

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

---

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

IN-2

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

IN-2

**Standing Committee  
on the Interior**

Selection of estimates

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Tuesday 25 October 2022

**Comité permanent  
des affaires intérieures**

Sélection des budgets  
des dépenses

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature

Mardi 25 octobre 2022

---

Chair: Aris Babikian  
Clerk: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Président : Aris Babikian  
Greffière : Thushitha Kobikrishna

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

---

House Publications and Language Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 25 October 2022

Selection of estimates .....	IN-3
------------------------------	------



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES AFFAIRES INTÉRIEURES

Tuesday 25 October 2022

Mardi 25 octobre 2022

*The committee met at 1600 in committee room 1.*

### SELECTION OF ESTIMATES

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Good afternoon, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on the Interior to order.

On September 8, 2022, the Lieutenant Governor transmitted to the Legislative Assembly the estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2022. Pursuant to standing order 62(b), these estimates, upon tabling, are deemed to be referred to the standing committees to which the respective ministries and offices were assigned pursuant to standing order 113(b).

All committee members should have received an electronic copy of the 2022-23 estimates from the Clerk.

The objective of today's meeting is to select the estimates of certain ministries or offices for review by the committee. Standing order 63 sets out the process by which the committee makes its selections. Each of the recognized parties on the committee shall select the estimates of up to one ministry or offices in each turn. The official opposition selects first, followed by the government. If members of one party decline to make a selection, the selection then passes to the next party in the rotation. The process concludes when either there are no further ministries or offices available to select or if both recognized parties decline to make any, or any further, selections.

Pursuant to standing order 63(c), these selections are to be reviewed in the order that they were chosen; however, this order may be altered by unanimous agreement of the subcommittee on committee business, or by order of the House.

Pursuant to standing order 63(d), the time for the consideration of the estimates of each ministry or office shall be determined by the respective committee.

The estimates of those ministries or offices not selected for consideration will be deemed to have been passed by the committee. As Vice-Chair, I will report those unselected estimates back to the House, and they will be deemed to be adopted and concurred in by the House.

In accordance with standing order 66(a), the committee must present a report to the House with respect to the estimates it selected and considered by the third Thursday of November of this year, November 17, 2022. If the committee fails to report by the third Thursday in November,

the estimates and supplementary estimates before the committee will be deemed to be passed by the committee and deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

When making your selections, I would also like to add that if members could please look at the list of ministries and offices in the estimates book or as displayed on the screen in front of you, and give the correct names of the ministries or offices when they select them for consideration.

Do members have any questions before we begin? Yes, MPP Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Mr. Vice-Chair, I'm wondering, is this being broadcast right now? It is? Okay, just curious. Thanks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Any further questions? So I will start with the official opposition for their first selection. I recognize MPP Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** The official opposition chooses the Ministry of Energy as our first selection.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Next is the government for their first selection. MPP Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I select the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Next, the official opposition for their selection. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I select the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Next I'll go back to the government for their selection.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** No further selections.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Then I will go back to the official opposition for their selection. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** We select the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, please.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Thank you all for your selections. Is there any other business which members way wish to raise? MPP Stiles?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** We have a number of motions that we want to introduce relating to consideration of estimates and the timing.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** I request a 10-minute recess for the Clerk to be able to review the motions.

*The committee recessed from 1605 to 1615.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** We're going to resume the meeting. I'm the Acting Chair for a while. Welcome.

MPP Stiles, would you like to move the motion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'd like to introduce the following motion:

That consideration of estimates for the Ministry of Energy be 15 hours in total; and

That, until the time allotted for consideration of estimates of the selected ministry has expired, the committee shall meet from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays during weeks the House is sitting, and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during weeks the House is not scheduled to meet.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Is there any debate or discussion on the motion? MPP Stiles, would you like to elaborate on that?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I think that the motion is quite self-explanatory, but the intention here is to ensure that we have adequate time to consider in the appropriate way these important estimates for the Ministry of Energy.

I'd also like to, at this time, request that this be a recorded vote.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Is there any debate or discussion on the motion? None? Are the members ready to vote?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'd like to request a recorded vote.

