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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mai 2023

Report continued from volume A.

1610

HAZEL MCCALLION ACT (PEEL
DISSOLUTION), 2023 / LOI HAZEL
MCCALLION DE 2023 SUR LA
DISSOLUTION DE PEEL

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 112, Loi prévoyant la dissolution de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise.

I've been listening to my colleague from Niagara Centre, who did a good job on his hour lead. I've listened to my colleagues ask questions about how there's nothing in the bill that talks about consulting. Everybody seems so surprised about that. But I've been in committee a lot the last six weeks. Do you know there was no consulting with workers on Bill 98, there was no consulting with workers and unions on Bill 23, and there was no consulting with workers on Bill 60? So to hear my colleagues surprised that the Conservatives aren't going to consult with workers and their unions on this bill—it's not a surprise to me. Maybe it's a surprise to others. But I think it's pretty clear that this Conservative government has trouble saying the word "consulting" or spelling it because they just don't do it in their bills.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, I'm happy to address a matter of such importance: the proposed breakup of the Peel region. This issue has stirred significant debate and divided opinions, and it's crucial that we approach it with careful consideration and a commitment to the best interests of those communities. We must ensure we do this while protecting the interests and the voices of the people of Brampton and Mississauga. The only way to do that is with transparency and fairness.

First and foremost, I must acknowledge the complex nature of this decision. The Peel region, comprising cities like Brampton and Mississauga, has grown and flourished over the years. They've become vibrant, diverse areas that contribute greatly to the economic prosperity of this great province. It has clearly benefited from the regional approach, with shared resources, coordinated planning and

collaborative decision-making. However, it is also undeniable that the region has faced unique challenges due to its diverse population and their needs. Rapid population growth, cultural diversity and varying levels of economic development have resulted in differing priorities and demands in the Peel region. While the regional approach has served the area well in many aspects, the larger concern here is that it hasn't been done before, and it's critical that the government gets it right. I think it's important to start today by going over what it means to get it right. Unfortunately, we don't have much faith in this government to do that, but it's important that we discuss it.

First—and I've already talked a little bit about this—there must be robust consultation. The people of Peel must be consulted throughout the process. I'm going to read that again because a lot of my colleagues are on their phones or doing something else: The people of Peel region must be consulted throughout the process. I ask my colleagues—I know they're not looking or paying much attention: Do you think it's fair and reasonable to ask that? Speaker, do you think that's fair and reasonable? I know you can't answer me. I actually think it is extremely fair and reasonable. We know this government doesn't do a very good job of consulting the very people they aim to affect by legislation, and with this bill, not much has changed.

Secondly, and this is equally important, we should be making sure that the municipal workers are being heard and fully engaged in this process, that their jobs are protected—and again, consult with the unions. The Conservatives say they're working for workers, but they never talk to the unions. We know that's not happening here with this legislation.

Third, each municipality needs to be represented fairly on the transition board. Once again, that doesn't seem to be the case.

Lastly, the whole process lacks transparency and accountability. That's not how you make significant changes in the province. That's not how you reshape our communities. Strong-armed, top-down approaches have never worked.

Speaker, dividing shared resources and assets, determining boundaries, and establishing new governance structures will be a difficult task. It will require careful planning, extensive consultations—there's that word again, "consultation"—and a collaborative approach to ensure a smooth transition and minimal disruption to the lives of the people it's going to affect. How can this be done without appropriate consultation? Oh, there's that word again, "consultation." The simple answer—I want all

my colleagues to listen, including my side. There aren't any Liberals here, so I can't ask them to listen. The simple answer is that it can't be done. It has created—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I'm sorry to interrupt, but you cannot point to the absence of other members.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It creates a messy situation where important communities' voices are left out.

As the representative of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the voice of Niagara, and a former city councillor, I understand the potential impact of such a decision on our community. We have long valued our identity as part of the Niagara region, and any changes to the neighbouring regions can have a ripple effect on our local area. We must recognize the potential consequences and ensure that our interests are adequately safeguarded.

Speaker, one of the main arguments in favour of breaking up the Peel region is the concept of greater independence and local decision-making. Advocates for this believe that by allowing each municipality to govern themselves independently, it can better address the unique challenges and capitalize on those opportunities that arise. This argument rests on the premise that local representation has a deeper understanding of their community and can tailor policies and services accordingly.

But it seems that this government isn't listening to those voices. The question has to be, why do we have this pattern? Every time a major decision is made by this government, it comes without proper "consultation"—there's that word again. And I wrote this; that's why I put it in a lot. We must engage in comprehensive consultation with municipal leaders, residents, other stakeholders, workers and unions to determine the best path forward. This evaluation should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the regional approach, identify the areas where local decision-making could be enhanced, and seek innovative solutions to overcome any of those challenges. Consultation is the only way to achieve that. Without those voices, it would go wrong.

Speaker, what about the concerns about pulling Peel about? What does that look like? Some may say the primary argument for maintaining Peel region lies in the strengths created by pooling resources, expertise and infrastructure planning. They believe that collaboration between municipalities fosters efficiency, avoids duplication of efforts and benefits the entire region. This perspective emphasizes the need for a regional vision and coordinated approach to tackling common issues such as transportation, economic development and social services.

As a representative of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, I recognize the importance of coordinating a regional approach. In Niagara Falls, we sit underneath a regional government that works hard to tackle major challenges we face in the region. Just the other week, we had the pleasure of meeting with regional government leaders here at Queen's Park and saw the importance of the work that they do every day. The region strives for a balanced model that fosters co-operation while allowing local decision-making on matters that directly impact each community. Simply, it gets big things right

and keeps the voices of small communities alive—like Fort Erie, like Niagara-on-the-Lake, like Wainfleet in one of my other member's areas.

The Niagara regional government is a pillar of governance, representing the collective interest of Niagara residents. It serves as a platform for collaboration, coordination and decision-making on matters that impact our daily lives. From infrastructure development to social problems, the regional government acts as a unifying force, bringing together diverse municipalities to work towards a common vision of prosperity and well-being.

Speaker, I think it's important we discuss some of the areas that the Niagara region gets right, seeing as it's mentioned in the bill. If we're going to debate the merits of dissolving a regional government, why not take a hard look at some of the work being done in Niagara? I am proud to be part of a dynamic and vibrant region. I understand the vital role our regional government plays in shaping the quality of life of its residents.

I'm going to do a little story here. Let's look at the work the region did on GO train. When I was elected in a by-election in 2014, GO train was a big issue. That was nine years ago. The Conservatives, in that election, in the debates, absolutely said no to GO. But the region, once I got elected and we started to work together with all the municipalities, with all the mayors, with all the elected councillors, with the regional chair at that time, which was Caslin—they came to their Niagara Week. They used to come with 14, 16, 18 asks, and they would get none of them. But do you know what they did? They came with one ask—one. I don't even know if the other member from Niagara knows this. Do you know what the ask was? That we have all-day, two-way GO all the way to Niagara. That was their ask. And they started bringing GO to Niagara. But here we are, nine years later. They made another announcement last week of a few more trains coming to Niagara during the tourist season.

What Niagara needs, and what we said in 2014 when the Conservatives were saying no to GO—we need two-way, all-day GO all the way to Niagara Falls. Somebody says, "Well, why do you need that?" It's one of the fastest-growing areas in the province of Ontario. I don't know if anybody on that side of the table has ever heard of Niagara Falls. We get 15 million visitors—it went down during COVID; we all understand that. The tourist sector was hit extremely hard, and we lost almost 40,000 jobs, but most of them have come back. So I'm saying to the government, if you're going to come into the riding and make an announcement, let's make an announcement that we've been asking for for nine years—by the way, it was supported at that time by the Liberals; I think the Premier at that time was Wynne. That's what we need when it comes to GO.

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I know one of my colleagues is here from Niagara. I know he knows I've talked about this many, many times. Imagine what it would do for the wine industry. Imagine what it would do for tourism. Imagine what it would do for his own riding if we had GO all the way to Niagara Falls—all-day, two-way. I can't say it any clearer than that.

We just had Niagara Week here last week. It was good. We had some meetings with them. We met with the chair. I know they met with the member for Niagara West. They also met with members from Niagara Centre, with me, with the member from St. Catharines. They met with the three NDP MPPs from Niagara to talk about GO, to talk about some of those issues that we need to fix. They talked about the wine industry.

I'm going to ask my colleagues, put your hand up if you've ever been to Niagara-on-the-Lake to enjoy some of the finest wines in the world. Put your hands up. Come on. It's got to be more than that. Come on, Sam, I know you've been there—

Miss Monique Taylor: I've been more than once.

Mr. Wayne Gates: "I've been more than once."

We have an opportunity in Niagara to grow the wine industry. As climate change goes, do you know what really grows in the heat? Grapes. We have that opportunity. I'm challenging the government. We need to get rid of the unfair taxation on our wine industry. We need to sit down and find out what we can do to make it better. We should be like California. We should be like BC. We have that opportunity to grow—I'm going off the top of my head, but I believe it's 18,000 jobs that are currently tied to the wine industry. Think about that. And we think it can grow. So I'm challenging the government.

I know the wine industry was here last week when they came for Niagara Week. I know you sat down with them.

Let's work together to make the wine industry the best it can be, the best in the world. We're already producing the best wines in the world, but it's not fair that they don't have shelf space at our LCBO. That's wrong. They should have more shelf space at the LCBO. I wanted to get that out in part of my speech.

But, again, who supports the wine industry? Our regional government, our mayors—our mayor in Niagara-on-the-Lake, our mayor in Welland, our mayor in Fort Erie, our mayor in Niagara Falls. They all want to grow the wine industry. They all work together as a region.

I've still got a few minutes left. I've got another issue I'm going to talk about.

Here's the other thing that we've lived with in Niagara with the regional government, with the municipal government: Do you know, in Niagara, over the course of the last—let's see, you guys were in opposition for 15 years; you've been in government for eight—25 to 30 years, in Niagara, we've lost two hospitals in St. Catharines. We've lost our hospital in Fort Erie. It's now an urgent care centre, and they're now saying they're going to close Fort Erie urgent care centre, like they're doing all over the province of Ontario. We lost our hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, by the way, is a great place to go visit. It's beautiful. But do you know what? It has one of the oldest populations in the entire province of Ontario. They closed their hospital. Port Colborne closed their hospital. Welland closed their hospital; I think they use it for ambulance services now.

That's seven hospitals that have closed, and they've taken services out of others. Why did they say they were doing it? They were going to build a brand new hospital.

Again, I'm going to go back to 2014, because I want to give you a history lesson. I've been around a while now, and before that I was a city councillor, if anybody's wondering. Before that, I was president of my local union. So I've been elected a long time in different levels of government. Before that, I was the campaign chair of the United Way.

In 2014, the Conservative government—again, it's in the paper; I can show you all the pictures and all that stuff during my campaign—said no to building a new hospital in Niagara Falls. They said they wouldn't build a hospital until they had a balanced budget. What happened is, the region—local government, the mayor of Niagara Falls, the mayor of Fort Erie, the mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the regional chair—said we need a hospital.

We've lost all these hospitals. One of the reasons why they said they lost a hospital is that they were going to build another hospital.

Here we are again, almost 10 years later, and our hospital still hasn't got shovels in the ground. I hear that on July 16 or July 17, we're going to get shovels in the ground. Think about that. It's 10 years to get shovels in the ground. That hospital will take at least five years to get built. That's 15 years from the time that the hospital said they got their planning grant of \$25 million, which was under the Liberals. They got a planning grant of \$25 million to start—15 years to build the hospital. I'm asking all sides here: Why does it take 15 years to build a hospital? To go from point A to point B? That's something we've got to have a discussion about.

What I really want to say here around the hospital is that I want it built as safely as possible, as quickly as possible. But do you know what else I want? Just like those workers in this bill want their jobs protected—they want to make sure their jobs are protected with any amalgamation or stand-alone—we want that hospital built with local unionized workers. We want to make sure there are lots of apprenticeship opportunities for our young people. We want to make sure that local engineers build that hospital, that local businesses get that opportunity.

Do you know what the cost of that hospital was? I'll do this real quick. I'd like to get into the P3s, but I don't have enough time; you only give me 20 minutes to speak. I know you guys are happy about that, but I only got 20 minutes to speak. The P3 hospital in St. Catharines, when it was built—and it's going back now, I think, 15 years or in that area; it might be 20 now. It cost \$1 billion in a P3 hospital. Do you know what that P3 hospital is going to cost today in Niagara Falls? Yell it out, any of you.

Joel, what do you think?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's \$3.4 billion under a P3—under a P3.

We need to get it right, and we've got to make sure that we're utilizing local workers

I want to do a quick—not a lot of people have done this publicly. We went through COVID—public health is so important with regional government, long-term care is so important with regional government. They’re all part of my speech, but I won’t get to it. I want to say thank you on behalf, I believe, of most of the residents in Niagara, to Dr. Hirji, who took us through COVID, saved as many lives as he could, gave us the best advice. Not everyone agreed with him all the time—as a matter of fact, the government didn’t agree with him most of the time—but he did a great job. He has now been replaced, and somebody else is doing that job.

Dr. Hirji, I just want to say on behalf of the province of Ontario, thanks for what you did with saving lives in Niagara, saving lives in the province of Ontario. And I wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you very much for allowing me to talk for a few minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, through you to my colleague from Niagara Falls: I served on Durham regional council for 13 years. When I look at this legislation, the core of it is pretty straightforward: It’s going to help support efficient local decision-making. The member from Niagara Falls touched on local decision-making and the importance of that. But key to this legislation is that it gives local officials the tools they need to get shovels in the ground faster on housing, transit and infrastructure that Ontarians critically need. If it’s passed, it’s going to give local legislators in some of the fastest-growing municipalities, like the region of Niagara Falls, the autonomy they need to prepare for the growth and deliver on their local priorities. We know what those local priorities are: housing, and meeting the supply and demand. Can he stand up in his place today and talk about what I’ve just described and support that direction and provide barrier-free access to developing the communities in his particular riding?

Mr. Wayne Gates: You’re going to hear this from me a lot on all the questions that you give me: You’ve got to have consultation on whatever you do. And that’s the issue on this bill—no consultation, no talking to workers, no talking to the unions.

1630

I also want to talk to you—when you’re talking about housing, I want to be clear, because every question period, I hear this answer: “The NDP says no to housing.” That’s absolutely—you know what I was going to say, but I’d get called out by the Speaker.

The truth of the matter is, we don’t agree that you need to build on the greenbelt. I agree 100% that we should build housing for young people. I’ve got three daughters. I’ve got five grandkids who want to buy homes. I understand that. But I also understand that they want to have clean drinking water; they want to make sure they can breathe the air; they want to make sure that the greenbelt has been protected. That’s the difference between your government and me. I agree with building homes. I agree with making sure we get it done as quick as possible. But

I disagree with not having consultation. And I certainly disagree with doing it on the greenbelt.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member for Niagara Falls for his comments this afternoon. This member comes into this House every day and fights for elders and people with disabilities in long-term care.

So I want to ask you to elaborate a little more on what you think this example of this particular bill is going to do to make sure that we don’t fall down the same rabbit hole we fell down in the pandemic—and you know it better than many people in this House.

At Extencare’s facilities in Ottawa, we saw some buildings where literally half the residents died in some of these facilities, where staff went into these facilities to work, and it was like going into a burning building. Some staff lost their life.

So I feel like one of the learnings we need to do out of the pandemic is to make sure we are there for our elders, that we empower municipalities to put elders and people with disabilities with the supports that they need. Do you think this bill does that?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The answer is no.

I will say, about my area, that we have regional homes. They’re not-for-profit. The outcomes have been a lot better. They have adequate staffing. They’re doing everything they can. We have new regional homes coming into Niagara. We sat down with the regional government and said, “How do we best do this? How do we make sure we have the staffing? Obviously, we’ve got the issue with Bill 124.”

Regional homes had approximately 22% of the residents who died during COVID; for-profit homes had 78%. That’s where our moms or dads or aunts or uncles or grandparents died. So it would mean to me that in the regional set-up that we have in Niagara, they’ve done a pretty good job in trying to protect, in incredible circumstances, under COVID—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Response?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I’m trying to do it.

Under incredible circumstances, under COVID, regional homes have done incredible work. I want to thank all the workers who work in those homes, and even in the for-profit homes. It’s not the workers we’ve got a problem with; it’s the corporations that care more about profit than care.

Thanks for the question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. John Fraser: I wanted to say to my colleague from Niagara Falls that a little birdie told me that he missed me over here. So I thought I’d come up and say, it’s good to see you. Just remember: I know everything that goes on in this place.

But do you know the one thing that I don’t know, folks? Do you know what I don’t know and what the member from Niagara Falls has been unable to express to me—

because I listen to his debate, and I've listened to him now. Here's a simple question: Should Mississauga be its own city?

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a fair question, because I have no idea. I can't answer that because I don't know Mississauga the way I know Niagara.

I really am glad that you were watching me on TV and that you came to the House to ask me a question. I appreciate it.

I don't know enough about Mississauga. I don't know enough about Peel.

What I do know is that you need to have consultation. You need to talk to the workers. That's what you have to do. You have to make sure that, if you're going to put a bill forward, you talk to the residents, you talk to all the people.

So to that—Mississauga, I know they've got a hockey team.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate hearing from my colleague from Niagara. Of course he had some interesting comments, as he always does—but I think the thing I didn't hear from the member opposite was a path forward. I know he spoke about how he thinks everything in Niagara is working well with regard to the region and local municipalities and his work with them.

I'm just wondering: If I understand the member opposite, is he saying that he thinks absolutely everything is perfect in Niagara when it comes to governance, or does he think there is any room to improve at all? Yes or no?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the question from my colleague from Niagara. But I think I'll be clear on that: I don't think I said that everything is working well in Niagara. We did have the cabal at the regional council, as you're aware of. We had some real issues at the region because of that. So do I think they could do better? Yes. Do I think we need to continue to consult? I think the new chair who's there, Jim Bradley, who was supported by your government—or told to support by your government—has stabilized the region. But is it perfect? Absolutely not. Can we get better at anything we do? Absolutely.

On the region, moving forward—I know you have somebody coming in to oversee the region. I'm guessing it will be a former Conservative MPP or somebody who donated to the Conservative government.

I have spent my entire career working with whatever government is in place, whether that's in the region, whether that's at the provincial level or municipal level. I'll continue to do that, and I'll continue to make Niagara the best place to live and raise a family.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls. When he started off his debate, he talked about the Conservative government and the lack of consultation with workers—primarily with bills that have “worker” in the title. But specific to this bill, he said that

the people of Peel region must be consulted throughout the process. And then he repeated, to ensure the Conservative government was listening, that the people of Peel region must be consulted through the process.

My question, very straightforwardly, is, do you believe that the people of Peel region should be consulted throughout the process of this and why?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the question.

Absolutely. The reason why I put it in so many times is because I've been going to committee—I was in Bill 98; I was in Bill 60; I was in Bill 23; I've been in a number of Working for Workers bills. What was always the same, even in the Working for Workers bill—I know my colleague from Ottawa will be surprised at this. They had to admit they didn't even consult unions or workers on the Working for Workers bill. So do I believe that consultation is extremely important? Absolutely. Why you don't consult, I can't answer. I can't speak for—whether it's the Minister of Labour or Minister of Education. But I ask the question. When I come here, I ask the same question about consultation. I asked the labour minister who he consulted with. I asked the education minister who he consulted with. I asked the Minister of Health who they consulted with. It was all the same. When it came to workers and unions, they didn't consult.

Peel and Mississauga should be consulted.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the member opposite responding to my earlier question. I know he works closely with mayors and councillors, as do I with my local mayors and councillors. I always appreciate hearing from them about the concerns of our mutual constituents.

I'm just wondering—it's a conversation that has gone around the Niagara region, about the number of politicians we have. We have 134 politicians in the Niagara region for a population that's less than half a million people. I'm just wondering, yes or no—to the member opposite: Do you think that Niagara has too many politicians?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the question. I'm going to respond this way: I continue to work with the politicians who are elected by the people who live in Niagara. I'm going to continue to work with the mayor of Niagara Falls and that council. I'm going to continue to work with the mayor of Fort Erie and their council. I'm going to continue to work with the mayor—Lord Mayor, by the way—in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and their council. That's my job. My job is to work with whoever is elected at the time.

I continue to say this, and I'll continue to say this—I've been doing it for a long, long time: I think consultation and working together is a lot better than fighting all the time. So I think I'm good.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to stand up today and speak to Bill 112.

As I said earlier today and I said, actually, the week previous, we're going to be supporting Bill 112 at second

reading. I'm not quite sure where my colleagues to the right or to the left of me are going to be on this.

I am very pleased, as I said earlier today, that I've been able to make the member from Niagara Falls' wish come true this afternoon, because I did feel very badly that he missed me earlier on.

