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Thursday 24 September 2015

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des débats
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Jeudi 24 septembre 2015

**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2015 sur la protection
des Grands Lacs

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Thursday 24 September 2015

Jeudi 24 septembre 2015

The committee met at 1400 in committee room 2.

**GREAT LAKES PROTECTION ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES GRANDS LACS**

Consideration 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 Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Good afternoon, everyone. It's great to see everyone this afternoon. Everybody is looking jovial. I'd like to call the meeting to order. Welcome, members of the committee, support staff and, of course, all the presenters here this afternoon to have public hearings on Bill 66, An Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin.

Today, we'll be hearing from presenters for five minutes. I would ask all presenters to stay within your five minutes. We have a full agenda. There could be a few votes for private members' business around 4:30, so we'll move along rapidly, if we can. It will be followed by nine minutes of questioning. We'll start with three minutes from each of the parties.

**GREAT LAKES PROTECTION ACT
ALLIANCE**

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): At this time, I would like to call upon Ms. Anastasia Lintner from the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance. We welcome you. You have five minutes. Thank you very much.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Anastasia Lintner, and I'm appearing on behalf of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance. The alliance is made up of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Ecojustice, Environmental Defence, Nature Canada and the Sierra Club Canada Foundation. The alliance has been advocating for Great Lakes legislation for almost four years, and for some of the organizations, for quite a bit longer than that.

I will, very briefly, refer to a one-page handout. The title is "Excerpt: Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance Submission." Yesterday, Natalija Fisher of Environmental Defence would have given you a very full sub-

mission; this is just the actual language of the amendments that are being proposed.

The alliance is happy to see Bill 66 for two primary reasons:

(1) The Legislature would be committing to the dual purposes of protecting and restoring the ecological health of the basin, and creating opportunities for individuals and communities to engage in achieving that protection and restoration.

(2) There is the provision for new policy tools to address the complexity and current challenges facing the basin.

The alliance believes that Bill 66 provides a solid framework on which significant progress can be made towards protecting and restoring the ecological health of the basin, so long as this government and future governments ensure implementation of both this bill and existing policy tools, seeking to employ the best policy tool that will solve the specific challenge that you're facing.

The alliance supports Bill 66 with one exception: the power given cabinet to exempt from legislation. As well, the alliance believes that there are a small number of amendments that would strengthen the legislation. The specific wording is in the handout that I just gave you. I can say that these amendments are intended to:

(1) Remove the exemption power by striking section 38(1), paragraph (1);

(2) Add clarity to purposes in section 1(2) to ensure there is an understanding that it is the ecological health of our waters and watersheds that we're aiming to protect and restore;

(3) Ensure that consideration is given to international commitments related to ecological health that are beyond just the quality and quantity of water in section 33; and

(4) Create alignment across all government ministries where decision-making may impact the basin's ecological health, by adding a provision after section 5.

The alliance's full submission provides additional detail as to why these amendments are important. You had the opportunity to hear from alliance members Environmental Defence and Sierra Club Canada Foundation yesterday.

If you have questions for me, I'd be happy to entertain them now.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that. It was well within time as well.

We'll move to the questioning, which of course is nine minutes, three, three and three. We'll start with the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good. Thank you for being here today. I appreciated the fact that you outlined the members of your alliance. Thank you very much. But as you reviewed Bill 66, did you feel it was incumbent to go out and consult with other organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, local source water protection committees or watershed groups? Yes? No? If you did, I'd love to hear about it.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: Yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Awesome.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: The alliance, in all of the work they have done, have made opportunities to engage in conference calls and webinars to have the alliance express to the Great Lakes community what they're thinking the important components are that need to go in this legislation, and then hear back from them what their concerns are. Each time there was an opportunity to make a submission, the alliance took advantage of reaching out and trying to find out what other people thought about the alliance's positions.

I personally haven't done it, but I understand that members of the alliance have definitely spoken with representatives in the agricultural community. I was engaged in helping to encourage municipalities to speak up if they're in favour of the bill as well.

In the last iteration of the bill, Bill 6, I was involved in my community, which is Kingston, and talking to our council there to see if they supported the bill. They made a resolution indicating that they wanted the government to pass the Great Lakes Protection Act.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay, very good. Switching gears and looking at GFIs, geographically focused initiatives: One of our concerns as the PC Party of Ontario reviewed this particular bill, Bill 66, was the lack of details around funding for GFIs. I wondered if that hit you the same way it hit us, and what your thoughts are on that.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: There is always a concern when we are talking about enabling legislation as to how it's going to be effectively implemented. For the GFIs specifically, in this iteration of the bill there has been an addition to the development of the initiative that requires attention be paid to both what are anticipated to be the costs and benefits associated with achieving the goals and objectives of that initiative, but also in terms of looking for ways in which it could be funded.

So the process for the GFI itself will come forward with some solutions, perhaps some really innovative solutions that haven't been thought of yet.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. We appreciate that. We'll move to Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Good afternoon, Ms. Lintner. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to talk to the point you have here: "The alliance strongly recommends that para

38(1)(l) be removed." Can you tell us why that's important?

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: This particular legislation is enabling a number of things to happen. When we have legislation that puts forward these new tools and opportunities for communities to engage and get involved in protection and restoration of the Great Lakes basin, it's a little bit frustrating to see that cabinet could exempt some aspect of that by regulation.

If there's a commitment to do these things and it's enabling, so that within the context of, for example, trying to develop a target, in the consultations within that target, finding out where some of the challenges are, then that ongoing process will outline what the limitations are and we won't need a power that exempts, because any concerns or things that need to be taken into account can be done within the process itself. Enabling legislation—it's not necessary to have an exemption clause and we prefer that it be removed.

1410

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So you see it as redundant.

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: I see it, yes, as being unnecessary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Unnecessary. And if it's left in, what do you think the risks are?

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: Well, I think that there are a number of things that have been committed to; for example, that the strategy will be reviewed every six years. If there's an ability to exempt, then this government or a future government could write a regulation saying, "We're not going to do that anymore." The commitments and the tools in this bill are important. Seeing them fully implemented is our way to move forward with protection and restoration.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I don't have—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns.

We shall move to the government. I have two with their hands up, so it's very difficult for me to pick. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you for being here. I'm really impressed by the work you and your organization have been doing in collaboration with other organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited, the Sierra Club and many more.

As you said in your presentation, it's very important we restore and protect our Great Lakes. You're very right, because we know 98% of Ontarians live within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin. Ontario has over 10,000 kilometres of Great Lakes shoreline, and more than 13 million people in Ontario rely on the Great Lakes in one way or another: for drinking water, food, electricity, employment and enjoyment.

Having said that, my question to you is: One of the purposes of the proposed act is to involve communities and individuals so that they can work co-operatively and collaboratively. Do you see value in that?

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: I see great value in that. When individuals and communities are looking within

their watershed and seeing a challenge that we don't yet have a tool to address, often because there's not just one sector that's contributing to pollution, it's not just one type of land use—looking at your watershed, if you have great ideas about what we could do to solve the problem, I see the opportunity in this bill to get engaged, to bring to the attention of the minister through the provision that allows you to make a request that a GFI be developed, to bring those ideas forward, and then to have the opportunity to engage with other members of the community in your watershed, across disciplines, across sectors, and come up with solutions to the problems that we're facing.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you. My colleague would like to ask you the second question.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: The proposed act would provide authority for setting of targets. Do you support setting targets, in collaboration with your local agencies, which could help achieve local and binational objectives?

Ms. Anastasia Lintner: Absolutely. If we know what we're aiming for in order to achieve it, and there are also provisions that there could be an action plan for achieving it, I think we will see better solutions coming forward than maybe we've seen in the past.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Ms. Lintner, for coming before committee this afternoon. We appreciate your input.

ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. We have two gentlemen with us this afternoon. I will let you do your introductions for the record. Thank you very much. Five minutes, sir.

Mr. John Kelly: Good afternoon. I'm John Kelly. I'm executive vice-president of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. To my left is Jason Verkaik, a farmer and chair of the board of the association.

I would like to thank this committee for giving the OFVGA the opportunity to comment on this bill, Bill 66. We have made a submission on this bill.

We are a lobby organization that acts on behalf of Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers. We represent members provincially, nationally and internationally on issues affecting production sustainability, food safety and more. The OFVGA has an active and engaged board of 11 members focusing on property, safety nets, crop protection, labour, research and other things.

In Ontario alone, the horticulture sector supports 30,000 farm-based jobs, and 125 different fruit and vegetable crops are grown in this province, with an estimated farm gate of \$1.6 billion. Our grower members are strongly committed to providing Ontarians with locally grown, sustainable food using innovative best management practices. To growers, sustainability speaks to environment, economic and social principles that allow farming to remain viable for years to come. These

principles are tied together and support the long-held tradition that farmers are stewards of the land and water resource management plays an enormous role in agriculture.

In fact, horticulture producers stand to be affected immensely by the legislation involving the Great Lakes. It is with this in mind that the OFVGA supports a stakeholder-led, science-based approach to stewardship of the Great Lakes. Looking at the health of our greatest water resource, we must consider environmental, economic and social implications of a policy that aims to make each industry's use of the lakes more sustainable.

I would now direct your attention to the précis that we have provided to you. It gives a general outline of our submission.

We firmly believe that regulations should be implemented only after science-based conclusions are drawn from a specific problem. When there is a gap in knowledge, scientific research must be taken prior to creating legislation. There is a concern with part IV, subsection 9(2), that gives power to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to arbitrarily set targets for the reduction of algae blooms two years after the initial legislation occurs. Targets should be set based upon scientific evidence as it becomes apparent, and should be adaptive.

We support the formation of the guardians' council; however, its effectiveness could be increased by developing regional sub-councils that speak to the health of each lake and meet at a greater frequency.

There is concern among many agricultural organizations that Bill 66 will create unnecessary overlap with current legislation. OFVGA members are already subject to the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Water Act, the source water protection act and the Nutrient Management Act, including the new greenhouse nutrient feedwater regulation.

The concern is that the act will only confuse stakeholders as to which act takes precedence. How the new act will incorporate current regulations into its targets and initiatives is unclear, and the OFVGA would like to see a streamlined legislation that makes use of current regulations and policies that would make it easier for stakeholders to adhere to.

Perhaps the greatest apprehension is the development of targets surrounding water protection. OFVGA does support the use of targets; however, we recommend that research be done to assess what contribution current production practices contribute to the loading in the lakes. We insist that new targets and initiatives should be considered after an economic impact study is completed. Offsets to any sectors that would face economic impact should also be considered. Any new targets should be science-based.

Another key element to this legislation surrounds watersheds connected to the Great Lakes and the various wetlands used to feed them. The assessment of wetland health is a key component, but in order for the assessments to be accurate, there needs to be an established

definition of what constitutes a wetland. OFVGA questions whether there is a good inventory of wetlands across Ontario and, if there is a need to collect more appropriate data, what role would the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry play in acquiring these data?

More importantly, the OFVGA questions whether there is enough science on both sides of the lake—meaning the US—to make rational, informed decisions. While there is a need for monitoring and reporting programs on the Canadian side, there is no clear idea where this responsibility falls within Bill 66.

Firming up our knowledge of the true causes of Great Lakes emergencies, such as algae blooms off the coast of Toledo is simply good policy, so we support the efforts of the government to achieve this knowledge and ask that it is done through sound, scientific channels.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on what will become an important piece of legislation. We applaud the effort that the government of Ontario is making to assist with the sustainability of the Great Lakes, and we hope that you will consider our suggestions that policies such as these must be comprehensive and scientifically sound in order to achieve long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability of our water resources.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. One second left. Good job.

Mr. Tabuns, we'll start with the third party.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for being here today and presenting.

You mentioned concern about the minister setting targets for reducing algal blooms. Can you enlarge on that?

Mr. John Kelly: Yes. We have concerns that the minister—or whoever is in that position—can arbitrarily set these targets. There is nothing in the legislation that we see that says it has to be based upon any scientific principle, so we're very concerned about that type of thing.

1420

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. It's hard for me to imagine a minister from any party setting a target for reduction in algal blooms that wouldn't rely on science.

Mr. John Kelly: You're correct. I won't say anymore.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. No, I understand why you're saying that.

I don't have a further question, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We shall move to the government. Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Mr. Kelly, thank you very much for your presentation. I know that farmers are important stewards of the land. I, myself, am from a farmer's family. I know from where you're coming, and I can imagine your feelings.

My question is, how can we best involve fruit and vegetable growers in the implementation of the Great Lakes act?

Mr. John Kelly: The first thing is, we are already subject to half a dozen acts concerning water in itself, so

the legislation must be streamlined. That's the first thing. The second thing is it must be based upon scientific principles and not, for want of a better word, political whimsy, so it has to have some strong background in the implementation. Third would be to engage the fruit and vegetable growers. The only engagement that we've really had is through the submission of what we've had, and there hasn't been anybody who has connected with us on this matter.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So what I understand is to promote best management practices and an innovative approach; that's what you're talking about?

Mr. John Kelly: That's certainly part of it, yes, but also looking at what the economic impact is, what the impact on the long-term sustainability of fruit and vegetable production in Ontario is.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. Mr. Dickson, did you have anything to add?

Mr. Joe Dickson: If I could mention just a couple of things. First of all, there are a lot of us here who are related to farm families and we know that that's the basics of our everyday survival. Without farming, we would obviously starve to death.

I just came from the Vatican, and I was sitting just nine rows off to the side of the Pope, and they had a representative there from the United Nations. They spoke on the papal encyclical. I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but you should be because it's being grasped worldwide.

I congratulate you on what you're doing. We're anxious for your input. We're always concerned about not having the opportunity to have a collaborative effort where we all come together on this. My question is, do you feel the same way on that? The more input that we have from you, the general public and those major providers for food using water—is crucial.

Mr. John Kelly: I think it is. Agriculture in this province contributes \$34 billion to the economy. We are, if not the largest, one of the top two contributors to the economy, so we have to be consulted on these things, just from that perspective. But certainly, from an engagement perspective, yes, we need to be engaged as much as possible.

Mr. Jason Verkaik: And you mentioned water usage. I am a farmer, and there are years I will not irrigate because Mother Nature does it for me. But farmers are very adept at using the exact amount of water they need, because if they don't, they will destroy the root structure and the plant's ability to grow if they use too much. So we're very conservative in our water use efforts. It's done according to what the plant needs. It's the same when we put fertilizers in our soil: We have soil tests that map out exactly what's in our soil. We have the science that tells us what an onion would need or what celery would need, and so we can adapt our fertilizer programs to that so we're not contributing more fertilizer to the ground than we need to. It's a real balance in what we do. It's very high tech and it's very understood so there's not excess done.

I farm in the Holland Marsh, where our big watershed issue was with Lake Simcoe. They had a lot of issues around phosphorus. The Holland Marsh contributes 2.75% of the total phosphorus into Lake Simcoe. We're the lowest-contributing into Lake Simcoe because we have the technology to understand what we need to do and how we need to do it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate that. You have quite a bit of extra time. Mr. MacLaren.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: This question is more about land and property rights, which, of course, is the greatest asset of farmers. Would you be supportive of the concept of an amendment to this legislation that would provide full, fair and timely compensation to landowners for the loss of enjoyment, use, value or profitability of their land?

Secondly, a similar question: Would you support an amendment that would provide 50% of the seats on the guardians' council to landowners?

Mr. John Kelly: On the first one, we would be supportive of the economic impact and the results of an economic impact analysis. If that's what came out of it, yes, we would be supportive of that.

On the second one, having private citizens on the guardians' council—

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Landowners.

Mr. John Kelly: Landowners. Yes, we would be supportive of that too.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for being here, gentlemen. I'd like to go back and revisit a very strong message I heard: that any targets developed should be based on scientific evidence. Just to clarify, I think it's safe that you wanted to emphasize that because of the devastating effect the legislation regarding neonics had. Is that fair?