#### Ayes

Hunter, Shaw, Stiles.

#### Nays

Bresee, Coe, Dixon, Flack, Leardi, McGregor, Dave Smith.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The motion is lost.

Are there any other—sorry, MPP Shaw?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** You were going to call for other motions? Sorry, I jumped the gun.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Yes, sorry. I thought you needed clarification or something.

Are there any other motions or business for discussion? MPP Smith, then MPP Shaw.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you, Chair. I move that, pursuant to standing order 63(d), the following time—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Go ahead, MPP Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 63(d), the following time be allotted to the consideration of the estimates of the ministries selected by the committee:

—the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for two hours;

—the Ministry of Energy for two hours;

—the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for two hours;

—the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Smith, the Clerk needs a five-minute recess to consider the motion.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** You should have a copy of the motion.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** She wants to put it up. She needs a five-minute recess.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Okay.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you. *The committee recessed from 1620 to 1622.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** I will resume the meeting. MPP Smith, you have the floor.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you, Chair. I move that, pursuant to standing order 63(d), the following time be allotted to the consideration of the estimates of the ministries selected by the committee:

—the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for two hours;

—the Ministry of Energy for two hours;

—the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for two hours;

—the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry for two hours; and

That the ministers responsible for those respective ministries be invited to appear before the committee; and

That for each ministry the minister be allotted 20 minutes to make an opening statement followed by question and answer in rotations of 20 minutes for the official opposition members of the committee, 10 minutes for the independent members as a group of the committee, and 20 minutes for the government members of the committee for the remainder of the allotted time; and

That respecting the committee's consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Northern Development, the Minister of Mines, and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry be jointly invited to appear before the committee and share the time allotted for an opening statement; and

That the committee meet for the purpose of considering the estimates of the selected ministries at the following times:

—on Monday, November 14, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m. and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m.; and

—on Tuesday, November 15, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m. and from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m.; and

That if any invited minister is unavailable to appear before the committee that the committee requires their parliamentary assistant or parliamentary assistants to appear before the committee in their place.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Smith has moved the motion. Is there any debate or discussion on the motion? MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I would just say that, given the ministries and the files that are before us, this allocation that you deemed to give to the province of Ontario is insulting, frankly.

When you look at the energy file—you have a government that's proposing more and more gas-fired power generation in the province, without any accountability. You are a government that has declined to renew the contract with Hydro-Québec, with absolutely no justification, and absolutely no credible climate reduction plan when it comes to energy.

We have people, as we know, who are struggling to pay their own personal energy bills. There is nothing that your government has done to date to ease the burden of people trying to make the decision as to whether they are able to heat their homes or their businesses or whether they are going to pay for groceries, because we know we are in this high inflationary period and people are struggling. There's nothing that your government has brought forward that brings relief to anyone.

You would think, given the serious, serious considerations before us, that a government that talks a good game when it comes to transparency and accountability would actually walk the talk. The fact that you are allowing the minister of each of these important, huge ministries to actually take a pass if that's what they decide is really objectionable.

I will be voting against this motion, and I will continue in my role as the MPP for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas to make sure that we fight for accountability and transparency, because clearly the government of Ontario will not do it on their behalf.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Hunter?

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I wanted to just really simply understand the government's intention in the review of the estimates and to give the ministries an opportunity to hear from this committee, to consider the questions and clarification and any recommendations that are valid, and to really be able to have the opportunity to do that. It seems the way this standing committee has been established, there is a priority to the ministries that have been selected, just based on the requirement that they be heard through the order of selection. So it just speaks to a priority and a level of importance.

I'm wondering about being able to weight the time that is spent against those priorities as well. For instance, the Ministry of Energy was the first, so it will be considered first, and should it be given a little bit more extended time? I'm wondering, based on the experience in past estimates review of that particular ministry, how much time was taken in this estimates committee to really consider its request and to be able to give it thorough discussion. So that would be my suggestion, to give some weighting to the time and to give priority to those ministries that have been chosen in their order, to give greater time to those ministries for consideration.