The rub in this whole dissolution of the region of Peel is going to be the reverse of what happened in my city, the city of Ottawa, around 1999. We had a transition board that essentially amalgamated Ottawa and Orléans, Gloucester—which was Orléans at the time—Nepean, Kanata into one city, which is now about a million people; we were closer to about 750,000, 800,000 then. It was the right thing to do. It was a hard thing to do. It didn't do what some people said it was going to do, which was reduce costs. It actually increased costs. But I think that the value in doing that was important in terms of streamlining government.

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We have the city of Mississauga, which right now is about 800,000 people—about the same size as we were when we amalgamated as a city in 1999, and just a bit smaller than Ottawa is right now. So I think it has come time to do that. The challenge is going to be in that transition.

We had a transition board at the time that was led by Mr. Claude Bennett, who was a minister in the Conservative government for about 16 years—actually, the MPP for Ottawa South at one point, somebody who would have sat in this seat, although probably not here, but on the other side. He led that. I didn't always agree with Claude. As a matter of fact, we didn't agree very much on a lot of things. But what I did know about Claude is that he did care about our city and that he was going to do what he thought was best for our city. The only bone of contention that I had with it is, sometimes there wasn't as much transparency and connection with the community as there could have been. And that will be the challenge in Peel—it will be actually making sure that everyone is at least heard. Not everybody is going to be happy—we know that—but you have to take the time to talk to people. You have to take the time to make sure that it's fair and open and transparent. Otherwise, people aren't going to buy into it.

So there's an opportunity here for the government to do it the right way—there are probably some things, when we look at this bill, that will ensure the government does this. Ultimately, the government may or may not accept those. But there's an opportunity for the government to do it the right way, and that's to make sure that you find somebody local, not just an individual to lead that—and individuals who will be part of that board who are local, who aren't necessarily partisan, but who care about the place where they live and making sure that it works well for everybody there and that one part is not shortchanged in favour of another part. It's not going to be easy.

This bill is also a precursor for the government to look at what they're going to do with municipalities. They've been talking about that for five years. The pandemic intervened, but when this government was first elected,

there was all this talk about what was going to happen with the municipalities. That kind of all went quiet. Now it's resurfacing. So the question is, is the government—aside from what's in this bill—going to start to do this in other municipalities? The answer is yes. So the thing that's most important when a government goes to do this is exactly what's important in the dissolution of Peel: that it's fair and open and transparent, and that the leadership around this transformation is local—people who know and care about the community that they live in, and that they have the experience, maturity, and not quite simply the gravitas to be able to lead that kind of transit. It's going to be a hard thing. And if it's not handled the right way, it could be a hornet's nest and there could be a lot more noise than is going to be good for the region of Peel and its subsequent parts and the people who live in it.

So I look forward to debate. I want to thank the member for Niagara Falls for encouraging me to participate. I can't resist. I had to follow my colleague. I love following him because he warms you all up for me.

As I said, we're going to support this bill at second reading. There are some things that we probably have to do in here to ensure fairness, openness and transparency. But let's get on with it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche):
Questions?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the member from Ottawa for his comments. I just want him to know that we were actually on this side of the floor supporting him when the comments were made by the MPP for Niagara Centre—in your defence. He started off talking about this bill, then he went into wineries and then just continued to whine.

It was a great presentation, and so I appreciate your comments that you will be supporting second reading, and that you and your municipality lived through an amalgamation a while ago.

So my question for you is, leading into this—this is the first of the regions that is going to be separated, and that was done with the consent and at the behest of the various mayors and regional chair, and that there will be a substantial transition period to allow for it to get it right, leading into January 1, 2025. Would the member opposite agree that this is a good way to test drive this concept while we appoint facilitators in the other regions to look into this very process for them?

Mr. John Fraser: When you start to look at other regions—the rationale for doing it in Peel, I think some of that's clear; in other regions, I'm not entirely sure. I can't give you that answer on whether it makes sense. This looks like the Fewer Politicians Act, 1996. I remember that; I've been around that long.

I just will make a comment about my colleague from Niagara. When he was making his comments, all I thought is, he's from wine country, so of course—I don't think he whines; I just think he promotes wines wherever he can go, and Niagara wines. I'm proud to be his colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche):
Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: To pick up on the thread of what the member for Ottawa South just said, when I hear members get up in this place and do those drive-by smears, I'm reminded of how sometimes you get a little insight into how government works when government thinks they know best for others.

What I've yet to hear in debate—beyond the legacy of Mayor McCallion—is a single organization that made a concerted effort in the greater Peel region to say, “We really want this to happen. This is the top priority. It's not homes, it's not poverty, it's not transit, it's not climate change; it's this government telling us what we need to do.”

It reminds me—back to the member from Ottawa South—of when I walked into this place as a newly elected member and found out that this was the government that was going to interrupt the municipal election and cut the amount of seats in the city of Toronto in half.

I'm just wondering, member from Ottawa South, do you detect a kind of nanny state phenomenon going on, oddly, in this Conservative government?

Mr. John Fraser: I know this is important. I know when we're talking about amalgamations, that's important, and I do believe there's a desire to have fewer politicians.

But here's the thing: Wait times for diagnostics in this province are off the charts. We've got a challenge in health care with human resources, and we're setting up a parallel system that's going to draw away those human resources that we need so desperately to the for-profit clinics. We already see it with temporary nursing agencies and some of those agencies gouging. Actually, it's bad for our hospitals, our long-term-care homes and our home care. But here's the kicker: It's costing the province millions and millions and millions of dollars that we don't have to spend. There's a long-term-care home in Kitchener that used to spend \$300,000 on temporary nursing every year. Do you know how much they spent last year? It was \$3 million. There are other priorities in this province, and that's one we should be addressing right now.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Quick question? Quick question?

Further debate?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: It's my pleasure to speak today in favour of Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act. As a member representing a riding in Peel region, this legislation is very important to me and to the well-being of my constituents.

I'm proud to be a part of a government that takes real and meaningful steps to improve the lives of Ontarians.

The number one question that Ontarians living in and around Peel region have right now is, why do things have to change and why are they changing right now? The immediate answer is that this government respects and supports communities that want to govern themselves. I even remember Mayor Crombie's speech at Mayor Hazel McCallion's funeral—that it's exactly what she wants, our city of Mississauga to be an independent community that governs itself.

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As someone who lived in Peel region for many, many years, I feel the same way our constituents do about many issues they face on a daily basis—housing costs, front-line service availability, respect for taxpayer dollars, and even traffic. The bottom line is that we need to create a solution that gives people the fair and equal treatment they deserve. That's exactly what Bill 112 is going to do—and it is exactly what Ontario needs to do, especially since Peel is going to keep growing faster and faster every year. Don't get me wrong; that's a very good thing. We want people to come to Ontario, and we want people to move to Peel. But things will need to change if we want them to be able to afford a home and build a life for themselves and for their families.

Take my city of Mississauga as an example. More than 800,000 people make this place their home currently, and soon enough it will be more than one million—one million people who will be living, working and building a family all in the big, beautiful place that is Mississauga. Simply put, a city of that size cannot serve its residents well if it is tied up with other jurisdictions the way it is now. Looking after that many people is not an easy job, and there is more than enough on Mayor Bonnie Crombie's plate already—

Interjection.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I like your laugh about this. I guess the message is out there—especially with the housing crisis she is facing in her city.

Mississauga has pledged to build 120,000 new homes over the course of 10 years, as part of our provincial mandate. But right now, under Mayor Crombie, the city is only building an average of 2,100 homes. That is too little.

Hon. Stan Cho: That's not even close to enough.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Exactly. It's not too close—far too little to meet the demand that Mississauga currently has, and even less when you think about the hundreds of thousands of others who will be moving to the city in the next few years.

Mayor Crombie's inability to build more homes every year means that people are going to keep paying ridiculous prices to buy a home and keep living in Mississauga. Ontarians already know very well that is no way to live. It is why this government was given a mandate by Ontarians to build 1.5 million new homes over the course of 10 years.

But the big difference is that we are breaking records year over year. We are saying yes to Ontarians by keeping our promise and delivering record-breaking numbers of housing and rental starts across the province, thanks to our Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing and, of course, the hard-working people of Ontario's workforce, who are putting shovels in the ground to build our province into a home for everyone who is willing to come and work here.

I'm happy to say that my ministry is also hard at work at expanding our robust protections and further helping hard-working consumers to make smart, safe choices when they buy a new home in Ontario, empowering them to shop with confidence and giving them peace of mind that they understand any risk associated with their purchase agreement.

Speaker, I can assure you that on the government side—because I have colleagues who sit on that side as well—we care deeply about supporting and safeguarding Ontario’s homebuyers as they make one of the most important decisions in their lifetimes: finding a place they can call home.

Housing supply is not an issue that only Mississauga is facing. Brampton and Caledon are also in need of help to meet their housing pledges. That is why our government is stepping in to support the people of Peel with this legislation. Bill 112, if passed, will help municipalities deliver their obligations and priorities in a way that is equitable and fair. That is important because we need to acknowledge that each part of Peel is unique in every way. Their circumstances, their identities and even their landscapes all play a role in the way things get done. Just as every corner of Ontario has its diverse and unique qualities, so does Peel region and the people who make it their home. Through Bill 112, we are proposing an effective way to ensure a stable, fair outcome that respects taxpayers’ dollars while also helping these three municipalities unlock their growth potential. A big part of this is going to be done by the appointment of a transition board that will give their recommendations on how to best deal with matters of restructuring. This means things like service delivery, labour relations, financial stability and others are going to be carefully managed so that the people of Peel can receive the best possible outcome.

Once the transition board is appointed, it will work with Peel and its lower-tier municipalities on a transition plan. This will include any changes to decision-making processes ahead of the divorce, and it will ensure a fair and equitable outcome that responds to the needs of local residents, respects taxpayers, increases efficiencies, and supports a friendly and successful transformation of Peel region.

The transition board would report their recommendations to our government in the next year so that they have enough time to work with our municipal partners and give the best possible advice to our government on the many complex issues that make a difference to the people of Peel region. Simply put, our transition board’s recommendations are going to help inform our government on this incredibly important moment in Ontario’s history, especially as we look to complete it by January 1, 2025.

We are doing this to improve the lives of Ontarians in Peel region, and while it is going to take some time, we are confident that this is going to help make Brampton, Caledon, Mississauga and everywhere else in between a better place to live, work and grow.

Speaker, I also want to point out that during this time of change, our government is thinking about the thousands of people who work for Peel region. Not only do we recognize and value their contributions to the well-being and prosperity of their hometowns, but we also recognize that this might be a big change for them. That is why our government has a strong commitment to creating a fair process that will help resolve matters of employment in a way that is fair and reasonable. After all, our goal is to

protect services, respect taxpayers and make sure that our municipal partners continue delivering the quality services that their citizens expect and deserve.

I want to point out that this isn’t a reactionary move by our government. Our municipal colleagues from Peel region have been asking for this for a long, long time. As a matter of fact, they have been asking for this since the days of the late Hazel McCallion. Perhaps it has taken this long because Ontario finally has a government and a Premier that are not afraid to upset the political status quo—the same status quo of the old days, when governments were cutting 300,000 jobs, wasting billions of taxpayer dollars, and, perhaps worst of all, creating a housing crisis. I’m concerned that this is the same political status quo that some would like to bring back into Ontario—only building a few thousand homes a year in Mississauga, a few thousand homes a year in Brampton, a few thousand homes a year in Caledon, and just a few thousand homes a year across all of Ontario.

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Instead, our government is going to continue focusing on our promise to the people of Ontario to deliver 1.5 million homes over the course of 10 years. And we are going to keep moving forward. We are going to keep building more transit, and we are going to keep building homes.

Speaker, it is under this government that we saw the highest number of housing and rental starts ever on record, and with this piece of legislation to help us, it will be this government that continues to build up our communities in Peel region.

Another point I would like to mention is that while we are going to grant independence to the three municipalities in Peel region, there will be no change to their existing borders. Our government is not here to create more red tape. On the contrary, part of the reason why we are making these changes is to improve access to services for the people of Mississauga, Caledon and Brampton. Our plan can only succeed by building up the unique strengths and qualities of our municipal partners, and we will not achieve this by taking away from the people and resources that give them that unique identity.

Protecting the services that the people of Peel rely on is a top priority of our government. We know that our partners in the region feel the same way. Putting the public interest as our number one priority is going to help us protect these front-line services, and it will help us maintain quality service standards for residents. As a member representing a riding within Peel and as a minister in charge of providing Ontarians with reliable government services, this is incredibly, incredibly important to me. Whether you need public health service, waste water management, policing or social housing, our government is going to support the people of Peel to ensure these services are not negatively affected during this time of change.

Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, there will be a transition board appointed to oversee this extensive and important process. Part of their responsibility will be to ensure that important issues like service delivery are carefully

considered during the restructuring of Peel, and we will work closely with them to ensure that local services continue uninterrupted with no impact whatsoever to local residents. That is the most important thing for this government.

I'm confident that our partners will be able to create the best results possible for the people of Peel region, and I'm confident that their tax dollars will be handled with the respect that they deserve. Taxpayer dollars are what keep this province running, and Peel region is no exception. It is the people who work in our small businesses, in our front-line services and in our construction sites who are building our economy and our future. So when we see that the taxpayers are being overtaxed and that their tax dollars are being wasted, of course it really upsets us.

A couple of weeks ago, our Premier made a very good point when he was asked about the future of Peel region. Currently, in Mississauga, there is a problem with how the city is handling taxpayers' dollars. Residents are being taxed too much, and it is affecting our joint efforts to fight the housing crisis. Just in the last two years, Mississauga has increased the fees on new homebuyers by almost 30%, and this has had terrible repercussions for families who want to live in Mississauga to work and build a life. The city's fees are adding approximately \$126,000 to the price of every home in the city, and it makes buying a home even more expensive than it already is. That is not what we call fighting the housing crisis; we call that making it worse. Municipal housing taxes in Mississauga are generating around \$34 million in tax revenue for the city every year, but they are spending less than 75% of that in a year. Then there is the issue of parkland fees. The city of Mississauga collects \$17 million a year for these parkland fees, but they only spend \$9 million of that in a year. All of this leftover money goes directly into the city reserves, which are more than \$270 million. Those are taxpayers' dollars that could have been given back to the people of Mississauga by not taxing them with so many fees in the first place.

Instead of just criticizing, our government is going to keep working with our partners in Peel region like Mississauga, whether they like it or not, to make the Team Ontario effort that the people of Peel need and deserve.

Speaker, just as Hazel McCallion was a trailblazer for the people of Mississauga and Peel, our government is going to trail-blaze with this legislation that is so highly named in her honour. She truly was a visionary. Although she is dearly, dearly missed each and every day by so many of the people she inspired, I am proud that our government is honouring her memory. She is irreplaceable. Although I wish I could say that there will never be anyone else as good as she was for our city and region—that would not be true.

I just want to say again, thank you to all the members for helping us support this piece of legislation in honour of the late Mayor Hazel McCallion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for the presentation. I listened with a lot of interest, in recognizing that the bill is called the Hazel McCallion Act, specifically dealing with Peel's dissolution, but the bill doesn't necessarily speak to the terms of the dissolution—it just sort of says “dissolve.” But what happens after the dissolution? How is it going to be enacted? I think that there is quite a bit that's missing from this bill.

Can the member across give us some very clear, specific details on what happens after dissolution, without getting into the fact that there's going to be a five-member advisory board—because that's not in the bill.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Speaker, as we have been saying all along, and as I said in my remarks as well, this transition board that's going to be developed is going to help us—it's going to lead into the change or dissolution of Peel region. That's why we have been very upfront about this—the fact that we want to make sure that the region knows that this is something where this board is going to work with everyone to make sure that everyone gets the best possible outcome to this, as the member said, dissolution.

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Again, we respect the transition board that's going to be formed, and we hope that all three municipalities will work with the transition board to have the best outcome.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery for his comments. As the MPP for Mississauga East–Cooksville, he certainly speaks from experience, knowing well the issues in Mississauga.

I wanted to ask him to elaborate further on his comments about respecting the taxpayers' dollars and what efficiencies might be found as we allow each of the municipalities the control over all of their planning processes, all of their service delivery processes, and how that will benefit the taxpayers of Ontario in that region.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the wonderful question. As we have seen—and I know as a former mayor himself, we had this conversation—sometimes there are duplications that happen. It really stalls the process, especially when we are looking at building homes, infrastructure and transit. That's why when we say “respecting taxpayers' dollars”—it's to find efficiencies and see how we can get things done in a much faster way. We hear that. My respected, honourable colleague and I had this conversation about how the duplication of the process, at times, delays things. That's why we feel that this process is going to bring ease into, especially, the development process. There are so many things that can be done in a more efficient and effective manner moving forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question to the member is, do you believe that your government should consult with

workers and unions on Bill 112 and be part of any advisory board?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the question.

Speaker, I have had the honour of being the MPP and representing the riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville for almost—this is my second term—five years now. Since day one, we have heard not only our constituents but also members of all three cities talking about how we need to work on the dissolution and make Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon separate cities. I'm sure my honourable member from Brampton heard the same thing, as well. So we have been listening, and that is what consulting is. We have been listening to members, residents, members of the cities, as well, to make sure that we make the best decision possible for them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: There were some really great comments.

Through you, Speaker: Being a member of the Mississauga area for many years, you have seen its growth, seen its expansion. Therefore, you see a need for us to see Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon chart their own paths.

How is this legislation, with consideration of population growth, really going to help Mississauga plan for Mississauga's future growth—as well as the other municipalities?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the question.

Absolutely. Right now, we see that Mississauga is close to over 800,000 residents, and I think Brampton is almost getting there as well.

We see how these individual municipalities can continue to work on services that we have talked about so many times, to make sure that the residents continue to get the best service possible, whether it's waste water or water management or whatever services they are currently being offered—policing. Again, that is something the transition board is going to give their recommendations on. I feel like it is a time when these municipalities—Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon—can find ways to operate individually yet continue to collaborate with each other to make sure that the residents continue to get the best service possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The transition board is a key piece to this legislation, and there's no guarantee that the selected board members for the transition board will represent the people in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon in the dissolution process. We know that the minister selects the board members, and we can speculate that the minister will be selecting people who will be favourable to the government. The minister will also be determining compensation and expenses for the board—expenses to be paid by municipalities.

My question is, if the regional municipality of Peel agrees with the dissolution, why does the government feel that it's necessary to legislate that they send them the bill for the transition committee to be paid, and how will the

government collect payment if municipalities don't pay his invoice?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the question.

Speaker, these are not political appointments. These are appointments based on the skill sets that each individual member is going to bring to this transition board. Whether they know how the municipalities work or financial information—there are so many options out there to make sure that, when this dissolution or this transition happens, it is done in the right way. That's why we are bringing the experts—to make sure that their decision is respected, their recommendation is respected. The individuals are industry experts who will be making the recommendations to the province of Ontario. Again, these are not political appointments. These are all highly skill-based appointments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Quick question?

Mr. Matthew Rae: A quick question to the minister: Can you elaborate on how this bill will help Mississauga—a city that is growing rapidly—build more housing in the future?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the honourable colleague for a very quick question.

I'll say that it will expedite, hopefully—our hope is that this will expedite the housing process that the city of Mississauga has been asking for and their city staff has been asking for. The hope is that, once this piece of legislation, if passed—is going to help, and once the transition is completed, is going to expedite the process.

As Mayor Bonnie Crombie has said many times, “There are duplications. I want to build things fast, so give me the tools.”

Well, Mayor Bonnie Crombie, here are the tools. But let's build homes for the people of Mississauga.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I ask for your indulgence as I begin my 20 minutes today with condolences to the families of the tragic shooting that happened in my city of Hamilton and Stoney Creek over this past weekend. A 27-year-old educational assistant and her 28-year-old partner, who was an IBEW worker, were shot by their landlord over a housing dispute. Unfortunately—I don't even know what to say—he was also a loss; his life was taken by police shooting back after he was shooting at them. It's an absolutely tragic situation. My heart, my prayers, my condolences go to all families who are feeling affected by this and to the community who is suffering around this.

The other part that I wanted to ask your indulgence in is for Nathan, the 37-year-old man with Down syndrome who has been missing since May 12. May 12 was 17 days ago—that this young man with Down syndrome has been missing from his community, from his home, and how that family feels. Our best wishes go out to them as they continue to search for him in hopes that he will be found well and healthy.

That is where I wanted to begin, so I thank you for your indulgence, Speaker.