Mr. John Kelly: It's not just neonics; it would be any legislation.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay, very good. Thank you. I appreciate that.

With that, as well, you referenced many layers of legislation, and that perhaps questions why this piece of legislation is even necessary. How do you feel about extra layers of legislation or regulations affecting farmers in Ontario?

Mr. John Kelly: We've had the Environmental Farm Plan for 25 years, and it's not really enacted in legislation. It was initially a voluntary program initiated by farmers for farmers to protect the environment. It really protects our way of living. It's our key asset, and that's the reason we do it.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would agree with that. Yes, absolutely.

And then switching gears just a notch: In terms of the geographically focused initiatives, we have concern that some of those initiatives could potentially override municipal plans or bylaws. As farmers, you work with your local municipalities day in and day out. How do you

feel that a regional or a provincial guardians' council or a body determining GFIs could potentially override your local council's authority?

Mr. John Kelly: That's one of the reasons that we recommended sub-councils to take care of those types of things. It becomes a balance. How far down the chain do you go, and how much engagement do you have? It will come to a point where it's just not useful. There has to be a balance somewhere. We think just with one guardians' council, that's not enough.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Not enough. Okay. Very good. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate both gentlemen coming forward this afternoon and sharing your views.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next we have, from Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Kevin Rich. We will hear from you for five minutes, sir, then we'll start with the government in questioning. Welcome, sir.

Mr. Kevin Rich: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Kevin Rich and I am the provincial policy specialist for Ducks Unlimited Canada in Ontario. In this brief presentation, I will walk you through the role of wetlands and Ducks Unlimited in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes, what we like in Bill 66, and two recommendations we feel would further strengthen the bill.

At DUC, our mission is to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for the benefits they provide waterfowl, other wildlife and people. Thanks to the efforts of 30,000 supporters, approximately 1,100 volunteers and our partners, we've been able to conserve almost one million acres of habitat in Ontario, virtually all of which lies in the Great Lakes basin. We're proud of our work in the basin on both sides of the border, including roles we play in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the Great Lakes Wetlands Conservation Action Plan and the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance.

1430

A bit about the science: The science that links wetlands, healthy watersheds and healthy Great Lakes is unequivocal. Wetlands provide essential ecosystem services that are required to combat climate change by building community resiliency, which we hear a lot about these days; addressing water quality and water supply issues; conserving biodiversity; and sustaining economic growth in the basin.

Despite these values, however, we continue to see loss in the basin. Approximately three quarters of southern Ontario wetlands have been lost due to conversion to other land uses. However, there is reason for hope, based on a commitment in 2014 by the Ontario government to reverse wetland loss, as well as through tools enabled by Bill 66.

We commend the Ontario government for making important amendments, resulting in a strengthened Bill

66 compared to previous versions of the legislation. For example, we are very supportive of new language in the purposes section regarding the protection of watersheds in addition to wetlands and other important features, and the need to account for the impacts and causes of climate change.

We're also supportive of strengthened reporting requirements, which will help ensure a higher level of transparency and accountability, and a simplified yet still rigorous process for approving geographically focused initiatives.

To further strengthen the bill, I would like to highlight two of the proposed amendments that have been put forward by the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance.

Firstly, we support the call to remove the provision in Bill 66 that gives cabinet broad exemption powers. Those powers were not in the previous two versions of the legislation and we see no reason for them to be in Bill 66.

Secondly, we believe there needs to be language added that drives greater alignment and accountability across multiple ministries. The task at hand here clearly extends well beyond the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

In addition we would recommend, in order to take full advantage of Bill 66, that the province allocate sufficient funding towards effective implementation of the bill.

In conclusion, we congratulate the government for reintroducing and moving forward with this important legislation. Bill 66 won't be a panacea for the Great Lakes but it will empower government, NGOs, local communities and individuals to use the right tools in the right places, tools we need to help restore the Great Lakes for the benefit of all Ontarians and for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity today to present to the committee. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Rich. We shall start with the government side. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Mr. Rich, for your presentation. My understanding is that your organization is very supportive of the proposed act. That's what you said in your statement.

Mr. Kevin Rich: That's correct.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay. Thank you so very much. And thank you very much for your commitment to wetland conservation for more than 70 years and all that.

Mr. Kevin Rich: Thank you.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: After having said that, my question to you is this: You said in your presentation that this proposed bill empowers local communities and individuals to use the right tools in the right place. Do you think the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, as a collaborative forum, is very important for discussing future initiatives and priorities, and to set targets?

Mr. Kevin Rich: I do see value in the role of the council in that regard. Given the huge diversity of land, of land pressures, of economic activity and pressures across the Great Lakes basin, we see the role of the Great

Lakes council in helping to provide advice that represents the diverse set of interests and priorities across the Great Lakes basin.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you. Can you throw some light on how monitoring and reporting programs are important to the proposed act?

Mr. Kevin Rich: I'll speak to that in the context of wetlands. If it wasn't for ongoing measurements and monitoring of the extent of wetlands and other important natural features, it's hard to know if you're winning, losing or just standing still. So the adage, "You can't manage something you can't measure," holds true for environmental concerns as well. We're very interested in ensuring that ongoing monitoring of the extent of wetlands is continued by this government.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you. In the Lake Simcoe watershed, the province has worked with many partners to promote best management practices and innovative approaches. Do you think a similar approach could be applied with respect to the Great Lakes act?

Mr. Kevin Rich: I think there is always value in working with different stakeholders, whether they are in the agricultural community or other industrial sectors—to work with them on best management practices and to communicate the latest science around the values associated with conservation.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much. It's good to see you here.

Mr. Kevin Rich: Thank you.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate your information that you shared through your deputation, but, Kevin, there is one thing that really caught my eye. You said, "Firstly, we support the call to remove the provision in Bill 66 that gives cabinet broad exception powers (through section 38 of the bill)." You went on to say, "These exception powers were not in the two previous versions of this legislation and therefore we see no reason for them," in this current iteration of this bill. So, Kevin, on behalf of Ducks Unlimited, what is your worry? Why do you think they put this into Bill 66, and what's your worry in terms of what they might want to do with the cabinet exception power?

Mr. Kevin Rich: Exemption powers.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Exemption powers, yes. I just—

Mr. Kevin Rich: I think the concern is that it's just not necessary. As my colleague Anastasia Lintner commented on, the way that the different tools are developed in the bill, particularly for the setting of initiatives and targets, there are checks and balances in place already that limit the reach of those powers. We think that those are likely sufficient to ensure that the powers they use meet the purposes and the outcomes desired in the bill.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. Interesting.

With regard to the overall makeup of the guardian council, we've done consulting on this bill ourselves and we've heard through deputations prior to yours that there is some thought toward breaking down that guardian council and having more subcommittees, if you will, that reflect local realities around each lake. How does Ducks Unlimited respond to that?

Mr. Kevin Rich: I will be perfectly honest: We haven't given that particular idea much consideration. My reaction is—I'll speak for myself here and put my own hat on—I think that makes sense. Again, to reflect the diversity of issues and challenges across the Great Lakes basin, I can see value in that, but that is not something our organization has turned their mind to.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. I appreciate that.

I think that's it, Chair. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Rich, thank you for the presentation today. My colleague actually asked the question I was interested in, and so I won't have a redundant question for you. Thank you. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Thank you for coming before committee this afternoon. We appreciate it, Mr. Rich.

Mr. Kevin Rich: Thank you for the opportunity.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE NETWORK INC.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next, from Community Enterprise Network Inc., we have Mr. Jeff Mole, who is the president. Welcome, sir.

Mr. Jeff Mole: Hi, Mr. Chair. Do you mind if I videotape my presentation?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): To members of the committee, there has been a request for Mr. Mole to videotape his presentation. So you'll be filming just yourself?

Mr. Jeff Mole: Just myself, not the members of the committee.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Is there any opposition at the committee level?

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's a public forum. Go for it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Very good, sir. Permission granted.

Mr. Jeff Mole: Very good. Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Mole. I am president of Community Enterprise Network Inc. Our mission is to give Ontario communities the tools they need to participate in government procurement in a way that profits will be reinvested back into communities. We are a shared-service start-up organization in the business of helping communities develop community enterprise.

I am here today to speak in support of Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act, and we ask the committee to consider amending the bill to prioritize community enterprise for delivery of the services required to achieve the purposes of the act.

The preamble states, "All Ontarians have an interest in the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. The government of Ontario seeks to involve individuals and communities in its protection and restoration."

1440

The purposes of the act are "to protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin" and "to create opportunities for individuals and communities to become involved in the protection and restoration of the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin." This is good stuff. However, who will do the work to achieve the act's purposes, and who will fund the initiatives?

Our concern is that the work will be outsourced to the private sector, with little or no regard for the social enterprise strategy for Ontario which was launched by the government in 2013. This strategy is the province's plan to become the number one jurisdiction in North America for businesses that have a positive social, cultural or environmental impact, while generating revenue. To meet the goals of this strategy, we believe the government needs to take a strategic look at community enterprise for all government procurement.

A community enterprise is a non-share capital corporation that meets a need and provides benefits. A community enterprise is run by a group of people who get together to develop a business that creates jobs and generates economic activity with a view to investing any surplus or profits for the betterment of Ontarians.

A community enterprise provides an alternative to privatization of public services by delivering competitive services while reinvesting surplus revenues in education, health care and community betterment.

Our expertise is in the field of broader public sector procurement. Our mission is to develop community enterprise in the following areas: school busing; farming and local food production; mining in the Ring of Fire; energy generation and distribution; liquor and beer sales and distribution; toll highways; highway maintenance; resource extraction and processing; waste management; energy from waste; invasive species eradication; wireless communication; attainable housing; untapped retail markets—the list goes on.

In our experience, mobilization and access to affordable capital are the main hurdles to a strong community enterprise sector in Ontario. Our goal is to work with government to help overcome these hurdles by recruiting directors, raising funds, and building membership to help grow community enterprise in Ontario. We provide the expertise needed to seek out public service opportunities, engage communities, and develop business opportunities for community benefit.

We are coordinating an initiative to develop a province-wide network of large-scale community enterprises in the government services sector. We can't do it alone. We need a government that understands the need to invest in growing the community enterprise sector for delivery of services. Accordingly, we encourage memb-

ers to amend the bill to create a pilot program to help social enterprise be part of the procurements related to projects to achieve the purposes of the act.

Furthermore, we encourage the members of this committee to bring forward a community enterprise act. This act would help facilitate the mobilization of communities and financial resources for the development of the capacity of community enterprise to play a part in public sector procurement and the delivery of publicly funded services. Communities must have adequate tools to do the jobs that governments have advocated. This is a conversation that is long overdue.

I look forward to your questions and hearing a motion to amend this bill.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Mole. We're going to start with the third party and Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Mole, the idea of having community enterprises makes a lot of sense. Do you have a suggestion as to how we would fund the program that you've suggested?

Mr. Jeff Mole: There are going to be projects that come up that are going to flow out of this bill. It says so in the bill. Those projects are presumably going to be funded, perhaps by government, perhaps through the non-government sector. The bill is not clear on that.

What is clear, though, is that within the government's strategy, which was called Impact—A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario, it was clear that the government said they were going to have a pilot project around the Pan Am Games. They were going to give social enterprise the tools they needed to compete for projects under the Pan Am Games.

I don't know the outcome of that pilot project. I don't think it happened, but it's certainly worth asking the question. And if it didn't happen there, perhaps it can happen within the guise of providing projects under this act.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We'll move to the government. Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you very much for your presentation. One of the purposes of the proposed legislation is to create opportunities for individuals and communities to become involved in the Great Lakes' protection and restoration.

Mr. Jeff Mole: Of course.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Do you see value in fostering public and community engagement on the Great Lakes?

Mr. Jeff Mole: Absolutely. Everything is proponent-driven. If we're going to engage communities, we need to engage them through a proponent. There needs to be an organization that is going to be the proponent for the project. That gives the community an opportunity to participate through an organizing proponent.

Government needs to understand the need to mobilize proponents. Quite often we've seen that when the government looks to having a proponent for, let's say, an energy project, they'll put it out to the private sector and

let the private sector handle it. But that doesn't necessarily give the best return on investment for taxpayers when it comes to developing these projects, whether it's energy projects, school busing, invasive species eradication or whatever other projects might flow out of this act.

We need to get our heads around the need to mobilize and give these organizations access to affordable capital, so that they can run a successful business that does good projects with good outcomes.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Just one more question: Do you feel that setting measurable targets and tracking performance in achieving targets is important?

Mr. Jeff Mole: Of course, in any government procurement or the outcomes of the act, absolutely.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thanks for being here, Jeff.

Mr. Jeff Mole: My pleasure, Lisa.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate your perspective on community enterprise. One thing really jumped out for me. My interpretation was that a key to a successful community enterprise is access to affordable capital.

Mr. Jeff Mole: Yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm just wondering: In reviewing the bill, Jeff, are you concerned that this particular act has no funding commitment defined whatsoever at this time?

Mr. Jeff Mole: Absolutely. One would think that perhaps the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change would have a mandate to protect the public interest and have some resources at their disposal to put towards this. I don't see that in the act.

But from our perspective, we need to see the ability to deliver these services and put forward proposals that make sense. Without having the tools to mobilize and put together a business case to bring to government, we're really flying blind and working with hypotheticals. We need to have strategic policies that allow community enterprise to identify the need and bring forward proposals to deliver a service to government that provides a good return on investment for taxpayers, but also reduces the size of government at the same time.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate those sound business pillars that you just described. Clearly we don't have that defined in this act, so it is a worry for us as well.

Mr. Jeff Mole: We said we were going to do that in the energy sector. We said we were going to give communities the tools to participate in renewable energy, and yet, something got lost in the shuffle. Under the Green Energy Act, the community piece of it was just swept aside. That needs to change.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Do you trust that this government will get it right with this particular piece of legislation?

Mr. Jeff Mole: I can only hope.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Mole: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I believe that concludes the questioning component. Thank you, Mr. Mole, for coming before the committee and sharing your insight.

ONTARIO LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the Ontario Landowners Association. I believe we have two members here with us today. I'll let you do the introductions. We welcome you here. You have five minutes for your presentation.

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: I thank the committee for having us here today. My name is Jessica Lauren Annis. I am the founder and interim president of the Toronto Private Property Rights Association, which is a chapter of the Ontario Landowners Association, which makes me a director. To my left here is Moira Egan. She's going to speak to the bill. She is a director of the Toronto Private Property Rights Association.

I just want to say that through my participation on over a dozen local and provincial committees, including two LGIC appointments, and deep research, I have gained a thorough understanding of sustainable development, as has Moira. Having said that, I'm going to pass it on to you.

Ms. Moira Egan: Hello. Bill 66 is the continuation of the implementation of sustainable development in Ontario, so it is important to understand what sustainable development is and what it is not.

1450

Sustainable development is a top-down, authoritarian, collectivist ideology masquerading as a grassroots environmental movement. It is global in its reach and is promoted by globalist social engineers who are, for the most part, funded by deep-pocketed foreign NGOs and cronyporporatists.

Bill 66 is not about the environment; it is about control. Specifically, it is about continuing the centralization of power, the depopulation of rural Ontario, the impoverishment of the population through deindustrialization, the transfer of wealth from the people to the 0.0001%, the destruction of our common-law rights, specifically private property rights, the delegation of governance to special interest groups, the creation of a privatized technocracy to regulate every aspect of our lives, and ultimately the destruction of self-reliance and free will.

The results of the implementation of sustainable development in Ontario to date are not pretty. Not only has Ontario lost 300,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs, but countless lives and families have been destroyed in the process and more than a few people, including a friend of mine, have been persecuted to death.

