracle: The Terry Fox Story*, are with us today. They'll be performing at 12 o'clock. Their names are Mike Mulrooney, Emma Smit, Micah Richardson, Greg Solomon, Amanda Trapp, Brittany King, Gavin Bowerman, Lucas Popowich, Eric Dahlinger, Sam Gaetz and Rachel Harrison. They'll be performing at noon in room 247. All members of all parties are invited.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to introduce today in the members' gallery, former MPP and the one you can all blame for convincing me to run for this job in the first place, Norm Sterling.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome some members from Equal Voice this morning. We have Sarosh Anwar, Farzana Nanji, Alice Propper and Bobbi France. Thank you very much for coming in today and talking about women in politics.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'd like everyone to give a warm welcome to my mother-in-law, Dorothea Harris, who is visiting from Campbell River, BC. I have to say she's the best mother-in-law in the world. There she is.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to the House my constit manager, Janet Haines, and a wonderful volunteer in my office as well, Sheena Haines.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome a couple of women who were here this morning for Equal Voice: Linda Kelso and Jeanne Pacey. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature David, Vicky and their son Nick Villeneuve. Welcome.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Doris Wexler-Charow. She provides rehabilitation to accident victims and she's going to be here in front of Queen's Park today at lunchtime with a lot of her friends. They're protesting cuts to catastrophic injuries in accident insurance.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to, first of all, congratulate page captain Jany Scherer, all the way from Kapuskasing, Ontario; and also, son oncle Matthieu Vallieres, qui est dans les tribunes publiques.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to welcome to the gallery Andrew Ipekian, a lifelong friend, one of the best friends you could ask for and one of the best real estate agents in the city. Welcome, Andrew.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome, from Lanterra construction, Graham Lake, Andrey Azarov and Brett Fahey.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I'd like to welcome a school from my riding who will be visiting the Legislature today, Henry Hudson Senior Public School.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome the folks who are here today from the Residential Construction

Council of Ontario, RESCON, and I'd like to invite all MPPs to a luncheon at 12 o'clock in rooms 228 and 230.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to personally congratulate you, as well as myself, on our fifth election. We were elected first on June 3, 1999, and we are the only two remaining of the 18 that were elected that year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy anniversary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Today, I'd like to introduce to the Legislature two politically engaged young people from my riding of Davenport, Lianhao Qu and Michelle Knowlton, who are here today with their parents Yan Gu, Nicole Knowlton and Shaun Lewis. Welcome, ladies.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to welcome back to the Legislature page Jessica Terry's mother, Shena Terry, who has been a regular visitor here, but also her grandparents Debby Parker and John Parker, who are here visiting today. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on the anniversary.

I've got two very special guests in the east members' gallery: a good friend of mine, Norm Gale, chief of the Superior North Emergency Medical Services, and he's the president of the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs; and Neal Roberts, who is chief of the Middlesex-London Emergency Medical Services. Welcome, gentlemen. It's good to have you here.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's a lovely day, Speaker. I have a number of people here. Meg Cormack is an intern in my office this summer. Welcome, Meg, to the Legislative Assembly. Lauren McDonald is a friend from London and a remarkable advocate for people with disabilities. An additional welcome to Norm Gale and Neal Roberts, our wonderful paramedics.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's my pleasure to welcome 11 really bright young men from Northmount School from the beautiful riding of Don Valley East. I asked them a few questions this morning about government. They got all the answers right. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize. My husband, Dr. Randy Harris, is sitting beside my mother-in-law, and I'd like to introduce him today.

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Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today an award-winning poet from Windsor, Mary Ann Mulhern. I'll have more to say about her during my statement this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the tradition of the Speaker when a former member is in the House, I do try to recognize them officially, even though it has been stepped on again.

Former MPP Norm Sterling served in the 31st to the 39th Parliaments. Welcome, Norm. We're glad you're here.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. I rise to seek unanimous consent for a representative from each caucus to speak for up to five minutes in acknowledgement of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report issued June 2, 2015.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent to speak for up to five minutes per party on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Do we agree? Agreed.

I understand we have the order understood.
Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Every day that we are in this Legislature, we gather on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. I am here today and stand to affirm the province of Ontario's commitment to reconciliation, to supporting survivors and to continuing to build trust with aboriginal partners.

Thank you to the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair and the entire Truth and Reconciliation Commission for shining a light into one of the darkest chapters of our country's history.

Thank you particularly to the survivors who shared their experiences and the experiences of those whose voices were lost.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has offered the province of Ontario and all Canadians an opportunity to renew our relationship with First Nation, Métis and Inuit people of this country, and has challenged us to renew our commitment to live together on this land, based on principles of trust, mutual respect and shared benefits. Working with our First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners is a challenge that our province has accepted, but it is work that is far from complete.

This painful chapter in our shared past is one in which Canada practised state-sanctioned abuse and assimilation. Over a period of generations, and under various governments, families were separated and children were deeply harmed, and continue to bear the scars and the consequences of this time. Their humanity was undermined. They were separated from their families and robbed of their youth, their potential, their comfort, their safety and their dignity. This has left a legacy of racism and marginalization that continues to echo in the lives of aboriginal peoples across our society.

We all have a responsibility to work towards reconciliation. Each one of us must ask what that reconciliation means in our own lives: in our work, in our families, in our places of worship, in our churches and in our broader communities.

I'm very pleased to join my fellow Premiers across Canada as we take steps towards reconciliation. We cannot change our past, but by unearthing the truth and truly understanding its meaning, we give ourselves the power to change the future.

Mr. Speaker and fellow MPPs, this is an important moment in our relationships. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and what happened to generations of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada, must never be forgotten and must be known and understood by all, if we're to forge a future that is worthy of the inclusive and compassionate society for which we all strive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, let me put a human face on this issue with a very human story.

There is a book—and I would urge all members to have a look at it—on residential schools in Ontario. There is a chapter on a residential school at Six Nations, near Brantford, in your riding.

Just let me, for a second, read one paragraph: "The British North America Act ... gave" the Prime Minister of the day "and the Canadian government complete control over the country's aboriginal people. The government began" to establish "Indian boarding schools. Living at these schools, away from their families, the children could be completely controlled by the staff. Through a process known as assimilation, the children's beliefs and behaviours would be forcibly adjusted to the European way of life.

"The model for these schools"—that is, throughout Canada—"was the Mohawk Indian Industrial School (also known as the Mohawk Institute), in Brantford, Ontario.

A former British army officer was in charge. The harsh daily routine, rules and regulations, were based on strict army training`... the Mohawk Institute inspired the system that followed."

Speaker, I was invited by Chief Ava Hill at Six Nations to visit the remnants of that school. It's in a building now—it's still there—and I was given a tour of the building. It was a visceral experience for me.

I will tell you two things that I saw. One, the students at the school had a nickname for the school. It was called the Mush Hole. Why was it called the Mush Hole? We were taken down to the basement, and there were huge kettle drums in which mush—food—was prepared. That is what the students at the school ate, hence the nickname for the school: not the Mohawk Institute, but, in the aboriginal community, it was known as the Mush Hole. The students had great fear of being picked up or sent to the Mush Hole.

The other part that stood out in my mind—and it was an emotional experience—I was taken to the third floor. Some of the students had pried out the bricks. There was an inner wall and an outer wall. Normally there would be insulation between the two walls. They had pulled out the bricks and made a little cave between the walls. We went in there, and what we saw was a hiding place for young students. Littering the floor of this hiding place were the bits and pieces that a child experiences in their life. There were a couple of candy wrappers; there were some torn pages from a comic book; there was a glove; there was a

sock. There were the other things that children leave behind in their play places. These children hid out between the walls to escape the harshness of this residential school.

In the book, there is a short quote from a resident of the residential school. His name was Geronimo Henry. He was a resident there from 1942 to 1953. He said, "They tried to convert me in there. They took away my ceremonies, my rituals and my language. They tried to assimilate us. They told us our religion and our rituals were the devil's work ... they took away my language, my own spiritual beliefs, and my culture." He lived in that environment for nine years.

It was a harsh, bleak and loveless setting. That's what I felt when I left the environment. It was a visceral experience—one of the most moving that I've had—that puts this in a real, real, live context.

We are doing a number of things to ensure that Ontarians and the rest of Canadians have their own experience or understanding of what has happened in the residential school system. We've done a lot of things, but the thing that I'm most proud of, as I know the Premier and the Minister of Education are, is we have designed a curriculum to include the aboriginal residential experience in the curriculum.

Our sense is that if students and, indeed, their parents and members of this Legislature were to leaf through this book, they would have a whole different, qualitative sense of what the residential school system was about and why the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was so important.

There are many other things that we've done. I just wanted to leave you with that visceral insight. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, it's with great respect toward our aboriginal brothers and sisters that I'm pleased to rise in this House today on behalf of the PC caucus and leader Patrick Brown to recognize and welcome the hard work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission since it was formally struck on June 1, 2008.

With the release of the report and its 94 recommendations yesterday, I must say that it provides a strikingly sad glimpse into a part of our collective history as Ontarians and as Canadians.

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I would first like to thank the chair of the commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, as well as commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, along with all those who previously served on the commission, as well as those whose immense contribution led us to today.

I would especially like to thank and commend the over 6,750 individuals and residential school survivors who provided the collective voice for the report by sharing their own first-hand accounts, to painstakingly recall and document experiences from the past.

Reading through the "The Survivors Speak" component of the report was particularly powerful for me. When

taking a step back and considering what the individual children must have felt as they were forced into residential schools, you can't help but share part of their pain. To me, this report is about those children.

The first-person accounts of children and the way their families were changed and torn apart by the enrolment in residential schools is truly tragic. Of the over 150,000 First Nations children who passed through the Indian residential school system across Canada, the human toll is staggering. One out of every 25 First Nations children who attended residential schools died there and were buried there, oftentimes without their families being notified.

Just as the legacy of the residential schools spans generations, so too must the subsequent education of future generations. I'm pleased to see the government including that in the school curriculum.

It is our hope that our collective attitude has changed in this country and that greater understanding of the lives and traditions of our aboriginal peoples will continue by building trust and contribute to the healing process.

I was proud in 2008 when Stephen Harper made the historic apology, on behalf of all Canadians, in which the federal government recognized that the great harm caused by Indian residential schools had no place in Canadian society.

I'm also proud that Canada is one of the very few countries in the world where treaty rights are enshrined in our Constitution.

Even with these national strides, it is impossible to read the tragic stories and first-hand accounts without emotion. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we cannot undo what has been done in the past.

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will help future generations to learn from this element of our collective history and, in time, bring some closure, we hope, to the terrible legacy of residential schools.

Mr. Speaker, the PC caucus believes that the report is another step along the path to promoting reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians, and we look forward to continuing the work it will take to bring forgiveness, healing and true reconciliation to all. Thank you. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further comments?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: All those who walked yesterday to mark the end of the formal truth and reconciliation process know that when one journey ends, another one often begins. Thanks to the work of the commission, the world now knows more about the pain that the survivors and victims of the Indian residential schools were forced to endure.

New Democrats hope that survivors, their families and the communities forever changed by this terrible legacy can now start new journeys.

Governments all across Canada, including Ontario, must start their own journeys today.

The legacy of residential schools continues to cast a dark shadow over our province. Residential schools denied children the sense of self that comes from being proud of one's heritage, language, culture and traditions.

These children were neglected. They were mistreated. They were abused, and sometimes they were killed.

Tearing families apart, stripping away language and culture, substandard education and the destruction of community, all led to widespread poverty, which remains rampant in First Nations communities today.

For too many, neglect, mistreatment, abuse and death remain the present realities of aboriginal people, particularly women. New Democrats are proud to join with Justice Sinclair in his call for a national inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women across this country.

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission demonstrate more than simply a historic wrong. They demonstrate an ongoing failure to live up to our responsibilities to care for every person in our province. There are First Nations communities in Ontario that still rely on diesel generation for electricity, that lack access to clean drinking water, proper education, proper health care and good-paying jobs. It is unacceptable that there are people living in Third World conditions in a province as wealthy as ours, Speaker

So, yes, today we do stand on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, but too often that recognition is as close as we get towards realizing our responsibilities to First Nations families.

It is incumbent upon all of us not to allow this report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to gather dust somewhere on a shelf. This report should be seen as a call to action. It should drive us to recommit to building a stronger relationship—as equals—with First Nations governments and First Nations peoples. We owe it to all of those who suffered and continue to suffer. We owe it to them to continue to work to build a better future together with our First Nations partners—a future based on mutual respect, equality and truth.

I know the minister spoke about the curriculum initiative. I laud the government for that, and I only hope that that curriculum is, in fact, mandatory for every single student in Ontario to participate in, because Canada, Ontario and all of our citizens will be better for it.

Let us each commit today to do our part in this great, historic and ongoing journey of reconciliation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments. I can't help but make a comment myself. I grew up one block away from the Mush Hole. I crossed the playground every day when I went to school, and I didn't know what I was watching. And to some of those who are now friends of mine: I didn't know what was going on. To them, I say I'm sorry. And I thank all of you for the comments that you've made today. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period. The member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you for your words as well, very emotional words.

My question is for the Premier. Your budget is being presented today for the final vote. In the pre-budget hearings held throughout Ontario we heard from all walks of life. People said, "Do something to help families struggling to pay their hydro bills." Businesses told you, "Get out of our way so we can create jobs and restore the Ontario that you've ruined." But you did neither. Instead, you dug deeper into the pockets of families and seniors and you put forward a bill that makes it even more expensive to do business in Ontario. Premier, why do you continue to refuse to listen to the people of Ontario?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member opposite was excited when the northern industrial energy rate program was announced as being permanent. I know he understands that that is a real boon to industry in the north. I know that when constituents come to him, he talks to them about the programs that are in place in order to mitigate the cost of hydro. I'm sure that he lets seniors and people on low income know that there are programs in place to support them. I'm sure he lets them know about that.

He also knows that some of those, like making the northern industrial energy rate program permanent, were part of our budget.

I say to the member opposite, there was much in our budget, whether it's the investments in infrastructure, so the roads and bridges in communities in his area and around his community, or whether it's the increase in the minimum wage that will help people in this province—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, it's clear what's actually happened to Ontario under your term. We now have the highest hydro rates in North America. They went up 15% last month alone, and with your fire sale of Hydro One, they're going to rise even higher.

Premier, we have the highest payroll taxes in Canada, and with your pension tax, they are poised to rise even higher. That's why GM, Ford, Chrysler, dozens of industries and our largest retailers banded together with 50 chambers of commerce to say that you're wrong.

We had 2,700 fewer businesses in Ontario last year than the year before. They're not out of business, Premier; they're out of Ontario.

All the experts have told you to change course. Premier, why do you continue to ignore them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There is a range of issues that the member opposite has raised, but let me just say to him that it is very important to us to recognize that Ontario, once again this year, is the number one jurisdiction for direct foreign investment in North America. That is a very important fact for us to understand. The conditions that are in place in Ontario are drawing business and drawing industry to the province.

The other issues that he has raised in terms of the need for an enhancement to the pension plan and our response

to the federal government, which is not interested in enhancing the Canada Pension Plan—we are putting forward an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. That's to solve a problem; the problem is that people cannot save enough. What the business owners have said is, "Be careful with the design."

We are listening to them. We are listening to the business owners across the province. The Associate Minister of Finance is talking to people—

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, as usual, you say one thing, but the complete opposite is true. Your pension tax will hurt businesses and families. Your Hydro One fire sale will drive up hydro rates and hurt families and seniors.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The officers of the Legislature will lose oversight and your Hydro deal will be done in complete secrecy. All this is so you can continue your infrastructure charade. You say you need the money for transit, but it was already in last year's budget without the money from the pension tax and the Hydro fire sale. It's all a ruse. It's all a shell game. You are so desperate for cash, and everybody in this building knows it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development, second time.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, will you stand down your final budget vote today and take a long, hard second look at the damage it's going to cause Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the people of Nipissing alone, but I think many people across the province would also be interested to know that the member opposite and his party think that the Canada Pension Plan is a tax, because that's the extension of what he is saying. He is saying that an enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan that we would put in place, is a tax. That's not what pensions are. Pensions are about putting an investment—

Interjections.

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

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The young people, the 20-, 30- and 40-year-olds in Nipissing, in Renfrew and across this province, are not able to save enough, even when they have jobs. The fact—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: A pension, Mr. Speaker, is not a tax. We are listening to businesses and individuals around the province on the design.

In terms of Hydro One, we are building transit. We are building transportation infrastructure. It was in our budget that one of the ways we were going to pay for that was through—

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Former Premier Dalton McGuinty once said this about privatizing Hydro One: "Selling off a natural public monopoly is a bad idea...."

"It's a quick fix, and it's a bad one...."

"They are prepared to sell off our one and only electricity highway." Perhaps he should have ended by saying, "unless it's the Liberals and they're desperate for cash."

Former Liberal cabinet minister and energy critic Sean Conway said this about the sale of Hydro One: "It is unacceptable that there is no public oversight or accountability." Perhaps he should have clarified this with, "unless hiding things saves the Liberals from future scandals."

Minister, is it not true that you're rushing headlong into the fire sale of Hydro One because you've maxed out the provincial credit cards, and you want to avoid any scrutiny from the Hydro One scandals to come?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member for Whitby–Oshawa said on March 5, 2015, "As Premier, I will order an immediate review of all assets owned by government...."

"Every dollar made will be invested in new infrastructure right across the province...."

"Let's use the full value of these assets to build the roads, highways, subways and infrastructure that every Ontarian can use."

Let's hear about Patrick Brown when asked about asset modernization: "I generally believe that the private sector can do a better job than the public sector. I generally think market conditions would be helpful for a lot of government agencies."

In the supplementary, I'll speak to their white policy paper.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the minister: We all know that you want the Ombudsman's report into Hydro One's scandalous billing practices to just go away. However, customers of the utility will not soon forget the anxiety and distress that you caused them when the amounts of incorrect bills were automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts, and customer service agents at Hydro One treated them like they were the thieves when they tried to get the errors corrected. Yet no one at Hydro One has been fired, even though customers were often treated with disdain, and managers tried to obfuscate the Ombudsman's investigation.

Minister, is it not time that openness and accountability be restored and those who were in charge of this billing fiasco be terminated?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy.

1110

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I think that's a wake-up call to the truth. The Legislature requires the new Hydro One to set up an office of an ombudsperson. We've retained the former Auditor General of Canada, Denis Desautels, to oversee the implementation of an ombudsman in Hydro One to ensure transparency and accountability.

No government in recent memory has expanded the oversight of independent legislative officers as this government has done. We created the position of the Financial Accountability Officer. We made the French Language Services Commissioner independent. We put into place the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. We've allocated new powers to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and expanded the Ombudsman's role to include oversight of municipalities, school boards and publicly funded—

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That was actually Ontario calling to ask when the truth would be heard from over there.

Minister, Hydro One customers and we in the opposition want decisive action today on the Ombudsman's investigation. Only Liberals would think that an insincere apology was a proportional response to over 10,000 complaints and businesses being overcharged millions of dollars.