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I can tell you I am pretty pumped about having to speak to Bill 112 today, the Hazel McCallion Act—which is the Peel dissolution. It's an interesting position for me to talk about because Hamilton, as we all know, was amalgamated many years ago, and it didn't quite have the results that the Harris government, at the time, had stated would happen. Premier Harris, at the time, said that provincial taxes would be decreased by 30%—combined with no increase in property taxes by merging municipalities and doing away with politicians and bureaucracy. It was all based upon the belief that there was too much municipal government waste and duplication—calling Ontarians “the most over-governed in the world.” They actually whittled down the number of municipalities from 850 to 444 at that time, which was quite the change. I can tell you, people in the community of Hamilton still feel the effects of that. There are still arguments about area rating and who's paying for what charges and how each property tax gets based out on compared to what services they get and they don't get. And we definitely did not see the property tax savings which were expected. Actually, their taxes went up about 50% in Hamilton, which is quite a hit.

Our taxes continue to go up, and we continue to struggle for services in the city, and people in the outskirts of Hamilton, in the Flamboroughs and the Glanbrooks—and folks who were amalgamated—are still unhappy with the decision that was forced on them.

So that was something that I definitely wanted to raise, because the plan of what the Conservatives had said would be better for the residents of Hamilton just turned out to be completely opposite in so many ways. I wasn't involved in politics at all during that time, so I didn't see it any different. I did live in Stoney Creek, and it became Hamilton somewhere around that time, I guess—maybe I was even a little older than that. But people still remember. And the problem with that is that it was forced upon them.

So what we're seeing in Bill 112 is that lack of consultation. Yes, we know Mayor Hazel McCallion and Mayor Bonnie Crombie definitely pursued this. Their city is growing at immense speed. They've been asking for this for years, but Brampton has not, to my understanding. I believe the mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown, has serious concerns. The mayor of Mississauga has claimed that this will benefit Mississauga by a billion dollars, and yet Patrick Brown is saying this will hurt Brampton by a billion dollars. So I think there's lots to talk about. There is lots to work out.

As you can see here, it's not a very big bill, but it has a lot of effect to it. There is a lot that will go through it. Who will assume the water waste? Will they have to rebuild for that? Money has been spent and shared throughout all of these taxpayers, through all of these regions.

Caledon seems to be a little fish in the water, with a very, very small population. Their population is quite small compared to—I think it's 5% of the actual Peel area—5% is an accurate number. So how will they be left in the mix of all of this? Then, to add on top of all of it, the bulldozing through of Highway 413, which will run right

through Caledon and have great effects on that municipality and on their growth basis—which will see huge growth in very quick time.

This article is from one year ago—it's from May 2022 that I was able to dig out. “Large amounts of” Caledon “are inside the province's protected greenbelt. But many farms outside that zone have long been owned by numbered companies, developers or speculators. Some warn this is the next frontier for sprawl in the greater Toronto area: According to the town's new official plan, Caledon expects to balloon to 300,000 residents from 80 over the next 30 years.” So there's major infrastructure that is going to be needed there.

Let's go back to that area rating in Hamilton, where these rural folks just don't have the same types of services—and a sprawling, growing community such as Caledon is going to need all of these services. Is the government planning on providing all of that funding to ensure that Caledon has the necessary services they need? I know their police service is under the OPP, so I'm sure nothing will change there. But when it comes to water, roads and sewers and all of that extra infrastructure, will that just go on the tax base of those Caledon residents? Will they be able to continue to afford their properties with these increased taxes? Those are the questions that I have as I'm looking at this. I think the residents of Caledon should have the opportunity to speak out, and not just the mayor.

These are the types of things that should be going to referendums in communities—that all community members should be talked to.

Instead, what we're seeing—and what actually just happened in the last 20 minutes is, the government has filed a time allocation motion. We haven't seen many time allocation motions from this government in this session. They have all the power, but debate has gone on, and we've been able to exercise our rights to be able to debate on matters. But today, for some unknown reason, there is a time allocation motion on the table, which will say that—let's see here. It truncates second reading. It cuts out committee completely, so there will be no further consultation, there will be no opportunity for people to come to committee to voice their concerns. There will be no opportunity for workers, CUPE members, folks who are invested in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to be able to come forward to speak—and that's exactly, as you know, Speaker, what the committee process is supposed to do. It's supposed to strengthen bills. It's supposed to provide opportunity for people to have input. And yet, this government is pushing it through, and third reading debate will be able to happen immediately. This bill could pretty much pass by Wednesday night. Today is the first day of second reading. So it's curious as to why the government feels that this bill, which was tabled late on Thursday just past—which would have been the last legislative day for us—and now is here before us today needs to be completed by Wednesday. That's a pretty quick turnaround.

With no consultation, with no input, with strong-armed abilities from the minister who will be able to appoint the

transition board—we know what government appointments around this Legislature have looked like in the last five years. They have pretty much been PC donors. They have been stakeholders to the PCs. They have been friends, relatives, cousins, major donors. So what could give the people of Ontario hope or faith that the minister will not be appointing people to the transition board—that will give them the outcome they're desiring?

1730

What will stop the privatization of water services? What will stop the privatization of transit services? What guarantee do the people of Ontario and the people of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon have that their best interests are being protected, and not the best interests of developers and builders and people who have bought up all of this land around the 413 in Caledon? It's pretty interesting that all of the pieces continue to fall together with this government—piece of legislation by piece of legislation. There's another piece to the puzzle that continues to fall.

So do I disagree with the late Hazel McCallion or the current mayor, Bonnie Crombie? No, I have no reason to, because I really don't know that community like I know my own community. But I think people should have the opportunity to have a say. I think when you cut out public consultation, you're asking for trouble.

And then when we see time allocation come on a bill like this, when we haven't seen time allocation very often in the last year that I can really think of much, maybe even longer—I know the Liberals liked time allocation pretty much on every bill, but the Conservatives have not done that so much in the last while. So it's curious as to why this needs to—

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: The member would like to time-allocate me, but unfortunately, that's not an option for him.

It's very concerning. I know the members of CUPE who are the workers for the municipalities there are very concerned about how the transition would happen, about who will be appointed to these transition boards, about how their jobs will continue to ensure—that their jobs are protected and what that will look like. Will there be more members? Will there be less members? Nobody has these answers, and everybody is left to rely on a transition board that is hand-picked by the Conservative government, which we all know leads to one result, and that's the result that they're looking for. That is concerning.

Like I said and like our member from Niagara Centre said in his lead today, our concerns were:

—a worker representative on the transition board from CUPE: Will the minister guarantee that workers will be on that transition board? Can we count on the minister to do the right thing and ensure that workers are on that board? We're not sure;

—that the bill goes to committee for consultation. That's not happening; that we know very clearly now, as per the time allocation motion that has just been tabled; and

—a commitment to no privatization or contracting out of public services. We know this government likes privatization. We're seeing exactly what's happening in our health care system with privatization, for-profit—a new way of doing health care in the province of Ontario and the horror stories that have gone with that.

So we're finding ourselves in the position that we will no longer be able to support this bill. That's really unfortunate, because, like I said, this is something that Hazel had wanted for years, and it's something that Mayor Crombie has asked for, probably with good reason, for their own municipality. But we're being forced and wedged into a corner again, because we're not able to trust the minister and the government to do the right thing by the people of Ontario—not just for their for-profit fundraising friends and buddies they have served over the last five years. They have certainly not served the average person in Ontario, and we know that. It's very clear.

They talk about this being a bill about housing. There's nothing about housing in this bill that I have found. I don't believe my colleagues have found anything about housing in this bill. They have put out several bills that say that they're about housing, and yet we are in the greatest housing crisis we have ever seen in this province. A single one-bedroom, barely-nothing apartment in Hamilton is \$1,800 a month, on average; for a two-bedroom, you're looking at \$2,200-plus. I know here in the city of Toronto, it is much higher than that. And in many communities across the province, we are seeing a huge problem when it comes to housing.

Building big houses in communities that are huge sprawl is not going to solve the issue for the people who can't afford the down payment. They can't afford a down payment for a house, so how are they ever possibly going to be able to buy that house, regardless of how many you build? They can't afford the rent in these places.

People are looking at different options and abilities of how they're going to make sure that their kids have houses, that their grandchildren have houses. Bills like this are not going to do it regardless of how many times the government says it. There is nothing in this bill that is going to protect homes, that is going to ensure that the people of this province have homes.

I'm looking forward to the actual question-and-answer period that happens after my debate time so that the members can correct me and tell me where it says in the bill how this is going to build affordable housing that people can actually afford. I'm sure there won't be any—I'm sure they'll have a whole bunch of other questions, but it won't be that.

Let's just continue to talk about housing. I was gobsmacked the other day when I heard that our housing wait-list in Hamilton has reached over 6,000—people who are on a wait-list for priority housing. I spent some time in Hamilton the other day with a social navigator program, visiting homeless tent cities. People should probably take some time and go and visit in their communities the tents that are there—because I'm sure they're in all of your communities. Have an eye-opener to the reality of what

people are facing. We're having seniors being evicted from their homes—seniors who have been in their apartments for years—because of renovictions. These are the real issues that we need to be talking about.

I get that we should be talking about what's happening in Mississauga and Brampton and Caledon and making sure that they're set up for the future going forward, but by squeezing in a bill in two days, three days—it's just not going to cut it. We're not going to be able to support this bill. We should have been able to work together to provide that opportunity for Mississauga, who is asking for this. But once again, you couldn't put the cards on the table, and you had to make it all about you, all about your buddies. And now we can't support it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the member opposite.

You wished for a question that had to do with affordable housing, and I perhaps will not ask the question that you're hopeful that I will ask, but, through the situation that we're facing right now—and we certainly are in a housing crisis. We've heard now for various months—in fact, quite frankly, years—that we have a lack of supply. I don't think the member opposite would suggest that we don't have a lack of supply of housing on the market, period—across-the-board housing. We know that CMHC reported last June that something like 3.5 million houses were needed within the next eight years in Canada. We know that the province of Ontario needs 1.5 million homes.

To the member opposite: Would you agree that the lack of supply is the single greatest force that is driving up the price of housing in our jurisdictions?

Miss Monique Taylor: I thank the member for the question.

Let's talk about Hamilton. We have 476 vacant units that the city of Hamilton can't afford the capital repairs on. How about pony up the \$3.8 million, and we'll start there? There's an actual start. I'm sure communities across this province are facing that same thing.

1740

If we actually invest in the properties that we have, we're going to fix some of the problems. If we invest in building internally in our cities, we will fix some of the problems. The sprawl, the greenbelt—all of that stuff is unnecessary. And we all know it's about the donors; it's about the big dollars that are being moved around the province and not helping our housing market.

I'm sure the member would agree that a person who is moving way out on the greenbelt and has to pay for gas, has to pay for transportation, has to pay for new schools is not actually worried about the affordability cost.

Making sure it's the internal city would make a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her remarks.

Briefly, Speaker, with your indulgence off the top and indulgence from the member, I just want to acknowledge the wildfires that are currently raging right now in Tantallon, in Shelburne county, out in Nova Scotia. My wife's mom, Pat, is with us. Pat, we're thinking of you and all the neighbours back home. That's really rough. Prayers for you.

I also want to just ask the member—because something that's also a big issue in a lot of municipalities is library services. I'm worried about the capacity for municipalities, if they keep getting their decisions made for them, to deliver on core services like libraries.

I can tell you, Speaker, after this debate, I'm jumping on a bicycle and going down to Alexandra Park to campaign for the great Olivia Chow, who wants to be mayor of this city and who announced today that she is going to fight for seven days a week of library services for families. Isn't that a great idea?

What do you think, member?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member from Ottawa.

Yes, libraries are an important part of our communities. Libraries are becoming even more important as the government continues to move the tribunals online, court systems online, ODSP—everybody is online these days. But people who can't afford Internet services or don't have a cellphone or are living in a tent don't have access to Internet services just for information, and so they count on those library services to be able to function in the government's world. So, yes, it's a great initiative by Olivia Chow.

I think that instead of cutting libraries, we should be investing in libraries and ensuring that everybody has access to libraries in their community—which is going to be tough for a community like Caledon, for instance.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member opposite for her remarks. When she refers to our insiders and back-room deals, I'm not sure who she's referring to. The current mayor of Mississauga is a former Liberal MP and is currently thinking of running for the Liberal Party provincially. So she's not really supportive of this government currently. But that being said—

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Yes, she does have excellent ideas. We're listening to those ideas.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: We have excellent ideas.

Mr. Matthew Rae: We have excellent ideas.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: She does agree with us, yes. Exactly.

My question to the member opposite is, would you be willing to support this bill? It is going to help get more housing built and reduce inefficiencies and help—

Mr. Ross Romano: It reduces the price.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It reduces the price, as my honourable colleague from Sault Ste. Marie is informing the

House. It reduces the price of purchasing a home because we're finding those efficiencies.

Will the member opposite support this bill?

Miss Monique Taylor: No, I will not support this bill that you refuse to allow consultation on.

And you want to talk about Bonnie Crombie running for the Liberal Party? That has nothing to do with—and that's what concerns me. That is why I can't understand why the government needs to rush it through so quickly. Other than the 413, the area in Caledon—how is the government benefiting? There is some way that there will be benefiting on the government's part, on stakeholders' part, to push this through as quickly as the government is doing, to use a time allocation—that hasn't been used in quite some time; now, all of a sudden, it's necessary to happen.

Do I think that the Premier wants to help Bonnie Crombie? Absolutely not. But there is something there. It will eventually come out, just like everything does.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm glad you brought up a little bit about the surrounding area there—like the 319 acres of farmland we're losing every single day in the province of Ontario.

But my question is—because I always like to be fair and reasonable to everybody; I asked this question to the Conservatives, and I'm going to ask it to you: Do you think that workers and unions should be consulted on Bill 112, and do you believe that unions should be part of any advisory board? Do you believe that whoever's sitting on this board should be named by the Conservative government before this bill passes?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member from Niagara for that question.

Absolutely, yes, as I stated in my debate, the unionized workers, CUPE members, any workers who are involved with those municipalities should have a say. They should be on these transition boards. They should be part of the conversations. They're the people who do the work day in and day out in these communities. They know the communities. It is their own community. They need to be on the transition board—not just appointees by the minister, but actual people who live in the community and don't have the political investment, the financial investment. We need to be assured that all of that is going to stay out of the transition process.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I listened to the member's speech, and I just wanted to highlight to her a few things that are important to her in terms of—she was talking about some of the visits she had most recently in her community. Many of us have such situations in our communities—and people need housing tomorrow. Do you know what helps them? Modular builds.

We have examples in my area where modular builds have been able to help—not only accessible units, but other units. But do you know what they encountered—the

folks who build the modular builds to get people into housing right away? Multiple tiers of permitting, red tape, and municipalities that can't get their acts together, going from department to department. Do you know what would help them? A bill like this, so they can just go directly and say, "This is my ask. I can get housing for someone tomorrow." This type of legislation will help. Now they can work with mediators to get that done. It's rich that the member says people need housing. This is exactly what this will help work towards—so that people who are in the work of modular building don't have to go through all the red tape.

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, I would love to have modular housing in our community.

There is no doubt that I think we should be looking at every opportunity for housing, thinking outside of the box, thinking of different ways, looking at different communities to see what they're doing, but there is nothing in this bill—I don't even know if the word "housing" is in this bill. I wish I could do a quick search to see if the word "housing" is in this bill. There is nothing about housing in this bill.

Maybe the member wants to relook at the bill—or maybe look at it for the first time—instead of the speaking notes that their staff write, and actually say how housing will be developed because of this bill. There is absolutely nothing in this bill about housing. This is about the dissolution of Peel. This is about the creating of municipalities: Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon. It talks about the transition board. It talks about how nobody will be able to—no compensation. So if there's a result of the enactment of this act, making any direction—anyway, they won't be able to sue; they won't be able to get compensation. That's the kind of stuff that's in this bill. There's absolutely nothing in this bill that talks about housing.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak to this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: As the member from Mississauga Centre, I am honoured to rise today to speak to one of our government's most ambitious pieces of legislation to date, which will shape the lives of my constituents and those in Peel region for the years to come.

Today, I'm actually wearing yellow in honour of the late Hazel McCallion. Yellow was her favourite colour. I know that Mayor McCallion is smiling down on us today as we debate, because her vision and her dream for our beloved city of Mississauga is becoming a reality.

Speaker, I am proud to speak to second reading of Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act—our government's intent to dissolve Peel region and make Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon each independent municipalities. It is named after my dear friend and mentor the late Hazel McCallion, who had a vision for our city of Mississauga that, if passed, will now come to fruition.

1750

From our humble beginnings as a small settlement to its present-day status as our province's third-largest thriving city—Mississauga's history is one of resilience, vibrancy, growth and community spirit.

Speaker, I would like to take us all on a journey through time to where it all began. Let us remember that Mississauga—as well as Peel region—is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people, as well as the Mississaugas, from which our city gets its name.

Chief LaForme of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation has been a great partner to our government when it comes to the tackling of human trafficking and supporting vulnerable women and girls.

The name “Mississauga” comes from the Anishinaabe word “Misi-zaagiing,” which means “river of the north of many mouths.”

Thousands of years ago, people lived in harmony with the land, drawing sustenance from its resources and establishing a deep connection to the natural environment.

The arrival of European settlers in the 17th century brought about significant change to the region. Les Français, the French, were the first to explore the area and encountered the native Mississaugas who resided near the north shore of Lake Huron. I like to think that some of those francophone descendants still live in Mississauga and Peel.

By the early 18th century, the Mississaugas migrated south and settled near the areas we now call Etobicoke Creek, Credit River and Hamilton Harbour. During this time, British settlers established trading posts and began to cultivate the land. Mississauga became a focal point for trade and commerce as it was strategically located along important transportation routes such as the Credit River routes and Lake Ontario. Gradually, small settlements were established, which later grew into villages with names many of you recognize today: Clarkson, Cooksville, Dixie, Erindale, Malton, Streetsville, and more.

By 1805, the Toronto township was created, which was comprised of most of modern-day Mississauga. This followed many years later with the creation of the towns of Streetsville and Port Credit.

Through the 19th century, Mississauga continued to develop, with industries such as farming, lumbering and milling playing pivotal roles in the local economy.

The establishment of the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway in the late 19th century brought further growth and prosperity, connecting Mississauga to large urban centres and facilitating the transportation of goods and people.

In 1967, residents of the then-Toronto township voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to rename their town Mississauga to avoid confusion with the neighbouring city of Toronto. But I would also venture to say, they voted to establish Mississauga as a distinct town with our own identity and separate, distinct destiny.

By 1974, the former towns of Mississauga, Port Credit and Streetsville, along with a number of smaller communities, amalgamated to form the new city of Mississauga. This amalgamation marked a turning point in our city's history as it brought together diverse communities and provided the foundation for future growth and development.

One of the most significant milestones in Mississauga's history occurred in 1978. Does anyone know what happened in 1978? Of course, it was the election of Hazel McCallion, Hurricane Hazel, as our city's mayor. Under her visionary leadership, Mississauga experienced remarkable growth and development.

Mayor McCallion's tenure of 36 years is unmatched and made her one of the longest-serving mayors in Canadian history, and her legacy as a dedicated public servant and influential leader continues to shape our city today.

During the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century, Mississauga became a hub for business, innovation and cultural diversity. The city attracted many corporations, leading to the establishment of numerous industrial parks and commercial centres. Its proximity to Toronto and its excellent transportation infrastructure further fuelled economic growth and investment.

Our city has a vibrant corporate hub with many well-known companies, such as PepsiCo, Microsoft, Abbott Laboratories, General Mills, and many more. Our residents are privileged to be home to some of the most acclaimed schools in the country, such as Sheridan College, Mohawk College and the University of Toronto Mississauga campus.

Mississauga is also renowned for our commitment to preserving our natural heritage. The city is home to a vast network of parks, green spaces and trails, providing residents with ample opportunities to connect with nature, soak up the sun and enjoy outdoor activities.

Mississauga Valley Park, which is near my office, is a beautiful place to have a picnic or a barbecue.

In fact, I would like to invite all of my constituents and community members to a barbecue which I will be hosting, together with Minister Kaleed Rasheed, on June 18 for Father's Day. Everyone is invited. Please come and join us.

Interjections.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you. We will be celebrating all the fathers in Mississauga.

The Credit River stretches all the way from Orangeville, winds through our city and empties into Lake Ontario. It is beautiful place to go canoeing or fishing. It offers beautiful landscapes and supports a rich diversity of plant and animal species.

Port Credit harbour is a beautiful place to take a walk by the lake, grab a bite to eat or snack on some gelato.

MPP Cuzzetto and I always compete as to who has the best riding. Of course, mine is the best, but Port Credit is also very, very special.

We are renowned for our many attractions and landmarks, ranging from the Living Arts Centre, the Art

Gallery of Mississauga, Square One Shopping Centre, and the Paramount Fine Foods Centre.

Let us not forget the pride of our province, Toronto Pearson airport, which was founded as Malton airport in 1937. Thousands of passengers have passed through our beautiful airport when they travelled abroad, reunited with loved ones and came here on diplomatic missions. And myself, with my family, landed at Toronto Pearson airport in October 2000, and the rest is history.