The majority of the people behind me who self-identify as environmentalists are not. They are globalists intent on creating a worldwide neo-feudal system, and

when their mission is complete, joining the elite to rule over the rest of us.

To that end, Bill 66 will cement the unholy alliance between the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, conservation authorities and globalist NGOs to centrally plan and govern land use planning for local communities across Ontario. If fully implemented, Bill 66 will spell the end of prosperity in Ontario and profoundly damage the environment, as meticulously researched and documented by Elizabeth Nickson.

I would like to conclude my presentation with a paraphrase of Pius XI: Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.

That concludes our presentation.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that. I'm going to start questioning on the government side. Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Jessica. Thank you, Moira. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions. I would just preface them by saying that I think I've been at the table for about 40 years at the municipal and regional level—deputy mayor, Catholic school board, all of those good things. I understand some of the problems are where proper consideration is not given to the citizen at large, the general citizen at large. They become overburdened with a number of things. Sometimes there is over-enforcement on compliance and that's a problem.

I did notice that you had mentioned the paraphrase of Pius XI.

Ms. Moira Egan: Yes.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Good for you. You should pay very close attention to the papal encyclical of Pope Francis, which—

Ms. Moira Egan: I am very familiar with it.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Wonderful. You should lead the way.

I'm going to incorporate a couple of questions into one question: How can we, as the province, best involve landowners in the implementation of the Great Lakes Protection Act, should it move forward? Part of that is, would you support changes to the bill that would require consideration of existing policies and plans when developing geographically focused initiatives and for requiring consideration of costs and benefits?

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: How to engage the landowner—I think it's best done at the local level. The local landowners have been completely disenfranchised through the Green Energy Act. I think this is another Green Energy Act, but now with land use planning. I don't think you can fix this bill.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Okay. I should point out that what we're hoping to do this time, and working very diligently

on it, is to bring compliance where the general public is involved. Do you agree with that philosophy, that we would form—

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: You're bringing in centralized planners from MOE.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Yes.

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: I sat on the Lake Simcoe Stakeholder Advisory Committee. It was extremely divisive. Science was actively suppressed. People most knowledgeable about the lake were not allowed to present. I think it's a terrible process when it gets centralized like that.

Stakeholders were completely ignored. I know that this committee looks at that as a good process. For one who was there, day after day—I can't talk about what specifically happened in the committee because I signed a non-disclosure, but I can tell you that overall, it was a terrible process.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I think that if you talked to everyone in this room, they've probably sat on one committee or another that has not been perfect in their mind and has been a problem—

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: I've sat on dozens and dozens of committees, and that was probably the worst.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate that. We shall move to the official opposition. Mr. MacLaren.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Do you have any amendments you would like to make to this bill?

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: I don't have any specific amendments in mind, no.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Okay. That's it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. We shall move to the third party. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I take it, then, that you believe we should be voting the bill down?

Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Thanks to both of you for coming before the committee and sharing your position.

NATURE CANADA

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move—maybe I better do a request here: Would Nancy Goucher from Freshwater Future be here? Anyone from Nature Canada? Oh, that's the teleconference.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): What we're going to do is take a few seconds to attempt to get the 3:30 delegation on. He's here? Okay, so we're going to move the agenda around a little bit due to the fact that we're ahead of schedule a bit. From what I understand, Mr. Cheskey from Nature Canada is on the line. Is that correct?

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Yes, it is.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Good. It's great to have you with us this afternoon, sir. I'm sure you're well

aware of the process: You'll have five minutes to make your presentation to the members of the committee, followed by up to nine minutes of questioning or comments from members of the committee, as well. Could you maybe let us know where you're from?

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Absolutely. I'm phoning you from Ottawa, and I'm with Nature Canada.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, very good. Thank you, sir. I believe that all members have a copy of your presentation or information in front of them. So the floor is yours, sir. You have five minutes.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Thank you so much for the opportunity to present to the committee. First, I would like to say that Nature Canada is the oldest national nature conservation organization in Canada. We have about 50,000 members and supporters. We are the national voice for Canada's 350 nature clubs and societies.

I want to recognize the impressive work that has gone into crafting Bill 66 and congratulate the committee on this proposed bill. That said, we support the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance's submission and believe that there's still a little bit of work to do to increase the effectiveness of the act and eliminate potential flaws, including the removal of the exemption clause.

We support the amendments proposed by the alliance, but I would like, specifically, to focus my comments on clause 3 in the purposes of the act and on section 33 on agreements.

Clause 3 currently states, "To protect and restore the natural habitats and biodiversity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin."

This clause would be much stronger by adding precise language recognizing the international significance of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin habitats for migratory species.

1500

The Great Lakes provide essential functions for migrating birds because of their geography and productivity. For example, natural coastal habitats and wetlands function as key stopover habitat for millions of songbirds, shorebirds and water birds to rest, feed and fuel up after long migratory flights, or in preparation for long migrations to Central and South America. Nearshore and offshore zones are essential habitat for tens of thousands of waterfowl each fall, winter and spring. Critical habitat for many of Ontario's threatened species is within Great Lakes wetlands and coastal areas.

These significant areas of bird concentration are recognized and mapped as part of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area program, or IBA for short, of BirdLife International, delivered jointly in Canada by Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada. Established in the 1980s and currently implemented in over 120 countries around the globe, IBA recognizes that many species of birds depend on very specific sites over the course of their annual life cycles for their survival.

Put simply, IBAs are the most important sites for birds on earth. Member countries of the European Union recognize IBAs and even offer them added protection.

Thirty-four of Ontario's 74 IBAs occur in or border the Great Lakes. Eighty-two species of birds reach national to global significance in these IBAs with regularity.

The degradation of these areas through habitat loss, industrialization, pollution and transformation from invasive species is a very real threat to our natural heritage and could tip the scale the wrong way for these species. With respect to clause 3, we support the following amendment, as proposed by the alliance: "To protect and restore the natural habitats and biodiversity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin, including critical habitat for migratory birds, bats and insects, such as important bird and biodiversity areas."

Many of these globally significant sites are within view of the United States, reminding us of our shared species and shared responsibility to steward and protect them through our obligations in various conventions and laws. Over 80% of the bird species in Canada migrate beyond our borders every year as part of their annual cycles.

For this reason, we strongly support the alliance's recommendation to amend section 33 by adding three key interjurisdictional agreements to which Canada is also party: the 1916 Migratory Birds Convention; the 1981 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially waterfowl habitat, also known as the Ramsar Convention; and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity adopted during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

That ends my comments.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, sir. We appreciate them.

We shall start with the government side.

Mr. Joe Dickson: You sure?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Yes, I'm sure. I'll keep my schedule.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you for the presentation. I'm certainly pleased to hear you mention, on the proposed act, both birds and biodiversity.

I'd like to just ask you a couple of questions, if I could. Your organization has really championed the need for our increased efforts throughout the Great Lakes. Do you think that this proposed legislation before us is, as a whole, a positive enough step in protecting the Great Lakes? That's part A. Part B is: Are there specific roles conservation volunteers see themselves playing in the implementation of the proposed act? That's all in consideration should it move forward. I wonder if I could have your comments on that.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Thank you very much for the questions. First, I would like to reiterate that we are part of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, and I think members of that alliance have all expressed their support for the act. Nature Canada, as the oldest nature conservation group in Canada, certainly supports the intent of the act, and thinks it is a very important and valuable step to provide the extra legislative attention that the

Great Lakes need. Clearly, what we're actually doing right now is not enough, so we think this is very timely and important legislation.

We also see organizations like ourselves—we're a national-level organization, but we work very closely with Ontario Nature, our provincial partner, and we certainly see a role for non-governmental organizations like ourselves in a number of places. Part of it is the council. We would certainly hope that the nature of conservation voices is reflected and captured in the council and also, certainly, on geographically specific initiatives, the GFIs.

Those initiatives—I'll just use the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area program as an example. We work with local groups to steward IBAs. Most of the IBAs are not within protected areas, so it's largely through stewardship efforts and working with landowners and working with local nature groups that we're able to achieve the sorts of results that we need to ensure that the integrities of the areas are maintained.

Having a new tool at our disposition, I think, is extremely important. I think the legislation in this bill is empowering to Ontarians. I congratulate you on that.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Do you also see that setting measurable targets and tracking performance to achieving targets is extremely important or not important?

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Targets are extremely important, absolutely, and I think that birds are a great example of something that—I hope that, through my comments, you can see the narrative. I think that needs to include biodiversity and certainly go well beyond water quality issues. Targets for that are certainly important as well.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for dialing in. Sometimes it's not the easiest. I certainly appreciate your efforts to share your message, Ted.

One thing in particular that jumped out of your presentation for me is the IBAs that Nature Canada has been involved in recognizing and defining. I thank you for the information, whereby you shared that 34 of Ontario's 74 IBAs occur in or border the Great Lakes, extending over approximately 25% of the Ontario Great Lakes coastline. Because of that, I also very much appreciate the recommended amendments, "To protect and restore watersheds, wetlands, beaches, shorelines and coastal areas of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin," and the next one in particular, "To protect and restore the natural habitats and biodiversity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin, including critical habitat areas for migratory birds, bats and insects, such as important bird and biodiversity areas."

That jumped out at me, Ted, and my question is: How do you feel about the possibility of industrial wind turbines being placed in the Great Lakes?

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Being placed in the Great Lakes or along the Great Lakes coastline?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Both: along and in.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Thank you for the question. I know it's one that has been pondered for many, many years now, and I think there is a current moratorium on it.

Our position with regard to industrial wind turbines: We are opposed to wind turbine developments within IBAs. I think the previous Ontario commissioner of the environment, Gord Miller, included as part of his report in 2012 that he thought IBAs should be exclusion zones.

We've tried to work with the industry, and continue to do that, as we are not an anti-wind group by any means. We feel that green energy is extremely important, and renewable energy is extremely important. But we just don't think it should happen anywhere and everywhere. There are places where biodiversity conservation is the predominant issue.

1510

IBAs kind of define themselves this way. It's possible there might be one or two where it's not an issue, but generally, the coastlines are extremely important places, stopover sites for birds, migratory corridors, breeding sites, staging sites, all of those things. And not just birds—as I mentioned, insects and bats as well. That said, there probably are areas, anthropogenic landscapes, where the impact is manageable and can be mitigated, but generally, certainly the natural areas and areas within IBAs—we've been trying to have those areas excluded from projects.

As far as offshore sites go, it's a very complicated matter, and I think we still don't really know enough. There are—

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much. I hate to interrupt, but we went over time on that one.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: No problem.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Mr. Tabuns from the NDP.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Ted, I just wanted to ask about your recommendation that the province include the alliance's recommendation to section 33, and that's including the Migratory Birds Convention, Convention on Wetlands and Convention on Biological Diversity. Why do you see it as important to have that included in the text of the bill?

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Well, thank you. It does mention some agreements, but these are three agreements that I think add substance to the biodiversity intent. The fact that the Great Lakes are of extreme importance for migratory species, for Ontario, and the fact that the migration of birds is something that really links us to the United States—the Migratory Birds Convention Act that came out of the migratory convention is the first environmental piece of legislation. I think there's a really good opportunity here to reinforce the commitment to make things like the Migratory Birds Convention Act, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Ramsar more meaningful and real, especially the convention parts. These areas are identified, and I think every opportunity we have to make them meaningful and real, we need to

do so. Incorporating them into legislation here is something that will obligate us and the province to consider them as this enabling legislation is implemented.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Cheskey, for joining us and sharing your thoughts this afternoon. We appreciate it.

Mr. Ted Cheskey: Thank you so much for the opportunity, and best of luck.

FRESHWATER FUTURE

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Nancy Goucher, I believe, has walked in from Freshwater Future. We welcome you and we apologize for shifting things around a little bit, but we were ahead of schedule. You have five minutes for your presentation followed by nine minutes of questions.

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Okay, great. Thank you so much. As you guys heard, I'm Nancy Goucher with Freshwater Future. While I've only been in my current position for less than a month, I've been working on the Great Lakes Protection Act for over two years through my previous position at Environmental Defence.

Freshwater Future's mission is to ensure a healthy future for our waters in the Great Lakes region by building the capacity of grassroots groups and ensuring that we have good policies in place. My comments on the Great Lakes Protection Act reflect both Freshwater Future's focus on grassroots, and my seven-plus years of experience working with different sectors to protect water.

To begin, in terms of recommended amendments, Freshwater Future endorses the submission put forward by the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance. We would like to emphasize the importance of removing the exemptions clause as we see this as a fatal flaw in the bill in that it could undermine things like accountability and transparency, key features of the legislation.

Now on to the positives. I'd like to point out three aspects of the bill that I think are really critical in protecting the Great Lakes. First, the purpose of the bill recognizes that Ontario needs to do more to protect the Great Lakes. I've heard some people claim that Ontario doesn't need this bill; that we have lots of other legislation and agreements in place to address water. I'd respond by saying that today's problems are complex and that new problems are overwhelming our old solutions. I'll give you two examples.

The first is microplastics. Microplastic is an increasing source of pollution building up in the Great Lakes. For example, researchers have found over a million microbeads per square kilometre in Lake Ontario. Microplastics are a complicated issue to address because there are so many different sources of plastic, from microbeads to litter to industrial spills. An important step forward is to better understand how much plastic is actually there and the pathways for its introduction. That's why I think

section 7 of the bill, which requires the minister to ensure that monitoring and reporting programs are established and maintained, will be a critical piece of the solutions puzzle.

Another example of how things have gotten increasingly complicated is algae. In the 1970s, Lake Erie was declared to be dead because of extensive algal bloom problems. Governments of all levels stepped up to the plate and took action to address the biggest sources of phosphorus, which was declared the major problem. Phosphorus in municipal sewage discharges was reduced by 82%, and the amount of phosphates allowed in laundry detergents was restricted. The result was that things dramatically improved and people were able to swim and fish in Lake Erie once again.

But now algal blooms are back, and 2015 was the worst year ever on record in terms of the size of the blue-green algae. What's worse is that this is part of an overall trend and things are getting worse. We're at a point where the drinking water for 11 million people is under threat. Last year, 400,000 people in Toledo, Ohio, and on Pelee Island were under drinking water advisories because of algal bloom near their drinking water intakes.

Fixing the algal problem this time won't be as easy as doing one or two things to solve this to address the biggest sources. These days, phosphorus is coming from all sorts of different places and we're going to need to be able to address those little bits of sources from all over the place. That's why I think the design of the Great Lakes Protection Act is so important. It actually acknowledges and addresses the complexity of current and emerging challenges.

One of the ways it does this is by acknowledging the role of local communities in developing and implementing solutions, which brings me to my second point.

The Great Lakes Protection Act, through the geographically focused initiatives tool, recognizes that it is at the local, community level where action can be taken to positively impact the health of our waters. Freshwater Future sees GFIs as an important tool that can actually drive local action. It can inspire collaboration between the various interest groups in a community, including farmers, First Nations, tourism, anglers and all these different groups, and the numerous checks and balances built into the process will ensure that local communities support the actions that would be enabled by the province.

My third main point is that the guardians' council is an important tool in helping to deal with the complexity of water issues. It can facilitate discussions between various stakeholders that, over time, can build trust and respect. This is what we really need to move things forward, as we've seen in the source protection committees. This forum can also help with identifying new and emerging challenges, which can be really helpful in addressing problems in advance, so being more proactive than reactive. The guardians' council can also help establish a common approach to how we're going to address water problems.

Have you seen the movie *Finding Nemo*? There's a part where all the fish got caught in a net and they were all swimming in different directions. Finally, Nemo, through his leadership, said, "Everyone should swim down the net." Everyone swam in the same direction, and they made it to the bottom and they all escaped. The guardians' council can be an important piece in trying to get various groups on the same page and swimming in the same direction.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. I apologize for cutting you off. We just went a bit over time as well.