I'm trying to also understand what the hurry is, as well, given that this is our job as the standing committee, to review the estimates and to give feedback to the minister and to the ministries. I'm assuming that the minister is supported by a team within the ministry that could benefit

from this type of oversight and second and third sets of eyes that could help to improve.

I do notice that there are default mechanisms built into this process, so if we are not able to get through our work by the date that has been set, November 17, it would be assumed that the standing committee has agreed to the estimates as presented, which may not necessarily be the case. I want to just make sure that the available time that we have before this pre-set date of November 17 is used to the best of our capacity as members of the Standing Committee on the Interior.

I would really question why we are in such a hurry. Let's give these estimates their proper consideration and let's make them better, because that would benefit the people of Ontario, who we all serve, and I think that's the point of us meeting here as a committee. It's not just to rubber-stamp what has come before us; it's actually to give it thorough consideration and to give it due consideration.

I would say that there is some priority that should be established based on the priority of the ministries that were chosen, and could perhaps use a bit more time for those first priorities, energy being the first one.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you. Next is MPP Stiles. Please go ahead.

1630

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My experience in reviewing estimates in the previous government was that this was a really important opportunity to dive down into some of the detailed breakdowns. For those who might be watching this and not understanding what estimates is exactly, it is where you see the detailed breakdown of proposed spending by the government. It is a really important opportunity, not just for the opposition to ask questions, of course, but also for government members to ask questions of the minister. The minister is also able to refer to a senior civil servant—for example, a deputy minister or an ADM—to respond to those questions. It's really one of the most important processes I think we go through here because we do get to drill down a little bit into what the actual spending is going to look like, the estimates spending.

I wanted to point out that, in these three or four ministries that we are going to be looking at, as my colleague MPP Shaw mentioned, there are some significant questions around this government's lack of an energy plan: the cancellation of the 758 renewable energy contracts; the failure to plan for the shutdown of Bruce; the rising costs to consumers, to Ontarians, right now; and then what all the experts are pointing to, which is that these costs are only going to increase dramatically as a result of this government's failure to plan.

It is, at very least, an opportunity for the government to explain to Ontarians in a little bit more detail. Perhaps they want to argue that we're incorrect about that or that the experts are wrong. Put forward some of the plans. Dive into the details. Allow us to ask important questions on behalf of stakeholders. This is a very important part of what government does, and it is one of the few opportunities—really, one of the only opportunities—where light can be

shone on the details of the government's expenditure estimates.

I would really encourage the government opposite to consider whether this is how they want to be remembered: as a government that hid from the people of Ontario or a government that was proud of what they were trying to do—I mean, I would assume they are. So let's talk about it. Let's see.

I want to also reiterate the comments of my colleagues here. I can't imagine a situation like this—it's really never happened before—where the ministers are not required to sit here and answer these questions. I think that's the first I've ever heard of that, and I have been in and out of this place for many years in different capacities. I think it shows a government that's afraid to share how they are managing things.

My colleague talked about the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ministry of Energy. When it comes to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I think people in this province are asking questions like, why are 320 acres of farmland a day disappearing in this province?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** That's critical.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** These are critical questions. I know the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has questions they would like us to be raising. Again, what is this government afraid of? Surely, a government should be able to stand by their spending plans, at the very least.

With that, Mr. Chair, I'd like to propose an amendment to this motion. I'm going to start with something that's not unreasonable. I think we should be looking at at least—I mean, we put forward a proposal of 10, 15 hours for each of these, which is not unreasonable based on past estimates experience. But I'm going to say, let's just triple it. Instead of two hours for each ministry, as this government is proposing, let's say six hours. So I'd like to propose an amendment such that each ministry is required to review the estimates for six hours for each of those ministries.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Now we will take a brief recess, and the Clerk is going to write it out. Thank you.

*The committee recessed from 1635 to 1650.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** I will resume the meeting. Sorry; thank you for your patience.

MPP Stiles, you're going to move the amendment to the motion?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Please go ahead.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'm going to try to read this. Can you make it bigger? Thank you.

