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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 18 February 2016**

**Jeudi 18 février 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 February 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 février 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 17, 2016, on the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure/Ministry of Research and Innovation; the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Education; and the Office of Francophone Affairs.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Speaker. It will be a pleasure for me to use the few minutes left on this important debate to put a few things on the record, I would say in no particular order.

One of the first things I wanted to talk about has to do with the Ministry of Health and the fact that we have nurse practitioners throughout this province. I'm really thankful that the Liberals saw fit to fund the nurse-practitioner-led clinics. I have three of them in my riding; there are many of them in the north. But Speaker, did you know that those nurses, most of them women—there are a few men—have had a pay freeze for the last nine years?

Think of where you were nine years ago and think of where you are now. Think of how much you pay for gas, for milk, for groceries, for everything else. Those nurses have not seen a pay increase in nine years. How could it be that we will be voting on these concurrence motions, but yet, in the Ministry of Health, we don't see anything to bring equity to nurse practitioners, we don't see anything to bring equity to the dietitians who work in any primary care model? Whether you look at family health teams, community health centres, aboriginal health access centres, nurse-practitioner-led clinics, it doesn't matter.

The dietitians have not seen a pay increase, and their pay was too low to start out with. The same thing is true for most of the other professionals working within the primary care sector. Whether you look at nurses or health promoters or dietitians or social workers, they haven't seen a pay increase in way too long.

What does that mean? That means they are not able to recruit and retain a stable workforce, because those are

people with pretty good skills. They can choose to go elsewhere with those skills and get jobs that pay a decent wage, have pension plans, have benefits.

The same thing in the Ministry of Health budget: We are looking at the fifth year in a row of flatline budgets for hospitals. Our hospitals are very creative and they have sought out efficiencies and they have developed best practices so they can do more with less. But, as the Ontario Hospital Association will say, they have come to a critical point where most of them are not able to balance their budget.

What does that mean? That means that 1,200 nurses have been laid off. That means that in January alone, 400 nurses were laid off. That means that this week alone, we had 69 layoffs in the Windsor area. We had layoffs yesterday in the London area. That means that our health care system—our hospital system—cannot cope. I hear the Minister of Health say, "Oh, but there are positions advertised in Ottawa." Mr. Speaker, nurses are not widgets. A nurse who loses a full-time job working at the hospital in Windsor cannot take unscheduled, part-time work in Ottawa. Those people have lives just like you and I. This is not respectful, and it's hurtful to patient care. But this is what we're about to vote on.

All the Liberals will stand up and vote in favour: "This is a great thing." But I can't support things like this, because it's wrong, because we can do better, because when we talk to the people of Ontario they tell us that health care is their number one priority. This is what defines us: We have a health care system that is based on needs, not on ability to pay.

That brings me to my third point: that this government has been pushing privatization at every step of the way. Look at programs and services that used to be within our hospital sector and that have gone out to the community. I have no problem—all of us New Democrats have no problem—with strong, community-based, not-for-profit health services. I come from that system; I certainly support it. But that's not what we're seeing. That's not at all what we're seeing.

What we are seeing are programs and services like mammography, like physiotherapy, like colonoscopy, like many diagnostic tests that used to be done in hospital. They were done in an area in hospitals that are not-for-profit, hospitals that have layers of oversight, transparency and accountability to make sure that we can ensure quality. As hospitals cannot maintain balanced budgets, they are told, "You can get rid of anything that is not acute hospital care. Hospitals should focus on acute hospital care."

Well, this is all fine and dandy, but where do the rest of the programs and systems go? The other programs and services go to the private sector. They go to the private sector where there is a very, very thin layer of oversight, called CPSO, which looks after the physicians who work in those private clinics. For the rest of it, we have lost all the transparency, the accountability, the quality assurance that we were going to have—good, quality care. All of this is gone because we have not built up the same amount of scrutiny that exists in our hospitals. Those services are allowed to transfer into the community, but not the oversight, not the transparency, not the accountability. None of that transfers, plus you bring in profit.

What does it mean when you bring in profit? It means that services that used to be completely accessible—your physician or your nurse practitioner would refer you for a colonoscopy. It was straightforward. You got your little paper that said, “Show up at 8:30, don’t eat anything,” and that was it. There’s none of that anymore, because you’re sent to a private clinic. Did you know, Speaker, that ColonCancerCheck, one of the programs I am really proud of that we have in Ontario—Cancer Care Ontario has this program so we can prevent colon cancer; we can catch it early for the best result. Well, most of that work is done by the private sector.

And what does it mean when you deal with the private sector? Well, you don’t simply have your appointment anymore. Now when you get there, they say, “Oh, you need to have a conversation with the dietitian.” Remember those dietitians who used to work in the not-for-profit? Well, they’re now going to the for-profits, where they get paid a little bit better. But the dietitian is not free; the consultation will be 60 bucks. “Well, I didn’t think I had to pay, but if the doctor there says I need to talk to a dietitian, I must need to talk to a dietitian; therefore, I will pay.” Then the barriers to access start.

**0910**

The Ontario Health Coalition did a fantastic report. They went out to hundreds of those clinics that have popped up throughout Ontario—not so much in the north, but a whole bunch of them here in southern Ontario—and they looked, and 90% of them or more had fees like, “We will do your cataract surgery, but the ophthalmologist prefers to use this lens, and this is a lens that is not covered; therefore, you’ll have to pay \$300 per eye.”

“Well, I thought my cataract surgery was supposed to be free. I thought we had medicare.” Yes, but all of a sudden there’s always a way they find to basically put in barriers to access to care.

I cannot vote in favour of a document that is basically pushing barriers to care—this is what we New Democrats call them—because once there are those backdoor fees imposed on patients, it means that some of us won’t go. It means that some will think twice about getting the care that is required—the care that is based on needs—because they do not have the ability to pay. This goes completely against medicare.

When the Liberals stand up, they are pro-medicare: “This is the program that defines us,” and they have

nothing but good words. But when it comes to acting, their actions are completely opposite to what they say. All of their actions are pushing more and more health programs and services into the for-profit sector, which they have completely refused to regulate or put oversight on or make sure they are respectful of what medicare is all about. So they talk a good talk, Speaker, but their actions speak even louder. Their actions speak louder when we see what is being done; when we see the number of private, for-profit clinics that are popping up every single week in this province; when we see the erosion of our hospitals, cut by cut—death by a thousand cuts. I cannot stand for that, Speaker, because this is wrong.

That brings me to another topic that has been in the news a lot, and that is violence: violence in our long-term-care homes—we’re talking patient-on-patient violence—and violence against our health providers, most of them being women and most of them being nurses.

A nurse had the courage to go against the taboos of the profession and speak up and give clear examples of how she and the nurses she worked with had been victims of violence, some of it pretty drastic. We’re talking about broken bones, physical violence, mental—every level. She had the guts to speak out, and what happened to her? She got fired. She got fired from her job. Her union is now working really hard to get her job back.

Do you know what happens when something like this happens? It puts a cold blanket on everybody else. A lot of nurses were finally coming out of their shell, being able to say: “Yes, my workplace has a lot of violence that could be prevented. Yes, I live with a lot of violence at work; I am afraid.” And yet the surroundings do not do anything to protect them, and when one of them finally speaks out, she is fired. She is now unemployed. How is this supposed to motivate change in the right direction?

Make no mistake, Speaker: As soon as we start to look into this, what is the main reason we have violence? It’s because we don’t have enough hands-on staff. It’s as simple as this. When people are sick, when they are in pain and they are made to wait a long, long time, then when that good nurse comes to help them, sometimes they lash out and she is at the receiving end. It doesn’t matter how qualified and good and good-hearted and wanting to help—when she has a caseload that makes no sense, when she’s running from one patient to the next because there’s not enough of them to do the work, then they pay the price.

When they speak up about paying the price and being the victim of violence, they end up losing their job. I can’t stand for things like this. This is wrong at so, so many levels that I could never vote for something that would allow this to go forward.

You all know that I come from 25 years in the health care system; many, many of my friends are nurses. They are primary care providers, hospital workers. They speak to me. Something interesting: The CBC radio station in Sudbury wanted to do a story on this. When I talk to some of the people I’ve worked with, some of the nurses who are victims of violence, and ask them to go public,

ask them to answer the call from the radio station, they all shy away. They don't want to; they are afraid. This is revictimizing them and this is so wrong.

My colleague here has lots of experience in trying to get those nurses their jobs back. Believe me, it is not easy and it is not a certain thing either, and sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. The consequences are drastic. Think of it: You've lost your job, you've been fired. This is wrong.

I also wanted to talk about—my, the time went by fast—both OPP helicopters. We used to have one in Sudbury; both of them are in Orillia. We needed the OPP helicopter in Sagamok this week because we had an armed, dangerous situation. Orillia could not take off because there was a snowstorm. Both OPP helicopters were stuck there. They ended up using the MNR helicopter from Sudbury to do search and rescue, but MNR is not trained to do search and rescue, the OPP is.

I can't vote for this, Speaker. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure/Ministry of Research and Innovation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, including supplementaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in supply for the Office of Francophone Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motions agreed to.*

0920

## SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S TRAILS ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX SENTIERS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Coteau moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les sentiers de l'Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I recognize the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing some of my time with the parliamentary assistant, the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Before I start, I wanted to take a minute to recognize the extraordinary work of one of my former fellow trustees, Sheila Ward, who passed away yesterday. Sheila Ward was one of my mentors when I first got to the board, back in 2003. She was an incredible person, very intelligent, smart, understood the process of the school board and how provincial governments and federal governments work so well, and she was a strong advocate for the children of Toronto. I know she's going to be missed by many people in this Legislature, but also in the city of Toronto. She was an extraordinary person and I just want to thank her, her partner and her family for the time she invested in public education in this city. I think she was originally elected back in 1991. She was just an extraordinary person and she will be missed by many of us.

The last 12 months have been an extraordinary year for sport here in the province of Ontario, and I'm happy to be here today to talk about this new act. Joining us this morning are some of the strongest advocates for trails here in the province of Ontario and across the country, folks who support trails and healthy living. I just want to mention these folks here joining us in the east members' gallery today: Richard Wyma, Mike Clewer, Bill Allen, Larry Ketcheson, Peter Curtis, Patrick Connor, Jack de Wit, Jessica Maga, Robert Ramsay and Brian Knechtel. They represent organizations such as Conservation Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, Parks and Recreation Ontario, parks and recreation Canada, the Trans Canada Trail, the National Trails Coalition and the Ontario Federation of Trail Riders. I hope I didn't miss anyone. Thank you so much for joining us here today.

I also see the MPP for Durham in the members' gallery as well. Good morning.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, this year has been an extraordinary year for sport here in the province of Ontario. The ministry staff and the government have been working hard to advance sport here in the province of Ontario. I want to recognize the staff at the ministry of sport, but also tourism and culture and the entire ministry for their extraordinary work.

In the past year, we developed the first sports plan in 20 years. We developed that sports plan because we wanted to address some of the most complex issues that are taking place here in sport in Ontario, and I'm very proud of our Game ON report. It addresses issues like low participation rates among women and girls in sport and looks at ways to overcome financial barriers that are put in place that sometimes prevent young people from full participation and from reaching their full potential in sport.

We've more than doubled the amount of Community Aboriginal Recreation Activator Programs that serve communities across the province of Ontario. These programs encourage young people to participate in sport and recreation through community-run programs.

As every member in this House is aware, we had the largest, most successful sporting event in the history of the province and Canada, and we were proud to be able to deliver that on time and on budget.

Mr. Speaker, our ambitious agenda to advance sport in the province of Ontario is far from over. As part of our plan to move sport and active lifestyles forward here in Ontario, I have the privilege of standing before this House to speak further to our proposed new legislation, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015. This is an important piece of legislation and I'm so happy that the parliamentary assistant will be joining me to speak on this bill. She has played such an active role in developing this proposed legislation. In my speech I'll address some of the ways that the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act will improve access to Ontario trails, building both a healthier and more prosperous Ontario. I know that the member from Kingston and the Islands will go deeper into some more of the details and talk about the next steps for creating a culture of wellness and active living in Ontario.

Ontario's trail system has always played an important role in building a healthier and more prosperous Ontario. That's why increasing access to Ontario trails is so important. If passed, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act would increase user access by making it simpler for trail users to understand the types of trail experiences that exist here in the province; cultivate trail tourism in the province by clarifying liability responsibility; and encourage the further expansions of our trail network by protecting landowners.

Currently, there is no single method of trail user plans that allow people to understand the trail experiences that exist here in the province. That means that there's no one-stop method to search for specific trails, and there isn't a systematic method of understanding how difficult trails can possibly be. So if you're a cyclist and you want to get out there and hit a trail, it's really difficult to understand, in many cases, the difficulty level of that trail. So you say, "I'm going to go for a great workout today." You're in an area you've never been to before and you hit a trail; it could end up being just flat land versus the more ambitious trail that you wanted to take on. An ATV rider might want a challenge and end up with a straightforward trail. It's unlike our ski hills that exist in Ontario and across the country, where when you go to a ski hill you understand right away the difficulty level of that ski trail.

Our Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, if passed, would create a voluntary categorization system and would provide users with a more holistic perspective of the Ontario trails network. If passed, Bill 100 would assist users in curating their own trail experiences, increasing access to trails and their general use.

One of the key pieces to this legislation is increasing the number of trail users by adding clarity to the Occupiers' Liability Act. That's an important piece that we think needs to be put in place here in Ontario. We know that trail tourism in the province of Ontario is part of a

larger tourism sector in the province, which is a \$28-billion sector. That represents around 4% of our GDP in the province of Ontario. We know that tourism supports 350,000 jobs in the province of Ontario. I may add that of the youth jobs that are out there in Ontario, 40% are connected to the tourism sector, so it helps our young people here in Ontario. The trail tourism component of that larger \$28-billion sector represents about \$1.4 billion in economic benefits, and supports an impressive 18,000 jobs. As the minister responsible for tourism in the province, I can tell you that this bill, if passed, will also continue to build on tourism in the province.

Currently there exists some legal ambiguity around what standard of care is owed to the users of trails. For example, if an ATV club charges membership fees for coordinating rides on a portion of an Ontario trail network, it is legally questionable what level of care is required from the business and from the owner of the trail. If Bill 100 is passed, it will clarify legislation, encouraging further participation between businesses and the owners of trails.

I would also like to highlight how we're also increasing access to trails by protecting landowners. Currently, if a hiker trespasses and causes significant damage to property, the landowner would have to file two court claims. If passed, Bill 100 would streamline that process by which a landowner can reclaim damages caused to their property, turning two lengthy trials into one.

#### 0930

Mr. Speaker, our government anticipates that making it easier for property owners to recoup damages will increase the number of property owners willing to allow easements on their property. Many trails cross private lands, with access freely given by these people willing to share their properties with trail users.

I just want to take a moment to thank all of the Ontario landowners out there who freely provide access to their land for trails, because it does, again, add to our economic activity here in the province of Ontario, but even more importantly, it adds to building a healthy Ontario. This legislation acknowledges the role private landowners have played in developing Ontario's trails and, if passed, will ensure that these property owners are protected against damage. It's important to increase access, because we want people in Ontario to be able to participate in an active lifestyle, and we want to promote a culture of wellness.

Trails are around us. In fact, just outside of the Legislature here, there's a trail. There are trails everywhere you go.

I often like to use the trail in Gananoque along the Thousand Islands Parkway when I go to visit my in-laws. It's the trail I often use. It's such a beautiful walk out there.

There are so many people participating on those trails. I was asking this morning about some of the trails that are out there that are notable. I know that around Lake Superior there's a trail where you can go and see, if you go along the trail, where the Group of Seven painted and actually go from point to point.

So we know that not only are trails good for one's health, but they also allow us to experience and see things that we may not normally have access to.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this healthy lifestyle component of trails helps prevent heart disease, diabetes, obesity, colon cancer and depression. Getting out there and being in nature is good for one's health. In fact, there was a study from Queen's back in 2001 that stated that trails can also reduce the economic burden of physical inactivity. We also know from our own research at the ministry back in 2014 that 90% of trail users believe that trails have a positive impact on their physical and mental health. Trails are vital to the people of Ontario. It's probably one of the most inexpensive activities you can do out there. You just walk outside and you hit a trail and you go.

This morning, I was talking to my friend Nick Pessos, someone I grew up with, and I was telling him what I was doing this morning. He asked, "Can a trail be a pathway?" I said yes. They're along boardwalks, pathways; they could be through waterways, along rivers, along the lake; they could be through city centres. Trails are everywhere. We want to make sure those trails are mapped out, that they're placed into categories, and people can easily choose which type of route they want to engage in, to learn, to stay healthy and just to explore.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke a bit about the \$1.4 billion of economic activity that trails create for the province of Ontario. In 2014, hiking expenditures by Ontarians led to important benefits to the province. There was \$559 million directly put back into Ontario's GDP through hiking, and \$806 million through labour income. The ministry also has done research and we have identified an estimated 18,000 jobs that are directly connected. The spending that takes place when people are actually on the trails: \$957 million on day-outing hiking expenditures, including travel, and almost \$700 million for overnight-outing hiking expenditures that take place here in the province.

Because trails build a healthier and more prosperous Ontario, the Premier has included this trail legislation in my mandate letter, and that's why we're looking forward to the future debate on the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. We see this as an important piece of building a strong Ontario.

Since 2009, our government has invested \$130 million in both direct and indirect funding to support our trails system here in the province of Ontario. We've invested in the Pan and Parapan Am Games legacy investments that, among other things, filled gaps on the Trans Canada Trail, creating 2,000 kilometres of continuous trail here in Ontario, connecting communities from Ottawa to Windsor and Fort Erie to Huntsville.

We're investing in the restoration of the iconic Ontario Place, creating the William G. Davis Trail, a dedicated waterfront trail along the east island of Ontario Place announced last year by Premier Wynne, which recognizes the extraordinary work of one of our greatest Premiers here in the province of Ontario, William G. Davis.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** A Progressive Conservative.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** A Progressive Conservative.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, there's a bit of activity around me right now.

We all recognize the extraordinary work of former Premier Bill Davis. I think this trail and the dedication at Ontario Place of this trail to this great Ontarian, this great Canadian, is an incredible thing.

I'd like to conclude by saying that the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act will improve access to Ontario's trails, building both a healthier and more prosperous Ontario. Our trails system in Ontario was largely built by the hard work and time of our volunteers—many of them joining us today on this important day—members of trail clubs and other not-for-profit organizations.

I was surprised when I was first briefed on the trail system here in Ontario and they told me how many clubs look after trails in the province of Ontario. I think it was 900 and change—just under 1,000 clubs across—am I getting some heads over there? Is that rough? Okay. So about 1,000 clubs here in the province of Ontario, and these are volunteers who look after our trails across the province on their own time so people in Ontario can stay healthier and so we can continue to add to the economy through trails. I want to say thank you to the men and women and the young people who work on those trails every day to ensure we have safe access and information, and we're allowed to participate in such an incredible activity.

In the fall of 2013, the ministry held a consultation; they put forward a consultation process to look for ways to strengthen the Ontario Trails Strategy. Through the consultations, we looked at issues related to trails: the roadblocks that exist, and the challenges and the opportunities presented to trails and organizations across the province. We spoke to people from Thunder Bay, people in Toronto, and Ingersoll to Ottawa. We turned to trail users, providers, municipalities, landowners and, of course, to our aboriginal partners. We held five regional sessions and two sessions with aboriginal communities. We also posted a discussion paper on the Environmental Registry for 48 days.

Through this consultation, we heard about the issues directly from the people involved in nurturing our trail system. We heard about the concerns related to liability, securing land for trails, trespassing, protecting private and public property, and more. But we also heard about opportunities to enhance our trails system here in Ontario to enhance trail tourism, to strengthen the role of trails, to look for ways to maximize water trails opportunities, ways to conduct research etc. Over 250 individuals and organizations participated in the consultations, and we received 80 submissions via the Environmental Registry on this discussion paper.

The bill before this House is informed by knowledgeable and valuable experience and perspectives shared by the entire sector. The legislation was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and

Forestry and the Attorney General. If passed, it will help us better manage trail activities and protect public lands and property by modernizing stewardship, compliance and enforcement tools.

**0940**

If passed, our legislation would recognize the significance of our world-class trail system, and would protect and enhance it as a vital resource for Ontarians long into the future. When this government introduced this bill back in May 2015, it was greeted with tremendous support from the trail community, associated stakeholders and the public. I call upon members of this House to show their support for Bill 100 and for the continued sustainability of Ontario's trail system, truly one of our greatest treasures here in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I recognize the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** It truly is a tremendous pleasure to share time today with my colleague the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. We've got a lot of details to go through, so I'm going to try and plow through fairly quickly, so bear with me.

I'm delighted to be able to add my support to this bill. I want to speak in a little more detail about the positive implications if this bill is passed. Ontario has some of the most treasured and protected outdoor areas in the world. As the minister has stated, the proposed Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, is important for Ontario and the future of our province's natural and cultural heritage. Thousands of kilometres of trails and roads on provincial crown land are open for the public, as the minister has stated, to use free of charge. Our urban, suburban, rural and remote land and water trails allow millions of Ontarians and visitors access to unforgettable natural experiences. There is a trail for everyone, people of all abilities and all ages.

In my community of Kingston and the Islands, we are so fortunate to have a number of trails that represent our rich heritage and our conservation efforts. Winter, spring, summer or fall, regardless of the season, I always enjoy hiking along Kingston trails; if only I had more time to do it. The city of Kingston is home to approximately 140 kilometres of walking, hiking and biking trails, divided among six distinct trail systems, all with unique character and charm. The Downtown Kingston, Treasure Island, Kingston West and Fort Henry trails are all part of the Waterfront Trail, a 900-kilometre Rideau Trail that stretches from Kingston all the way to Ottawa.

Last year, as part of the city of Kingston's annual Kingston Gets Active Month, I invited members of our community to join with me for lunchtime walks around our beautiful downtown and at Lemoine Point for a few early and invigorating Saturday morning hikes. One of our most well-known trails is the K&P Trail. Dating back to the 1800s, the K&P Trail, formerly the Kingston and Pembroke railway right-of-way, served as a railway track for steam engines. Once the tracks were removed, the right-of-way became a popular trail for recreational use. Now owned by the city of Kingston, the trail will be an important connector to the eastern Ontario trail network.

The K&P Trail is a great example of a multi-part trail. It has 15 kilometres of multi-use, semi-urban and rural trail extended from the Cataragui Creek to Orser Road. The K&P is ideal for a variety of recreational uses, enjoyed in all seasons, and it provides for a range of scenic experiences with its open landscape, rock cuts and wetlands. A personal favourite of mine is the 11 kilometres of trails at the Lemoine Point Conservation Area, with several scenic lookouts and benches located along the trails that enable you to take in all of the peaceful surroundings and all that Mother Nature has to offer. That it is equipped with handicapped-accessible trails from the north and south parking lots makes this a very popular trail for people with disabilities.

Our trails province-wide provide the opportunity to lead a healthier and more active lifestyle. The province recently conducted the Ontario Trail User Survey, which received over 5,000 responses from a wide range of trail users from across the province, including hikers, snowmobilers, mountain bikers, off-road motorcyclists, cyclists, four-by-four users, ATVers, horseback riders, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, canoeists and kayakers. We have left nobody behind. The survey found significant personal benefits with respondents all indicating the use of trails improved their mental health, physical health and sense of well-being.

Trails attract individuals and families to visit and explore our communities, supporting the local economy and jobs. In 2014, hiking expenditures by Ontarians contributed, as the minister has stated, \$559 million to Ontario's GDP and \$806 million in labour income. The ministry's research estimates that hiking created more than 18,000 jobs across the Ontario economy.

Our government has proudly supported the development of our trail networks and I want to take a moment to briefly outline some of our work to date. Since 2005, we have established the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee to oversee the implementation of the Ontario Trails Strategy. We've mapped over 21,000 kilometres of trails across Ontario and approximately 4,000 trailheads. We've funded a variety of local and regional trail projects, we've improved accessibility for people with disabilities and we've developed an award-winning central website for trails. The proposed legislation, if passed, will build on these achievements, close existing gaps and better support and enhance Ontario's trails.

Beginning with province-wide consultations in 2013, which, as the minister has stated, have included aboriginal engagement sessions and five regional sessions across the province, we heard the concerns and priorities of our different trail partners. Sessions were attended by 251 individuals, which included representatives from 80 municipalities, 48 trail organizations, 42 other not-for-profit organizations, 17 health organizations, 12 tourism organizations and eight conservation authorities, among many others. We also received 80 submissions through the Environmental Registry.

Landowners shared that they are hesitant to allow access for trail development due to liability concerns and



that lawsuits are settled out of court due to fear of liability. Consequently, a clarification is needed for the Occupiers' Liability Act.

Public and private landowners, including the agricultural community, want to ensure that their property is adequately protected and are concerned with property damage from inappropriate trail or off-trail use.

Stakeholders expressed concerns about trespassing. It can be widespread, and measures to counter it can be difficult to enforce. The fines and amount recoverable for damages at the time of prosecution are also low. As a result, changes to the Trespass to Property Act also need to be taken.

There is a need to establish a way to secure land and ensure long-term access to trails, where costly rerouting of trails can be avoided. A legislative mechanism is needed to help secure land long term for trails and trail access to allow for trail easements. We heard that additional tools are needed to help promote trails and trails tourism.

The proposal before you today has been designed to address these issues in a comprehensive way and it has been developed in collaboration with 12 other ministries. It is important to mention that the legislation starts off by acknowledging the crown's duty to respect aboriginal and treaty rights within—and without altering—the constitutional and common law framework that protects them.

If passed, the act would help the trails community more effectively develop, operate and promote trails by addressing long-standing land access, liability, trespassing and protection of property challenges. This legislation, if passed, would make Ontario's thousands of kilometres of trails stronger and safer while encouraging the expansion of the province's trails system.

As enabling legislation, it would provide the government with the authority to guide the trails sector on promotional initiatives to increase awareness and regional tourism. These actions would respond to stakeholder requests for a mechanism to promote trails more effectively and ensure consistency across the province without creating an additional burden.

If passed, the proposed legislation would also set out a mechanism for trail easements, embed the Ontario Trails Strategy into the legislation and require its periodic review. Overall, the passage of this legislation would help deliver on the government's commitment to implement "a refreshed Ontario Trails Strategy, including the introduction of trails legislation." This legislation will allow the province to keep pace as a leader in the development, management and promotion of trails in Ontario.

#### 0950

If passed, the legislation would proclaim an annual trails week in Ontario to coincide with International Trails Day in June, and through consultations allow for the establishment of voluntary best practices, targets and a classification system, as the minister has mentioned, as well as a process for recognizing trails of distinction. It would also require the publication of the name of every trail recognized as an Ontario trail of distinction on a government of Ontario website, along with the trail

classification system and best practices and targets, if established.

The Ontario classification system could be used to promote trails and provide useful, consistent information to Ontarians and visitors, helping them to find the right trail for their skill level and their interests, enhancing their trail experience. A number of factors would be taken into account, such as designating trails according to the level of difficulty, for example, similar to downhill ski hills' black diamond and other designations. Parks Canada and the International Mountain Bicycling Association use this format for their classification system. They could also be classified on the basis of permitted uses—for example, hiking and snowmobiling—or trail settings, such as urban, rural and remote areas. Other factors as well as accessibility and amenities will also be considered.

A process for recognition would be developed for the trail classification system at a later time through consultation with provincial ministries, agencies, and municipalities; aboriginal communities; stakeholders; and others that have an interest in trails. Voluntary best practices could include trail management and signage, and would enable consistency across the province. If widely adopted, voluntary best practices could help promote trails more effectively. If the act is passed, the government would consult with the trail sector at a later date to help guide the development of voluntary best practices.

The legislation recognizing Ontario trails of distinction would include trail awareness and local tourism, responding to the stakeholder request for a mechanism to promote trails more effectively without creating additional burden. This approach would also allow for the wide variety of trails and varying capacity of trail managers to be taken into account. By including this authority in the legislation, it would signal the intentions of government to provide guidance to this sector.

The legislation, if passed, would strengthen the consequences of trespassing on private and agricultural land and will increase the amount that landowners could recover at the time of prosecution for damages caused by trespassers. The legislation would help to clarify landowner responsibilities for trails running through their land and clarify liability for trail providers and users.

The proposed legislation would also provide a mechanism to establish trail easements. One of the long-standing issues is the long-term securing of land for trails, without which trail managers may lose access to the land, or face costly rerouting. Setting out a mechanism for trail easements would help address this issue. Mechanisms currently available include: informal handshake agreements that can end abruptly when the land is sold; common-law easements that require land ownership on the part of the easement holder, but many trail organizations do not own adjacent or nearby land; and conservation and heritage easements where trails only qualify if they serve specific conservation or heritage interests.

If passed, the proposed legislation would create a mechanism to enable eligible bodies and landowners to

voluntarily enter into easements to secure long-term trail access. This aligns with stakeholder requests for a legislative mechanism to allow trail easements.

An easement under the proposed act would be an agreement between a willing landowner and an eligible body that grants the eligible body a right to use their land for trail-related activities. Trail easements would have to be negotiated between the willing landowners and eligible bodies, and be registered on the title to the land.

In order to ensure that the interests of individual property owners balance with the wider interests and objectives of the whole community, trail easements would not be made exempt from the Planning Act and the oversight it provides. The proposed mechanism would specify the purposes for which a trail easement could be granted; require that all trail easements be registered in the appropriate land registry office; allow the term to be specified in months or years, or in perpetuity, to be negotiated by the eligible body and landowner; allow for the assignment or release of the easement; and allow the easement holder to enforce the easement or covenants and the landowner to enforce those covenants.

There has been some confusion in the past couple of weeks about this particular part of the bill. The misinformation is that if an easement is granted, a landowner will lose control of who can access the trails on their property. This is incorrect and this is something I would like to clarify here and now. As I mentioned above, an easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agree to do so.

We are proud of what this legislation can accomplish, if passed. It is the product of a collaborative process between the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and 12 other ministries. Our primary partners in the development of the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, have been the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The legislative proposals include changes to the Public Lands Act, the Occupiers' Liability Act, the Trespass to Property Act, as well as complementary amendments to the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and the Off-Road Vehicles Act.

Under the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, if passed, our government addresses liability, trespassing and crown land issues.

In support of the stand-alone Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, the Public Lands Act would be amended to protect public lands and property from damage and to strengthen enforcement under the act. If passed, changes would make damage to crown land property an offence. This provision would have no effect until a regulation is made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to define damage.

If a person is found guilty of causing damage to crown land or property, a court would be able to order the person to rehabilitate the lands and repair any damage to crown land or property, in addition to imposing a fine

under the act. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would also be able to rehabilitate land or repair damage and recover costs for doing so in court.