We'll start with the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You know, actually, I really appreciate your comments that you've shared today. You certainly bring a lot of passion, but at this time we don't have any questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes. Thanks very much for the presentation. I want to go back to your concern with section 38(1)(l). That's the exemption clause. Can you tell us why, in your words, it's a fatal flaw?

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Well, there are lots of things in this bill that I've pointed out—the tools and the pieces of it and some of the timelines around reporting, for instance. If there's an exemption clause that allows someone to sort of get around any of those requirements that are set in the bill, I think that undermines some of the things that we've been working towards in order to improve the bill.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you. I don't have further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We shall move to the government. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Welcome to Queen's Park. Great presentation.

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Thank you.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I understand that your organization has championed the need for increased efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Do you think that the bill which is before the committee today on the whole is a positive step in protecting the Great Lakes?

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Absolutely. One of the things that I've been working on is Lake Erie, specifically, and so one of the pieces of the bill that I also really like is the requirement to set targets around nutrients. This is really important. For example, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has been undergoing a process of setting nutrient targets, as well. I found that to be a comparable process because what it meant is that they did consultation around what the target should be, and everyone pretty much agreed on those targets. That means that that discussion about what those targets are is set, and now they can move on to implementation. So it's a really important piece of the process in terms of solving issues like Lake Erie algae.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Do you think that it's important to take action through geographically focused initiatives, like those proposed in the act, that can help bring people and local communities together?

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Yes, absolutely. I think that having this tool available that is endorsed by the province, and perhaps supported by the province, can be really effective at bringing some of these different groups together. Having conversations at a table between farmers and people who care about water and people who care about tourism—to have these discussions and find out that they actually have much more in common than what divides them. So I think that by establishing that common interest, they can develop common solutions and start to move forward.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Thank you very much. We really appreciate you coming before committee this afternoon and sharing your thoughts.

Ms. Nancy Goucher: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Have a great afternoon.

Is Mr. Duncanson here from the Georgian Bay Association, by chance? Ms. Bonnie Fox from Conservation Ontario?

We are a few minutes ahead of schedule. Why don't we take a seven-minute break and allow members to—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Stretch?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Stretch. Good word. So seven minutes from now—maybe eight.

The committee recessed from 1522 to 1530.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I'd like to call the meeting back to order.

GEORGIAN BAY ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I believe Mr. Duncanson from the Georgian Bay Association is here. Thank you, sir, for coming early, as we are a bit ahead of schedule at this point. We welcome you. You have five minutes followed by nine minutes of questioning from the three parties. Welcome, sir.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Thank you very much, Chair Crack and the rest of the committee. My name is Bob Duncanson. I'm the executive director of the Georgian Bay Association. The Georgian Bay Association is an umbrella group representing 19 communities along the eastern and northern shores of Georgian Bay, stretching from Honey Harbour in the south to the North Channel. We've been advocating on behalf of our landowning members since 1916, and we represent about 3,200 properties with approximately 18,000 individuals.

The Great Lakes region is of immense importance to Ontario, to Canada and to North America. In their 2014 report *Low Water Blues*, the Mowat Centre cited that the annual economic output for the region was US\$4.9 trillion, placing it amongst the largest economic regions in the world.

One of the main engines behind this economic success is water. The Great Lakes combined contain the earth's second-largest single supply of surface fresh water.

In the Georgian Bay context, property owners alone contribute over \$100 million annually to the local, provincial and federal economies through goods and services purchased and taxes. When you add in campers, boaters and fishermen to this mix, the number becomes significantly higher. It is the water in Georgian Bay that brings us there.

Without water in sufficient quantity and quality, this economic input would be threatened. The Great Lakes are Ontario's golden goose. It is critical to our future well-being that we nurture them and protect them so that they'll keep giving back.

The Great Lakes are under great and unprecedented stress. Climate change is resulting in frequent one-in-100-year storms, interspersed with periods of drought. Nutrient loading is causing blue-green algae outbreaks, not just in Lake Erie, which we've all heard about, but also in other parts of the Great Lakes, including relatively pristine Georgian Bay.

Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species like phragmites, Eurasian milfoil, Japanese tangleweed, zebra and quagga mussels, and round gobies present their own challenges, not to mention Asian carp.

Chemicals are an emerging concern. Chemicals that septs and municipal treatment facilities cannot remove have an unknown long-term impact on ecological and human health.

There is a perfect storm brewing in the seemingly placid waters in the Great Lakes.

The Georgian Bay Association operates in a part of the province where there are no conservation authorities or source protection committees; where municipalities, being rural in nature, have limited capacity to initiate, let alone run, programs that will protect the Great Lakes. Most initiatives of this kind are initiated by property owners working through non-governmental organizations like ours.

We believe that the Great Lakes Protection Act, with its guardians' council and geographically focused initiatives, will provide a framework that will improve citizen engagement with government at all levels and help us to be more proactive in our efforts to protect our part of the Great Lakes.

Some detractors may argue that the Great Lakes are a binational resource and therefore it should be up to the federal government to do the heavy lifting on this file. In reality, we need all levels of government, together with NGOs and the public at large, to work together on protecting the Great Lakes. This is how it works in the US, and it works well.

I have heard other detractors state that the province has sufficient pieces of legislation in place to do what Bill 66 is proposing. With respect, I suggest that the various provincial ministries, as a whole, lack a Great Lakes focus.

Bill 66 will align priorities and decision-making across ministries and start to set targets, all of which will give the protection of the Great Lakes the profile it deserves.

Our hope is that you, as legislators, and your colleagues in the Legislature, will support the Great Lakes Protection Act and help protect this life-sustaining resource for many generations to come.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate that.

We shall begin with the PCs. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Chair. Thanks for being here. I apologize for coming in in the middle of it all. We certainly recognize and appreciate anyone who comes forward to exercise their voice. We all care about our Great Lakes, absolutely. I live just off the border of Lake Huron.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: We are all within driving distance of a Great Lake, if not walking distance.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, exactly; you've got it.

The Georgian Bay Association has been very active. I remember that, a couple of years ago, Garfield Dunlop arranged a meeting with many of your representatives. That was time well spent.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: He's been a good supporter.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, very much so.

I find it interesting: Everybody is honing in on the exemption, and that's the number one problem or consensus that we're hearing. Has your association thought of any specific, tangible example of what this exemption might do to have a negative impact on the Great Lakes?

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Exemptions are always, when they're left nebulous, as they are in this piece of legislation, worrisome to us. One of the battles that we're fighting in the Georgian Bay Association is on open-net technology used by the aquaculture industry. Some 52 tonnes of phosphorus are being introduced into our Great Lakes annually by a for-profit industry. Our concern would be that a minister might choose to try and exempt that industry from bringing in new technology.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, very good. That's exactly what I was looking for. Thank you for that.

I'm thinking about all the current pieces of legislation that are already in place. I'm sure you can appreciate that we have a concern about over-layering and redundancy, if you will, handcuffing. But in terms of our legislation, you said that it's refreshing to have renewed interest in the Great Lakes, and I share that with you. But in terms of the GFIs, are you concerned at all that those GFIs could be potentially directed by one body as opposed to individual or more regionalized groups?

Mr. Bob Duncanson: We look at it as a real opportunity for bottom-up leadership. On Georgian Bay, as I mentioned, it's a pretty scattered group of municipalities with limited capacity. It's even a scattered group of NGOs. We think that there's tremendous opportunity to collaborate.

I'll use another example: water testing. Our members who are in their own community would love to plug into

a framework that would allow them to go out and do some water testing, be the arms and legs for the province, which doesn't have arms and legs, who can get out into the field, but we need to plug into a bigger framework. This is where I think a GFI could really benefit us, where we could pull together and say, "Okay, let's work with our municipal partners; let's work with the province, with the MOE, the MNR; and figure out what we should be testing, and put in a protocol that the average citizen could do the legwork and roll it up."

We look at it as a bottom-up process. I suppose if you looked at it from the top down there could be a concern that you could have Big Brother trying to direct things. We would certainly be the first to blow the whistle if we felt that we were being dictated to. But so far, we've been very pleased with the collaborative approach that, certainly, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has taken on this.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good. Again, thank you for your commitment to protecting and restoring our Great Lakes.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Not at all. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to Mr. Tabuns from the NDP.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Duncanson, thank for being here today. Ms. Thompson again has asked the question that I would have asked. That was about the exemption clause. There seems to be a pretty clear position on the part of all the stakeholders that that exemption clause is highly problematic.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Yes. It definitely should have definition. It can't sit there, I think, in its wide-open—there have to be parameters put around it, I think, if it's going to stay there at all.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We'll move to the government. Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you for your presentation. I'm from the riding of Barrie.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Excellent.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I have to tell you that my great lake is Lake Simcoe.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Yes, and you feed into us.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes, I know. The other great lake that is very important to me is, of course, Georgian Bay and the rest of the lake, because that's where I was brought up and where we do our swimming and boating and all of those things.

1540

I see that you are concerned about the levels of the lake. I have seen in the past couple of years some really difficult times for boat owners and marine owners and cottagers in that regard. But, on the whole, your organization has championed the protection of the Great Lakes. Do you think this legislation, with a couple of tweaks, will be very important to the protection of the Great Lakes?

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Absolutely. I wouldn't be here today if I didn't feel that. I think it's really important for

all ministries to look at how they can play a role to support the protection of the Great Lakes. Our perception, as citizens looking up to the tower around here, is that sometimes ministries have other priorities. They should try and use the Great Lakes as one of the filters that they look through when they're making decisions that will impact the Great Lakes because, as I say, at the end of the day, if you look at what drives Ontario and what's driving people to come to Ontario—when people move to Canada, they look at the five blobs of blue on their world atlas, and there's a reason why they want to come in to the GTA or in to southern Ontario, and it's water. Water is paramount. If we don't protect it, we're our own worst enemy.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: You're absolutely right. We can live longer without food than we can without water.

The other question I wanted to ask is: Do you see the value in having the Great Lakes Guardians' Council meet often to discuss Great Lakes issues?

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Yes, with the proviso that there's healthy public input into that guardians' council, so it's not top-down. It really has the ability to be both ways.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Do you believe there should be targets and reviews of those targets?

Mr. Bob Duncanson: I think that there are certain areas where targets are fairly important. I'm pleased to see the MNR target on wetland protection. That one certainly resonates for the eastern side of Georgian Bay, where we have some of the best wetlands in the Great Lakes system that are threatened. We, again, need to start taking care of that. I'm not convinced that the MNR have had that focus enough.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. Thank you so much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate you coming before committee this afternoon and sharing your thoughts.

Mr. Bob Duncanson: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): You're welcome.

CONSERVATION ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I'm just going to go through the list. Is Ms. Bonnie Fox from Conservation Ontario here yet?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, great. So next we have—and we're a little bit early, but moving right along—Ms. Fox, from Conservation Ontario. We welcome you. You have five minutes to address the committee, followed by nine minutes of questioning.

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Okay; thank you very much. The following comments are coming from Conservation Ontario as the network of the 36 conservation authorities in Ontario. Conservation authorities are local watershed management agencies that deliver services and programs to protect and manage water and other natural resources.

The Great Lakes are an essential resource to Ontarians' social, economic and environmental well-being. Conservation Ontario strongly supports the purpose of the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act, as well as the expanded description of the purpose, that being to protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin and to create opportunities for individuals and communities to become involved in its protection.

The Great Lakes Protection Act provides new tools for the province of Ontario to continue to be an effective partner in Great Lakes protection. In particular, conservation authorities, as public bodies under the act, are pleased to see that it enables setting measurable targets for nearshore areas to achieve Great Lakes objectives; that it enables coordinated actions by various watershed stakeholders; that it enables building and enhancing existing tools and programs to implement local actions for broader Great Lakes benefits; that it enables additional science research, monitoring and reporting; and that it enables building upon existing models for efficiency, and those are both watershed models and binational.

The following comments focus on a couple of key issues and amendments that are intended to strengthen the Great Lakes Protection Act. Integrated watershed management enables a suite of interconnected issues to be addressed collectively and efficiently, and the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act enables this type of integrated approach. However, to ensure that the act is implemented in a truly integrated manner, it should ensure comprehensive monitoring and facilitate collaboration.

It is recommended that the list of monitoring and reporting commitments in section 7(1) include hydrology and biological communities: hydrology because it plays a significant role in ecological health, and biological monitoring such as fish populations, wetlands and benthic invertebrates, because they are indicators of water quality and associated ecosystem impacts.

An additional amendment should indicate that this monitoring and reporting should be done on a watershed basis, which would be neatly nested within and consistent with the focus of the legislation on the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basins, which are the larger watersheds.

In addition, to facilitate collaboration, it is suggested that section 34(2) be amended to include a requirement for the sharing of data, in addition to sharing documents, as necessary to deliver on geographically focused initiatives, and that part IV, the target-setting section, include a similar requirement for sharing of documents and data.

The second key issue is around funding. To ensure that the implementation of activities under the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act is successful, a clear and efficient plan for funding these activities is required. The proposed Great Lakes Protection Act does acknowledge this need in section 19(2)8, which requires a strategy for financing the implementation of an initiative.

It is suggested that amendments be made so that a proposal for an initiative—that's part V in section 12,

and the target-setting in part IV—is required to include a strategy for financing as well. These activities could hold significant financial and human resource implications for the public bodies involved, and funding could be a major constraint to success.

Just in closing, Conservation Ontario would like to thank the standing committee for the opportunity to speak to you today and to submit comments on the act. The conservation authorities look forward to assisting the province in achieving Great Lakes protection through providing support and advice, and serving as operational science-based delivery agents.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thanks very much, Ms. Fox. I appreciate that.

We shall start with the third party, the NDP. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Fox, thanks for being here and presenting this afternoon. When you look at the bill, and the conservation authorities have looked at the bill, to actually have an impact on the Great Lakes, what sort of funding level are we talking about?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: The way that the act is designed, it's up to the local public bodies—and the province, if they're involved—to determine what the scope is and how it's being used, so I think it's difficult to put a number on something like that. That's why I think it's important that, as part of any proposal or implementation of an initiative, it have a financing strategy associated with it.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And if there is no financing strategy and no further allocation of funds to make this bill a reality, what do you think the impact would be?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: I don't think it would help the Great Lakes and the efforts to protect Great Lakes water quality.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. To the government side: We shall go with Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Thank you.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Great presentation. Thank you very much for your support. I recognize the important work your organization has been doing—and is doing, as a matter of fact. One of your organizations, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, is located in my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. A couple of weeks before, I was there at the launch of building a trail from Orangeville to Port Credit in Mississauga. It was a great event.

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Great.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: We have a close working relationship with you, your organization. As you know, this is the third version of the bill. It has been heavily consulted, and each time we changed the bill, it has been improved and strengthened.

Having said that, your organization has asked to be invited to the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, and our government revised that previous bill to require this. Am I right?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Yes. We appreciate that.

1550

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thanks.

Can you tell us what other aspects of the bill you believe conservation authorities have expertise in to support our government?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Because of the watershed management basis of the business of the conservation authorities, they're really a critical partner for Great Lakes protection. We look at the Great Lakes—it's the bottom of the drainage basin, right? All of our watersheds are draining into the Great Lakes, so what's happening in our watersheds—the management actions and best management practice that we decide to implement with the local partners, that has an effect on what's happening with the Great Lakes.

For that reason, the authorities are a critical partner. They're critical as well for the research that they do on a watershed basis that then—we'd like to partner with the province and with the federal government to take that science and help us to make good decisions locally. That's another key area.