I move that the motion be amended by striking out "two hours" and replaced with "six hours" anywhere that it appears in the first paragraph.

And that the fifth paragraph be struck out and replaced with the following:

"That, until the time allotted for consideration of estimates of the selected ministry has expired, the committee shall meet from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

on Mondays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays during the weeks that the House is sitting and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during weeks the House is not scheduled to meet."

And that the sixth paragraph be struck out.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Is there any discussion or debate on MPP Stiles's amendment?

Would MPP Stiles please speak to the amendment first?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** If I may motivate that, I think that the intention is clear here. We put forward a motion originally that had proposed 15 hours for the Ministry of Energy, and the government members opposite voted that down. Anything less, even six hours, to me seems inadequate, to be honest, for any of these ministries, considering past practice under every other previous government.

We've also taken out reference to the minister not having to appear, because I think for most Ontarians that would be objectionable. The minister should be here to answer questions related to the detailed breakdown of proposed spending by any ministry.

And that the fifth paragraph respecting—I think I was—yes, anyway, that's the nature of it. The other piece was, we've taken out the reference to the timing of when the committee could meet because it would be inadequate given the proposal I've put forward.

I think this is a very reasonable attempt, really, to negotiate with the government. It shows, I think, the opposition's openness to having a conversation about moving somewhere between where the government is at, which I think is completely unacceptable to the people Ontario, and where the opposition would like to head.

I have moved an amendment, and I really do hope that the members opposite will see it in themselves to support that amendment.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Is there any debate or discussion on the amendment? MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I just want to really actually focus in on the accountability piece. When I was first elected, I would like to remind the government, your government convened a Select Committee on Financial Transparency, and that was to get to the bottom of the hydro mess. I spent and other members spent the better part of three months on that select committee. We called witnesses. We were given an opportunity to understand exactly how the hydro file had been managed under the Kathleen Wynne government. We had all kinds of witnesses, expert witnesses, who came, who provided testimony so that we could understand and so that the people of Ontario could understand how their tax dollars had been used in the energy and hydro file during the Liberal government—three months.

I believe MPP Hunter was on that committee. It was a lot of time that we were allotted to really understand, be transparent and get to the bottom of what had happened in a very, very important file. The minister of the crown appeared, as should be the case.



But given the motion that you've put forward, let's just say what this means: You are going to give members of the opposition 20 minutes—20 minutes—to question perhaps the minister, perhaps the parliamentary assistant, and the independent members 10 minutes. Are you honestly telling the people of the province of Ontario that 20 minutes is adequate time for His Majesty's loyal opposition to ask questions of how money is being spent? These are huge files and huge amounts of taxpayer dollars that are being spent.

Let's just start with the energy file. Your government is subsidizing Ontario Hydro through tax dollars to the tune of \$6 billion a year. That's what was happening under Kathleen Wynne's government, and your government has done nothing but continue that. People deserve to know why \$6 billion of their tax dollars is going to subsidize hydro when their hydro bills are going up and not going down. That's not something that we're going to get to the bottom of—we're not even going to scratch the surface—in 20 minutes.

The very fact that you are allowing the minister of the crown to wiggle out of a sworn responsibility that they are sworn to uphold—I guess we shouldn't be surprised, because we have a Premier who said, when it came to appearing before an Emergencies Act inquiry—something that is vital to understanding what transpired in Ottawa—that he was not asked to appear. Apparently, it turns out, he was asked to appear, because a letter was shown. Both he and the former Solicitor General were asked to appear.

Now they've been summoned to appear and it looks like the Premier is going to fight that summons to appear. This government is going to spend more hard-earned tax dollars on lawyers to fight his ability to come and be accountable to the people of Ontario—

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Point of order.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Excuse me, MPP Shaw. MPP Smith has a point of order.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** We are supposed to be discussing the amendment to the motion. I would respectfully ask that the member keep her comments to the amendment to the motion.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Please stick to the amendment of the motion, please.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Is that a point of order, Speaker?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** It is a valid point of order.