After this morning's vote, the officers of the Legislature will no longer be able to hold Hydro One or you accountable. Although you may think you're helping yourself politically by removing this oversight, in reality, without these checks, you will become more arrogant, more reckless, which will lead to even greater scandals in the future. Minister, will you not save yourself from your party's own hubris and allow the Auditor General and the Ombudsman to continue to investigate Hydro One or, for the last chance, remove any reference to it at all from the budget bill?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: As minister, I received the report from the Ombudsman and I referred it to the new chair of Hydro One with a request that it be reviewed to ensure that all recommendations will be implemented, to look at any further issues around the billing issue and customer service issues, and to report back publicly within 40 days.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the new chair of Hydro One is in the process of selecting a CEO of Hydro One. Myself, as minister, and the chair of Hydro One are in the process of restructuring the board of Hydro One.

We're moving forward with determination—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the second warning—no, sorry; you're warned.

Wrap-up sentence, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward responsibly with determination to reposition an asset which will be invested in infrastructure, billions of dollars of infrastructure, which will not require tax increases or—

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier stood in her place, looked me in the eye and said, regarding the sell-off of Hydro One, that "it was very clear in our budget, in our platform and in our budget again that we were looking at assets...." Well, Speaker, going to Niagara Falls and standing in front of the Sir Adam Beck dam is looking at a hydro asset. Looking isn't selling. Recycling isn't selling. Maximizing isn't selling. Unlocking isn't selling.

Will this Premier cut the nonsense and the double-speak and give Ontarians a chance to have their say by holding a referendum on the Hydro One sell-off?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I turn to the Premier, I'm going to ask the leader to withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdrawn, Speaker.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've read these quotes a number of times, and I'll read them again, one in particular from the 2014 budget. The quote I will read is, "The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

Actually, those words can encompass a variety of things. That's why those words were used, because at the time of the budget, the decision had not been made as to exactly what we were going to be doing.

That's why we had asked Ed Clark and his group to look at the assets, and by that, I mean—you can have a narrow definition of the denotation of "look," but the connotation of "look" is that we would review, that we would analyze, and that we would then make a decision, and there would be a range of things that we would be considering.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Premier lectured Ontarians about how she had been clear about her plan to maximize assets. Ontarians heard about recycling, unlocking, leveraging, but not a sell-off. People shouldn't need Google Translate, together with a Magic 8 Ball, to figure out what this Premier is talking about.

The Premier went out of her way to keep Ontarians in the dark about her scheme to sell off Hydro One. That's a fact, Speaker.

Ontarians actually want to be heard. In a democracy, that is not an extraordinary request when we're dealing with one of the biggest policy decisions to come our way in a generation.

Will this Premier do the right thing by the people of Ontario and hold a referendum on the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I would say to the leader of the third party is that she just cannot have it both ways. She cannot read, as everyone did, page 257 of our budget, where we said we're "exploring options to unlock the full value of a wide range of valuable provincial assets ... specifically, the LCBO, Hydro One" and OPG, and then go out and say on July 9, 2014, and I quote the leader of the third party, "The budget says in black and white that the government is looking at the sale of assets, 'including ... crown corporations, such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario.'"

I do not believe that the leader of the third party was the only person in Ontario who understood that one of the things we were looking at in that range of options was the potential sale of some of those assets.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I've become very accustomed to the wily ways of this government and the way they talk. The Premier did not run on selling Hydro One—end of story. If she doesn't believe that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If she doesn't believe that, then she needs to go out to the Tim Hortons in Hamilton, Windsor, Sarnia, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, or, in fact, when she's in the Tim Hortons today in Toronto, I encourage her to ask anyone she meets: Do they remember that this Premier was running on a plan to sell off Hydro One? Do they remember at all voting to sell off Hydro One?

I've been in those communities, and I can tell you I've been hearing from people at town hall meetings across Ontario. Not a single person voted to sell off Hydro One in the province of Ontario.

Will she do the right thing and put this to a referendum?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the leader of the third party were as emphatic in her support for transit and transportation infrastructure, I think she would understand why it is so important that we find a way to make those investments. We were very clear that making those investments was a fundamental part of our economic plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government after government in this province, and in jurisdictions around North America, has put off the investment in infrastructure, which is why those same jurisdictions are looking now to find ways to make those investments, because that neglect has set in.

We are not going to wait any longer. We have been building since 2003, and we are going to continue building. But we cannot do that by only borrowing, which is what the leader of the third party would have us do. We were very clear that there are a range of things we need to do. One of them was reviewing assets—

Interjection.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —unlocking value and using that to invest in future assets. That's what we're doing.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Middle-class families deserve a fair shake. They deserve a hydro system that they can afford. They deserve a hydro system that supports jobs and that actually serves the public interest. But instead of fixing Hydro One, this Premier is handing control to big banks, to offshore investors and to a small group of her powerful friends.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's fearmongering, total fearmongering.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is warned.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People deserve a say; they deserve a say. Will this Premier put those families ahead of a handful of insiders and give people a say by holding a referendum?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment on the specifics of this, but I know that the people of Ontario know that Hydro One is valuable. That's why the protections that we have put in place are there. We've made it very clear that 40% of this company will remain in public hands.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Timmins—James Bay.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The protections for price controls—the Ontario Energy Board, which sets prices now, will set prices after this arrangement is in place.

We've also made it clear that no single entity or individual will own more than 10%. There are controls over the board that will remain in the hands of the provincial government. Those are the protections that must be in place.

This was a difficult decision, but it is the right decision because if we do not do this, we cannot make the

investments in transit and transportation infrastructure that apparently the third party doesn't think are important.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Earth to Premier: Nobody believes any of that about the 40% and about the 10%. Nobody believes any of that. Earth to Premier: Hydro One is the backbone of our economy. It's what gets electricity to homes and to businesses. People deserve to know that Hydro One is being run in their best interest.

Instead, Hydro One is going to be run to benefit banks, off-shore investors and a small group of the Premier's powerful friends. Giving people their say is the right thing to do in this circumstance.

Can the Premier tell middle-class families why she's more interested in hearing from a small group of powerful insiders than she is in hearing from Ontarians themselves about a sell-off of their Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Energy.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Check your hydro bill in three years and see what it looks like—

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

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Over the last eight or nine years, this government has invested over \$33 billion to make the system clean, reliable and affordable. We put ourselves into a surplus position when we had a deficit previously. What we've done with that surplus is create the Industrial Electricity Incentive Program, a program that gives up to 50% off a marginal increase in electricity use to businesses. That includes, for the braying member from Timmins—James Bay, two new gold mines opening in northern Ontario using the IEI Program; last year, Detour Gold opening up a new gold mine, saving \$20 million a particular year; creating jobs in Pembroke at MDFP paper board—140 new jobs; in Whitby, Atlantic Packaging, creating 80 jobs with this program that's based on surplus energy that we have invested in.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People deserve to know that when the Premier says something, she actually means it. They deserve to know that when the Premier stands up in this Legislature and says, "We are not selling off the assets," the Premier is being honest. It turns out that the Premier is selling Hydro One.

People deserve a Premier who listens to them and who treats them with respect. Will this Premier agree to hold a Hydro One referendum or will she keep telling families in Ontario that she really doesn't care at all what they think?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I think many people in the province of Ontario—certainly everybody on this side of the House—believe that the Premier we have has got the courage to make tough decisions, Mr. Speaker, moving forward. She recognizes that there's an infrastructure deficit across Canada, including in Ontario, and she has put together a 10-year, \$34-billion program to invest in schools and hospitals and transit—

Miss Monique Taylor: Backbenchers for Ed Clark.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Finish, please

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It's visionary, Mr. Speaker. It takes a lot of guts to make that type of commitment. It's going to make Ontario more competitive and it's going to increase our quality of life in this province. So I'm pleased to be on this side of the House, where we're doing progress rather than being totally negative.

Interjections.

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

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. Members may not be aware that the Attorney General has decided to pay the legal fees of former justice of the peace Santino Spadafora, to the tune of \$14,000. Spadafora retired days before he was scheduled to appear before the Justices of the Peace Review Council to face a disciplinary hearing for submitting false expenses. There were allegations of 600 false claims for meals, hotels, highway tolls and mileage, in the amount of \$16,000. By retiring, the review council lost jurisdiction over Spadafora because he's not a justice anymore and he avoids the disciplinary hearing. Just so I'm clear, there was no hearing.

Minister, can you explain what justification you used to pay Spadafora's legal fees?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, thank you for the question. The member is right: Yes, I've made the decision to pay on the recommendation of the Justices of the Peace Review Council.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Justices of the Peace Review Council has been in place since the 1970s. It's an independent body that has a mandate to receive and investigate complaints against justices of the peace, and to review and approve standards of conduct. Moreover, they have the legislated responsibility to make recommendations to government about compensation for costs associated with hearings.

Yes, the justice of the peace resigned before the hearing, so there was no hearing, and I'll explain in the supplementary why I came to this conclusion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It was a recommendation. You're the minister: You actually get to make the decision. A reasonable person would have to believe that the only reason Spadafora chose to retire early was to avoid the

hearing. If the hearing had found him guilty of submitting false claims, he could have been forced to repay that \$16,000. Instead, you want to give him another \$14,000. Looks to me like Spadafora gamed the system to avoid a disciplinary hearing and to avoid repaying the false expense claims. Do the right thing, Minister: Make the decision today that you will not pay his legal fees.

Interjections.

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

I want to remind all members that once you are warned, the next time I speak to you, you are named.

Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: If the member opposite would have taken the time to read—which is public—the recommendation and the reasoning from the Justices of the Peace Review Council, she will have seen that the justice of the peace—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: He did it to avoid the hearing. He resigns with his—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin–Carleton, come to order—second time.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: —for different reasons retired before the finding was made. The council noted that in the Canadian system of justice it is not appropriate to assume that there would have been a finding of judicial misconduct.

The work of the justice of the peace's lawyer to narrow the issues ultimately saved considerable costs.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon is warned.

Carry on.

1130

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I have to say that, after he submitted his letter of retirement, none of the work was compensated, to ensure that the process was not being manipulated.

So yes, after consideration, I have decided to follow the review council's consideration—

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

New question.

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: The Liberals are stacking the Ontario Energy Board full of energy insiders and people who have made their careers fighting for higher rates. Marika Hare spent 15 years with Enbridge before she joined the OEB. Then, while at the OEB, she approved a 40% rate increase for her old employer. Now, she's getting a promotion to vice-chair.

The Premier is also appointing former energy lobbyists and a former Hydro One staffer whose job it was to get higher rates.

The Premier is stacking the OEB with energy insiders. The Premier is putting a lot of faith in the OEB, so why is she appointing and promoting energy insiders, instead

of consumer advocates who will stick up for families and businesses?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I don't believe that the member really believes the premise of his question. I know he understands that when you put together a board of directors of 12 or 14 people—

Interjections.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm sure he knows that when you put together a board of 12 or 14 people, you get a selection of expertise on that particular board. You want somebody who can chair an audit committee; you want somebody who has experience in the sector, who is an industrial or business experienced person; you need somebody who can understand human resources. You get a composite of people on the board. So we do not apologize for having people on the Ontario Energy Board who understand the sector and can contribute to a board of directors with that level of expertise.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's not just that the Premier is stacking the OEB with energy industry insiders; the government is also looking at cutting supports for customer intervenors who help consumers fight for fair energy rates. It is an awfully strange time for the Premier to be mucking around with the inner workings of the OEB at the same time as she's engaging in the biggest hydro sell-off since Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

At the same time that the Premier is appointing and promoting energy insiders to the OEB and selling off Hydro One to the private sector, why is the Premier looking at stopping intervenors from standing up for consumers at the Ontario Energy Board?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The current chair and CEO of the Ontario Energy Board, Rosemarie Leclair, is an industry insider. She was formerly the CEO of Hydro Ottawa. Hydro Ottawa comes to this particular board looking for rate increases. I haven't heard one person suggest that that background experience puts her in a conflict of interest.

We have credible people on the board. They come from a cross-section of expertise in the community, sometimes from outside the province, sometimes from outside the country, because we want objective people on that board. We want people who understand the industry, who understand consumer advocacy, who understand audits and who understand communications. We have all of that on the Ontario Energy Board, and we make no excuse for that.

PIPELINE

Mr. John Fraser: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Énergie.

Minister, as you know, TransCanada submitted a project description for the proposed Energy East pipeline project to the National Energy Board. I know that Ontarians, including some of my own constituents in Ottawa South, have voiced their concerns about this proposal:

concerns around potential risks to public safety, our lakes and rivers, and our natural gas supply.

Recent federal legislation has limited the scope and time allotted for National Energy Board hearings and can limit community and public participation in the regulatory process. To that end, I understand that many Ontarians are interested in knowing what role the province will have in the regulatory process.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell the House what role Ontario will play in the hearing process, and what the government is doing to ensure that the voices of Ontarians are heard?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member from Ottawa South for the question.

Our government believes that it is vital that the National Energy Board only move forward once it adheres to our cabinet-approved principles:

- the highest safety and environmental standards must be met;

- the duty to fully consult with aboriginal and local communities must be met;

- there must be world-leading contingency planning and emergency response programs together with the developer assuming 100% liability for spills;

- they must demonstrate economic benefits and opportunities to the people of Ontario over the short and long term; and

- current consumers of natural gas must be protected with regard to price and supply.

The OEB has engaged with stakeholders, First Nations and Métis communities, and the public, and will complete a report that represents the interests of all Ontarians. This report will inform Ontario's position at the National Energy Board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer.

I know that my constituents who attended the OEB community consultation session appreciated it very much. I attended the consultation myself, and I can state that these were not only a forum for Ontarians to provide their input but also to learn more about the proposed project itself.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has been proactive in its approach to Energy East, asking the OEB to undertake a review of the application, which is ongoing, and forming a working group with the province of Quebec to identify common interests and positions concerning this project.

Minister, since TransCanada has filed this application with the National Energy Board I believe that it has effectively suspended the application and is amending it to reflect significant changes to the proposal as it was originally filed.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is this yet-to-be-seen amended proposal affecting Ontario's ability to review the application and prepare its intervention with the National Energy Board?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, it is vital that all governments take the time to hear from

experts, community and municipal leaders, aboriginal groups, business leaders and other impacted groups.

Just today, the Quebec energy minister and I sent a joint letter to the National Energy Board seeking clarification on a number of areas of shared concern, given that TransCanada is significantly amending its application. Elements of the process have become unclear. We expect and deserve to know exactly what those projects will include, and to have the application supported by the highest degree of rigour, analysis and due diligence. We will not compromise the health and safety of Ontarians.

We look forward to a timely response from the National Energy Board and will actively participate in the federal regulatory process once it formally commences.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES PROGRAM

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, as of June 1, the Assistive Devices Program is now facing a \$20-million cut in funding. These cuts were made without any consultation with the industry and with no consideration of the vulnerable individuals who rely on assistive devices like walkers and wheelchairs.

According to the Canadian Assistive Devices Association, Ontarians in need of these products will suffer due to these actions on the part of the Assistive Devices Program.

This \$20-million reduction is yet another example of your government cutting corners, like cutting funding for diabetes test strips, chiropractic care, physiotherapy and cataract surgeries. This is going to have long-term consequences for seniors.

Minister, will you immediately reinstate the program so that assistive devices dealers across Ontario can continue to provide the necessary services for vulnerable people in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question.

I'm proud of the fact that this province and this government is providing, through the Assistive Devices Program, support to more than 300,000 Ontarians. In fact, that's an increase of 100,000 people since we came into office in 2003.

The funding that we've provided to the Assistive Devices Program since 2003 has actually increased by 99%. We're providing almost half a billion dollars to those Ontarians who deserve the support and need the support.

I think the member would agree and acknowledge that as technologies evolve, efficiencies are found. We've learned that for some devices we've been overpaying as that technology has evolved. We've also found opportunities by doing a request for proposals or looking at providing them in a more efficient way so that we can also find savings.

1140

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We both know that there will be more need, as the age of seniors increases—there are

more seniors in our province. So the reduction in the funding for the Assistive Devices Program will result in further costs to our health care system. I get these concerns in my community office every day. It's yet another example of your government spending a dollar to save a dime. These cuts mean that a grandmother would have to wait three months for funding for a wheelchair or pay out of her own pocket instead of receiving the wheelchair when she needs it. Instead, she's more likely to fall and end up back in the hospital, further costing the system and impacting the quality of her life.

Minister, did you consider the impact that these cuts have on the quality of health care and the long-term implications to our seniors?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We've certainly considered the impact of our changes in continuing to review the more than 8,000 products that we provide through this program to Ontarians. We've seen and we understand the improved access that they're going to provide, and in many cases it's going to lower the cost to the consumer, to Ontarians, as we continue to review precisely how much we're paying for each one of these items.

We will continue to review the approved costing of the funding products. I think it's a responsible thing for a government to do, to not overpay for certain devices—to pay the appropriate amount for them. These changes, as I mentioned, in many cases will actually result in lower costs for Ontarians.

We'll have an opportunity in a few minutes to make sure the budget passes so we can actually implement these changes, these efficiencies and improvements, so we can provide even more services to Ontarians.

CLASS SIZE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. On Monday, the Minister of Education claimed that class size caps were not on the table. Yesterday, though, the minister admitted that class size caps are part of negotiations, blaming the president of the school boards association.

Ontarians know that the Premier and her government hold ultimate responsibility over education in this province. The blame game won't work. The Premier and her government need to stand up for families and commit to keeping class size manageable, ensuring high-quality education for our kids. Small class sizes are essential to student learning. Kids don't need less one-on-one time; they need more.

Will the Premier step up and commit to families that there will be no increase to class size caps in the fall? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: The responsibility of the government, which is clear from the legislation, is as the funder. What I can absolutely say is that the funding will be 22 to 1 at secondary, which is what we're talking about. The funding was 22 to 1 last year; the funding is 22 to 1 this year. The funding has been 22 to 1 for the last decade.

The funding was probably 22 to 1 for the decade before that except during the social contract, when it was a totally different system anyway.

So if you're asking me, am I committed to that to which I can commit, which is, "Is the funding going to carry on at 22 to 1?"—absolutely. That's what's in the grants. That's in the money that has been sent to the boards. That is the money that they're basing their budgets—

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

Supplementary.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I think my question was pretty straightforward: Will the minister do her job and protect education or not?

The Premier must tell her minister to step up and stop any changes that would increase class size caps. The minister needs to stop sitting on the sidelines and protect our kids' education in this province. The blame game is growing old, and Ontarians see right through it.

One-on-one time is absolutely crucial to kids' success in school, and frankly, the Premier and her government are well aware of that. Kids with special needs, kids with ESL requirements, kids across the province will pay the price for overcrowded classrooms.

Will the Premier guarantee to all of us in this House that she will not allow any increases to current class size caps?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm not sure how many times I can say this: My responsibility is for the funding. The funding last year was \$22.5 million; the funding this year is \$22.5—

Interjection: Billion.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Sorry—last year, \$22.5 billion; this time, \$22.5 billion. The number of students has actually decreased—

Interjections.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Because the number of students in the system is decreasing, when you hold the funding constant, that means the amount of funding per pupil is actually going up.

Now, does every board get exactly the same funding? Of course not. We have boards where the enrolment has gone down 25%. We have other boards where the enrolment has gone up 10%, 20% or 30%. Of course the funding shifts around as the students go down in one board and up in others. The total—

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

New question.