We have a vibrant arts and culture scene here in Mississauga. You never want to miss annual events like Canada Day, Ribfest, New Year's Eve and our tree-lighting ceremony—all held in my riding, at Celebration Square, right in front of city hall. On top of that, Mississauga is where the well-known Carassauga Festival is held annually—like just this past weekend, when various communities represented in our city showcased dance performances, food stalls and vendors over a three-day period, showcasing the rich cultures and diversity that our city is home to.

I would say that Mississauga is like the whole world in one city. Indeed, we are very blessed to call Mississauga home.

Today, Mississauga is the seventh-most populated city in Canada, with a population approaching 800,000. A report recently published by the city forecasts that Mississauga's population is expected to grow to a whopping one million by the middle of this century. And with that, our government is doing everything we can to accommodate this large and swift growth. We are building new highways, new rapid transit and new housing as fast as we can.

Many of my constituents will be overwhelmed with joy once our Hurontario LRT is completed over the coming years, giving them easy access to the north and south corridors of our region, when they want to go all the way to Brampton or go down and visit Port Credit.

My own riding is full of housing projects in the works, which soon will house many of my current and future constituents who will enjoy living and working in our great city.

Our city is also home to an incredibly diverse group of Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews—and many other religions—who I meet with and speak to on a regular basis and who I am very proud to serve.

Did you know the most common mother tongues in Mississauga after English are Urdu, Arabic, Mandarin—and yes, even Polish.

Every year, I am honoured to join my constituents in celebrating their holy and most important religious holidays, or any other important cultural events. A week ago, I spoke at the 2023 Chinese Culture Festival organized by the Canadian Innovative Community Service Alliance, held in Celebration Square in my riding. A month ago, I joined my constituents in celebrating Eid-Ul-Fitr at Shalimar mosque, celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan, one of the three pillars of Islam. Days prior, I joined the Orthodox Christian community at the Canadian Coptic Centre to celebrate Easter.

1800

My riding of Mississauga Centre was created in 2018, and I have been serving as its representative ever since. Speaker, I was fortunate to live in Mississauga for over 20 years, where I attended St. Hilary Elementary School, and then Philip Pocock Catholic Secondary School. The city shaped me into who I am today, and I couldn't be more grateful.

I can say that winning my first election was one of the toughest, most challenging and greatest achievements of my life. I do not come from wealth—I was raised by a single mom—or from a political dynasty, and yet my team and I achieved something remarkable, winning the support of Mississaugans who believed in me and in our party's message.

My city is home to ridings of many of my own caucus members, who regularly accompany me to local events and engagements. These include, of course, Minister Kaleed Rasheed, Rudy Cuzzetto, Nina Tangri, Deepak Anand and Sheref Sabawy. And do you know what I like the most about my Mississauga team, Speaker? It's that we truly look like Mississauga looks. We reflect the cultural and professional diversity of our city. And that's what makes our Mississauga team really great and exceptional.

Now, I want to spend a few minutes talking about the late Mayor Hazel McCallion, whose memory we are honouring today. Her name to me is synonymous with leadership, resilience and an unwavering dedication to public service.

Hazel McCallion's journey began in 1921 in Port Daniel, Quebec, where she was born Hazel Journeaux. Her upbringing in a small rural community instilled in her a strong work ethic, a deep sense of community and a determination to overcome challenges. These qualities would prove instrumental in shaping her future as one of Canada's most influential and beloved political figures.

She started her career in the private sector, working for the engineering firm Kellogg for 19 years. However, it was her entry into the world of politics that would truly propel her into the national spotlight. By the late 1960s, she decided to leave the corporate world and delve into the world of politics. She was first elected as mayor of the then town of Streetsville in 1970, serving for three years.

Once the city of Mississauga was created, she ran and served as a city councillor for two terms, before beginning her mayoral campaign in 1978. She held that position, as I said, for 36 years, and her tenure is a testament to her extraordinary leadership and the unwavering support and love she garnered from the residents of Mississauga. Incredibly, she never had any serious contenders during each of her election cycles and always won by a landslide. I think we could all take a page out of Hazel's book.

Under Hazel's stewardship, Mississauga experienced unprecedented growth and development. Her visionary approach to urban planning and economic development transformed the city into a thriving and vibrant hub. Our city went from mostly empty farmland to a bustling city full of businesses, homes and active communities. She

attracted businesses, fostered innovation and created numerous job opportunities for residents. And Mississauga stands today as a testament to her ability to turn vision into reality and set a solid foundation for future prosperity.

During times of hardship, Hazel McCallion showed remarkable responsibility and leadership to her constituents. Shortly after she was first elected, a Canadian Pacific train carrying toxic chemicals derailed near a heavily populated area, spilling hazardous chemicals with the potential to endanger local residents. Hazel McCallion oversaw, in partnership with police and other government authorities, the successful evacuation of 200,000 residents, resulting in no deaths or serious injuries.

Her fiscal responsibility should be noted as well. During her entire tenure, the city never had to borrow money and remained debt-free. Since the 1990s, she would openly submit the city's annual operating budget to residents for their input and scrutiny. She was characterized by accessibility, integrity and an unwavering commitment to the needs of her constituents. She was known for her open-door policy—or “Meet me at Tim Hortons” policy—welcoming the concerns and ideas of residents with genuine care and attention. Her commitment to transparency and accountability set a high standard for all public officials, reminding us that our positions of power come also with a responsibility to act in the best interests of the people that we represent.

She was once quoted saying: “I learned to do with little. And that's why today, I only spend the taxpayers' money like I spend my own, which is seldom.”

Hazel McCallion's fearless leadership style earned her the nickname Hurricane Hazel. One of the most remarkable aspects of McCallion's career was her ability to transcend political divides and bring people together for the betterment of our community. Throughout her tenure, she fostered a culture of collaboration, working with different levels of government, community organizations and businesses to achieve common goals. Her ability to build bridges and find common ground exemplifies the true essence of leadership and the power of consensus building.

One example is how she happily endorsed our Premier and our party in the 2018 and 2022 elections while previously having endorsed Liberal leader Justin Trudeau. She didn't subscribe to partisan divides, because her main priority was advocating for the people of Mississauga. She understood that as a municipal leader, one must remain non-partisan and work with partners who have the best interests of Mississaugans at heart. She was not an opportunist. She did not care about political fame and accolades. She simply cared for and loved our city, and the city loved her back.

That is why, Speaker, today, our government is honouring Mayor McCallion's vision and legacy for Mississauga by proposing Bill 112 to dissolve Peel region once and for all. This bill would begin the long process to dissolve the region and establish independent municipalities for Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon by January

1, 2025. We are answering the persistent call of Mayor Bonnie Crombie, who has long called for an independent Mississauga. Our government's plan would ensure that Peel region taxpayers get the highest quality services they pay for, while improving the efficiency of their municipalities. We want to give all three municipalities the autonomy and tools to deliver on their local priorities and meet the ambitious housing pledges that they agreed to.

The dissolution process would ensure a fair outcome for all three municipalities, along with the preservation of front-line services and workers and show respect to the taxpayer. I want to echo the words of Mayor Bonnie Crombie: “An independent Mississauga will allow us to be more nimble when it comes to responding to the housing crisis, increase efficiencies, reduce duplication and save residents time and money. This process will take some time and we are committed to ensuring the continuity of front-line and essential services across the region of Peel.”

So Speaker, it's an honour to participate in today's debate. Like I said, former Mayor McCallion is smiling down on us as we are proceeding with this bill to dissolve the region of Peel and create three separate municipalities.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for sharing the life of Hazel McCallion with us. I do have questions, however, about the actual bill itself and the transition committee that will be appointed by the minister and, of course, our concerns about who will be appointed to that board to ensure that there is community input and voice allowed while this huge transition happens for the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

Could the member please tell us whether there will be workers, unionized workers, current workers of the city, people who are invested in the city—will there be public consultation and will there be people from the public allowed on the transition board, such as the workers?

1810

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you very much for that question. As the member knows, we are committed to delivering on our campaign promises, one of which is to create housing for all Ontarians. As the member is aware, Mississauga has consistently not met targets. We are only at 24,000 housing starts in the last decade, and we need to be closer to 120,000. That's why, by eliminating multiple tiers of government, we are looking for efficiencies, but also, we are looking to save time, because it's not acceptable that today, in our city of Mississauga it can take up to 12 years to get any housing started. That's why, today, we are committing on delivering on that promise to build affordable housing for the region of Peel.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: That was a great presentation from the member from Mississauga Centre. One of the features of this legislation is the establishment of a transition board,

and in the news release that was issued to announce the legislation, we talked about a transition board of up to five people to facilitate the change in local government and, if needed, oversee the financial affairs of Peel and its lower tier municipalities. I'd like the member from Mississauga Centre to talk a little bit more broadly about the effect of that transition board as we move forward with this legislation, if passed.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you for that question. Yes, this act, if passed, would establish a transition board to ensure the process is fair and balanced by overseeing Peel and its lower-tier financial affairs and making recommendations on implementing the restructuring.

Yes, the transition board would have up to five members and would serve the ultimate goal of an amicable and fair dissolution process that respects taxpayers and protects existing services. We don't want to presuppose the outcome of this transition board, but we will be looking at services like Peel police, paramedics and other shared services to ensure that there are no service disruptions to our residents and to ensure that each municipality has service continuity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to go back to the member once again. She talked about housing being a main reason for this happening and talked about how the region of Peel is just too big. I get that, but we also know that this government believes in smaller government, in less bureaucracy, which will increase the cost and the cost to the taxpayers. We know in Hamilton, through amalgamation, there was like a 50% tax increase.

My thoughts and what I really, really want to know from the member opposite is, will she please tell me, has she read the actual Bill 112? Could she please point out where it talks about housing in this bill, because I cannot even find the word "housing" in this Bill 112?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Yes, indeed, this bill is about housing, and let me just give you an anecdote. When I first moved to Mississauga in 2002, my mom, who was a single mom, was able to put down a down payment on a townhouse. That townhouse 22 years ago was about \$200,000. Fast-forward 20 years, when I was first elected as a member: As a single woman on an MPP's salary, I would not be able to afford to put down a down payment on that same townhome, which is now costing around \$900,000. Essentially, we are pricing our young people out of the market. Basic economics—it's supply and demand. If we don't have enough supply, the price of housing goes up.

I talked to a lot of my constituents during the election and continuously, and what they say is, they want their young people to be able to buy a home and finally move out of their basement. So this bill is going to put us on a path towards meeting our targets. Mississauga has a target of 120,000 starts, and this bill will bring us steps closer to achieving that goal over the next 10 years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank the member for Mississauga Centre for a very thoughtful speech on a very important topic. The topic we're speaking about here is about two of the fastest-growing municipalities in Ontario but also two of the largest. When we look at a city like Brampton, which is about 700,000 people, this is bigger than the region of Durham. This is bigger than the region of Niagara, with a smaller landmass. Mississauga is similar—even bigger and again smaller landmasses.

I think this government trusts the people of Mississauga, trusts the people of Brampton and trusts the people of Caledon to make decisions that impact them. Those same residents trusted this government back by electing PC members in each one of those impacted ridings.

Could the member talk a little bit about the importance of trusting our municipal partners and giving them the responsibility to serve their residents?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: That's a great question. The member is right in saying that in the last election, we, in fact, took over all the NDP seats in Brampton. The deputy leader of that party lost her seat. We are trusting our municipal partners.

I want to congratulate Brampton because actually, when I look at Brampton's housing starts, they are above and beyond Mississauga's. Over the last decade, Brampton had 30,531 starts when compared to Mississauga's 24,124. There's something that's right that's happening in the city of Brampton. We need to continue supporting our two fastest-growing municipalities across the province of Ontario.

Because as you know, we have many more immigrants coming to our thriving city, to our thriving province. The federal leader has announced 500,000 new immigrants will be coming. We know a lot of them will be settling in the city of Brampton, in the city of Mississauga—two beautiful cities but with two distinct identities. That's what we are celebrating here today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member has talked about trust, and trust comes with consultation. This is a quote from Caledon mayor Annette Groves. She acknowledged that when the dissolution was announced, it was not a move she wanted, and the town would need to be made whole as it expects to have lots of greenfield development in the coming years. This government has removed the development charges through Bill 23. This actually further disenfranchises the city of Caledon because they will not have the infrastructure dollars to actually build the housing that the government is talking about.

The mayor of Brampton has actually said that this move will cost billions of dollars. In fact, he has actually threatened to take the city of Mississauga to court to be compensated for the investment in that infrastructure. If I was a Brampton member, I would be very concerned about

hiking up those property taxes, about going to court and about essentially turning your back on the city of Brampton.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: What does the member have to say about that? Because this guy has got a lot to say all the time.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I'd like to remind the member that the current mayor of Brampton actually used to be the leader of our party. I think it's very clear that our party did not turn our backs on the people of Brampton, which was very evident in the last election. We took all of the NDP seats. For the first time, we are giving Brampton a second hospital, a 24-hour emergency department. We are building a medical school in Brampton. We're building transit. We're building infrastructure. The people of Brampton really saw the leadership of our Premier, our party and our then-candidates and have turned them into MPPs. In fact, we have a unique situation where the region of Peel has elected all PC members of this party.

We are trusting not only the voters of Brampton but also our municipal leaders. We're looking forward to the dissolution on January 1, 2025.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from London North Centre has a point of order.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Today, I would like to express condolences to the Mastronardi family on the passing of my father-in-law, Genuino Domenico Mastronardi, also known as Jim. Jim was born in Villa Canali in the Abruzzo region of Italy. He came to Leamington in 1951, via the Halifax pier, like many other Italian immigrants who were hoping to build a new life in Canada. Jim will be missed by his children Nancy, Debbie and my partner, Jim Mastronardi. Sending love and condolences. Rest in peace.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

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Ms. Jessica Bell: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel. This bill was introduced very recently, and it looks like this bill is going to move through the Legislature extraordinarily quickly, with an inadequate amount of consultation—and that's me being polite. It's a very sudden decision that affects millions of people.

It's hard to guess at the Conservatives' true motivations here. Is it a legacy for Hazel McCallion? Will it mean that the government can pass those MZO's without local government approval or support? It's hard to say.

It's also interesting that we're debating this bill at a time when inflation is at record highs, when we have an affordable housing crisis, when people are being evicted from their homes, when hospitals cannot meet the need. When I go canvassing, people can't even find a family doctor. It's surprising that this is what we spend our time debating, when it seems like very few people are asking for this.

This is what we'd like to see: We would like to see a transition board that properly reflects the people who are

going to be directly impacted by this decision, and that includes the workers who are employed at the regional level, who are very worried about what this means for their livelihood, their jobs and the work that they do for the region.

We want to see this bill goes to committee, so elected officials, residents from Brampton and Mississauga and Caledon, can come and speak about what this bill means to them. We can hear from municipalities and experts who can talk about the tax ramifications of this bill, as well as the impact on service quality of this bill, because right now, we really don't know; I would say that neither do you. Yet we're passing this bill at record speed, and now we hear that it's not even going to go to committee—a classic run-fast-and-break-things Conservative approach.

So let's talk about what's in the bill. This act would dissolve the regional municipality of Peel and create single-tier municipalities for the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon. What concerns us is what's actually missing in the bill. There is nothing to ensure that the transition board that is going to be created fairly represents the interests of the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. And it's shocking to me when I look at the bill that there can be a maximum of five people on this transition board. That is one mighty small transition board. The minister can decide who is on this board.

The word "consult" is missing from the bill. The act of consultation is now missing from the process, and there is nothing requiring the Conservatives to create a transition board that would allow for workers or businesses or the mayors of the region and city planners of the region to sit on this transition board, to ensure that it goes smoothly and that the breakup is amicable, that service quality is not impacted and that taxes don't go up. This government already has a record of giving big development fee discounts to developers who are building housing that is not affordable, and as a consequence, people all across the GTHA are opening their emails with their property tax bill or getting their bill in the mail, and they're seeing big property tax hikes of 2% to 7%. That's a Conservative tax hike. That's a Doug Ford tax hike, because you're running fast and breaking things, and you're not thinking about the consequences.

There is no requirement for the Conservatives to publish the findings of this transition board with respect to the costs, benefits and risks of various options. Using an evidence-based decision-making approach with consultation included doesn't seem like that's something this government is looking at doing, even though this bill will impact well over a million people. It's very surprising.

There is no requirement that the Conservatives obtain the approval of local councils for its dissolution plan, or even to consider their viewpoints. Wow. There's no provision to compensate any municipality for the loss of access to any regional asset it helped pay for. As I recall, I watched the press conference with Mayor Crombie and Mayor Brown; maybe some of you did too. It was really surprising to hear Mayor Brown talk about the services

that they had just recently invested in that were in the Mississauga boundaries, and they were worried: “What does it mean for them? Do we have to go out and put another tax hike on residents again so that we build them again? Because we’ve just built them, but now we could potentially lose them.” There was real anger in that press conference—anger and surprise. I don’t actually think that’s how you should treat municipalities. It’s a concern.

What also concerns us is what, in particular, is going to happen to Caledon. We look at Mississauga. It’s a big city; it’s a population of 718,000. We look at Brampton—650,000. You know, perhaps they do have the capacity to exist as a single-tier municipality. I mean, Mississauga has been asking for it. But what do you do in a situation like Caledon, which has a population of 76,000? What will that mean for their property tax base if they have to turn around and say, “Okay, now we have to provide our own paramedic services, our own road services, our own garbage collection services, our own affordable housing services. What does this mean for us, given that our tax base is a lot smaller than some of these other regions?” My hope is that cabinet gave that a thought before they moved forward with this bill and my request is that there is proper consultation, real listening, that happens so you could do your due diligence and get your facts before you decide on the plan to proceed. Because it could have some pretty significant ramifications.

It is not clear, also, whether these three existing municipalities will retain their current boundaries. Or are you looking at redrawing their boundaries for them? Have you talked to them about that? I wonder. That is very concerning. And some regional reconstruction proposals that we’re hearing about—it could look like, maybe, that Caledon’s rural areas will be added onto Orangeville or Dufferin county, and Bill 112 doesn’t rule out these annexations. The reason why I bring this up is because there’s just a lot of confusion, there’s a lot of uncertainty. What does this mean? What does this mean for regions? What does this mean for people? They’re concerned and they’re worried and they’re wondering why this is the government’s focus, given all the other crises that we have right now with housing, with inflation, with child care. So many other crises, yet we focus on this.

It’s also important to note that this dissolution was not sought by Brampton or Caledon. They didn’t ask for it and this is a request they’re already making: How will this government ensure that a dissolution will benefit all three local municipalities and not just Mississauga, the one that pushed for it? What’s the plan to ensure everybody plays fair and everyone comes out okay? I don’t see it in this bill.

Specifically, I want to look at what Brampton mayor Patrick Brown said in more detail. He said that this dissolution will require Brampton to replace whatever regional assets may be transferred to Mississauga, including the Peel region headquarters or regional water and waste water facilities, which are currently located in Mississauga. So what does that mean? These are genuine questions. They’re also wondering whether it will require

Brampton to replace any regional assets or deliver all the services currently delivered by the region as a whole. For example, Peel police could continue under a joint board and Peel’s waste water services could be delivered by an independent utility with the municipalities as shareholders, each retaining their existing equity. All these people are musing around what this could mean, how are things going to work out, who’s going to pay who, because they don’t know. None of this has been worked out or discussed. People are worried and scared, so it’s a bit of a surprise to see this bill.

I want to talk a little bit about stakeholder responses to the bill and what people are saying after they’ve seen it. We’ve been hearing a lot. One is a statement from CUPE president Fred Hahn. He said, “Your government has embarked on a large and transformative project with Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act (Peel Dissolution), 2023.” CUPE “is a key actor in the region with several local unions representing thousands of workers that provide exceptional services to residents. We are requesting that CUPE and its locals be included in formal consultation on this legislation and offer our expertise for this reform.

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“CUPE has the in-depth granular knowledge of the region that would be an asset to the transition board that will be set up to execute any migration of services to constituent municipalities. Including a CUPE representative on the transition board would give the government access to decades of knowledge on municipal reform, not least of which is how to harmonize workers’ collective agreements”—something to think about—“which straddle across the three municipalities. An appointment to the board would channel one of the region’s greatest assets—its workers—to this complex process.”

For this kind of feedback that we only have a short period of time to give, this kind of feedback should have been presented in committee so that you could hear from the most-impacted residents, stakeholders, local boards of trade; instead, this government isn’t going to hear that feedback, and I’ve seen what happens when this government moves quickly with bills. I saw it with Bill 23, and then in future bills, you correct your mistakes and bring back changes. These are people’s lives.

Next, I want to quote from the Toronto Star. It was an op-ed by Patrick Brown. He says:

“This is an exciting time for Brampton. We are a vibrant and mature community that is the fastest-growing large city in Ontario. Our population is projected to grow by 41% by 2051 and we have a plan in place to build the homes those families will need. With this rapid expansion, outpacing that of our neighbouring municipalities, the dissolution of Peel makes sense, but it will have a price tag—a big one.