Please, go ahead. Stick to the amendment.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Let's focus on this. Let's focus on an amendment that this government put forward that said it is acceptable for a parliamentary assistant and not a minister to appear for the 20 measly minutes that you have allotted to the people of Ontario to understand how you are going to spend billions upon billions upon billions of their tax dollars—20 minutes. That's all you're giving them.

This is absolutely to the point of the amendment. They might not like it because what we're seeing is that the tone is set from the top. People don't want to be accountable in the Premier's office and they don't want to be accountable around this committee. It really is a deplorable day to see

this government, which walks around touting the fact that they are transparent and they care about the taxpayers' dollars—you don't care about the taxpayers' dollars, or you would give them an opportunity to understand how you're spending their money.

When it comes to the environment file, let me just say this: Your government has been cited not once, not twice, but three times by the Auditor General for breaking the law when it comes to the Environmental Bill of Rights. That is an absolute atrocity when we look at what's going on in the province of Ontario and around the world when it comes to the environment, when it comes to endangered species, species at risk, the loss of biodiversity—

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Point of order.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Smith, submit your point of order.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** This is estimates, and it is the amendment that they have put forward. Could the member please talk about the amendments for estimates? That would be the amount of money that's being spent.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Shaw, MPP Smith has a valid point of order. Please stick to the amendment.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** The amendment is proposing that we expand the time allotted. The amendment, Chair, is about expanding the time allotted to consider estimates in the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and that's what I'm discussing. I'm justifying and explaining why a responsible, accountable government would want people to have an opportunity to ask questions about the environment file when that file is so important right now.

When this government violates the Environmental Bill of Rights, that is a cost to the taxpayer. They need to know where that money has gone. That's what estimates is for. That's why we have estimates. When the government—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you.

1700

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'm not finished, Chair, thank you. I know that they don't like to hear the truth. I know it hurts. I know that they must be embarrassed by a Premier who refuses to appear before an inquiry. But what we need to know—

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Point of order.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Could the Chair please instruct the member to stick to the motion? Going beyond anything but the motion is completely unacceptable and should not be allowed. Please ask her to strike—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Smith, I understand. I'd like her to finish, please. Thank you.

Please conclude your comments.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Chair. So when it comes to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, I think the government may not understand that. Perhaps the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks doesn't understand, but people are rightfully concerned about the environment, they're concerned about climate change, and they're concerned about how this

government is spending their tax dollars—or, in the case of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, not spending tax dollars, because there's a continued reduction in this very important file.

These are questions that we can't cover in the 20 minutes that this government has given us. So I'm absolutely speaking to the amendment, Chair. I am speaking, and what you're hearing from me—this passion and this concern—is my job. It's my job to reflect the concern of many, many Ontarians. Clearly, this side of the House, the government side, doesn't think it's their job, so we are going to do that for them. We are going to bring their concerns, we are going to bring their voices to this committee to say 20 minutes is an outrage. How can we ask questions about the dumping of contaminated soil on agricultural land across the province of Ontario in 20 minutes? How can we talk about contamination by aggregate industries below the water table that is impacting people's water? The water that people drink, their potable water, is at risk because of potential contaminants from the aggregate industry, and what is the government doing? What are they doing? Where is the money being spent to protect people and their source drinking water?

These are the questions that we were sent here to consider, and these are the questions that the minister should be here to answer, because it is the minister's job. That is why they are a minister of the crown. That is why they are sworn as a minister of the crown. That is why we expect nothing less. Thank you, Chair.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you, MPP Shaw. MPP Stiles?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I know we're speaking right now to our amendment that the official opposition has put forward to the motion brought forward by the government. What I haven't heard here at all this afternoon is one explanation from the government about why they voted against our initial motion or how they feel about the amendment that's being put forward.