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This question is to the minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Ending child poverty was a goal of the late writer and activist June Callwood. The Keep the Promise campaign was established two years ago by friends of June to give children a chance to voice their experiences, aspirations and commitment to ending child poverty. They've created videos and practical resources for kids and

teachers in 25 projects across Canada and a website called keepthepromise.ca, which includes a very rich collection of print and video resources.

Ms. Callwood, who came to be known as Canada's conscience, once said that if any of you happens to see an injustice, you are no longer a spectator; you are a participant. I believe that statement holds true today and should always guide the work of our government.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please inform this House what kind of progress our government is making to reduce child poverty?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Kitchener Centre for the question and also for quoting my personal hero, June Callwood.

I commend the Keep the Promise campaign for their work to engage children and their communities in the fight against child poverty. Our government shares their commitment to ensuring that kids get the very best start in life.

While there is certainly much more to do, Speaker, we have made significant strides since introducing our first Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2008. I know the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will be very happy to know that at last count, 47,000 children and their families have been lifted out of poverty and tens of thousands more have been prevented from falling into poverty—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We've also made progress on each of the eight indicators, including school readiness, standard of living and birth weight.

Under our new Poverty Reduction Strategy, we're recommitting to reducing child poverty by 25% because our children are worth it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the minister for her answer. It's very encouraging to learn that we are making progress when it comes to dealing with the issue of child poverty.

Yesterday, the Keep the Promise campaign hosted June Callwood Children's Day, featuring a colloquium in which students presented their campaign work to end child poverty in Canada. They talked to elected representatives, leaders, and Keep the Promise volunteers on the priorities that lie ahead. Students in grades 5 to 8 were involved in a conference highlighting current issues and opportunities and profiling a child's perspective on poverty, which no doubt was an incredible experience for everyone involved.

Minister, it's inspiring to hear that our government has reaffirmed our commitment to reducing child poverty by 25%. We know that you and your team have been working very hard to achieve this goal.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please outline some of the other ways in which our government is tackling this very important issue?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to report that we're taking a number of concrete steps that will

reduce child poverty. Beginning in July, the Ontario Child Benefit maximum and income threshold are both being indexed to inflation, raising the maximum benefit to \$1,336 per child—more than double what it was in 2008. Of course, it did not exist before we introduced it.

We've increased the number of student nutrition programs, providing healthy meals to an additional 31,000 children and youths. We've expanded eligibility for Healthy Smiles Ontario. That means 70,000 more kids have access to the dental care that they need.

We're also committed, going forward, to extending health benefits such as prescription drugs, vision care, assistive devices and mental health services to children in low-income families.

1150

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, one month ago, I asked you why my constituent Mr. Jim Lees has to wait months for a bed in a long-term-care facility. I explained that he has gone back and forth between the hospital and the local retirement home, because the home cannot provide the care he needs, as they are not a long-term-care facility—not to mention that the family is paying thousands more each month than they would for nursing home care.

Minister, it has been a month since I asked you that question, yet the situation remains exactly the same: There are still no beds. Mr. Lees is still in the same retirement home, and he's still not receiving the care he needs. In fact, Mr. Lees fell last week and spent a couple of days in the hospital, because he was overmedicated.

Minister, I will ask you the same question I asked you one month ago: Will you help Mr. Lees, or is this yet another example of the health care that seniors can expect under your government?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Associate Minister of Health.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I thank the member for his advocacy on behalf of his constituent. I want to begin by reminding the member that, as he well knows, my office and his office have been working very hard on this case. The CCAC has been working with the family, to make sure that the best possible care is made available to the resident.

As he well knows, having been a past Minister of Health, I cannot comment on the particulars of this case. But what I can say is that any Ontarian who needs urgent care is placed on the highest priority list for our long-term-care homes and is provided that level of priority care.

I can also remind the member that this government has made historic investments in long-term care. In fact, the member from Sault Ste. Marie just reopened a new long-term-care facility with 50 new beds.

We're continuing to invest. I want to assure the member that we will continue to do everything we can.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Minister of Health: Since I raised this issue, Mr. Lees has been offered six idle beds. These are beds that were not on the list of the 12 nursing homes his family has selected. Remember, the family is only required to select three homes, and they've selected 12. One of those beds was in Toronto. One was way up north. Two were not suitable for Mr. Lees's care needs. The others remain a mystery to all of us, as the family was not told where these beds were located.

I say to the minister, I'm not sure how you expect the family to agree to a nursing home bed when even your own ministry can't identify where it is.

Minister, I find it troubling that this man is classified as critical, the highest priority, yet you can't find him a long-term-care bed. I don't believe you just opened 50 new beds. We opened 20,000 new beds in our eight years. You haven't built a gosh-darned thing in your 12 years. Don't you think we need some new nursing home beds in this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to again thank the member for his question and remind him that I can't speak to the specifics of this case. I'm happy to speak to him outside. I also note that my office has been working very diligently with his office, and that the CCAC has been working very diligently with the family, to resolve the issue.

But what I can say is that this government has been making significant investments in long-term care. In fact, we have driven down wait times by 34%. And get this, Mr. Speaker: We have driven down wait times by 34%, but when the Conservatives were in power, they did not even measure wait times.

So I'm taking no lessons from the member opposite on this issue. All I can say is that we continue to invest in long-term care, and we are going to be redeveloping 30,000 new beds over the next little while. That's a historic investment in long-term care.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, you will know of Little John Enterprises in Timmins. It's a second-generation sawmill that has been operating in our community for a number of years. They have come to you—they have gone to your ministry in the field—in order to be able to get an allocation of timber. All they need is 8,000 cubic metres of wood, of poplar, so that they can continue supplying a niche market they've created that is being supplied out of the mill in Timmins.

I've gone to you; they've gone to you. We've asked you for more wood, and you've written back to us, saying that essentially most of the resource has been allocated.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: If you say that most of the wood has been reallocated, why is it that we're shipping 71,000 cubic metres of poplar annually into the province of Quebec and not supplying mills here in Ontario?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. As he is aware, we have had a fair bit of back-and-forth on this particular issue. In fact, I think it was before Christmas that he first raised it with me, or shortly after I came into the ministry. I asked him to supply me with a note at that time, going back to July or August or September of last year. I never did receive a note from the member on it at that time, so I never heard back from him. So I'm not sure how important it was to him.

Subsequent to that, the member came to me a little while ago. He raised the issue of the particular operation and enterprise in his riding that he is concerned about. I asked him at that time to supply me with some information, which he did, somewhere like four or five or six months after the initial conversation we had had on that particular topic. I finally did get the information specifically from the member. We have responded to the member through a letter, I believe. In fact, I believe I have asked my staff to contact his staff directly to let him know the circumstances. So we're finally aware of the issue from the member—

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

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I'll get to more in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, that was the load of loads that I have seen in a long time.

To the minister, I say this: We know that 71,000 cubic metres of wood, poplar, is being shipped unprocessed out of Ontario and into the province of Quebec at the same time that mills in Ontario need that wood. My question to you is simply this: Why should it be such a difficult thing to make an 8,000-cubic-metre allocation to Little John Enterprises when we know that we've got 71,000 cubic metres of poplar being moved out of Ontario and into the province of Quebec?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. I think the issue of wood flows into Quebec is relevant. In fact, for quite some time now, I've asked my staff to get back to me with issues related to that and how it works, and there may be a point in the not-too-distant future where we make some recommendations on that. I would say that wood has flowed into Quebec for decades; this is not new. In fact, a number of people in Ontario receive employment directly as a result of those wood flows.

But more specifically to the issue at the heart of the member's questions, many smaller enterprises across the province have always managed to find the wood allocation that's needed to support their operation through business-to-business relationships. As I understand it, the history on this particular enterprise is exactly that. We have been supporting the efforts of the enterprise with the

district MNR staff through that operation to get some support for them to try to effect a resolution.

I'm not sure why they haven't been able to resolve it. It could be price—I'm not sure, Speaker—but that's obviously something that we don't have—

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

New question.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. As the minister knows, our government must continue to improve accessibility. In fact, in my riding, the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton has done a great job of helping to meet the educational, social and employment needs of young people and adults with learning disabilities.

Currently, one in seven Ontarians has a disability. That number is expected to grow in the coming years. Looking at employment, 55% of Canadians with disabilities believe that hiding their disability increases their chances of getting hired and promoted.

Today, the minister announced our government's accessibility action plan. Would the minister please inform the House about our government's path forward to create an accessible province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As we reach the halfway point of the AODA's implementation, we have an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the incredible progress we've made and, at the same time, recalibrate on the path forward to our goal of building an accessible Ontario by 2025. If we continue to lead the country, and we are; if we remain an international leader, and we are; we need to drive a cultural shift across society to improve accessibility.

This morning, I had the privilege of announcing a series of new initiatives to reinvigorate the momentum that's needed to reach our goal to be fully accessible by 2025. We're going to work with employers to try to get there. Included in our initiatives are a couple of new seed capacity funds, including the Community Loans program and the Partnerships for Accessible Employment fund. We're going to get where we need to go, and we're going to reinvigorate momentum in—

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to thank the minister for the great job that he is doing and for that answer, and, of course, for working so diligently on this very important file.

Improving accessibility is not just the right thing to do for our society, but it's also the smart thing to do for our economy. That's why organizations like Community Living North Halton, which is a group that is working very hard and diligently, day in and day out, work with community partners to offer support and services for people living with a disability, and they're so important. We cannot afford to let any Ontarians fall through the cracks.

As I understand it, Provost Moran has completed her legislative review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This review was meant to be a guide. Would the minister please inform the House on how Provost Moran's legislative review is helping to guide our path forward?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The second area of focus of our action plan involves adopting key recommendations of Provost Moran's recent review of the AODA.

As recommended by Provost Moran, we're working closely with stakeholders to improve the legislation, including ensuring that the timing between reviews makes sense and that duplication between the two pieces of legislation is also addressed in a number of different ways.

We also recognize that compliance really isn't where it needs to be, so we need to continue to do work on the enforcement side. We're going to be implementing audit blitzes where challenges are present. We're going to be enhancing the effectiveness of our enforcement programs. For 2025, our goal is 1,200 audits.

On the other hand, we know that businesses that champion accessibility ought to be recognized as well. We're going to be putting in place a series of initiatives to do just that: to celebrate successes, as we work towards—

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, we had many partners who joined us today on an important announcement dealing with reform of police record-checking in Ontario. Please welcome Jacqueline Tasca and Michelle Keast, from the John Howard Society of Ontario; Camille Quenneville and Uppala Chandrasekera, from the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario division; and other friends who joined us for the announcement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford, on a point of order.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery today are Shelley Ratelband, who works in my Woodstock constituency office, and her two daughters, Chelsea and Brittany. They're all here from the great riding of Oxford, and I'm pleased to welcome them to Queen's Park. I hope they have a great day here.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING ONTARIO UP ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2015
LOI DE 2015 POUR FAVORISER
L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

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

Bill 91, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 91, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1203 to 1208.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

On June 2, 2015, Mr. Sousa moved third reading of Bill 91.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	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.	Hardeman, Ernie	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Hudak, Tim	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Garfield	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	
Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 46.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the convention, no one interrupts a vote, but I am standing to say

that I am reminding all members that pictures are forbidden in this place.

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

The House recessed from 1213 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure today to introduce the executive director of Ontario Agri-Food Education, Colleen Smith, and her colleague, Taylor Selig. We've had a good day today. They were joined by Keith Currie, of OFA, as well as Brandon Ashmore, of the Canadian Beverage Association.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We're joined this afternoon by a friend of mine from Windsor-Tecumseh. Her name is Mary Ann Mulhern. She's an award-winning poet, and we'll have more to say about Mary Ann in a couple of minutes. Welcome to Queen's Park.

By the way, I believe David Lepofsky, of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, will be joining us. And from Signs Restaurant, Anjan and Manny Manikumar and Rachel Shemuel will be signing for us today. We may also be joined by Luke Anderson and Lorin MacDonald.

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a lot of guests here this afternoon, so I am going to take my time to introduce them.

From my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt: Jean He, Samuel Wong, Fiona Siu, June Ong, Hilla Master, Alice Wang, Lai Chu, Bejoy Das and Pratima Das.

Glemena Bettencourt, who ran with Terry Fox on his run; Alisa Van Der Toorn, who is a teacher at Terry Fox Public School; Eddie Yu, a Terry Fox Run volunteer from Team Toronto; and Jordon Hill, a Terry Fox runner from Toronto Island.

Councillor Pam Damoff, from the city of Oakville.

Glynis Henry and Geri Berholz.

From the Terry Fox Foundation: Bruna Raimondo, Steven Smyth and Jacqueline Gillis.

From the Canadian Cancer Society, Nicole McNerney, and Councillor Jon Hurst, a councillor for Halton Hills and a pioneer of the Terry Fox Run for 35 years who was an original runner with Terry Fox.

Welcome, each one of you, to Queen's Park.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Like my colleague, I'll ask the indulgence of the House, as I have a number of guests who are here today for the conversation on Bill 13.

I'd like to start by introducing Pam Damoff, who is a councillor in the city of Oakville, and also here for my bill.

Dave McLaughlin, a partner at the MMM Group; Chris Drew, who lives in Brampton and is a cycling enthusiast; Jacquelyn Hayward Gulati, who is the cycling coordinator from the city of Toronto; Howard Brown; Jared Kolb, the ED of Cycle Toronto; Justin Jones, from Share the Road Cycling Coalition, now a resident of Belleville; Elliott Silverstein, from CAA; my brother Ed McMahon; and Yvonne Bambrick, who is an author and

cyclist in the city of Toronto. Welcome, colleagues. Thank you for being at Queen's Park.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming some members in the public gallery who organized a wonderful rally today in defence of accident benefits. Their names are Pam Forester, Sarah Palmer, Ruth Fernandes and Jordan Hill. Please join me in welcoming them.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I, too, would like to introduce Howard Brown, who many years ago came second to me in the presidential race for the Young Liberals in Rose-dale. Welcome, Mr. Brown.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to acknowledge somebody who is on her way, if she's not here already, and that's my EA, Theresa Lubowitz, who has been a fantastic support to me on a private member's bill. I want to thank her—she's not here yet.

I also want to acknowledge Howard Brown, a good friend and supporter as well.

Interjection: There she is.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Oh, there she is. Hi, Theresa.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're not here.

Further introductions?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine—I think he's a New Democrat—Howard Brown, who's in the audience here today.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, I'm not sure if he has been introduced yet, but in the gallery is a good friend of the PC Party, Howard Brown.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further comical introductions?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Howie Brown. In 1991, when I was an opposition member, he prepared a householder for me which was complaining about the price of gasoline at 47 cents a litre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions of Howard Brown? I mean, further introductions? The member from Burlington.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to reintroduce Howard Brown, although he is welcome and we're glad he's here.

WEARING OF PINS

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that I be permitted to wear a Share the Road Cycling Coalition bike lapel pin for this afternoon's proceedings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Burlington is seeking unanimous consent to wear a pin—and I will pause for a moment to allow the member from Timmins–James Bay a counter.

I think we need to do this, so go ahead.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, we're not going to oppose it, but I would just ask the government House

leader not to spring these things on us. I know the Conservative House leader has just been made aware a few seconds ago. I had no idea. There is a process. Normally, the House leader tells us before any of this stuff happens. We will give consent, but I ask the House leader not to do this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I suspect it's not the House leader who's doing this. But I do agree with the member that it is a tradition that any unanimous requests for wearing of things are done through the House leaders to ensure that no one offends anyone and is made to look like they are doing it on purpose.

What I'm going to do is ask for unanimous consent for the member, now that we know that this point has been made. Do we agree with unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would ask that we have unanimous consent in order to wear ribbons for Howard Brown.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Some people have the opinion that I lost control of the House as soon as I became Speaker. But under this circumstance, I think I'm going to pass on that UC.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. Earlier, I introduced some guests, and they hadn't quite arrived. If I could just mention to you that David Lepofsky is here, as well as Anjan and Manny Manikumar, and Rachel Shemuel, who will be signing for us this afternoon.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ACADÉMIE CATHOLIQUE ANGE-GABRIEL

M. Steve Clark: Comme l'année scolaire tire à sa fin, je voudrais souligner quelques réussites de l'Académie catholique Ange-Gabriel à Brockville. C'est avec le bon travail des professeurs que les élèves peuvent s'épanouir et profiter davantage de leur expérience académique. Pour cela, j'aimerais premièrement les remercier.

Cette année, comme toujours, a été très mouvementée et très variée. Un des temps forts de l'année a été la compétition de Mini Skills, qui a encouragé les étudiants à s'intéresser aux domaines de métiers spécialisés et aux technologies.

« Dévoile ton art » a inspiré les élèves à s'essayer comme poètes et « We Day » comme activistes sociales. La classe de 6^e année a même exploré leurs talents scientifiques à la foire de science de Rideau St. Lawrence.

En septembre, l'école célébrera sa 20^e rentrée. Alors, je veux dire à tous les élèves et les professeurs de l'Académie catholique Ange-Gabriel : félicitations pour votre travail cette année et passez de belles vacances. Je suis certain que vous continuerez à réussir et à faire plein de choses intéressantes l'année prochaine.

1510

MARY ANN MULHERN

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As I mentioned earlier, we are joined in the members' gallery today by Mary Ann Mulhern. Mary Ann is an award-winning poet from Windsor whose work I have quoted here in the House on at least two previous occasions.

It was her idea to create the position of a Poet Laureate in Windsor a few years ago. I was on city council when we did that. That experience prompted me to introduce a private member's bill to create the position of Poet Laureate for Ontario.

Mary Ann has written a poem called Windsor, and, with her permission, I'd like to read it to you now.

Windsor
 A river seeded with light
 Radiance of sun and stars
 Flows through the heart of Windsor
 Gives breath to ten thousand roses
 Reflects the face of a city
 Created from Strength
 Men, women and children
 Enough faith to endure
 Enough hope to build bridges
 Span of this millennium
 When Windsor thrives, grows, glories
 In so many colours of the world
 How they shine!

Thank you, Mary Ann, for being here today. Thank you for promoting poetry, literacy and the arts. Thank you for reminding others how great it would be if we finally had a Poet Laureate in Ontario.

ONTARIO FLAG DAY

JOUR DU DRAPEAU DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Yvan Baker: Three weeks ago today, I rose in the House to introduce Bill 101, An Act to proclaim Ontario Flag Day. This legislation, if passed, would proclaim that May 21 in each year be recognized as Ontario Flag Day. I would humbly ask for the support of all members in this House for this bill.

First raised on May 21, 1965, the Ontario flag symbolizes the contributions of our people, our rich history, our diverse heritage, distinct values and shared successes. It represents all of us who call Ontario home.

Le drapeau de l'Ontario est le symbole à la fois des contributions de notre peuple, de notre histoire féconde, de notre patrimoine diversifié, de nos valeurs distinctes et de nos succès communs.

From the early aboriginal people who first called this land home, to anglophone and francophone settlers, to the millions of immigrants who continue to arrive on our shores from around the world, Ontario has a rich history and diverse heritage.

Millions of people, including my grandparents, chose to come to this province because they wanted a better life for their family and for the generations that would follow. They found that in Ontario. In fact, my grandfather used to say that this is the best place in the world.