“We all know that Mississauga has wanted independence from Peel for a long time. Mayor Bonnie Crombie supports the dissolution of Peel because it will save Mississauga \$1 billion. What she conveniently doesn’t mention is the fact that dissolution will cost Brampton and Caledon billions in turn.”

There are winners and there are losers. One wonders, given the crises and the difficulties people are facing, why this government would want to randomly identify winners and losers given the state that we're in. Is this really what this government wants to focus on right now?

This is Patrick Brown again:

"The truth is that the cost of replacing or upgrading infrastructure, future growth and other financial factors cannot responsibly be ignored when considering an undertaking like this. These costs are real—and they are enormous.

"For example, the two water and waste treatment plants that service Peel are located in Mississauga. What Mayor Crombie won't acknowledge is that Brampton helped to pay for these essential facilities and the dissolution of Peel means Brampton will lose them as they have reached capacity—which also means a service agreement between the municipalities is not an option."

These are really complicated decisions, very complicated. These are agreements that don't need to be severed at this time, but it looks like you're proceeding.

"Having to rebuild our water and waste water system from scratch is going to be both expensive and urgent—our research estimates at least \$4 billion. Ontario is in the middle of a housing crisis, yet we have been forced to turn down four housing projects recently because of a lack of servicing capacity. It is now time to pay for new water and waste water treatment plants in Brampton and just when the bill is due, Mississauga wants to leave without paying.

"Brampton has also contributed to four Peel Regional Police facilities that are located in Mississauga. Policing costs across the region have been calculated using an assessment-based formula, meaning that every household in Peel pays the same amount.

"Mayor Crombie claims that they subsidize our policing costs, but this is simply incorrect. Data supplied by Peel Regional Police shows that Mississauga makes greater use of policing services, including more calls for service, due to their larger population. Additionally, Mississauga uses Peel police's specialized marine unit, something Brampton obviously has no need for."

The reason why I'm taking the time to read all of this out is because you can already see the tension, the conflict that's being created by two major municipalities. Why? Why? What's the benefit? I genuinely don't understand. It's surprising.

Then there's Caledon's mayor, the child in the middle. Annette Groves said that she did not want to leave the Peel region and described Caledon as the child of the Peel divorce, given its small size, despite arguably facing more financial risks than either Mississauga or Brampton, because they have a very small tax base. Groves said, "We are confident that we will be taken care of throughout this process." I hope so, because when I read this bill, I don't see the guardrails that need to be in place to ensure that the residents of Caledon are cared for. I see a power grab. I see some really drastic moves. But I'm not seeing the careful thought and the evidence-based decision-making and a plan for consultation and a plan to be transparent and accountable. That's not that I see in this bill. If I was a

Caledon resident, I'd be understandably worried, especially since I already got a property tax hike because of the Conservatives' decision to give developers a big fee discount, and the cost of all those services is now being pushed onto residents. I can just see an even bigger property tax bill coming because of this meddling in municipal governance.

I also have heard the Conservatives opposite talk a lot about how this is really about building housing and speeding up housing supply. There is no question in my mind that we need to build more housing for Ontarians to live in, but I am not convinced at all—and I haven't heard an argument yet that makes sense that explains how getting rid of a regional level of government is going to speed up the construction of homes for Ontarians. I'm not seeing that argument yet. I certainly don't see it in the bill.

There's no question that we need to build more housing. I urge this government to take a good, hard look at the kind of housing you're building and who is buying it. Because what we're seeing across Ontario as we build more homes is the kind of 600-square-foot homes that investors really like. We're seeing the big 4,000-square-foot homes on quarter-acre or acre lots that are relatively cheaper to build, and they make a lot of profit. But what we're not seeing is the homes that people can afford, that Ontarians can afford, that MPPs can afford. We're not seeing that.

What we're also seeing, when we really look at housing statistics, is we're seeing that each and every year, it's not first-time homebuyers that are getting into the market; they're being pushed out. The people that are getting into the market are the people that already have a home or two homes or three homes or four homes, and they're using equity in the properties that they already own to outbid and out-compete first-time homebuyers, who are feeling bitter, angry, resentful, frustrated. They feel like their dreams of home ownership have gone up in smoke.

I don't see anything in this bill—I haven't actually seen anything serious by this government over the last five years to address the issue of who is buying homes and how we're going to make sure that it's first-time homebuyers that get those homes at an affordable price. I'm not seeing that at all. Because if we want to talk about costs, the cost of buying of home, we need to tackle that issue. It's building and addressing speculation, protecting renters, and building affordable homes and supportive homes. It's not just about supply. It's just one leg in the chair, and the chair is not going to hold up unless you deal with those other legs as well. And I'm not seeing this government do it. I really don't.

We're going to be here for a while tonight. Maybe in some of the questions, some of the MPPs opposite can explain clearly how it is that getting rid of a regional tier of government is actually going to build homes for Ontarians that people can afford. I'm all for it. I'd love to see a well-reasoned, logical argument that isn't just sound bites but has some evidence and some teeth to it.

My closing remarks are this: This is a significant change in how governance happens in Ontario. At a minimum, that transition board needs to be accountable and representative. All three municipalities and the workers need to have a say, and they need to be part of that board.

And this bill needs to go to committee. We need to hear from residents. We need to hear from stakeholders. We need to get this right. It's not just about speed; it's about creating legislation that works for everyone: Mississauga and Brampton and Caledon.

1840

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question to the member opposite. We have many municipalities around Ontario. Of course, some of the ones we're talking about here are significantly growing. We have very ambitious goals, as we all grow, in Simcoe county. We know we need to build more homes and certainly the municipalities have to work a little bit closer together.

Something I brought up earlier is just the amount of things you hear from a lot of folks who want to contribute, who want to help in the region, but they have to go through all this red tape and permitting to go from one municipality to the other. They just wish, "I would just want a one-stop shop." That's something we've heard, obviously, through former mayor McCallion. She saw at the time the merit in this particular bill: (a) It's something that they've been asking for in the region, but (b) it's also going to help with the growth issues there and help them really simplify things for people, and for people interacting at the regional level, help them to do business a little easier.

So I just want to ask her, why are we preventing people from doing business a little bit easier?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Barrie–Innisfil. When we're thinking about making things a little bit easier, I have heard feedback from stakeholders about the flaws and the issues with the provincial government's one-stop shop when it comes to getting housing and infrastructure approved. My request is that the provincial government look closely at that one-stop shop to make sure that it is fast and efficient as well.

When I hear experts like AMO come in and speak about the impact of this government's bills on housing and housing starts, the message they send to us loud and clear is that Bill 23 in particular is looking at leading to up to a \$5-billion reduction in the amount of money that's available for infrastructure, and that infrastructure is necessary to get housing built and serviced. We are already seeing housing starts in some regions being cancelled or delayed because there is no money for infrastructure.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from University–Rosedale. As always, she lays out a fairly strong argument, but really with a lot of empathy for the people of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon.

She quite rightly pointed out there is no requirement for the Ford government to publish the findings of the board with respect to the costs, benefits and risks of various restructuring options prior to making a decision. This lack of transparency is, I would say, discombobulating.

We've gone through it in Waterloo region. There is a report somewhere in one of these backrooms about us potentially also being dissolved as a region. This destabilizes democracy, and preventing those local municipalities from either participating or negotiating this dissolution demonstrates such a disdain for our democracy in this province.

I wanted the member to talk about, what's the ripple-effect when a government is so reckless with their legislation?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Waterloo for your question. In Toronto, we have seen the direct impact of the Conservatives' decision to meddle in democracy. Shortly after the Conservatives were elected, they turned around and eliminated the number of wards that Toronto has, drastically, in the middle of an election. It was disconcerting. It was upsetting. It impacted that election, and people haven't forgotten.

That also happened in London, where there was a decision to change how votes were going to be counted—they were moving towards a ranked ballot system—as well as change Kingston's election process as well. They were also looking at moving forward with ranked ballots.

Municipalities are telling us when they come into committee that the rapid changes to governance, to planning, are impacting their ability to do their job and serve residents and build housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the member for her speech today. You know, I've been listening here all day. Someone was saying, "Oh, the word 'housing' is not in this bill." But the intent of this bill is to avoid some duplication. The goal is—as we say, there's no silver bullet. We need tools in the tool box to build houses quicker. We all agree that we need to build more housing, more affordable housing and more housing of all sizes, including the missing middle.

We really need the municipalities to get on board and help get these shovels in the ground. So the proposed legislation, if passed, would remove duplications in the application approval processes, empowering our municipal partners to get homes and infrastructure built faster. Does the member opposite not agree that a shorter, less complex approval process would allow our province's private and non-for-profit sectors to build homes in Ontario faster?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. This bill does a whole lot more than just eliminate duplication of housing approvals. It's looking at getting rid of an entire regional level of governance. So it's a lot more than that.

And there are many ways for us to build more homes to meet the needs of Ontarians. In fact, in Bill 97, in clause-by-clause, I introduced an amendment to end exclusionary zoning and allow more missing-middle homes as of right, and the Conservatives voted it down. So there's a lot of talk about wanting to increase supply. But this Conservative government had a clear opportunity to move forward

with creating more housing supply for Ontarians to live in, and this government chose to vote it down.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: The member asked, where is the money for infrastructure? So I would like to point her to our most recent budget, which clearly lays out \$180 billion of infrastructure investments, \$40 billion into building new hospitals. We're building transit. We're building schools. We're building highways. We're building long-term care. So this is unprecedented infrastructure investments in our province. And when it comes to the development charges, it is an actual fact that the city of Mississauga is sitting on \$230 million in reserve. And guess what? By building more homes, the municipalities will be able to collect more property taxes, therefore increasing their revenue. We really need to have this outside-of-the-box thinking in order to build these homes.

So I want to ask the member opposite, why does her party keep on voting no to investing in infrastructure in the province of Ontario?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member opposite. I do encourage you to look very carefully at what AMO has been presenting when it comes to infrastructure investments. They have been very clear about the impact of Bill 23 on the ability for municipalities to provide the infrastructure that we need to build homes and to service them, in particular. Sewage, electricity, day cares, parks: That's all negatively impacted by the Conservatives' recent decisions. By giving developers a big tax cut, it has restricted the amount of money that's available for infrastructure. And in the long term, that will negatively impact our ability to provide homes for Ontarians, both current Ontarians that live here and Ontarians that want to call themselves Ontarians in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad that I was here for your speech and always appreciate learning a few things. One of the things that is not laid out in the bill and, certainly, we haven't heard any discussion from the government—and, frankly, you didn't raise it today, but you might have thoughts—I'm wondering what's going to happen when it comes to the school board. We have got Peel District School Board: different municipalities, different folks all under that umbrella.

And if we don't get to have committee—which the government, in its infinite wisdom, has decided we're not going to have—and we don't get to hear from folks who can walk us through what that would look like or weigh in about how this should unfold and should happen, do you have any thoughts on what this could look like for students and families?

Ms. Jessica Bell: That's an excellent question. I see the Minister of Education is here. Maybe that's a question that the minister could ask directly.

What exactly is the plan? How is the breakup of Peel and Brampton and Mississauga and Caledon to affect school boards? When I think about the Toronto District

School Board, what I'm seeing very clearly is that there are cuts coming to staffing positions. We're looking at losing over 522 staffing positions. It will directly affect the quality of schooling that our children have, especially kids that are really struggling to catch up, kids that are special needs. They're finding that they don't have the vice-principals, the reading assistants, the educational assistants they need to really get ahead, and their parents are understandably very worried. And I can imagine that the residents in Mississauga, Caledon and Brampton are feeling something similar as well.

1850

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I'm delighted to be here to talk about a vitally important bill and to speak and voice my support for Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act. I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing described the objective of this bill as clearly as it could be explained, Madam Speaker, and that is that this bill looks towards the future. The purpose is to prepare the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon for the decades ahead.

Speaker, by 2041, the combined population of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon is expected to exceed two million. In 2021, the enumerated population of Brampton was 656,480, which represents a change of 10.6% from the same number in 2016. If you compare that to the provincial average of 5.8% over the same time or the national average of 5.2% at the same time, it's safe to say that not only is Brampton a very large municipality but it is very fast-growing.

By 2051, Mississauga is expected to grow to 995,000 people, with Brampton catching up at nearly 985,000 people. Brampton continues to grow rapidly, along with the rest of the Peel region. Speaker, Brampton and Mississauga represent two of the top 10 largest cities not just in Ontario, but all of Canada. And the growing municipality of Caledon is already among the top 80 largest cities in Canada.

Caledon, actually, by 2051, is expected to almost quadruple in size to 300,000 people. I remember when Brampton was 300,000 people; it was about 20 years ago. We are a city that really has done the right thing when we look at the challenges we have faced as a province, as a society—particularly my generation has faced—around the lack of housing supply to meet the growing demand of our community. Brampton is a city that put shovels in the ground, did the right thing and got houses built.

Now, under 15 years of the Liberal government, we weren't rewarded for that. What did we get instead? We got neglected by government after successive government. We had Peel Memorial, which was the same hospital that I was born in, the same hospital many folks of my generation were born in—it was actually shut down under the Liberal government, while we were building houses and experiencing rapid growth. We saw the GTA west corridor, which was a bypass highway for Brampton—every other major municipality seems to be able to get a

bypass highway around their municipality. When Brampton came forward and wanted their own bypass highway, we were neglected. We were left in the dark. We weren't allowed to have that in Brampton.

We see this even still. When our government put forward a very clear commitment around Highway 413, we saw the region and we saw even other municipalities say Brampton can't have a highway. If you go around downtown Toronto, you will see lots of "Stop the 413" lawn signs. Well, Madam Speaker, during my campaign in Brampton North, there were about 2,000 PC Party "Graham McGregor" signs, and I think the voter results actually speak for themselves. If we talk about trust of the residents, the residents trusted this government, this party, to get it done. What does getting it done look like? It means not only are we getting it done for today, but we're getting it done for decades and decades into the future.

The region of Peel—the cities of Brampton and Mississauga and the town of Caledon—represent a significant portion of Ontario's economic engine powering this country, and our government clearly takes the future of these three municipalities seriously. The residents of these municipalities deserve to be taken care of. That's exactly what our government is doing.

Home to some of the most amazing people you will meet anywhere, our region, our part of the world, our little corner of the country is represented by a number of different religions, cultures, ethnicities—you name it. I've heard members in this House and elsewhere say Ontario represents the world in one province, but I think we can all agree that Peel region represents that on its own.

I couldn't be more proud to represent a riding in the region. Brampton North is a place that some of the most hard-working people in this country, thankfully, chose to call home and make the community into one of the greatest places to live. However, we are growing, and I've stood in this House before and I've stressed the need and the importance of combatting Ontario's housing crisis. This is a PC government that recognizes that severity, and that recognition starts by acknowledging where we live.

The province of Ontario is the greatest place in the world. It's no secret that people want to live here. People want to come to Ontario. They want to become part of here. They want to become Canadians. Dare I say, they want to become residents of Brampton.

We're creating jobs all over the place, and we need people to come here and fill them. We need more people to come to Ontario, bring their skills, bring their talent, bring their hard work, their ideas, but also bring their cultures, their languages, their music, their food, their clothing. One of the beautiful things about Canada: There's no conflict between being proud of where you came from and being proud of where you are. Myself, I'm a proud child of Scottish and northern Irish immigrants, but I'm also a very proud Canadian and a very proud Brampton boy, as noted by my Instagram handle, *bramptongraham*. Follow me on Instagram.

In Ontario, we've got a labour shortage of about 400,000 people, give or take, and our government—we're

hard at work to find ways to get more people into the skilled trades to combat that shortage, and find ways to get newcomers from around the world to bring their families with them to benefit our province and begin to call it home. We in the PC Party, on the government side, want more people to come to Ontario, not less people to come to Ontario.

With our province in this historic predicament of the labour shortage, the housing shortage, the issues that we're facing, our government is taking bold action and we're breaking from the status quo all across the board. We know this is the only way to prepare Ontario for the future. When you break from the status quo in the way that we have, when you innovate, when you refuse to do things the way that they have always been done, you're going to get some anxiety, you're going to get some naysayers, you're going to get people who have an issue with it. But we know that if we listen to the doubters, if we listen to the naysayers, Ontario will continue to be in the mess that we were when this government—when the PCs inherited the mess that the Liberals left after 15 years. If we keep doing things the exact same way, we're going to continue to get the same results.

We know that the work needs to be done today to prepare for the future, and these municipalities need to prepare to house and accommodate newcomers. It's as simple as that. I've always been a firm believer that when somebody new comes to our home, we want to make sure that they feel welcome. To be honest, just seeing how many successful people there are in Brampton North and all the ridings across Peel, it's a very heartwarming thing to see what people have been able to accomplish to push our province forward.

How would we feel if we welcomed everybody into Ontario—the 500,000 new Canadians that we're projected to have in 2025, 60% of them coming to Ontario. How would we feel if we welcomed them to Ontario but we didn't build homes for them to live in—homes that they could start a family in, in a community that they want to live in and help grow? We need highways for people to drive on. We need to build hospitals and long-term-care beds for people to go to when they get sick. These are all important parts of welcoming people to the Canadian family, to the Ontario family, and these are things that we cannot neglect as legislators in this House.

It's ironic when you hear from some members of this House again trying to say what's right for Brampton, what's wrong for Brampton. I certainly intend to support this legislation. I've got a good feeling about the other four Brampton members; I've got an even better feeling about the 12 Peel caucus members, Peel MPPs, as well.

We've heard it before from other members of other parties, where our government brings legislation forward to build things like the second hospital, the Peel Memorial hospital, which was closed down under a Liberal government in 2007. We're bringing that back. We have members that aren't from Brampton voting against Brampton, voting against Brampton's interests and telling us we don't deserve that new hospital.

We bring in Highway 413 finally, the GTA west corridor highway—finally, a bypass highway around Brampton, not only saving commuters tons of time, not only bringing in half a trillion in investment, not only creating thousands of construction jobs, but also being vitally important to the commercial trucking network. If you haven't been to Brampton lately, we've got a whole ton of truck drivers. Come on down to Brampton North; we can meet them. But what do members that are not from Brampton do? They'll stand in this House and they'll vote against Brampton's interests. I think you can see where I'm going with this, Speaker. When you come from a city—and this might be hard for other members to understand—that's been continually neglected, you can understand that the city might want a little bit more control over their own terrain, a little bit more control, a little bit more say, so that they can put things forward that are in their own interests.

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We know that, in Ontario, we need to build, we need to get things done for the residents we serve and the residents whom we will serve when the new ones come in who are going to choose our province as home. For our economy, we need people to move here, but if we invite them to come to our home, to our province, if we sell them the Canadian dream but we don't provide them a place to live, then who will we be as legislators? How could you hold your head high as a member of this House?

Brampton North, my riding, was once a place that people would move to in search of an affordable home outside of Toronto, but now people of all ages are getting priced out of Brampton. I spoke earlier about some of the members—and I see them here today—who voted against the second hospital, Peel Memorial Hospital, for Brampton, the same hospital that members of my generation were born in, and now similar members vote against the rights of those same members of my generation who still want to live in Brampton but they're just simply priced out. They'll never be able to afford a home if we continue to go with the status quo—the party of no, the party of the status quo.

Now, we know, and the residents of Brampton know, that this PC government has their backs. Whether it's building a hospital, long-term care, highways, houses, only this party will get it done.

Last year, the federal government announced that Canada broke its record with over 430,000 permanent residents welcomed to the country in 2022, and by 2025 they hope to see the number go to half a million, and so do I; so do members of the PC Party. We know we need to grow—not only grow economically but grow culturally as well. Diversity makes Ontario better, but at the same time as we're fighting, we have a lot of issues that we need to make sure we're looking after.

Now, immigration will help with the labour shortage, but we need to make sure that we're building homes for people to live in when they get here, homes that will meet their needs. We need to make sure that people are able to drive on roads or take transit to take their kids to school.

We need to make sure they're able to take their parents to the doctor. We've got to make sure they're able to get to work. We need to have jobs for them to work in, Speaker, and we need to build opportunity and jobs for people to work at when they get here.

A recent study conducted by the Ontario Real Estate Association found that two thirds of Ontarians polled are spending well over one third of their budget on housing. On average, it takes millennials 20 years to save for a down payment. In Mississauga, development charges add approximately \$127,000 to the cost of a home. Across the GTA, before a single shovel hits the ground, the average homebuyer is already facing an average of \$116,900 in municipal development charges and fees.