Stewardship activities: That relates back to the best management practices. That's critical. And just for the target-setting, that was an important piece for us, because we need a target in the nearshore area of the Great Lakes as watershed managers because we then are able to measure whether our actions are effective in having a change and a benefit to the Great Lakes. So having those targets watershed-based and being able to measure effectiveness I think is a really important piece of the legislation.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the official opposition. Mr. MacLaren.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Could you give us examples of what problems you would see, you would be trying to fix, to get the quickest and biggest improvements to water quality in the Great Lakes through this bill?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Through this bill? I think having some action as geographically focused initiatives on what you might call priority watersheds, in terms of those that are having impacts on nutrient contributions to the Great Lakes. I think a focus on the part of the province to encourage those watersheds to engage in utilizing the tools that are available in the legislation could have an impact. I think the monitoring and the reporting on what is—already a lot of good work is being done in the Great Lakes program, both provincially and federally. Getting that information out to others in terms of effect—

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I meant something more specific. Do you know of areas that need to be fixed?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Yes. The one thing that I'd like to say, though, is that too much of a focus on only what we think are the problem areas doesn't help us in terms of making improvements across the basin, basin-wide. So the geographically focused initiatives need to be learning

beds—and then transfer of the good tools across the province. I think that's a really important aspect.

I lost sight of what your prompt was there.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Do you know of a specific problem that needs to be fixed?

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Water quality and then a focus on green infrastructure and stormwater management in the highly urbanizing areas. The key areas are the Thames River and the greater Golden Horseshoe, because of the intense urbanization that is going on.

Currently the federal government is leading the development of a nearshore framework, where they are going to be assessing the nearshore areas and looking at where are the priority areas to protect and where are the priority areas because of threats. I think that exercise will let us know—certainly, drinking water is a big issue in terms of the Great Lakes. That's an example of a threat that we need to pay careful attention to. Obviously, Lake Erie is the most threatened, but shortly there behind is Lake Ontario with cladophora.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Thank you very much, Ms. Fox, for coming before the committee this afternoon and sharing your thoughts. I appreciate it.

Ms. Bonnie Fox: Okay; thank you.

THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): As we continue, just a bit ahead of schedule, I believe there's a little change to the agenda as we have a teleconference at 4:15 p.m. I believe Mr. Huber is here as president of the Thames River Anglers Association. We welcome you, sir. We appreciate your coming on before your scheduled time. You have five minutes to make your presentation to the committee, followed by nine minutes of questioning.

Mr. Robert Huber: Wonderful.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Welcome.

Mr. Robert Huber: Good afternoon, the Honourable Glen Murray, members of the Legislature and the standing committee, and my fellow speakers. My name is Robert Huber and I am the president of the Thames River Anglers Association. We're a grassroots organization of volunteers that has worked diligently since 1986 to improve the overall health of the Thames River and protect a diverse and sustainable multi-species fishery. We accomplish this through a combination of stream-based rehabilitation projects and hatching and releasing trout and walleye into the rivers, along with encouraging everyone, from youth to our city councillors, members of Parliament and corporations, to enhance and protect those rivers. It has been our experience that ecosystem-based stewardship programs dramatically improve the quality and sustainability of recreational, aboriginal and commercial fisheries that rely on those rivers for clean water, migration and spawning.

The Thames River itself is a nationally designated heritage river, having a rich and historic role as a temporary and seasonal route for the First Nations and Métis

people. Its watershed covers over 5,800 square kilometres and it supports over 90 species of fish, along with numerous aquatic species that have been listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern, which includes 12 fish species, six reptiles and seven mussels.

On behalf of our organization, we would like to formally commend those involved in drafting Bill 66 by communicating our full support of the purpose, policies and expectations that have been outlined to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. It's also encouraging to see that first reading was very well supported by the Legislature, and we hope that this momentum eventually results in programs and initiatives that will ultimately determine its overall success.

People who enjoy the outdoors and are actively engaged in projects to enhance the environment see firsthand the impacts of climate change and pollution. Efforts to actually reverse those problems are not without their complexities and take long-term dedication, hard work, and support from all levels of government to make any sort of noticeable progress.

Should this bill pass all future readings and is actually ratified, it's our intention to work with our local MPP to submit proposals for initiatives that, with appropriate scientific evidence and application of Bill 66, could yield measureable improvement in the health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. This would include, but is not limited to, requesting that the province develop and implement a strategy to completely eliminate the practice of releasing waste water by municipal sewage treatment facilities that has not been fully treated during extreme rain events. Urban centres in Ontario are dumping billions of litres of undertreated waste water directly into the rivers without oversight or accountability for those actions, and it absolutely must stop.

We would also like to see the province undertake a full study and development of an updated decision framework to determine the value and environmental impact of aging recreational-purpose and hydroelectric dams. Many of these structures are reaching the end of their expected lifespan and have fallen into a state of disrepair or been damaged by floods. Deadbeat dams have been proven to exacerbate the growing problem of toxic blue-green algae in the Great Lakes while destroying upstream habitat and interfering with or blocking native fish species migration. Frequent or annual draw-downs of dams have also been shown to cause spikes in the releases of greenhouse gases, thereby contributing to global warming. If the bill passes, we hope that under no circumstance should municipal, provincial or federal taxpayer money be used to repair or build structures that directly contravene this act.

It is also imperative that the province continue to support and fund the community hatcheries programs, along with other stream and habitat stewardship initiatives. Finding people who actually volunteer their time to improve a fishery, build a viewing platform or plant trees along a stream is difficult enough without having to worry if the funding or support for these programs will

suddenly come to an end. These are good programs that are making a difference in Ontario, and they need to continue to be a priority for the province.

1600

Hopefully this standing committee and our Legislature will make certain that Bill 66 is not only exemplary in its purpose but also includes the backbone and funding channels for necessary projects, along with the teeth required to hold those accountable for interfering with its mandate. Edward Abbey, who was a champion of environmental causes, once said, "Sentiment without action is the ruin of one's soul."

The Thames River Anglers sincerely appreciate the efforts made by the minister, Legislature and members of the standing committee to protect and restore the Great Lakes through the drafting of and future efforts to pass this bill.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Huber. I appreciate your comments. We will start with the third party, NDP. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: First of all, thank you very much for taking the time to come here. We really appreciate it.

The dumping of waste water: Are you, as anglers, seeing the direct impact of that on the waters that you are fishing in?

Mr. Robert Huber: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And this is a frequent occurrence that you're seeing? It doesn't have to be too frequent; I'm just curious.

Mr. Robert Huber: I can be pretty precise about it. Just in the city of London on the Thames River: In the last 12 years, the average amount of waste water dumped was 181 million litres per year of untreated waste water and 574 million litres of only primary-treated waste water, which just has the solid masses removed.

That waste water eventually goes into Lake St. Clair, down the Detroit River and into Lake Erie. We all know what then happens there.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. You've answered the question.

Can you tell me the relationship between the dams and the growth of algal blooms? This is the first time I had heard this.

Mr. Robert Huber: Absolutely. When you impound a river, that river is no longer moving, and the temperature of the water increases. In the city of London, two of those waste water facilities that released the untreated waste water are actually upstream of our dam that we have in the city. It's not working right now; it has been broken for eight years. When it was working, it would capture all that waste water, keep it in the pond for the summer, and let it flourish. It creates a eutrophic zone of basically oxygen-depleted water, and then at the end of the summer: Open up the gates and flush it all down. That's what the city does with it right now.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I really appreciate that; thank you. I don't have further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We'll move to the government: Ms. Kiwala.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you very much, Robert, for coming here today to speak with us. We really appreciate it. Great presentation—it's wonderful what people can pack in in five minutes. Good job.

I do also want to commend you for the rehabilitation work that you have done, and also I'd like to acknowledge you for the work that you've done in including First Nations in the consultations that you've done. Fabulous job.

I'm wondering if you can talk to me a little bit about how the province might be able to involve anglers in the implementation of the bill, should the bill go forward.

Mr. Robert Huber: Absolutely. I did read a bit about the role of the guardians within Bill 66. I don't know if there will be an open casting call, but we're ready. If anything, we're standing there already with our feet in the river. We can put a suit on, if we have to.

The other side of it is that within southwestern Ontario, we have what are called fisheries management zones, which were the split-up of the region with the regulation changes in the early 1990s. We don't have a fisheries management zone council for region 16, which is pretty much all of southwestern Ontario, so it is very hard to have a stakeholder voice in policy change, projects and things that are going on that affect fisheries, water quality and habitats within southwestern Ontario. We've tried our best, but it's just not getting any traction to actually have that formed yet.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Are there any other additional details that you can give to us or priority actions that you would suggest that the province take to help protect the Thames River?

Mr. Robert Huber: What I really liked about Bill 66 was that it wasn't just focused on the lakes, and that there's an understanding of the role that the tributaries and the rivers take in the health of the lakes themselves. It makes a lot of sense.

I think that if the province really reaches out to each of the—if you look, there's a similar group of conservation and angling-type groups on every single major river system within Ontario: Credit River, Grand River, Thames River. We all have groups like this. A lot of them just don't know when to speak up and share their thoughts and comments. Those are really the people who are going to be out there doing a lot of the projects and willing to actually volunteer their time to make it happen.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We will move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I certainly was looking forward to your presentation. I appreciate it very much.

In terms of a step going forward, listening to your comments about waste management, right now it's my understanding that urban centres just have to report how many times they have to dump as opposed to the quantity that they dump. Are you in agreement with that, or do you know anything more?

Mr. Robert Huber: It varies from urban centre to urban centre. There has obviously been some recent news

this summer about Toronto being expected to provide a little bit more timely notice, as in the same day, when they do a release like that, because it's a matter of public health and drinking water quality. In the city of London, it usually takes about two weeks for them to publish it on their city site, and that's where we were able to pull 12 years' worth of records from. But it's a bit of work to find it, and it should be a lot—if that event actually takes place, people should know right away.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good.

I was struck by the fact that you said that it's tough to get a forum struck in region 16, in southwestern Ontario. Do you have any observations on why it's not happening?

Mr. Robert Huber: We've been trying for 10 years to get that fisheries management zone council, have it take place. My understanding is that it's such a wide geographic area that it's a little bit more complicated than maybe making something like that in a northwestern Ontario community. That would probably be the most easy way to put that. We're hopeful that it will eventually happen before things change again, but by all means, we have to find our own ways to get our voice up and spoken.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I have a number of fisheries in my riding of Huron–Bruce, so I'm interested in that. They do a great job for us.

I appreciated your comments very much. My last question is, would you be willing to share or give us a copy of your remarks for our records?

Mr. Robert Huber: I was going to submit them officially. I don't know if there was an opportunity to do that: comment and provide notations, things like that?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Sure.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much for coming before the committee, Mr. Huber. We have a vote, so we will recess at this point. Again, thanks for coming before us.

This meeting is recessed until the vote. I encourage all members to go quickly: You've got two minutes and 50 seconds to get there.

The committee recessed from 1607 to 1619.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, I'd like to call the meeting back to order.

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): On your agendas, from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, we have Jacqueline Wilson with us—she's counsel—and as well, via teleconference, Ms. Theresa McClenaghan, executive director. Are you there, Ms. McClenaghan?

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan: Yes, I'm here as well. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Excellent. We just wanted to test, to make sure that we had the right volume. That's great.

I believe, Ms. Wilson, you're going to be making the presentation. Is that correct? All right. You have five minutes, followed by nine minutes of questioning from the three parties. Welcome. The floor is yours for five minutes.

Ms. Jacqueline Wilson: Thank you. My name is Jacqueline Wilson. I'm counsel at the Canadian Environmental Law Association. We've handed out copies of our presentation today.

I'm going to deliver the oral presentation on behalf of my colleague Fe de Leon, who fell ill today, so I'm pinch-hitting this part. My colleague on the phone, Theresa McClenaghan, who is the executive director and counsel at CELA, will answer any questions about the presentation.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association is a specialty legal aid clinic that focuses on environmental issues, including law reform issues. We have been working on protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem for a long time. CELA is also a member of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance.

We want to express our general support for Bill 66. We see it as an important new tool to address the growing and complex threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem, in particular from climate change, invasive species and toxic substances. In particular, we support the improved language in the preamble which now better reflects the importance and the understanding of the importance of the Great Lakes basin.

We also support the addition of language in the purposes section of the act, which also better reflects the importance of the Great Lakes watershed and the need to address climate change.

We support the addition of subclause 4(4)(d)(ii) of the bill, which outlines how the minister will develop criteria for geographically focused initiatives. We're very supportive of the enhanced public participation envisioned by this bill, in particular allowing members of the public to bring forward requests to establish targets or geographically focused initiatives.

The focus of my presentation is going to be on our concerns about toxic substances and environmental health in the Great Lakes ecosystem. I want to stress the magnitude of the problem of pollution from toxic substances in the Great Lakes. To give you a sense of that magnitude, I'm going to give you some statistics from the PollutionWatch report called Protecting the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin and Drinking Water Sources, which looked at the Great Lakes basin and pollution in December 2009, based on 2007 National Pollutant Release Inventory data.

That report stated that approximately 32 million kilograms of toxic chemical pollutants and over 720 million kilograms of criteria air contaminants were released into the air of the Great Lakes basin on the Canadian side of the border, and another 54 million kilograms of pollutants were released directly to water from facilities in source protection areas and regions of the Great Lakes basin. Those stats are high enough but they likely are in

fact even higher because that report focuses only on facilities covered by the National Pollutant Release Inventory, which doesn't cover many pollutants, and that study doesn't cover pollutants discharged from indirect sources.

We want to stress a growing concern about toxic chemicals from consumer products. Those toxic substances have been found and detected in the Great Lakes, and the existing chemical management regime has not kept pace with that growing threat.

Bill 66 offers us an opportunity to advance efforts to prevent pollution from toxic chemicals, and it's another tool to support and advance implementation of the Toxics Reduction Act and the 2014 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health.

However, in order to further support that goal of reduction of toxic substances in the Great Lakes basin, CELA recommends including actual targets for reduction and specific goals to eliminate toxic chemicals in this legislation.

Before we move to questions, I also want to stress CELA's opposition to clause 38(1)(l) of this bill, which was added in this version and allows cabinet to exempt any person or class of persons from the act. It's our position that there's no need for this broad exemption power and that it could undermine the effectiveness of this important legislation, so we urge the government to remove it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall start with the official opposition. Ms. Thompson?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Actually, we don't have any questions at this time.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. We'll move to Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thanks very much for coming and presenting today. I want to go back to the last point you made, and that's the exemption section of the bill, 38(1)(l). Can you expand upon why you see this as a negative for this bill?

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan: Because this bill is enabling legislation, the broad exemption power is ill-conceived. It's not the kind of situation where you have a very specific process where you need to allow some discussion to government for exceptional circumstances. This is broad enabling legislation, and because of the structure of the bill, where all kinds of sectors would be involved in developing the particular proposals, for example, for initiatives, there's already plenty of room to negotiate the specific measures adopted for those initiatives. In our view, the possibility of a broad exemption is very troublesome, because we have no way to predict whether a government might take a whole entire sector of activity and exempt it from the bill, and suddenly not allow parties across the province to be discussing and including that sector in the discussions about specific initiatives, or talking to government about specific things they need to do on the approvals side.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That's pretty straightforward. Thank you, Theresa. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the government. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Ms. Wilson, for your presentation, and thank you for your dedication and commitment to environmental issues. I'm very pleased to share with you and your association that our government is also very dedicated and committed on environmental issues.

I'm sure you're aware, and many members of your organization are also aware, that our former Premier Dalton McGuinty has received the Sierra Club Distinguished Service Award for his dedication to the environment. And Diane Beckett, interim executive director of Sierra Club Canada Foundation, said, "We honour those who despite significant challenges make the right decisions for our environment. Premier McGuinty persevered in the face of strong dissenting forces to close power plants and create a green power industry in Ontario. No other government leader in North America has made a greater contribution to fighting climate change."

I'm very proud to be a part of a government whose ongoing commitment is for environmental issues. Even our current Premier, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, and my minister, Glen Murray, are also very dedicated and committed on this issue.