Ontarians from across our province continue to make contributions to the economic, social, political and cultural life of our province, our country and the world.

Rendre hommage au drapeau de l'Ontario nous permet de célébrer tous les citoyens de l'Ontario et leurs innombrables contributions, tout en honorant notre histoire, le patrimoine, les valeurs et les réussites.

It is my hope that all members of this Legislature will support this legislation and join me in marking May 21 in their calendars each year not just to celebrate Ontario Flag Day—although this is important—and not just to celebrate our history, heritage, values and shared successes—although this, too, is important—but to pay tribute to the people of Ontario who continue to make Canada and Ontario the best places in the world.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today, I launched an awareness program for my private member's initiative known as Growing Agri-Food Jobs, and I do it in celebrating the Local Food Week that we have upon us right now.

I'd like to share with the House that Ontario's agri-food industry is vital to the province, contributing \$30 billion annually to Ontario's GDP and providing 740,000 jobs. Yet, despite this important economic aspect of our agri-food industry, we actually have a low-job profile, if you will, amongst students across Ontario. That's why I introduced my motion Growing Agri-Food Jobs in Ontario.

The motion asks that the importance of agriculture and food literacy is recognized by ensuring that the Ministry of Education includes a mandatory component of career opportunities associated with Ontario's agri-food industry in grades 9 and 10 guidance and career education.

With that, I am very pleased to say that this motion will enable the Premier to realize a goal. When she was Minister of Agriculture and Food, she challenged the agri-food industry to create 120,000 new jobs. Yet, unfortunately, studies show that for every one person graduating with an agricultural diploma or degree, there are three jobs waiting.

So this has been received very well by the NDP, as well as the Liberal Party. I look forward to the debate on October 8 during Agriculture Week later this fall.

FORT ERIE RACE TRACK

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yesterday I was happy to attend the opening of the Fort Erie Race Track, which is

celebrating its 118th year. With post time at 4:15, we had nine races that saw an increase in both track betting and off-track betting. I can tell you—I was there last year—attendance was up and sales were up.

The residents of Niagara had a great time yesterday. They want to keep having a great time. That's why we need more race dates. Forty is a good start from where we were, but we need 77 race dates.

We also need to return gaming to the track in the form of slots. With the slots back and more race dates, the track can become self-sustaining and not need a dollar from the province or the town.

Three years ago, the Premier committed to integrated horse racing with OLG, including gaming, which would bring the slots back to Fort Erie. In fact, it was the Premier's idea. There are over 1,000 jobs that could be protected there and 200 that could be created with the return of gaming to Fort Erie. That's jobs for the community that are absolutely needed. By returning gaming to Fort Erie, the province generates revenue and the town gets to keep their race track.

This is something that needs to happen now, so that we can continue to see more days like the very successful day we had at the Fort Erie Race Track yesterday.

ANNIVERSARY OF BARRIE TORNADO

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: This past Sunday was the 30th anniversary of the Barrie tornado. On May 31, 1985, a series of tornadoes swept across the province of Ontario, with the most devastation occurring in central Ontario and my hometown of Barrie. It was a challenging day in our history, with 12 dead, 281 injured and close to 600 homes and businesses lost or damaged.

At 4:15, a powerful F4 tornado, with winds between 270 and 310 kilometres per hour, formed in Grand Valley, eventually travelling to Barrie. It was a defining moment in our community as neighbours came together to help support each other and help to rebuild.

At Royal Victoria hospital, those who were injured sat silent and patiently, covered in blood and mud. Ambulances rushed more in as good Samaritans brought others in pickup trucks. Portable lights were brought in and sheets were placed over tables in the cafeteria as it was used for assessment and treatment.

Nurses and doctors returned from already working a full day to do their job again. Police officers, firefighters, paramedics and soldiers from nearby Base Borden worked tirelessly to get Barrie citizens through this very difficult time.

In the weeks ahead, neighbours took in those who had lost their homes and the city began to rebuild.

Barrie's tornado devastation was significant, but it revealed an even stronger resolve and a sense of community. This resilience is still part of our community today.

Thanks to all of the unsung heroes who acted on this very devastating day.

LAKE NIPISSING WALLEYE FISHERY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This week, the Lake Nipissing stakeholders wrote directly to the Premier out of desperation and frustration. They're at a loss to understand how the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry turned down their request to continue to restock Lake Nipissing, as they've done for years, to reverse the decline of the walleye population.

The ministry is entrenched in its position on Lake Nipissing. Yet, on its website, they boast the fact that they help stock 1,200 other water bodies in Ontario each and every year. The refusal to allow stakeholders, at their own expense, to augment stocking efforts proves that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing at the ministry.

Lake Nipissing is one of the most ecologically and economically important lakes in northeastern Ontario. But instead of working with partners to find solutions, the ministry just digs in its heels.

The stakeholders' petition is now available for constituents to sign in my office and on my website.

The Premier needs to act and the minister needs to start asking his staff some hard questions. They should allow the stakeholders to continue to restock—again, at their own expense, as they always have—while submitting the ministry's data and conclusions for a third-party scientific review to explain how it's acceptable to stock 1,200 other Ontario water bodies but not Lake Nipissing.

1520

GIRLS GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to showcase the fantastic girls in grades 7 and 8 at Rawlinson Community School who took part in my Girls Government program. Girls Government is a program run by Equal Voice, which helps get young girls interested in politics. I worked closely with five bright young girls from Rawlinson Community School—Ryann, Sana, Alyssa, Penelope, Cheyenne—and their teacher, Mrs. Emily Praamsma.

Since January, these girls worked alongside me and their teacher to learn about politics and to select a specific issue they'd like to champion. The girls selected mental health as their issue. Each of the girls engaged in lively debates selecting this issue. As well, they developed strategies on what we can do as a province to remediate this issue.

With much research and discussion, these bright young girls from Rawlinson drafted a letter to Minister Hoskins indicating their specific concerns and perspectives on the provision of mental health care in Ontario.

On May 27, I was happy to host my group here at Queen's Park, and I'm so happy that they had an opportunity to meet with Premier Wynne, with you, Mr. Speaker, and several MPPs throughout the day.

I'd like to extend a special thanks to Minister Hoskins, who personally met with the girls from Rawlinson to

discuss how our government is working to tackle the issue of mental health.

Mr. Speaker, the energy from the girls from Rawlinson helped remind me of the importance of my role as a female politician in this Legislature, and as the first female MPP for the riding of Davenport. I want to thank them for their hard work, and I look forward to their bright careers going forward as active, engaged citizens in Davenport.

GREAT BLUE HERON CHARITY CASINO

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to acknowledge today, for the residents of Durham and all of Ontario, the success of the MSIFN, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. I have the opportunity to meet regularly with Chief Kelly LaRocca, who never misses an opportunity to tell me about the MSIFN community and the charity casino that they own: the Great Blue Heron Charity Casino in Durham region. It's a famous achievement in the Durham community and remains a great success for MSIFN as well as our entire region.

Great Blue Heron was financed, built and developed by the MSIFN as a result of a nation-to-nation agreement with the government of Ontario. The agreement was signed in 1993, and the casino opened in 1997. With the agreement came the opportunity for the MSIFN to initiate economic development and financial self-reliance. Overall, GBH has direct and indirect economic benefits to the region of \$264 million annually and generates more than 1,100 jobs.

This unique asset in Durham represents independence and opportunity to the MSIFN, and it has proven to be a phenomenal success.

My hope is that you will take the time to visit this wonderful casino.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to thank all members for their statements and introduce Howard Brown in the gallery.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr20, An Act to amend The Welland-Port Colborne Airport Act, 1976.

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive Weiche Estates Inc.

Bill Pr22, An Act to revive 1476263 Ontario Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on University Undergraduate Teaching Quality, section 4.11 of the 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled University Undergraduate Teaching Quality, section 4.11, 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; Han Dong; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Harinder Malhi; Julia Munro; Arthur Potts; and Lou Rinaldi.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Brock University, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the University of Toronto for their attendance at the hearing.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, the Clerk of Committees, and staff in the legislative research services.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

POLICE RECORD CHECKS REFORM ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA RÉFORME DES VÉRIFICATIONS DE DOSSIERS DE POLICE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act respecting police record checks /
Projet de loi 113, Loi concernant les vérifications de
dossiers de police.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce the Police Record Checks Reform Act. This bill, if passed, would develop a clear, consistent and comprehensive legislative framework for police record checks for the first time in Ontario, setting province-wide standards for how police record checks are requested, conducted and disclosed in Ontario.

This bill will establish set types of police record checks, direct what records can and cannot be released, and clarify rules and practices for consent and disclosure.

If passed, the legislation will remove unnecessary barriers and increase opportunities for employment, volunteering, education and other community service while protecting both public safety and individual civil liberties.

MUNICIPAL ACTION
ON ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ACTION MUNICIPALE
EN FAVEUR DE L'ACCESSIBILITÉ
POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Mr. Hatfield moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to require municipalities to take action with respect to accessibility for persons with disabilities / Projet de loi 114, Loi exigeant que les municipalités prennent des mesures en matière d'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: This bill grew out of the controversy over the ramp on the sidewalk at Signs Restaurant in downtown Toronto. The bill prohibits municipalities from taking any action that impedes a person who offers items, including goods, services and facilities, from improving accessibility to the items for Ontarians with disabilities.

The bill requires municipalities to conduct a review of bylaws and other instruments and to report and plan in respect of complying with the bill.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 13

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeing unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the July 17, 2014, order of the House referring Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged, and the bill ordered for third reading, and that the order for third reading of Bill 13 be immediately called and the question be put on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment.

1530

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the July 17, 2014—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

All in favour? Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE MOIS
DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

Ms. McMahon moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month / Projet de loi 13, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois de la bicyclette en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 61

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Terry Fox Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the March 26, 2015, order of the House referring Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Terry Fox Day, to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and that the order for third reading of Bill 61 be immediately called and that the question be put on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the March 26, 2015, order—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

TERRY FOX DAY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE JOUR DE TERRY FOX

Ms. Wong moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Terry Fox Day / Projet de loi 61, Loi proclamant le Jour de Terry Fox.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 101

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 101, An Act to proclaim Ontario Flag Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the orders for second and third reading of Bill 101 be immediately called and that the question be put on the motions for second and third reading without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the orders for second and third reading of Bill 101—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Agreed. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ONTARIO FLAG DAY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE JOUR
DU DRAPEAU DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Baker moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 101, An Act to proclaim Ontario Flag Day / Projet de loi 101, Loi proclamant le Jour du drapeau de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ONTARIO FLAG DAY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE JOUR
DU DRAPEAU DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Baker moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 101, An Act to proclaim Ontario Flag Day / Projet de loi 101, Loi proclamant le Jour du drapeau de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: 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 government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item numbers 60, 61 and 62 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Sylvia Jones: From my Girls Government program, this is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Princess Margaret Public School Girls Government group:

"Whereas there is an increasing level of obesity and childhood diabetes in teenagers in Ontario;

"Whereas only 15% of Canadians come close to the recommended levels of physical activity on a daily basis;

"Whereas over the course of a year, one in five Canadians experience a mental health or addiction problem;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Education as follows:

"That the province make the Healthy and Active Living course offered to students in Ontario high schools a compulsory course selection for all four years of high school education."

I will affix my name to the petition and give it to page Emma to take to the table.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to commend the work of the Accident Benefit Coalition for putting together this petition. They have 19,000 petitions signed online, and I have almost 600 signatures to present today. The petition reads as follows:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Stop Further Cuts to Accident Benefits.

"Whereas in 2010 the Ontario government permitted insurance companies to dramatically cut accident benefits for all victims and has announced plans on allowing even further reductions;

"Whereas this will severely impact on Ontario's most vulnerable victims of car crashes;

"Whereas those injured in car accidents depend on accident benefits for recovery;

“Whereas when someone is catastrophically impaired, they will require these benefits to help them afford their daily expenses indefinitely;

“Whereas reducing accident benefits will put further strain on the health care system;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly undertakes legislative reforms to halt the proposed changes to accident benefits in Ontario.”

I strongly support and agree with this petition, and will affix my signature and hand it to page Philip.

UNLICENSED TAXIS

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas consumer choice is key, provided passenger safety is paramount for taxi programs;

“Whereas bandit taxicabs that are not licensed or insured pose safety threats for passengers and other drivers;

“Whereas unsafe bandit taxicabs predate programs like Uber, who are using new technology;

“Whereas legitimate taxi programs uphold the safety measures within municipal bylaws and the Highway Traffic Act; and

“Whereas municipalities must be able to enforce their own bylaws;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact passenger safety legislation that will stop unlicensed taxis from operating.”

I hand this over to page Jany and I affix my signature to this.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electronic cigarettes, more accurately known as vaporizers, are between 95% and 99% cleaner than smoking tobacco; and

“Whereas electronic cigarettes are not a tobacco product, but rather a tobacco replacement therapy for those wishing to quit smoking, and a significant contributor to tobacco harm reduction in Ontario; and

“Whereas there is no scientific or medical evidence indicating that vaping causes inhalable exposure to contaminants that warrants health concerns;

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

“That the government of Ontario abandon schedule 3 of Bill 45, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014.”

I have received over 4,000 signatures on the electronic petition as well as hundreds and hundreds of these. I agree with it and will give it to page Dale.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition collected by the students at Meadowvale Public School in Mississauga.

“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 agree with this petition. I’m affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Julien.

1540

LAKE NIPISSING WALLEYE FISHERY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has stated that the walleye population in Lake Nipissing is in decline; and

“Whereas their answer is to manage through the recreational fishing regulations; and

“Whereas that is not a viable solution if the commercial fishery on Lake Nipissing is not regulated; and

“Whereas the Lake Nipissing Stakeholders Association wants to restock the lake at large volumes to replenish the waning walleye population, but is not being allowed to do so by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry despite the fact the ministry commits to stocking 1,200 other water bodies in Ontario each and every year;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allow the Lake Nipissing Stakeholders Association to restock Lake Nipissing with walleye to protect our local fishery for future generations.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this, sign my name and give it to page Emma.

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

“We ask that the Attorney General’s office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature and give this petition to page Robert.

LUNG HEALTH

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister from—the member from Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I like the way you’re thinking.

I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to

immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition. I’m going to sign it and send it to the table with page Dale.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in her 2014 annual report, the Ontario Auditor General confirmed what Ontario electricity consumers already knew, that our energy system has been woefully mismanaged by this Ontario government and we have been gouged with rates and charges to compensate for their mismanagement; and

“Whereas Minister Chiarelli prefers to criticize the truth rather than take responsibility for this mismanagement;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario demand her energy minister’s resignation immediately.”

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

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

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in Essex county.”

I approve and support this petition, and will affix my name and send it to the Clerks’ table through Ram.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly funded French-language education; and

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto,” including Beaches–East York, “and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school ... yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school...; and,

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools...; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto...; and

“Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that ‘... time is running out to address the serious shortage’...; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has confirmed that we all benefit when school board properties are used effectively in support of publicly funded education...; and

“Whereas parents and students from both French Catholic and French public elementary schools in east Toronto are prepared to find common ground across all language school systems to secure space...;

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

“That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school” in the community so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.

I agree with this petition and leave it with page Kate.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition prepared by my Girls Government group from Island Lake Public School.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government should provide funds for community hospitals all across Ontario. The reasoning behind this issue is the residents of Ontario pay taxes towards the hospital which doesn’t provide any extra equipment like X-ray machines, CT scanners or dialysis machines;

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

“That the Legislature ask the government to provide funds for all supplies for all hospitals, including community hospitals, all across Ontario.”

I will affix my name to this petition and give it to page Philip to take to the table.

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai une pétition qui vient de partout en Ontario, incluant le carré Yonge-Dundas à Toronto.

«Privatiser d’Hydro One : une autre mauvaise décision.

« Attendu que la privatisation d’Hydro One est un aller sans retour; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre des centaines de millions de revenus fiables d’Hydro One pour nos écoles et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre le plus gros atout économique provincial et le contrôle de notre avenir dans le secteur de l’énergie; et

« Attendu que nous allons payer de plus en plus pour l’électricité, tout comme ce qui est arrivé ailleurs; »

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« D’arrêter la vente d’Hydro One et de faire en sorte que les familles de l’Ontario, comme propriétaires d’Hydro One, en bénéficient, maintenant et pour les générations à venir. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais demander à Robert de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an industrial wind turbine development is to be constructed approximately 3.5 kilometres west of the village of Crysler by EDP Renewables; and

“Whereas the project will consist of 25-50 mega wind turbines and this has raised concerns by the citizens of Crysler and surrounding area related to health, safety and property values; and

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approval;

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

“That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments, and the Minister of the Environment conduct a thorough scientific study on the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Julien.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The time for petitions is over.

Orders of the day.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L’INFRASTRUCTURE AU SERVICE DE L’EMPLOI ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Duguid, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2015 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Naqvi.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, before I start, I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I'm very proud to stand in the Legislature on behalf of the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and speak to Bill 6, entitled the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. Building modern infrastructure is part of our government's plan to continue growing the economy and create jobs.

I know that in my community of Ottawa Centre, infrastructure investments, and specifically those in transit, are top of mind for many of my constituents. That's why I'm proud that our government has made significant investment and will continue to make even more.

There are three important infrastructure investments that I just want to quickly highlight, that are taking place in my community of Ottawa Centre and that are not only going to benefit my community but also the entire city of Ottawa, one being the building of phase 1 of the Confederation Line LRT in Ottawa. Our government is investing \$600 million in building this state-of-the-art LRT system that will start in my community of Ottawa Centre and then weave into the community of the member for Ottawa–Vanier, the Attorney General, and then into Ottawa–Orléans.

This project is the single largest public infrastructure project in the city of Ottawa since the building of the Rideau Canal. It just shows you the significance of this project, and how much it's going to redefine our city for years and years to come, because our government is investing in this very important project.

We are also, of course, helping to expand bike paths and improve pedestrian walkways across the city. That complements well with the building of the LRT.

The other very large infrastructure project that is taking place in my community, which impacts the entire city of Ottawa, is the building of an addition to the Ottawa heart institute. It's a state-of-the-art medical facility providing specialized heart care, not just in Ottawa but entire eastern Ontario. We're investing \$200 million in building a brand new expansion extension to the heart institute, with six brand new heart surgery operating rooms. It is, again, going to revolutionize the delivery of health care when it comes to heart health in our community.

I want to thank all the people who work at the Ottawa heart institute for their incredible work and diligence in helping us live healthy lives.

The other project that is extremely important to my community, and again benefits the entire city of Ottawa, is the building of Innovation Centre. Our government is investing over \$15 million in the building of Innovation Centre. This is going to be Ottawa's equivalent of

Communitech in Kitchener-Waterloo—a place of incubation; a place where we bring our entrepreneurs, our innovators, our students and all the other experts together, so that they can create the next big breakthrough.

We're working very closely with the city of Ottawa and Invest Ottawa, which is our economic development agency in the city of Ottawa, in developing Innovation Centre at Bayview Yards.

All these three investments are critical in helping to make my community of Ottawa Centre and our city of Ottawa—in fact, Speaker, I would argue, all of Ontario—the best place to live, work and raise a family.