So, Mr. Chair, I respectfully ask: I'd like to hear what the government members have to say about their rationale for reducing, to such an extreme, the amount of time that the people of Ontario will have, through the opposition, to ask questions. I don't understand, and I haven't yet heard any explanation from the members opposite.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you, MPP Stiles. MPP Hunter, please go ahead.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank the member from the NDP for proposing a solution to an amendment that has really, I think, done a disservice to the intent and the reason that we're here to review estimates, which is actually to get into the details. This is what estimates is about. In order to get into the details, you do need time to consider the volume of information that is in front of you and to be able to ask important questions of the minister. I would agree that it is very unusual that the ministers would not make themselves available to present themselves at estimates. My experience is that ministers would alter their

schedules to be at estimates, not the other way around. So I do think it is important to maintain the purpose of estimates.

I know we are doing it differently this year, and I should say that I have actually not sat on an estimates committee, so I wasn't there for the experience that was referred to earlier. However, I have appeared before and have had to answer questions in a similar fashion—maybe not in the way that it's being set up this time. But it is very important to have the time to ask detailed questions and to hear the answers.

I would support the amendment to the motion that has been put forward so that we can give these ministries the appropriate consideration that they require and also to maintain that accountability that is so important when we are talking about spending the public's money. That's exactly what estimates is all about. That accountability does remain with the ministers, so they should appear before the committee and have that opportunity to be questioned thoroughly and provide thorough responses. I don't see the hurry and the push that the government has. I do think that this work is important and it merits the time that is needed to appropriately consider the important details of the estimates that are being put forward.

So I want to just thank the member for making this suggestion. I hope the government, which has the number of votes here to support this, would agree that giving it more time is the wise thing for us to all do.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Is there any debate or discussion on the amendment? None?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Can I ask for a recorded vote?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Stiles is asking for a recorded vote.

Are the members ready to vote? Shall the amendment carry?

### Ayes

Shaw, Stiles.

### Nays

Bresee, Coe, Dixon, Flack, Leardi, McGregor, Dave Smith.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The amendment is lost.

Back to MPP Smith's motion: Is there any debate or discussion on MPP Dave Smith's motion? Seeing none, are the committee members ready to vote?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** May I ask for a recorded vote, please?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Stiles is asking for a recorded vote.

MPP Hunter?

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I have a question about the motion.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Please go ahead, MPP Hunter.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I just wanted to ask MPP Smith, because your motion was written before the organization of the committee, will you reorder the meetings to match the selection? Is that going to happen? Through the Chair, maybe—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The order is to follow what we selected.

1710

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** Right, versus what is in the—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Yes, correct.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Are the members ready to vote? All those in favour, please raise your hand—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Stiles requested a recorded vote. The Clerk is going to count the votes, please.

#### Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Dixon, Flack, Leardi, McGregor, Dave Smith.

#### Nays

Hunter, Shaw, Stiles.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The motion is carried.

Are there any other motions or business for discussion? MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'd like to move a motion that consideration of estimates for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks be 10 hours in total; and

That, until the time allotted for consideration of estimates of the selected ministries has expired, the committee shall meet from 9 to 10:15 a.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, 9 to 10:15 a.m. and 3:45 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. on Fridays during weeks the House is sitting, and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during weeks the House is not scheduled to meet.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Shaw moved a motion. Is there any debate or discussion on the motion? MPP Shaw, could you speak on the motion, please? Quickly.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Pardon me? Did you say "quickly"? Is that the theme of the process, that we are not taking time? Democracy does take some time, unfortunately. It may be inconvenient for others, but sometimes this does take time. It's important business that we have here in this House, on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario.

I would just like to be very clear and add to what I've said, that it would seem to me that the government side

thinks that the people of Ontario have written them a blank cheque; that it's their money, not the people of the province of Ontario's, and they can spend it as they see fit. Because if that were not the case, they would do what is expected of them. They would do the right thing and be accountable for how you are spending hard-earned taxpayer dollars. People didn't just hand over their wallets to you to spend as you like. It's not just to be directed from the Premier's office.

This is the people of the province of Ontario's money that you're spending, and 20 minutes to ask questions about whether you are spending that money wisely, prudently, effectively—20 minutes? Does that sound like something that a reasonable, responsible, accountable government would propose? Thank you, Chair.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** MPP Stiles?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I want to thank my colleague MPP Shaw for introducing this important motion. We've already laid out some of our concerns about the government's watering-down of this process.