Having said that, my question to you is, do you see value in having the Great Lakes Guardians' Council as a collaborative forum?

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan: Yes, we see a lot of value in having the Great Lakes Guardians' Council. One of the things that it really adds that we don't have today is a multi-sectoral approach to setting priorities, both for the lakes as a whole and for specific threats within particular parts of the basin.

At the moment, a lot of that work is done in good faith but at the governmental level, and it means that particular actions that might be needed in particular watersheds are not necessarily getting the priority that those in those watersheds might imagine. Similarly, for the basin as a whole, that is a good forum to have a conversation about what the Great Lakes-wide priorities should be. So we're strongly supportive of the Great Lakes council proposed in this bill.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Can you shed light on how geographically focused initiatives are important?

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan: The biggest reason that they're important is because we lack legal tools today to address some of the activities, actions and land use that are threatening the lakes. As indicated, we do have ongoing threats that are not being prevented or restored under our current tools. Having geographically focused initiatives means that, in a very collaborative way—which is intended by the bill—either the minister could ask a public authority to develop a proposal and consult, or it could be the ground up coming forward with a proposal. But it would be very specific to the actual threats in that part of the lake. It's quite critical because

it's not a one-size-fits-all solution across Lake Superior to Lake Ontario. Even within one lake, it's not one-size-fits solutions in every part of the lake. This is going to be an extremely important new tool. I'm quite excited, assuming the bill does pass this committee and the House, to start working with people to take new actions to protect the lakes.

1630

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Ms. McClenaghan and Ms. Wilson, for coming before committee and sharing your insight with us. We appreciate it.

Ms. Theresa McClenaghan: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Have a great afternoon.

ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next, from the Association for Canadian Educational Resources, I believe we have Alice Casselman, who is the founding president. We welcome you. You have five minutes, followed by nine minutes of questioning from the three parties. Welcome. The floor is yours.

Ms. Alice Casselman: You're welcome. Thank you for this opportunity, and good afternoon, everybody. I know it's a long day and a long afternoon, but anyway, here we go.

We're very supportive of Bill 66. Our work is to help citizens and agencies realize the impacts of climate change on our water and our natural heritage in the Great Lakes basin, including the St. Lawrence, of course. That's where I was raised.

ACER began in 1997 to establish one-hectare forest plots with Environment Canada and Smithsonian folks, the career scientists, and with the partners who owned the land. We trained local staff and their volunteers, with our staff having developed these protocols. As citizen scientists, they then collected the data to be shared with everyone. Our latest plot, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, is now being inventoried by their staff and volunteers that we trained.

Just to give you the context, we use local citizen scientists to do this data collection and sharing of all of their work with our technologies and teaching resources. A lot of us were teachers when we started the organization, and are now retired.

Our mandate has always been monitoring changes in trees through measurements by the local environmentally interested people and educators. We've implemented several programs along this line, from the indicator species experimental plots at Humber Arboretum to, currently, taking the riparian zone restoration monitoring very seriously—a research document released in 2010, because we were trying to find what was common to the best practices at that time.

We've gone on to staff, equip and train our local partners and volunteers to work together to carry out our

benchmark inventories on their land and their plantings, to monitor the success of community and machine plantings.

I've had the opportunity to review the written submissions of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, who you just heard, and I heartily endorse their recommended amendments.

We're particularly happy, as science educators and others who are interested, to see that the purposes of the proposed act include the intention to enable citizens to contribute; they reflect the issues of climate change in the purposes; and they support the scientific principles that will guide the government's decisions in this proposed act.

We hope to have opportunities in assisting in monitoring and reporting with others, in a collaborative manner, with sections 7 and 10.

I want you to think about looking at some of the attached pages and links that lead you to some of those reports.

Very quickly, then, to finish off: We've mapped and benchmarked inventories of 10% of both community and mass tree plantings. We finished with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority last year, and the city of Mississauga last year, with the Great Lakes Community Guardian Fund. Now we're working with Lake Simcoe and their cleanup fund, to do the same thing.

That's what we do. We permanently tag them, GPS them, inventory them, and share all the information so they can track what the success of those plantings is, and then make some decisions as to what they should plant in the future and what sites and trees should be put together for doing that in a successful way in the future. Our work is to help with the analysis of those plantings and results over years of cumulative data collection, to make better decisions for our changing climate.

It's a breakthrough for us, as a community-based citizen science organization, to do this monitoring in a very, very accurate way and share the information, so that we can make those future choices and protect our Great Lakes basin, including the St. Lawrence River.

We look forward to working with all the communities in the Great Lakes basin and the St. Lawrence to help see this vision of the law fully implemented.

Again, thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Ms. Casselman. We appreciate your remarks.

We'll start with the government. Who will be starting? Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Welcome, Ms. Casselman. Well done, I might add.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Thank you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's refreshing to see someone who believes very strongly in monitoring and being able to realize the impact from that. I certainly congratulate you on citizen scientists. You really want more public participation.

A couple of quick questions, if I could. One of the purposes of the proposed act is to create opportunities for

people and communities to become involved in the Great Lakes. Do you see that value in supporting individuals and groups, even though I've heard what you've just said, getting involved in the Great Lakes science and restoration action and at the same time seeing the value in ensuring monitoring—again, you've already touched on it—and reporting programs are established and maintained to monitor the health of our Great Lakes? I'd like your—on those same things.

Ms. Alice Casselman: This collaboration, as a provincial partner, we have now through our last contract confirms our integrity, confirms what we do, and allows us to share. So the more collaborative partners, the better. We're educators. We've been teaching a long time, so we would enjoy working with others to share our methodologies, our technology and our resources, including the equipment. To train, equip, support is our mandate, really, to make sure this happens. We'd be delighted to partner with whoever is interested to do the collection of the data. Most people aren't interested in measuring. We are. That's our niche.

Mr. Joe Dickson: You're a guiding light.

Just finally, Mr. Chair, if I have time, the strategy sets out Ontario's road map for the protection of the Great Lakes and that includes public engagement, sharing the Great Lakes science. In your mind, would this proposed act require strategy to be reviewed regularly and for the progress to be reported, and do you support an ongoing commitment along that vein?

Ms. Alice Casselman: Absolutely, sir. We need cumulative, long-term data to be shared by everybody. We don't want people to have to buy data, we don't want disappearing data, as in Maclean's magazine, might I say. We want to make sure that this is ongoing, long-term commitment by all the partners so we have this to make future decisions. We're walking away and not knowing what happens. That's not good.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Excellent. If I have the opportunity, I'll suggest that we clone you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Please do. We have a little hub of an office in Mississauga. We'd be delighted to have information sessions with anyone, any time, any place. Just call us. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Don't go away.

Ms. Alice Casselman: I am so sorry. I was looking over there.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We'll move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I actually would like to share my colleague Mr. Dickson's comments. I really appreciate your comments and your dedication. It struck me.

A quick question: With regard to the GFIs and targets that need to be met, you stand by the fact that everything needs to be scientifically evidence-based. Yes, thumbs up.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Absolutely. That's my whole background. My whole life has been teaching science and encouraging people to understand and appreciate, to have

fun doing science. That's what we're about. I know about the areas of concern from the previous run and there are lots of hot spots that we could help.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. What a breath of fresh air.

Your document is very handy as well. In the first page you talk about tree and shrub roots increasing bank and shoreline stability. I just want to invite you to my riding of Huron-Bruce. In Goderich, the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority—

Ms. Alice Casselman: We want to be there. That's one of our field station potentials.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's gorgeous. What they've done to reinforce the bank with trees and shrubs is absolutely perfect.

Ms. Alice Casselman: We were horrified. We actually worked, on my say-so—Heather Auld and Don MacIver, who used to be with Environment Canada. They were the ones who suggested Goderich with the wind damage. In the Niagara region, too; we have visions of putting in field stations which are replicas of the pilot we did in Niagara with Trillium money for the last three years, and you're welcome to all those reports and data.

And November 13, if I might add, we are holding our last of three community mapping workshops and I invite anyone in the area to come and join. This is a whole new asset-based community mapping protocol that we've brought to the environmental sector.

1640

Those two previous reports are on our website. Also, in February, braving blizzards, in Niagara we will have—I think it's the 4th or 6th of February—the last HIRA workshop. HIRA stands for hazard identification and risk assessment, and that's what these two, Don MacIver and Heather Auld, built when they were with Environment Canada and now with Risk Sciences International. They're our stars and mentors for 17 years.

So please do remember those dates. We'd just love to have you involved.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. I look forward to seeing you in Goderich.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Great, thank you. We'll move to the third party. Ms. Casselman, don't go away yet.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Whoops. Sorry; I'm aware of the time.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): No, there's plenty of time. There's plenty of time for you, ma'am.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: We never let people go. You can come in, but you can't leave.

Ms. Alice Casselman: I know we have a certain amount of minutes, so I'm always very—I lived by the clock for 35 years. It's okay.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And I'm very appreciative of that. It's nice to see a citizen group tracking climate change. I appreciate your presentation today.

One of the concerns I've had, and it has been expressed by a number of people who have appeared before us today, is section 38(1)(l), which gives the government

broad powers to exempt—what can I say?—projects and bodies from the bill itself. I am assuming that your group opposes that exemption?

Ms. Alice Casselman: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You do?

Ms. Alice Casselman: I do. I do, out loud.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Excellent.

Ms. Alice Casselman: May I say, however, that I have a solution. I want to share this with you because I feel so strongly about this information that just came from India. I think going back historically, the Supreme Court of India ruled that environmental education shall be in every state, and they made it happen. Lately, as of two years ago, they actually said that the corporations making X dollars net profit shall have to have 2% of that net profit, over a certain boundary, maximum or minimum, put in a CSR. They have four categories, and one of them is where they actually go into their communities where their factories are and do things.

I would recommend, if I may, that you look at that legislation. I think it would be precedent-setting for Ontario to lead this. I know it's a tough time for everybody, but some people are making money, so the CSR needs that injection of some of it—a little bit. I think we can go really miles with that, if we look at that legislation.

In the steel company that I worked—the young lad who is working with us now came from there in Gujarat, and he was telling us this successful project that he did with his company, because they're sucking out groundwater. Goderich is on groundwater, right? So imagine if your company said, "This is our footprint. This is how much we have to spend with your community. Let's work together." They actually went out and found pasture land that wasn't being used and other land, and they said, "Okay, with the community, let's dig a huge pond three metres deep and that'll recharge the groundwater we're sucking out to manufacture steel, and we'll plant, with your people"—remember this is Gujarat—"all native nut and fruit trees with the farmers, and they will harvest and keep what they need and sell a surplus." Doesn't everybody win?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Amazing, and that's India.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for that.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mrs. Casselman. You're actually quite lovely. We really appreciate it. You're the only person yet to try to escape twice prior to the questioning, because usually people stay. You were entertaining and very knowledgeable. Thank you very much.

Ms. Alice Casselman: It speaks to my educator's background, watching the clock. The kids can see it behind my head, and I have to twist my neck. Take care.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you for coming. We really appreciate it.

ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next we have, from the Alliance for the Great Lakes, Mr. Joel Brammeier?

He's the president and chief executive officer. We welcome you here this afternoon, sir. You have five minutes.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: My first comment has to be that Ms. Casselman needs to pay a visit to the United States, because that was an infectious presentation, inspiring and a tough act to follow, so I hope I can.

Ms. Alice Casselman: Thank you so much. Any time you want to invite me.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: I may well take you up on that.

Ms. Alice Casselman: And pay my way—

Mr. Joel Brammeier: That is always the rub, as we're going to talk about.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Good. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: Mr. Chair, thank you for inviting me. As you said, my name is Joel Brammeier. I'm president and CEO of the Alliance for the Great Lakes. We are an independent NGO headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, with staff around the Great Lakes region on the US side. I'm also a member of the governance board of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, which started and continues to organize the stakeholder movement to support funding for Great Lakes restoration in the United States.

Our vision is healthy Great Lakes for people and wildlife forever. I'm here representing thousands of our supporters, because the Great Lakes are precious to the environment and the economy of our region, and they know no political boundary. The province of Ontario is in a unique position to help lead the region towards Great Lakes health, resilience and promise for the future.

I want to take a moment also to specifically thank the province of Ontario for its leadership on the invasive species issue, particularly with regard to Asian carp. People in the United States notice your activities and are very thankful for the actions that have been taken over the last several years here.

Our lakes, unfortunately, can still induce fear rather than awe—fear in the form of water that's toxic at the tap or pathogens that make people sick. This really ought to be unheard of in a place where we have access to nearly 20% of the world's fresh surface water.

The Great Lakes region can become a global leader in water stewardship, and the Great Lakes Protection Act will demonstrate that Ontario is serious and aspirational in its expectations of what the Great Lakes can be.

We fully support the recommendations of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance and urge you to adopt their recommendations.

I also want to point out that the committee is receiving a letter signed on to by 15 United States organizations in support of the bill, organized by my colleague Nancy Goucher, who I think is not back in the room yet.

My own comments are going to be focused on some of my own observations and experiences in Great Lakes work over the last 15 years, with a particular focus on targets, collaboration and financing.

As you've heard already today, the problems facing the lakes today don't come with simple on-off switches. They're not coming at the end of a pipe, typically. The

targets contemplated by the protection act will set certainty in the face of this daunting complexity.

Targets do not solve a problem, but we have already seen the power of targets when voiced by Premier Wynne and her counterparts in the states of Ohio and Michigan, saying we will reduce pollution in Lake Erie by 40%—that lays a foundation for success. It communicates to the public that we know there is a path to Great Lakes health, and it activates innovators, stewards, landowners and advocates to find solutions. Those targets, as contemplated in the act, are critical.

The protection act does something else that I think is extremely important: It tries to harness the power of collaboration. In particular, the process of consultation with stakeholders and the ability to use a diverse set of tools that are customized to the situation at hand are critically important in solving the systemic problems we have in front of us.

I've seen the demand for and the power of these kinds of approaches in other places, and I just wanted to share my perspective from the States, in particular the state of Wisconsin. The state of Wisconsin is facing a similar situation as to what is in Lake Erie, on a smaller scale, with toxic algae blooms, that are coming from a myriad of sources, in a watershed.

Residents there are deeply concerned, not just because they're concerned about the quality of their water, but because they see people not coming to that part of the state because of the quality of the resources being diminished.

There's a new statutory approach there that invokes voluntary practices; regulation, as appropriate; measurement and monitoring; and significant financing, and these communities are actually binding themselves together, urban and rural, in an attempt to reduce water pollution from all sources.

I see promise in the geographically focused initiatives concept, and I urge you to pursue that promise in this bill.

The last thing I want to mention is the importance of financing and funding. To give an example of this, reaching back several decades, consider the creation of the concept of areas of concern, these most polluted hot spots around the Great Lakes in the US and Canada that were designated in 1987.

Communities around the region created plans for cleanup of these sites, and, frankly, many of those plans—I can certainly speak from experience in the United States—sat on a shelf for a decade or more, until the mid-2000s, when stakeholders and communities started to realize that if they didn't get active about finding financing to implement these plans, nothing was ever going to happen.

There's a lot more work left to do in the Great Lakes. In the US, we're looking back, however, on five years of unprecedented investment—federal, state, local and private—brought about by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

From our own work to change local policies to improved clean water in communities, I know that timely investment is as meaningful a predictor of success as the

right policy and strong public engagement. It does not necessarily have to be a huge infusion of government money from one source, but the need for sufficient financing is real and it needs to be satisfied for these initiatives to succeed.

1650

The Great Lakes centre our effort to build a resilient future where the people of the region are elevated alongside the place that we all hold dear. The protection act rightly seeks to address critical gaps in Ontario's leadership of Great Lakes protection, and it does so in a way that partners with the people of the province. With an emphasis on target-setting, collaboration and sufficient funding, Ontario can continue to emerge as a Great Lakes leader within an ecosystem that joins and aligns two great nations.