Enforcement officers would be provided with new enforcement tools to stop vehicles, inspect documents and arrest persons suspected of or caught violating the act. Proposed amendments, if passed, would increase the maximum penalties for the majority of offences under the act and create a separate penalty structure for individuals and corporations similar to other legislation. Proposed new maximum penalties for individuals are \$15,000 for the first offence, and \$25,000 for the second and subsequent offences. For commercial interests, proposed maximum penalties are \$25,000 for the first-time offence, and \$50,000 for the second and subsequent offences. The amendments would also allow a court to impose an additional fine where there has been monetary benefit from the commission of an offence under the act.

Due to the vast area of crown land in the province, detection of contraventions is often difficult to achieve within the current two-year time limitation period. The act would be amended to increase the length of time within which to lay charges to within two years from the date of discovery of the offence up to a maximum of five years from the date that the offence was committed.

The second complementary initiative proposed in the legislation relates to the Occupiers' Liability Act, which was adopted in 1980. The act currently provides a basic duty of care to anyone who comes on the land but creates a lower duty towards people who come on the land for certain stated purposes and who are deemed to willingly accept the risk of injury. The act currently states that an individual who comes on to a marked trail for recreational purposes, and for free, does so at their own risk.

Amendments, if passed, would clarify the standard of care required by not-for-profit and public owners and managers of trails. It would be clarified that trail managers and not-for-profit organizations that may receive benefits or payments or may charge incidental fees for access to the land, such as parking fees, would not have to make reasonable efforts to ensure that the trails are reasonably safe. Under those circumstances, the individual trail user who comes on the owner's land does so at their own risk. However, the owner still has an obligation to such a person not to injure them intentionally and not to act with reckless disregard for their safety.

#### **1000**

The proposed amendment would clarify that this rule also applies to organizations that receive a public benefit or payment, such as snowmobile clubs. The act would also be amended to add portages to the list of lands to which the lower standard of care applies. The Trespass to Property Act was also adopted in 1980 as a companion to the Occupiers' Liability Act. It clarifies the offence of trespass and sets out the presumptions about when land is private and thus when entry on the land is trespassing. The act provides rules about signage and gives the landowner the right to arrest and to hold trespassers until the police arrive. Many stakeholders, especially farmers

throughout the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and individually, feel that the maximum fine for offenders under the act of \$2,000 is outdated.

I want to thank the member for Dufferin–Caledon, who introduced a private member's bill in an effort to address this issue, and I'm proud that our government is taking it one step further.

Bill 100's proposed amendments to the Trespass to Property Act would, if passed, strengthen the consequences of trespassing on private and agricultural land by increasing the maximum fine from \$2,000 to \$10,000, consistent with other provincial statutes. It would also remove the limit on the amount that landowners can recover as part of the prosecution for damages caused by trespassers. Raising the maximum fine would show that the province takes trespassing seriously and that the fine is meant to be a deterrent but also proportionate to the offence.

In addition to these changes, the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and the Off-Road Vehicles Act would be amended through the proposed legislation to align with the amendments that would be made under the Occupiers' Liability Act.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, if passed, the legislation we are proposing addresses many long-standing issues, such as securing long-term access to the land, liability, protection of property and trespassing. Trail organizations, municipalities, the provincial government and other organizations, as well as the aboriginal communities, would all benefit. For example, farmers, municipalities and the general public would benefit from the changes to the Trespass to Property Act, organizations would benefit from the ability to create trail easements, and the provincial government would benefit from enhanced compliance and enforcement tools that would improve the management of trails on crown land.

We will work together to ensure that the trails are safe, accessible spaces where Ontarians of all ages and abilities can enjoy being active in Ontario's beautiful outdoor settings.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to my comments in the beginning related to the importance of trails in the lives of Ontarians. I noted the promotion of better physical and mental health, conserving and appreciating the environment, as well as strengthening our people and the communities they live in. Trails also open up a momentary respite from the fast pace of urban life, along with the challenges of daily living.

My dear friend the Anglican bishop of Ontario, Michael Oulton, described these locations as "thin places." I was intrigued by the term. He went on to describe how these spots are places that we come upon in life and words fail to describe the experience. People of faith consider these places to be found where the walls are a bit weaker between heaven and earth, and we catch a glimpse of the divine. I was thankful to Bishop Oulton for capturing and verbalizing that spiritual correlation. I knew he got it, and so did I.

We also chatted about how people are drawn back to these thin places because they have the capacity to

nurture the heart and soul. Life slows down for a bit, and we can pause to appreciate the remarkable gift we have in the land around us and in the people we encounter. That's the power of the thin places as they touch the heart and draw people together. I'm thankful to Bishop Oulton for opening up that experience with me.

Our government is indeed very supportive of this piece of legislation. We would like to protect and expand Ontario's trails system. I call on all members of this House to join us in the effort by passing this bill today. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sorry; questions and comments.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I listened to the minister and the parliamentary assistant. In fact, the parliamentary assistant used words in her last paragraph saying that the government wanted to protect and expand trails in the province.

As many members in this House know, I've written to the minister and expressed concern about this bill. I recognize that the stakeholders are here today. Some of them have issued press releases; the minister has issued press releases.

So 27 months ago, the ministry conducted some consultations. Last May, they introduced this bill. Regardless of the press releases or the comments today, there is an issue in this province regarding Bill 100. I outlined my concerns to the minister in a letter, asked for a briefing, and received the briefing this morning. I've asked for some higher level of detail from ministry staff about the consultations.

Let's talk about what's happening in Ontario today. I had a call this morning at my constituency office in my riding from the Athens snowmobile club. The entire trail from Athens to Gananoque is closed. A section north of Athens is also closed.

The Grenville snowmobile club—two sections of trail have been closed and two other property owners have indicated that, at the end of the season, they're done in terms of their agreements with the snowmobile club.

These agreements are very delicate. These interpretations are very delicate. I'm asking the government and the stakeholders to not issue press releases but to actually go out and talk to property owners about their concerns and to address them. That's the way we should move forward with Bill 100.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My comments are very much in line with the previous speaker. I support what we are trying to do. We want trails to be available and we want people to use them and be healthy—all of this is great. But we are legislators. We read the words on the piece of paper, and the way the bill is being interpreted right now is really, really problematic for me.

I represent one of those huge ridings in northern Ontario. I represent Nickel Belt. I have gatherers, snow-

shoers, snowmobilers, ATV trails, ski trails—I have them all, and they're really heavily used. We have tons of snow this year.

But this bill has caused the same thing that it has caused in his riding. Some of the trails are now closed. We are going in the exact opposite direction of what we want to do. We want trails to be available and we want Ontarians to use them, but this bill is problematic.

Come and talk to the people in northern Ontario; come and talk to the snowmobile clubs, the snowshoer, the cross country skier. We have some of the most beautiful trails in Nickel Belt, and some of them go through farmland. The snowmobile clubs have an understanding: When you go through farmlands, they put those extra signs that say, "Don't go off the trail; protect our crops." People get that.

The farmers would never give access to their farms in the summer. They're farming them. In the winter, they let us through their farms on the trails, when they are covered with snow.

The bill is problematic. I support what the minister is trying to do. I want people out there using the trails. I want the trails to be available to all and everybody to use them, but we're talking about a piece of legislation, not a dream. I support the dream, not the piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm delighted to stand and speak for a couple of minutes about this bill in support of Ontario's trails systems. I am delighted to join my colleagues. It's a good piece of legislation.

As speakers before me have said, our trails are a treasure, a valuable element of our province's culture and heritage. I can speak to what's happening in Ontario, specifically what's happening in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora with trails. In Aurora alone, there are 57 kilometres of trails. We're working with landowners who aren't concerned. Their concerns are addressed because, like all across Ontario, associations and municipalities are sitting down with landowners and they're hearing them out. They're dealing with the issues. This piece of legislation will only make things better; I'm convinced of that.

Mr. Speaker, let me carry on about how important trail systems are to my riding and to Ontario. I've heard a lot of discussion today about recreational uses and about fitness uses, but there's another element that especially those of us in urban areas have come to rely on, and those are trails for use as active transportation: getting our children off the streets, a way for our children to get from their houses to their schools without crossing busy intersections, having them enjoy a little bit of nature as they move about, and business people being able to get to their jobs from their houses without having to climb into a car; let's not forget that. That's another reason I'm delighted that this bill is moving along.

Trails offer a place to explore and experience the breathtaking beauty and rich cultural heritage that we identify with Ontario. So the bill before this House is

informed by knowledge, valuable experience and perspectives shared by a wide variety of interested and passionate stakeholders across the province. I encourage all my colleagues to support this bill. Come and explore some of the 57 kilometres in Aurora.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? Questions and comments?

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank all the members who commented this morning on the bill. I would like to assure members opposite that, if you read this bill in its entirety, you will see that it is a bill that's good for Ontario.

I understand that the member from Leeds–Grenville says that there has been some confusion in his riding. I've made this offer to him, and I've made offers to other members in his caucus who are taking us up on the offer. I'll make the same offer to the third party: If you have a club, if there's a municipality, or anyone who wants to talk to us, we will get people from the public service to reach out to have those conversations.

I understand that if you're the critic, if you're the opposition, if you're the third party, it's not your job to make the government look good. It's your job to criticize and to hold us accountable. But we know this piece of legislation is a good piece of legislation. It protects landowners. It clears the way if there are any foggy areas when it comes to liability. Let's get rid of the partisanship, and let's deal with the issue.

I've issued a statement saying that section 12 is very clear. There are no easement rights that will be imposed by any governments on landowners. The landowners' association issued a press release that was wrong. I issued a statement correcting them, from our opinion. We've talked to legal counsel.

If you have anyone in your community—the member from Leeds–Grenville, especially—who has an issue, give us the phone number. We will call them directly and we will work with them. There are almost 1,000 volunteer organizations out there. We can't get to every single volunteer organization. If there's an issue, we can help them on that issue. Get us the numbers, and we will call them directly. We will work with you. Take me up on my offer to help you deal with these issues locally.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M<sup>me</sup> Andrea Horwath:** Aujourd'hui, j'aimerais accueillir à l'Assemblée législative les coprésidentes du Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien, Geneviève Borris, Rym Ben Berrah et Myriam Vigneault; le président de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, Denis Vaillancourt; le président de la Fédération de la jeunesse

franco-ontarienne, Jérémie Spadafora; la directrice générale de La Passerelle, Léonie Tchatat; et le président d'Action Positive VIH/SIDA, Carlos Idibouo.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's my great pleasure to welcome former member of Parliament Sarkis Assadourian, sitting in the members' gallery. As well, it's a great pleasure to introduce the Tashjian family, who just recently arrived from Syria. Please help me welcome Shahe, Anoush, Hrair and Hrag Tashjian. Welcome to Canada, welcome to Ontario and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Barry Hunt, president and CEO of Class 1 Inc., an innovative medical gas company headquartered in Waterloo region. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to welcome my niece Rebekka Schultz and her friend Sarah Curran, both on their reading week, visiting Queen's Park for the first time. I welcome them here.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence of Alison Brown, who is my OLIP intern. It's her last day. I want to thank her.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to welcome my honorary constituent Mr. Lee Montgomery to Queen's Park today. I'd also like to welcome Dr. Magda Havas and Sheena Symington. They've been tied up in traffic, but they will be here.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to welcome Michael Eggens to the gallery today. He is the father of our page Ryan Eggens and comes from Guelph. Welcome.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Speaker, it's Heritage Day. We have members of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario up in the west gallery. Please welcome president Catherine Nasmith, Kae Elgie, Jean Haalboom and others who have joined us today to speak to our members about Heritage Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome a couple of guests to the members' lobby: Jennifer Mills from Quinte and District Rehabilitation services and Sue VanderBent from the Ontario Home Care Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to welcome here in the Legislature Amanda Ramroop, who's a Ryerson student working in my constituency office, and Darlene Ferreira, my legislative assistant. Welcome.

**M. Yvan Baker:** J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux étudiants de ma circonscription d'Etobicoke Centre. I'd like to welcome students from the grade 5 class of Valleyfield public school and their teacher, Lorraine Vasilaros, who are touring Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd also like to welcome in the public gallery Alison Storey Davidson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** In the members' east gallery this morning, I have friends and constituents of Cambridge: Brian and Glenna Haggie and Ian Hope. Welcome.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I would like to welcome Wendy Fritz, who is here this morning. She's the mother of page captain Charlotte Fritz. She's here to see Char-

lotte today, of course. I make the introduction on behalf of Tim Hudak, who was unable to be in the House.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to welcome to the gallery today Zheng Wong, a Ryerson student who is going to be helping out today.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Rick Miller from the great riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. Welcome.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member for Sarnia-Lambton is probably on his way, but I want to introduce the mother of page Tristan Bhola, Patricia Bhikam Bhola, who is here in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

#### MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I do stand today for an introduction, because tomorrow is an historic day in the province of Ontario. It is the birthday of one James J. Bradley, the esteemed member from St. Catharines.

I know I'm slightly breaking protocol, but because he is the dean of the Legislature, I know you'll give me a little flexibility this morning.

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

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Now, Jim, I want to give this to you on behalf of our caucus. Happy birthday, Jim.

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

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —wouldn't reveal his age, so I'll leave it at that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? I suspect he's going to make note of that in his "WhiteBerry."

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. It has been one year since the Chief Electoral Officer tabled his scathing report into the actions of Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed Jr. in the Sudbury by-election—a first for Ontario. No chief electoral officer before Mr. Essensa has ever made a finding of apparent attempts at bribery under the Election Act.

Mr. Essensa pointed to the Premier's very own deputy chief of staff as the source of these apparent contraventions. Pat Sorbara continues to work in the Premier's office, despite the fact that a dark cloud hangs over her head.

Mr. Speaker, a year after this historic finding by the Chief Electoral Officer, the Premier has still assumed no responsibility. Will the Premier finally do the right thing and remove Pat Sorbara from her office?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I've been very open with the Legislature and with the media and the public about any of the allegations that have been put forward. As far as I know, the Elections Ontario investigation that the Leader of the Opposition is speaking about is ongoing, and we'll continue to co-operate with that independent investigation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks, Speaker. Back to the Premier: While Pat Sorbara may not have been charged with her partner in crime, Gerry Lougheed Jr., she continues to be under OPP investigation for the apparent contravention to the Election Act.

Never before—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock. I know what to do and when.

Please finish.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Never before has a Premier allowed someone with so much influence to remain in their position while under police investigation. Integrity in the Premier's office seems to be a foreign concept to this government.

Mr. Speaker, if Ms. Sorbara is charged under the Election Act, will the Premier finally ask her to step aside?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I've been very clear with the public. I've answered hundreds of questions on this issue. There's an Elections Ontario investigation going on. It's an independent investigation. It's taking place outside of this House. We'll continue to co-operate with that investigation.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Again to the Premier: For one year, Ms. Sorbara has had unfettered access to the Premier and all the government's documents. Her predecessor, Laura Miller, is charged herself with making important government documents disappear.

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Common sense would dictate that Pat Sorbara step aside while under OPP investigation. You heard the Premier; she won't even entertain the thought. This Premier, like her predecessor, will stop at nothing to protect her own personal political interests and hang on to power.

Why should the public believe that this government hasn't once again wiped away all evidence of wrongdoing?

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Well, Speaker, I think that common sense will dictate that the opposition will respect the convention of this House and not interfere in an ongoing investigation. Clearly they have no other important issues to talk about. Clearly they have no plan for Ontario, that

they continue to focus on an investigation that is outside the scope and jurisdiction of this Legislature.

In fact, I would remind the member from Leeds–Grenville that he said himself, back in February, “Stop interfering in an ongoing investigation and let it run its course.” Speaker, I agree with him—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I agree with his earlier statement that there is an independent investigation and to let it run its course. I think the PC Party should focus on building a plan for Ontario as opposed to just scandalmongering in this House.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. The government's recent agreement with correctional officers only addressed one of the serious concerns facing our corrections system. Monte Vieselmeyer, the corrections chair of OPSEU's ministry employee relations committee, said this recently to the finance committee in Windsor: “The crisis is very real and is compromising the safety of staff, offenders and all Ontarians we serve.” He said that in one year, “the ministry recorded over 900 staffing-related lockdowns across the province.” Lastly, he said, “We have seen a significant corresponding rise in inmate-on-staff assaults,” 855 in 2013 alone.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government failing to protect the hard-working men and women who work in our corrections system?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services will want to speak to this, but I want to have the opportunity to say that in the reaching of a collective agreement with OPSEU and with respect to the correctional bargaining unit, the work will be ongoing. Part of that agreement was that we would continue to work with them on things like better mental health supports and enhancing rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and building safer, stronger communities right across our province by doing that. We recognize that there is more to be done. We recognize that there needs to be transformation within the system.

Having said that, we have hired hundreds of new correctional officers—571 new correctional officers since the fall of 2013; 144 new recruits are going through the training right now. That's the largest group ever.

We recognize there's more to be done, but we are already in that process.

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: In December, I toured the Thunder Bay jail along with several members of our PC caucus. I could not believe such deplorable conditions could exist in a jail like this in the province of Ontario. The mayor of Thunder Bay was

being generous when he called it a “rathole.” Mike Lundy, the head of the local correctional officers, said, “Toilets don’t flush.” They “regularly back up and overflow down into our kitchen area.” “Sinks have no running water. There are holes and mould throughout the crumbling structure.” There are no working sprinklers or smoke detectors.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Premier would never work in such disgusting conditions. Why, then, does she expect our correctional officers to work in these conditions?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want our correctional institutions to be safe for the people who work in them and for the inmates. I want a transformation that actually leads to rehabilitation. I want changes within the correctional service, which is why, in the mandate letter to the minister, he is charged with making those changes.

But I want to say that the Leader of the Opposition, I believe—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Are your wants just stretch goals?

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

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** He was a member of a government in Ottawa, in the Harper regime, who had no interest in rehabilitation, no interest in working with the provinces on corrections, and no interest in ensuring that there was justice or transformation in our correctional institutions. I don’t remember the Leader of the Opposition speaking up when he was a member in Ottawa for nine years.

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: Throwing insults at past federal governments doesn’t help correctional officers.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Dodging and deflecting doesn’t help correctional officers. Mike Lundy from the Thunder Bay jail said it’s “a death trap for staff and inmates, packed in like human sardines.” Mr. Lundy said, “Severe overcrowding and chronic understaffing led to a full-blown riot....” There was a correctional officer who was taken hostage for 12 hours.

I saw the first-hand account. I visited the jail. So my question is very sincere: Madam Premier, will you visit the jail? Will you go to the jail? Will you see it yourself? Don’t send someone else because, if you see it, you won’t stand for it.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the Leader of the Opposition to do his homework and recognize I have been in jails. I visited jails with the Attorney General when she was the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. That’s exactly why, in the minister’s mandate letter, there is a charge to transform that system. I have visited jails. I understand that there are concerns—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But our solution will never be to throw more people in jail. Our solution will never be to increase the overcrowding. Our solution will be to focus on rehabilitation—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Your time is up, but I’m going to wait until I get some quiet.

New question.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. People expect the government to share their priorities, like creating good jobs and protecting health care that we all rely on, but this Premier just doesn’t seem to get those priorities. She doesn’t seem to share those priorities with Ontarians.

More than 400 registered nursing jobs have been cut from our hospitals since the start of January, and almost every day we hear of another Ontario hospital that is being forced by the Premier to cut patient care.

People want to know: Why is the Premier cutting health care when she knows that these cuts are hurting Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The reality is, as I have said over and over, and as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said, that over 24,000 more nurses are working in Ontario than were working here in 2003—a growth of 21%. Over 10,800 RNs have been added since 2003.

As I said yesterday, there are hospitals and health sciences centres that are hiring full-time nurses right now: Ottawa Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences centre, Orillia Soldiers’ Memorial Hospital and the Royal Ottawa mental health care group. The fact is there are institutions all over the province that are hiring.

We’re going through a transformation. There’s no doubt about that. Health care is being delivered in-community, where people need it, but we are increasing funding year over year.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, similar to what the Premier’s last comment was, yesterday she had the audacity to say that her plan doesn’t include cutting health care. The Premier should actually pay more attention to what she’s doing and spend less time selling off Hydro One and helping Liberal insiders.

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Here’s what’s happening in Ontario that the Premier doesn’t seem to think much about: Patient care is

suffering—end of story. Patient care is suffering. Nearly 1,200 registered nursing jobs in this province have been cut in just over a year. Those Liberal cuts, no matter which way you look at them, mean longer wait times for patients, fewer nurses in our hospitals and even less care for Ontarians when they need it the most.

Why does this Premier think that patients should pay the price for her deep cuts to our health care system?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm absolutely amazed by the allegations coming from the third party.

Once again, here are the facts—and they're not even ours on the government side; they're from the College of Nurses of Ontario: Ontario nurses held 86,794 employment positions in the hospital sector in 2014, and by the end of 2015 that had increased by almost 1,000 more positions, to 87,513.

They fired nurses when they were in power in the 1990s. We've added—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Windsor West and the member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** They actually reduced the number of full-time positions for nurses when they were in power.

We've increased the proportion of nurses: 30% more nurses working full-time since we came to government in 2003. The numbers increase year after year after year.

I'm happy to give more facts and truthful statements.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Here's another thing the Premier said yesterday: She said her changes to health care are causing "some disruption in the system." But "disruption" does not begin to describe the damage that this Liberal government is doing to our health care here in this province: 1,200 nursing jobs cut, less care when hospital patients need it the most, and seniors waiting hundreds of days for home care and years upon years for long-term care. That is not disrupting; that is devastating for patients and for their loved ones.

When will this Premier start thinking about the priorities of patients, about the priorities of families, about what's happening in our health care system, and stop cutting health care in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm flabbergasted.

The facts are, when you look at the outcomes, when you look at the wait times that are being measured in this province and across the country, Ontario remains in the first place of the shortest wait times. I could go on and on in terms of the outcomes. We have one of the best cancer care systems and best cancer outcomes in the world. I'm proud of that, and I'm proud of the hard work that all our health care professionals do day after day after day in this great province.

The truth is simply the opposite of what the third party would like to portray. We're increasing investments.

We're increasing staffing across the health care system. We're making those important investments: 270 million additional new dollars in home and community care this year alone. We're making those important transitional reforms, but it's resulting in better care.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier. For most Ontarians, life is getting harder, and the Liberals just aren't helping. People want good jobs—the kind of jobs that come with good pay, decent benefits and the security of knowing that you can pay the bills. But families are struggling and good jobs are hard to find. The government should be focused on helping families, but instead, this Premier is more focused on selling off Hydro One.

Why is this Premier more interested in helping private investors turn a profit when she should be helping the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely focused on job creation. We're focused on working with businesses so that they can expand. I was at Morgan Solar yesterday, which is a very innovative solar panel manufacturer. They are expanding their operation in Ontario. We made an announcement today that will have an effect on the wine industry in Ontario, that will create more jobs in the wine industry.

We are absolutely focused on how we can play to the strengths of Ontario to create those jobs that are going to provide security for families in Ontario. That is our number one focus. In the budget next week, it will be very clear that that is what our plan is doing, and we continue to work with the private sector, with organizations around the province to make sure that we grow.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier should know what's actually happening here in the province of Ontario.

In Ontario today, youth unemployment has been above the national average for 12 years running. The whole time this government has been in office, youth unemployment has been running above the national average, and fewer than half of the workers—fewer than half—in the GTHA are working in permanent, full-time jobs.

The Premier should be helping people and focusing on job creation, but she is more interested in the private investors and the profits that they can make off her sell-off of Hydro One. Ontarians deserve to know, why is this Premier not working for them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The leader of the opposition needs to get her facts straight. This province has grown by 208,000 net new jobs since the global recession, and don't be telling me those aren't full-time jobs. Every single one of those jobs is full-time because we're migrating from—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions are to the Chair; answers are to the Chair.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the challenges that our economy has right now is that we have an opposition in this Legislature that's—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** —advocating jacking up corporate tax rates, which is going to kill jobs. We have an opposition leader in this Legislature who is opposing the important investments we're making: \$130 billion over 10 years to create 110,000 jobs per year. If you were to support those policies, then we might have sympathy with your concerns—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Although the minister is finished, I'm going to ask the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to come to order, second time.

And a reminder to everyone: You always refer to members in this House either by their riding or by their title; that helps with the debate, hopefully.

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I find it astounding that the minister of economic development and trade could say he has no sympathy whatsoever with the opposition's concerns over the lack of good jobs for the people of this province. That is astounding, Speaker.

This minister can come here with all the bluster in the world, but the reality is that the youth unemployment rate has been higher than the national average for 12 years running under this Liberal government's tutelage all that time. They have done nothing to help young people with work.

But Ontarians have clear priorities. They expect the Premier to protect health care and to focus on creating jobs, but she doesn't seem to share those priorities. Over the past year, she has started selling off Hydro One to help a small group of private investors turn a profit. At the same time, they failed to create the 32,000 jobs that they had promised in last year's budget. So again, lots of plans but no action.

Why can this Premier stretch to help her Liberal friends but not stretch at all to help Ontarians?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This government is absolutely committed to helping our young people find opportunities in this growing Ontario economy, an economy that's leading this country in growth, leading this country in job creation. That's why the Premier has put in place a youth jobs strategy; 30,000 young people have seen employment opportunities as a result of that strategy.

Did we have support from the NDP when we brought in these policies? Absolutely not. In fact, they continue to harp on antiquated—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo will come to order.

Please finish.

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**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Speaker, if the NDP really cared about youth employment, they would have the courage to make the investments that we're making in infrastructure, which are providing our young people with apprenticeship opportunities right across this province. They don't have that courage; we do. We're standing up for young people and jobs across this country—

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

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Premier. I've stood in this House and said to the Premier repeatedly that she needs to do more to combat human trafficking in Ontario. I've called for a co-ordinated task force, I have flagged numerous instances demanding action, but this government has done nothing.

As my private member's bill, Saving the Girl Next Door Act, outlines, a number of things can be done immediately, without further delay. Right now, although police units want to combat this crime, they do not have the resources they need. Very few police units are able to dedicate officers to deal with human trafficking and most don't have the resources to start.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier immediately commit to providing the financial resources police services need to effectively combat human trafficking?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opposition member's focus on human trafficking. She knows full well that we are following up on the recommendations of the select committee.

When we brought in our anti-sexual violence and harassment policy, It's Never Okay, I said at that time that the select committee was working on initiatives that were going to complement and continue the work of that policy.

We're already taking steps on the ground. We're building on the work of the committee. We're setting up that multi-ministerial advisory panel that was recommended. It will be co-led by Minister Naqvi and Minister MacCharles. They're going to work closely with the experts who were recommended on the front lines to bring forward a strategy that we will bring forward by June.

I've also asked the violence-against-women round table co-chairs to convene a special meeting on human trafficking. Our officials are already in conversation with Manitoba.

It's clear to all of us that information needs to be better co-ordinated, and this work connects with the work on the inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women. There's more to be done.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** The crisis is now. We can take some actions now. We don't need to wait until June.

In addition to the action items in my private member's bill, Saving the Girl Next Door, we know the fight

against human traffic is woefully underfunded. I've heard time and time again that more financial support is needed on many fronts.

As it stands, our police colleges have no routine training on human trafficking. Police units need adequate funding for dedicated officers and further training. Since 2012, Manitoba has committed to at least four times what this province has.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier immediately commit to financial resources comparable to Manitoba's levels and make human trafficking a priority?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It is very much a priority, as I have said. I have already said that we are in conversation with Manitoba to understand what they are doing. I'm sure that some of the measures in the private member's bill that the member is bringing forward will be part of the conversation as we develop the strategy, but they will only be part of it. I understand there are two or three things that are being suggested by the member. There is a much broader strategy that needs to be put in place. We're going to do that.

We've already begun that work, so when the member opposite says, "The crisis is now," we understand that. That's why the work has started now. That strategy will come forward, but it will be a complete strategy. I appreciate the input of the member opposite.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. This government speaks about economic growth, but it is so out of touch with Ontarians that it doesn't even realize that millions of people are being left behind.

This government failed to meet its job creation goals last year not once, but twice. They failed to create more than 32,000 jobs that they themselves had forecast in last year's budget.

For nearly two years, Windsor and Essex county has remained among the top regions with the highest unemployment rate in the country. Windsor has also had the highest youth unemployment rate in the country for the fifth straight month.

Speaker, my question is simple: What will it take before this government stands up for Ontarians instead of prioritizing its powerful insider friends?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I thank the member for the question.

Look, the fact of the matter is that, since the recession, we've created 608,000 net new jobs, all full-time, in this province. The challenge we have, though—the member is not completely off-base—is that there are regions in this country that were hit harder during the global recession than other regions. That's why we've created the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and the Eastern Ontario Development Fund. That's why we partner with companies, many in the Windsor area, to create much-needed jobs there, in particular manufacturing jobs. That's why we partner closely with the auto sector, many

of those jobs being created in southwestern Ontario. That's why we have very good relations with companies like Chrysler, which just recently announced 1,200 new jobs in the Chrysler plant there.

Mr. Speaker, there's more work to do—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Message sent, I hope?

Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Time and time again, and as we've just seen, this government toasts itself on a job well done, but Ontarians feel the service cuts. They feel the job losses and the increase in energy costs due to the sell-off of Hydro One. People are struggling, and this government doesn't really seem to care.

Just yesterday, Speaker, Bombardier announced that 430 jobs would be cut in Ontario. Up to 350 of them would be directly in Thunder Bay. In the past three months, another 400 people were laid off at Bombardier's Downsview plant in Toronto. These are not just numbers, Speaker; they are real people with real lives. They are families that are forced to start all over again.

Minister, when will your government stand up for hard-working Ontarians and make meaningful change in their lives and in this province?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This government has always and will continue to stand up for hard-working Ontarians. That's why it's so important for us to make \$130 billion worth of investment in our infrastructure, something that your leader doesn't support. But we'll continue to make those important investments.

We also will stand up for those communities that are struggling. That's why we are proud to make a \$3.5-million investment in London—nearly \$30 million in all in private sector funds, creating 1,400 jobs. That's why in Windsor, we are proud to invest \$4.5 million, leveraging \$22 million in jobs and creating and sustaining over 420 jobs. In Essex, your own riding, our Southwestern Ontario Development Fund invested \$1 million, leveraging \$7 million and creating and sustaining 513 jobs.

I point to these examples. They are examples of many—I have a long list of examples where we have gone to bat for the people of Windsor—

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

New question.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Énergie.

An issue that is important to my constituents of Ottawa-Orléans concerns the environment and, by extension, energy conservation savings. During the campaign, I heard about this from many of my constituents who live in the older neighbourhood of Orléans. They told me they wanted government action to help increase residential conservation efforts, and also help them lower their energy bills and save money.