I'm excited that we are now going to be investing over \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years. That is just incredible, to see the kind of emphasis that our government is putting on building public infrastructure that will benefit every single community that we all have the privilege of representing.

These investments will build much-needed infrastructure in every corner of the province and will support over 110,000 jobs annually. Experts agree: Investing in our infrastructure is an investment in our economy and in our future.

An April 2013 report from the Conference Board of Canada found that each dollar invested in public infrastructure in Ontario raises the gross domestic product by \$1.14 in the near term. In addition, our own studies show that the returns on this dollar grow to \$3.10 in the long term while supporting jobs and facilitating private investment. That's a three-time increase as a result of investments in public infrastructure.

Bill 6, if passed, would require our government and future governments to regularly prepare long-term infrastructure plans. This will ensure that all governments recognize the importance of long-term planning for infrastructure.

The Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act is part of our plan to continue building a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. The proposed legislation would increase the opportunities for apprenticeships for a wide variety of trades.

As the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure has stated in the House before, our government was willing to accept amendments from the opposition and stakeholders to strengthen this important legislation. Bill 6 is now a stronger piece of legislation because of our collaborative work during the committee process. There are now provisions in this legislation around social housing, health and safety, accessibility and asset management, to name a few.

Speaker, I will conclude by stating that this bill represents our government's key priorities: to build Ontario up by investing in people's talents and skills, building new public infrastructure across the province and creating a dynamic business climate. I sincerely hope that all members of this House will support this important legislation during third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Interjection.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm sharing my time. Where is our—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's got to rotate anyway.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you.

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 6 at third reading. Our caucus supported this bill at second reading as well.

I understand the bill was sent to a standing committee of the Legislature and was amended at committee, but I particularly want to acknowledge the constructive work that was done by my colleagues on the committee: Jeff Yurek, the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, and Lisa Thompson, who of course is the member for Huron–Bruce. I want to thank them. Normally, within our caucus, the critic for the bill—in that case, me—would have been subbed in on the committee, but because the committee was time allocated and the committee met on the Monday of this week and the previous Monday for public hearings, I, of course, Mr. Speaker, was in the Chair. We're doing double duty many days here, trying to get it all done, and I want to express my thanks to my colleagues who are actually the members of that committee for our party, generally speaking. They carried on and did the work in committee.

There were public hearings. The minister who I follow, the government House leader, indicated that there were hearings. Yes, there were, and at the same time, I want to acknowledge the work that has been done by my colleague the member for Dufferin–Caledon. She has been assertively bringing forward the idea that we need to do more to recycle aggregates. There was actually an amendment to Bill 6 that was passed by the committee. It's now section 9.1: "Infrastructure planning and investment should endeavour to make use of acceptable recycled aggregates." Again, this is an amendment that was based largely on work that was done by the member for Dufferin–Caledon, and she deserves enormous credit. I think we need to recognize the opportunity that recycled aggregates represent and ensure that that opportunity is reflected in this legislation.

Bill 6, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014: This bill, if passed, enacts the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014. The bill would enshrine a series of principles, requirements and authorities to promote improvement in infrastructure planning in the province of Ontario.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government, in the absence of Bill 6, brought forward recently a long-term infrastructure plan. That was, I think, appreciated by the people of Ontario whose projects were referenced in the plan.

1600

We pointed out at second reading that, in fact, the government was able to do that work before the election in the absence of Bill 6. So there's nothing stopping them from bringing forward a long-term infrastructure plan,

even if Bill 6 doesn't pass. But, certainly, the government wants to appear to be committed to ensuring that there is, on an ongoing basis going forward, long-term infrastructure planning, hence the need for Bill 6.

The government, in Bill 6, outlines a number of specific principles upon which infrastructure plans would be developed. That has been thoroughly canvassed, I think, in the second reading debate. But, certainly, as I said, as the official opposition, we support the idea of long-term infrastructure planning for the province of Ontario.

The government tells us they're committed to a \$130-billion long-term infrastructure plan over 10 years. We see, in this year's provincial budget, the government, in its capital plan, is committing to an expenditure on infrastructure of \$13.536 billion. That's maybe where you get the \$130-billion figure—times 10. The government is committed to around \$13.5 billion in infrastructure, when you look at the list; for example, about \$2.5 billion on provincial highways, \$2.7 billion on hospital infrastructure, \$1.9 billion on education infrastructure; justice, \$243 million. So, of course, the government has committed in the provincial budget to this kind of expenditure.

I think it's therefore reasonable for us, as members of the opposition, to point out some of the infrastructure needs that we have in our ridings. This is something that I've repeatedly raised in the Legislature on a number of occasions over the last several years now, and that is the need for the government to put the Highway 6 Morriston bypass project on the five-year plan for capital construction for highways.

Applause.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to thank the member for Essex for his support.

I've raised this I don't know how many times, Mr. Speaker, and I will continue to do so. You, as a member representing the Hamilton area, understand that this is an important project for the Hamilton area. I've raised it in the Legislature; I've raised it in committee.

We have put together something called the Morriston Bypass Coalition, which had a number of meetings in recent months with key officials within the government, including senior staff and several of the ministries.

The Morriston Bypass Coalition is a group of businesses, chambers of commerce and municipalities: Con Cast Pipe, Sleeman, Guelph Chamber of Commerce, Canada Bread, the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada, Nestlé Waters, Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf, the Freight Management Association of Canada, Fluke Transportation Group, the Grain Farmers of Ontario, the Hamilton Port Authority, the city of Hamilton, the Hamilton international airport, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Cargill, the county of Wellington, the Ontario Trucking Association, the Southern Ontario Gateway Council, the township of Puslinch, the city of Guelph and, of course, the county of Wellington.

They have done a good economic analysis of the need to proceed with this project, and we are currently waiting to hear back from the Minister of Transportation on a

recent request that we have made. We know that after the budget has passed—and, of course, the budget bill passed in the House this morning. The Ministry of Transportation now knows what its capital allocation is going to be for new highway construction in the year ahead. When they have that information, they're in a position to look at modifications to the five-year capital plan—the southern highways program, as the ministry calls it. Each year, they do projects that are on that plan, and that makes room for new projects to be added.

I would, again, respectfully request to the minister that he, as soon as possible, agree to meet with the township of Puslinch council representative—hopefully, the county of Wellington could be represented at that meeting, as well as the Morriston Bypass Coalition—so that he could hear for himself the important urgency of this project. I would hope that he would be in a position, then, to add it to the five-year plan of the ministry.

I want to, again, talk about the economic study that was done by the township of Puslinch—Mayor Dennis Lever and the township council and staff who took the lead on this to get this done. There was a report that was prepared by Dr. Clarence Woudsma of the University of Waterloo, which underlined the need to move forward with the Morriston bypass. The study included reference to the current traffic logjams through Morriston, which are costing commuters tens of millions of dollars every year, and the commercial traffic costs are in the millions of dollars annually. This report documented that the economic cost of the current logjam that exists through the hamlet of Morriston, in the township of Puslinch.

I also want to again remind the government that the Premier herself, in question period in July, implicitly acknowledged the importance of the Morriston bypass project. I had raised it in the Legislature the previous day, and in response to a question from our Leader of the Opposition, she said she felt that the issue I had raised the previous day was an important priority. As a former Minister of Transportation, we know—hopefully—that she has an understanding of the transportation needs of the province, perhaps better than some, and she would, hopefully, want her Minister of Transportation to follow through on this implicit statement that she made, that it should be made a priority. Again, I would ask the minister to do that.

Again, the Highway 6 Morriston bypass needs to be added to the Ministry of Transportation's five-year plan for new highway construction. Again, the Premier has acknowledged that the project is needed. The Morriston Bypass Coalition includes the township of Puslinch, the county of Wellington, the cities of Guelph and Hamilton, as well as chambers of commerce and prominent businesses such as Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf Foods, Nestlé Waters, Sleeman Brewery, Canada Bread, and Cargill.

Again, the township of Puslinch has done their homework, as was requested by a previous Minister of Transportation, who, of course, now serves as the Minister of Energy, who suggested that they put together this business coalition and study the economic impact. This has

been done, and it is now finally up to the government to respond.

Another important infrastructure priority in our riding is the need for a new courthouse in Halton region. The existing courthouse in Milton was built more than 50 years ago. It's no longer adequate to meet the needs of one of the province's fastest-growing areas.

I have had the opportunity to visit and tour the courthouse myself, and I encouraged the court users to also invite the other Halton-area MPPs, who subsequently had an opportunity to tour the Halton courthouse and see for themselves. We've tried to work together, across the aisle, setting aside partisanship, to advocate with the Attorney General on the need for a new courthouse. I think all of us—the member for Halton, the member for Burlington, and the member for Oakville, who serves as the Minister of Labour—are in agreement that this needs to be a priority.

I've raised this in the Legislature in question period. The Attorney General indicated again that—she said it was a priority. We're trying to find out what that means. Obviously, we would have expected some greater commitment in the provincial budget. It wasn't there, but we continue to identify that as a priority, as local MPPs, and we will continue to do so until the government finally does the right thing.

I would also want to acknowledge the good work that has been done by Halton regional council and Halton regional chair Gary Carr. They have worked hard to raise this issue with the government.

Courthouse users, including judges, lawyers and staff, and all of us, as I said—the Halton-area MPPs, the four of us—are behind the project. We would identify that as a priority in our area and urge the government to respond and announce that a new courthouse has been approved, and then proceed with the planning for it, and then we would look forward to seeing it built.

I'm pleased that the Minister of Education is in the House today. I would again call to her attention the need for a new Holy Cross Catholic school in Georgetown. In 2013, the Holy Cross Catholic school in Georgetown was the Halton Catholic District School Board's number one priority that they submitted to the government. They had a number of conversations with the minister, and I raised it in the House on a number of occasions. They put together a good business case. But unfortunately, they were not successful in getting approval for a replacement school.

I have had the opportunity to visit this particular school. I've toured it, I think, three times or maybe four times, working with the local school board trustee, Mark Rowe, who does a great job. The school was built in the late 1950s. It's currently in a deteriorating condition. A recent facility condition survey indicated that the building will require over \$5 million in repairs over the next eight years, to maintain it in an acceptable condition.

Then there is also insufficient room on the current site to expand the school, to support anticipated population growth in Georgetown. So even if they don't get

approval for a new school, they're going to have to spend \$5 million just to maintain it in an acceptable condition for the foreseeable future, for the next eight years.

Certainly, the school board wants to go ahead and build a new replacement school. I tried to do everything I can, as a member of the Legislature, to draw attention to this issue, working with the school board trustee and the local school board, and I will continue to do so.

1610

I'm also privileged to represent the town of Erin. The town of Erin's waste water management system is an important infrastructure project on the horizon in our riding. The town of Erin has been working for years on a servicing and settlement master plan—they call it the SSMP—and an environmental assessment appears to be the next step. The town of Erin is probably the largest southern Ontario community without a communal waste water management system. They still have septic tanks in their backyards, and we need to move ahead to modernize the waste water treatment in that community.

The lack of a sewage system and communal waste water treatment system is impacting the town's ability to attract commercial and industrial investment and, currently, it's forcing ratepayers to pay increasingly higher taxes. But the town cannot afford to build this system without the support of the provincial government. According to published reports, the potential capital costs to provide sewage treatment/sanitary services for both Erin and Hillsburgh are estimated to be as much as \$58 million, with annual operating costs of \$900,000.

The town of Erin currently has a population of around 11,000 people, and approximately 4,500 people live in Hillsburgh and the former village of Erin. They need to move ahead with this project, but they cannot move ahead without substantial financial support from the province of Ontario. This is something that we've raised in the Legislature on a number of occasions now in the context of this discussion on Bill 6, and I will continue to raise it until we receive a satisfactory response.

Also in the town of Erin, we have a situation that has arisen in recent years: the Station Road bridge. The Station Road rehabilitation is an urgent project due to significant safety concerns. This is in the hamlet of Hillsburgh, in my riding. Station Road is located on top of an earthen berm which creates a dam. There's also a bridge within the dam to allow the Upper Credit River to pass underneath the road. There are significant structural concerns with the dam, and a hazard assessment recently done identified a high hazard potential should the dam collapse. There's also a fire station located adjacent to the bridge, and when the road was closed previously, an incident occurred which delayed emergency response, and nobody wants this to happen again. The Station Road bridge has been identified by the Credit Valley conservation authority as a safety concern.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has issued a temporary permit for the repair of the failed culvert, which requires a permanent solution to the entire dam situation. An article that appeared in August 2014 in the Well-

ington Advertiser indicated that the town had received an 18-month extension from the Ministry of Natural Resources to come up with a permanent solution. So the clock is ticking. It's almost a year now since that edict came down from the ministry. Of course, the town council and the town staff want to do something, and they've come to my office to discuss it with me. I've written the government many times seeking financial support from the province for the town of Erin for this project, and I've been advised that the town cannot complete the project without "the financial assistance of other levels of government."

The town of Erin sought funding under the ministry's small, rural and northern infrastructure capital program, but they've been denied funding. They were told that their expression of interest did not pass the pre-screening process because other applicants had "highly critical projects" with "more challenging economic conditions."

This is totally unacceptable to me. It's totally unacceptable to the people of the town of Erin and the council. I think there has to be room for support from the provincial government for a project like this, especially when the provincial government is ordering the town to deal with it within an 18-month time frame and, of course, at the same time denying them the financial support they need to make it happen.

I would also like to talk about GO Transit service. In December 2008, I tabled a private member's resolution calling upon the government to extend GO train service to include stops in Acton, Kitchener and Waterloo by September 2011. Again, it was in 2008 that I brought that forward in this Legislature. While the new service was finally operational in January 2012—in fact, Mr. Speaker, I had the chance to ride that first train from Acton to Toronto and Union Station to come to work that day—there are only two trains in the morning and two in the evening. There are six in the morning from Georgetown and six in the afternoon, but only two trains morning and afternoon serving the community of Acton.

During the lead-up to the most recent provincial election campaign, the government promised full-day, two-way GO train service between Waterloo region and the GTA. However, their promise at that time lacked details and no specific time frame was committed to. When the House resumed sitting in July, after the provincial election, I raised this in the Legislature in the form of a private member's resolution; actually on the very first day it was possible to do so, the day of the throne speech. I asked the rhetorical question: How does the government define full-day, two-way service? Does it mean trains every hour through the day, every half-hour? And what is the time frame? I tabled that resolution, and it continues to be one of the top three private members' notices of motion on the order paper.

Subsequent to that, and in response to a series of questions from our opposition critic for transportation, the member for Kitchener-Conestoga, we were informed that it might take as many as 10 years before this commitment will be achieved, and that is apparently the

government's commitment now. During the election campaign, I don't think anybody expected that it would take 10 years. And while it's fair to say that they weren't giving us a specific time frame, to suggest it was going to take 10 years was not something they told us at that time. I commend my colleague the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for at least getting that much information, but we would encourage the government to proceed more expeditiously than that and get this done as quickly as possible.

I also want to mention, because it has come up at meetings with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture this week, another initiative that I brought forward in the Legislature with respect to high-speed Internet. There are still large parts of the province, particularly in rural Ontario, that do not have access to high-speed Internet; at least high-speed Internet that's affordable. The Internet service in rural Ontario is often slow, unreliable and expensive, and there are some residents of Ontario who still have no alternative but dial-up Internet.

I would say that reliable access to high-speed Internet is essential in today's economy. Whether you own a farm, run a business or use the Internet at home, we all depend on being connected. This is another issue I have raised, and will continue to raise in the House, trying to get the government to bring forward a provincial strategy to ensure that all residents of Ontario have access to affordable high-speed Internet.

There are a number of other projects.

In conclusion, I need to acknowledge the fact that the government, in its budget, has reinstated the Connecting Links Program. It was something our party called for, for a long time, and I want to express my appreciation for that. I wish I had more time, Mr. Speaker, because I've got a long list of projects that I'd like to talk about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I know I'm out of time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You are.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, and again, we support Bill 6 and will be supporting it at third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We're all anxious to get our words in here, as we are in the fleeting moments of the session, so I appreciate the member wanting to carry the clock for a while.

I am certainly always honoured to speak in this place, and speak within my critic's portfolio, which is infrastructure and small business. Bill 6 falls under that umbrella. Bill 6 is the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. In my briefing notes, I have written down here, "It's all very nice, but where's the beef?" Essentially what we've come to think about this bill is that it is yet another bill to create a plan to be able to create more plans, similar to the bill we discussed this morning, the Great Lakes Protection Act.

Nevertheless, we can't fault the government for trying to prioritize or put some emphasis on the importance of

infrastructure-building in the province of Ontario. In fact, they have staked a lot of ground on it: roughly \$130 billion worth over the next 10 years. It always amazes me that a government can project 10 years into the future, in terms of what they're going to spend, assuming that they're going to be here in perpetuity. Why don't you make your plan 100 years in advance and tell us you're going to spend a trillion dollars? It's quite interesting.

However, they're going to spend \$130 billion or so, which roughly equates to about \$13 billion per year, on infrastructure in the province of Ontario. Undoubtedly, we know we that need it. There's a deficit in infrastructure. I would submit to the government: Why don't you start by stopping to waste so much money on public-private partnerships? You've wasted \$8.2 billion over the last nine years. Don't take my word for it, Speaker. Take the word of the auditor. There are lots of reports. If the members want to take the time to actually read the reports from the Auditor General, she clearly states that \$8.2 billion has been essentially vaporized under the watch of this government when it comes to funding and financing infrastructure projects. Our concern is that this will allow them to plan to vaporize more of that money.

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We would like to see them take a more prudent approach to planning, and maybe this is what, hopefully, gives them that opportunity, unlike what we heard, I guess, prior to the last election. We heard the government and several ministers tout their plan to develop and to bring about the high-speed rail network between Toronto and Montreal. Speaker, this was brought about with much fanfare. It was a promise to bring in new high-speed rail. It was unfunded. I remember it was just prior to the election. They were going to bring people from London to Toronto to Montreal. It would only cost half a billion dollars, be ready within 10 years and cost within \$10 a ride. What a stretch. What an incredible stretch.

And then we reminded them that we would like some high-speed rail between Windsor and London. They said, "Okay. We'll throw that in too as well," just as a teaser. It made quite a joke of their ability to plan and to really understand what the needs are of our community. That's why we are supportive of this. We hope it actually gives them a road map and the ability to project and to take into consideration municipal concerns, municipal needs, economic development concerns, the status of our infrastructure as it is—a whole host of things.

Speaker, I sat on the committee just this week in which we had some amendments to the bill. There were two recurring themes. One was the specific prescription about apprenticeships being allocated within the context of building public infrastructure projects. The government has proposed a quota system. As much as I understand and appreciate the need to bring apprentices online, a quota system on a hard measure potentially will not work. I would much rather take the government's direction on this and what they have implemented through the College of Trades, which is the ratios that are currently brought about through the College of Trades. That is

what has been done, as we are aware. They did turn around on the quota system. Now it will be factored in through the College of Trades. I truly appreciate that that change has been made.

The second recurring theme was one which many community members requested. Those who are involved in community development, community engagement and economic development requested that the government make consideration for the use of a community benefits plan, something that would be structured, targeted, something that had a model that those community partners could be involved in specifically, a direct pipeline, as it were, to infrastructure projects, to talk about how they can bring about new jobs for new immigrants, for those with disabilities, those who have not ever worked in that sector, and then address the apprenticeship issue. They were paid lip service too, Speaker—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks, Speaker. I just wanted to get your attention, because this is really important, what I'm talking about right here.