Speaker, to put that in context—because we speak about numbers like this regularly in the House—I want to explain a little bit about what that would mean for a family, a prospective homebuyer: \$116,900 over the life of the mortgage could be up to \$800 per month. That's \$800 per month. Now, to members of this House—MPPs are pretty well paid—maybe \$800 doesn't sound like a lot of money, but I've got to tell you, Speaker, for people who are just starting out, people of my generation, people in my community, of which Brampton is one of the largest cities in terms of front-line workers, \$800 is a heck of a lot of money.

This kind of cost is a barrier to people attaining the dream of home ownership. They're barriers that we're working hard to remove, and this bill is going to introduce effective measures that will prepare the municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon for upcoming generations.

Housing is a huge part, a massive part of preparing ourselves for the years and the decades ahead, which is why our government has taken unprecedented action in getting shovels in the ground faster. In 2022, Ontario saw the second-highest number of housing starts since 1988, with just over 96,000 new homes. We also broke ground on nearly 15,000 new purpose-built rentals, which is the highest number ever on record, as we're aiming to meet our goal of 1.5 million by 2031.

When talking about the progress in this year, housing starts across Ontario are up 16% between January and April from where they were the year before. Rental housing—over 7,000 rental starts; that's double what that number was from January to April.

These may not be priorities for every member of the House, and I understand that. You've got to face your own voters when you go to see them during the election. We all made our own commitments; we all spoke to voters in our own communities. But I've got to tell you, these kinds of issues, for my voters in Brampton North, are a massive priority. When we talk about getting shovels in the ground, getting houses built—that is a massive priority. When we talk about having effective health care and new hospitals and new long-term-care homes and a new medical school coming to Brampton—that is a massive priority. When we talk about getting access to better jobs, bigger paycheques,

being able to take more of that paycheque home at the end of two weeks—that's a massive priority.

What this bill will do, if passed, is make sure that Brampton is in control of its own destiny and in control of its own priorities. I hear members of the House talking about the rush, the rush, the rush. I think the plan that we're putting forward in this bill—and one of the reasons I'm so keen to support it is because it's actually a very reasoned and thought-out plan to announce our intention, where we're going, but to lay the steps out on how we make the decisions to get there. We'll hear during debate and we've heard already that there are a lot of questions to answer when you split up two large municipalities like Brampton and Mississauga. Quite frankly, this bill doesn't include the answers—because we know that we still need to get there with the panel, working with the municipalities. But by having good partnerships with the mayors of Brampton, Mississauga, Caledon, with the regional government, with our regional partners, our government is very confident we'll be in a good place in January 2025, when we'll be able to present the full plan. Frankly, as a Brampton resident, as a Brampton representative, I'm very confident in delivering a better outcome not only for my residents in the now but for my residents in the future.

I'll be clear: The only way forward for Ontario is for us to plan for the expected and inevitable growth. Liberal neglect for over a decade somehow overlooked this important step in planning. That's no surprise. Frankly, they've proven recently that they are no longer able to plan for an election, let alone for this province's future.

Municipalities have to start getting ready now by addressing the barriers in their way. We have unnecessary delays leading to a rise in the cost of building the infrastructure and the homes that we need. We heard from planners and architects that every month of delays on a new home being built can add up to \$3,300 per month in terms of cost. You take that over a year—that's almost \$40,000 on the cost of a project. You take that over five years—that's almost \$200,000 on the cost of a project in delays alone, never mind the cost of materials, the cost of taxes, the cost of development charges, the cost of labour, the cost of the land. Through delays and through inaction, we actually add to the price of a home. So when we take action to reduce those barriers, to reduce the delays in terms of housing construction, it actually works to make housing cheaper.

I've been elected for a little under a year.

Interjections.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you. I thank my colleagues, but I really thank my residents for the trust they put in me. What I told them, what the member for Brampton South or the member for Brampton East, the members for Brampton Centre and Brampton West—what we told Brampton residents is that we would have their backs and we would put them first. We're doing that through the Peel Memorial Hospital. We're doing that through the Brampton medical school—the first time in over a century. We're doing it through Highway 413. And now we're doing it by

putting Brampton residents in control of Brampton's destiny. I think that's something that, while it is a break from the status quo, while it is bold, while it is innovative, gives us a lot of reasons to be confident. Working together, we're going to make sure that Brampton has a bright future.

Thank you for your time.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Sarah Jama: The dissolution of the region of Peel would require the replacement of certain regional assets such as water and waste water facilities located in parts of the region.

We know that this government has been unable to support certain Indigenous communities in this province with access to clean water that's usable and safe.

So how can this government, with no real consultation or involvement from local communities regarding this bill, be trusted to implement such drastic changes on such short timelines while making sure people have what they need? Where is the respect for the current infrastructure that exists?

Mr. Graham McGregor: While I thank my colleague for the question, I have to disagree a little bit with the premise, because I think the timelines that have been set out are eminently reasonable.

We've announced our intention, with this bill, that we will have the independent cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the town of Caledon—by January 2025, we'll have our road map to get there, through the work of the independent panel, working with the mayor of Caledon, the mayor of Mississauga, the mayor of Brampton and the chair at the region of Peel. That will give plenty of time for the 2026 fall election—for prospective candidates to put their plans forward on how they want to govern and how they want to proceed.

We could delay forever. I think we've struck a great balance in terms of being reasonable and taking our time and doing it right.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the member from Brampton North for his presentation.

Speaker, over the coming years, we're going to be working with our municipal partners in the region of Peel to give them the tools and the autonomy, as the member of Brampton North spoke about, to operate efficiently and deliver on our shared priorities, like building houses. At the same time—and this is an important distinction—in the legislation, if passed, any changes will support residences by ensuring that local services are maintained in a cost-effective way.

I'd like the member from Brampton North to talk about the role of the transition board in effecting my last point.

Mr. Graham McGregor: That's a great question from the member from the member for Whitby, and that's exactly what I was alluding to in the previous answer.

We've announced our intention, so we know where we're going. But we also know that we don't have all the

answers today, but we will have all the answers as we get there in January 2025. That's when our intention is to present a finalized plan on the exact nuts and bolts of how things are going to go, and that will give more than a year and a half before any municipal political leadership runs for the election.

Now I want to take the time to give a bit of a shout-out to the city of Brampton. There was a time when Brampton, municipally, was in a gridlock. That's not the case anymore. I'm happy to share more of that in the following questions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le député de Brampton North.

I was listening to you speaking, and you talked about how important it's going to be for this board—but there's no mention of consultations in this bill. You also mentioned building houses; there's no mention of building homes in this bill. Both of these points I brought up are not my questions.

My question would be, if this bill is so good and protects the people of Mississauga, Brampton and—what's the word?

Mr. Graham McGregor: Caledon.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Caledon; sorry—why do we put a clause that reads, “No person is entitled to compensation as a result of the enactment of this act”? Why would you do that? If a person is harmed, there's a process for that. It's called legal process. Why would you prevent them from doing that?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I thank my colleague.

Frankly, any time we can educate on how to pronounce “Caledon” is a good day in the Legislature. As a boy from Brampton—they're just our neighbours to the north. It used to take less time to drive there, because traffic has gotten out of control, but that's a whole other story.

Maybe this quote could help shed a bit of light on some of my colleagues' concerns and hopefully allow them to support the bill. I'll quote local mayor Patrick Brown, who said, “As the region of Peel dissolves, we will work constructively to ensure Brampton taxpayers are treated fairly. I want to thank Premier Ford for assuring the residents of Brampton they will not be shortchanged during this process. We expect to work closely with the transition board to achieve a result that respects the taxpayers of Brampton, allows our city to continue its significant growth, and treats all municipalities within Peel region equitably.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member from Brampton North for his participation in debate this afternoon.

Speaker, when I look back over the history of governance reforms, especially in the municipal sector over the past 50, 60 years, we see that PC governments have taken the lead. In 1970, we saw that the PC government of the day made changes to bring about the regional municipi-

ality of Niagara and made changes in the regional governance structure. We saw, in the late 1990s, the government of Mike Harris taking action to modernize so many cities, including the city of Toronto, the city of Hamilton and others. And now, today, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we see efforts to be responsive to the needs of local constituents in the modernization of the Peel region.

I'm wondering, why is it that the Liberals and the NDP refuse to take action that would bring about meaningful progress when it comes to municipal reform to provide better services for the people of our communities?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank my colleague from Niagara West for the question. He's absolutely right; if we're not changing, if we're not adapting, if we're not modernizing, we're going to be left in the dust. I'll give a local example, right in Brampton.

There used to be the—I think it was the shire of Bramalea and the town of Brampton. Depending on which Legion you go to, that can still be a contentious topic. Around that time, there were still the same kind of arguments of people resisting change. They were afraid. And that's reasonable. I think part of political leadership is to reassure people and reassure the residents that political leadership has their backs.

I represent a riding with parts of Bramalea, old Bramalea, parts of Brampton. Things seem to work pretty good.

I think modernizing is good. The PC government is a modern party.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question concerns some of the issues that the mayor of Brampton raised in the press conference and in the media.

How is the government going to deal with some very real issues that have been raised, like the fact that the police headquarters for Peel is in Mississauga, or that the water treatment plant that Peel uses happens to be in Mississauga? What will that mean? Does that mean there will have to be new police headquarters built? What is the plan to make sure the services are redistributed fairly and taxpayers don't have to pay a whole lot of extra tax because there's now duplication on the local level?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank my colleague for that question—particularly about community safety in Brampton, because this is something near and dear to my heart, near and dear to many of the members.

I was actually at a community safety town hall with some of our local councillors, Peel police, bylaw, paramedics a few nights ago, last week. We talked about how sometimes coming from Hurontario and Derry, it can take 30 minutes for them to get to a call in Heart Lake or a call in Springdale. Part of Peel police's plans is to put a new police station in the northwest centre of Brampton, which will dramatically reduce those times.

To get to the meat of my colleague's question about how we handle that transition—I think that's exactly why we're taking the approach we are taking. The transition board will help to implement the province's clear expectation that affected municipalities work together

fairly, in a spirit of partnership, to ensure value for money and efficient, high-quality services for taxpayers. Where there are shared assets and services, the dissolution process would help ensure an equitable outcome for all residents, preserving their access to municipal services. We're going to continue to work with our partners and with the panel to make sure all the residents are looked after.

Brampton, we've got your back.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I've been listening to the debate throughout the afternoon on Bill 112, which is dissolving the region of Peel, and I feel like this debate tonight should have a theme. I'm thinking of a Monty Python movie, and I'm thinking of one particular quote: "The beatings will continue until morale improves." Because this is another example of a piece of legislation which sends out the signal that this is about housing and about addressing some really key issues in the province of Ontario, and yet it does not do that.

Certainly, this divorce, or this untangling, of Peel region is going to be messy.

We've also learned that this is now time-allocated. We'll be here till midnight tonight to rush this piece of legislation through. This piece of legislation is not going to go to committee, once again bypassing a long-standing parliamentary tradition of actually having consultation. Consultation was not part of this legislation at all, and I think that the citizens of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon will have some very legitimate questions about what is the motivation for this legislation.

The Premier and the minister talked about Hazel McCallion, who passed away, and how this was a long-standing promise to Hazel.

We know that the mayor of Mississauga has been very vocal about her desire to see the city of Mississauga be independent—and her potential run for leader of the Liberal Party, which is also very interesting. I think—and many people do think this—that this was meant to placate her and say, "Okay, listen, you have your city. Don't run for the Liberals." We'll see what happens with that. It's the Liberals; anything goes over there.

The housing question is really the most top-of-mind, because this province is facing a housing crisis. To date, everything that this government has done on housing or under the pretense of housing has not been effective. Carving up the greenbelt is not an effective way to address the housing crisis. Housing starts are actually going down in Ontario, based on budget 2023 and their own stats. Property taxes are skyrocketing because of Bill 23, because developers have got this gift from the government. They're costing taxpayers even more expenses with the extension of urban sprawl.

The member from University–Rosedale and myself are hosting a town hall on Wednesday evening because the concern across this province in the way that this government is pretending to handle the housing crisis is really

worrisome for the farmers across this province, for communities, for local municipalities. Those local municipalities, through AMO, have been very vocal about how this government throws out legislation across the province and how this further destabilizes those municipalities. Right now, planners in the province are just waiting for the next shoe to fall, the next brick to drop, and this is very concerning.

I do want to say, the feedback—because feedback is important. I know the government doesn't always care about the feedback, but we do, as the official opposition.

This is one article from just last week: "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: What's Next for Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon in Peel Split?" They're saying that it's going to be messy.

The press conference that my colleague also referenced—I watched it as well. There's some genuine concern. The mayor of Brampton has articulated some very tangible concerns that this piece of legislation will negatively impact the people of Brampton.

We do think that the people of Brampton should have a voice in this entire process, but they've been sidelined by this Premier, by this minister and by their own members.

This article went on to say, "What happens when a nearly 50-year-old region with 1.5 million residents, thousands of employees and billions worth of infrastructure splits up?" It's going to be messy.

"Caledon Mayor Annette Groves acknowledged when the dissolution was announced it was not a move she wanted and the town would 'need to be made whole.'"

We have heard this before. We have heard, after Bill 23—where municipalities said, "We want to reach these housing targets. We have the wherewithal within our own municipalities to help facilitate this right now around the maintenance of the current infrastructure, but we do not have the funding to ensure that future housing has that needed infrastructure. We will need to raise taxes." And this has happened in Ontario—in Waterloo region, I believe it's an 8.7% increase in taxes.

"Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie and Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown have been engaged in a war of words over the division of shared regional assets."

These shared assets—people have invested money and time and energy, and divorces can be messy. They don't have to be. But do you know what you have to do? You have to bring the people to the table to actually have the conversation about how you distribute these assets and how you financially compensate them for those assets.

Mayor "Brown has voiced concerns that Mississauga will take advantage of Brampton taxpayers in the split and has suggested billions of investments are required to make the city 'whole.'"

So you have two municipalities here; one is happy, one is not—and then one is caught in the middle, with Caledon.

The two shared assets which are worth mentioning here, in this very limited debate on Bill 112—a wastewater treatment plant and the Peel Regional Police services are of particular concern to Brampton, according to the mayor,

going so far as saying that he would like to take legal action. I'm sure that this government may have something to say about that.

I was talking to a police officer, a sergeant in the Peel Regional Police force, and he said the criminals are having a heyday: "Yes, we like chaos"—and they do.

When this dissolution happens, there will be gaps, because this government doesn't do anything in a smooth transition, in an open, transparent manner.

So these are legitimate concerns that have been articulated by those municipalities. And trust matters in this process, so not having a full understanding of the motivation—because the motivation clearly is not housing. Housing is not even mentioned in the bill. So what is driving this? Is it a personal legacy project for this Premier? Is it the chess game that he's playing with the mayor of Mississauga? Regardless, in the end, because it's so poorly thought out, because there is no strategy at play, the people lose. And Caledon in particular is actually very vulnerable.

And this transition panel of five people—for the love of humanity. This transition panel—we've already been through this in Waterloo region. There was a study. It cost \$200,000 to see if it made sense to dissolve the region of Waterloo, because we have three major cities and four townships. That report has never seen the light of day.

So all of this talk about honouring our fiscal responsibility and being transparent—actions speak louder than words, and when people show you who they really are, you should believe them. That has caused a great deal of distrust around this entire process.

While the region's business community seems relatively concerned about it, there is a local advocacy group, Engage Peel, and the organizer, whose name is Harminder Dhillon, "is concerned dissolution will mean 'weaker' pushback on environmental issues like dismantling conservation authorities and building Highway 413 through Caledon and Brampton."

He went on to say, "This is a typical conservative philosophy, just sort of divide and rule. It's a local decision and then you sort of pit one against another. We had a voice of Peel; now we'll have three voices."

We've seen this divide-and-conquer approach play itself out in this Legislature, and nobody wins. In fact, people usually end up in court—and usually, the government loses in court.

This is another TVO article from last week, and it said, "Divorces Are Expensive, Even When They're Municipal: Is Queen's Park Ready for the Bill?" It talked about what it would really cost to make those municipalities whole, to make sure that those public services are not compromised, to make sure that this infrastructure that is needed to actually build housing is possible.

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"Caledon is expected to accommodate huge levels of housing development in areas that are currently farmers' fields"—there are a number of MZOs. The government has made it very clear that they don't think the greenbelt is a real thing and conservation authorities are not so much

of a real thing—"and those new homes will be impossible without the infrastructure that was supposed to be funded, in part, by the region." They talk about this tool box and these tools in the tool box; you're actually removing a regional planning force which has proven to be very effective.

It went on to say, "Asked whether Caledon's taxes will increase, Groves told reporters she was 'certain' the government must have considered the impact on property taxes before it went forward with dissolving Peel region into its constituent municipalities." I think that's hopeful thinking. "Respectfully, that certainty must rest on evidence the rest of us haven't seen, because very little in this government's recent history suggests that the level of property taxes being levied in GTA municipalities is a huge concern for it."

This is very reminiscent of Bill 23, I would have to say. You can title a bill "better homes, faster homes," but when you remove the actual ability for municipalities to follow through on those initiatives, then you're actually compromising your own initiative; you're actually working against yourself.

Thank goodness that the farming associations across this province wrote that united open letter last week. It was unprecedented and, in fact, historic, because these are associations that traditionally support rural and northern members—Conservative members, I would say. It was a scathing testimony of how this government is compromising our ability as a province to be self-sufficient, especially when your own housing task force said that we don't need to build on the greenbelt. We don't need to go past these urban boundaries. Let's use the current infrastructure that we have within our municipal boundaries. Let's build up. Let's intensify. Let's build the missing-middle houses. You don't need to compromise the ecosystem in the province; that's for sure.

I will say—and this has been articulated, I think, very well by a number of municipalities as Bill 23 rolled out—that throwing these municipalities into chaos will not help streamline a system to create more affordable housing.

I just wish that this government, if they wanted to move this quickly—it's unprecedented. It was introduced on Thursday; likely we'll be finished our debating on Monday, on dissolving a regional level of government. I wish that you had that same sense of urgency for building purpose-built public housing, or capping agency nurses, which are costing the health care system twice or three times as much, or retaining health care workers instead of formally allowing them to be poached.

I just want to talk a little bit about the process, because the process matters, because the process is wrong in this sense. While amalgamation has been relatively common in Ontario, the dissolution of Peel is unprecedented. That needs to be said. It needs to be clearly articulated. We've gone through some painful amalgamations across this province. Some were successful; some were not. There were lots of painful growing pains throughout that process. But to say that this five-person panel is going to be able to negotiate through this complex issue—and there's no

guarantee that the workers, in this instance thousands of CUPE workers around Brampton, around Caledon, around Mississauga at the regional level—thousands of workers are wondering what this means for them, and that’s a good question. They have legislation called Working for Workers. Well, then, let’s just think about the workers, and let’s make at least a strong commitment. This is what we would ask: that those workers would have representation on this five-person panel. Because there is crossover between these municipalities, and these workers have already been through enough post-pandemic. There’s nothing to ensure that this board, right now, as it’s crafted, fairly represents the interests of the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. If the minister wants to stack this board with friends and family and—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Who?

Miss Monique Taylor: Donors.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Donors, yes—there’s nothing to stop that from happening. There’s actually a very strong pattern of behaviour of our public boards and the appointments process. If you’ve been watching it, it’s pretty alarming. Just ask the Minister of Transportation.

The word “consult” is missing from the bill. There’s no requirement for the Ford government to publish the findings of the board with respect to the costs, benefits, risks of various restructuring options prior to making a decision. If the Liberals were doing a messy rollout of a dissolution of a regional level of government, I guarantee the PCs, the Conservative members, would be losing their minds, because it’s guaranteed to cause more pain and suffering to these Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga citizens.

The bill does not even give local municipalities of Peel an opportunity to negotiate the terms of the dissolution themselves rather than having a settlement imposed on them. So this is, once again, a very disturbing pattern of a provincial government having zero respect for municipalities. They’re not even permitted to participate. This goes back to the disdain that this Premier clearly has for local, democratically elected levels of government, and it’s leading us to a very dark place.

There’s also no requirement for the Ford government to obtain the approval of local councils for its dissolution plan. This is clearly a top-down process which is meant to squash and silence locally democratically elected people.

There are no guidelines to address impacts on municipal workers, and I think the member from University–Rosedale really spoke to this with great empathy. These are people who deliver public services. They deserve to have a voice in the process. They have a lot of knowledge to contribute and to share, and their voices need to be respected.

There’s no provision to compensate any municipality for the loss of access to any regional asset it helped pay for. That is quite something. Brampton has been contributing to local infrastructure projects. They’ve contributed their fair share. This legislation disenfranchises those Brampton citizens who paid for the infrastructure. It’s

embedded in the legislation. So there is definitely a pattern of picking winners and losers here in this legislation and rushing it through to try to silence those dissenting opinions. This is hugely alarming for us.