I know that our government recognizes the importance of conserving energy and has been working to create a culture of conservation savings in the province. Every action across every sector will help us achieve our GHG reduction targets.

In the past couple of weeks, I've heard our government discussing a home energy retrofit plan that will help fund the Green Investment Fund. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could he please inform the House about this program?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for the question.

In addition to a wide range of existing residential and industrial conservation programs, Ontario is investing \$100 million more as part of our Green Investment Fund to help homeowners upgrade their homes, reduce their energy bills and cut greenhouse gas emissions. This investment is expected to enable audits and retrofits of up to 37,000 homes and save an equivalent of 1.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

Funding will reward actions by homeowners, like replacing furnaces and water heaters and upgrading insulation, that will save consumers money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every dollar invested in natural gas efficiency has resulted in up to \$4 in savings for natural gas consumers.

Mr. Speaker, this investment will help homeowners save money while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we know climate change is not a distant threat to Ontario. It is already costing the people of Ontario. It has created more unpredictable weather patterns, which have devastated communities, damaged homes, businesses and crops, and increased insurance rates.

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We know that we had to meet this challenge head-on and that good climate policy is good economic policy. That's why in the fall economic statement we introduced the Green Investment Fund. It will demonstrate how proceeds from a cap-and-trade program will benefit our environment, our economy, our homes, businesses and communities.

I know that recently there was an announcement through the Green Investment Fund to help Ontarians with home energy retrofits. Can the minister please inform the House how this announcement will help our efforts in combatting climate change?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I would just like to make three points, and I want to thank my friend from Orléans. One is the impact of this. We've been debating employment—and my friend the Minister of Economic Development makes these points—and what is the government doing? We have to retrofit every single building in Ontario over the next couple of decades. We're retro-

fitting them with better insulation, ground-source heat pumps and pollution-free home heating and cooling systems, things that will lower electricity and energy costs for Ontarians over the coming decades.

But what's most important: Can you imagine how many hundreds of thousands of people have to be employed to do that, what this means to our building sector, what it means to our energy and our technology companies? What we're embarking on, Mr. Speaker, will be one of the biggest job-creation programs in the history of Ontario, one that will result in more modern buildings and lower pollution.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** My final point is this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There isn't a final point to be made. Thank you.

New question.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I don't have to remind the minister of the terrible events that took place in my riding on September 22 of last year. The murders of three women have been well documented and broadly discussed since then.

On November 5, my Bill 130 passed second reading. My bill would have afforded greater protection to victims of abuse if and when their abusers were released from custody. At the time, I asked for one of two things: that the government move my bill quickly through the process or draft a comprehensive piece of legislation to give greater protection to victims of abuse. Can the minister tell me what progress has been made, and when we might see some concrete action on this file?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I do want to thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his work and advocacy on this very important issue. Speaker, we all know that what happened in Wilno was shocking and devastating for not only that community but for all Ontarians. The member opposite knows that I've been engaged with him. He and I have had a few very constructive conversations. He also knows that I support his bill.

In fact, as part of the work that my ministry is doing—the part of the work that the Premier was alluding to earlier, which is contained in my mandate letter—is around transformation of our correctional services, this is very much in active consideration. Part of that transformation planning is to look at our legislation, and identify the deficiencies and how we can strengthen it. I can assure the member opposite that his private member's bill is very much an active part of those discussions.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the minister. Since my bill passed second reading, I've met with advocates in my riding who are looking for action. I've also met with Lara Kuzyk, the sister of Anastasia. They have all expressed a strong desire to see this enacted into law.

While I respect that this is only one part of the many things we can do for women who find themselves in abusive situations, it is nevertheless an important piece.

This afternoon, my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock will be debating her Bill 158, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, which deals with the scourge of human trafficking.

Speaker, it is time that this government tackles abuse from every angle and takes all measures to ensure that the children of today grow up in a society that will simply not tolerate any form of abuse or violence against women. We need a commitment to action, not words. Can we count on the minister's commitment today?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Absolutely. We have an activist agenda on this side of the House in not just talking about these issues but actually coming with concrete strategies to address them. I think the time for more task forces and studies is not what is needed here. We know what some of the challenges are. Our probation and parole officers do incredible work on the front lines, making sure that those who have been released from our institutions have the services available to them to better reintegrate in the communities.

That's why one of the things I have been doing is meeting with probation and parole officers directly to hear from them about their front-line experiences. I had an incredible meeting in Thunder Bay a few weeks ago, where we had a very constructive discussion. I will be in London, Ontario, this afternoon visiting the local probation and parole office and meeting with the officers there to understand their perspective, so that we can collectively transform the system that really focuses on reintegrating individuals back into society and breaking the cycle of re-offence in our communities.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. Earlier this month, we learned that ridership on the Union Pearson Express is not growing; it is, in fact, shrinking. The president of the Union Pearson Express blamed Torontonians for not getting on board, but had Metrolinx bothered to listen to Torontonians, it would have known long ago that what they want is an electrified public transit service that is affordable and is accessible.

Why is Metrolinx blaming the people for low ridership on the Union Pearson Express instead of listening to us?

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

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for the question. As I said yesterday in the Legislature, and as both I and the Premier have said over the last number of days, we understand that ridership numbers are lower than anticipated and lower than we'd like them to be, which means that we are all working hard, both within this government and also at Metrolinx, to make sure we analyze the entire situation so that we can get ridership up.

I did mention yesterday that this past Family Day weekend, the UP Express was free and we saw literally tens of thousands of people take advantage of it. What we do understand is that when the UP Express is used, the research demonstrates that it is a service that is very well regarded. Collectively, we have to work hard to make sure we get those numbers up, and we're looking at every aspect of the service to make sure we produce that outcome.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Back to the Premier: There are 10 times the number of riders on the Dufferin bus and it doesn't have its own marketing department. The Union Pearson Express was originally supposed to be run by the private sector, at no cost to the public, but the private sector understood that this business model wouldn't work.

Despite this, the Minister of Transportation at the time insisted that the air-rail link proceed as planned under the same flawed business model and asked Metrolinx to take over the project. That minister is now the Premier.

Does the Premier now regret her decision to ignore all the warning signs, ignore the experts, ignore the people and push ahead with an expensive, empty, dirty diesel train?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** As I've said on many occasions, what we have to remember, above all else, about this service, Speaker, is that because of the leadership of this government, because of the leadership of this Premier, it was an infrastructure project that was delivered on time and on budget, in time for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, as promised.

Having said that, as I said in my earlier answer, there is broad recognition by this government and by the team at Metrolinx that we have to work hard to make sure that we use every available tool, including looking at the fare structure, to drive ridership up. Because, again, we know that when the people of this region—tourists or residents who live here—use the service, they like the service.

I should also mention that it is part of our 10-year commitment to electrify the UP Express, as we are electrifying that portion of the Kitchener corridor that we own. I would say that members like the member from York South–Weston and the member from Davenport on this side have been strong advocates to make sure we get this right, and we will—

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

New question.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Health care is a top priority for our government. As a registered nurse and former care co-ordinator for the CCAC in Cam-

bridge, I was concerned by some of the things that I've heard from the opposition in the last few days about health care.

Under the last NDP government, I was one of many nurses who were laid off because they slashed the home care budget. They also short-sightedly cut nursing school and medical school places. The Conservatives made further cuts, firing nurses and closing thousands of hospital beds.

**1120**

Last year, our government increased the health care budget by over \$500 million, to \$50.8 billion. In home and community care, the government announced a 5% increase which will grow by over \$750 million.

Can the minister please set the record straight regarding our government's investments in the health care sector?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you to the member from Cambridge for this very important question.

I, too, have to admit I was alarmed by some of the accusations and innuendoes coming from the official opposition and third party members with regard to our health care system. We remember when the PCs were in power: 6,000 nurses, of course, were fired; hospitals were closed. In the last election, we were reminded of their commitment to cut 100,000 jobs. Thousands—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You will get to government policy. Thank you.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's right. Get to government policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me, leader of the third party, I'll take care of it.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I apologize, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let's get there, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thousands of personal support workers, nurses and other hospital support staff would have lost their jobs.

The truth is, we're far from making cuts. We're increasing funding every single year to the health care sector and we've invested more than—as an example—\$4.3 billion in the home and community sector this year alone. We've increased funding by a further \$270 million. Our investments in community care will keep people healthier and away from hospitals and in their communities, where they want to be.

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

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Setting the record straight in this House is important. Thank you, Minister.

The increased investments that we're making in home and community care as well as in the hospital sector speak to the high priority that this government places on health care. Because of the government's commitment to health care, 24,000 more nurses are working in Ontario since taking office, a growth of 21.6%, and over 10,800 registered nurses have been added. Nurses play such a valuable and important role in our health care system in Ontario.

We know that one in five Ontarians will experience a mental health illness in their lifetime and that this is a critical issue here in Ontario. I know that since 2003 our government has increased annual funding for mental health and addictions to more than \$2 billion.

Can the minister please inform the House of the investments the government has made in mental health and addictions?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you again to the member from Cambridge for this question.

I can firmly say that this government is wholly and absolutely committed to increasing access to mental health care for Ontarians. Our government created a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy to support Ontarians, from childhood through to old age, living with mental health and addictions challenges, and each year we're increasing funding to that sector. Last year we committed to increase funding to mental health and addictions by a further, new \$138 million over the next three years.

We're also increasing our adaptability to meet the genuine needs of our patients. Just last month, we announced that we're investing \$16 million in 1,000 new supportive housing units across the province for individuals with mental health and addictions challenges.

#### GROUND CURRENT POLLUTION

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, it's a known fact that there's a major problem facing rural Ontarians. It concerns the future of family farming businesses. It's a known fact that farmers raising livestock are facing a major crisis that threatens the future of farming in Ontario. Ground current pollution is maiming and even killing their livestock. It's crippling their financial opportunities to live the Ontarian dream. They feed cities. They feed you and me, our families and our neighbours.

Minister, are you willing to enforce recommendations from the OEB's staff discussion paper of May 2008 that stipulates that LDCs cannot put current into the ground? Thomas Edison said it, and who knows more than him? Speaker, to the minister, are you willing to save the family farm?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the honourable member for Chatham-Kent-Essex for asking the question this morning.

I know there will be a debate this afternoon. He's bringing forward a private member's bill on this topic, a bill that was previously introduced in this House by a former colleague of ours, Maria Van Bommel, the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, I believe. I also have the advice of a professor from Trent University, Dr. Magda Havas, who is in the members' west gallery today.

This is a very serious problem for livestock owners in the province of Ontario. Just recently, Hydro One and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture are working together to

study this issue in detail, and I'm pleased that some steps have already been taken to address it.

I encourage, of course, livestock owners—when I'm chatting with my friend Ralph Dietrich, head of the dairy farmers in the province of Ontario; and just last night at the Beef Farmers of Ontario, I had a discussion about this important topic.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, voltage won't kill, but current does. We have to ensure that we're measuring the right thing.

My bill is directly inspired by the work of former Liberal MPP Maria Van Bommel from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. She attempted to pass the bill back in 2006. All three parties spoke in support of the bill, including you. I believe that a good idea for Ontarians—it shouldn't matter who presents it.

Speaker, this afternoon, we will be joined by members from numerous farming associations that, frankly, really don't care whose name is on the bill. They just want to see action now.

To the minister: Will you keep the spirit of co-operation alive and pledge support for Bill 161, the Elimination of Ground Current Pollution Act?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his supplementary question today. I can assure him that the government caucus will be supporting his bill this afternoon—

**Interjection:** Because we're reasonable.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —because it's a very reasonable bill, and we're very reasonable people on this side of the chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about the pilot that's going on with the OFA. We're making progress on this. The pilot will help: identify, assess and mitigate instances of stray voltage and current; assess alternative approaches to testing; look broadly at how electrical systems contribute to current and voltage on farms; and address how standards and procedures are applied.

In fact, we're doing a pilot in Little Britain, Ontario, in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—the member right across the road here.

## L'UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la première ministre. Aujourd'hui, des centaines de personnes de partout en Ontario sont à Queen's Park pour dénoncer la lenteur du gouvernement dans le dossier de la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Après des mois de consultations auprès d'un millier de francophones de toutes les régions et services de l'Ontario, le résultat des États généraux sur le postsecondaire est criant et sans équivoque : on veut une université pour et par les francophones. Le document final a été remis à la première ministre le 18 février 2015. Ça fait un an.

Est-ce que la première ministre peut expliquer pourquoi elle n'a toujours pas mis en place le comité

transitoire de gouvernance de l'Université de l'Ontario français?

**L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Merci pour cette question. C'est très important pour moi que nous ayons les programmes pour les étudiants, en français, dans toute la province. Je veux dire que j'ai parlé avec les étudiants et j'ai dit que c'est une priorité pour moi d'avoir accès à tous les programmes en français si un étudiant veut ces programmes.

Est-ce que c'est nécessaire d'avoir un édifice? Je ne sais pas. Je ne peux pas le dire en ce moment parce que si nous avons un édifice dans cette communauté, est-ce que c'est nécessaire d'avoir un autre édifice dans une autre communauté? Donc, nous devons avoir plus de consultations. Nous devons travailler avec les communautés parce que c'est très important, comme j'ai dit, que nous ayons l'accès, pour les étudiants, à tous les programmes nécessaires en français au postsecondaire.

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Madame la Première Ministre, 611 500 francophones de la province manquent d'options postsecondaires en français. Plus de 2 000 d'entre eux se sont inscrits à l'Université de l'Ontario français. Nous avons dû travailler fort pour nos écoles primaires, puis secondaires, puis les conseils scolaires et puis, il y a 20 ans, nos collèges. Nous avons maintenant besoin d'une université pour et par les francophones.

**1130**

Les consultations ont été faites, les rapports ont été écrits, la communauté francophone est unie dans son désir d'avoir l'Université de l'Ontario français, et j'ajoute que cette Assemblée législative a voté en faveur de mon projet de loi 104 pour la création de cette université.

Quand est-ce que la ministre va finalement mettre en place le comité transitoire de gouvernance de l'Université de l'Ontario français?

**L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** La ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça me fait plaisir de répondre à cette question parce que le gouvernement libéral, présent et passé, y travaille depuis très longtemps. La première ministre a demandé un comité aviseur. Le comité aviseur s'apprête à remettre son rapport. Alors, on est très intéressé à voir ce qu'a le comité aviseur.

Maintenant, je ne prendrai pas de conseils de ce parti-là. Quand ils étaient au gouvernement, ils ont établi un Collège des Grands Lacs, un collège qui n'a mené à rien, qui a coûté des millions et des millions aux Ontariens et qui n'a mené absolument à rien. Le gouvernement par la suite—le gouvernement qui est maintenant le premier parti d'opposition—l'a fermé et on ne pouvait rien dire parce que c'était tellement une structure chancelante.

On veut être sûr que la prochaine université postsecondaire francophone en Ontario sera bâtie sur une base solide et va assurer une pérennité—

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci.

*Interjections.*

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

#### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Aujourd'hui, ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation, l'honorable Liz Sandals.

Speaker, as you will appreciate, the education of our children in Ontario's schools benefits when we have parents involved, excited and engaged, and contributing. In my own riding of Etobicoke North, I have seen how good schools can graduate up to become great schools by the increased engagement of parents. Psychological and sociological research demonstrates that there is a positive link between student achievement and parents' involvement, expectations and guidance. Schools in my own riding have benefited from some of the more than \$60 million we've invested since 2006 to support parent engagement.

Speaker, my question is this: Minister, this very week you announced grant applications for the 2016-17 school year which are now open. Can you please tell this House more about what this means for Ontario students and families?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Ontario is helping parents get more involved in their children's education by supporting local parent-led projects that encourage student learning and promote well-being.

In the 2015-16 school year, the province funded more than 2,200 projects that helped identify barriers to parent engagement, and found local solutions to help more parents be engaged in their children's learning. In fact, since 2006, the government has awarded over 17,000 grants to school councils and over 680 regional or provincial grants, a total investment of over \$27 million to parent-led projects. Parents Reaching Out Grants demonstrate that parents are working to find local solutions to enhance parent engagement.

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

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Merci, madame la Ministre, pour votre réponse et aussi pour votre engagement à ce sujet. J'ai moi-même vu les avantages sur le terrain. Par exemple, Albion Heights Junior Middle School, Claireville Junior School and, en fait, 22 écoles dans mon circonscription ont bénéficié de ces subventions particulières. Étant donné l'économie basée sur le savoir de demain, je crois que les Parents Reaching Out Grants sont une partie clé de la stratégie d'engagement familial de l'Ontario, et cela est intégré dans les objectifs de notre nouvelle Vision de l'éducation en Ontario.

Minister, would you please elaborate on what projects are included and how you envision they will benefit children's education in Ontario?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** The Parents Reaching Out Grants include funding for parent involvement committees and school councils, for local projects like family math nights, resources to welcome parents who are new to Ontario to learn about the Ontario education system—a whole host of things.

For example, for some of the projects that parents have chosen, we help parents with resources to help them support their children's learning: information on topics like bullying, child care, math homework, and the new health and phys-ed curriculum. We've made a lot of parent resources available, a lot of resources around online social networking safety and how to be safe on the Internet.

We know that when parents are engaged, their children do better. That's why we are encouraging parents to get involved in their children's education.

#### ACCESSIBLE PARKING PERMITS

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Last year, over 1,000 counterfeit accessible parking permits were confiscated in Toronto—up by 28% in just one year. Apparently, motorists are able to easily access or create these fake permits. This government's response was to tighten up security on newly issued permits only.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to explain how bar codes on new permits will help to alleviate fraud, since the old permits, which are easily counterfeited, are still accepted until they expire.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I appreciate the question. I think the member knows full well the importance of these permits to Ontarians and to those who need them and need access to these spaces in Ontario. The last thing we want to see is anyone counterfeiting or fraudulently using these types of permits in Ontario. We think that is a despicable practice, for somebody to fraudulently take a permit and take a spot or a space from someone who has a disability or needs to have that type of access.

On this side of the House, we're concerned about that issue. We're taking steps within our government and our ministry to tighten up the security of these permits, to make them tougher to counterfeit. That was the purpose of the announcement. That's what we're aiming to do.

We're going to continue to work with the accessibility community, to continue to make these permits stronger for Ontarians and to reduce fraud that's out there in the province.

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

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Thank you very much. My question really didn't address the fact that we're trying to tighten up security. I mentioned that we're tightening up security. My question is, why aren't we tightening up security on the existing permits, and not just waiting for those permits to expire?

Mr. Speaker, thousands of Ontarians, we know, struggle with mobility issues. Many face additional burdens when accessible parking is taken up by these fraudsters. When designated spots are unavailable, motorists with permits are sometimes allowed to park in no-parking or no-stopping zones.

Unfortunately, our accessible parking rules vary from municipality to municipality, resulting in much confusion. For example, Thornhill resident Michelle Zaldin

received a ticket in the city of Vaughan for parking with a permit in an area that's acceptable in Toronto.

I'd like to know if the minister plans to streamline accessible parking regulations so that Ontario residents struggling with mobility challenges don't need to carry with them a copy of every municipality's parking regulations.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I appreciate the supplementary question. As the member knows, we've taken a number of steps to increase the security measures and increase fines related to this. I'm certainly happy to take any suggestions that the member may have back to the ministry to review them, and to work with the member opposite to continue to raise the standard in how we protect consumers and those individuals with accessibility needs in Ontario.

I should remind the member, and I think the member knows, that not all of these disabilities in individuals are visible disabilities. We need to make sure that the permits are provided for individuals who need them in Ontario. I'm committed to working with the member opposite to do all that we can to strengthen these provisions for individuals who need these permits.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on a point of order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I just want to remind everybody that the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition is having a reception in room 230. I recommend all members to drop by.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I want to call members' attention to a special guest who a number of us are having lunch with shortly. We're joined by Assemblyman Walter Mosley. He's a Democratic assemblyman representing Brooklyn for the state of New York. And of course, a very familiar face as well: He is joined by Avi Benlolo, the executive director of the Simon Wiesenthal foundation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome to the Legislature.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2016

##### LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

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

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter

certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

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

*The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.*

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

On September 16, 2015, Mr. Hoskins moved second reading of Bill 119. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

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

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

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** To the justice committee, please.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Referred to the justice committee. Carried.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nickel Belt on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** A point of order, Speaker: This morning, as I was talking to the motion on concurrence in supply, I said there were 69 layoffs in Windsor. It was 169 nurses being laid off in Windsor. I made a mistake.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Just a record correction, Mr. Speaker: At one point, I meant to say 608,000 net new jobs created since the recession. For some reason, I think I said 280,000, which wasn't even close. That's why the Premier was looking at me funny, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And on that note, I do want to bring to everyone's attention that when you correct the record, you only correct the record. In the last little while, until today—I'm glad it happened the way it did today—there were people making editorials or making comments or debate. That's not the purpose of correcting one's record. So we will stay focused on correcting one's record.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** While they have not joined us yet, there are a number of representatives from our first responders who will be joining us in the House regarding the PTSD announcement. One is from the Orangeville Police Services Board. I would like to welcome James Giovannetti.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### 2016 CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines. As the final weekend of the 2016 Canadian auto show revs up with a tribute to the 100th running of the Indy 500, a celebration of this great race and the Canadians who have fought for victory there, a collection of nine cars from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway museum will be on hand, including Jacques Villeneuve's 1995 Indy winner, the Reynard 95i, and the Lola Mackenzie Financial No. 15 car that Scott Goodyear rode to his second-place Indy finish in 1992.

Of course, while the century-old race provides the backdrop, this year's show features many of the favourites that auto show fans look forward to each and every year. More than 1,000 cars, trucks, SUVs, concept cars and motorcycles are featured among the 65,000 square feet of exhibits, displays and attractions at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Visitors with a taste for the exotic car can check out the Auto Exotica display, featuring \$25-million worth of cars, including Rolls Royce, McLaren, Ferrari, Maserati, Bentley and the Aston Martin.

To top it all off, a very special guest appearance will be made tomorrow, as the Batmobile escapes Gotham

and touches down in Toronto for a star-studded day and dark night.

I encourage auto and superhero fans alike to fire up those engines, bundle up the family and head down to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for our country's largest consumer show, the 2016 Canadian International Auto Show.

## HOSPITAL INFECTION CONTROL

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to rise today to talk about a recent visit I made to an innovative company in Waterloo region, Class 1. Barry Hunt, president and CEO of Class 1, is with us today in the members' gallery.

Class 1 makes equipment to recapture anaesthetic gases vented by hospitals, helping them to reduce carbon emissions. It started off as a small business in Barry's basement in 1995 and hasn't stopped growing since then.

They have taken on a new challenge: fighting hospital-acquired infections. Some 80,000 Ontarians are infected every year in hospital; 4,000 of them die; every 42 seconds another Ontarian is infected; every two hours another patient dies.

Hospital-acquired infections, or HAIs, are the third-leading cause of death in Canada, responsible for more deaths every year than car accidents, breast cancer and HIV combined. These deaths are preventable.

Class 1 is working to reduce hospital infections by 80% by 2024. They have developed technology that will break the chain of infection by scouring the surfaces of hospital rooms with ultraviolet light to kill hidden bacteria.

The estimated direct cost of these preventable infections is \$20,000 per case, or \$1.5 billion, in Ontario every year. The cost of prevention is far lower than the cost of treating patients who are unnecessarily infected. I'm hopeful that the upcoming 2016 budget will reflect this much-needed and important investment in our health care sector.

## HIGH-SPEED RAIL

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Recently, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, we had a visit by the Honourable David Collenette, Ontario's recently appointed special adviser on high-speed rail. He came with a team of policy experts from the Ministry of Transportation on a fact-finding mission to hear local voices offer their input, ideas and expectations on advancing the province's visionary plan to build a high-speed rail network in the Windsor-to-Toronto corridor.

We had municipal leaders there, representatives from the tech sector, manufacturing, academia, financial services, and environmental groups. We heard outstanding feedback from these people. The round-table sessions ran about two hours. Let me offer you some of the highlights.

As we brand ourselves in Waterloo region as Silicon Valley North, we need faster and more frequent rail service tied to our economic development. Those trains

need to flow in all directions. This is going to help us to attract the talent we need to keep innovating and creating jobs. And it needs to connect with our light rail transit system which is now under construction.

Mr. Speaker, all around the globe, you will find high-speed trains servicing the public—in Spain, China, Austria, the UK, Italy, South Korea and even Uzbekistan.

We know that we have the know-how here in Ontario and, now, with a willing federal partner, we have the political will to stay on track with this ambitious plan to bring high-speed rail to the people of Ontario.

#### IVAN MATER

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I rise today to recognize the passing of Mr. Ivan Mater on February 16, 2016, just 10 days after celebrating his 96th birthday. Beloved husband of the late Belle Mater, Ivan was a loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

After working on the family farm and across the Prairies during the Depression, Ivan joined the Royal Canadian Navy in 1941 and served until 1945, crossing the Atlantic 30 times, which was quite extraordinary in those days.

He met Belle in Belfast, Ireland, during the war, and they were married in Inwood in 1946.

Following the war, Ivan embarked on a career in construction in Sarnia. Over a four-decade period, he built homes, apartment buildings, Sarnia General Hospital, commercial buildings and industrial parks.

Ivan was a long-time member of the Progressive Conservative Party locally, the Golden K Kiwanis, Central Baptist Church, the committee of adjustment for the city of Sarnia, the Sarnia Legion, the Sarnia Lakeview Cemetery board, and many others. He was also active with the Shriners Mocha temple. He recently received his 70-year membership pin in the Masonic order, and was a recipient of the John Ross Matheson Award from the Scottish Rite of Canada for service in 2012, and the 2012 Queen's jubilee medal.

Always active, Ivan enjoyed dancing and gardening. He once led a project to plant over a hundred American sweet chestnut trees throughout southwestern Ontario.

I am thankful that I had the privilege to call Ivan Mater a good friend for so many years.

My deepest condolences to his loved ones. Ivan will be dearly missed by his family and the broader community of Sarnia–Lambton.

#### GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I rise today to remind members of this House of the plight of hundreds of hard-working families affected by Goodwill Industries' decision to close their stores earlier this year.

On January 18, without warning, Goodwill Industries closed all of its 16 stores in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Newmarket, Barrie, Orillia and Brockville, putting hundreds of people out of work.

As the labour critic, it's both alarming and disheartening to know that our government has done nothing to get to the bottom of what led to hundreds of Goodwill employees in these communities being out on the street without warning.

Goodwill received millions in revenue in 2014 and at least \$4 million a year from the province. The CEO, whose decision it was to shut down operations, citing a fiscal crisis, makes well over \$230,000 a year. Meanwhile, the almost 500 affected employees, the lowest-paid workers, probably, in this province, those who need our help most—their livelihoods rely on these Goodwill stores staying open. They depend on their government, and all they've gotten so far is silence and inaction.

These workers are dedicated. They've worked hard for Goodwill. The stores were pillars of their communities. They're being thrown out of work without notice, and that's devastating to them.

The government's silence and inaction on this issue is unacceptable, in my opinion, so I stand here today with New Democrats, and I urge all members of this House to do the same thing, and get some action to get these people back to work.

#### ORGAN DONATION

##### DON D'ORGANES

**Mr. John Fraser:** As we approach the end of Kindness Week, I'd like to encourage all Ontarians to think about how we can be generous to the people around us. One of the kindest acts a person can do is consent to the Trillium Gift of Life Network.

Consentir au Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie est un des actes les plus généreux qu'une personne peut faire.

Organ donation is an important decision that should be carefully considered. There are currently 1,620 Ontarians waiting for a transplant. Every organ donation can save up to eight lives.

##### 1310

By making the decision to donate, a person gives hope to patients waiting for a life-saving or life-enhancing transplant. In my riding of Ottawa South, over 36,000 residents have consented to donate their organs. I am proud to represent such a generous community. There is still room for improvement.

I'd like to encourage my colleagues to remind their community about the importance of organ donation through their householders and other correspondence. Encouraging this meaningful act of kindness could make a world of difference to someone in their lives and someone in their communities.

Promouvoir cet acte généreux pourrait faire toute la différence pour quelqu'un dans notre communauté et pour leur famille.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I want to take this opportunity to express some concerns about the Ontario pension plan.

Of course, we all want Ontarians to have a secure and stable retirement. However, I feel it's important to bring up for consideration some of the following situations.

What if you are an 18-year-old student working part-time at a store to help pay for university? You pay into the ORPP, once fully implemented. You attend teachers' college and become a teacher at 25. What happens to the eight years of previous contributions?

What if you work part-time at a local coffee shop to help pay for college? At 30, you move to Vancouver for a new job opportunity. You stay in Vancouver and retire there. What happens to the 13 years you contributed?

What if you pay into the Ontario pension for a few years and then land a job with a great pension? How does that impact your contributions?

There are many questions that are yet to be answered about the Ontario pension plan, or questions where the answers seem to change. Is the ORPP portable? If yes, how will that work? If your spouse outlives you, will they get a benefit?

Perhaps most concerning: What if your employer can't afford the ORPP and you lose your job? At the end of the day, if you don't have a job, you don't have a pension.

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to speak today on the recent trade mission to India. I was fortunate to be among the delegates that joined Premier Kathleen Wynne on this successful and important trip. It was an incredible experience—one that has not only strengthened Ontario's ties with a valuable trade partner but also strengthened vital cultural ties.

Over the course of 10 days, 65 agreements were signed with a value of more than \$240 million, including the creation of more than 150 jobs in our province. As our business ties continue to grow, so will those job numbers. As the Premier puts it, we're building a brain-chain between India and Ontario.

India is an emerging market and trips like these create valuable opportunities for Ontario businesses, but it was also an incredible cultural experience. India is a beautiful country, and we were welcomed with open arms. I was lucky enough to be invited to lay a wreath at the grave of the great Mahatma Gandhi, a moment that was both humbling and unforgettable for me. In addition, I was also fortunate to visit the Golden Temple and to see important projects on the ground for women's issues. It was truly a humbling experience.

I'm so thankful to have had the opportunity to join the trade mission to India. Thank you so much for letting me speak, Mr. Speaker.

#### CLASSY LANE STABLES TRAINING CENTRE

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** On a cold winter's night on January 4, a neighbour of the Classy Lane Stables Training Centre in the township of Puslinch spotted flames in

one of the five barns. After calling 911, he stood helplessly with others, unable to rescue the 43 racehorses inside because of thick black smoke and flames. Firefighters from five departments, including my neighbouring community of Cambridge, were called to the blaze. The fire marshal is still investigating the cause.

The loss has devastated the horse racing community. Dan Lagace from Cambridge was working with seven horses that were housed at the Classy Lanes stables. He rushed to the scene, but said he was helpless as the building that contained his livelihood and beloved horses was engulfed in flames. The deaths of the 43 racehorses are more than just a professional catastrophe; it's like losing family members, many said. About 20 people lost their jobs, and a GoFundMe site was set up. It has raised over \$500,000 to assist them.