The community groups were talking about a community benefits plan. They were paid lip service by the government, actually. They were not given a community benefits plan. They were told that inherent in infrastructure planning and development are community benefits. You can see them. There are jobs. You can dig up sewers and there are jobs associated with that. People are spending money. But that doesn't actually deliver on what these folks were talking about. They were talking about a structured, measurable plan that had targets, benchmarks and thresholds.

I guess we're not going to see that through, so they've ultimately let down many community groups that made a good business plan for the involvement and implementation of community benefits plans within the bill.

Speaker, talking about apprenticeships, we know that we need to make a serious effort to bring new skilled trades and young workers into the skilled trades and to keep them here. Not only is there a demand side for skilled trades, but unfortunately, there has been an exodus of skilled trades to other jurisdictions. We've raised that alarm. Many have talked about the need to enhance the apprenticeship program and the supports that are given to apprentices.

What has the government's answer been to that need and to the demand that is in place? In the 2015 Ontario budget, the changes to the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit, the ATTC—here's how they're going to respond to it—are going to decrease the general tax credit rate from 35% to 25%. That's not really going to help bring new apprentices online. It decreases the tax credit rate for small businesses, with salaries or wages under \$400,000 per year, from 45% to 30%, so they are no longer incentivized to bring on apprentices. They're cutting there again.

It decreases the annual maximum credit for each apprentice from \$10,000 to \$5,000. That directly affects those apprentices who are able to deduct the costs and fees to their apprenticeship program.

Fourth, it reduces the eligibility period from the first 48 months of an apprenticeship program to the first 36 months of an apprenticeship program.

Again, they talk a lot of game about enhancing and supporting apprentices in the province of Ontario. At the same time, the 2015 Ontario budget makes some drastic cuts to what we currently have under our apprenticeship regime. We don't understand the logic there.

Again, the bill essentially is a bill that creates a plan to be able to create a plan. I don't know if that makes sense to anybody. Certainly, it doesn't really make sense to us, especially given that there's nothing that prohibits the government, especially a majority government, from creating a plan today. They can create a 10-year plan, a 20-year plan, or they can create a 100-year plan. There is absolutely nothing that stops them from doing it. However, they felt the need to be able to have to structure themselves, so let's see them do that.

They've had different plans before. One of the plans is called the southern highways plan. Built into that southern highways plan are different infrastructure projects in the south that communities have identified that need to be done. They are not yet prioritized; some of them actually are, but some of them have been on the books for quite some time.

One of them, the Highway 3 bypass, in my riding of Essex, passed environmental assessment in 2006 and has been on the plan since 2006. It is a highway in Essex that is two-thirds done. It's completed two thirds of the way, from Windsor to Leamington, in its widening and expansion.

It's a highway that was long championed by my predecessor, Bruce Crozier. He spent 19 years in this place. I would submit and argue that of the 19 years—and he sat on the government for many of those years—he spent the majority of his time lobbying the government to actually start this project and then see it to its completion. Unfortunately, he passed several years ago. Actually, you know what? If memory serves me correctly, he passed two years ago today.

Interjection: Oh, my gosh.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Am I right? Yes. So we honour Bruce, and we think about him. He did a wonderful job. He was a wonderful representative.

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, yes. Many of you sat in here with him. I had the good fortune and the honour, as a member, to introduce a motion several weeks ago that was entitled Finish What You Started, essentially—Finish the Bruce Crozier Highway. The highway is aptly named after Bruce. It called on the government to simply finish that program, and complete the highway. Don't do it for me. Do it for your former colleague Bruce Crozier.

It was voted against. I want to commend my friend the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who stood with me—stood with us—and voted with that, I think because he saw it as really a practical thing to do. It's a project that has already been started. It meets all the criteria. It has a good business plan. It's sound in its

engineering. It has been on the books for quite some time. Let's earmark the funds for it and get it done. You started it. Finish what you started.

It goes a long way in rural Ontario to stick to your word and to do what you say you're going to do. That's potentially why we see so much consternation within rural Ontario when it comes to infrastructure and the ability for the province to prioritize anything that is outside of the boundary of the GTA.

We need bridges; we need roads; we need hospitals; and we need most of the underground services that you see in small communities. We need that desperately. However, when it comes to actually prioritizing our regions, and regions that require growth, we don't see that from this government.

I will point back to my riding, and Windsor. We have the Herb Gray Parkway, a \$1.8-billion infrastructure program that will link the 401 to the new Detroit River crossing, which will be called, as we now know, the Gordie Howe bridge, as Stephen Harper decided it would be named. Why not call it the Tim Hortons bridge or something? I don't know, but he decided to call it the Gordie Howe bridge.

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We have the Herb Gray Parkway, a massive infrastructure program. It's been transformative for our community. It's changed the landscape drastically. We know that it will improve, eventually, the flow of goods and services across our border, and we know that it will eventually support economic development.

However, despite the enormity of the price tag on that project, our region, in Windsor and Essex county—our unemployment remains unacceptably high. It's around 11.5%. The government claims that the \$13 billion per year will be the panacea of job creation and economic development, and undoubtedly it does; however, they've got to do a lot more strategic thinking in terms of what they put into place for economic development. We need an automotive strategy. We need an agriculture strategy. We need a local procurement strategy. These are all things that the government can no longer take a *laissez-faire* approach to when it comes to supporting our economies. They have to actually be on the job. Unfortunately, we've seen them outsource many of those vital components to other entities, and it's got them into a lot of trouble.

This is, again, about creating a plan. If it is to be that, I certainly support it. If it is a plan that is bulletproof and something that cannot be tampered with, and something that brings in broad consultation with various stakeholders—specifically municipalities—we are happy to support that initiative and to see it well-nuanced so that it really addresses our highest-priority needs.

Unfortunately, up to this date, we, again, have seen the government utilize infrastructure as the carrot, so to speak. Whether it be pre-election or post-election, at any given time they will dangle various infrastructure projects in front of communities, I believe, and I would say more so for political benefit than for the practicality of it.

One of which, I will remind members—I don't know who in this chamber at this moment actually canvassed and campaigned in Sudbury in the most recent by-election, but I can—yes, I see one hand over there. Do you remember your government proposing and promising that they were going to finish Maley Drive? What a melee you guys have created with that. You campaigned on it. You said, "We're going to finish it. If you elect Glenn Thibeault, we're going to get it done. He's going to get it done." Not two weeks later, three weeks later—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, they decided to change their minds.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: They changed their mind and said, "We can't do it." And there was poor Glenn Thibeault, who had to sit there with the Minister of Transportation and say, "Look, we made a mistake. Oops. We can't do it now. We're going to do it, believe us, we're going to do it—maybe after the next election that you elect me. But we can't do it this time."

Speaker, it's really a joke. It turns our infrastructure planning into a joke when we see a minister of the crown actually utilize an important infrastructure project, which that community has relied on and banked on and actually supported a member because they made that commitment, and turn it into a political football. It's ridiculous.

We want to see that stopped. We want to see the government take a serious approach to not only identifying and prioritizing infrastructure projects, but we want to see them take a hard look at how you fund it. You're going to sell off—evidently, you're selling off the majority of Hydro One to be able to fund 3% of your \$13.3-billion annual expenditures. So you're going to—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's not even used for that.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's not even that, I'm hearing. It's not even going to fund 3% of your overall expenditures. But you're going to blow a public asset that provides revenues and has provided revenues to the coffers of the provincial government for over 100 years. You're going to eliminate that forever, in perpetuity, for generations to come, and for what reasons?

I could imagine that today, after the budget passed, there were some corks of champagne bottles being popped down on Bay Street from the financiers and those who understand that they are going to make a massive amount of money on this transaction. In fact—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Wellington-Halton Hills and the education minister are a little loud.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker.

There was a wonderful article in the Toronto Star just this week. Unfortunately, it had to be written by a white-collar criminal, a self-admitted con artist who apparently knows the ins and outs of the game on Bay Street. He identified this as something that potentially could be the biggest con that we've ever seen in the history of this province, something that he identified quite clearly as us being taken to the cleaners on this deal. Why is it that the Premier and the finance minister can't see that? Don't

take my word for it. Take the word of somebody who is actually doing time for similar types of deals.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: He's a senior adviser—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: He sounds like he could fit well within the advisory panel of the Clark report. To make this deal go down, it seems criminal; and I think the people of our communities feel as though it's criminal because they are the stakeholders. They are the majority owners within the package that the Premier is trying to sell us. They say they want to broaden ownership. Well, is there any broader ownership than each and every Ontarian as a stakeholder in Hydro One? No, there is not. There cannot be, and yet we are given no voice in this massive transfer of wealth from the public to the private sector. Who is going to pay the price? We absolutely know who is going to pay the price. It will be ratepayers in our communities who have to struggle with skyrocketing hydro rates.

Speaker, Bill 6, again, is a plan to create a plan. We will see what that plan is, going forward. The government has staked a lot of ground on it. Let's ensure that all stakeholders are duly consulted and a broad segment of the public gets to actually have their voice heard when it comes to prioritizing these infrastructure projects in our communities. Let's take the politics out of it. Unfortunately, a lot of the prescription in this bill is given to regulation, subject to ministerial approval. My confidence level that we're not going to see any more high-speed rail announcements or Maley Drive announcements in a political lens just prior to elections—my confidence is not that great that we won't see that or that this bill will prohibit that.

However, it will allow us to hold the government to account because they have made so much of the infrastructure file and staked so much political ground on it. We will see if they actually are true to their word or able to actually fulfil their promises to the people of Ontario. Unfortunately, right now, Speaker, we are not left with that much confidence. I thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I welcomed the remarks from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the members from Wellington–Halton Hills and Essex. I'm very pleased to rise in the House for the third reading of Bill 6, the proposed Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. Indeed, one of the reasons why I chose to run for a seat in this House was to ensure that we had a government that would continue the momentum of investing in the much-needed infrastructure that this province requires.

At the heart of it, Bill 6 is about applying the expertise we've gained over the past decade as we move forward with the next generation of infrastructure investment. I see infrastructure investment as one of the most direct forms of economic development that a government can engage in. Building modern infrastructure is directly linked to building a competitive economy.

For instance, a 2013 Conference Board of Canada report found that each dollar invested in public infra-

structure in Ontario raises GDP by \$1.14 in the near term. Our own studies show that each dollar invested in infrastructure more than triples our return on investments in the long term. But unfortunately, for too long Ontario has relied on infrastructure that was outdated and deteriorating.

Since 2003, our government has invested nearly \$100 billion on infrastructure, focusing on what makes our communities stronger: assets like hospitals, schools and transportation infrastructure. In the past decade we've built 23 new hospitals, and 650 new schools have opened or are under construction. That is a tremendous record of achievement.

We're currently constructing 11 major hospital projects across the province, and we've expanded or rehabilitated over 9,100 kilometres of highways. That's more than the distance from Toronto to Vancouver and back. Together we've built or repaired over 950 bridges across this province. We've accomplished a lot, but we recognize that there is still much more that needs to be done. That's why our government is investing an unprecedented \$130 billion in infrastructure in the next decade. This is the largest infrastructure investment our province has ever seen.

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Unlike the opposition, who say they support infrastructure but have no concrete plan to fund it and have consistently voted against budget measures that would fund it, the Premier announced our plan to unlock the value of certain public assets to help support investments in transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure projects. Together with other asset optimization strategies, this will provide us with \$5.7 billion; that's about \$2.6 billion more from asset optimization than we had previously assumed. This increase of \$2.6 billion brings our unprecedented investments in Moving Ontario Forward from \$29 billion to \$31.5 billion over the next 10 years. That's going to help communities like Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Hamilton, Mississauga, Brampton, Kitchener–Waterloo, Ottawa and many others.

Just as asset optimization is part of our long-term infrastructure plan, moving forward with Bill 6 is part of the same path forward to ensure Ontario has the infrastructure it needs to promote a modern economy and build a dynamic business climate. At this legislation's core, Bill 6 is about enshrining solid principles for long-term infrastructure planning in Ontario to guide our path forward. I note that the member for Essex spoke about the need for this type of approach.

Under the proposed legislation, the government must prepare a long-term infrastructure plan that covers at least 10 years. Mr. Speaker, the rigour of this process will ensure that the needs of our changing province are reflected in our infrastructure planning.

I'm very proud to say that during the committee process, we've strengthened the legislation by adopting amendments from both stakeholders and the official opposition, though I do wish to note for the record that the third party, the NDP, did not bring forward any amendments.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you for reminding me.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: You're very welcome.

Mr. Speaker, we broadened the definition of infrastructure in this legislation to include social housing. I think that's a very important step forward, and I can only hope that when the federal government decides to invest significantly in infrastructure, they will invest in social housing as well. This will accurately reflect in legislation the importance that we place on the building of social housing as infrastructure. Since 2003, our government has committed over \$4 billion to affordable housing, which is the largest investment of its kind in the province's history. Including social housing in the definition will encourage future governments—and as I said, I dare say the federal government—to take this type of infrastructure investment seriously.

We also amended the legislation to ensure that consideration to accessibility is incorporated when we build infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, today is the 10th anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I cannot think of a better day to remind MPPs and Ontarians collectively that we must constantly think about how we can improve accessibility in the province. This amendment to Bill 6 is one of the many changes we need to make in the coming decade.

One concept that was raised numerous times during public hearings was that of community benefits. I'm very encouraged that all parties agreed to accept an amendment that infrastructure planning and investment should promote social and economic benefits for local communities. As MPPs, we're all focused on improving our constituencies, and this amendment will encourage local benefits from local infrastructure projects. Unlike the assertion that the member from Essex made, in fact, this government is entering into community benefit agreements on various projects throughout the province. We will be using that as a tool in future infrastructure planning to ensure that communities, that young people, that people seeking employment get the full benefit of the infrastructure projects being built in their communities.

In consultation with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, we also accepted an amendment that will allow the government to create regulations requiring municipalities or any other broader public sector entity to develop asset management plans. This builds on the work that we've been doing with municipalities to prioritize infrastructure through asset management planning. Now we will have the ability to standardize asset management planning, which is necessary to realize the full value of this work.

As we move forward on this, we'll continue to consult significantly with municipalities to ensure these regulations are crafted to improve municipalities' ability to deliver on their infrastructure needs. This is not only good planning, it's good business practice and it's nothing less than what the taxpayers of this province would expect from all levels of government.

We also adopted an amendment that recognizes the crucial role that the professional engineers in Ontario

play in implementing the government's infrastructure investments. This amendment creates equal authorities for both professional engineers and architects. And we improved the legislation to promote apprentices. We did this through the committee process. This legislation encourages—I'm tripping over my remarks here, Mr. Speaker. What I meant to say—I wanted to continue on the issue of design professionals.

This legislation encourages the broader use of architects and other design professionals to be used in large-scale infrastructure projects so we might derive further value from the money that we're spending on infrastructure, to improve urban design, landscape design, the resiliency and the durability of these infrastructure projects that we are building.

On the issue of apprentices, we are moving to a plan-based approach. I believe we've now struck the right balance of promoting apprentice training while at the same time taking into consideration the industry's concerns.

Today we have a situation where many young people face great challenges in finding stable, well-paying jobs, and meanwhile there are shortages in many of the skilled technical trades. The skills training and apprenticeship provision in Bill 6 is a smart and strategic way to help close this gap.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker—and, maybe the official opposition will argue, most importantly—we adopted a PC amendment that will consider the use of recycled aggregates for infrastructure projects. Our government understands the economic and environmental benefits for considering recycled aggregates for infrastructure projects, and this amendment will ensure that recycled aggregates are considered as part of infrastructure planning and investment. I do want to thank members of the PC caucus for bringing this forward as a very good submission to the process.

Our government views Bill 6 as a landmark piece of legislation in helping to shape Ontario's future. I encourage all members of the House to support this legislation.

As I said at the outset, one of the key reasons why I decided to run as a member of provincial Parliament is that I saw the damage that was done to my community, to my city, to my region through the lack of infrastructure investment: a transit system that was outdated and underserving the communities; roads, highways, bridges that were falling apart or were not keeping up with demand; schools that were deteriorating; and a lack of health infrastructure for the future. So I ran to support a government that is investing in this. I ran because this is a government that is supporting the people and businesses of Ontario by providing the key infrastructure that's going to ensure that this province is a wonderful place to invest in and to continue to live, work and play in.

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Interjections.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Mr. Speaker, I know that while these truths are self-evident, they are sometimes

painful to some members of the House. But it is no laughing matter to acknowledge that this province, over a number of decades, had a significant infrastructure deficit. Investing in infrastructure now and doing it in an informed, planned and managed way is going to ensure that Ontarians will be able to know that the money that is spent on this is going to deliver the maximum value.

I also believe, and I hope and trust, that with this bill, we'll be able to depoliticize some of the infrastructure decisions that are made in this province so that, in the future, whoever sits on this side of the House will continue to deliver infrastructure for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, May 12, 2015, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

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

Here we go—a vote deferral.

Pursuant to standing order 28, they request that the vote on third reading of Bill 6 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, June 4, 2015.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 2, 2015, on the motion for 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): When we last talked about this bill, Mr. Hatfield from Windsor–Tecumseh had the floor.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, good afternoon. Again, may I say I'm humbled to be able to stand in this House, as one of 107 voices in this Legislature, to have the privilege to speak to this bill.

I spent 35 or 40 minutes speaking to the bill yesterday morning, and by way of a brief summary, just to bring you up to date, a lot of what I had to say then was about inclusionary zoning, and that's a major way that I thought this Bill 73 could be improved. Municipalities that wish to create more affordable housing could use inclusionary zoning as a tool when developers come into

the planning department to apply for new housing developments. You can establish your goals—for the sake of argument, say, 10%. If you want to build a 100-unit development, you might have to set aside 10 units and make them available to qualified people who need affordable housing, from an established waiting list.

We can debate whether 10% is too high or too low, but I believe the principle is sound on inclusionary zoning and it's something we should all take a look at. As we all know, there are just too many people in Ontario looking for safe and affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning could solve some of that problem—not all of it, Speaker. There are so many other things out there. But this bill would really be something to brag about, really something to hold up to the rest of the country, if, finally, the government did more than just listen to the argument on inclusionary zoning and actually added something in here to address the problem of the lack of housing.

There's a crisis in affordable housing, and it's something we should be addressing. It's only going to get worse. The municipal housing stock across the province is really starting to crumble. No matter where you go, municipalities that provide subsidized housing and rent-gear-to-income housing—there hasn't been a lot of money spent on maintaining these properties in recent years, and private landlords certainly aren't rushing forward to build new housing stock for those who need it the most. They say that they would if they had more government partners with them on various schemes. We could create some more housing stock for people who need affordable housing and rent-gear-to-income housing, but private developers need incentives. They can't do it on their own. I think that if you worked it the right way, inclusionary zoning is one of the incentives that could be used to address this problem.

I also spent a good deal of my time yesterday outlining the need for real reform at the Ontario Municipal Board. I know they'll be looking at it elsewhere, but I still think we could have seen more by way of OMB reform within this bill, because I believe you can't fix planning problems in Ontario until you harness the extraordinary powers of the Ontario Municipal Board.