I want to say that it does feel like a little bit like that story, the Emperor’s New Clothes. You can talk about how this is—I think they got their thesaurus out around—bold and innovative. This is chaos. You are creating chaos and you’re not doing it—even if your intentions were good, you’re not doing it well, and that is very problematic for the citizens of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

The dissolution was not sought by Brampton or Caledon, so it is interesting to hear MPPs from the Brampton area say that they’re listening to Brampton citizens when they haven’t been part of the process at all—and not only at the beginning, but throughout the entire process—and then it’s going to be a slam dunk and this five-person panel is going to navigate through levels of bureaucracy and administrative issues. It’s really quite something.

I just want to say—there’s a lot to be said, and I’m sure it’s going to be a fun night—already with Bill 23, AMO has said that through that legislation they’re losing \$5 billion of infrastructure funding. This has already had a cooling effect on housing starts across this province. The budget also confirms that those housing starts are down, as well. So you are picking winners and losers. You’re giving those developers a huge tax break, saying to municipalities, “We said we’re going to make you whole, but now we’re not.” You’re saying to mayors who literally want a partner—that’s what they want. Municipalities want a partner from the provincial government to come to the table in good faith around affordable housing, around attainable housing, around infrastructure, and for some reason this government has said, “Do you know what? No.” You put your blinders on and you’re racing ahead, and it’s not going to solve the housing crisis in the province of Ontario.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate hearing the member for Waterloo this evening. I did listen and appreciated much of what she had to say. I think there are some differences of philosophical concern around some aspects of what she mentioned.

I do want to ask—because I didn’t hear it, and perhaps it was at the beginning of the speech, when I must have missed it—does the member opposite believe that it is a good idea for the Peel region to be separated or not? I don’t think I caught that explicitly.

Ms. Catherine Fife: On this side of the House, we believe in coming to the table and having that conversation with Peel, with Caledon, with Brampton, with Mississauga and actually exploring what the impact of dissolving a regional level of government is going to be like. That has not happened with Bill 112.

We have huge concerns around the entire process: The fact that you’ve time-allocated, the fact that you’re not

sending it to committee, the fact that you're silencing the very people we're elected to serve. That is a huge problem for us and likely an obstacle.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Waterloo for your presentation.

I was struck by the use of words you used to describe how quickly and how rapidly this government is getting rid of a whole level of governance. Starting on Thursday; maybe we'll finish debate on second reading tonight—that's very fast.

You talked about how this government has a track record of creating chaos because they move too quickly.

Can you give us some other examples of when the Conservatives have moved too quickly and created chaos?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, that's a very easy answer. The most recent one is Bill 23. Bill 23 actually sort of sidelined municipalities altogether—and when you have a regional level of government and then you have municipalities that serve under that regional level, there is regional planning that connects those infrastructures. Those waste water pipes don't just stop at the end of Brampton; they continue throughout the entire region. Planners have said even with Bill 23, around that kind of growth, that they need the ability to have all the data, have all the information, and then also have the revenue to actually continue to build that infrastructure.

I think planners across this province—if your entire goal was to create chaos, you're overachieving. That's what we used to say about the Liberals.

Really, slowing this piece of legislation down so that Brampton is not disenfranchised and so that Caledon is not further marginalized and so that Mississauga is independent and strong—that would be a good idea. We would support slowing down this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from Waterloo for her remarks.

In her remarks, she said our government is pretending to address the housing crisis, but I want to correct the record. In 2021 and 2022, we saw a record number of housing starts. In 2023, already only five months into the year, we've seeing a 16% increase in housing starts, 7,000 more rental starts, and historic levels for purpose-built rentals.

Building on my colleague's question from Niagara West—we didn't really get a straight answer in her response to the member from Niagara West. Is the member from Waterloo going to support this bill? Yes or no?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Let's talk about these housing starts. Your own budget shows that the province is moving in the wrong direction on housing and that the dismantling of the greenbelt isn't doing what they promised. The budget predicts fewer housing starts next year than this year—and they're nowhere near the goals on your track record of building 1.5 million homes. In 2022, 96,100 homes were started, with even fewer projected to be

started in the following year—in 2023, that's only 80,300 homes.

You are moving in the wrong direction, and now you're actually putting up roadblocks and barriers to building new homes. And never have you ever addressed the fact that attainable, affordable housing is the problem in Ontario.

You talk about immigrants coming to this province? Immigrants need affordable, attainable housing. That's what immigrants need.

So, quite honestly, it defies logic that this government drops a bill like this and says it's about housing when housing is not even mentioned in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question to the member from Waterloo is actually about something that has been talked about in the news. The minister made a statement that the province will be appointing facilitators to assess the regional governments in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, York, and Simcoe county, which are very fast-growing regions. I am, of course, interested in Durham region, but you might be interested in Waterloo. At this point, what can we anticipate? What should regional municipalities and folks across Ontario be able to discern from this process?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I mentioned it a little bit in my comments about this bill, but Waterloo region—this process, they already went through. It cost \$200,000. There was a special adviser. There was a study. A lot of money was spent. A lot of consultation happened. We've never seen the light of day on that report.

So the one thing I know for sure is that there will be a lack of transparency, there will be a lack of accountability, and whatever this five-person panel comes up with around dissolving Peel region—all I know for sure is that at the end of the day, Brampton has predicted to see their taxes raised by 80%. That is not fair when we have a cost-of-living crisis in the province of Ontario and we have a crisis around housing and affordable housing.

This is irresponsible legislation. The reason that you're rushing through this piece of legislation is to avoid scrutiny of it, and that's a denial of our democracy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Graham McGregor: That was an interesting presentation to listen to from my colleague from Waterloo, to say the least.

I just want to remind members of the House: This is the same member who voted against Brampton's interests every single time. We brought a new hospital, Peel Memorial, a second hospital for Brampton. What did this member do? She voted against it. We're bringing a Brampton medical school—for the first time in over 100 years in the GTA, Brampton students becoming Brampton doctors. What did the member do? She voted against it. We brought Highway 413, a bypass highway, similar to what every other large municipality has. What did the member do? She voted against it.

Regarding this bill, the member hasn't said whether they will vote against it or not.

I don't know if the member has ever been to the site of the new hospital expansion, the site of the new medical school, or the site of the new highway.

So I would ask the member, (1) if she has ever visited Brampton, and (2) will she support this bill?

Ms. Catherine Fife: My family lives in Brampton. I love Brampton.

Do you know what the people of Brampton know for sure? The average home price in Brampton jumped \$20,000 for a second month in a row—housing prices, under the leadership of this government, have gone up \$20,000 for a second month.

Also, nothing in this bill actually addresses the need to build new social housing.

According to the Peel region, the wait-list for an affordable unit in Brampton is five to eight years.

That's the record of this government around Brampton.

And this legislation is unsupportable.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): A quick question: the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: One of my greatest concerns about this bill is—the government continually talks about housing. I skimmed through this bill. I've searched through this bill; I cannot find the word "housing."

How does the member feel about the fact that housing is not even mentioned in a bill that they claim is because of housing purposes?

Ms. Catherine Fife: This bill is not about housing. The people of this province have totally caught on to this government. When you override the greenbelt, when you pave over farmland, it's not about housing. Whatever this government is trying to sell to the people of this province, they are not buying. They certainly can't afford a house in Brampton or Mississauga or even Waterloo region because this government has done nothing about addressing the high cost of housing, around supply—because the pipeline is very clear. If this government addressed the housing starts that have already been approved in the pipeline, which you have every tool in your tool box to use, then you would already be halfway to your 1.5 million houses. That's how many housing starts have been approved already. Why don't you do something with legislation that makes sure that that housing actually gets built? Why don't you do some good instead of so much harm?

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: As the member of provincial Parliament for Brampton East and a resident of Brampton myself, I'm pleased to rise here today to speak in support of Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act.

The region of Peel was first established in 1974 by—guess who? A Progressive Conservative government—where we thought the need to deliver those services was done correctly through developing a new region. Premier Davis set this up so we could then serve the cities of

Brampton and Mississauga and the town of Caledon. We set up services to help support the waste water management treatment, the public health, the long-term care, housing, social services, our police and paramedics—on how to deliver quality and effective services to the residents of Peel.

Speaker, as a Bramptonian—the region of Peel and its functions and its responsibilities are something that the members of this region have become very familiar with. But as time progresses, as the representative from Brampton East, who wants to see Brampton flourish, who wants to see all cities of Peel flourish and grow to become big, world-class cities—we have to understand the duplication and overlap of services that exists within the region of Peel.

The dissolution will eliminate the inefficiencies and will benefit Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon in the long term. With the support and guidance of our government, all three municipalities will be equipped to support themselves and the residents who live in those particular cities. Keep in mind, we represent those very residents. We have their back, and we're here to champion their needs in this government—it's the same residents who are served by the councillors and mayors in those respective areas.

This bill takes into account critical concerns of Bramptonians, including health care and transit, and ensures Brampton will not be left behind.

The region of Peel includes two of the largest and fastest-growing municipalities in the country and is poised for a significant level of additional growth over the next 10 years. The Peel population currently is forecasted to exceed two million residents by 2051. If we continue at this pace, action needs to be made to make sure that they continue receiving that high quality of service they're used to today. Brampton is expected to grow to approximately 985,000 people. Mississauga is expected to grow to over 995,000 people. Caledon is on track to quadruple in population, to 300,000 people. It's for this reason that separation is critical in order for each municipality to adequately support their residents and their needs.

Let me be clear: Our government is a government that is dedicated to smaller government, lower taxes and better service for the people of Ontario. When we look at those services, eliminating a fourth level of government is going to be a big contributor in making sure that our businesses are successful, in making sure that more development start-ups occur, in making sure that Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon have an unlimited potential of growth moving forward in the coming years, with the number of people who are going to be coming in and moving into these particular cities.

Speaker, when my colleagues on the right, the opposition members from the—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for

second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Given that we are on an amazing speech by the member, I think we'll continue debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from Brampton East may continue.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Like I was saying, the members to the right of me, the members from the NDP—they don't support these policies which come in and help support job creation, which help support housing, which help support these cities to achieve that unlimited potential that they're so set to be. They talk about how the region of Peel delivers great benefits for the people of Brampton. Well, the fact of the matter is, the majority of the votes in the region of Peel lean toward Mississauga. There are unfair advantages as well as advantages in the region of Peel. It's time. When we look at the level of expansion in population that is occurring in these particular cities—they should have the right to make their own decisions and continue to flourish in a direction which best works for that particular city. It's for this reason that the separation is critical—in order for each municipality to adequately support their residents.

The city of Brampton is the ninth-largest city in Canada and the fourth-largest city in Ontario alone, and its growth represents over 90% of the net population growth within the region of Peel between 2016 and 2021. You can imagine how many people are now calling Brampton their home and the level of services Brampton now needs to expand and the level of potential that Brampton now can unlock with these new changes.

In terms of its local economy, Brampton is home to 90,000 businesses which contribute to the city's manufacturing, retail and wholesale sectors. Imagine how much less red tape those businesses will have to deal with knowing that there's one less level of government coming in their way when they go ahead and make our city so beautiful.

With the support of our government, Brampton was able to plan and achieve significant growth in recent years—like the new medical school the member from Brampton North just spoke about. This government is committed to making sure that Brampton thrives and making sure that Bramptonians have an amazing place to live. They've delivered more for Bramptonians in the last four years than any previous government. We're here for Brampton.

So with the new medical school, with the construction of the Queen Street bus/rapid LRT partnership that's happening, as a rapid transit system, to improve Brampton's already significant ridership—another full-service hospital is coming to Brampton, and not to mention the various financial investments made to key sectors: in our transportation sector, our community safety sector, our industrial development sector.

You've seen all the businesses that have moved into Brampton over the last couple of years that have helped our city thrive, and it's because of the great work by the

members on the government side of this House, who will do everything it takes to provide good housing opportunities and good jobs for the people of Brampton and for the people of Peel.

Bill 112, if passed, will continue to support Brampton in its growth as an independent city and will facilitate the establishment of critical infrastructure and support its growing population. I live in the city of Brampton—I live in Brampton East—and what that allows me to do is, every time I walk out of my house, I have the opportunity to speak to everybody and understand how they feel this change affects them.

Change is sometimes difficult, because once we get comfortable, our growth becomes limited. Any technological business, any media business—we take a look at these large corporations, and everybody has to change with time in order to continue to be successful, in order to thrive, in order to make it to that next level. Imagine if Steve Jobs didn't put the screen into the iPhone. We'd still be on our BlackBerry, typing on keyboards. Look at the amount of innovation that happens when we adapt to change. Sure, it's uncomfortable for a little bit, but the long-term picture needs to be strong.

That's exactly what this bill does. It gives Brampton the ability to dictate its own future, its own growth path, and then deliver better results for the city. And that's not only for Brampton; that applies to Caledon as well, that applies to Mississauga, that applies to the region as a whole—and not only in this particular sector, where we have facilitators coming in; the other regions that are surrounding us, as well, that are going to see facilitators come in, because not only do we want to see these cities thrive, but we want to see every single city in Ontario thrive. We want to see every single family in Ontario making a good income; we want to see them providing for their families, we want to see them with big savings accounts. We want to make sure that happens by delivering the services that they need by, again, smaller government, lower taxes and a better quality of life for our residents.

To provide this change, we need to re-evaluate and redesign the governance structure in a way that promotes better service delivery, more efficient decision-making and improved representation for the people of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Speaker, I have heard loud and clear from all the residents asking for answers on how they're going to be affected by this dissolution and what's going to happen to the critical infrastructure needed.

I'd like to take this moment to personally reassure the residents of Brampton that our government—through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, led by our amazing Minister of Municipal Affairs—will continue to work diligently to ensure a seamless transition during the dissolution by appointing a transition board that will oversee the separation of the region of Peel and the assets while maintaining the quality of service. This is exactly why our government has put in an 18-month buffer time—a little bit more than a year and half—to make sure that we make the right

decision. These facilitators we're going to be bringing in—they're not just going to be a random accountant we're going to pull off the street. These are very, very highly experienced auditors who have specialized in municipal accounting, so they can paint us a clear picture of where we stand today—they can give us the exact copy of who is owed what, how we're going to make these changes, and how we're going to proceed further. It's through consultation through the auditors, to make sure we have the right numbers before us to make these decisions—we don't want to go off of rumours that a billion is owed there, a billion is owed here, a billion is owed there. Those numbers will be clarified by credible auditors and accountants who will then provide a clear picture of how to proceed forward.

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As mentioned earlier by my colleagues, this transition board will have five members who are going to provide advice and feedback to our government within the next year on restructuring these matters. The board will also be empowered to give directions with respect to municipal decisions to ensure fairness for all three municipalities during the dissolution. As a government that is there for the people, we will make sure that nobody is directly impacted by these changes.

Dissolving a government body, in general, that has existed for nearly 50 years is not something that is ever easily done, but it's very important to make sure that these cities continue to grow. This transition board is going to consist of experienced members, and the board's recommendations are going to inform us about the subsequent legislation that's going to be coming forward, and it will address the outstanding issues and concerns that are all up in the air right now. They're going to come in, give us the exact numbers, give us the accredited numbers and then we'll be able to make better-educated decisions from there. That's why we put in so much lead time, not only for us to make these decisions—but after we've made this decision, we've put in enough lead time to make sure that the cities are able to adapt to these decisions before their next municipal turnaround.

This will also benefit Brampton, as it eliminates all the inefficiencies, the red tape.

When it comes to addressing the housing crisis, these changes give Brampton greater access to seeking approvals on housing development projects. Once we eliminate this fourth level of government in Peel, more housing starts will be able to move a lot faster. Before, they were used to dealing with two particular entities. Now they'll be dealing with one entity. You can imagine how much faster the paperwork will flow through one governing body instead of two. It will help Brampton meet its municipal housing plan of 113,000 homes, as part of our More Homes Built Faster Act.

What I've learned in my short period of being a member of provincial Parliament is that there's nothing the members opposite enjoy more than adding red tape. They come in here and they talk about missing words in the legislation. Well, Speaker, I can assure you that once

you're removing a specific set of governance, you will see action faster. You won't see action faster only on the housing front; you'll see it in every single aspect. Whether you're in the manufacturing business, whether you're in the warehousing business, whether you're building new homes, whether you're creating jobs—you'll see in every single aspect of life how much easier it will be for these individuals to operate.

When we move around Canada, when we move around North America, businesses and people are used to three levels of government, and here in Peel, we have four.

I feel like the decision that has been made by this government is the absolute right direction to move in to ensure that we have the right growth moving forward for all our cities.

This will be a historical but very beneficial bill for Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. It will help ensure stable, fair outcomes that respect the taxpayers while positioning Brampton for future growth. And I look forward to our government continuing to support all of the municipalities affected in this transition.

When we come in and take a look at not only Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, but we take a look at all the cities involved—even in the future, when we start taking a look at York region or when we take a look at Niagara region and bring in these facilitators, all with the same goal in mind: to make sure that people can get access to housing faster, people can get access to better, high-paying jobs faster, and businesses are able to grow in scale faster. This is exactly what our government intends to do.

I know the member from Mississauga–Malton shares my thoughts, and I'd like to share the remaining amount of time that we have here today with the great member from Mississauga–Malton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): The member for Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Speaker, you look amazing, first of all.

It's always a great honour and privilege when I stand to represent the residents of Mississauga–Malton.

Today, we're talking about the second reading of the Hazel McCallion Act, which aims to dissolve the region of Peel. The proposed legislation is not only a tribute to Mayor Hazel McCallion's trail-blazing legacy, but it's also a realization of Premier Doug Ford's commitment to promoting economic growth, job creation, and addressing housing affordability.

I came to Canada on January 15, 2000, and at that time, Mayor McCallion was the mayor of the great city of Mississauga.

By dissolving the Peel region and transitioning Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon into single-tier municipalities, we're ensuring that these cities have the tools to prioritize their local needs. By uniting these three municipalities as single-tier entities, we take a significant step towards fulfilling their ambitious housing pledges—including Mississauga, at 120,000 new homes.

As Ontario's third-largest city and the home of 100,000 businesses, Mississauga is the province's second-largest

economy. As a mature and distinct city, Mississauga needs the power to shape its own future. Once it becomes a single-tier municipality, the council and staff of Mississauga will have the ability to make decisions in the best interests of its residents and businesses.

Speaker, I've talked and heard a lot of times about the way we're doing this; it is kind of said that it's going to be like a divorce or a separation. I truly believe it is not actually a divorce or a separation. The way I look at it, it is like—an example: Imagine a family with three siblings, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. They grew together under the guidance of the region of Peel—well, for an example, much like me and my brother, under my parents. When we were small, we used to share a room. I remember, when I was in grade 8, my dad came to me and said, “You're grown up now. You're independent. You can have your own room.” Much like that, we have seen that these cities have grown up to have their own unique identity and ambition, recognizing the need to stand tall and independent, just as my brother and I, just like siblings. Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have grown into vibrant and thriving municipalities. It is natural for siblings to have their own dreams and aspirations, just as these municipalities do. Each has its own set of local priorities, unique challenges and opportunities for growth. The time has come for them to embrace their individual identities and forge their path forward. By dissolving the region of Peel and enabling Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to become a single-tier municipality, we're granting them the autonomy and tools they need to navigate their futures independently. It's akin to the moment when siblings mature and embark on their personal journey, taking control of their lives, while cherishing the bond that they have.

Speaker, like any estate planning, the road ahead is not easy. Peel region will continue to exist and deliver services to 1.5 million residents until January 1, 2025. The transition board that our government will appoint will prioritize the interests of the people and protect them throughout the proposed changes in governance structure. Minister Clark has already emphasized that the transition board will oversee the financial affairs of Peel region and its lower-tier municipalities to ensure prudent financial stewardship.

We understand that these are complex issues that need to be untangled—including the allocation of assets, liabilities, services, governance and employee relations. Our government has made it clear that all municipalities will be treated fairly and equitably by this board, respecting the needs and aspirations of all residents regardless of where they live. We're committed and the board is committed to providing excellent service, upholding the principles of respect for taxpayers and the protection of existing services.

In conclusion, this bill is a testament to our government's respect and support for effective administration of local governance. We believe that municipalities should have the tools they need to plan for population growth, including housing options. Furthermore, we

believe in fostering goodwill partnerships and fair collaboration between neighbouring municipalities to deliver the best outcomes for their residents.

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I want to express my gratitude to all members of this House for your attention and for your consideration of the proposed Hazel McCallion Act. Let's all come together, work together, to support this legislation, which will empower Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to shape their own future and meet the challenges of the coming years. Together, we can create prosperous and thriving communities that will prioritize local needs and ensure a bright future for all our residents. The time is now. Let's all work together to build a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): We're now on questions.

Ms. Sarah Jama: In 1997, which was actually before my time, the Tories argued that the number of municipalities in Ontario was “excessive and a burden to the taxpayer.” It was actually the Tories who forced the province's big regional areas to merge into big cities, beginning with Toronto. These amalgamations took time and had way more voices involved. So my question is, why are you contradicting yourselves—through the Speaker; sorry—when this government has treated these processes of amalgamation and the opposite with more respect in the past?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Centre for that amazing question because it gives me the opportunity to talk about change and the change that comes along with time.