I phoned owner Barb Millier, who was very grateful for the call from Premier Wynne, and to many others for their tributes and donations to those who've lost jobs. Agricultural and rural affairs Minister Leal visited the farm and his staff worked with the owners after the fire.

At an evening vigil, I joined horse lovers, employees and firefighters to remember the horses that perished and the human lives that were impacted.

Thank you to all those who have reached out to those affected by this terrible loss.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 63(c), the supplementary estimates 2015-16 of the Office of the Assembly before the Standing Committee on Estimates are deemed to be passed by the committee, and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 62(c), the supplementary estimates 2015-16 of the Office of the Assembly, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S FIRST RESPONDERS ACT (POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER), 2016

##### LOI DE 2016 D'APPUI AUX PREMIERS INTERVENANTS DE L'ONTARIO (ÉTAT DE STRESS POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail et la Loi sur le ministère du Travail relativement à l'état de stress post-traumatique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to rise today to introduce that bill. There are some people in our society, people who are first responders, who step to the front when we're going the other way. They are people who put out our fires and rescue people from car wrecks, people who deal with some quite violent situations and people who work in our correctional facilities. We owe them a lot more than we're providing at this point in time from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. What they've asked for is presumptive legislation. What I'm bringing forward today would accomplish just that.

#### BATTLE OF THE HATPINS DAY ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR DE LA BATAILLE DES ÉPINGLES À CHAPEAUX

M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant :

Bill 164, An Act to proclaim Battle of the Hatpins Day / Projet de loi 164, Loi proclamant le Jour de la bataille des épingles à chapeaux.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm curious for the member's explanatory notes. The member for a short statement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Le projet de loi proclame le 29 janvier de chaque année le Jour de la bataille des épingles à chapeaux. C'est le 29 janvier 1916 qu'un groupe de femmes a réussi à empêcher les inspecteurs scolaires d'entrer dans leur école et de la fermer, puisque le règlement 17 empêchait l'enseignement du français en Ontario.

The bill proclaims January 29 in each year as Battle of the Hatpins Day.

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On January 29, 1916, many women pushed back school inspectors from entering the school of their children by using the pins from their hats. By doing this, the inspectors were not allowed to come in and shut their school down under regulation 17, which did not allow the teaching of French in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup. I've now been taught something.

## PETITIONS

### HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

**Mr. Han Dong:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the home inspector industry remains largely unregulated; and

"Whereas homeowners are increasingly reliant on home inspectors to make an educated home purchase; and

"Whereas the unregulated industry poses a risk to consumers;

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

"To protect consumers by regulating the home inspection industry and licensing home inspectors."

I support this petition and I'll sign it.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Sayeem.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition here that was sent—I've had several of these from across Ontario, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in ... Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in

direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

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

“Once debated at committee, to expedite” its progress through third reading and finally “to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to page Owen.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a very heavy petition here, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I’m happy to affix my signature.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that has been collected by Christine Mathieu, who lives in Gogama, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Gogama Highway 661 Maintenance

“Whereas Highway 661 is a three-kilometre secondary highway which links the town of Gogama to Highway 144 and is in extremely poor condition throughout the entire winter season; and

“Whereas Highway 661 is an essential highway which all emergency vehicles, school buses and other vehicles, including snowplows, must travel into and out of the community daily; and

“Whereas the low standard of winter maintenance of this highway, always snow-packed and icy, creates a

serious public safety issue, putting at risk the lives of the area residents.”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Increase the winter maintenance standard for this single-access highway into Gogama to ensure that the residents have safer access to their home community.”

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

#### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I have a petition here that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

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

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

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

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name and send it to the table with page Richard.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. John Vanthof:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

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

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I wholeheartedly agree and send the petition down with page Luke.

#### PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** J'ai une pétition ici, adressée à l'Assemblée législative, pour l'élimination des microbilles dans les produits cosmétiques.

« Attendu que les microbilles sont de petites particules de plastique de moins de 1 mm de diamètre, qui passent à travers nos systèmes de filtration de l'eau et sont présentes dans nos rivières et dans les Grands Lacs;

« Attendu que la présence de ces microbilles dans les Grands Lacs augmente et qu'elles contribuent à la pollution par le plastique de nos lacs et rivières d'eau douce;

« Attendu que la recherche scientifique et les données recueillies jusqu'à présent révèlent que les microbilles qui sont présentes dans notre système d'alimentation en eau stockent des toxines, que des organismes confondent ces microbilles avec des aliments et que ces microbilles peuvent se retrouver dans notre chaîne alimentaire;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative aux fins suivantes :

**1330**

« Mandater le gouvernement de l'Ontario pour qu'il interdise la création et l'ajout de microbilles aux produits cosmétiques et à tous les autres produits de santé et de beauté connexes et demander au ministère de l'Environnement d'effectuer une étude annuelle des Grands Lacs pour analyser les eaux et déceler la présence de microbilles. »

Je vous l'envoie avec page Micah.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“Whereas once you privatize Hydro One, there's no return; and

“Whereas we'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“Whereas we'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“Whereas we'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerks' table via page Charlotte.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve.”

It's signed by many people throughout my riding, and I'm happy to hand it to page Richard.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that is signed by Mrs. Valerie Hawkings from Long Lake Road in my riding, and it reads as follows:

“Petition about intercity transportation

“Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

“Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa; and

“Whereas there have been serious reductions at Ontario Northland, including the elimination of Northland's train services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario.”

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

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** “Stop the Carbon Tax petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn't necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and

households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

“To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

Again, it's signed by many people from my riding. I'll hand it to page Delaney.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled, “Hydro One not for sale!” It reads:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

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

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One.”

I support this petition fully, affix my name to it and send it to the table.

#### PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** J'ai une pétition ici sur l'élimination des microbilles des produits cosmétiques adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

« Attendu que les microbilles sont de petites particules de plastique de moins de 1 mm de diamètre, qui passent à travers nos systèmes de filtration de l'eau et sont présentes dans nos rivières et dans les Grands Lacs;

« Attendu que la présence de ces microbilles dans les Grands Lacs augmente et qu'elles contribuent à la pollution par le plastique de nos lacs et rivières d'eau douce;

« Attendu que la recherche scientifique et les données recueillies jusqu'à présent révèlent que les microbilles

qui sont présentes dans notre système d'alimentation en eau stockent des toxines, que des organismes confondent ces microbilles avec des aliments et que ces microbilles peuvent se retrouver dans notre chaîne alimentaire;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative aux fins suivantes :

« Mandater le gouvernement de l'Ontario pour qu'il interdise la création et l'ajout de microbilles aux produits cosmétiques et à tous les autres produits de santé et de beauté connexes et demander au ministère de l'Environnement d'effectuer une étude annuelle des Grands Lacs pour analyser les eaux et déceler la présence de microbilles. »

Je vous l'envoie avec page Jessie.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

##### SAVING THE GIRL NEXT DOOR ACT, 2016

##### LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE DES JEUNES FILLES

Ms. Scott moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 158, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2016 and the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2016 and to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 158, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2016 sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes et modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Tuesday was no ordinary day for me. It wasn't an ordinary day at Queen's Park and it wasn't an ordinary day in the Legislature. In fact, Tuesday was a special day—one of the finest days I've had in my 10 years here serving as a member of provincial Parliament. It was one of my most extraordinary days, in fact.

We all take pride in the work we do on behalf of all Ontarians in our ways and in different efforts. We work hard each and every day to make a difference in all the details that it may take. But on Tuesday, February 16, it was that much more. It is the day I stood in the House and introduced my private member's bill to take a direct hit at the underground world of human trafficking.

The Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016, may hold the legislative contents of this bill, but it is truly the representation of the many long hours of dedication and commitment and pure sweat of a small, collaborative group—survivors, victim service providers, police officers and advocates—who fight this horrendous crisis every day. At this time, I would like to strongly thank, as

I acknowledge some honoured guests that we have in the gallery today for being here in support of this human trafficking bill: Cynthia Bland, the founder and CEO, and Simone Bell, speaker, experiential adviser and peer mentor, for Voice Found; Karyn Kennedy, president and CEO, and Lindsay Jolie, director of communications and community relations, for Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre; and Bridget Perrier, co-founder for Sextrade101. Please join me in welcoming our honoured guests.

**1340**

These devoted individuals, as well as others like Timea Nagy who couldn't be with us today, recount stories and tell about instances and events that make you shudder or just plain cry in an instant. Whether we pay attention as a society or not, these experiences are very real. They are horrifying, repressive and severely damaging

Discussions, conversations and consultations paint the picture, but it is the actions that speak the loudest. I have served on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. I have called for the creation of the multi-jurisdictional and co-ordinated task force of law enforcement agencies, crown prosecutors, judges, victim services and front-line agencies so that we can do more.

We know the facts. Human trafficking is an underground and fast-growing crime. It starts in Canada and it stays in Canada. Over 90% of the victims are Canadian-born. It's in our neighbourhoods, our communities and our towns. Victims are predominantly girls and are as young as 11 years old. Traffickers recruit, transport, harbour and control the very girl next door for sexual exploitation or forced labour. They are lured into a nightmare that they can almost never escape from on their own.

Ontario specifically has been identified as a major hub of human trafficking. Cities and towns along the Highway 401 corridor such as London, Toronto, Kingston and Ottawa provide an accessible thoroughfare for traffickers to transport victims and keep them isolated. Traffickers range in profile from lone individuals to complex criminal networks.

Enough is enough. It is time to take immediate action and it's time to save the next innocent soul before they become a statistic.

The Saving the Girl Next Door Act is specifically intended to have three main parts: continuous education and awareness; immediate action—immediate, I say again—to expand existing laws; and immediate action to enhance existing law.

First, the bill proclaims every February 22 as a day of awareness of human trafficking, as it marks the date in 2007 when Canada's Parliament unanimously condemned all forms of human trafficking and slavery. Ontario must follow suit.

Second, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act will expand current laws to evoke an immediate impact. It will allow the courts to make a protection order against a perpetrator of human trafficking or child exploitation. A

protection order—similar to a restraining order—would force the trafficker to stay away from the survivor for a minimum of three years. If a trafficker breaches that protection order, they would face a penalty of up to \$50,000 or up to two years of jail or both.

There is also a new tort that will allow a survivor to sue their trafficker for damages. There are devastating effects of human trafficking, and recovery is emotionally and financially difficult. It may serve as a measure of justice.

Third, the bill pushes public awareness of traffickers through the enhancement of current legislation. It will expand the definition of "sex offence" under Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000, to include offences related to the trafficking or purchasing of the sexual services of persons under the age of 18.

Manitoba has shown us the way. Their provincial Legislature not only has passed its own law on human trafficking with emphasis on protection orders; they have invested the financial resources to enforce it.

Notably, one of Canada's leading experts in human trafficking and sexual exploitation is Joy Smith, a former MP for Kildonan—St. Paul in Manitoba, who now dedicates her life's work to its eradication through the Joy Smith Foundation. Mrs. Smith has put her full support behind this bill, stating, "I applaud Laurie Scott for this excellent Bill 158, Saving the Girl Next Door Act. It will save lives. It is very innovative and demonstrates the extraordinary leadership Ms. Scott has displayed in this area of human trafficking."

The bill is action now. While continued discussion, consultation, collaboration and legislation are required to end human trafficking—colleagues, Tuesday may have been an extraordinary day, but the undertaking is not complete. Please join me, everyone in this Legislature, all parties, all sides, in lending unanimous consent to this bill. We owe it to our honoured guests who are with us in the gallery. We owe it to the front-line workers, survivors and advocates who combat this horrific crime every day. And we owe it to the girl next door.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour to rise, always, in this Legislature, and it's particularly an honour for my colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and this bill.

She's modest. When she talks about the Girl Next Door Act—I want to tell you a story about a girl next door who would, in fact, be helped by this bill. Obviously I'm changing her name. A young girl, she was 14 at the time and new to high school. She was shown some extra attention by a high school senior, a young man in grade 12. She was, of course, just flattered to get his attention. This is called, by the way, the Romeo pimp syndrome and it's not unusual.

Anyway, he shows her attention. They date. The next thing you know, he's inviting her out to parties. There are drugs involved. She's experimenting with drugs in a way that she probably wouldn't have done otherwise.



The next thing she knows, he's telling her, "Would you go to a party for me? It's all older guys. Don't worry about it. It's a good party, great music, lots of drugs. You don't have to pay for anything." She goes, not knowing that he's actually charged the men for her presence.

This young woman gets more involved in drugs, and addicted to methedrine. Now she has to go to the parties. Now she's also getting extra money for extra sex work that she's doing at the parties.

She is a victim of human trafficking. He goes on; she has no idea, of course. He moves on. She doesn't know until they break up that there were many other girls working for this same young man. Doing this, he makes tens of thousands of dollars.

This is something that is happening across our province. Quite frankly, I was unaware that it was as extensive as it is. This is something that is happening in just about every high school in some areas, Ms. Scott has pointed out. This is something that is happening to girls we may know, or whose families we definitely know.

This is not, as one would first think when you hear about human trafficking, importing—but it is as well, of course—women from other countries who don't have cultural capital and can't speak the language, forcing them to work in so-called massage parlours. That goes on as well.

But this is also about, just as the bill is named, the girls next door, the Canadian girls. Some 90%, as the member has said, were born right here. It's shocking, it's horrific and it's real. It's happening.

Now, I have to say, I did speak to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock about this, and we were very concerned about some of the federal moves around sex trade work like Bill C-36. We hope the new government rescinds that bill because, in fact, it denies protection for sex workers who actually choose that profession, who are adult women or adult men who choose that profession. That's an entirely different topic. That's an entirely different subject. That's an entirely different debate.

This is about children. At the end of the day, this is about our children. That's who we're speaking about here. If you look through all the provisions of this, you'll see that all but one specify "under 18 years." One of the concerns we had, in fact, is that in the preamble it says "19 years." I just throw that out to the member. She may want to look at the age in that bill.

**1350**

But apart from that there's nothing here that, of course, we in the New Democratic Party would not support. We do support it. It's interesting: I just came from the announcement for PTSD, which as many of you know I've been working on for seven years now. So I came from a room full of first responders—police, paramedics, fire—and this is a bill also for them—for the victims, but also for them, to give them the tools they need because they don't know what to do and they don't have the resources to do it. This is a first step towards addressing that wrong as well.

In a sense it's a shame we couldn't have moved them all in here because they would have heard this bill and they would have been supportive of it, because they see it—and they see it a lot. It's shocking. It's happening. It's in our midst. It is the girl next door. I just want to, again, give kudos, as she's become quite a champion on this issue—it's such a long name; I want to say Ms. Scott but I'm going to say Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock again; a lovely area, just a long name—for her actions on this and her tireless championing of it.

It's always good to see members of this House who take on something and really go to town on it and do not stop until they get action from the government. To my friends on the other side of the aisle, I hope that you are listening and that you do take action on this, because it's critical and it will save lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Speaker, I'll be speaking as the minister responsible for women's issues on this bill. I'm pleased to rise to speak on this very serious issue of human trafficking, an area that I think we all agree needs more attention. I think we all agree that human traffickers prey on our most vulnerable citizens, often very young people.

I think it's important, and I'm going to shift to my other role as the Minister of Children and Youth Services, to acknowledge that human trafficking does not just target women and young girls. It targets boys and young men. I think that as we go forward in this we need to acknowledge that. I'm glad to see my critic from the opposition party for children and youth services is here, because many young boys are also victims of human trafficking.

But first I want to thank the member for bringing the bill forward and I'm very pleased to say our government will be supporting the bill. I want to thank her for her work on this bill and on the select committee. The Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment made a few specific recommendations regarding human trafficking. We have lots of voices on the human trafficking agenda; we have a permanent round table on violence against women, which is part of our government sexual violence and harassment action plan called It's Never Okay; and of course the many stakeholders. I acknowledge the people who are here today and acknowledge your tireless work. Your voices are incredibly important to this conversation about human trafficking.

I do want to say—and I won't say everything I want to say because I'm going to share my time with others—that there is definitely a need, Speaker, for more coordination of information within and between governments and local organizations. We need to take a very holistic approach to combating human trafficking. The front-line organizations and the supporters of survivors and the advocates are equally important in all of this.

As the Premier mentioned this morning in question period, and I think in an announcement last week, I'll be co-leading the government's work on an advisory panel

co-led by my colleague Minister Naqvi, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. That work will build on work that's already going on. It will build on investments that are being made. We currently have \$456 million in funding to address gender-based and other violence in Ontario. So we're not starting from scratch, Speaker. It's important to build on our success and look at what has been working.

Because my co-chair is not here, I just want to briefly touch on a couple of things more on the policing side, if I could, Speaker, and our work with the federal government.

We are participating in the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women subcommittee on human trafficking, which is a federal, provincial and territorial working group. Police forces across the province continue to work with the RCMP and the Canadian Border Services Agency to address human trafficking.

I also want to acknowledge Durham Regional Police Service, where I live and where the member who brought this bill forward lives—or partially lives in Durham, right?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I partially have it in my riding.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** She's partially in Durham. I know she's reached out to them as well. Durham Regional Police Service coordinated the first anti-human-trafficking initiative in Ontario, known as Operation Northern Spotlight. It involved 26 police services. It was so successful that it led to a second operation, coordinated by the OPP, involving 29 police services from across the country. I applaud Durham Regional Police Service for their work, and all police forces across Ontario will need to play a role in addressing human trafficking going forward.

It's also important to note that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has used the Proceeds of Crime Front Line Policing Grant to provide \$1.5 million in funding to 12 projects to help police services combat human trafficking. That helps the police with special investigations; educational campaigns for victims and witnesses; increased surveillance; improved officer training, which I'm very supportive of; and human trafficking investigation.

Speaker, there is a lot more to say. I know my colleagues will be speaking to this bill as well. Again, I want to congratulate the member for bringing this forward, thank her for her work on the subcommittee and thank the guests here today. Together, I believe we can address this serious issue. We have to make sure that our most vulnerable people, who are affected by human trafficking, don't get caught in this. We have to support them, we have to prevent this and we have to take action against those who commit this horrible crime.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It's a great honour to join the debate today on the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's bill.

In our legislative career, we often end up focusing on a few issues that we become very passionate about. I

really want to thank the member for all of her work on human trafficking. It's not an easy subject. It's not an easy issue for people to comprehend. We've already had some comments about how when you say "human trafficking," people often think about bringing young men and women from outside of the country. In fact, we're learning that that is not the case. The majority of them are domestic or girl-next-door.

The front-line people who are helping survivors, who have been experiencing this first-hand—I want to talk specifically about a police officer who, many years ago, was involved in trying to assist some young women from his community who had been caught in the web of human trafficking.

He became a de facto air traffic controller to try to figure out and reach out to his support network of where he could go—because the traditional methods didn't work. You can't take a survivor who has been involved in human trafficking and drop them off at the local transition place or women's shelter. It doesn't work. The model is not successful. He essentially built a whole network of people he could call on to get assistance in the middle of the night when he was trying to help these people.

**1400**

At the end of it—I wish I had brought them—he had little business cards made up, because he is in the police service. One side said, "Here are the things that you need to look for if you suspect human trafficking." He used to hand those out to his fellow officers, often in other detachments and jurisdictions, because he found, when he spoke to other individuals—other people who were working in the front lines—that they didn't know what to look for; they didn't know what to watch for. They suspected things, but it was not an easy fix.

I really want to give a shout-out to the people who are assisting the survivors, because you were there when we as legislators were not paying attention. You built the model. When we were working on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, Laurie Scott—sorry, the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—brought forward her suggestions and wanted to make sure that human trafficking was incorporated.

I was very pleased that one of the opportunities we had was to meet with the author and ask a lot of questions about a book called *Somebody's Daughter*, by Julian Sher. If you want to learn more—if you want to see the impact this has on our community—this a really good place to start. We have opportunities in other jurisdictions, like Manitoba, that have been doing some excellent work, and I think we can capitalize on that.

I want to give credit where credit is due: The minister stood up and is participating in a debate on a private member's bill. I think that speaks volumes to the fact that she is taking this issue seriously. I appreciate that, and I want to congratulate her on that. I think that sends the right message that this is an issue we can work on collaboratively.

As it turns out, I do actually have the indicators of human trafficking. I'm going to wrap up, because there

are a lot of people who want to speak, but just a couple things that people can look for if they suspect it: Is the victim in possession of identification or travel documents? If not, who is controlling them? Was the victim coached on what to say to law enforcement and immigration officers? There is some excellent work. We just need make sure that we coordinate it and share it among all of our law enforcement agencies and the individuals who are assisting survivors.

With that I will wrap up and say thank you for bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's a real honour and a pleasure to rise today to speak in support of the private member's bill that is before us today, introduced by the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Like others in this House today, I want to add my congratulations to the member for her tireless advocacy on this issue. I had the privilege of working with the member on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. As occasionally happens in this House, sometimes we develop friendships across party lines, and those friendships are based on enormous respect for the passion and commitment that we bring to our work. I want to certainly acknowledge that, on behalf of my caucus.

During the select committee process, the stories we heard about human trafficking were among the most disturbing and the most shocking of the depositions that were brought to the committee. I do want to acknowledge the people who are here in the gallery today to witness this debate and who informed the private member's legislation that has been brought forward. Certainly, we were always reminded during the select committee process that it is vital to honour the voices of survivors, to respect the voices of survivors and to incorporate the expertise that survivors bring into legislation that we are bringing forward.

Although the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment looked at a number of different issues, we did highlight the issue of human trafficking as something that the government needs to take action on. The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has previously raised this issue in the House. I think this private member's bill before us today moves us one step closer to the comprehensive provincial strategy that is needed. I do want to acknowledge the efforts that the government is making to convene a round table to push this issue forward, as well.

I wanted to share with members today some of the testimony that we heard during the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. This is from the interim report. We had a presentation from Legal Assistance of Windsor. The representative of that organization talked about one of the experiences of the clients whom they were working with who had been recruited into human trafficking.

The story goes that this young woman “was recruited by a friend over Facebook at 16 years old. She was told

by a girlfriend that she had met in a group home that the girl's boyfriend's friend liked her pictures and that he wanted to meet her. After texts and phone calls with the young man, she agreed to meet him. For over two months, she was forced to prostitute in cities across our province and service between seven and 10 men a day, seven days a week.”

Speaker, this is the experience of a 16-year-old girl and, as the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock points out, many of the victims of human trafficking are recruited at very young ages, as young as 11 and potentially even earlier. Her bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, certainly recognizes the risks to children by our failure to take action on the issue of human trafficking.

The bill has three components. The first is to declare February 22 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The second and the most substantive piece of this private member's bill is to enact the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, which will provide legal protections for children who are exploited by human traffickers. The third is to amend the sex offender registry act, so that those who are convicted of trafficking will be entered into the registry.

All of these issues are very important in moving us forward because, as we pointed out in the final report of the select committee, Ontario is a major hub for the global trade in human beings that we are seeing in human trafficking. It is an extraordinarily lucrative business that attracts criminals worldwide because, as the experience that I mentioned points out, unlike the drug trade, where criminals sell their illicit drugs and the drugs are gone once they're sold, with human trafficking, these girls, young women, young boys and aboriginal women can be sold over and over and over again.

The title of the bill, Saving the Girl Next Door Act, certainly does reflect the reality that many of the people who are recruited are from middle-class families. But we also have to acknowledge that human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable in our society. Many of them live in group homes; they are aboriginal children; they are indigenous women. There is a direct connection to missing and murdered indigenous women and the efforts that we need to make to understand the systemic barriers that led to the murders of those women.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It's an absolute privilege to rise today on behalf of the citizens of Cambridge in support of Bill 158 and add a few comments to this very important debate in the House. I want to also acknowledge the members who have joined us in the gallery today to hear this debate and to hear how we are progressing in the province.

**1410**

It was an honour to be appointed to the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. As other members of the committee who are speaking here today have said, we all joined together. This was an incredible

experience: to have all members of both sides of the House be really unanimous in our support of doing all we can to prevent sexual violence and harassment, including this very egregious crime of human trafficking.

Interestingly, the sexual violence action plan, Bill 132, is in front of the social policy committee just now. Members of that committee have just travelled across the province in order to hear public consultation regarding the action plan, but we did hear again about this burgeoning and growing issue of human trafficking.

Personally, I believe that this is an issue that we all need to really stand up and take notice of and to build awareness of. I fully believe that one act of violence against one woman is one act too many, and many of us do believe that. Preventing this crime in the first place is the most important thing. I believe that some of the recommendations that came forward in the select committee really look at doing that: educating our young people—girls and boys—not only on the presence of human trafficking but on sexual assault and consent issues in the first place.

As a parent, as a nurse and as a member of my community of Cambridge, I will add my voice to the others in this place and outside the chamber who are speaking up against this growing crime.

My riding straddles the 401. I now look at the hotels that are perched along that corridor in a different way. Hearing stories when we were sitting listening to survivors, listening to providers, about those trafficked women who are held hostage in hotels—probably in my community as well—is really horrifying. Interestingly, my own awareness has been raised in the last year or year and a half about the crime. Trafficked women and girls suffer. I've heard stories that girls and boys are micro-chipped. They cannot escape because there is a web around the hotel employees. Those who clean the rooms and those taxi drivers who come in and out are paid off by some of the pimps, some of the traffickers, so that if a girl happens to escape and gets into a cab, that cab will bring her around to the back door and return her to the trafficker.

This has to stop. This is one of the reasons why we do need a coordinated strategy to be able to stop these kinds of things. This could be my daughter, it could be my son and it could be yours. It could be the girl next door.

These bad actors, the ones who turn the other way, the ones who will not stand up and report the crimes, are the ones also who really need to take a lead role in their own community to prevent this from happening.

As a member of this government, I'm proud of the work that we're doing and proud of the work that we're doing concurrently; proud of the fact that all members on all sides of the House are standing up to try and eradicate sexual violence in Ontario and also human trafficking.

Our government will be continuing to take real steps to address human trafficking by working with community groups that are already on the ground, many of whom are here today and many of whom we heard from during our select committee. They'll be working closely with the

experts on the front lines to bring forward a comprehensive strategy. As we move forward, our approach will be survivor-centred. It'll be responsive to the needs on the ground. It'll focus on collaboration with other levels of government, community groups and justice partners.

It's important that we get this right. I look forward to seeing the comprehensive strategy that this government is bringing forward in June.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakubski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to join this debate today. I have very limited time so I won't go into some of the details, but I do want to thank the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and to congratulate her for bringing forth this piece of legislation.

I, like a lot of people, was shocked to learn just how close human trafficking is. Like most people, I thought it was out there but really never, ever came home and touched us here. She brought a lot of those issues to my attention, as she has to other people around this province.

I think a lot of it helped, when she was on the select committee dealing with sexual harassment, that she learned about so many of these stories. But learning about the stories is one thing; bringing them back here to the Legislature and taking some action is quite another. I must say that I've seen a lot of private members' bills in my 13 years here, and this private member's bill is probably one of the most comprehensive and well-thought-out pieces of legislation that I've had the pleasure of examining in my time here. It speaks to the commitment that she has to this issue, but it also speaks to the commitment we must have to this issue. This bill, while I'm confident it's going to pass second reading today, will amount to nothing if the government doesn't take further action in either bringing this bill further forward, or bringing forth some kind of comprehensive legislation on their own that will address this scourge of human trafficking.

This is something that's under the radar for most people. This is going to help to bring it out of the basement, so to speak, out of the closet, so that more people understand how perverse it is and why we must take immediate action on this issue. This bill is going to help that. I encourage all members of the House to support it today, but I say to the minister, the Premier and the cabinet: Move quickly on forms of legislation. Either back this bill up all the way to royal assent or move quickly on the reforms that will help our children never become victims of human trafficking.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** You know, you have a prepared speech, and you have four minutes to talk about this very important issue. Unfortunately, the time is running out for me. But I'm very happy to rise today in the House to share some of the comments that have been brought to light on this very important issue that was raised by the member opposite. I want to congratulate her for bringing this to the House today. I really appreciate this.

Once upon a time, I was a social worker. You hear stories throughout this process. I also had the great privilege of standing alongside members in the House today on the select committee. We did indeed hear about human trafficking.

One thing I would have to say, for me as a select committee member, is that the government is taking some action. One of them was raised and highlighted by the minister, where we are bringing forward a multi-ministerial advisory panel that will be co-led with Minister Naqvi and Minister MacCharles as a result of this wonderful initiative that we had as a select committee.

I know time is running out. I have all great things to say, but I want to salute and I wanted to at least stand up and say congratulations for bringing this bill forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I rise today to add to the discussion on Bill 158, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. This is a very important topic, as we've all said here, and one that impacts every riding and community in this great province. I want to once again commend my colleague the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I hope that following the discussion here today, this government will prioritize the passing of Bill 158 in the same way it has prioritized other pieces of legislation. Most I don't view as nearly as important as this.

As I mentioned in previous remarks to the sexual violence and harassment action plan, the true extent of human trafficking is not fully known in Ontario or in local municipalities, as the signs that someone is being trafficked are not always recognized.

Anecdotally, in my own riding, in my constituency office, we assisted the mother of a young woman recently over the winter break, in a situation where the mother believed that her adult daughter was caught in this same vicious cycle of drug abuse and trafficking. I want to commend my staff and the local community support agencies of Sarnia-Lambton for helping to find the young woman in that situation assistance and the opportunity to try to break free from the violent, coercive grasp of traffickers.

The provisions in the Saving the Girl Next Door Act will assist authorities in our communities by giving them more tools to go after these traffickers. This is something that is needed and should be adopted immediately by this government. I want to commend again the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes for her continued work on this issue, and I want to thank all members of the Legislature who have added to this discussion.

1420

Just before I close, someone mentioned these hotels along the 401 and other places. There must be managers or owners of these hotels watching this show right now, and I'd ask them to take a good look in the mirror and question what's going in these facilities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Mr. Speaker, regardless of how painful this topic is, I want to say what a privilege it is to be able to rise today and make a few comments.

I was particularly moved by the title of the bill. I had a conversation with a group of mothers of teenage daughters, and I raised the issue of human trafficking because this was a group of people who live in the greater Toronto area and I felt that they should know. They just had no idea, and so I feel compelled to make a particular point about the title of the bill—because that's who we're talking about.

We have an awareness that is minuscule in comparison to the breadth and depth of the problem. So I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on her initiative.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. When you look at the manner in which it has been organized—and people have referenced the tremendous inability of individuals to escape—it gives you some idea of bringing that meaning of human slavery back into our conversation.