I'd like to ask the members opposite what they're objecting to here. Are they objecting to spending the extra hours? Because I know that there are some—we've actually introduced motions now today that require this committee to sit for more days and more hours. We are all willing, here in the official opposition and the opposition, to do that work. Is that what the members opposite are objecting to? Are they objecting to doing the work and taking the time? I think that's what we were all elected to do here, so that's one thing I'm concerned about.

Or are they objecting to the time that we could spend on the questioning of their spending of taxpayer dollars? Are they objecting to the questions, the opportunity that might be there to ask questions about the spending of money that, arguably, isn't just theirs to spend, that the people of Ontario might have concerns about? Are they objecting to the fact that we're not specifically letting the minister off the hook, that we're asking the minister to be present for those conversations, which seems like the least that the people of this province should expect from a minister of the crown?

I'd like to know, from the members opposite. They said almost nothing today—nothing. I'd like to know what their rationale is for changing long-standing tradition. I have to tell you, Mr. Chair, I've spoken to, in the last few months, former ministers of the crown of all political stripes. Nobody can believe what this government has done to democracy in this place. And I have to say, it smells bad. It looks bad on them. It smells bad. It looks like they're trying to hide something.

So I'd like to know what the members opposite are actually objecting to. If they're going to put their hands up and vote against this motion, why? Why are you doing that?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Speak up.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speak up. Let us know. Go on the record. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Thank you, MPP Stiles.

MPP Smith, would you like to respond to MPP Stiles? No? Is there any debate or discussion on the motion? No? Are the members ready to vote?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Recorded vote, Chair, please.

#### Ayes

Hunter, Shaw, Stiles.

#### Nays

Bresee, Coe, Dixon, Flack, Leardi, McGregor, Dave Smith.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The motion is lost. MPP Smith?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I move adjournment of the committee.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** We have one more speaker before that. MPP Stiles?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, thank you. Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion. It reads as follows—

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Chair, I moved a motion already.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** He's already moved a motion to adjourn.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Oh, I thought you said you wanted—that I already had—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** No.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** So are we voting on the motion to adjourn?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Yes.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Okay. I'd like a recorded vote, please. Can we speak to that motion first?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** It's a motion to adjourn. We can't discuss anything.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** There can, however, be—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** There's no discussion, please. Sorry. So a motion to adjourn by—

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Can we have a recorded vote on this?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Yes, we can have a recorded vote.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Just so we can have it on the record that this government wants to shut down the debate on this—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** Please, quiet. MPP Stiles, you have to go through the Chair.

Recorded vote for the motion to adjourn.

#### Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Dixon, Flack, Leardi, McGregor, Dave Smith.

#### Nays

Shaw, Stiles.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Logan Kanapathi):** The motion carries. The meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

*The committee adjourned at 1720.*







## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR**

### **Chair / Président**

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Président**

Mr. Mike Schreiner (Guelph G)

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

Mr. Ric Bresee (Hastings–Lennox and Addington PC)

Ms. Jess Dixon (Kitchener South–Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud–Hespeler PC)

Mr. Rob Flack (Elgin–Middlesex–London PC)

Ms. Mitzie Hunter (Scarborough–Guildwood L)

Mr. Anthony Leardi (Essex PC)

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell PC)

Mr. Mike Schreiner (Guelph G)

Ms. Sandy Shaw (Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest–Ancaster–Dundas ND)

Mr. Dave Smith (Peterborough–Kawartha PC)

Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke PC)

### **Substitutions / Membres remplaçants**

Mr. Lorne Coe (Whitby PC)

Mr. Logan Kanapathi (Markham–Thornhill PC)

Mr. Graham McGregor (Brampton North / Brampton-Nord PC)

### **Clerk / Greffière**

Ms. Thushitha Kobikrishna

### **Staff / Personnel**

Ms. Pia Anthony Muttu, research officer,  
Research Services