Thank you for the opportunity for making comments today, and I'm happy to take your questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Brammeier. We will start with the third party, NDP. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like to thank you very much for the presentation and for the written submission.

Could you talk to us a bit about the level of financing or funding that's gone into cleanup initiatives on the part of American Great Lakes states?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: I can. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is a federal funding source that has created a little less than \$2 billion in federal investment through federal agencies over the last five years. That goes in a number of ways through federal agencies and also in grants to state agencies, and then it often is matched, typically by additional investment at the state, local and private scale. So even though you're seeing that \$2 billion in federal investment, you're seeing multiples of that being invested by state and local sources.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Those are very significant resources, and it's good to hear about that. You noted that plans to clean up the lakes, to clean up local communities that had hot spots, sat on shelves until the middle of the last decade. What was it that sparked people? What moved them to actually start investing?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: I think it was the inertia, frankly. There was a time, I think, in the early 1990s and mid-1990s in the US when many of the areas of concern had groups of stakeholders that came together and built very strong, meaningful plans and networks of people who wanted to support those plans for cleanup. If you spend five or 10 years waiting around and watching to see what's going to happen and you realize nothing is happening, you start to create a movement of communities that all network together and write a plan for the cleanup of the Great Lakes. That plan eventually underpinned a federal process that became the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. Ms. Mangat?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Welcome to Queen's Park, Mr. Brammeier.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: Thank you.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to see that there is support across the basin. It demonstrates how important it is to work co-operatively and together. When we work together, we always benefit from the ideas and advice of others.

We all know that in the past five to 15 years, unique changes have been recorded in the Great Lakes' history. Previous speakers today and yesterday spoke about climate change. We can also see the impacts of climate change here in the province of Ontario, severe weather phenomena: heavy downpours, rainfall and snowfall extremes, and, similarly, floods and droughts are becoming very common. What is your position on this?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: We are facing serious implications in the Great Lakes region from the reality of global climate change and we are facing a reality where some of those changes are baked in and are already damaging and hurting the people of the Great Lakes region and the ecology of the Great Lakes region.

What we have to do in the short term is equip communities with the tools they need to become more resilient in the face of challenges like extreme storms, extreme flooding, property damage. In the long run, we have to mitigate the causes of climate change, because that is the only thing that will protect the Great Lakes for generations to come.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Do you think that overall, on the whole, Bill 66 is a positive step in the right direction?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: I think that the collaborative approach outlined in Bill 66 can very much support the kind of building resilience within communities and networks of communities that I spoke of, yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So what I understand you are saying is that this proposed act would enable geographically focused initiatives?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: Yes. When I say collaboration, I do mean the GFI concept, which allows a network of communities to come together, identify what we would call stressors on their systems, stresses on their water such as dealing with extreme precipitation, and then come up with strategies to adapt to those stresses collaboratively.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the third party. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for being here. I'm taken by your breadth of experience, and I'm wondering—many neighbouring states value the legislation we have in Ontario, known as the Environmental Farm Plan and also the Nutrient Management Act. Speaking to somebody who is chair of the Great Lakes initiative, he's saying that many neighbouring states are looking to Ontario to help them develop their own environmental farm plans and their own nutrient management plans.

We all know that Lake Erie is a big issue. In your experience, bringing an American perspective to our committee table today, what are Americans doing in terms of their part in protecting our Great Lakes?

Mr. Joel Brammeier: Well, that's a great question. With regard to the programs that you mentioned related to agriculture, it is important to recognize that the Lake Erie problem and the nutrient problem is an international problem. There are certainly larger contributors and smaller contributors across the board, but the problem truly will not be solved without action on the part of all of the jurisdictions around Lake Erie.

I'm encouraged by some of the progress that is being made, particularly in the state of Ohio, where there have been some initial steps to reduce the inputs of phosphorus into the Maumee River and other streams and rivers there.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That's exactly what I was referring to.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: I think that we have a long way to go, and I believe that we have a lot of work to do on both sides of the international border.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. That's it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Brammeier for coming before us and for coming up to the great province of Ontario. We appreciate that.

Mr. Joel Brammeier: Thank you for your time.

GREENLAND INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING LTD.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next we have, from Greenland International Consulting Ltd., Mr. Mark Palmer and Mr. Jim Hartman with us this afternoon. We welcome the both of you. You have five minutes, followed by nine minutes of questioning. Good afternoon.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Chairperson Crack, Vice-Chair Dickson and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I'm here before you with my business partner Jim Hartman. Collectively, we represent 50 years of professional engineering experience in the province of Ontario. We work for a company called Greenland International Consulting, which is a member of the Greenland Group. Our head office is located in the town of Collingwood, in Simcoe county, Ontario.

We stand before you to specifically recommend the following amendments to the principles that are intended to guide decisions in Bill 66: primarily, that section 6.4(i) be amended to read, "An ecosystem approach that addresses individually and cumulatively all sources of stress to the Great Lakes." And finally, another amendment: that section 6.4(iv) be amended to read, "The importance of collaboration and the sharing of data between government and interested persons and organizations in seeking to achieve the purposes of this act."

We've prepared a slide deck presentation. Jim will speak to some of the examples that we're leading now with our partners—municipal and First Nations partners—in Ontario and maybe a focus on Simcoe county. We were involved with the preparation of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and some of the modelling tools that were developed about 10 years ago.

Greenland is a professional engineering company, but we're unique in the sense that our business plan includes the development of decision support tools, which includes Ontario universities. Currently, we have relationships with the University of Waterloo for information technology development and the University of Guelph. Jim and I are both Guelph grads, so Guelph is dear to our hearts.

In 2013, we entered into a joint venture arrangement with not only Waterloo but also the Communitech hub. Communitech is a 1,000-member organization in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. We're a private sector company, but we've reached out through the network and membership there to work with agencies, government, NGOs in terms of developing partnerships and the development of these tools and technologies. Primarily, we're working with a Great Lakes basin focus, and we're also, as I mentioned, working with some First Nations communities in Ontario.

To date, landmark cloud-based system tools have been developed and validated in Ontario, including, this summer, models for the Lake Erie basin. Currently, we're working with Environment Canada, the Ontario provincial ministries as well as the conservation authorities to look at policies on the Canadian side of the border for Lake Erie and how to incorporate innovative technologies and approaches with these systems with university and research teams. That's an ongoing project that is under way.

One of the models in your package that is referred to as CANWET has been around for 10 years. It evolved, as I said, out of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. It stands for the Canadian watershed evaluation tool. We're pretty proud of that tool.

1700

We're here to also say that this industry-accepted tool forms part of a first-ever open and transparent Internet cloud platform that will be accessible at shared, lower costs and maintained at the University of Waterloo. We developed this platform with other tools. What that means is that the data that is being provided to these tools and models provides information that we feel would be of value to multiple users. As a private sector firm networking with government agencies, we feel that this will lower costs over the long term. With the legislation at hand, moving to our cumulative effects management approach, we feel the technology is there.

New technology is now being rapidly developed in Ontario. I just returned from the Eureka Acqueau conference in Europe. We were invited by the NRC to participate in a European forum, and I was very proud to showcase the work that we're doing in the Great Lakes basin and with the province as well. We're moving quickly on the technology front.

Having the legislation amended to include collaborations, sharing of data, and also cumulative impacts: We have the tools, we have the technology and we have the partners now in place—and some examples—to move this forward.

Jim can just provide a few examples with the time remaining.

Mr. Jim Hartman: Certainly. We've actually put into motion and into place some of the tools that Mark is talking about with respect to cumulative impacts.

One of the specific examples that we've been working on recently is in the township of Adjala-Tosorontio, which is just west of Alliston in Simcoe county. In that particular instance, that community is growing and looking to grow further, but they also have environmental concerns within the community that need to be addressed, specifically their septic system and the septic system failures that are occurring there and some issues associated with the failures as it relates to source water protection and taking of groundwater.

When we started to look at solutions to that, we looked at the cumulative impacts of the septic systems and potential solutions, which would include looking at non-point sources as a method of reduction, as well as looking at the potential of removing septic systems and discharging them into a waste water treatment plant. But in doing so, we looked at the cumulative impacts of all of those impacts and, using tools like CANWET, determined what those impacts would be on—in this particular case, the Pine River, which, as you may be aware, is a very highly regarded salmon fishery within the Great Lakes. The tools have been used from a cumulative impact perspective in projects like that. We've also been involved in the visioning strategy for the county of Simcoe and using those tools to identify the best locations for waste water treatment plants throughout the county.

The tools are in place, as Mark has indicated, and certainly, we think that this bill will go a long way to ensuring those cumulative impacts are having high regard going forward on all future projects.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

We'll start with the government. Ms. Kiwala.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you very much for being here. It's a very interesting presentation. It's a dreadful shame that we only have three minutes to question and you have five to deliver. But that is what it is, so there's nothing else we can do about it.

I have to say, right off the bat, it's an absolutely inspiring collaboration that you've done with different levels of government and different regions—very fantastic. You're working with a First Nations group, which is always important to me. Also, your work collaborating with universities is going to be extremely important in getting the best science-based approach to this policy going forward. We really appreciate your input there. I would encourage you as well to think about Queen's University—just saying.

It sounds to me in general like you support the bill. You feel that it's a positive step for the province to be taking at this time.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Yes. There are five pieces to cumulative effects management, and the missing piece is the legislation, the statutory directive to implement it. We

have the technology. We have data. We can utilize that very effectively through these partnerships. With the legislation and with the amendments that we've suggested, it fills the final piece of the puzzle for effective cumulative effects management. That's a piece of the puzzle that I believe is really needed now to move forward on individual watersheds.

I just wanted to also mention some of the pilot testing we've done in Lake Erie. It's quite exciting, actually, because we're always asked the question. With the number of watersheds in Lake Erie, we're pilot testing the tools now on the Thames River basin draining into Lake St. Clair—very interesting results we're getting now, and we couldn't have done this without the University of Waterloo involved, in terms of their horsepower with computer technology.

As engineers, at the end of the day we're the ones helping, working with stakeholders to develop solutions. We take our risk through that as professional engineers, but we need the best tools and technology, and that's where I think we've got a very unique blend of a team there. The technology's moving very rapidly, so there's no reason, I don't believe, that these amendments could not be made in looking at cumulative impacts and not just individual—

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Fantastic. So would you support setting targets as well in collaboration with local priorities?

Mr. Mark Palmer: Yes. The experience that we had with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan was very unique. We worked with all the municipalities in the Lake Simcoe basin, setting targets—end of sub-watershed targets but also there were in-stream targets. We had some American companies working with us as well with their experience with TMDLs, total maximum daily loads technology.

The answer is yes, and with the technology now we're able, through these tools, to develop these maps—the road maps, these hot spot maps. It's interesting, as we develop these maps, what I find is it breaks down the barriers on finger pointing. What it does is, it shows clusters of area where everybody has to work together. It could be, as Jim said, multiple point/non-point sources. I find that, without these tools, we've always been pointing fingers at who is causing issues in the lake, but with the technology now there in place and moving quickly, we're able now to create these partnerships to say, "Let's work together," and "Where do we spend our limited dollars to fix the issues?"

It's not only a spatial issue. We're finding with the snowmelt periods and climate change—these models are linked to climate models—we're having dramatic impacts obviously with the spring freshet and also the events we have with warmer winters. So this will be an interesting winter, what's coming up, with El Niño, in terms of monitoring loads to the lake. I think it could be quite dramatic actually.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

We'll move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I think we can all agree that the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is certainly a benchmark. We recognize what's in it to make it to the level of an award-winning initiative.

I also have to share with you that I'm a Gryphon. I'm sure you know Wayne Caldwell.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Excellent.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the work you're doing and the message that you share today.

One thing about setting targets: Would you not agree that any targets that are identified for Great Lakes protection should be science-based based on the message that you just shared with us?

Mr. Mark Palmer: Yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, I applaud the idea of removing the finger pointing and getting to the solution—absolutely we need that to be done.

But when you take a look at Bill 66, were there any flags that popped up for you or did you find it odd that there was absolutely no funding identified to accompany Bill 66?

Mr. Mark Palmer: From a private business perspective, we do live in interesting times for finding money, but I find that when we have these tools, leveraging is a key tool that we can use in business. That's my message today, as a private business that's been in operation for 20 years. I think moving forward with the legislation, it should include this private sector involvement with technology, and our Communitech cousins, our 1,000-company representation of firms there with sensor technology and many new techniques. We should encourage that. We should encourage the private sector getting more actively involved in watershed management issues.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. I agree with you.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Mr. Tabuns, from the third party.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Gentlemen, I'd like to thank you for appearing today, but I don't have any questions. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. A very comprehensive presentation. We really appreciate you taking the time this afternoon.

Mr. Mark Palmer: Thank you, Chair.

PICKERING AJAX CITIZENS TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR WATER

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next on the agenda we have Pickering Ajax Citizens Together to Protect Our Water. We have Joanne Dies, is it?

Ms. Joanne Dies: That's right.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): She's the co-chair. Is Mr. Steele here with you today?

Ms. Joanne Dies: I'm sorry. He was unable to make it at the last minute.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Of course, you know you have five minutes for your presentation, but maybe we'll take it to four since that was in my package. What do you think, Mr. Dickson?

Mr. Mike Colle: I didn't get that.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): It's all in your package.

Thank you very much. You have five minutes for your presentation, and we welcome your remarks.

Ms. Joanne Dies: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for allowing me to address you this evening.

1710

As the Chair said, I'm Joanne Dies. I'm a resident of Ajax. I'm also a municipal councillor and the co-chair of what we call PACT POW—it's a lot shorter. The citizens' group PACT POW came together three years ago in direct response to concerns from residents regarding the algae growth along the Ajax waterfront, specifically on our beaches and shores. In Ajax, we're very proud that the whole front of our waterfront from east to west is publicly owned and is a public park enjoyed by many. As Vice-Chair Joe Dickson knows, we do have a huge problem with stinking, rotten algae, which they call cladophora, along the Ajax-Pickering nearshore, which is getting worse as time goes by. It's really very prolific.

So we've done scientific study. It's been conducted along the Ajax-Pickering waterfront and has proven that the soluble reactive phosphorus, or SRP, discharged from the Duffin Creek sewage plant in Pickering, which is just west of Ajax, is the cause of the nuisance algae. A phosphorus reduction strategy was approved for Lake Simcoe not too long ago, but no such strategy has been established to protect Lake Ontario from SRP. That's one of our questions: We'd like to know why it's okay to have that protection in Simcoe but not Lake Ontario.

Therefore, we need the province to set a specific target for SRP for the Lake Ontario nearshore waters now, and we need the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Glen Murray, to apply SRP limits specifically on the Duffin Creek plant now, as an immediate permanent solution to the algae problem, because we have a problem now and it's getting worse.

Minister Murray has an opportunity to do this immediately in his response to PACT POW's part II order request, as well as requests filed by the town of Ajax, NGOs and almost 100 Ajax residents—and Pickering residents as well—regarding the York and Durham region's deficient Duffin Creek sewage plant outfall EA and environmental study report. This would send a strong message of support for Bill 66 and the need for strong policies and regulations on nutrient loadings, essential to preventing further degradation of the shoreline and our future water quality. We need to turn back the tide.

Again, MPP Dickson knows the Duffin plant's outfall and the explosive algae growth are huge issues in our

community. He promised during the last election to champion an immediate solution to this problem. I have to say our residents are well educated on the issues that nutrients cause in our lakes, in our nearshore, and how they jeopardize the future of our quality of drinking water.

Bill 66 contains tools that PACT POW and the town of Ajax could use, such as section 30, which would allow us to request that SRP targets be set and a geographically focused initiative be prepared to tackle the broader nearshore algae problem.