My hope today is that not only will this bill pass but it will serve to spearhead a vigorous response to this crime that is just so damaging for the victims. I want to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing it forward today and allowing me to make a few comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm very touched by all the members who have spoken today: the member from Parkdale-High Park; the minister of women's issues—I do appreciate your being here; and the members from Dufferin-Caledon, London West, Cambridge, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Ottawa-Orléans, Sarnia-Lambton, York-Simcoe.

We have all, in this Legislature, heard the stories of human trafficking because we've spoken about it a lot; I specifically have. I appreciate my colleagues who have been on the select committee for the stories that they've heard outside of this Legislature. I think, from the stories that the members have told, we all know why we need to save the girl next door. This bill can take immediate action, and it has to be taken immediately before one more soul is taken into human trafficking.

I brought forward a motion of provincial networking of resources. We heard stories today of the patchwork of services. Some police services have human-trafficking-dedicated officers. Some victim services provide some services. It is a patchwork. It is not nearly enough. The guests I have in the gallery today are proof that they have taken such leadership.

I'm asking this government to take leadership now by implementing this bill, to take definitive actions, because we cannot waste any more time. June is not early enough. Pass this legislation. Let us protect some victims and

survivors now. Collectively, I know we can make a difference, and I know you want to make a difference.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I should inform the House that the vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 158 will take place after the private members' ballot items this afternoon.

## LIFE LEASE ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

Ms. Hoggarth moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to regulate life leases / Projet de loi 160, Loi visant à réglementer les baux viagers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'm always honoured to stand here in the House before the Legislature and represent the voices of my constituents. Today is no different.

Confucius once said that the strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home. This holds true today, and it speaks to the importance of establishing and maintaining quality housing for our seniors.

For decades now, the standard timeline of living was to work hard, purchase a home and take pride in maintaining it, and then to move into a retirement home until circumstances demand another move to a long-term-care facility. Much was lost in those relocations: a sense of independence, of community, and the feeling of belonging that comes with living in one place for a long time. The life lease option can make these senior transitions less traumatic.

What if, instead of moving several times when you're ready to downsize, you could move once and stay in that same place for decades? What if you didn't have to give up your independence to find somewhere more manageable to live? What if you could keep that sense of community and belonging that is so important to us, especially as we age?

Life leases are that missing link in our housing needs. In life leases, seniors can create a home all their own, without the difficult duties, tasks and expenses associated with home ownership. Usually residents do not have to deal with real estate problems, either.

The first life lease projects in Canada were built in the late 1970s and 1980s. There are now more than 300 lease projects across Canada, with about 135 currently in operation in Ontario alone. The majority of life lease projects in Canada are owned and operated by religious groups and other not-for-profit organizations. Nine out of 10 life leases operate well and are run with the residents' best interests in mind. I congratulate these groups for a job well done. However, this has not always proven to be the case.

Just as condo owners need protections, regulations are needed in order to ensure quality of housing and consumer protection for all life lease holders. In the ever-

expanding industry, and with an aging population, it's time for us to define in legislation what qualifies as a life lease and what guidelines must be set in place.

In my home riding of Barrie, I've had constituents reach out to me with concerns over how their life lease communities are run. In one instance, life lease holders saw their monthly fees increasing and the reserve funds for their complex decreasing in order to pay for the development and maintenance of another life lease project nearby. This is the sort of blatant misuse of reserve funds and disrespect for life lease holders that the legislation I am proposing today will help to prevent.

As legislators, it is our duty to protect the most vulnerable members of our population. In the golden years of their retirement, senior citizens who have done so much to build up this great province should not have to worry about keeping a hawk eye on the people to whom they entrust their money. Not only will this new bill define a life lease, but it will also set the standard for basic annual meetings between life lease sponsors and holders.

At these annual meetings, as with any other large investment, the sponsor will report to the life lease holders on the revenues and expenses of the complex for the preceding fiscal year. The sponsor will provide a detailed budget of the complex for the current fiscal year, and the sponsor will, of course, share with residents the balance of the complex's reserve funds. This annual meeting will ensure that life lease sponsors are held accountable to their holders and to the law, and will protect the investments senior citizens make when purchasing life leases.

#### 1430

Another key aspect of the mandatory annual meeting between life lease sponsors and holders is that it will provide the life lease holders with a right to be heard. With this legislation, every life lease holder will be entitled to bring forward matters with the sponsor and to discuss those matters in the public forum of an annual meeting.

I want to return again for a moment, though, to the issue of life lease sponsors and the reserve funds they manage on behalf of the life lease holders. Shelter is one of the most basic human rights, but it isn't enough to simply provide a building for people to live in. These life lease complexes must be maintained for the security and happiness of all involved.

When a roof begins to leak, when a sidewalk crumbles or when an elevator stops working, it goes without saying that money will be needed to pay for these repairs, which is why having a reserve fund for life lease complexes is of paramount importance. This is why we must also legislate that it is a requirement for life lease sponsors to maintain a reserve fund to pay for any unforeseen major repairs or replacements of assets. This fund must be present at all times on and after the first occupancy date of the complex. An engaged residents' association could provide valuable oversight to ensure the facility's superintendent and staff are held to the same high standards as condominium managers.

Our senior citizens have spent their lives supporting their fellow Ontarians, and it is now our duty to return

the favour. Life lease complexes are not just a place for our seniors to live. They are more than the bricks and mortar of which they are made. These complexes allow our seniors to maintain their independence while enjoying fewer responsibilities—no more mowing the lawn or shovelling the snow.

Quite often, life leases are more affordable than owning and maintaining a house or condominium, and many life lease sponsors cover the costs of the property taxes. Many life lease projects also provide access to social and recreational programs, even care and meal services. But the real attraction of living in a life lease complex is the sense of community it provides for our seniors. This kind of sense of community keeps our seniors healthy. There's a peace of mind that comes from knowing there's always a neighbour nearby when you need a hand. Living in a community with people who share your background and your values can also provide great comfort in a rapidly changing world.

One of my constituents, a man whose parents were living in a life lease, spoke with us about the benefits of their experience and where there was room for improvement. The residents' investment in the unit is guaranteed and, as a result, they feel more secure in their financial stability. Without the fear that their rent or condo fees would unexpectedly be increased, they were able to prepare for the day when they would have to move on to long-term care.

Some seniors do not want to pay rent in an apartment building. As former homeowners who value an investment in property, they see renting as an unwise use of their money with very little return. Life leases help them to safely maintain their capital for the future.

My constituent also spoke highly of the amenities and the activities offered to his parents and their fellow residents. Life leases often offer classes such as woodworking, senior fitness, live entertainment sometimes broadcast directly into their suites, a store to provide basic essentials, and library services. Many even offer a level of personal and medical care including assisted bathing, on-site nursing and physiotherapy. Regularly hosted coffee and dinner parties help to bring the residents together and develop that sense of community that other seniors lose when they change their homes.

Despite the many benefits his parents experienced, my constituent feels there is room for improvement. They felt they had very little input into the operation of their home. While their building did have a residents' association, it only dealt with trivial matters such as when and how to set up and take down the Christmas decorations. This is what needs to change.

He expressed that his parents wished to have a voice in the important matters of the building and to have some oversight over decisions surrounding the raising and spending of fees, maintenance and key staff. Residents, many of them with beneficial experience and many others eager to learn, would be an asset to these facilities. With a real voice, they'll be as committed to their building and investment as they were to their own homes. This

bill gives them the well-earned opportunity to have just that.

One senior living in a life lease in the great riding of Barrie put it this way: "The chance to live completely independently, yet amid like-minded people, is a cause to celebrate." Don't let such celebrations be marred by an unregulated industry.

Today we have the opportunity to secure protections for senior citizens throughout the province. Life lease projects are a fantastic housing option for thousands of seniors throughout Ontario, but we can make this option better by ensuring that these projects are governed by a core group of rules and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, honoured guests and my fellow members of provincial Parliament, I call on you today to support and vote in favour of the Life Lease Act, 2016. Ensuring safe and affordable housing for seniors is part of this government's plan to build Ontario up. By passing this bill, we will be taking another great stride forward in our fight for fair and reliable housing options.

Before I finish, I would like to wish my constituents Wally Carruthers and Erryle and Tom George much happiness as they begin their new lives in life leases.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time and the honour of speaking before you here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 160, An Act to regulate life leases.

As our population ages, many seniors are looking to move to a more manageable home. This might be one without stairs, one with less maintenance or one that is smaller.

For many seniors, life lease properties are a good option that provides them with a safe place to live, without worrying about outdoor maintenance. Life lease communities are different than condominiums or townhouse complexes in that the resident does not purchase the unit; they simply buy the right to lease it and live in it for life. The organization, or sponsor, continues to own the whole building, including all the units, which means that they retain most of the control. The person who leases the unit pays a monthly fee, similar to a condo fee, for maintenance and amenities.

In 2007, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., or the CMHC, estimated that the total number of life lease communities in Canada was 287. According to one life lease website, there are now over 125 life lease communities in Ontario alone, and there are many more across Canada. As our population continues to age, it seems likely that we will see more of these types of units. Many seniors seem to enjoy being part of these communities, which often have activities and social programs, and enjoy their reduced responsibilities.

Many of these life lease communities are operated by non-profit organizations such as churches, municipalities and charities so they can keep rates low and put the money back into maintenance. However, as with all in-

dustries, there are some organizations that perform better than others.

There's a life lease community in Calgary that made news because the contract seniors signed prevented them from getting any of the market gains; they could only sell the unit back to the owner, minus a few thousand dollars for refurbishing. One senior owned the life lease for seven years during the Calgary housing boom, so the market increase would have been significant, but she didn't receive any of it. In fact, when she moved into a smaller unit owned by the same company, she had to put more equity into it.

There was a story of a life lease community where a widow was convinced to sign an agreement that gave the board sole discretion to determine the selling price of her life lease if she wanted to move, and gave the board 50% of any increase in market price.

While most of the life lease communities in Ontario use the market value model, there is no requirement for them to do so and nothing to prevent the types of stories that we've heard from other provinces.

There was a story from Ottawa of a group of seniors who put deposits on a future life lease project. They had to wait some time to have their deposits returned, after not enough units could be sold to proceed, because the developer had spent the deposit money on planning and site preparation.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with the need to ensure that our seniors are protected against people who try to take advantage of them.

As the member from Barrie has pointed out, life leases are a type of accommodation that is not covered by specific legislation. That means that seniors who are moving into these communities don't have the type of protection that someone living in a condominium or rental apartment would have.

**1440**

We should be clear that life lease communities are still covered by the fire code and the building code, so that there are protections—as there are for all Ontario homes—to ensure the safety of the building when it is built.

I do want to commend the member for good intentions in trying to protect seniors by introducing the bill to regulate these communities. However, those of us who have been involved with the Condominium Act, the Residential Tenancies Act or similar pieces of legislation know that rules around this housing are complex. They require extensive research and intensive consultation. We support the intention of what the member is trying to do, so we will support the bill at second reading so that we can get it to committee and have that consultation.

Legislation that impacts someone's home has to be created and amended with great care. As you know, this bill was introduced two days ago, on Tuesday, which didn't give members much time to research it. My office contacted the member from Barrie's office on Tuesday and asked for more information and background on the bill, but we haven't received anything yet—I'm sure it

will be on its way—nor could we find any information publicly. I hope that the member will take the time to provide more information in the future to help us in our discussion at committee if the bill makes it there.

Looking at the bill, we already have some concerns. While the bill requires a reserve fund to be maintained for repairs and replacement of assets, there are no standards set as to what constitutes good repair.

The bill requires notice for an annual meeting but does not provide any standards for how that notice is to be given. Is a small sign in the backroom enough? Does notice have to be mailed or emailed?

The bill requires the sponsor or owner of the life lease complex to return deposits or payments if the unit is not given to the leaseholder on the date specified in the agreement. While the intention is good, there is no timeline given for when the payment must be returned, no penalties if the sponsor fails to return it and no requirement for the sponsor to keep the deposit in a trust account to ensure that the money is still there when it's supposed to be repaid to the senior.

We are also concerned about the areas this bill fails to address.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is not the first province to look at legislation to regulate life lease communities. In fact, Manitoba passed the Life Leases Act in 1999, and has since amended it. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation.

Manitoba's Life Leases Act requires deposits to be held in trust accounts, and prevents the funds from being used for anything other than the residential complex where the leased unit is located.

It includes a cooling-off period, which allows the purchaser up to seven days to cancel the agreement. It also lays out requirements for disclosure, which the sponsor must provide to the purchaser, something that is being recommended to protect Ontario seniors.

Manitoba's legislation requires the sponsor to maintain insurance policies, as set out in regulation. There are requirements to notify a tenant representative about board meetings, and to share a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

None of these issues are addressed in this private member's bill. These are some of the issues that we would expect to arise through a full consultation. Perhaps the member has moved forward quickly with this bill because her government refused to do so.

In 2007, the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly sent a submission to the Ontario government that outlined some of their concerns with life lease communities. In the submission, they said, "It is encouraging that the government appears to be moving in the direction of creating consumer protection legislation to cover this area." However, almost 10 years later, there is no government legislation to protect our seniors living in these life lease communities. It appears that they were talking about it before the 2007 election, and afterward the consultation ended up on the shelf.

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly is a community-based legal clinic that was raising concerns about how



Ontario seniors were being treated in their homes, and the government seems to have ignored it.

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly reported multiple cases where seniors were told they were not permitted to use their walkers or wheelchairs in common areas such as hallways. This means they were essentially trapped in their unit.

They also reported that seniors in some life lease communities were only permitted to get care services from the provider associated with the building. This limits choice and can result in a resident being forced to accept lower levels of care or pay higher costs.

They reported that some life lease communities were falsely promising leaseholders guaranteed access to associated long-term-care homes, even though they had no control over the admission process or the waiting list. These are real problems being experienced by Ontario seniors in life lease communities, but the bill that we are debating today does not contain any measures to stop these mistreatments of our seniors.

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly recommended that life lease legislation should include a method for dispute resolution. As they said in their submission, “Many seniors do not have the means to pursue dispute resolution by way of civil litigation through the court system. They should not be left without the opportunity to air their legitimate grievances about the operation of the project or decisions that affect their investment or their daily lives.” Again, this is something that is not being addressed in this bill. We recommend that the legislation specifically include the right of lease holders to form residents’ councils or other organizations to voice their concerns. Again, this is not part of the bill.

A number of organizations have recommended that there be disclosure requirements similar to those in the Manitoba legislation. In their studies, CMHC said, “There is also a need for disclosure requirements before seniors purchase their interest to ensure they are aware of the potential risks they face in their particular development.” CMHC recommended that life lease legislation be put in place that includes:

- a cooling-off period;
- how a life lease interest can be registered;
- tenant representation on board;
- clarification of whether provincial rent control legislation affects increases in monthly occupancy fees;
- under what conditions deposits may be used by the developer to fund construction or for other purposes;
- reserve fund requirements; and
- disclosure requirements.

Mr. Speaker, we will support this bill so we can do what the government has failed to do over the last 10 years: protect our seniors who live in life lease communities. We look forward to the bill going to committee and having extensive committee hearings so we can create a comprehensive, well-thought-out piece of legislation that will make Ontario a leader in life lease communities and protect our seniors.

Thank you very much again to the member from Barrie for bringing this bill forward to start this debate, so we can make it better for all people who live in leased communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I’m pleased to rise on the Life Lease Act, 2016. As always, it’s a great pleasure to rise to speak in this House, and I am particularly pleased to be able to speak today on Bill 160, An Act to regulate life leases: the Life Lease Act, 2016. The regulation of the life lease in Ontario is an important topic for us to be discussing because it primarily affects some of the most vulnerable people who live in our province: our seniors.

Far too often, I hear from seniors in my riding about the challenges they are facing. I’ll list some of those challenges; maybe that’s why they’re looking to find lease opportunities:

—the rising cost of hydro, where they can’t stay in their own homes. They can’t afford to pay their hydro bills;

—unable to see a doctor quickly—and we have listened with real interest in the last few days as both parties over here have raised issues about our doctors and the challenges we’re faced with and how the government has taken on the doctors rather than getting a settlement. I don’t know how that helps our seniors with patient care;

—one that we saw is that gas prices went up, and our gas prices aren’t regulated in the province of Ontario;

—the rising cost of food and how many seniors we’re seeing in food banks today. Think about that. Our parents, our grandparents, have to go to food banks to be fed;

—the rising costs of health care and medication because of privatization, the cuts to health care and the cuts to our nurses. We saw that with Windsor, where they had 169 nurses. Think about this: When were they told they were going to cut nurses in Windsor? I want you to hear this, all three parties. They were told that information on Family Day. Isn’t that something nice to take to your family?

—one that I think we’re not talking about, and it is part of this bill, because it’s why people are going to these, is the lack of affordable housing for seniors. I talk about my riding, in Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Crystal Beach and Niagara Falls. It’s a huge issue. I have people come into my office almost every day about affordable housing. What do they do? They get into life leases. It’s not necessarily that they want to, but they have to because they can’t get affordable housing in their own community. As of right now, there are two pieces of legislation in Ontario that mention life leases: the Assessment Act and the Land Transfer Tax Act. Those are both good things. We shouldn’t be taxing life lease holders differently than someone who lives in a home or a condo. And we shouldn’t be applying a land transfer tax to the sale of a life lease since no land is actually being transferred from a buyer to a seller. So far, so good.

**1450**

But there's a problem, Mr. Speaker. I know you'll be interested in this. The problem is that those two acts are the full extent of legislation that mentions the holding, the purchase or the sale of the life lease in Ontario. Some other legislation will apply to the building in which the life lease unit is contained, as well as that of the sponsor or owner of that life lease. But it's a short list, with several important pieces missing.

You want to ask: What is missing? I'll tell you. What is missing from that list is the Residential Tenancies Act and the Condominium Act. Neither piece of legislation has any sort of regulation that applies to life leases. The serious under-regulation of life leases in Ontario is a growing problem. In particular, the popularity of life leases is growing—more among seniors who see it as a cost-effective way of finding housing in their later years. As the amount of life leases in effect in Ontario continues to grow, so too will the importance of having proper regulations for these leases.

That leads to the obvious question: Does the Life Lease Act, 2016, create a full and effective regulatory regime for life leases? First, the Life Lease Act, 2016 requires that the sponsor or the owner of the life lease refund payment to the holder of that life lease should the holder not be able to move into the unit on a specific day. This is a good first step. But clearly, in this situation, the sponsor or the owner of the life lease has not met their contractual obligation as it relates to the sale of the life lease, and there should be consequences in that situation. Life leases are considered a right to occupy, and anything that interferes with that right needs to be addressed.

The second area that the Life Lease Act, 2016, addresses is in regard to the need for repairs or the potential to replace within that life lease unit. The bill requires that the owner or the sponsor of the life lease unit must maintain a reserve fund to pay for unforeseen major repairs or replace assets. Again, this moves us in the right direction.

If you live in an apartment building and, through no fault of your own, major repairs are necessary on your unit, it is the responsibility of the owner of that building to make sure the repairs are completed. By ensuring that the owner or the sponsor of the life lease is required to maintain a fund to pay for repairs, we would help give peace of mind to seniors living in those units.

Unfortunately, the provisions of Bill 160 do not go as far as they could have. While the provision contained in this bill to address the issue of repairs is certainly a significant improvement over the current system—and this is important—it falls short of the standard set in the Condominium Act. The Condominium Act requires a third-party audit of the finances available for repairs, and that money actually is held in a separate audited account. By not coming up to the standard for the collection and maintenance of the reserve fund for the repairs, Bill 160 leaves a loose end which has the potential for incredible trouble.

Another area that the Life Lease Act, 2016, seeks to bring increased regulation to is in the area of disclosure.

This bill will maintain annual meetings between the sponsor or the owner of the lease and the owner of the life lease, as well as a disclosure of the financial information to the holder. At these meetings, the bill also requires that the holders of the life lease have the right to be heard. Again, this is another step in the right direction. It is absolutely essential that our seniors be able to have their voices heard as it relates to their care and their living standards. It's equally essential that anyone who holds a life lease be able to have the peace of mind provided by knowing that the finances of the building where they live are in good shape.

That being said, there's another area where the Life Lease Act, 2016 could have gone further. If you live in a condo or you rent an apartment in a building, you have to go through the Condominium Act—you can look at it—or the Residential Tenancies Act, respectively, to a dispute resolution process that does not require formal legal action against the owner or your condo building or your rental company, whatever it is.

However, if you are a holder of a life lease, you do not have that option, and that makes no sense. In fact, a lawyer from the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly has informed us that, "Seniors are not going to undertake formal legal action against the institution where they live, depend on care and are fed—often a special diet. They tend to be fearful"—this isn't just seniors; it's a lot of people who rent, by the way—"of repercussions. A non-confrontational mediation/arbitration system needs to be built into the system."

While I'm happy to see there is some obligation for disclosure and communication being built into this bill, I believe we would better serve our seniors of this province by adding a system that is closer to what the ACE has said is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the final provision of the Life Lease Act, 2016, that I would like to discuss today is one that I think we all need more detailed information about from the government. The bill contains a provision that says the LG in Council can prescribe anything that may be prescribed under this act and another one that says the cabinet can create exemptions to the bill.

From my reading of the bill, there doesn't seem to be much that can be prescribed, and there also in my mind aren't many people or companies that should be exempt from these requirements. So I'd be interested to hear from the member from Barrie about what possible exemptions she sees on what could be prescribed by the LG in Council. I think having that information fully disclosed will make it much easier for all of us here to make a judgment on the merits of the bill.

That brings us back to the question I asked earlier: Does the Life Lease Act, 2016, create a full and effective regulatory regime for life leases? Of course, as with most issues that come up in this House, the answer to my question may be, "Yes or no, sort of." The Life Lease Act, 2016, makes an excellent start at filling some of the regulatory gaps that exist in the world of life leases, their owners and their holders, but it still has shortcomings.

The bill does not require as high a standard for reserve funds for repairs as other legislation does. It doesn't create a non-confrontational dispute resolution system that seniors can use. That leaves us with many important questions whose answers will have a serious impact on the effect of the bill.

1500

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The minister responsible for seniors' affairs—the minister without portfolio.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In my few minutes, I want to have your indulgence that I'll be sharing the time with the member from Ottawa–Orléans and the wonderful member from Scarborough–Agincourt as well.

Congratulations to the member from Barrie for bringing this piece of legislation to the House, and also to the members from both sides, that they have spoken so eloquently, mentioning some of the pitfalls that they, according to their experience, expressed with respect to various forms. There are a number of life leases; there is not just one particular form. There are a number of types of life leases that suit the variety of our people.

I've heard from all three members in the House that seniors weren't mentioned. Let me say that it's not only seniors who go into this type of housing accommodation, but it is mainly chosen by seniors, for good reasons: the style of living—modest, if you will; affordability; a communal type of life. They want to have an easier time, to have a flexible time when they want to go on holidays. If they are snowbirds or snowflakes or whatever, they want to make sure that they can leave and the property is being taken care of. And it's not only a type of life lease that is an apartment. It can be a semi-detached; it can be a condo; it can be a house—many, many forms. There are reasons why people choose to go into a life lease situation.

The bill as it is presented is not supposed to be the final document. I think we have to compliment the member from Barrie for bringing this to the attention of the House, to initiate the debate and to move it forward. Let me tell you, Speaker, that there is a lot of interest out there, both from the providers and from the occupants of this type of accommodation.

In my previous life—I have to say this very quickly because time goes fast—I did a consultation on life leases for then-Minister of Housing Jim Watson. Let me tell you that there are a lot of problems associated with this particular type of housing accommodation. So let's initiate the debate. Let's go to the public. Let's bring everything. I don't think that the member from Barrie means that this is the final document; I don't think so. She knows very well that we want to move it forward and we want to have proper consultation from all sides. I would say, hopefully it's done very quickly—and then bring it back to this House with the input of the members of the House and the various stakeholders. Then we can say that we have some documents that indeed provide not only safety and security but also some of the protections that those occupants are looking for.

The problem that I have experienced myself is that there is no particular responsibility now on behalf of the providers, and those providers are very often organized groups. They can be religious groups or professional builders, whatever—developers—that want to go into this type of business, if you will. They are doing very well.

Given the number of seniors coming on stream and the affordability of housing, I have to say that this form of housing will be on the increase. Anything we can do to bring some peace and quiet into this particular industry would go a long way in bringing some peace into the minds and hearts and homes of those people who want to move into a form of leasehold housing.

I want to congratulate the member for bringing this to the House. I hope that we can move it quickly, indeed, and then bring it back a final time when we can say, "Yes, we can offer some serious protection where the occupants of those properties have rights as well," because at the present time they are at the mercy of their provider.

I'll let my colleague add to it, and I want to thank you for the time, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and support my colleague and my seatmate behind me in support of this bill, the Life Lease Act.

Before the House returned this week, I spent an extensive period of time meeting with constituents about their concerns dealing with life leases. The concern that has been raised by the member from Barrie is actually very true.

I have several pieces of life lease contracts that I want to share with the members of the House. A significant number of our constituents have bought into these life leases, thinking it's like a condominium, when in fact it's not a condominium.

I had a constituent brought to my attention. They had just moved into this life lease. Within one year of moving into this life lease—they used to live in a condominium; now they're in a life lease—their rent, a so-called management fee, went up 200%. There's a lack of transparency with the management fee—and the fact that they don't own that unit, called a unit; they have to pay property taxes. It is not a property; they have a permanent lease to live in that unit.

The other piece I want to add on to this debate about life leases—because a significant number of my constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt are buying into life lease units. One of the articles that has recently been shared is from the Canadian Bar Association. In 2009, they did a paper called *The Real Dirt on Real Estate: Shared Property, Granny Units and Life Leases*. That's the title of the article, Mr. Speaker. I want to share with the members of the House this particular article. The article talks about the five different models of life leases in Canada and the concerns about different aspects of the life leases that the member from Barrie talked about earlier.

Some of the concerns involve the entrance fee, the piece dealing with the disclosure of the entrance fee, the disclosure of the management fee as well as the protection of the deposits, because some of the developers/sponsors of these life leases can use the funds to develop the construction of the life leases, but then the construction goes belly up.

How are we ensuring that these seniors who bought into the life lease have protection? We just recently changed legislation to protect all condominium owners. The question has to be asked.

We now have a colleague wanting this Legislature to protect all those seniors across the province to have housing, but also, more importantly, the investment called a life lease. I want to applaud my colleague from Barrie for bringing forth this piece of legislation, but also to encourage every member of the House to support this piece of legislation so that it can go to committee for further debate.

I'm going to stop so my colleague from Ottawa-Orléans can speak about the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I'm very proud to rise today and speak on behalf of my colleague from Barrie's private member's bill, An Act to regulate life leases.

I will share, a little further down in my notes, that I was the co-owner of a retirement residence, and I worked in the retirement home industry prior to this for 15 years. I must say that, as we're seeing this aging population, life leases have certainly become an increasingly popular option for many people in this province. I'm very proud that the member from Barrie is bringing this to this House as a debate.

Many people in this province are certainly exploring housing options as they grow older. They understand that they're protected under the landlord and tenant act and our newly updated condo act. Certainly, in a retirement residence, we follow the landlord and tenant act. But when it comes to life leases—as was explained by my colleague—there's no one, overarching piece of legislation that regulates and captures this form of housing arrangement.

As I mentioned a little earlier, I was the business owner of a retirement residence, and I certainly understand the needs of seniors and the aging baby boomers, and the need to have greater housing options for people as they enter the latter stage of their lives.

**1510**

The exploitation of seniors and the elderly should not be a concern as people age. Certainly, this is something that I think we need to address, and I'm so proud to see the member for Barrie addressing this today. People should feel secure and safe in the housing arrangements they choose. That is why it is important that we pass this bill today and set its course to committee. Therefore, I encourage all members of the Legislature to give seniors greater safety of mind and home by passing this important bill, brought forward by my colleague the member from Barrie.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I see 48 seconds on the clock. I can't resist that. This bill commends itself to support in the Legislative Assembly.

The Niagara Peninsula—other members from the peninsula would know this, and it may be around the province: We have some experience now with life leases, particularly because we have a greater-than-usual number of people who are in their senior years looking for an alternative to the residence in which they already live. I think they have cried out for our Legislature to address it. Just as they see rentals and condominiums addressed at the present time, they want to see life leases addressed.

I want to commend the member for bringing this forward, and I hope this bill will move forward to committee, where it can receive further study and input from those who are concerned.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

I wish to inform the House that the motion on second reading of Bill 160 will take place at the time—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Oh, I'm sorry. Thank you.

I apologize to the member from Barrie. She has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank everyone who spoke.

I do know that it seemed like it was at the last moment; however, this has been in the planning for some time.

I love all the suggestions. They are really good suggestions. My idea was that it would go to committee, and that's where things work best, when we all have our best ideas. Problems that may happen in Niagara Falls are not necessarily problems that have happened in Barrie. We need to all get together in committee and make this the best bill it can be.

The difficulty with regulating too much is that most of the sponsors who run these life leases are perhaps religious groups—churches—and not-for-profits. We don't want to regulate so much that they won't do this, because seniors are very fond of this, where they can keep the equity from their houses so that they have money to go into long-term-care when it's time to go there. So I think we have to be careful. It's not exactly like condos. As a matter of fact, there are a lot more amenities, and people are usually much happier in life leases than they are in condos. As we all know, when people are happier, they live longer and are healthier.

I thank the member from Oxford, the member from Niagara Falls, the minister responsible for seniors affairs, my colleagues the members from Scarborough-Agincourt and from Ottawa-Orléans, and also Mr. Bradley, from St. Catharines. I hope that we pass this bill and make it much more detailed, for the sake of seniors. This is a good way for them to have housing in their old age.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Now I wish to inform the House that the motion for second reading of

Bill 160 will take place after private members' ballot items have been concluded this afternoon.

ELIMINATION OF GROUND CURRENT  
POLLUTION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉLIMINATION  
DE L'ÉLECTROPOLLUTION DU SOL

Mr. Nicholls moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act to prohibit harmful electrical ground current / Projet de loi 161, Loi interdisant les courants électriques telluriques nuisibles.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and present Bill 161, the Elimination of Ground Current Pollution Act, 2016. As the PC critic for community safety—Bill 161 addresses a major issue facing rural and even urban Ontario and needs to finally be addressed.

I'd like to recognize the major driving force that has motivated me to present this bill: Lee Montgomery. You'll find him in the members' gallery. A former award-winning dairy farmer who lives just north of my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, Lee has been relentless in his pursuit of resolving this issue for over 40 years. Lee lost his entire herd due to ground current pollution, and sadly, he lost the love of his life, his wife, Donna. He believes that her death can be attributed to the same problem that killed his herd.

I also want to recognize Dr. Magda Havas, also sitting in the members' gallery. Magda has been able to provide scientific evidence proving that ground current pollution exists and does kill livestock.