There are other aspects of Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, that we should be talking about this afternoon. As I said yesterday, there are a number of parts of this bill that are worth saying some nice things about, and I'll do that at some point this afternoon.

It's easy to be critical. I guess that's why they call us critics. If you're the critic of a portfolio held by a minister, you're expected, at some point, to stand up and criticize what's on the table. On the other hand, it's easy to say good things. I believe that if there are good things in a proposed bill, you should highlight those as well, and I will be doing that. It's easy to state that you agree with something, just as it is easy to say, "I disagree."

Speaker, I mentioned to you that before becoming a New Democrat MPP, I was a member of city council in Windsor. One of the first committees I signed up for, as a

councillor, was the planning advisory committee. I was very proud to serve for seven years on the PAC for the city of Windsor. I wanted to do that, because I always thought it was one of the most important committees that any municipality can have.

Planning is really sneaking a peek into the future of your community. It's a snapshot of what is to come, or it offers an idea of what could be possible. Don't get me wrong: I know that we've all believed in projects that never developed and never got off the planning pages. They looked good on paper.

I remember that years ago—Bill Davis was Premier; I think his friend was Gerhard Moog. They brought forth a proposal. You'll appreciate this, member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore: It looked almost identical to Toronto city hall; you know, the dome and the towers. That was to be the new Holiday Inn on Windsor's waterfront. We accepted, of course; the city of Windsor at the time did. But instead of that, we ended up with the Plywood Palace, a basic box. It stood there for many years until it burnt down. But what was accepted by the municipality later led the municipality to put in a lot of changes to make sure that in the future we would get what we were promised. At the time, we were promised this great vision, and we ended up with the Plywood Palace, as I say.

I'm still waiting for some pretty imaginary proposals that were presented to city council. Even back when I was a reporter covering city hall and covering planning council advisory committee meetings, you would see these plans on paper and say, "Wow. Wouldn't that be good?" But just because they were accepted didn't mean they were going to be developed and built. Life gets in the way: A funder drops out, for some reason; priorities change. But, at least at the planning stage, there are sets of rules and guidelines, standards, statements that establish the parameters of what sort of proposal might fit into or onto a certain parcel of land.

1700

The way I see planners, I see them as the visionaries. They have the imagination to see what most of us can't. For them, it's more like a game of chess as opposed to us playing checkers.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I think they make it up.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: They make it up? You're an engineer; don't tell me that.

Planners know what amenities it will take to service a plot of land, how the traffic will flow, where the sidewalks should go, how much parkland will be needed, for example, what land should be set aside for school purposes, where the bus stop should go, will there be room for commercial and industrial zones and how close they should be to residential areas. Once those plans are set in place, they should be set in stone. This bill would establish criteria to delay challenges to official plans and policy statements, and I'll speak to that a little bit later on as well.

I will mention at this point that in Windsor we always made sure that non-elected representatives sat on the

planning advisory committee. For many years, that was the way we did our business, and that's part of this bill, that a non-elected member of the public and administration would sit on a municipal planning advisory committee. In fact, in Windsor our committee was chaired for many years by a non-elected person. Now, this changed somewhat when we adopted a new governance system and created more standing committees of council, but for me the principle was sound then and it's sound today, that non-elected reps should be included on planning committees. This bill will see that this happens in all communities on a go-forward basis—of course, if it's adopted and accepted.

If we turn our attention to the section requiring a parks plan and the cash-in-lieu provisions of parkland dedication, no one seriously questions—I would hope no one seriously questions—the need for parkland in urban settings. We need our green space. We need our trees. We need our playgrounds. We need our dog parks. For most people, it's just a basic quality-of-life thing. Official plans speak to this issue. And don't forget, Speaker, developers are used to paying the price. No matter where they build, if they don't have the land to develop parkland as part of their proposal, they're used to and are required to put up cash in lieu of dedicating certain land for parkland; nothing new there. The money is supposed to go into a reserve account, and it's supposed to be used to create parkland, hopefully nearby. That's how it's supposed to work. It doesn't always, apparently, work out that way.

Late last year, there was a bit of an exposé in Toronto on the Toronto situation. Those who write for a quarterly magazine and an online blog called Spacing blew the whistle on Toronto's cash-in-lieu reserve fund. Sure, the money is collected from the developers, but for the most part, it just sits there earning interest. Now here's an excerpt from that Spacing article I read. The quote is:

"The city likes to boast about its open spaces, citing how its 1,600 parks and 600 km of trails encompasses 8,000 ha, or 13% of Toronto's area. As every park entrance sign duly notes, Toronto is 'a city within a park.'

"Yet it's become apparent that there simply aren't enough parks within the city, or at least certain parts of the city. In areas of high growth, and the dense older neighbourhoods that abut them, the city of Toronto has largely failed to create new networks of parks and substantial public open spaces sufficient to accommodate the needs of tens of thousands of new apartment dwellers."

In this Spacing article, written by John Lorinc and Alex Steep, it was revealed that Toronto's parkland acquisitions and development reserve fund stood at more than \$248 million. Don't get me wrong, Speaker; the city is spending some of that money, but because the land is so expensive in the areas where green space is needed the most, the parks get developed in other areas where the land is less expensive.

This Spacing article also suggested that some people in the planning areas, in planning departments at city

hall, warned against creating new parks because they couldn't afford to maintain what they already had. I think that's an issue that—I know I ran into that when I served as chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. We had a parkland land acquisition reserve fund, and yet some members didn't want to spend it because we were having trouble maintaining what we had. There wasn't always enough money to fix the boardwalks in certain parks or along the waterfronts or in our green water spaces. Some members, rightfully so, questioned why we would be buying more waterfront property to maintain if we couldn't afford to maintain the conservation areas that we already had.

So in the defence of those who say, "Why dedicate more parkland when you can't look after what you already have?"—I'm sure they would point out that, for example, an acre of land in downtown Toronto goes for, what, somewhere between \$30 million and \$60 million? And, you know, to develop that—or just to find it, first of all; there's not a lot of land out there for parkland these days.

If the money isn't being used, the flip side of that coin is that instead of the cash in lieu, then perhaps municipalities should just say to the developer, "We're going to force you to acquire more land on your own and create this parkland on your own dime," instead of paying the city so many cents on the dollar for not providing it.

Let me say some nice things about Bill 73 for a moment. Now, I'll say off the top, I like the bill, I'll be supporting it, but I do think it needs improvement. For example, it removes the arbitrary 10% discount that must be applied to transit-related growth, the growth costs when calculating development fees. It allows you to prescribe services where costs could be estimated based on future plans and not past policy. It pulls back the drapes, as we just talked about, on how the money collected in lieu of parkland is saved and spent; it makes that more transparent.

Like I say, I'm not convinced with the aspect I'm not happy with at all—in one part of the bill, it reduces the parkland dedication payments from a rate of one hectare for every 300 residents to one for every 500. That weakens the intent, as far as I'm concerned.

I referenced yesterday, for those that were here, the OMB's weird ruling in Richmond Hill. This falls into that category, as far as I'm concerned. To refresh your memory, Speaker, the OMB overruled Richmond Hill's elected council. They wanted developers to provide or pay cash in lieu of parkland when new developments were proposed. We all know we need the green space, as I've mentioned, and more of it, but the OMB ruled that there should be a cap on what a developer has to provide.

I used the example of a cap working something like this. If you can, in your mind, just get a picture of a bit of green space, a small grassy park. If you can now picture 75 families having a picnic on this small property, and now, in your mind, get that picture, not of 75 families, but of 750 families on that same—

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, a lot of them would still have moustaches, the member from Nipissing is suggesting. Maybe in North Bay they don't have as many. I don't know. But if you have 750 families squeezing out the 75, you're going to be elbow to elbow; you're going to be standing on each other's heads. To me—and I think I'm a pretty reasonable kind of guy—the OMB vision of a cap on green space that should be provided, as opposed to what the town's planners and councillors had in mind, I just don't think makes a lot of sense.

1710

I said I'm going to say some good things about the bill, and I will.

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, I've been saying it in between the lines, as well. I don't want to wake too many of you up. I've got to keep this going for another seven and a half minutes.

The bill does delay appeals to official plans and zoning bylaws, and it does away with global appeals of new official plans. Developers can appeal a specific section but not the entire plan. Municipalities will have more powers to protect what are called "employment areas." It makes planning decisions more transparent by making approval authorities explain how written or oral submissions affected their final decision. It makes single- and upper-tier municipalities establish a planning advisory committee, which we talked about. And as I said, it insists that at least one member of those committees not be an elected or paid municipal official.

Currently, provincial policy statements are updated every five years; this bill will change that to 10. Just like new official plans, they'll be good for 10 years and updated every five years thereafter.

Minister, like I said, there are some good points, and I can support the bill, but I think a lot of us on this side of the House would really like to see it improved in other areas, especially around the themes of real OMB reform and inclusionary zoning. I can't believe that your Toronto-area members haven't lobbied you personally for better language around inclusionary zoning. They'll be the ones feeling the wrath of the voters because of the crisis that we know currently exists in Toronto when it comes to affordable housing.

Minister, allow me to thank you once again for supporting the private member's bill brought by the member for Essex, Mr. Natyshak, regarding the improvements to the Bruce Crozier highway. In my opinion, you, sir, have earned a ton of goodwill with your vote, as far as I'm concerned.

I know you've got a whole bunch on your plate these days. You have your mandate letter. You're reviewing plans on the greenbelt, the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara escarpment, and I sincerely hope that we won't see much in the way of any degradation, any deterioration of land set aside and protected from future development, when those plans go through their review process. I think the farmland has to be protected. The green space has to be protected. I just hope, Minister, that the OMB

doesn't get involved and overrule all the good intentions of what most of us want to protect when it comes to those plans.

I know the city of Toronto has some concerns about the bill. I won't go into all of them. For example, we talk about the planning process and having a non-elected member on the planning advisory committee. As I understand it, in Toronto they have a much more mature, if you will, planning process, and they are, in their opinion, much more advanced than what is being proposed in the bill. I think they are asking for a clause allowing for exceptions to municipalities which can prove to the minister that his intent in some of these proposals has already been met, are being met in certain circumstances.

And in some of Ontario's municipalities, they're doing much more than what is laid out in here, and that shouldn't be held against them.

Yesterday, the member from Oxford, the critic for the official opposition, spoke about my friend Dave Canfield, the mayor of Kenora. Ernie reminded us that the mayor's office in Kenora is actually closer to the city of Calgary than it is to the city of Toronto, so when those that call these types of bills a cookie-cutter bill that we all have to come out of in the same kind of shape—there are other parts of the province. Toronto has Toronto's issues, but other parts of the province have different issues, different restrictions, different ways of doing business that seem to be working, but if you come out with exceptions to some rule, that will cause problems for some.

I know that I talked to my friends at AMO and we talked about the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund—since we're talking about strengthening municipalities. They were hoping that there wouldn't be as much of a download, as much of a cutback in that fund, and I know the original cut has been somewhat diminished; it's not as bad as it could have been, and I know that they're very appreciative of that. But, again, municipalities are struggling. Even in my community of Windsor, when a factory closes down or a plant shuts down and they have this empty space—and it happens in the northern communities as well in logging mills and so on, when most of the plant is not being used or all of the plant is shut down. MPAC says, "Okay, now the value of the assessment on that property, that could be going to pay for the region's tax base"—all of a sudden it's negligence. When you lose, in a small community, \$1 million or \$2 million in an assessment, you're really struggling to pay the bills and really struggling to keep on providing the services that we've all come to expect.

Municipalities are struggling, Minister—I know you're well aware of that—and we all know money is tight, not only in the province but with our municipal partners as well. Yesterday I mentioned the crumbling housing stock where Mayor John Tory is looking for \$1.5 billion from federal and provincial partners. We know that hundreds of thousands of people are on the waiting lists for subsidized housing, let alone the people who are in there now.

I know, Minister, you and I have talked about—I think it was in Medicine Hat, Alberta, they're getting rid of the

homelessness problem. Things happen in the rest of the country that we can look at here which would help with affordable housing as well. It takes money. I know sometimes it's tough to get cabinet colleagues on the same page, no matter the portfolio.

Just let me mention the private member's bill, Bill 39, that the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore has on the table. A lot of that is very good, around inclusionary zoning, and I don't know why that wasn't included in this bill because it is a good bill. It should be supported, and if it was woven into this, this would be a great bill.

I think I have pretty well wrapped up my time and I do have some more stuff I would like to put on the table, but I just want to thank you for your time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I am not going to comment much on my good friend from Windsor–Tecumseh because I think he gets what this bill is trying to do and I think, as he has indicated, he agrees with a lot of the stuff that we are doing. As we pass this and move it down the road to committee, there will be some amendments, probably, and hopefully we could take some kind of a balanced approach.

What I want to do, Speaker, though, is clear the air on something that the member from Oxford, during his debate yesterday, totally misrepresented that is in the bill. I know the member from Windsor–Tecumseh touched a little bit on it, and that's the part where we're taking away some responsibilities from the municipalities. Quite the contrary: We are giving the municipalities more responsibility, more control. One is by certainly increasing the review of our official plan from five to 10 years, but the fact of amending that official plan—the member from Oxford yesterday said that municipalities would not be able to touch it for two years, and everybody else won't be able to touch it. Frankly, municipalities and their elected councils are the only ones that will be able to make any amendments or suggest any amendments. So I think it's important to make sure that while we might not agree on certain things let's at least talk about the facts. The facts are black and white: If this bill is passed, then the municipalities have that opportunity.

1720

There has been a lot of consultation since early last fall to earlier on this year, and municipalities had a huge input. AMO had a huge input. I'm sure, at the end of the day, we'll come up with something that will fit what it's supposed to do. I look forward to the passage of Bill 73.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The member from Windsor–Tecumseh spoke about the cookie-cutter bill, and the member from Oxford did indeed talk about communities in northern Ontario, many of which are closer to Winnipeg and Calgary than they are to Toronto. Here's what happens when you have people in Toronto making bills that are allegedly a one-size-fits-all: You've got very distinct problems in Toronto and the greater Toronto

area, and you've got very distinct problems both in northeastern Ontario and in northwestern Ontario.

I remember sitting in the mayor's chair in North Bay when Bill 26 crossed. It was an act that took away the ability to build on a wetland. Now, certainly in Toronto and the GTA, the wetlands are few and far between, and we can understand the value of that. We understand in the north, especially, how water is filtered through our wetlands. But if you come to northern Ontario, if you take even one flight over northern Ontario, you will see that there is only rock or wetland. That's all that's there, and you build your cities around them.

You used to be able to—a municipality was able to build on a wetland if it created an equal-sized wetland elsewhere. While I was mayor, we accumulated over 100 acres of wetland and built this most beautiful conservation area with boardwalks so people could walk through, and then we built an industrial park in a wetland. As businesses came, they built their business. Well, Bill 26 said, "Right across Ontario now, no more building on a wetland, even if you replace it." We have a \$40-million industrial park, fully serviced, that cannot be built on. That's why we ask for such particular attention to be paid to the north.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That was the Liberals—the Liberals.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That was the Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. I see the member from Renfrew is wandering again.

Ms. Catherine Fife: He's wandering in the right direction, though.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes.

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I just want to commend the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. He always brings his experience to the debate. But Bill 73, Smart Growth for our Communities Act, is a missed opportunity once again to truly reform the Ontario Municipal Board. What we've seen is that there are still massive parts that are missing. After a year and a half of consultation, you've come back to the Legislature with another flawed piece of legislation. As I said, it's a missed opportunity.

The bill ignores solutions to affordable housing, such as inclusionary zoning. We know the value of inclusionary zoning. We have a huge housing crisis in the province of Ontario. Build it into the act.

This piece of legislation doesn't even support Bill 39 from the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore—sometimes we feel we're more supportive of your private member's bill than your own government.

In Kitchener–Waterloo and Waterloo region, we have been feeling the pain of the Ontario Municipal Board now for five years. You will remember, of course, that we're a good place to grow; we've been highlighted for intensification. The 10 years of consultation—and we came out with this great plan. The developers took us to the Ontario Municipal Board. They found against us. They increased it—their finding—by 1,000 hectares. For five years, we just found out, it cost \$1.7 million that the

region had to spend to fight that decision. Five years: Think of the economic drag in the region, from that perspective. They finally settled. It was out of court. They settled at 455 hectares, so they split the difference, essentially.

This is not democracy. An unelected, undemocratic board can override a municipality. It is not in the best interests of the people of the region. It's not in the best interests of the people of the province. Bill 73 misses the mark entirely on addressing this serious issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to also commend the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I think the fact he has an extensive municipal background has helped him grasp the direction of this bill.

I share his passionate concern for social housing. We're going through a long-term housing policy as well as the expert panel. The member knows that; we've chatted about that.

I know the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore was quite supportive of Bill 73. He's spoken to that. Green space shouldn't just be around cities; it should be through cities. Part of our provision, the member opposite will know, is to hold municipalities to account around how they collect—and they'll have to report as to what parkland and green space they have invested in. I think that's really good.

You mentioned the coordinated review. I'm quite excited to have attracted the Honourable David Crombie—an institution and an inspiration. I met with him as recently as this morning to talk about some of the work that he's doing, and he's very, very excited. I also met with a group called Neptis. You may know them as well. They had a good report comparing Vancouver's planning to Toronto's planning.

I want to just say that, with respect to inclusionary zoning, we've made it very clear to the member from Parkdale that if that's to come about, it would come about as a result of the housing review that we're doing. So we're looking seriously at that.

As for the OMB, there would be a separate review. CMHC used to have a form of inclusive zoning. They called it the limited dividend building. We're also looking at that concept as well. That was back when we had a federal partner. It would be nice to have that as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh has two minutes.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you to the members for Northumberland–Quinte West, Nipissing, Kitchener–Waterloo and, of course, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

When we talk about green space, we talk about partners. I hearken back to the fight we had, as members of city council in Windsor, with the provincial Liberal government over the Herb Gray Parkway. What was presented to us initially was, I think, six lanes in each direction, flat highway, and it was just going to look like what we see in Toronto, the 401 area. We dug in our heels: no. We

said, “We’re not going to accept it. This is the gateway to Canada, if you’re coming in from Michigan, or it’s the last vision you’ll have when you leave here on your way across the border. We want something better.”

We hired world experts in traffic flow, in tunnelling and parkland, and we ended up with something we can all be proud of in this province—it was more expensive, yes—the Herb Gray Parkway. It did have its problems; I won’t get into “girdergate” or anything like that. But at the end of the day—and we’re still waiting for the bridge to be built across the border—we are going to have a magnificent parkland over top of this highway, and the tunnelling and all the connecting trails and links. It’s going to be something we can all be proud of in Ontario, but it took a fight to convince the government that, indeed, it was worth it.

At the end of the day, you might spend a bit more money upfront, but it is something that people will talk about and people will remember. Of course, it might also set some sort of a precedent and we may have to build more of these in other parts of the province. I say, “Bring it on,” because it’s well worth it.

Actually, Minister, I think that highway could be open in a matter of weeks, if not days, from what I’m hearing. We’re that close to it. A little overdue—four or five months—but it will be open pretty soon.