Here's what we think needs to be changed to make Bill 66 stronger:

—In section 7, the minister must also carry out monitoring and reporting of SRP concentrations in nearshore waters measured at appropriate intervals in the water column, and tissue phosphorus concentrations in cladophora measured at optimum depths for growth; and

—A new subsection in section 9 requiring that within two years of this section coming into force, the minister will establish a phosphorus reduction strategy for the Lake Ontario nearshore which shall, at a minimum, include establishment of a water quality objective for cladophora, a provincial water quality objective for SRP and nearshore waters of Lake Ontario and phosphorus loading limits for sewage treatment plants discharging into our lake.

Regulating SRP is key to saving our waterfront from the adverse effects of algae. People want to swim in a clean lake and have picnics on our beaches. What they don't understand is why the government is not fixing the problem when they have the tools at hand.

PACT POW supports the amendments to Bill 66. We're very glad to see it coming forward. We also support the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, including the removal of the section 38 exclusion clause by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. We need the province to act quickly to approve Bill 66, with our recommended revisions included—that would be nice. Bill 66 is exciting news, a step in the right direction, but we have to make sure we implement consistently and that we all, including the Ajax waterfront, can benefit from this legislation. We know that nutrient loadings are issues in other municipalities where there is population; this is not new. I've also read studies that go back to 1971 that say nutrient loadings are the problem, particularly from sewage plants. So we feel that we need regs.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

We will start with the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thanks very much for being here. I appreciate your message. It reinforces a message from the anglers, interestingly enough, that we heard earlier today. Thank you for that.

First thing, would you be able to share the notes that you read off of today? Were you reading directly from here?

Ms. Joanne Dies: They should be in the package.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: This one?

Ms. Joanne Dies: No, they look like that. But they should be in the package.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Oh, that one. Perfect. Okay.

Ms. Joanne Dies: Bullets.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I know I've seen that. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

In terms of the benchmark, the manner in which Lake Simcoe has been improved: I think it's something that we kind of need to hold as a measuring stick. How do you feel about breaking down the guardian council to have geographically based sub-councils, if you will, of the guardian council addressing each Great Lake?

Ms. Joanne Dies: Well, it has to be manageable, of course. So that may work, in that respect. I understand the need to look at those hot spots or special areas of concern, which is really what we are, and I think that's what was proposed previously, to look at those special areas. So yes, you would have to have a way of doing that that would be fair and advantageous.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. Very good. I think that's it for now, but I really appreciated your presentation. Your messaging was not lost on me.

Ms. Joanne Dies: I don't know if you wanted me to add anything about Simcoe—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Sure. Go ahead.

Ms. Joanne Dies: Simcoe is a different lake, of course; we all understand that. But it reached a tipping point and was almost a dead lake. So what happened was that the legislation said no more nutrient loadings into Simcoe. They looked at the best, latest technology: reverse osmosis technology, which removes like 99% of phosphorus, and some pharmaceuticals as well, which is an emerging issue. It's very efficient and it will forever benefit the lake, and hopefully the remediation of that lake won't take as long as we think it might.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And my last question is, are you open to hosting tours and showing us exactly, hands-on, what the issue is?

Ms. Joanne Dies: Yes, absolutely.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you.

Ms. Joanne Dies: There are some photos there for you.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, there are photos here.

Ms. Joanne Dies: They're my boots.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

We'll move to Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Dies, I want to thank you for coming here today. I don't have questions, but I do want to say it's a very effective presentation and the photos say more strongly than anything else that anyone can say what the state of the lakes is. I find it extraordinary that the operator of the sewage treatment plant that you identify doesn't think that their discharge has anything to do with the problem. Thank you.

Ms. Joanne Dies: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We'll move to the government. I would imagine Mr. Dickson would like to comment, or ask a question, perhaps. Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I would prefer not to comment, but to ask questions and give the proponent the opportunity to speak longer. I think I heard you say you would allow an extra moment because of the photograph, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Joanne. Joanne is one of our diligent councillors in the municipality of Ajax and has worked on this project for several years. She's so powerful that she actually stopped the Premier's bus about two years ago when it was coming through Ajax. The Premier stopped on a dime and had a special meeting right on the spot, unannounced, unrequested and un-prearranged.

Ms. Joanne Dies: And we'll never forget that moment.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Just a couple of quick comments for my colleagues around the table. I want to get to the main thrust and that's Bill 66, but there have been about 100 requests for bump-ups on this particular project. I certainly support it; I'm on public record continually agreeing to do that. It's one of those items that requires extensive legislative reviews, individually, so it's quite a timely process. I spoke with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Glen Murray, as late as a day and a half ago.

1720

When we get to Bill 66, Ontario is now being recognized, after a second day of hearings, as the leader of environment and climate change. We have five bodies of water, excluding Lake Michigan, we have five provinces/states, and it's a lengthy process.

I know that I've mentioned once or twice today the papal encyclical of Pope Francis—and to sit nine rows beside him, and have a representative from the United Nations give a review of that and put in place for the rest of the world the very strong platform that he has put forward on the environment.

Lake Erie: I know there is a process where we have something coming forward, I'm hoping, where there will be a 40% reduction and a very short time frame to implement it and complete it. That's not formalized as yet, but experts are telling us day in and day out that collaborative effort is the secret. We need to upgrade all of our water basins, rather than specific areas. I still say this is an exception in Ajax, and it has to be considered as that.

Ohio is making its own progress. Lake Simcoe was mentioned. Of course, what that really means and what we did—I think it was in 2008-09 that MPP John Gerretsen, the Attorney General, brought forward that legislation. That model is really a model for some of the Great Lakes work that has to be done.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Final comment, please.

Mr. Joe Dickson: A final comment would be a question to—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): No, there's no time. You're well over time.

Mr. Joe Dickson: One minute, Mr. Chair—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We have an order from the House, Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Mike Colle: Come on. You've got 40 minutes. Let the man talk.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We've got an order from the House. To be fair to all members, each party and also the presenters—a quick question.

Mr. Joe Dickson: If the Chair wouldn't hold me up so long, Councillor Dies, I would have this question to you. PACT POW has championed this need for increased efforts to protect the Great Lakes. I know how strong your sentiment on that is as well. Do you think the proposed legislation on this whole project is a positive step in protecting the Great Lakes? I'm referencing, of course, Bill 66.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): A quick response, please.

Ms. Joanne Dies: It's a positive step, but it's missing the nutrient regulations.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I understand what you said—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Thank you very much, and we really appreciate you coming forward.

Ms. Joanne Dies: Thank you for having me. I appreciate that.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I know that Mr. Dickson would love to go on for another 10 or 15 minutes, but we do have an order from the House. I apologize; I'm just doing my job.

Ms. Joanne Dies: I understand.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. It was very informative. We appreciate that.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): And thank you to the Chair, as well, for letting you continue? No? Okay.

ONTARIO HEADWATERS INSTITUTE

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next on the agenda, from the Ontario Headwaters Institute, we have Mr. Andrew McCammon, executive director. We welcome you, sir. You have five minutes for your presentation, followed by nine minutes of questioning.

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Thank you very much, and thank you for working so late on a Thursday afternoon. I'm sure you'd like to be outside, like I was all day, planting trees. It's hard to stay awake and alert at this hour.

The Headwaters Institute obviously focuses on small streams—first, second and third order, technically. While they are small and under the radar, our small streams generally consist of about 60% of the area of every watershed, contribute about 60% of total stream length, host the majority of biodiversity and contribute the bulk of flow. Our headwaters are extremely important and our position is basically that, yes, while the lakes have significant point source problems—municipal STPs, industry and so on—you cannot protect and preserve the lakes without preserving the land.

You have in front of you our submission from April; there are two recommendations in it. The first recommendation asks you to add some detail to sections 9 to 13 on

facilitating public input. I think it's a little light, and I tie that in particular to section 30(3), which says that the minister may ask a proponent for more information.

That could put a huge cost chill—maybe a municipality would have the resources, although they might not want to give them up, to detail a proposal for the minister to become a local initiative or what have you, but certainly the OHI has numerous suggestions, and we cannot afford to answer the minister's call for detailed material on our proposal. I think there is a significant chill in that.

Our second recommendation is based around the perception that this province is really faltering on watershed management. It's very encouraging to see that watershed management has been written into this third draft of the bill, which is less bad than the previous two, and we really salute the fact that it is improved and it really is a reminder to everybody—those who got their shorts in a knot on the previous Bill 100 and Bill 6, that it had to be passed, it had to be passed, it had to be passed—this is a much-improved bill. It always is encouraging to see that sober second thought, in fact, provides improvement.

Watershed management is not working in this province. The bullets on page 2 explain why. They are the tip of the iceberg. The CA Act is currently being reviewed but there are so many other areas that are lacking in terms of targets for natural heritage, in terms of the low water response plan, in terms of highly divergent 179/06 guidelines in the CAs for development and protection of wetlands. It is a checkerboard out there.

We really think that the watershed management message in the Great Lakes Protection Act is important but it really needs to be buffered with other things.

In particular, my last point would be this: The Great Lakes Guardians' Council is not a bad idea, but I think it is going to be extraordinarily unwieldy. There are municipalities, scientists, academics, agencies, NGOs, farmers, aggregate extractors, industry, coastal nursery specialists—there are all kinds of specialists to talk about the lakes.

If you go to the IJC website, on the areas of concern, you will see that there is a promise to have digital maps of the sources of pollution. There aren't any. If you cut down all of the trees in the headwaters, you will have problems in the lakes. So a holistic approach is required, and in particular—and I really appreciate your question to the last presenter—we believe that Ontario needs to establish regional water boards that can formulate solutions that are needed locally on permits to take water, on the quotas under the level 3 advisories, under the low water response plan, and so on and so on.

We need as many resources on the land as we do that will be in the Great Lakes Guardians' Council. I would really think that a good percentage of the appointees to the guardians' council really should come from the land, and I don't see any room for that.

Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Right on time, sir. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

We will start with the government. Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your presentation. It was very informative.

I do see your recommendations here and I do understand that you have already contributed to changing earlier versions in regard to having—the bill was strengthened from earlier versions, in response to previous requests from organizations like OHI, by clarifying that the purpose of the bill is to protect and restore watersheds, not just the Great Lakes. Correct?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Yes.

1730

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. The preamble also was modified in direct response to concerns from your organizations with respect to the description of the size of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. Is that correct?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Yes. Do you have a couple of points and then I can respond to them, or—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Well, I just wanted to ask you if that is correct.

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Yes. It's really—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: So it was changed.

Mr. Andrew McCammon: It was changed, yes.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. Now my question is, how can the province best employ integrated watershed management approaches in the implementation of this act?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: There is an incredible diversity of agencies dealing with watershed management. There are four major agencies, to my counting: MNR, MOECC, municipal affairs and housing and OMAFRA. I think that they, along with conservation authorities, should be encouraged through a new document. The current document, Water Management on a Watershed Basis, is over 20 years old. If the province tabled a guideline that required the major water-focused ministries as well as the CAs to embrace adaptive management and/or integrated watershed management, that would go a long way.

In the CAs, there is about a 30-30-30 split in the progressives, the stand-pats and the CAs, with seven people who really don't have the resources to do integrated watershed management. So it's a policy issue and it's a resource issue.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: You are also in favour of it being a basin-wide approach?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Oh, yes.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd also like to know if you are in favour of measurable targets and tracking performance.

Mr. Andrew McCammon: It really is one of the follow-throughs on the point that I raised about natural heritage targets. The federal government has a document called How Much Habitat is Enough? We have been requesting the province for about years to consider tabling a provincial equivalent so that you would identify how much headwaters, how much wetlands, how much natural heritage each watershed should save. So those are the big aspirational targets, and then you would have water-quality targets and other targets.

You may not be aware of this, but the province has something called the Provincial Water Quality Objectives. They're just objectives. A watershed can fail year after year after year on any of those criteria, and no action is mandated. So yes, we need targets.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Andrew, thanks for being here. You just closed off by saying, yes, we need targets, but would you not agree that those targets need to be scientifically based, with pure, clean evidence pointing to why an initiative needs to happen?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: I think that's a softball question. Yes, of course.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. That's good, because we heard concern earlier from the fruit and vegetable growers that it's just not right to have targets for the sake of having targets. The targets need to be science-based. I just wanted to get your opinion on that. Okay. Thank you very much.

Then you also went on to say during your deputation that Bill 66 is "less bad than the previous two," Bill 100 and Bill 6. That choice of words actually stuck with me: It's "less bad than the previous two." What's still wrong with it? Do you want to clarify your comment?

Mr. Andrew McCammon: I think it is a lengthy bill that tries to prescribe certain futures, and while it tries to be a visionary bill, it in fact might tie our hands to some of those visionary things. I think that the geographically focused initiatives are completely unnecessary. I would remove that section from the bill. Let it happen. We have a thing under the IJC that a province can designate any watershed a priority watershed. We've never done it, in spite of requests from municipalities and conservation authorities, and suddenly we're going to have GFIs? There are tools—there may be future tools—and to say everything has to be a GFI I think is prescriptive.

I have serious misgivings about the council. I articulated the last time I deputed in this room that it's going to take 10 years to figure out who's going to be on it, how it's going to work, what the staffing is going to be and what the changes are going to be. Everybody in the NGO community is supporting it because they want to be on it. I just think it's going to take seven to 10 years out of ministries in moving forward. It's all going to be focused on serving the Great Lakes council. I think there are so many other things that could be done. This is supposed to be enabling legislation; well, give the ministers—that was the other thing we got into the bill; MNR is written into this bill as well, not just MOECC—their authority and let them do their job. Why are we prescribing these incredibly complex things that could change and could get in the way of specific actions?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I really appreciate it. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Andrew, thanks for being here this afternoon. The questions that I wanted to ask have been asked by colleagues. You and I had a chance to talk

previously, and I think I have a pretty clear idea of where you're going with this. So I just want to thank you for the presentation.

Chair, I have no further questions.

Mr. Andrew McCammon: Thank you, all.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. McCammon, for coming before the committee this afternoon.

Before we adjourn, I would just like to remind all members of the committee that the deadline for filing amendments is tomorrow, Friday, September 25, at noon. You would file those with the Clerks' office.

Having said that, the House will be adjourning at about 6 o'clock, but I would like to, on your behalf, adjourn this meeting and thank you for your hard work today. Adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1736.

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CONTENTS

Thursday 24 September 2015

Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, Bill 66, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2015 sur la protection des Grands Lacs, projet de loi 66, M. Murray	G-635
Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance.....	G-635
Ms. Anastasia Lintner	
Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association	G-637
Mr. John Kelly	
Mr. Jason Verkaik	
Ducks Unlimited Canada	G-639
Mr. Kevin Rich	
Community Enterprise Network Inc.	G-641
Mr. Jeff Mole	
Ontario Landowners Association	G-643
Ms. Jessica Lauren Annis	
Ms. Moira Egan	
Nature Canada.....	G-644
Mr. Ted Cheskey	
Freshwater Future.....	G-646
Ms. Nancy Goucher	
Georgian Bay Association.....	G-648
Mr. Bob Duncanson	
Conservation Ontario	G-650
Ms. Bonnie Fox	
Thames River Anglers Association.....	G-652
Mr. Robert Huber	
Canadian Environmental Law Association	G-654
Ms. Theresa McClenaghan	
Ms. Jacqueline Wilson	
Association for Canadian Educational Resources.....	G-656
Ms. Alice Casselman	
Alliance for the Great Lakes	G-658
Mr. Joel Brammeier	
Greenland International Consulting Ltd.....	G-660
Mr. Mark Palmer	
Mr. Jim Hartman	
Pickering Ajax Citizens Together to Protect Our Water	G-662
Ms. Joanne Dies	
Ontario Headwaters Institute.....	G-665
Mr. Andrew McCammon	