I have met and observed ground current testing with Dr. Don Zipse, an electrical forensic engineer from Wilmington, Delaware, in the United States, and I've also met with Mr. Peter Stern on several occasions at his farming operation in Drumbo, Ontario. Over the last 10 years Mr. Stern has lost over 110 dairy cattle, and most recently he lost six dairy cattle and had two stillborn calves. Think of the economic losses, but also think of the physical and emotional strain that that dairy farmer, and dairy farmers and other individuals—farmers throughout Ontario—face when that happens.

This tragedy is not only affecting the dairy business but all livestock farms throughout Ontario, and it must stop now. I have one question: Where is the OSPCA? This is animal cruelty, but I want to assure the farmers that it is not their fault. So OSPCA, do not blame the farmers.

Speaker, this problem isn't just limited to our province. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Connecticut, Vermont, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Idaho are all amongst US states that have either put in place state legislation or have put in place the establish-

ment of commissions to address the problem of ground current. Here in Ontario, this debate marks the first time that legislation dealing with the problem of ground current has been debated here in the Legislature in just under a decade.

Some may say that this is not a new bill. They are partially correct, as a former Liberal MPP, Maria Van Bommel, introduced a similar bill in 2006. It passed second reading with all-party support, but it died on the order table, never to see the light of day again, until now.

I've been working in preparation of debating this bill for quite some time. I have spoken with stakeholders throughout Ontario, giving township and county council presentations and alerting rural communities to the negative effects of ground current pollution on livestock. I've heard questions raised about the potential impact on humans now and for future generations.

I would like to take a moment to thank the councils from Brant county, Oxford county, and North Dumfries and Blandford-Blenheim townships for allowing me to be present at their council meetings and to share with them my findings regarding ground current pollution.

**1520**

I also want to read into the record part of Brant county's letter from Mayor Ron Eddy to Minister Chiarelli, the Minister of Energy:

"The council of the county of Brant is extremely concerned about this issue of stray current, which is pertinent to any resident of the rural communities throughout Ontario. Stray current has been a concern to livestock owners for many years. The negative impact of stray current on livestock is significant and many agricultural operators have been seriously compromised by this problem through lost productivity and through animal mortality.

"Further, the detriment to health and well-being of impacted farm animals from stray current is very concerning. Even more alarming is that new evidence suggests human health may be impacted by this issue."

Mayor Eddy goes on to say, "Stray current can be addressed through changes in both the policy and practice of the provincially regulated electrical distribution and electrical services industries."

To be clear, voltage does not kill, but current does. Voltage is the pressure that pushes electrons from a transmission or distribution line, producing current.

Before I get too detailed in my bill, I also want to be very clear about another important item. I view this bill, Bill 161, as a non-partisan bill. Allow me, Speaker, to express my reasons why. Over the past 40-plus years, all three parties in this Legislature have in fact been in power at one time or another, but they've done little or nothing to rectify the problems of what some may still call stray voltage.

For the record, I know that Hydro One coincidentally inserted a brochure on what they call stray voltage in their recent billings just prior to the debate of my bill.

Just looking around the gallery today—and I know some have had to go—members of our farming commu-

ity were here to listen to this bill being debated. We still have some up in the public gallery and I would like to recognize them. Thank you for your support of this bill.

Farmers of varying backgrounds and farming operations from all across Ontario are here, and they're here today because they're worried about losing their family farming businesses and they're worried about the effects of ground current pollution on their families' and neighbours' properties. They, like me, know that farming in Ontario is in jeopardy if this issue isn't properly addressed. Ground current causes livestock to experience health issues such as mastitis, foot rot, open sores that won't heal even with antibiotics, sudden death and even miscarriages. This results in a huge financial loss to our farmers.

Now, you may not want to hear what I'm about to say, but it needs to be said. There are those who have a vested interest in protecting the electrical utility and want to blame farmers. There is scientific evidence that proves that Hydro One is not measuring the right metrics in the right way—and, hence, after visiting a farm, there is no problem, they say. Yet cows continue to dance up a storm, milk production is down and the cows and farmers are sick.

Farmers in Ontario need legislative support as well as the support of the associations they belong to. Thomas Edison said this: "Never put current in the ground."

In 2009, the Ontario Energy Board, the OEB, enacted code amendments detailing procedures and methodology for dealing with occurrences of stray voltage. This was a positive step, and the province should be commended for taking this initiative. I would like to point out that the OEB prepared a staff discussion paper pertaining to Farm Stray Voltage: Issues and Regulatory Options back in 2008. I would also like to commend the OEB for their efforts.

Loads are increasing on the distribution lines in rural Ontario. The OEB has a number of recommendations to solve the issue of ground current pollution, but the one that the utilities have implemented is actually making the problem worse. Existing distribution lines are inadequate to handle increasing loads. According to section 9.3.2 of the OEB staff discussion paper, distributors in Canada are not regulated as to how they investigate suspected stray voltage cases. If the government fails to implement both proper assessment and proper solutions, the cost to farming businesses will continue to grow.

A lack of attention to the fulfillment of the OEB's recommendations from eight years ago continues to haunt rural Ontario. Electrical codes are being disregarded with respect to illegal dumping at substations.

A beef farmer from my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex sent me an email this past Tuesday stating that he lives in fear of the unknown and silent killer, ground current pollution. You can't see it, you can't hear it, you can't smell it, but animal and human bodies sense it.

Another concern shared by many farmers is that complaints are not being seriously taken to heart. We need to send a message across rural Ontario that their voices will

be heard. That's exactly what my bill will guarantee. The bill will require electrical providers to respond to a complaint within 10 days of receiving it, investigate the claim within 30 days, and take all necessary steps to eliminate objectionable current flow within five months. If passed, Bill 161 would require the government to develop a comprehensive plan for the elimination of objectionable ground current in Ontario within two years after the day on which this section comes into force and complete the implementation of the plan within 10 years of that date. This may, in fact, be the most important component of the bill. We must send a clear message that Ontario is committed to solving the problem.

Speaker, since my time is limited, it's important to note that my passion for community safety involves more than just human safety, but also being the voice for livestock throughout Ontario—no, I won't make an animal noise. These animals are experiencing massive health issues through execution by ground current pollution.

When you know you're doing the right thing, how can you be wrong?

I will now allow for further debate, and I will come back to my concluding comments in a moment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak to this bill today. I want to note again the presence of Mr. Montgomery here, who was around the last time we debated this bill, when Maria Van Bommel brought it forward—a bill that we debated in 2006, which I spoke in favour of at the time. I think that Mr. Nicholls is doing us a service by bringing it forward again. I'm sorry that Ms. Van Bommel's act wasn't passed into law; it should have been. I think today we should be supporting this bill, and I urge the government—I urge Mr. Bradley there, watching this in a benign sort of way, to act as a spokesperson in the Liberal caucus to move the bill forward, go to committee, come back for third reading and be put into place.

Frankly, Speaker, I was taken aback in 2006 that Ms. Van Bommel even had to bring the bill forward. I said at the time, "Why are we debating this? This is pretty straightforward. If you've got leakage of current into the ground, if you're damaging livestock, if you're damaging farmers, why on earth wouldn't we correct it?" It appears that although some steps were taken—and Mr. Nicholls related that in his speech—obviously, inadequate action was taken.

It makes complete sense for us to enact this bill, make the investment and clean up the system so that we aren't getting stray current and we aren't getting this kind of damage.

In 2009 and 2011, we had problems in Toronto with stray current that led to the electrocution of a number of pets. Very quickly, Toronto Hydro dispatched crews all over the city to deal with leaking current that was causing this kind of risk to animal life and, frankly, risk to one police officer who intervened on an animal that was being electrocuted. There is no reason on earth that the

rest of Ontario should not get at least the same level of concern and service as was shown in Toronto by Toronto Hydro.

1530

I noted in 2006, and it strikes me again, that the standard in Alberta was much more severe than the one here. We allow, in Ontario, up to 10 volts as a limit. In Alberta, it's one. In Vermont and Wisconsin, it's 0.5. I would say, Speaker, there is no reason on earth we shouldn't have the same standards as jurisdictions like those. We have a large rural population. We're going to be distributing electricity for many decades to come, I hope, and there is no reason that farmers and rural populations should have to deal with this kind of risk.

I wanted to note—and it struck me back when we debated the bill originally—that the stray current problem tended to be most severe at times of peak power demand: 6 to 9 in the morning and then in the evening. It made sense at the time and it makes sense now not only to deal with the wiring issue but also to deal with the consumption issue, to the extent that farms and rural operations are given the support to transition to low-demand electrical appliances and high-efficiency equipment. There will be less current drawn into the system overall and less current to stray and to go out and cause this tingle or electrocution.

My colleague Mr. Vanthof will be talking from a far more knowledgeable position than me on farms, cattle operations and the sorts of difficulties that people face. But I want to say, as someone who believes that we need to make a very large-scale transition in Ontario to renewable energy, I believe that electricity is going to be the core of our energy system in the years to come. It's big now, and it will be much bigger, but if we don't deal with this issue, we're going to have people saying, "We don't want more investment in electricity. We don't want an expansion of the electricity system." We need that. To the extent that we are discouraging people, undermining them economically, undermining their sense of the capacity and resourcefulness of the province by ignoring this issue, we undermine our future.

I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward. It was the responsible thing to do. I'm glad you've gone and talked to others around Ontario and promoted the bill.

Again, I urge everyone in this House to vote for the bill, and I urge the government to not let this one just go into orbit, circling around committees and never touching down, but to actually have hearings, have amendments, where necessary, and have it brought back for third reading and ultimately proclamation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I'm so honoured to be able to speak to this bill this afternoon. I would like to thank the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for this bill. I'd also like to thank the member from Toronto–Danforth for his contribution to the bill here this afternoon. I would also like to thank the members of our farm community who are here in support of this bill.

As you heard this morning from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we are very supportive of this bill. As we also know, a very familiar piece of legislation was brought to us by the former member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, from our side of the floor—in support of this bill. It is my hope that this legislation passes and that we can move forward with regulating stray current.

Being from Durham, we know how important farms, farmers and the safety and security of our crops and livestock are. They are integral to our economy and our community. It makes up part of our lives, along the urban-rural boundaries, and I'm thankful that our government is so committed to supporting farms and farmers across our great province.

I received an email recently from a constituent in Newcastle that brought the blight of stray current to prominence for me. I have heard about it, but I didn't know it had such a devastating effect on our farm community and our farmers in general. This is one of my constituents from lovely Newcastle. She told me that her family dairy farm has been hit by stray current for a long time. They've had this farm for over 100 years, and she believes that the health of her family's cattle has declined in the last eight years due to ground pollution from stray current. According to her, they have lost 30 dairy cows over the last eight years, and have spent thousands of dollars researching the reasons, causing the family great stress. They believe that stray current is the only constant in this situation—that the cows slowly die, with nothing the veterinary profession can do to help them.

She asked me to act so that her family farm would not have to leave her family's hands, and so that they could sustain the business with healthy cattle and a healthy farm. That drove home the importance of this bill, as far as I'm concerned. I am so glad to be able to tell her story today. I am very supportive of this legislation that will hopefully help her family, and other family farms in the future.

Of course, our government has been aware of this problem, and the ministry has assured us that they are taking action on their own part. The Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture have been co-operating, and numerous industry members have been working with government to come up with a solution.

This has resulted in a pilot program designed to identify instances of stray current, assess approaches to testing for it, look at how our current system contributes to the problem, and address standards that can be applied in the field.

As well, the Ontario Energy Board requires local distribution companies to investigate stray current complaints from livestock farm customers and to make the details of their response procedure known.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding, there are over 500 farms, and I do understand that farming is a very important part of the economy of my riding of Durham as well as Ontario in general. This bill is a step forward in trying to preserve our farming community.

I am glad that the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has taken action, and I am proud to support that action. I am glad to support our government's efforts as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 161, An Act to prohibit harmful electrical ground current. I want to congratulate my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex for bringing this bill forward.

I want to take a moment to introduce someone in the gallery as well. Sheena Symington is the daughter of Barbara Symington, from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I know Barbara. Barbara lives in Renfrew, but Sheena lives in Bobcaygeon, in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, so I'm sure the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock will want to say hello as well. Thank you for joining us here today to support my colleague on this bill.

I'd never heard of stray voltage or stray current or tingle voltage or whatever before I became a member of the Legislature almost 13 years ago, and then I had the opportunity to debate and speak when Maria Van Bommel brought forth the bill. It must be about nine years ago, maybe. Is it 10 years ago? Ten years ago she brought forth the bill. They were calling it stray voltage then, even in the bill.

I did want to make one comment. Whether you call it stray current or stray voltage or ground current, I'm absolutely certain that the cows don't care. They just want it to stop. That's essentially what we're trying to accomplish with my colleague's bill here today. Whatever you call it, there's not much question that for the livestock, it's harmful. So we have to find a way in order to eliminate that, and that's what the bill calls for exactly.

1540

My colleague from Toronto–Danforth pointed out that the standards in Ontario are up to 20 times higher voltage than in some other jurisdictions. That should bring us to question it right off the bat. How can we allow 10 volts when Vermont was 0.5 volts? It really just makes no sense whatsoever.

There is going to be debate on this bill. Hopefully, the government will act upon it. I want to point out that my colleague—and he knows a lot more about it than I do—has been working on this since he got here. It's been something that he has taken a passionate view on. Basically, he said, "I'm not going to stop until we do something to eliminate this hazard to our livestock." I commend him for taking all of the necessary actions. He has brought this forth to this point. This is the second reading debate today.

I'm confident that the government, as they have already said and as the member for Durham has said, is going to support it. They believe that it's right. But we also have to take this to the next level. If we really, truly believe that we're going to try to eliminate this harmful ground current, then it has to go beyond the readings today.

I want to say to my colleague again, thank you very much. Thank you for educating us again on this—because, quite frankly, there are so many issues that get debated in this Legislature and there are so many issues that get brought before us as members, that unless it's coming by us on a regular basis, we move on to other issues. It's whatever issue is being brought to us most vocally at any given time. But Mr. Nicholls has been dogged, over the last several years, in pointing out this is something we have to deal with.

So we're dealing with it today by virtue of legislation second reading debate here on Bill 161. But as I have said, if it stops here, then we haven't accomplished that much. It has to go beyond this. This has to get to committee and it has to get through to the third reading so that we can proclaim it into law. There are teeth in the bill. There are some real limits. There are some real schedules. There are time limits as to when the utilities have to act and how much time they have in order to ensure that those changes take place. That's giving the utilities time to come up with a plan to make sure that it can be dealt with, but also, when there's a complaint, making sure they respond to that complaint in a timely fashion. The other thing that we've heard over the years is that we don't get a good enough, quick enough response to complaints.

All of the things that are being done in the bill today are going to be extremely helpful. Hopefully, we'll move on from this to the next step. As other members have said, farming is a core industry in our civilization. Without farming, we're not eating. I don't look that good here now, but I'll tell you, I'm going to look a lot worse if I don't eat for a while. We want to make sure that we're doing whatever we can to assist those people who put the food on our table, to ensure that their herds are healthy and they can continue to do what they do in such a marvelous fashion, making this country the great one that it is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on any issue, but it's especially an honour to be able to speak on Bill 161. It's an agricultural issue and, actually, it's pretty well a dairy issue in a lot of cases. I'd like to commend the member for bringing it forward.

Before I get too far on my ramblings, I'd like to say that we've all got to push because this bill—something similar was brought many years ago and it should have been implemented by the government. This one is going to take a lot of work. It's going to take much more than just here today to get this done.

One of the reasons why this issue has trouble getting traction—the first time I heard about it was when I started dairy farming 30 years ago. I've been a dairy farmer for 30 years—retired four years ago. The first piece of resistance you get on this issue is from the electrical community, from an electrician: When you start explaining what happens on some farms—"No, no,



no. That can't be." What makes it a really tricky issue is that it doesn't happen on all farms to the same degree.

Before I go further, I'd like to welcome our guests here and thank you for taking the time to come.

That's what makes it a tricky issue, so it's an easy one to explain away. We've had these issues in my riding. I come from Timiskaming-Cochrane, and there are about 50 dairy farms around New Liskeard. I've had these, "Well, you know—wink, wink, nudge, nudge—he's not managing this correctly, or she's not doing this correctly." But farmers know, and what is really frustrating to the farm community is that whenever we do something—we put a piece on the barn—everything has to be up to code. So everything is up to code, but the electrical supply coming in and leaving isn't up to code. That's the most frustrating thing.

What we found in my little part of the world—I'm not an expert; I made my living milking cows. I'm not an electrician. We had a farm electrician—he's still a farm electrician—Jean Caron. We all call him Johnny Light; he still does a lot of the electrical work in our area. He saved a lot of our bacon, because he had come to understand that certain things cause troubles and certain things seemed to work.

One thing where we had a lot of trouble is that we live in an old glacial lake basin—if you dig four feet down, it's water. Our barns used to be all built on floating pads, floating foundations. When the ground froze, they went up and down. But that no longer works for code. You have to dig down eight feet. We have way more trouble with—you can call it whatever you want; I don't even pretend to know the difference between current and voltage. I just know that there's certain electricity you've got to avoid, and that caused huge problems. Again, nobody really knew that. We had to learn that the hard way.

Something else that seems to cause more trouble is if you build a big new barn with a steel structure. But nobody told us. These are great structures. It's the way to build a barn. I remember when the first one went up in my riding. I was still farming, and I had an old wooden barn. Oh, boy, I walked in this place, and I liked that barn better than I like this building. It was a nice barn. But it turned out—the farmers there are very progressive, but they've gone through thousands of dollars and hours to try to get this fixed. Guess what? The newer barns that are going up in our area are wood-framed.

Why does the agricultural community have to learn that themselves through the school of hard knocks when we all know that this issue exists? That is the most frustrating thing. That's why I commend Mr. Nicholls, and I commend Maria Van Bommel for bringing this forward the first time.

I'm going to chastise the government a little bit, because they have been the government for more than a decade and they know this exists. Again, the reason this problem isn't being moved on that quickly is that the people on the government side—they're not bad people; I disagree with them a lot, but they're not bad people—

will go to their experts, to the electrical community, and the electrical community will tell them, "Well, not really. It's not that bad. Because look, there are a lot of very productive farms," and there are. But it's an individual issue. It's an issue that has to be solved. It's an issue in more than just dairy, but it's easiest to identify in dairy.

I get a little—"offended" is the wrong word—upset when I hear this about dancing cows. This is a hard issue to explain to other people, because you think of dancing cows, and they're thinking, "Are they hip hop or"—no. The real problem is that—if the stray voltage was a matter of the cow standing in the milking parlour and getting electrocuted and falling down dead, that would actually be better, because you'd then have to figure out what happened. But that's not what happens. Those cows are irritated for months—for years—and that causes chronic ailments, which end up killing them.

It also ends up killing the farm family, financially and other ways.

**1550**

But certainly the stress—and that's why you can measure it in dairy. Because we measure all kinds of things in milk, right? So the somatic cell count—somatic cells are white blood cells in the milk, and when a cow is under stress, more of these blood cells will come to fight whatever is stressing it. They test that. Every time you ship milk, they test the somatic cell count, and the higher that count goes, it tells you there's a problem.

That's one of the initial things. You've got a somatic cell count you can't control, despite all the management things you're employing. That's telling you there's a problem, but it's not universal across all farms—and that's what this government has to remember. When somebody in the electrical system says, "Oh, no, no, it's not a problem because we've got 5,000 farms working perfectly and this couple of hundred over here, they've got"—no, no. It's a much deeper issue, and I urge this government to actually work with all of us and get this fixed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** An historic day in which Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats are all on the same side on an energy issue; we all happen to agree on this one.

I thank my colleagues for some of their contributions toward this issue of stray voltage, which is often called phantom voltage, stray current; it exists under many different names. And I thank the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for once again resurrecting my former colleague Maria Van Bommel's bill. I remember when she presented it in the House a number of years ago—I think it was in the 39th Parliament—and it passed at that time. I wish him luck in seeing OMAFRA take this idea—and either incorporate it or pass this bill. But in one form or another, let's get this one enacted.

This is not just an issue that stems from power generation. Among the other things that may be on a farm that can contribute to this would be faulty wiring, improper

grounding, an overloaded circuit or defective equipment. You can have much the same potential difference between an object and an ungrounded source of electricity if you've got voltage from phone lines, for example; it's also possible that a gas pipeline, which is made of iron, can be carrying an unintended or unwanted current.

One of the reasons that we often see this manifested most strongly in dairy farms is that, frankly, vegetables have no particular way of telling you if they're being subjected to stray voltage. An animal being connected to a milking machine can often receive a very severe shock of static electricity. The important thing to remember is that it's not just the voltage. It's also the current. For example, on a dry day, if you reach out to touch something, you can hear a snap and you'll get a shock from static electricity. You're actually getting a shock of several thousand volts, but it's a very, very low current.

So for this issue of stray voltage or stray current or stray electricity, what you really need is a strong enough current that the current is carrying the electricity to the point where, in the case of dairy farms, it could be affecting the animal. This is often seen when you would find, for example, a cow that normally has no trouble going up and being connected to the milking machine, which certainly relieves the pressure of the milk on the animal, but now is reluctant to go near a milking machine because it knows it's going to get a continuous low voltage or low current of electricity passing through it while it's giving milk. If I was the cow, I too would be reluctant.

You might find, for example, that the animal would have reduced water or feed intake. You could find, as my colleague stated earlier, the milk output could be lower or you could find some substances in the milk that you contract. There are a number of different ways that an animal will try to communicate to its owner that something is wrong.

This is an issue about which, over the years, Hydro One has said, "To the degree that this emanates from our gear, we're going to take this one very seriously." So if you're watching this and you're on a farm, here's a number to write down: 1-888-664-9376. If you think you've got a problem with stray voltage, you should pick up the phone and call 1-888-664-9376.

This is one that our power generators and our local distribution companies and Hydro One take very seriously, and it's one on which the Ministry of Energy has spent some serious time and effort working with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and specifically in response to reports of stray voltage. Hydro One, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and other industry stakeholders have been working together for some time. They're working on a pilot program designed to identify, assess and mitigate instances of stray voltage and stray current.

They're also looking at assessing alternative approaches to testing, because one of the ways to address it is—first of all, if there's a means of finding the problem before you notice it in the behaviour of your animals,

then it's something that both the farmer and the utility can get on and we can identify where the source is and what you do about it.

We need to look broadly at how electrical systems contribute to current and voltage on farms. As well, we need to work with the OFA to get the point across to a lot of our farmers that you shouldn't take the integrity of your own electrical system and your equipment for granted forever. It's something that you've got to continue to review and it's something that you've got to continue to check.

One of the most common causes of stray voltage is a degraded insulator on a tower or on a piece of equipment or on something on the farm or something that is intended to ground the voltage in the ground. If the insulation starts to degrade, that can cause current to flow through the ground, or if an electrical wire should fall, then there will be a piece of ground that's subjected to often a very high current and that could be conducted an indeterminate distance, depending on the moisture conditions and what's in the soil. For example, soil that has a higher quantity of iron will conduct electricity more so than soil that has a lower quantity. If the soil is wetter, it can conduct electricity a lot further, and so on and so forth.

Among the things that Hydro One and the OFA and the Dairy Farmers are working on is to assess how standards and procedures are applied in the field. This is one particular issue for which Hydro One plans to use the findings of this pilot program to improve its policies and its communications and especially its responses for our dairy farmers, for whom this is a very real problem that the province recognizes and is hoping to contribute to a solution.

I thank my colleague for bringing the bill forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I appreciate the opportunity and the hard work done by the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex on his act today to prohibit alternating ground current. I was here 10 years ago when we discussed this, and here we are, still talking about it. So the time for action is now.

I want to recognize—and I'm not going to get everybody, but I know I have some dedicated dairy farmers from my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I can't see everybody, but I think John Devos is here, Kurt Schmidt—I don't know if John and Carson made it. Anyway, some had to go—and Mark Grossi I believe is here.

**Interjection:** He's watching via Internet.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Watching via Internet? Hello, Mark. And also Sheena—I haven't met you yet but I'm coming over there to say hello. Thank you very much for taking the time to come.

Look, in a nutshell, a lot of this has been said. We have, actively, 22 cases in my riding office that we're dealing with right now. Now, the majority are from my riding. We are helping some other ridings, but that's

okay. And the fact that I have that many cases is shocking. I want a big shout-out to Bonnie from my office, who I know is the front-line person to receive a lot of the phone calls and deals a lot with hydro.

We have the stories ranging from the cows not able to drink from the water bowls—they get shocked. They actually have died with no illness detected. They stopped eating and drinking. The quality of the milk is so poor that farmers can't meet their quota. Cattle are afraid to get on the rotary parlour where they are milked and they're being forced to get on it. Cows are kicking the milker off of themselves. A lot of the farmers are reporting reproductive issues.

**1600**

One farmer actually reported use losing 18 cows in 15 months, and another lost 18 cattle in 12 months. Production and breeding are down. The milk board actually shut one farm down due to reproduction drop, and he was also coming up with lame cows and calves that were aborted. We had the story that they spent \$40,000 on an Agrivolt meter that didn't work. It lost approximately \$300,000 between cattle dying and production.

One farmer purchased a bull for reproduction, and he wasn't performing—can I say that here? And as soon as the filters were put on, he had some zip back—can I say “zip”? You have to watch what you say here. But he had some zip back.

These are farm families. Their cattle and milking business is their livelihood, and they're taking huge financial hits when the cattle cannot produce, let alone when they get sick, incurring vet bills for no known illness.

We wonder 10 years later why we are here talking about this again. I know the member from Mississauga had said that we have more discussion going on, and they want to talk some more. And I know there's a pilot project in my riding, in Little Britain, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is involved in the pilot project. But I can only say that if I'm here another 10 years and speaking to this issue, what we have done?

The member has brought forward a bill. He's worked extremely hard and talked to people across the province—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** We're going to pass it.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** We're going to pass it, but what are you going to do with it? That's what we keep saying: Do something.

We've got copious amounts of information. I can give you more if you're lacking information, because my office has a ton of it. They're real people, real businesses. They're losing their livelihoods, their family farms.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: It's always great to hear him speak. As a dairy farmer himself—I can't outdo his great speeches in the Legislature. But we're saying to the government: Please act now. The bureaucracy is too much. The farmers can't get the help they need in any timely fashion. Again I say: To pass the bill would be great, but actually doing something about it would be of the most benefit to the farmers. I thank them again for coming down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** It's my pleasure to be able to rise today to express my support for my colleague and his private member's bill, the Elimination of Ground Current Pollution Act.

Many jurisdictions in North America have tackled this issue of ground current to protect livestock health, as well as human health. As we've heard over and over again, it's time—it's past time—that Ontario gets serious about this issue.

I had a call from one of my constituents asking me if I would be supporting this, to which, of course, I said yes. She expressed concerns similar to those which we've heard, as a member of the dairy farming community. The stray voltage made her cows sick and resulted in them underperforming. She was lucky that none of her cows died, but it did happen to others. Perhaps most frustrating for her was the lack of interest on the end of her local electricity provider. Quite simply, they did not take her concerns seriously. A friend of hers developed testing equipment to measure what voltage came on the farm. Even with evidence in her hand, it took months for her hydro provider to admit that there was a problem.

So what does it mean? It means that with four wet feet on cement, the cows are getting shocked. It impacts how they eat, drink and reproduce, and in serious cases, they can die. They are getting shocked all the time. If a cow gets shocked every time she goes to get a drink, she will either stop drinking or only do so when she is desperate, so this becomes an animal welfare issue as much as an economic issue.

The bill is about respect for the animals, respect for farmers, and respect for property owners. It's certainly a pleasure for me to support my constituents in York–Simcoe through this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have for debate on this bill. I will return now to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex to respond to the debate this afternoon.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** First of all, I would like to thank the members from Toronto–Danforth, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Durham, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Mississauga–Streetsville and, of course, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for their insightfulness in terms of this particular bill. I also want to give a special shout-out again to members of our farming community who are here today. They know that we care about their farming business. We care about your animals. We want to see you successful.

I have been very passionate about this for the last four years. I've done research; we've had round-table discussions. I've been part of testing that's been going on. To me, it's the right thing to do. I take my critic role very seriously, especially when it comes to community safety.

You heard me say earlier, Speaker, that when you know you're doing the right thing, you can't go wrong.

To the members in this Legislature, I say: Let's not punish those who feed us. We need to stand strong and

support our farming communities. Let's tackle the hot spots first.

To my colleagues from all parties in the Ontario Legislature, as you vote to pass Bill 161 at its second reading, I want you to think about farming in Ontario. I want you to think about your family, your children, your grandchildren and your neighbours, now and for future generations to come. A "yes" vote will save lives, animal and human.

If Bill 161 passes, it needs to be brought up in committee sooner rather than later. I will be persistent in ensuring that it comes out of committee, goes into third reading and eventually receives royal assent, so that we can now and forever address this issue of ground current pollution in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the debates on the private members' ballot items for this afternoon. The time provided for private members' public business has expired. We're now going to proceed to the votes.

SAVING THE GIRL  
NEXT DOOR ACT, 2016  
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE  
DES JEUNES FILLES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We will deal first with ballot item number 15, standing in the name of Ms. Scott.

Ms. Scott has moved second reading of Bill 158, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2016 and the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2016 and to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like it referred to the justice committee, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Scott is asking that the bill be referred to the justice committee. Agreed? Agreed.

LIFE LEASE ACT, 2016  
LOI DE 2016 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Now we're going to proceed to the next vote.

Ms. Hoggarth has moved second reading of Bill 160, An Act to regulate life leases.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless the member for Barrie—

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'd like it to go to private bills.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Barrie is requesting that the bill be referred to the committee on regulations and private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

1610

ELIMINATION OF GROUND CURRENT  
POLLUTION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉLIMINATION  
DE L'ÉLECTROPOLLUTION DU SOL

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The third one: Mr. Nicholls has moved second reading of Bill 161, An Act to prohibit harmful electrical ground current.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I think I heard a no.

All those in favour of the notion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House. I look to the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex to—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I would move that Bill 161 go to the committee on general government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Nicholls is asking that the bill be referred to the committee on general government. Agreed? Agreed.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF MEDICAL  
OFFICER OF HEALTH

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask for orders of the day, I wish to inform the House that we have today laid upon the table order in council 242-2016, appointing Dr. David Williams as the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the province of Ontario.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016  
LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT  
UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 17, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion

Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member for Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to pick up where I left off yesterday, because it's important that all sides of the coin with regard to Bill 151 are looked at.

You might recall, Speaker, that I left off yesterday expressing concerns around how WDO is going to be enveloped into—or, maybe more appropriately put, slid into—the new authority that Bill 151 will be creating. And I worry; I worry that without a cost-containment plan, once WDO becomes an authority, its budget could grow by millions and millions of dollars, with little to no explanation.