Thank you for your time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I’ll be sharing my time with the members from Beaches–East York, Mississauga–Streetsville and Etobicoke Centre.

I’m very pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 73. As I heard this afternoon the eloquent words from the member opposite about the proposed legislation, I am very pleased, as a Toronto urban member of this House—why we need to have this proposed legislation.

As we heard this afternoon, the proposed legislation’s changes aim to give municipalities more opportunity to fund the growth-related infrastructure like transit and waste diversion. It will also address the issue of development charges like section 37, particularly density bonuses and parkland dedication systems. On a number of occasions in this chamber, we’ve heard from our colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who spoke passionately about the lack of parkland in his riding and how important it is for the children and the people in his riding.

1730

The proposed Bill 73 has a number of pieces that I think all of us in this chamber would agree on. First of all, it has been, I believe, since the mid-1990s that this Legislature last reviewed the development charge. It’s almost over 20 years since we did that review, and it’s overdue that we do this kind of review.

But the other big part of this proposed legislation is dealing with the issue of growth. Across the city of Toronto and across the province, we see growth everywhere when it comes to infrastructure. The proposed legislation,

if passed, will remove the mandatory 10% discount required when levying a charge for transit services; I believe everybody in this House would agree with me that it is a good thing. It will create an authority to identify services for which an alternative service level calculation would replace the historic 10-year average service level, and it will create an authority to identify ineligible services exclusively through regulation.

The other piece we constantly hear concerns about in this chamber is about enhancing transparency and accountability. If passed, this legislation would require municipalities to reflect capital projects funded through development charges in a more detailed report. The other piece is, it will require development charges to link to municipal asset management planning.

I hear all the time with regard to transparency, “What did they do with the development charges? Where did the money go?” More importantly, this particular legislation will restrict payment outside of 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.

Furthermore, it will create an authority for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to investigate a municipality in relation to compliance with the act. Finally, this authority will allow the minister to investigate but also require the municipality to cover the costs of this compliance investigation. I think those extra teeth, as we often say, will force the municipality to be accountable and to be transparent, and they know the consequences if they’re not in compliance. At the end of the day, I’m sure no municipality wants to pay for that investigation.

At the end of the day, I believe that we’ve heard very clearly that every member of the House will support little bits and pieces of this proposed legislation, Bill 73. I am sure that every member of this chamber would agree that, as we go to committee and more public hearings on Bill 73, we are going to get improvement of the proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to stop. I’m going to let my colleague from Beaches–East York continue the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Taras Natyshak): The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. What an honour to be able to address this House with you in the chair today. It’s a very novel experience for me, and I’m delighted to have you there.

Let me start off by saying that I’m absolutely delighted for this chance to speak to Bill 73. I’ve known the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for many, many years in the capacity of many different portfolios. I know you to be extremely well-researched and thoughtful, and you put your all—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Some more.

Mr. Arthur Potts: —some more, yes—into every portfolio.

My neighbour here, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, says we’ll go to the committee, we’ll

have amendments, and we'll finally get it right. I have a lot more praise for this bill than I think the member next to me did, because yes, there may be an amendment or two, but I know that you put a lot of thoughtful work into getting this bill right where it is right now and, of course, looking for other ways we might improve it here and there—little bits and pieces. But congratulations for bringing forward a tremendous bill which will help so much in planning in Ontario.

What I'm particularly interested in speaking to is this whole section 37 opportunity. As the member from Scarborough–Agincourt was saying, what you see so often in the city of Toronto, with the section 37 monies, is that it's always sort of left in a vacuum about where they actually ended up going.

In my neighbourhood, we've got a beautiful development at Dundas and Carlaw going up—Streetcar—where their section 37 money is going to a fantastic theatre, conditional on them getting additional extra funding for that development to make it whole. If that funding doesn't come up, you always wonder: Then what happens to that section 37 money?

What we know is going to happen with this bill is, it will be absolutely crystal clear, on a project-by-project basis, and on some level of an annual reporting at the municipal level, that all the section 37 monies that are collected are being used in the way that was intended and that was projected, so that there is an accountability to it.

I think it speaks so much to how our party, this government, does go down this route to try to clarify, to bring accountability and oversight into decision-making, through all the boards and agencies that it operates within, and the municipalities, which are essentially creatures of the province.

We go to the Ontario Municipal Board questions. The member from Windsor–Tecumseh talked about the private member's bill of my colleague over here from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. The question came up: Why wasn't this included as part of it?

Of course, as was very clearly said by the minister, that's part of a continuing review, which is coming forward. I'm sure, and I'm positive, that the very thoughtful insights that the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore has put into his thinking around the OMB, from his considerable experience at city hall, and as a trained architect and planner—no doubt, his considerable experience will be involved in populating what the right language and what the right opportunities are, with the Ontario Municipal Board.

I remember, when we spoke to the member's private member's bill, Bill 39, that there was a very interesting exchange I had with the member from Oxford. In my community, it's so important that we rein in how the Ontario Municipal Board works, because it tends to go overboard in reversing and rejecting plans that the neighbours and the citizens have put together with the municipality, whereas, in his view—he spoke at length about how they need the Ontario Municipal Board in order to correct misbegotten plans at the municipal level.

There is almost a rural-urban split on how people perceive it. I'm confident that we'll find the capacity to make sure we get the rules right, so that both rural and urban opportunities will be looked after.

In the Beach, in Beaches–East York, I have sort of two different worlds: that which is south of Danforth, and that which is north of Danforth.

South of Danforth, and you learn all through the election—it's a beautiful community. They're extraordinarily well organized, and they almost universally are organized around opposition to development. Or, maybe to put it more succinctly, they're there to try to make sure development is right and it fits into the character of the neighbourhood.

We have a group that we call the Greater Beach Neighbourhood Association, which is really an amalgam of 14 or 16 different residential associations in the south end, at Queen Street or at Kingston Road, Gerrard Street, and south of Danforth, where those communities often react to a development. They gather and they organize so that they can take matters to the OMB, to make sure they get the planning right.

I believe this bill will help, because you'll have planning advisory committees which will go to making sure that the secondary plans and the official plans, as they affect these individual neighbourhoods, are well thought out, so that when they go to the board, there won't be an opportunity to overturn them, because they've got them right.

We'll also have local appeal bodies, so that many matters—within the Planning Act, we can't change how the OMB operates, but we can change the kinds of things that it has oversight over. That's what I think we're doing—and doing very effectively—with this bill, so that local municipalities will have an appeal body, so that for some matters coming out of the committee of adjustment, it's not necessary to go to the OMB. We can look at and deal with them where they are, at the local appeal level.

With that, Speaker, I'd like to turn over the time to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Taras Natyshak): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I'd like to begin with just a little anecdote. A number of years ago, I was at a seminar in the United States, and it was being conducted by a transit guru who had planned transit systems all over Asia and in parts of the United States, and he was talking about the preconditions necessary to effectively and economically, and in a timely manner, deliver transit projects on budget and on time. He said you can summarize these principles in three words: "Density is everything." Density is something that stems from a good, well-supported municipal plan. One of the things that the province won an award for, almost 10 years ago, was in fact its own plan for Ontario. In this vein, I'm looking at some of the clauses that are proposed here in Bill 73.

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Very clearly, as a municipality develops and tries to implement things within that award-winning plan, which is called Places to Grow, one of the things that the GTA

will do—which are very clear, if you have travelled in Europe or in Asia—is to densify. As soon as you propose densification, one of the things that you know at present is that you're likely to run into an appeal to every conceivable board.

Just to resolve some of these disputes—I'm just going to quickly run over a few of the measures that Bill 73 proposes. For example—and this may seem self-evident, but it isn't the case now: Require appellants to provide clearer reasons for appeals. At the moment, you can take a municipality's official plan and appeal it, really, without any basis, and you can take it one or two levels and then have your appeal dismissed and dismissed. All you do is basically say to the municipality, "You may get what you want, but we are going to be able to slow this thing down." But if what you need is that density, to be able to build the kind of community that's going to be a sustainable one, you're hoping to yourself, "Would the province please give us the tools to ensure that people can't appeal our municipal plan for reasons that are either meaningless or frivolous?" That's one of the things that this plan does.

It also removes the ability for appellants to appeal an entire new official plan. If you're a municipality, one of the things that you've asked the province of Ontario is, "Can we have some sort of autonomy in choosing what developments happen within our borders?" There's a series of checks and balances in doing development in the province of Ontario, but once we've achieved that compromise, one of the things this does is it says to people who wish to appeal it, "You can't appeal the whole thing. You have to tell us what is in there that you don't like, and you've got to show that you've got grounds for an appeal."

Hopefully, this should take some of the frivolous and vexatious cases away from the Ontario Municipal Board and from other forms of appeal, and also be able to resolve them and allow a city not merely to have control over development within its borders but to be able to get on with the job in a timely manner.

It also provides enhanced opportunities for alternative dispute resolution. What that means, in very practical terms, is, does this actually have to go before an adjudicatory body? Must it go to a judge, a tribunal, the Ontario Municipal Board or anything equivalent? Is there a way that the parties can get together and, in the presence of an arbitrator, a mediator or whatever, come to a conclusion that this particular dispute either does or doesn't have basis, and be able, in a cost-effective and a timely manner, to resolve it?

If you're sitting on a municipal council, you really want to read this bill, because there are a lot of things that you're going to be looking at and saying, "Thank heavens. We've been asking for this for a long time."

Bill 73 is an important piece of legislation. I look forward to it getting speedy passage.

I thank the Chair for his time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm really pleased to be able to speak to this bill. I appreciate the comments being made by my colleagues as well as the members opposite.

My community, Etobicoke Centre, is a suburban community. We have buses in our community, but we don't have mass transit. Most people rely on cars to move around. It's a beautiful community. We have a number of developments that have recently been proposed for our community that would really shape or affect the communities to which they've been proposed. Developments in a community like Etobicoke Centre are something that have to be looked at very, very carefully because the community is a community that's established and people enjoy a certain way of life. People have moved to that community because they value the quality of life in that community, and when developments get proposed, that can be very impactful on the local community and the quality of life.

When I think about some of the developments that have recently been proposed in our community, I think about Humbertown plaza, which some of you may be familiar with, around Dundas and Royal York, where a developer applied to build a large condominium and retail complex. The Humber Valley Village Residents' Association very effectively raised money, brought forward and advocated on behalf of the community and was able to negotiate a reduced development with the developer.

I think about what's happening now in Markland Wood, which is in the southwestern part of my riding, where a development has been proposed, and many of the residents are very concerned.

I know that I've met with members of the Glen Agar Residents Association. That's a group of residents who have come together because they're concerned about a development that is in the initial planning stages in that community.

These are three parts of my community that represent thousands and tens of thousands of people, and residents' associations have advocated on behalf of those communities because they're concerned about the impact on the community of these developments.

If there's one thing that I've learned from going through this process and working with the various organizations and communities that I've talked about, it is that the communities have a very important role to play, or should have an important role to play, in how their communities get developed. When applications get filed for development, particularly in an established community, those communities, those residents, those community associations who speak for the residents and advocate for the residents, can play a part in that planning process and can play a part to be able to respond to what's been proposed.

I know there are a number of components to this bill, but the one that I'm particularly interested in and want to speak to today is the role that communities will be able to play in the development process and this element that I think the ministry refers to as "enhancing citizen engagement"; for example, requiring that municipalities and

approval authorities explain how public input affected their planning decision. It's one thing to have a meeting, to listen and then make a decision; it's another thing to link that input with the decision and help residents understand that. That's really requiring, in my mind, accountability to the residents. I think that's a really good thing and an important thing.

Require that municipal official plans include locally designed public consultation policies: It's not enough to say we consulted. You have to have a policy and an approach. Again, this requires accountability to the residents to be able to say, "Here's how we're going to consult with you." I think that's important.

Increasing the use of planning advisory committees and ensuring citizen membership on these committees: I think that's another important mechanism through which communities can have input into the planning process.

I started my remarks by talking about how developments can impact a community. I gave three examples in my community of Etobicoke Centre. Like I said, if there's one thing I learned, it's that communities must have a voice and a meaningful role in making sure that these developments are handled responsibly and that the communities can maintain the quality of life that they've become accustomed to.

These changes are particularly interesting, and I think as we look forward to the consultations around the OMB and some of the reforms that may potentially be proposed there, it's really exciting for a community like Etobicoke Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I wanted to thank the member, but I guess it would be members for their speeches today on Bill 73, because the government tends not to put a speaker up for the whole time; they just share it.

I've only got a couple of minutes. I'm looking forward to the time after the House rises for the summer recess; we'll have a chance to speak to this in a more complete way in the fall. But it would be nice if, during the summer, the government would actually go out and do some consultation on this, because they brought in the legislation without the consultation.

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Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Wrong.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Now, what we really need to hear from the people—we need to hear from the people all across Ontario. This is a bill that affects everybody. It's not a narrow bill; it's a very broad bill. If you look at the number of things they're changing in the act, it's quite substantial. I think that it would behoove the government to get a little more feedback from the people, because I know there's nobody in my riding who was talked to about this bill. AMO has yet to really make a decision on how they feel about this bill.

So where was the consultation? I heard the member from Northumberland–Quinte West rattling in the background, saying there was lots of consultation. We'd like to know where it was. Was there any in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I say to my friend Lou? He would

have to say back to me, "No, there was not." For the past 12 years, municipalities have spoken over and over again about how changes that this Liberal government has made have not been in concert with consultations with the municipalities.

I would have much preferred a broad consultative process with municipalities to work on a bill that—we understand there need to be changes to the Planning Act, but it can't always be a top-down kind of thing. Sometimes, it just makes more sense to hear from the people first and then put together a bill that everyone can be happy with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think our fundamental disappointment with Bill 73 is that the bill still does not sufficiently protect municipalities from needless appeals to the OMB. As I mentioned in my previous hit, Waterloo region has gone through five years of fighting an unelected, undemocratic board that overruled the municipality in their planning process.

I'm channeling a little bit of Rosario Marchese today, because he wrote an op-ed in response when this review was first started. He said, "Here's what makes the OMB so unique: While the OMB does have adjudicative powers, like a court of appeal, it also has policy-making powers, like a government ministry. This is profoundly undemocratic." He would say probably—

Interjection: God bless.

Ms. Catherine Fife:—"God bless" at the bottom of that.

Courts cannot create policy, but the OMB can, and it does. Then communities have to react to that policy creation. "The OMB is not a court, a Legislature or a ministry. It is a fourth branch of government, unelected and accountable to no one." Those are the words of Mr. Marchese. Of course, we agree with him. What a missed opportunity to have Bill 73 address this.

In Waterloo region, we spent five years fighting the Ontario Municipal Board's decision, which found in favour of the developers. They added 1,000 additional hectares on a 10-year consultative process which conformed to the provincial policy of good Places to Grow.

The Waterloo region government and municipalities, duly elected, were following the leadership and the guidance and the legislation that has caused us to actually plan for intensification, which is the smart thing to do. The OMB overruled that, and then we had to spend \$1.7 million fighting that. Where did that money go? Well, \$640,000 went to appeals and \$625,000 went to the legal and expert witnesses. The lawyers did very well.

What a missed opportunity that this legislation does not address this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to respond to the comments by my colleagues from Beaches–East York, Mississauga–Streetsville and Etobicoke Centre on Bill 73, which will, if passed, amend the Planning Act.

One of the areas, as Minister of Education, that I'm particularly interested in is the section on increasing municipal transparency, which would require more detailed reporting from municipalities about parkland fees which they've collected. In particular, it would change the parkland dedication rate for cash in lieu and try to incent the actual acquisition of parkland, and it would require more municipalities to prepare park plans in consultation with school boards and the public to facilitate planning for parkland green space and park facilities.

So let me put that in English, because it's not at all clear what that means. In my municipality, in Guelph, in my hometown, the two school boards and the municipality actually do quite a good job of working together on planning issues, because the municipality, when a new subdivision is being planned, actually has the authority to ask for some of the land to be dedicated to parkland. The two boards and the municipality will often work together to have some land dedicated for parkland and then the two neighbourhood school sites co-located with the parkland, which means that in the long haul everybody can use the parkland. There's a good parkland plan for that.

But that doesn't happen in every municipality. In lots of municipalities, the municipality just takes some cash from the developer. They don't create parkland, and there's a bit of a mess in the long haul when all of a sudden you've got development after development after development and no parkland. This will change that.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It looks like the minister had a drive-by there.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always a pleasure to rise, especially when we talk about the Planning Act and opening it up, because there's no question that the Planning Act causes a number of issues, especially in rural Ontario. I'll talk just for a second about the issue that the Minister of Education brought up, and that was parkland. When you're dealing with small subdivisions, and we're talking 10, 15 lots, it doesn't make sense—you know, parks in a rural area are done generally by area. We don't have the benefit of the large subdivisions.

So sometimes it may have to be looked at, because I know there are some terms around trying to quantify what the cash transfer should be or whether it's a finished lot or unserviced land that should be transferred over. But the basis is, we like to create regional parks that would fit all the small, little subdivisions in one area, because that's the only thing that makes sense in rural Ontario.

I think it's a good point. It has to be addressed and clarified because, I know from our side, there's a lot of confusion. Developers aren't happy, municipalities aren't happy, and in the end, it wastes a lot of time. But for the most part, I always saw the OMB as a necessity, something that is in a way a kind of sober second thought. It made sure that councils were following the regulations. It takes some of the political side out of it. Especially

maybe in some of the smaller councils, it can be a little bit of, "Well, it's Joe down the street. But Harry up the road is a little bit different," and that's not right.

So I think we want to make sure that that opportunity is there. There's no doubt that there needs to be some clarifications and some changes made, updated with some of the new growth development initiatives that are under way. We're looking forward to seeing that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre has two minutes.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank all my colleagues and the members opposite for their remarks.

I want to just quickly touch on something that was a recurring theme in the remarks from some of the members opposite, which was around the OMB. I know from experiences in my own community that we have members in my community who have concerns about the OMB and have thoughts on how it could be improved. That's why we're going to be undertaking a review of the OMB. As part of that review, I know that there are a lot of thoughts on all sides of the aisle about how that could be improved. I think that's the opportunity for those comments and those ideas to be brought in.

I know that I'll be engaging a number of the residents' associations, the homeowners associations in my community to participate in that discussion because they've had the experience with developments and they're very knowledgeable about the impact that the OMB can have. Particularly, in my community, the Humber Valley Village Residents' Association had to think about how they would work with the developer, knowing full well that this particular application could be appealed to the OMB. They handled it effectively, but there are certainly opportunities for improvement to the OMB.

The OMB is not being addressed here. What's being addressed here is a number of other things that are important. The OMB review will be taking place, and I'm sure the minister will look forward to your comments about the OMB at that time.

But I just want to go back briefly as well to talk about what is in this bill that I think is relevant to all our communities. The Minister of Education referred to the issues around parkland. I think that's absolutely critical. If I think about my community of Etobicoke Centre, this is a critical issue.

Again, I want to go back to the issue of how communities will now be able to be involved in planning their communities and responding to applications that are being put forward within their municipalities, within their communities. I think that's one of the highlights of this bill for me, and I think it will serve our communities and our respective ridings very well.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 6 o'clock right on the dot, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
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