This is exactly why WDO should be scrapped. If producers are individually responsible for recycling, they don't need WDO interfering in their operations, complicating procedures and duplicating the ministry's responsibilities. All the government needs to make this system work is an agency to collect and analyze data and report any potential violations to the ministry's enforcement branch. We don't need a policy shop duplicating the job of the ministry.

And, Speaker, by reading Bill 151, you would think that the Liberals forgot their own report on the need for regulatory clarity on the roles of WDO and the ministry. In fact, the Liberals admitted that the overlap and duplication between WDO and the ministry have gotten so bad over the years that it's impossible to effectively maintain accountability. Still, the Liberals have put forward a bill that continues to be the very problem that they identified just a few years ago. This problem crops up in several areas of Bill 151, but we are particularly concerned with sections 13 and 14 of schedule 2.

For instance, let's consider the process for the development and approval of windup plans. Under section 14, the minister may direct an IFO to develop a plan to wind up a recycling plan. Upon the minister's direction, the IFO must determine who it believes will be affected by the windup plan and consult with those individuals. At the same time, the authority must determine who it believes will be affected and consult with those very individuals. The authority must then review the IFO's windup plan for the approval, but the authority cannot approve the plan unless it's consistent with the minister's direction. If consistent, the authority can approve the plan and send it to the minister. However, if the minister wants to change the plan, he can require the IFO to make those changes. Do you see what the frustration is in terms of how this is being set up?

Speaker, after the IFO receives the authority's approved plan or the amended plan, it must implement it within the timeline set by the minister and the conditions set by the authority. Once that plan is implemented, the

IFO must prepare a final report to the authority and the ministry.

I'm sure all of you feel a bit lost hearing an explanation of the windup process. Just imagine what it's like to be a business that's regulated within this senseless maze of bureaucracy.

This is a very troublesome area within this particular bill. We would suggest that, instead of investing in new business opportunities, companies will have to set aside funds to invest in regulatory compliance. That is not what we need in 2016 in this province. Is it really any surprise that businesses are greatly concerned with this section of the bill? We all know this is a bureaucratic disaster just waiting to happen, and the irony is that it duplicates all of the same problems that the government has already identified.

That's why we believe that WDO should have no role in windup plans. The ministry should deal directly with the industry funding organizations to wind up the electronics, used tires and Orange Drop programs as soon as possible. The ministry should work directly with the industry and municipalities—the two of them together, industry and municipalities—to seamlessly transition the Blue Box Program under the new framework.

It's time to get WDO out of the way and let the government assume its role as the regulator and allow industry to assume its responsibility for recycling. Unfortunately, though, the Liberals can't fully accept the role of government as a regulator and the role of the private sector as an innovator. For whatever reason, they want control.

Speaker, consider the board selection process for the authority. This is another troublesome area that stakeholders have identified. Section 25 of schedule 1 outlines the process for appointing the authority's board members. Get this: To select the membership, the minister appoints five members, who then get to elect six members. Just to recap, so everybody gets this straight: The minister's five appointees get to pick six more members. I know the question you'll have: If the minister wants to control the board, why doesn't he just come out and say he'll be selecting all 11 members? To think that these five appointees won't be taking their marching orders from the minister to select the next six members defies all common sense.

Clearly, if businesses are going to take on full responsibility for recycling, the membership of the authority should reflect those industries; otherwise, the board could be stacked with their Liberal friends. We've seen it happen before. But in this particular case, the board could be stacked against the very businesses that are stepping up to the plate to increase recycling in our province.

Speaker, government should work to create the right conditions for businesses to succeed, not set the conditions for a perpetual fight with the authority.

Again, the minister is accountable, and the ministry needs to assume responsibility for oversight and enforcement to increase recycling.

That brings me to my next point: enforcement. Rather than having the environment ministry's enforcement

branch enforce the law, the Liberals want to create a new department of inspectors—or we could refer to them specifically as waste cops, because an extra layer of bureaucracy is an absolute waste. Specifically, section 47 of schedule 1 gives the authority a new enforcement branch, along with the power to conduct searches, seize documents and issue fines. I know what you're thinking: Isn't that the job of the ministry's enforcement branch? Aren't they more than capable of enforcing the law? These are valid questions that, unfortunately, have no valid answers from the Liberals.

For whatever reason, this government doesn't seem to have the faith that we have in the professionalism of Ontario's enforcement officers. We know that the hard-working men and women at the ministry's enforcement branch will do a great job of making sure everyone plays by the rules. They have the experience, the expertise and the mandate to get the job done. They don't need to stand on the sidelines while a new force of waste cops takes over.

**1620**

This is the same approach taken by the BC Liberals. They rely on their environment ministry's enforcement branch to enforce the law, and look at their results. BC has a diversion rate of close to 40%, while Ontario lags behind and is stalled at a mere 25%. The facts speak for themselves. There is absolutely no reason why the Ontario Liberals need to be reinventing the wheel here. Again, the government, not the authority, should be responsible for oversight and enforcement.

Probably, when we think about this a little bit further, one of the more troubling aspects of this bill is the assumption that Ontario, on its own, can influence global supply chains through regulations. It's a very naive notion, I would tend to say, but let's examine this a bit further.

Under section 67, the government of Ontario would have the authority to tell multinational companies how to design their products and packaging. Do you really think multinationals will allow an Ontario jurisdiction to tell them how they're going to package and pull through products and brands that are going to be sold on a multinational basis? Really? Again, it's a naive initiative. How could this realistically work? It's a mystery to most, but that's what the bill says.

This section, again, goes back to the Liberals' central planning approach to government. But Ontarians understand that it's not the government's role to sit at a company's boardroom table and dictate product and packaging design. They know central planning does not work. Yet the Liberals remain offside with common sense. Even worse, their ideology and their approach to government has caused them to overlook serious considerations about food packaging.

When I was general manager of the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative, we were looking to innovate. We were looking to add value for the commodity of goat milk. I can tell you that with every grocery store we met with we had to, when considering product development,

think about not only the CFIA rules that dictate packaging at the federal level; we had to think about the multinational schematic of how they lay out their products. When you go to a dairy counter in a grocery store, it's not happenstance as to how they lay out and identify the various brands of milk or the various brands of cottage cheese. It's all executed by design, and a lot of time has gone into that calculation. Again, I just shake my head thinking that this government could actually think they could control product and packaging of multinationals.

Let's go back to CFIA for a second. I really need to stress this: Food packaging is federally regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, specifically under the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act. The mandate of CFIA is to ensure that food sold in Canada is safe for Canadians. So how are the Liberals—and actually, I'm going to back up there. Another thing: When we were looking at product development in terms of adding value to goat milk, a big thing that multinationals looked at was shelf life. You had to search and research and do your work to make sure you had the proper packaging that would sustain and support the expected shelf life that multinationals wanted if you were going to ever be looked at to go onto their shelves. That's fair.

Again, the mandate of CFIA is to ensure that food sold in Canada is safe for Canadians. How are the Liberals going to work out regulatory overlap, duplication and conflict with federal rules concerning food safety? I think the answer is simple. That answer is, they just don't know. This is a major concern that needs answers now, not when a regulation is drafted behind closed doors.

Then there's the issue of overall competitiveness. Businesses in Ontario are already facing high taxes, excessive red tape and skyrocketing electricity rates. Many have chosen to pack up their operations and move to more competitive jurisdictions so they can remain profitable. We're seeing greenhouses do it, we've seen manufacturers do it, and there's going to be more.

This is an issue that our party repeatedly raised, and we specifically raised it during the debate on Bill 91. We particularly highlighted the case of the Heinz manufacturing plant in Leamington, outside of Windsor. Heinz had pleaded with the Liberal government to do a cost assessment on the Waste Reduction Act so it could determine the impact on its operations. The Liberals refused to provide any cost analysis whatsoever, and as a result Heinz had the worst to fear. Shortly after that, the company announced that it would be shutting its doors after more than 100 years of doing business in Ontario.

In 2014, this closure put hundreds of hard-working men and women out of work in southern Ontario. Thankfully, the Liberals dropped Bill 91 before any more damage could be done to Ontario's economy. Likewise, the Liberals should also drop any provisions in Bill 151 that will kill jobs and hurt our economy. Designing products for a global company is a good place to start.

The government must understand that many of the outcomes it is seeking are already happening in the

marketplace at a natural pace. Industry, through the laws of supply and demand, is taking action to increase sustainability, and businesses are stepping up to the plate to take on their responsibility for recycling. In terms of standards, we're also hearing that people are being mindful, when it comes to trade, of the products and how they're produced, and they're taking a look, in terms of how products are being produced, with regard to emissions. Climate change is going to be taken into consideration, and countries and jurisdictions that are manufacturing and producing products, being mindful of climate change, might have a few extra trade doors open. We need to be thinking about that.

We have to admit that if government creates the right conditions for growth in the green economy through environmental standards and recycling targets, there is no need to have the minister designing the next laptop for Dell or the next set of tires for Goodyear or new packaging for groceries. This government needs to assume its role as a regulator and let the private sector decide how to design its products and run its business.

Another area of the bill that will have unintended consequences is part II. Policy statements are a new addition to the waste diversion debate in Ontario, and they clearly have not been fully thought through. In fact, the Liberals haven't even told us how many policy statements they intend to introduce. They claim, like with many other sections of Bill 151, that everything will be worked out once it's passed into law. Well, Speaker, we just can't trust them to get it right, and we disagree with them on this account. Ontarians need to know the potential effects of these policy statements now, not once it's too late. Think of the effect the provincial policy statement has had across Ontario.

I want to conclude by saying that we're concerned about Bill 151. We applaud this Liberal government for adapting many good ideas that the PC party came forward with in our plan when we debated Bill 91, but we need to think about this. Our position is clear: We welcome the policy reversal by the government, because they adopted many of our ideas, and we support elements within Bill 151 that reflect good business modelling, but we have to ensure that government stays out of the way of business leading and increasing recycling in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri):** The time is now available for questions and comments. I invite the MPP for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. You have the floor.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** First and foremost, to frame the argument, I think it's important to lay out some of the arguments here.

As a member of the New Democratic Party, and personally, I strongly support initiatives to protect the environment. I think it's important that we all accept that as a starting point.

In addition to that, we all need to acknowledge, as we move forward, that it's going to become more and more important for us to develop increased initiatives to prevent waste; to look at ways reusing and ways of reducing our carbon footprint and our footprint broadly

speaking. These are important initiatives; these are important issues to talk about.

**1630**

The manner in which we do it will require us to work with other partners. One of the key issues that was brought up by the member's speech is that, in any sort of initiative where we need to work with various partners, we need to have an open dialogue with those partners to ensure that the solutions we propose will actually work. If we propose solutions that don't take into consideration the realities of the various players, that type of solution-making is not going to work. I think that's an important issue raised by the member.

However, I submit that in any of our decision-making, we need to start with a principle, and the principle is that climate change, waste generation—reduction of that generation of waste has to be a key priority in this province, it has to be a key priority in this country, and in fact it needs to be a key priority in the world.

The reality is that we've left a great and, in many cases, a negative impact on our environment. As a society, we need to take steps to remedy that problem.

I look forward to other solutions, I look forward to other initiatives, other bills, and how we can actually, in a very vigorous way, address the serious impact we've left on the environment and remedy that moving forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri):** The floor is now open for further questions and comments.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm pleased to see that some positive conversation is happening about Bill 151 in this Legislature.

As the member from Huron–Bruce indicated in her speech, waste diversion is very important to her and to her riding, as well creating jobs. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, this is an economic bill. It will create jobs and it will boost the economy of Ontario by recovering more resources from waste materials, and thereby it will create jobs.

I would like to say that the Waste Diversion Act, 2002, which was passed by the Tories, created monopolies that set fees. All those organizations will be removed under the new legislation and replaced with a new system, a new model—the producer responsibility model—for the end of the life of their product and packaging.

I would like to say that we have consulted extensively with the stakeholders and have heard that these changes are wanted and are necessary to move from the stalled 25% diversion rates we are at today.

The potential growth rate and economic implications of an open market in recyclables and resources are vast. It will not only have huge economic benefits, it will also have environmental benefits. It's a positive step in the right direction, and I support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri):** The floor is now open for questions and comments. The MPP from Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I live in such an easy riding that you don't have to look at your map of all the desks in the

Legislature that we're always consulting for some of the more complicated ones.

I'm pleased to rise and say a few words on the Waste-Free Ontario Act, Bill 151. I just feel that we have to lead by example. One way we can do that is—we have been testing for over a year, I believe, using iPads here in the Legislature. Instead of implementing that—many of us have iPads at our own disposal, or other tablets—here we are: I've got papers and papers and papers all over the place. It's a shame. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that we're not able to do more to use less paper products right here in the Legislature. Isn't that ironical when we're speaking about having a waste-free Ontario?

I think we can do a lot more, not just by leading as an example, but using a carrot instead of a stick. Let's promote companies, let's use our abilities to offer awards, to use social media, and promote the companies that are reducing waste. None of us like to see a huge cardboard box filled with more cardboard and more paper, and all that's inside is a little CD case. None of us like to see that.

In terms of trying to figure out regulations for that, it gets complicated because maybe there are other products that are going to be going in there at a later date or are going in there in other jurisdictions. Companies have to deal with the fact that we're bilingual, and that makes life difficult for many. We don't want to do anything to have a little box that the companies have to, literally and figuratively, manage within. Let's see that we can do more in terms of leading by example and offering incentives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri):** The floor is now open for further questions and comments. I recognize the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to stand in this House.

Today is my first opportunity to speak on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and to comment on the comments from the member from Huron–Bruce.

I listened intently to the last few minutes of her comments. The one thing I took away from her comments, and that I would like to echo, is that we are all concerned about the environment; we are all concerned about minimizing the impact we have on the environment. The one thing that we need to make sure of with this legislation, as with all legislation, is that actually there is more to the legislation than just convincing people that it's doing something. The title is good, but we need to make sure that the workings are going to have the desired impact.

I heard from one of the members across that this is a "totally new way of doing things, new and improved." Often, when you have "new and improved," you have a lot of glitches and a lot of problems. We all have to make sure that it actually works. I say this all the time on other issues: It's great to make rules and regulations in this fine place, but we have to be absolutely sure they're going to work outside of this place.

To echo the last member who was speaking: She made a good point, because a lot of times companies—and I

know; I used to farm. We didn't package things because we wanted to spend more money on packaging or because—we always had a reason. We have to make sure that we do the best we can to make sure there aren't needless reasons to do things.

If we all concentrate on that, then we can all work together towards that goal.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri):** Further questions and comments, all members?

I now return to the MPP for Huron–Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I appreciate the comments we heard from the members from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, from Mississauga–Brampton South, from my colleague in Thornhill and from my friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

We all care about the environment, no matter what any party would like to have people believe. We want to do what's best, and what's best is how the Liberals embraced our good ideas that we put forward when we debated Bill 91. Bill 91 was an unequivocal disaster, and the only way they were able to recover from that is by embracing the great ideas that we put forward, and we're not going to stop.

We like what we see, for the most part, in Bill 151, because they have embraced PC ideas in how to entice and encourage industry to increase recycling rates and waste diversion. We also have concerns as well, and we need to discuss those concerns a little bit more.

Those concerns are simply, in the spirit of reducing, let's reduce bureaucracy; let's reduce red tape. I say that genuinely to the people across the hall, and in doing so, let's just scrap eco tax programs that are doing nothing but increasing the cost of doing business in Ontario. Those eco tax programs, specifically, are Ontario Tire Stewardship—we all know how well that organization has been doing lately—e-waste and Orange Drop.

If we can drop those eco tax programs, totally forget about WDO, and think about the following: have a government that sets targets and sets standards, and then gets out of the way to let industry lead, I think then we're on track.

1640

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This will be much better.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the note of confidence expressed by the member from St. Catharines.

We're in bad shape in Ontario when it comes to waste diversion. I don't think there's any argument on that. We need action on this issue. I'm hopeful that there are some elements of this bill that may be useful, but I have substantial concerns about the bill in its current form.

As you're well aware, Speaker, little has been done by the Liberal government on this issue since they were elected in 2003, and Ontario has lost out economically and environmentally because of their lack of action.

Today, we're debating the government's new waste bill, Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. Before we look at the bill, let's review the situation we're in.



I'm going to start by quoting the words of the member for Mississauga–Brampton South, who delivered a big chunk of the Liberal leadoff speech on this bill the other day. She noted—and this backs up my argument—that we face very profound challenges in this province on waste. “In the residential sector, 47% of household waste is diverted from landfills, but the rate for the rest of the economy is much, much lower. Existing waste diversion programs cover only 15% of Ontario’s waste stream, and over the last decade, our overall waste diversion rate has stalled at 25%.”

Speaker, as you may well be aware, the Blue Box Program was something that was in place largely in the 1990s. It spread a bit, but really, the bulk of what was done to allow action on recycling in Ontario was done before this government came to power in 2003. In that time from 2003—and now it's 2016, 13 years—we have had stagnation, and stagnation that people have noticed. I mean, it isn't as though no one ever commented on the fact that nothing was happening or no one ever noticed that the government seemed paralyzed on this issue.

We in this party have certainly raised it a number of times. We have raised it in the House; we have raised it in the media. We've known for a long time that Ontario was increasing its greenhouse gas emissions because of the failure to address the waste issue, and it was letting economic opportunity pass Ontario by.

This is what the minister himself had to say about the greenhouse gas impact from our current waste management approach. He said this in his leadoff speech: “In Ontario, absolute greenhouse gas emissions from waste increased by 25% between 1990 and 2012.” That's pretty substantial.

We saw drops in greenhouse gas emissions from the industrial sector that were very substantial from 1990 to 2012—very substantial. From the waste management file, one where the government had an awful lot of control, a lot of ability in terms of passing legislation and not a lot of concerns about international competitiveness, we saw very substantial increases in emissions. “In 2013, the Ontario waste sector was responsible for nine megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, 5% of the provincial total; 93% of those emissions came from waste sent to landfills.”

Speaker, that is a bad record. That is a bad record. I was here in 2007 when Dalton McGuinty talked about climate change as being the defining issue of our times, an issue that demanded action for ourselves and for future generations, and yet, frankly, virtually nothing was done on this issue from 2007 to today. The issue still hangs fire.

I want to note as well that failure to act, setting aside climate change for a moment—it's a big issue to set aside, but an issue I'll set aside for a moment. If we do not, in fact, get the waste issue under control, we're looking at 16 new landfills that will need to be sited in Ontario between now and 2050. That comes from the government's own draft strategy. Anyone in this Legislature who has ever had to deal with landfill issues—my

colleague from Timiskaming may speak to this—knows that the siting of 16 more landfills in Ontario is not going to be very popular, aside from the fact that environmentally it's a huge step backwards.

We need to be taking substantial action to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce our waste production. We need to have waste diversion numbers that will eliminate the need for new landfills in this province. There's no question that we need to act on this issue and there's no question that we've needed to act for a long time.

The bill before us has some useful elements. The NDP supports the bill's aim of making producers pay for the waste they produce. No question in my mind: If you're making a car, an umbrella, a chest of drawers or some electronic piece of equipment, the fact that you don't have to deal with the cost of disposal increases your profits.

Speaker, producers who make goods that are efficient, reusable and long-lived should be rewarded, and those who make disposable junk that will just simply pile into landfills and drive up people's costs and reduce their standard of living should not be rewarded. They should be forced to pay extra costs.

There's broad support in this province for individual producer responsibility, in which producers pay the full cost of end-of-life management of their products and packaging. We may well have disagreements as we go through debate in this bill as to exactly how that's done; we may have disagreements as to whether or not this bill is adequate to reach that goal. But I would say there's general agreement in this society and likely in this House that individual producers need to be responsible for the cost of their products throughout their lifespan.

Now, individual producer responsibility is an issue and an item for action that is long overdue. Since the passage of the Waste Diversion Act in 2002, waste diversion programs in Ontario have been controlled by industry-funded monopolies. These monopolies have lacked incentives to find creative ways to reduce packaging and divert waste from landfills. As a result, there has been little innovation in waste reduction and recycling, and only four waste diversion programs have been created in 14 years. Too much of our waste keeps going to landfill.

Action on individual producer responsibility makes tons of sense. If you're at home watching this, you realize that the person who has made a profit on the item they've sold you should also be taking the cost on disposing of that item when it's at the end of its lifespan. No question; common sense, I would say. Every party in this House supports that and, my guess is, the overwhelming majority of the population of Ontario.

I also want to note—and the member for Huron–Bruce was there; the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change was there; I was there at the Paris climate summit, in December, Conference of Parties 21, convened by the United Nations. That was a very sobering event. I've followed this issue for a long time. I have

some sense of the scale of the difficulties that we face, but I actually found the conversations with climate scientists and the workshops that I attended to be very sobering in terms of the scale and speed with which this issue is moving.

So for us, looking at this particular waste reduction act, there's no question that having a keen regard for the climate aspect of waste reduction is very substantial, and that is something that has to be reflected, I believe, in the government's approach to this whole bill—to its whole operations—but it has to be reflected in this bill.

We all know that we get greenhouse gases coming from landfills where organic waste gets chewed up by microbes that expel methane and heat up the planet. But we also know that when you make useless goods that are transported on roads, causing huge amounts of emissions from transportation, you're creating more greenhouse gas emissions. If you have a society that is not being run efficiently—if producers, for instance, aren't running their factories in a way that maximizes the use of each kilo of raw material that comes in, generating waste—then you have an operation that's contributing to climate change. I think, both from a climate perspective and from a business perspective, a high level of efficiency makes tons of sense—tons of sense.

Without individual producer responsibility, producers can just pass on the cost of waste management to consumers. They can pass on the cost of their inefficiency. They aren't going to have that incentive to design for reduce and recycling, and they need to have an incentive for reuse and recycling. Instead of creative solutions to dealing with waste, what we've dealt with have been eco fees.

**1650**

I have to say that the former Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, had to deal with and defend the whole eco fees approach right about the time the HST came into force here in Ontario. I went to the media conference that day, and I have to say I've rarely seen a minister put on the griddle so effectively by the Queen's Park press gallery. They turned him over a few times to make sure he was extraordinarily well done, and then they just flamed him up for a few more minutes before they finally let him go.

Eco fees have not done what's needed in Ontario. They have provided a cover for inefficient producers, because they are flat-rate, right? I'll go into this a bit further, but they're flat-rate. If you design an item that is extraordinarily efficient in terms of material—can be reused, can be repaired, can have its life extended—your product gets stuck with the same eco fee as that of someone who's producing junk.

The eco fee system, because it doesn't actually reward the high-efficiency, innovative design producers, and it gives protection to those who would never fit those categories, has been a failure. In the end, it has meant that the whole cost of dealing with disposal falls on the shoulders of the citizens and the businesses of this province, and doesn't fall on the shoulders of those who push the stuff out the door.

Speaker, as you're well aware, there are significant economic opportunities and environmental benefits from waste reduction—and I emphasize reduction—significant benefits from reuse, and then, down the list but a term more commonly used, recycling. Reduction is absolutely our best bet and we need to have a society that thinks in those terms.

There is no doubt that there are some initiatives here that Ontario needs. But what worries me and should worry other members of this Legislature, and not just those on this side of the House but those on the government side of the House, is that this is just enabling legislation. There are no timelines in this bill. I've seen bills come before that were adopted to great fanfare, great enthusiasm, great excitement that finally something was being done. I'll say the cap-and-trade legislation that we passed in 2009, which may well be in place in 2017, fits that category.

There are no timelines in this bill. It makes me wonder about the effectiveness of this bill, because when there are no timelines, if the government, upon passage of the bill, upon proclamation of the bill, decides that it's facing political difficulties and doesn't want to actually push through—and I'll note that the clock to the next election is now ticking down. It's 2016. We saw the announcement about wine in grocery stores; I guess it was this morning. Man, if anything says countdown to an election, that says it. Through an alcohol fog, one can see the emerging outline of the next campaign.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** In the next federal campaign, it will be smoke.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Yes, it will be smoke and wine.

Ms. Mangat, in her remarks, had this to say: "If the proposed legislation is passed, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change anticipates that the transition of the municipal hazardous or special waste program, waste electrical and electronic equipment program, and Used Tires Program could be complete within two to four years. However, the transition of the Blue Box Program may take longer, as government, municipalities and producers would need to discuss the transition process extensively to ensure that residents continue to receive convenient and accessible collection services."

I will give Ms. Mangat this credit: She actually talked about the substance of the bill in her leadoff remarks. I'm not going to be nasty in my remarks about the Minister of the Environment, but he was much more general about the bill, much more high-level. Ms. Mangat actually talked about the content, the timelines, how this is going to be put in place on the ground.

Now, I have to say, that noted, that a timeline of two to four years for the non-Blue Box changes takes you to just past the next election date and a bit further than that. So it puts you in a great position, because you can say that you passed the bill and you're going to deal with the issue, but you don't actually deal with the rubber-hits-the-road stuff until maybe a day or two after the election, after the ballots are counted.

*Interjections*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I've been around; I've noticed how you guys operate. I know how it works now.

If substantial changes to the Blue Box Program are delayed for more than four years, it takes us to 2020 or 2021—it takes us into the next decade—so I have to ask, could the government defer action forever on this? I think the answer is, yup, they sure could. They sure could.

The success or failure of this act, assuming it actually gets implemented, will depend on policies and regulations that have not yet been disclosed. In fact, after disclosure, they won't have to come back to the Legislature for debate or review. Speaker, that too is a substantial worry, because, really, the elements that all of us will have to deal with in our ridings, in terms of our individual constituents who are dealing with waste issues and individual businesses or institutions that are dealing with waste issues—all of those substantial pieces will not be subject to review by the people in this chamber. We won't get a chance to say, "That makes no sense whatsoever," or on the off chance, say, "Hey, that was actually pretty good." It won't be in our hands.

I have to say that this comes up as an issue for me in my riding when people come and say, "You voted for this piece of legislation, and yet this regulation, this actual piece of law on the ground that affects us, makes no sense at all." I have to say, "You know, the legislation was headed in the right direction; I can't help it if the regulations that were put in place are really pretty dicey." That's a problem with this bill: The lack of detail, the setting in place of a framework without filling in that framework so that we know exactly what we're going to be launching is a problem, a worry, a concern.

I note, Speaker, that the government proposed individual producer responsibility back in 2008. Now, time's a-passing; 2008, eight years ago, was a while ago, and little has changed. Little has changed. Nothing changes the day after this bill passes. Industry-funded organizations will still control our waste diversion programs. That will still be the case the day after the Speaker calls for the vote and we all get to stand in our place voting yea or nay. The day after that, those industry-funded organizations will still control our waste diversion programs. This bill sets no timeline for when Ontario will even begin moving toward full individual producer responsibility.

I listened to Ms. Mangat and her comments earlier on the member from Huron-Bruce's leadoff speech, and she talked about extensive consultation that had taken place. Frankly, having talked to my colleague Jonah Schein, who was here for Bill 91, I have no doubt that extraordinarily detailed conversation and consultation has taken place. There's enough heat on this file and enough people had a big interest that it wasn't going to be one that was just going to simply be cooked up in a few minutes and put steaming onto a plate for those of us in the Legislature to read. No, there was a lot of consultation.

So I have to ask, if all that has taken place, why haven't timelines been set? If one knows where all the different players are at and what their concerns and issues

are, why haven't those concerns and issues been reflected in far more concrete legislation that is put before us for consideration?

I want to note, Speaker, that despite its title, Bill 151 fails to establish a legislated goal of zero waste. What is this again? The Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015? That's pretty much it in terms of mentioning "waste-free." It doesn't show up as a goal within the legislation. It doesn't show up as a target. Why aren't we setting targets and timelines for a waste-free society? Why isn't that reflected in the legislation? It's a very substantial question about the effectiveness of and, ultimately, the direction of this act.

**1700**

Now, I'm going to be talking in greater detail about the bill, but I want to draw back a bit and talk about the larger framework for thinking about waste issues.

Happily, I have the opportunity to draw on a speech that was delivered by our former environment critic, former member for Davenport Jonah Schein, who had an opportunity, when Bill 91 was on the floor, to make a presentation to the Municipal Waste Association. He talked about the principles and the considerations that need to be taken into account when you're putting together a waste diversion or a waste management bill. He said at the time that New Democrats welcomed a new waste diversion act—absolutely true—and he hoped to see a bill that would increase accountability and transparency in the waste management sector, a bill that would protect our environment and foster a green economy.

As he said, New Democrats have always supported key principles around waste diversion and recovery. The first principle is accountability. As I'd said earlier, the polluter, not the consumer, is the one who's accountable for or responsible for the product. You've got to have that or, as we have seen, costs for dealing with waste just run out of control, and the consequences of dealing with waste—and I'll cite having a landfill put in place near where you live or where you work as one of those consequence—are very substantial.

We support the idea that the producer is responsible for the full life cycle of the product. That's extended producer responsibility. The producer of a product must internalize the full cost of their product's life cycle.

Secondly, incentives need to be created so it is easy for consumers and producers alike to do the right thing for our environment.

Thirdly, we need properly informed and enforced regulations to incentivize waste recovery and the protection of our environment. If you have some of the most beautiful legislation ever written, legislation that would be regarded as fine literature in many other languages, and you don't enforce it, then as beautiful as it may be, it is irrelevant, and it's absolutely the case. You have to have regulations that make sense and that people understand very easily, very quickly, there's no confusion about what's being regulated, and then you have to have the resources in place to make sure there actually is an adherence to the law.

I have to say that my experience with the Archives and Recordkeeping Act here in this Legislature—it was pretty clear that in the course of the gas plant inquiry, we questioned quite a few Liberal staff who very happily destroyed every record they put their hands on. There was no enforcement of the act, and so there were no consequences. It was a useful experience for me. I hadn't really thought before about the laws on the books that had no enforcement whatsoever. I was familiar with laws that got enforced sporadically or poorly, but laws that had no enforcement whatsoever, whose only function was to look pretty on the shelf—that was new to me. So, making sure there's adequate and substantial enforcement for regulation is going to be a critical part of any bill that's worth its salt.

Fourthly, the market has a key role to play. We have to create the market conditions where environmentally conscious, smart and innovative practices and products are encouraged and profitable. It makes complete sense. People aren't going to sell products into Ontario that don't make money. Those who are making smart products that make sense environmentally should be rewarded, and those who don't should be discouraged.

I have to say that Mr. Schein was right when he said, "I think it's safe to say there is a broad consensus that we need to do better on waste reduction in Ontario." Not only is it the right thing to do for our environment—our air, our land and our water—but waste reduction recovery offers huge potential economic benefits in terms of job creation. Recycling creates seven to 10 jobs for every one job in the disposal industry. That's an extraordinary number. According to some estimates, deposit return programs create even more jobs.

Even now, years after the crash of 2008, when I go and talk to my constituents, I find people who have a very difficult time getting work. My guess is that if you surveyed all the members in this chamber on a day when it's completely full, you would find that they came across the same problem. When we have an opportunity to create meaningful and environmentally beneficial work in recycling or reuse, we should be doing that.

As I've noted, waste diversion rates in Ontario are stuck around 25%, far below any publicly stated provincial target and far below other provinces. Why? Why has that been the case? Mr. Schein noted that a large problem has been a lack of enforceable targets. Even though Ontario has been stuck at low diversion rates, the government has not created the tools necessary to ensure producers' compliance with these targets. Individual producers have been provided little economic incentive to reduce waste or make their products more environmentally friendly. As long as it is cheaper and easier for companies to send materials to the dump instead of reusing those materials, reducing those materials or recycling them, we'll continue to fail to meet our waste diversion obligations.

Of course, the handling of eco fees has been quite a failure. This is something he said a few years ago and was said by me a few years before that and, I have no

doubt, was said by others a few years before that. It has burdened Ontarians with costs they should not have to pay, but it has also rocked the confidence of the public in government recycling programs.

When the government allows producers to pass on the cost of disposing of their products to consumers through eco fees, there's no incentive for change or green innovation for these producers. On top of that, the government failed to produce a nuanced program of differential costs for different products. I touched on that earlier. If you make a product that's easily reused, repurposed or repaired, you should be spending far less and should have to charge people far less than a product that is none of the above.

I have to say that Mr. Schein noted that inadequate monitoring by the provincial government means that we don't have a real sense of how effective waste management programs are. What we do know is that producers pay less than half of recycling costs in many municipalities.

Speaker, as you're well aware, municipalities are hard pressed across Ontario. There may be one or two that aren't, and I look forward to hearing from them, but when I talk to city councillors here in Toronto or in any other part of the province, they find it hard to pull all the pieces together. They don't need an extra expense around waste management. They need support from those producers who are passing the costs on to the public and to the municipalities that represent them.

Mr. Schein also noted that there's a problem with waste materials being dumped in Ontario—no question—but also a problem with export of those waste materials overseas, often to China and often to situations where there's inadequate worker health and safety, inadequate protection for the environment and large-scale dumping of toxic materials. That's not environmentally or ecologically responsible; that's just passing the problem down the line to someone else who's perhaps desperate for work and desperate for income.

We're a sophisticated society, technologically and economically. We have the ability to set up a waste management or waste diversion system that will allow us to avoid that pollution and allow us to reduce and recover materials.

We believe that materials can be diverted. We believe that disposal bans should be considered and put in place where appropriate. I find it extraordinary, Speaker, that the waste diversion percentage in industrial, commercial and institutional is around 13%. A big chunk of that waste is paper. The idea that paper in large quantities would be going to landfills boggles the mind—it totally boggles the mind. A large part of our waste is organic waste from restaurants. The idea that we wouldn't be able to recover that waste, compost it, use it for building up our soil in Ontario, use it for all kinds of other beneficial purposes, boggles the mind.

**1710**

In the end, consumers, taxpayers and municipalities should not be left to foot the bill. The provincial govern-

ment needs to empower itself to penalize those who do not meet diversion targets or standards for recycling. We need to prioritize waste diversion in this province. We should be tracking where the waste is going and setting the standards on how it's dealt with. We need to bring accountability and transparency to our waste diversion programs in Ontario and restore public confidence. Programs should be monitored and audited for their environmental and financial performance to ensure that they're being managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and the results of these audits should be made publicly available. How do you hold a government to account if you don't know what it's doing? People need to be able to find out through access to publications exactly how functional or dysfunctional our waste diversion programs are. That information has to be made public.

Speaker, we need to look at the creation of jobs through reuse, for example, by moving towards refillable wine bottles. What has been done in the beer sector in terms of refillable bottles has been extraordinary. It shouldn't be extraordinary; it should be everyday. Frankly, we drink a fair amount of wine in Ontario. I think the province is very happy to drink a fair amount of wine, and I think it would be just as happy to drink that wine from refillable bottles.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Cheers.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Virtue, and cheers, at the same time. Exactly.

We've talked about a variety of issues, but I also want to talk for a moment about the direction that the government is taking on the use of garbage burning, or—what's the euphemism?—energy from waste. The decision by this Liberal government to pay garbage-burning operations for the energy they produce is absolutely staggering to me. I read the minister's comments from his leadoff speech at second reading on the link between climate change and waste. The minister made a strong argument for waste reduction and recycling to substantially cut our greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, he made a case that it was imperative to take action to cut those greenhouse gas emissions. Yet at the same time, a few rows over, we have the Minister of Energy offering cash payments to garbage incinerators for generating electricity from the heat created by their mass burning of garbage.

I have to tell you, Speaker, when a company is making money burning garbage and selling the electricity, you can be sure that their lobbyists will be swarming all over this building if we take substantial action to cut off their fuel supply. But in fact, if we move towards a zero-waste society, if we move to a virtually zero-waste society, the material for garbage burning will drop dramatically.

Most of what's recyclable is also what's burnable. Why would we be putting up these garbage burners—close to agricultural operations, I might add, where we get to eat or drink the residue from those garbage burners. Why would we do that?

Either this government wants to cut greenhouse gas emissions and will divert the majority of waste from the

current waste stream, which will mean very little fuel for garbage burners, or we'll continue to generate lots of waste and, with the burning of the waste, even more greenhouse gas emissions. You can't have it both ways. I look forward as my speech goes on to exploring this issue a little more thoroughly.

As my colleague Jonah Schein has said, burning waste reduces the incentive to reduce or divert waste in the first place. We shouldn't be squandering resources by burning them for energy. He summarized his points about what needs to be put in place in order to divert waste successfully: We need to ensure producers are accountable for the full life cycle of the waste they create. We need to incentivize consumers and producers alike to do the right thing for our environment. We need to enforce regulations that mandate waste recovery and protection of our environment, and issue fines for non-compliance. And we need to create the market conditions in Ontario for environmentally conscious, smart and innovative industries to take root and prosper.

I think my colleague did a pretty good job of setting out the key principles that need to be respected when you're putting together a bill that will deal with this very substantial problem.

So what's in this bill?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Finally, we get to the meat of the matter.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Ah, you have been waiting so long, but you were patient.

Bill 151 enacts the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act and the Waste Diversion Transition Act. Together, these statutes replace the current Waste Diversion Act, 2002, the WDA.

A key feature of the Waste Diversion Act is the use of industry funding organizations—IFOs—and industry stewardship plans. Bill 151 enables the transition to a regime of greater producer responsibility for waste.

Frankly, Speaker, that's a good thing. I have worries about timelines and regulations; I think those are substantive matters. But putting in place the machinery for transition? That's a good thing.

The new legislative framework for waste management will be similar to that of land use planning under the Planning Act, in that the government will define provincial interest for the system of resource recovery and waste reduction and will issue policy statements with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the cabinet.

Persons and entities with powers or responsibilities under this act or another act that has a relationship to the matter will be required to have regard to the provincial interest. Persons and entities with powers or responsibilities under this act or other listed acts will be required to act in a manner that is consistent with the policy statements.

Now, I understand philosophically why the government would do this, but I think there are substantial questions that are raised here, because I look at planning in Ontario and the way that planning is carried out and

the way that planning gets bent out of shape. Under the current planning regime, my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo could speak to Kitchener–Waterloo’s efforts to put in place zoning to restrain sprawl and to actually have a compact, environmentally progressive city, and yet they got beaten down totally at the Ontario Municipal Board.

So I have to ask, Speaker, will this new act, will this setting of provincial goals, with a requirement for other bodies to follow along, actually give the protection that the environment needs? Will it be extraordinarily loose? Will we be in a situation where individual councils will “have regard for” the law—and that’s a legal term—but, beyond lip service, not actually implement it?

I talk to colleagues of mine who serve on rural councils, who are engaged in huge battles over interpretations of provincial statements on planning. That has very substantial implications for development of habitation or subdivisions along roads. So it’s spread out. A lot more transportation services are required. It’s more expensive for rural municipalities to service those communities strung out along roads. Speaker, if this is as loose as the Planning Act, then I think we may have a substantial problem here.

1720

I note that “every five years, the minister shall prepare” and publish a progress report describing actions that have been taken toward the strategy’s goals and the description of the progress made toward these goals, based on the performance measures outlined in the strategy. Now, I have to say, maybe I didn’t read the bill as thoroughly as I should have, and maybe I will find this as I go through it a second or third time, but it doesn’t seem to require the minister to table these reports in the Legislature. If my reading wasn’t faulty, then the minister needs to clarify or correct that. Those reports have to be available, not only to us, but to the people of Ontario generally.

Waste Diversion Ontario, which was established in the Waste Diversion Act, continues as the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, which I will refer to as the RPRA in my further comments, because that’s an awfully long title. This delegated authority is not a crown agent. So, one has to ask how much power is being delegated to this authority, and how will they be held to account? My colleague from Huron–Bruce, I think, touched on this in her remarks. My colleague Jonah Schein had this to say about similar structures and issues in the predecessor bill, Bill 91: “Is it the right approach for the Ministry of the Environment to transfer enforcement powers to a new authority that ensures compliance of producers and recyclers, or is this enforcement better done by the ministry itself?”

Groups like the Canadian Environmental Law Association have raised concern that transferring enforcement to the authority will reduce the independence and fairness of prosecutions under the act. The Canadian Environmental Law Association is a pretty serious group. They analyze these matters; they look at precedent in Ontario. When they express concerns, I think that people should

listen to them. You may ultimately disagree with them, but they’re not a group to be dismissed; they’re a group to be taken account of.

Prosecutors in the Ministry of the Environment are accountable to the Attorney General to ensure that there is no political interference in prosecutions conducted by the crown. The Attorney General, in turn, is accountable to the Legislature. Delegating enforcement to this new agency could undermine this accountability structure and remove important procedural requirements such as disclosure.

Look at the history of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, a group that we’ve had occasion to discuss at length in this Legislature, particularly after the propane explosion at Sunrise Propane in North York. We’ve discussed them and looked at the difficulties, the problems these delegated authorities have around the risk and deficiencies of outsourcing inspection and enforcement to an agency. Therefore, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and others believe that enforcement of law is a core government function that should not be transferred to a delegated administrative authority.

A further question is whether the Waste Reduction Authority, as it was in Bill 91, or the RPRA in this incarnation, will have the resources to monitor and audit compliance of waste diversion practices and have an adequate number of inspectors with sufficient authority to conduct inspections. As I look through the act, the enforcement branch has a fair amount of authority to enter non-residential buildings to seize records; they can call on the police to go with them to seize records. So they seem to have some of the fairly obvious elements in terms of ability to go in and enforce the law. I think the questions may well be: Will there be enough inspectors; will they have a mandate to actually protect Ontario’s environment; and will this designated non-crown-corporation body have the authority and momentum and force to do what is needed?

Certainly, we’ve seen in other jurisdiction and other areas, such as unlicensed home daycare, where lack of enforcement really does provide us with very substantial problems. The Waste Reduction Authority needs real auditing powers and capacities, and for that it needs to be adequately resourced.

Now, a point that my colleague raised with the Waste Reduction Authority needs to be raised here as well. The RPRA—this resource productivity authority—can be audited by our Auditor General, but it isn’t subject to review by parliamentary committee, it isn’t subject to the Environmental Bill of Rights, it isn’t subject to the protections that the Ombudsman can provide, and I think that’s a problem. The authority is open to assessment by the Auditor General, as I noted, but we know that the auditor has limited resources to monitor every agency.

We also know that in the case of Hydro One the Ombudsman took a huge initiative that was of great consequence for the people of Ontario when they were dealing with the complete disaster around billing and

misbilling that happened across this province. We now know how a lack of accountability of government agencies or quasi government agencies—Ornge, eHealth, the Ontario Power Authority—has cost Ontarians billions of dollars under the current Liberal regime. It's a mistake we shouldn't be repeating in this legislation. It's an item that we're going to be looking at very closely as we go further with this bill.

Each year, the RPRA shall submit and publish a business plan describing its activities and objectives for the current and next two years. It shall also submit and publish an annual report. Now, the cabinet—the Lieutenant Governor in Council—may prohibit the sale of a prescribed material if responsible collectors under the act have failed to collect it or if responsible persons under the act have habitually failed to fulfill any responsibilities with respect to the prescribed material.

That is a useful power. If there is a producer who does not in fact take the responsibilities seriously for—what can one say?—end-of-life processing or management of a particular product or material, then, yes, this province needs the authority to step in. Irresponsible actors, irresponsible players, need to be called to account. The government doesn't have the power to say, "Wait a minute. Your products are highly problematic. They need to be kept out of the market."

I'll give you an example. I had a meeting with police in my riding recently. To my great surprise, they were after counterfeiters. I thought immediately, when they said counterfeiters, that they were talking about money, but, no, they were talking about counterfeit pizza ovens. There are pizza ovens that have been manufactured completely outside normal standards. Someone had been able to get CSA stickers to put on them, and so there were pizza ovens along the Danforth in Toronto that were counterfeit. They were not safe, not fit for use.

I have to say, Speaker, that our existing laws prohibiting unsafe equipment in restaurants and in other places are good laws. I was happy that the police were going after these counterfeiters. I think it makes sense for us to have an expansion of legal authority so we can deal with products where the manufacturers abrogate, ignore or completely pass on their responsibility to deal with the full life cycle of a product.

We've heard a few stakeholder reactions and, interestingly, they reflect some of the concerns that I have expressed and that the official opposition has expressed. The Ontario Waste Management Association put out a backgrounder from December which expressed broad support for Bill 151. Like us, they see individual producer responsibility as a good thing. They see some broader government powers as a good thing. But they caution about potential issues that could emerge as details are ironed out. Again, that's the point I raise, Speaker: that so much of this will be left to regulation that will not come back to us for consideration.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has long advocated for extended producer responsibility for waste diversion programs. No surprise, because their members

get stuck with the tab. If there is an item that's out there that is made in such a way that it cannot be recycled, they are the ones that get stuck with the cost of finding a landfill somewhere and putting it in that landfill. So they have an interest in the bill, that it will actually do what is promised. They are concerned about rising costs for municipalities imposed on them by the industry-funded organizations that find ways to avoid paying their traditional 50% share of costs for blue box materials. Obviously, AMO would welcome legislation that would shift these responsibilities and costs to producers, but it notes that the actual effect of this act will depend on regulations—exactly the point I made and that the Ontario Waste Management Association made—and that transition is estimated to take three to five years; in other words, after this coming election cycle.

**1730**

It may just be a coincidence, Speaker. Who knows? I don't know. Three to five years—who knew that it was going to be like that? Just totally arbitrary, random.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture: In a statement, the OFA said, "OFA applauds the waste-free initiative proposed in Bill 151"—enjoy that, Liberals, while I repeat that—noting that one objective of the act is "to reduce waste, and reduce the province's dependence on landfills that are typically located in rural areas."

Yes, they are now located in rural areas. I have to say that my riding has a huge landfill, the Don Valley. If you see Riverdale Park, it's a beautiful park for tobogganing. It's fabulous. It is a giant landfill. You will see, along Broadview Avenue, these 10-foot-tall pipes, about 30 of them. They're the methane catch-and-release mechanism. If you go in to the floor of the Don Valley, if you drive along the Don Valley south of Bloor, you'll notice all the greenery out there. That sits on about 10 feet of cinders, of ash that came from the incinerator at Dundas and the Don Valley, that operated in the last century. I don't know how late it operated—maybe into the 1920s and 1930s. So there's a lot of landfill that is now capped off in urban areas. The new ones are in rural areas.

The OFA, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, also noted that much will depend on subsequent regulations. I think we've all noticed that a huge amount of power is being given to the government, giving them the power to write regulations that we will never get a chance to review. They wrote, "We don't want to be surprised by any unintended consequences impacting Ontario farm businesses. Ontario farmers already participate in recycling programs that involve the recycling of pesticide and fertilizer containers; feed, seed and pesticide bags; plastic bale wrap, and many other items used on the farm. Expansion of those programs will be an important development under the proposed act."

They're right. They don't want to get blindsided. They don't want to see regulations come along that are hugely problematic. Like us, they would like to see more in this bill, more concrete detail, so we know exactly what this framework, this enabling legislation, is going to be used for.

The Workers Health and Safety Centre was hopeful that Bill 151 would result in fewer hazardous materials in the waste stream, noting that while the Toxics Reduction Act requires monitoring and reduction plans, the implementation of these plans is not mandatory. They're hopeful that in the process of putting this bill together, action will be taken to further reduce the amount of toxics that individual workers deal with and that we deal with in the waste stream.

If we look back about waste diversion and action on waste diversion, you'll see that the Liberal government has been talking about reforming the Waste Diversion Act for over a decade. Following a mandatory five-year review of the Waste Diversion Act in 2007, the government released a discussion paper in October 2008 that proposed a goal of zero waste—I wish those words were in this act—zero waste within an extended producer responsibility framework. The report, for all of those who are out there, eager to enter it into Google, is *Toward a Zero Waste Future—Government of Ontario, 2008*.

The discussion paper was followed by a ministerial report in 2009 entitled *From Waste to Worth: The Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy*. The report recommended a new system based on outcomes-based individual producer responsibility—yes, that was 2009; it was only seven years ago—in which producers would be “fully responsible for meeting waste diversion requirements for waste discarded in both the residential and ... industrial, commercial and institutional sectors.”

Despite this recommendation seven years ago, nothing happened. Five years passed after that 2008 election paper without a bill. Then finally, in 2013—that's one election, one prorogation and one Premier later—the Liberal government finally tabled Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. That bill was introduced in June 2013, and there were 16 days of second reading debate—16 days. Man, you've heard of endless summer? Well, this takes the “summer” out and just is endless. The bill never made it to vote, never made it to committee. The bill was never debated at all in 2014 and it died when the election was called in May 2014.

Eight years after the government proposed a zero-waste future, Ontario is still waiting for individual producer responsibility. And as I said earlier, with the lack of timelines in this bill, one has to ask how much longer Ontario is going to have to wait. You would think that after eight years, the government would have figured out some timelines and been able to say, “As of 2017, this is in place. As of 2018, this is in place.” Except for that pesky election coming up, I'm sure they would.

What do we have now, in place of extended producer responsibility? We have a shared responsibility system when it comes to most waste. Producers only carry some of the cost of waste created by their products and packaging. For example, the costs of Ontario's Blue Box Program are shared, and that's theoretically 50-50, between municipalities and producers.

The government's discussion paper on this matter notes some major problems with this model—mainly the

fact that the people generating waste do not bear the cost of the waste. So there are inadequate incentives to reduce, reuse or recycle.

A 2013 policy paper on extended producer responsibility observed that “under the Waste Diversion Act, “functioning recycling markets have been disrupted; consumers have been burdened by eco fees in some cases unfairly; recycling targets have not been met; program efficiencies questioned....”

“Concerns with programs under the WDA are well documented. This includes, numerous reports by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Auditor General, and within government reports.”

We need to move to a system of extended producer responsibility so that the responsibility for cost is borne solely by the producers.

Speaker, in my last few minutes I again want to say that the problem with leaving most of what's concrete to regulations means that the debate on what's in those regulations won't be in the public realm. Those who have the most sophisticated, most expensive lobbyists, the most well-connected lobbyists, will be the ones who will be working the committee rooms—committee rooms that most of us in this chamber won't ever attend—going to those committee rooms and having those meetings where the regulations are hammered out and will be presented to the people of Ontario as a fait accompli. That is not very democratic. That is not what we need in terms of protecting the public good. That is very problematic. That's something that I think the government needs to address in this bill.

As well, the government should be taking the opportunity to look again at this rewarding the burning of garbage in Ontario. The burning of garbage and the paying of those garbage burners for the electricity they produce is opposed by the Toronto Environmental Alliance, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, the David Suzuki Foundation, Durham Environment Watch, Environmental Defence Canada and Environment Hamilton. The environmental coalition notes that 85% to 90% of municipal solid waste is recyclable or compostable. Burning all that material defeats the very idea of having a waste management act that reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It makes sure that there is huge pressure to continue producing that fuel so that more carbon dioxide can go into the atmosphere.

Speaker, I'm looking forward to further debate on this bill. I expect we will be going to committee. I look forward to hearing from the stakeholders. I, along with members of my party, will be providing a number of amendments that we hope will be made to make this bill effective.

**1740**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** It's my privilege and responsibility, of course, to rise in support of Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. As you'll know, Speaker, many



bills we do—we use the phrase that we do it for our children. But I'd like to just share with the House that I actually have two of my children present, both willing and voluntary, not mandatory: Shamsa Qadri and Shafiq Jr. We welcome them. They are here specifically to see that we do just that: leave a better Ontario to the children.

There are many aspects to this bill; for example, increasing waste diversion, keeping valuable resources out of landfills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our waste stream. As our Minister of Climate Change has spoken very forcefully and committedly about, this is perhaps the single leading issue of our time.

I must say, Speaker, as you will know, that the government of Ontario and the Premier travel globally—for example, recently to Beijing, and also to India—and you can see the effects of, let's call it, improper, not ideal and not optimal waste management and greenhouse gas reduction. It's rampant on the streets, in the landfills, in the cities and so on. This is something that we in Ontario are taking very seriously.

As you know, there are many, many components to this bill. For example, over eight million tonnes of waste are sent to landfills every year, and there are approximately a billion dollars' worth of recoverable materials in those very landfills. Between the job creation, the environmental sense and our stewardship of the environment going forward, I think that together, all told, that is a worthy goal, not only for us as stewards of the environment but, literally and figuratively, for our children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the debate this afternoon in response to the third party's environment critic. Surprisingly, he and I have things in common, and I appreciate his comments sincerely. I enjoy working with him, actually, because he's very thoughtful.

One of the thoughtful comments that he shared this afternoon was around the policy statements that could be developed. We worry about these policy statements as well, just like the environment critic for the third party does. With the way we have reviewed it, ministry directors can issue directives to businesses and require them to write reports detailing how they will meet the provisions laid out in policy statements. At the same time, the authority can issue directives to businesses to ensure that they are in compliance with reporting and recycling standards. If a business disagrees with a directive from the authority, it can appeal to the Environmental Review Tribunal. If a business disagrees with a ministry directive, they have no way to appeal it. This is a problem that we feel needs to be addressed. We worry, because how is this fair?

When we think about this government's own Open for Business initiative, I would suggest to you that the whole point of being open for business is to reduce regulatory burden. So we issue a caution here: We sincerely say, let's not create wasteful bureaucracy. Let's not increase red tape and complicate and get in the way of industry

moving forward to having a better waste diversion rate than we do right now in Ontario.

We all have to work together to make sure we get this right in committee, so that there is something feasible and tangible we can all wholesomely support in third reading.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I just want to congratulate the member from Toronto–Danforth on his contributions to this very important bill. As we've heard, this bill has been a long time coming.

The member talked about how long these timelines might take and if they will get accomplished. We've had some experience with that. It took 13 years for this government to come out with a provincial nominee program. It also took 10 years to come up with the Ontario anti-racism secretariat. I hope that the action on this file, on Bill 151, will be a little more speedy.

As the member from Danforth said, this government's record on waste diversion is at a standstill, and has been at a standstill for quite some time. We need action on this file. This environment, with regard to waste diversion, is in bad shape, so we're glad that this government presented this bill to the House, but we also have questions and concerns about the fact that there really are no measurable goals in this bill. It's basically a vision for a strategy. It's kind of left up to regulation.

We don't get that feedback on regulation. When you do that, what happens is those regulations are done by lobbyists and by special interest groups who have that leverage or that kind of advantage. Therefore, that bill that we're agreeing to today and which we all believe, in principle, is a good thing may not be the bill that the people actually thought was going to come out of this legislation, and be effective enough to have a waste-free Ontario.

I hope this debate on this waste-free Ontario bill isn't a waste. I hope it's going to be effective and that this government will come through and show us real leadership on this topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Let's thank the minister for climate change for this legislation.

I will be sharing my time with the member from Newmarket–Aurora, and chair of cabinet, I think—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I just wish to inform the member we're on questions and comments, the two-minute hits, if you wish.

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Oh, sorry. Okay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. We look forward to your speech. That concludes our—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There have been four questions and comments, even though the fourth one was very brief, which means we now allow the member for Toronto–Danforth to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank the members from Etobicoke North, Huron–Bruce, London–Fanshawe,

Durham—no matter how briefly—and the member from Mississauga–Brampton South, who did try. My guess is that she actually did hear parts of what I had to say.

The member from Etobicoke North was correct: Climate change is the single leading issue facing our society today. I have to say it's intertwined with some others but, really, in terms of our future, it's critical. This bill should be contributing to a substantial part of the solution, and it's my hope that we can bring about amendments that will be useful.

It is my worry—it has been said by the member from Huron–Bruce and by my colleague from London–Fanshawe—that absent the concrete elements in the regulations, we have very substantial misgivings about what actually will be put on the ground at the end of the day.

I understand why a government would do this, but I also have to say it's hugely problematic when you're asking others to vote for a bill when a lot of what's concretely going to be done is not visible at this point.

My colleague from London–Fanshawe talked about things taking a long time to come to fruition. She's quite correct. We've waited for an anti-racism secretariat, now called the Anti-Racism Directorate, for about a decade. We can't wait another decade, again, for action on waste diversion. Too much is at stake, too many problems await us and too many surprises are waiting out there for us. We need to get on with this, but we need to have more concrete from the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member for Durham.

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Thank you, Speaker. My apologies; my faux pas.

Let's thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for this legislation. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the members who spoke so eloquently toward this bill before me.

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Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the member from Newmarket–Aurora, as well as the Chair of Cabinet.

As we all know, the environment and our influences are not getting along very well. As humans, we create a lot of waste. Everything we do, especially in the global north, involves the creation of waste, whether through production of the things we use or what is left of it when we're done.

Recently, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the World Economic Forum released a report that claimed there will be 750 million tonnes of plastic in our oceans by 2050. Their metaphor was that this means there will be more plastic than fish in our seas in fewer than 50 years. In Ontario today, it's estimated that we each create five pounds of waste every single day.

Clearly, we need to take action, and that is what our government is doing with this bill. We talk about population growth, economic growth, development and expansion, but it is wholly characteristic of 21st century thought that we must consider how we will make that growth sustainable. Adjusting to the new reality is a long process.

Ontarians generate about 20 million tonnes of waste per year, of which we divert from landfill only about one million tonnes. Ninety-seven per cent of households have access to a blue box recycling program, and maybe sometimes we shame our neighbours who don't make use of it as we should do, Mr. Speaker. Green bin programs are also becoming available to Ontarians. Almost half of the one million tonnes of organic waste collected in 2014 came from green bins, which in total makes up about a third of our total waste.

In Clarington, the regions of Durham and York have built an energy-from-waste facility which is owned by the region and operated by industry. It can currently combust about 140,000 tonnes of waste per year and can power about 10,000 homes. This is a similar model to the northern European countries with stringent emission regulation where usable land is a precious commodity. It makes us ask ourselves what our priorities are: larger and less sustainable landfills, or smart alternatives that reduce our impact?

So 47% of residential waste is diverted from disposal, but in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors, only about 13% is diverted. This doesn't seem entirely fair. Yes, industry fees cover about 50% of what it costs municipalities to administer the Blue Box Program, but will that continue to be enough? Not when waste disposal remains cheaper than diversion, and not when blue box programs cost about double what it costs to put waste in a landfill. Ontario's families are sorting their waste and making efforts to consume less. Industry should follow suit.

We are going to hold producers fully responsible for recovery and reduction of waste by eliminating fees that end up being passed from industry to consumers, because we believe that the cost of resource recovery and recycling should be treated like any other cost of doing business in Ontario.

This act will address the nearly \$1 billion worth of recoverable materials that end up in landfills across Canada. We will provide numerous tools to ensure those resources are recovered and not lost. We will harness the economic value of these materials, including the job creation and growth involved in increased diversion, and propel investment from industry in waste management and recycling.

Those who produce the waste should be accountable, like every other Ontarian, for diverting that waste from landfills so that we can increase our diversion rate, which has hovered around 25% for far too long, and to give real teeth to notions of sustainable growth. I am happy to support this act, and I look forward to further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm delighted to carry on the debate on behalf of the government, and to carry on with remarks that the member from Durham started. I think that Ontario is showing real leadership in taking action to support the circular economy, a system where nothing is wasted and valuable materials destined for landfill are

put back into the economy without negative effects on people and the environment.

There's been some discussion by members opposite and members on this side of the House about landfill sites, or, as I would have called them in my youth, dumps. One of the largest in Ontario was the Keele Valley dump just to the south of the small town of King City, which I grew up in, just on the outskirts of Maple. It was so massive that in my youth, when we stood on the edge, it seemed like if you fell in, you would never be found. That dump was filled and built higher and higher and higher, and became a ski hill eventually. Now it's dotted with methane recovery pipes; the methane is pumped to a central processing area where it is burned and fires turbines that make electricity for the local community.

Even as a young kid, standing in the edge of that massive dump, I was awestruck at all the garbage and all the waste that was going in there, and wondered about all of the metal that would never be recovered, for example, because it was buried under tons and tons of other garbage and dirt. I'm glad to see that things have progressed over the years, but perhaps they have not progressed far enough, and I believe that's really at the root of what this bill is all about.

A new approach is needed, and this government understands that: one that will increase waste diversion, one that will keep valuable resources out of landfills and one that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our waste stream.

Other speakers have mentioned this, but I will again: Over eight million tonnes of waste are sent to the landfill each year in Ontario. That represents approximately \$1 billion worth of recoverable material lost each year in landfills across Canada. We're missing out on a huge

opportunity to generate revenue and create jobs. Recovering just 60% of waste materials could create 13,000 jobs and contribute \$1.5 billion in gross domestic product in Ontario. This is not only the right thing to do; it is a huge economic opportunity.

Ontarians, as was mentioned earlier, generate nearly 12 million tonnes of waste each year. On average, each Ontarian generates 2.3 kilograms of waste material per day. Ontario's overall waste diversion rate has remained at around 25% for the past decade. Ontario's four waste diversion programs under the Waste Diversion Act of 2002 divert over one million tonnes each year. That's good, but not good enough. I think we all can agree on that. About 47% of Ontario's residential waste is diverted from disposal. However, the diversion rate in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors continues to be low, at about 13%.

I spoke earlier about the economic benefits of the circular economy. The waste management sector, we're told, contributes a little over \$2 billion to Ontario's GDP. This is nearly as large as the contribution to GDP from paper manufacturing in Ontario.

We'll wrap it up quickly, Mr. Speaker. Really, I look forward to the support of the House for this bill. When we get to committee, we can work some of the details out and move Ontario along.

Thank you for your indulgence.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French  
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat  
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh  
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow  
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller  
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns  
Glenn Thibeault  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim







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