When we made the region of Peel, I wasn't even born either, but I understand their decision when it comes to putting them together and delivering quality public services for everybody. But when we take a look at the populations today, as I discussed in my speech, with Caledon quadrupling, Brampton surpassing 800,000, Mississauga surpassing about 990,000, we need to make sure that we have a plan that looks after the growth and the future of these particular cities—and not only these particular cities in Peel, but all cities across Ontario—to make sure that they have the power to unlock the potential that they hold, to make sure that there's not a regional barrier that favours one city over the other. They need to have the ability to make these decisions on their own.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I was around in 1997, when the Conservative government did that, and I think it was the right move.

My question is to the member from Mississauga–Malton.

We've been talking at great length about the efficiencies by having one level of approving authority, but what we haven't talked about today is the double level of taxation and development charges. By removing the fourth level of government, as my friend referred to it, we will actually be eliminating the level of development charges and the level of taxation. I'd like you to speak,

please, to the efficiencies we will find there and how that will benefit the single-tier governments of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, by having a single layer of taxation and DCs.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I just want to say thank you to the member for Simcoe–Grey for asking a question and throwing the answer into it, as well.

You said it so well: When there is a single tier, there's not going to be duplication of work; there's not going to be duplication of fees. We can save the cost and, at the same time, we can build those homes faster.

We know that we have a housing crisis. When we reached out to the residents coast to coast, everywhere we went, we heard this loud and clear—that our province needs housing built now; not 20, 30, 40 years from now. That is what this government is doing—making sure we build 1.5 million in the next 10 years.

The member opposite was talking about what we did in the past. This is a testament that we are consistent. We believe in smarter government, and this bill will again make sure that we have a smarter government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is for the member for Mississauga–Malton.

I'm curious: If the goal is to lower development charges on a regional level or eliminate them, then what happens? What's your choice? Do you want lower-quality infrastructure because there's less money to pay for infrastructure? Or do you want taxpayers to have higher property tax bills? What's your choice?

Mr. Deepak Anand: The choice is very clear to the province of Ontario: We need to build homes now. We can't wait. We know that every time we have a little smaller government and we have more efficiencies, all of us benefit—and that's exactly what this bill is doing.

As municipalities, Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon have grown up, and it is time that they can fulfill their dream as single-tier municipalities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Question, please.

Mr. Graham McGregor: My question is for the wonderful member from Brampton East. I listened to his speech intently.

It's clear that Brampton is a big, grown-up city with some big, grown-up problems. We've got a health care issue. That's why we're building the second hospital at Peel Memorial. We're building the Brampton medical school—for the first time in over 100 years in the GTA, coming to Brampton. We've got traffic issues. That's why we're building Highway 413. We've got housing issues. That's why we're so happy with the city of Brampton for signing on to our housing pledge, at 113,000 units. Of course, this is the agenda the PCs put forward. We were rewarded with the trust of Brampton residents—to elect five members.

Could the member talk a little bit more about trusting Brampton to be a big, grown-up city in charge of its own future?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'd like to thank the member from Brampton North for that amazing question.

Speaker, when we take a look at Brampton, this government takes it seriously. Under previous governments, every time Brampton stood up and asked for its fair share, there was nobody around to listen. Now, when this government came into power, under the leadership of Premier Ford, Brampton has been heard; Brampton has been listened to.

The member talked about the hospital. The member talked about the highway. The member talked about the new university. The member talked about long-term-care homes. This is something Brampton has been asking for for years.

This government is about to unlock Brampton's potential to surpass a new level with this legislation. Brampton will no longer have to adhere to the complications that they faced in the region of Peel. They will be able to make their own decisions, going forward. They will be able to support their own infrastructure projects based on what's right for them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please. Questions, please. Yes, from the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Guy Bourguin: Merci, monsieur le Président. J'étais endormi sur la switch.

Ceci dit, the question for either of the presenters: Why expedite the process? You're going to say, "We'll put it to committee and then we'll take"—but why? Are you afraid of your own constituents and the questions they're going to ask or they're going to present? Are you afraid of your own constituents talking against what you're trying to do—or for?

The fact is, you're expediting this process, time allocation—we're plowing right through this. When we go too fast, that's when mistakes happen.

So I ask you: What are you afraid of?

Mr. Deepak Anand: The answer is very simple: The time is now. The reason we're doing it is because we believe the people of Ontario and their government respect and support the effective administration of local governments, recognizing that the municipalities should be empowered with the tools needed to plan population growth, including the tools needed to build more housing options; understanding safe communities and delivery of effective front-line services; appreciating the importance of value for money and high-quality service delivered in an effective manner. That is why we're doing this now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please. The member from London North—Brampton North.

Mr. Graham McGregor: All right. No, that bill is coming next week—just kidding; it's a joke.

We hear a lot of this kind of coded language out of the members of the NDP. They say, "Slow down." They say, "Think longer, longer consultations." Well, we really know they want to meander, they want to delay, they want to do nothing, with their head in the sand, and leave Brampton residents behind. We see this. What did they say

about Highway 413? Two decades—two decades, where Highway 413 has been studied to death. What do they want us to do? More studies. More delays. The needlessly delay party, the NDP—that's what they are.

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Why is it so important that we're moving quickly? The question is for either of my wonderful colleagues.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I love the passionate energy that comes out of the member from Brampton North, because he means well. He wants to serve his constituents, and he doesn't mind working overtime to make sure that he delivers those changes.

When we got elected, we ran on a platform of getting things done. How do we get things done? By working on them now. If we're debating and we're spending more time now, that's time that we don't have to spend tomorrow. Guess what? There's only two weeks left of this Legislature. When are we going to come back to debate this? When the House stands again? That's the needless delay that's coming from the party beside us.

We're the party that's going to move forward and get things done in a timely manner, with the right amount of time to deliver these services. That's why we put 18 months into the legislation to deliver the change—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Thank you very much for your answer.

Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to be able to take my place in this fine Legislature and offer a few hopefully thoughtful comments at this late hour on Bill 112, which is An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel. I think, in effect, it is the “unpeeling” of a region, which is unprecedented.

Ms. Catherine Fife: This is very good. “Unpeeling”? Come on.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the member from Waterloo.

But it has been an interesting conversation to this point and I think that it's, frankly, disappointing that we won't be able to hear from folks at committee. Since we've been discussing this at second reading, since we've been debating this bill, the government, in its infinite wisdom, has decided to time-allocate it, so shorten the discussion time, ram it through without its day in court, so to speak, or its time in committee, and then, right out the other side, third reading, which makes sure that it goes through quickly. The government has talked about the time it will take, until January 2025. But at this time, while the bill is before us, there's an opportunity to offer amendments, there's an opportunity to hear from the impacted municipalities, to hear from the folks who have been doing their best to keep up with this unfolding story and to offer comments out in the community or in the media. I mean, that's really been the only way that we've been able to hear from folks: if they have picked up the phone and called one of us or have shared public letters or had the conversation in the media. That's what we're having to draw from when we're talking about something that, as I said, is unprecedented.

This is a bill, the Hazel McCallion Act or Peel dissolution act, that is going to make some significant changes for the folks in Brampton and Caledon and Mississauga, and we want to make sure that the dissolution of Peel region doesn't wind up costing residents more or negatively affect their municipal services. We have actually heard from a number of the government members—I would say platitudes, Speaker, and you'll have to forgive me, but I don't trust it. And why should I when we see things like Bill 23 just gut so much of our province and do such harm? But this government isn't willing to make themselves available to constituents and to stakeholders and to interested parties at committee. They have said, “No, committee will not happen.” And that's a shame because the government could have had the opportunity to learn something, and I think that it's always a good idea for governments. With that in mind, I will endeavour to share some thoughts that maybe the government can learn from.

As I said, this dissolution is unprecedented. I think it's very important that the government get it right. Again, and I'm going to say this a few more times, it's disappointing that the government has shut down committee and will not invite concern, will not invite criticism, will not invite amendment, will not invite good ideas. The Conservatives are rushing this through, Speaker, but it has a lot of red flags and it does have a lot of questions. It does not require that Peel region residents be consulted. It does not ensure that municipal workers are being heard as part of the process. It does not ensure that the voices of each municipality are represented fairly on the transition board that we've heard about today, that five-person appointed board. It does not provide for any transparency or accountability in how decisions are made. Anybody who has got an eye on this that has any bit of expertise or specific educated interest thinks it's going to be messy. And each municipality is going to expect to be “made whole.” That is something that this Premier has been big on promising, but we don't have municipalities who are being made whole—not the way that they had expected, especially if we've seen a lot of other changes. This government slashed municipalities' revenues through Bill 23 and promised to make them whole. They failed to deliver on that promise.

This government has been saying lately that everything somehow connects to housing—that all roads lead to housing, everything is about housing. But they have not drawn a line to how this bill gets us to more housing. They are saying that this in part is about addressing the housing crisis. Just about every measure that this government has taken on housing has been ineffective. Many have worsened the crisis, and I can happily—not happily—I can easily share a few: carving up the greenbelt to build unaffordable—potentially mansions—houses, and not a single new unit of homes that actual real Ontarians, or Ontarians who are struggling—also they are real Ontarians; I don't know how often the government remembers that, but they are not going to be able to afford. Housing starts are going down; they're not going up. Property taxes

are skyrocketing because they have let the developers skip out on the bill.

Urban sprawl is expensive—it really is—and it irreversibly destroys prime farmlands and ecologically important areas. There are a lot of folks across Durham region who are very concerned about what they have seen happening with the DRAP lands, and that was Bill 39; part of that made the DRAP lands available to be pulled out of the greenbelt. They were protected in perpetuity—oh, no, just kidding. We have a lot of folks in the Durham region who learned a valuable lesson with this government and Duffins Creek. Nobody out there trusts you when it comes to the environment.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Nobody.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Nobody.

Speaker, we've seen amalgamations have been fairly common in Ontario. But, as I mentioned, this dissolution of Peel is a first. It's unprecedented. It's going to be complicated. The devil is going to be in the details. Those details are going to depend on regulations passed by folks in cabinet, I guess, as well as the findings and recommendations of the transition board. Maybe it will turn out okay; maybe it won't. I don't know. But neither does this government, and neither do the people watching at home.

I will admit that there have been some really lovely, reassuring words spoken. The members from Brampton have done a bang-up job sharing their vision for a positive future. But, Speaker, prove it.

Mr. Graham McGregor: The voters agreed.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The voters—so I'm being heckled that the voters agree. The voters had no idea that this was in the works—

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Okay. Enough heckling, all of you.

But the voters of Brampton or Mississauga or Caledon, the taxpayers, the neighbours, the folks—they all have questions. And it is quite likely that had this government had the nerve to invite folks to committee, they would have heard some of those concerns.

So the “just trust us; don't worry; all will be well”—I believe that the member from Brampton East told us that the member from Brampton North—it wasn't “well-intentioned.” Oh, “He means well.” I have every faith that members on the government benches mean well. But this is a big deal, so how do we know it's going to be okay? Because people have real questions, and this government does not have the answers.

Here's another perfect example of that, the “just trust us.” I'm actually going to read part of the government bill into the record. The preamble—which, by the way, for the folks at home, if you look up Bill 23, which was another mess—well, it was a mess. If you look at Bill 23, you will see that the preamble—and there's an explanatory note—basically says anything in this isn't actually part of the act. So this is not actually part of the bill, but it's written in its pages here as the preamble:

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“The people of Ontario and their government:

“Respect and support the effective administration of local governance.”

It goes on to paint a rosy picture of why they're setting out to do this. It talks about safe communities and the delivery of effective front-line services. Speaker, it doesn't talk about how those services are going to be delivered. It doesn't talk about who's going to pay for them. Those are some of the questions that, if the government had any nerve, it would have allowed those questions, and it would have given thoughtful answers. Maybe they don't have answers, Speaker.

The word “consult” is missing from the bill. There's nothing requiring this government or the transition board to consult with Peel residents or businesses about any restructuring process. This is going to have a huge as-yet-unknown impact on taxes and services. We've talked about it, that media reports are basically saying, “Divorces are messy; is the province ready and willing to foot the bill?” I don't know.

Speaker, some of the things that I wanted to share—as I had mentioned, in the preamble, it talks about effective service delivery, but I do want to get on the record, as a number of us have, that we want to ensure that any services—essential services, effective services, community services—are delivered well and that they factor in the workers.

I'm going to share here; this is a piece from CUPE Ontario: “Restructuring Peel Not a Solution to Affordability Crisis, says CUPE.” But as Fred Hahn, who is the president of CUPE Ontario, said:

“People care about affordable housing, they care about protecting public health care, they care about the quality of public transit in their cities. They don't care about what level of government is providing services.”

“Hahn says that as the province moves ahead with restructuring, the union will work with its allies to ensure that Peel residents continue to access quality public services provided by public sector workers and thwart any attempts towards privatization ... the president of CUPE 966, which represents 2,000 members employed by Peel region, says he is worried that workers were not factored into the decision to dissolve the region.” As he reminds us, “Without workers, you can't provide service.”

I will add, “Hahn and”—the local president—“Arya say that workers must have a seat at the table when the province appoints a transition board to oversee the dissolution process.”

The Premier “likes to say that he respects front-line workers. If that's the case, he should appoint union representatives to the transition board,” Hahn says. “It's workers who provide the services that Peel residents rely on, from waste collection and infrastructure maintenance to the delivery of social services. And they must have a say in how these services are managed in the future.”

Why is that an unfair ask? You've got five appointed folks on that transition board. They're going to have a lot of work ahead of them. Why not make sure that various important perspectives are included? Certainly, in the Durham region, CUPE 1764 has I don't think quite 2,000

workers across the region of Durham. They do really important work. Actually, Speaker, you and a number of the other MPPs run into region of Durham workers all over the place, as across all of our communities: workers who do a lot of heavy lifting but always community-based work.

As we have heard and as we've read, there are a lot of people who are wanting that reassurance—real reassurance, reassurance they can take to the bank—that jobs will still be there, that continuity, that we will stay publicly funded, publicly delivered. I don't trust this government when it comes to privatization, and why should I? But I hope for the sake of the workers in those municipalities that they will take the time to get this right, since they're hell-bent on putting it through tonight, it would seem.

Speaker, I'll share a bit from the Pointer. This came out today: "Region's Municipalities Seek Clarity and Speed for 'Transition Board' Tasked with Dissolving Peel.

"A week after the PC government announced the unprecedented decision to break up the region of Peel, its member municipal governments in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga have raised a number of questions and concerns during recent council meetings regarding how the transition board will guide the process."

They want this to be "seamless and effective."

"In Brampton's committee of council meeting on May 24, councillors ... asked Christopher Ethier, manager of government relations," about clarity regarding the financing, and "Ethier said there was no clarity about the timeline or who would pay for the financial implications involved in the transition. He is awaiting further clarification on the matter from the province, he told councillors." That's on the 24th. This was reported today, that they're still waiting, right? They're still waiting for clarification on this process.

Normally, when a bill is tabled and we have the chance to debate it and it goes to committee, we get the chance to hear those questions, and it's supposed to strengthen legislation. It's supposed to, I would say, alleviate the fears of the broader community. Right now, this is not a government that has worked very hard to foster trust. The government seems to become quite indignant when any of us say, "Why should anyone trust you?" It's like, "Well, because. Just trust us."

This is the kind of thing that harms that trust with the public, because everyone is out there wondering why, and why so fast, or what's really driving this. And if the government took the time to do things well—because maybe a dissolution in this case will work out just fine; maybe it will be garbage. Nobody really knows yet. The fact that some people are asking for it and others are not, but everybody wants clarity—everyone wants actual provincial leadership, not just platitudes. There's a lot of money at stake. We've heard really eloquent breakdowns of the concerns that are out in the community when it comes to services and infrastructure, who has paid for what, who will be reimbursed, what belongs to whom, what will be utilized by whom—all of that.

I know, as members have talked about, that with the passage of time comes change and betterment and things and stuff. I know that the wheels keep turning, the world keeps turning and time goes on, but something that is timeless is, "Measure twice, cut once." Take the time—while the wheels are turning, the planet is turning and everything keeps going. Take the time that you have, that keeps changing, to do it right, to do things well, to show actual leadership.

Speaker, I've got three minutes left, and I will say that there are a number of other municipalities who are watching. They are looking for that leadership from this government. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made a statement and said that the province will be appointing facilitators to assess the regional governments in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, York and Simcoe county, some of our fastest-growing regions. He said, "The facilitators will help us identify how we can better support local decision-making in high-growth regions across the province," and he goes on.

The regional municipalities are interested. I don't know that I would compare us to Peel in Durham, but everyone wants to do things well and deliver services effectively and efficiently, so the work that will be done there will unfold and hopefully the world will all be a better place. But I think we are looking for leadership and answers from this government. It is disappointing to skip committee when, inevitably, folks would have questions.

I have an interest in this conversation. There's a little bit of nostalgia, and I'll take the last minute to share: I'm not a Brampton girl, but I went to school there for a little bit. I lived in Bolton and I lived in Palgrave, and I still remember that it was the region of Peel that provided our family with the very first compost bin that we ever had, which brought hours of joy to my brother who found snakes and many happy memories in that compost bin.

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It was a time that was many years ago, and I know when I've gone back to walk down memory lane, which is now—the Trans Canada Trail literally went behind my house and I remember when they pulled up the train tracks. I still have in my office a train spike that they left behind. When I taught grade 5 and all about the railroad, I passed that around. I have all my own emotional connections to the region of Peel and different parts of it, but I know that things change.

However, as I said, what does not change is the need to do things well, and I'm not reassured that that is what is happening here, which is disappointing but unsurprising from this government.

With that, I'll be happy to take questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Oshawa for her remarks this evening. My question is simple—obviously, I wouldn't count Durham short, there's one million people, I believe, in the region of Durham, so it is a fast-growing area of our province as well. Related to this—and I don't know what traumas her

brother subjected her to when she was growing, but my condolences on that.

My question to the member opposite: We talk about how we need to get more housing built, and this will reduce duplication of planning. I hear a comment from builders—all types: purpose-built rentals, missing-middle housing and the planning and the site control plans they have to go through and the duplication.

Does the member opposite—will she support this bill and help us reduce some of that duplication?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Well, certainly duplication that slows things would be something to fix, but this piece of legislation in front of us is using a pretty big hammer for that nail, and there is a lot that—it has been interesting: The government questions have been that one to us, right? They want to know, “Don’t you want to stop the duplication?” Okay, and there isn’t a better way to figure that out, there isn’t another way to figure that out?

This piece of legislation begs the question: How come all of a sudden, all at once, tonight only, no committee? I don’t know. That’s my question to you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Question, please.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Let’s just give a little summary on how quickly this bill is going through the Legislature. On Thursday, the bill was introduced to eliminate an entire region, an entire level of government, and now, four days later, the government’s announcing that we’re not going to be doing public consultation on this bill, the bill is not going to go to committee, and, odds are, this government wants to pass this bill within a week.

I heard the member of Oshawa say that it makes sense to measure twice and cut once. Would you call the government’s behaviour over the last week with this bill an example of measuring twice and cutting once?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, I would not. I’ve had the opportunity to serve in this House—I can’t believe it has already been nine years, but it has, and there have been a lot of opportunities that I would say are missed by this government and the one before it. When we go to committee and we hear good ideas—in this case, we won’t be going to committee, but when we hear good ideas or when we hear from stakeholders who say, “Here’s a tripwire. Here’s something—avoid this mistake.” The last government—well, the last government was this government, but then the one before that, it’s always this race to just get it through and then we’ll go back and fix it later. That has been a pattern I have seen by the last three majority governments.

With something this big and with as many moving parts or immovable infrastructure parts, I would think that the government would really want to, at this point, even just invite from experts to make sure it was the best legislation it could be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I think in this debate I’ve made my opinion about that member’s party and the way that they treat Brampton quite clear. I’ve got lots of respect for the member, so I won’t get back into all the things that

that party voted against, but I am curious: When the member talks about measuring twice and cutting once, if the member were to measure this bill, would you cut yes on the bill or would you cut no on the bill?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This is an interesting place, for a million different reasons. I have had the opportunity to vote against things that I might support in theory, but I’ve had to vote against it because there’s been garbage in an omnibus bill. There might be some epic ideas, and then it’s like, “Oh, look, and garbage,” and you can’t vote for it. So I will do my homework and go back, and your legacy list of all the times we voted against Brampton or what have you—I am going to go back and figure out which of those omnibus bills you tucked good in with garbage, because I don’t have it at my fingertips.

Speaker, the fact that this is going through so fast and without any consultation—I can’t support that. Whether dissolution or the unpeeling of a region is a good idea or a bad idea is almost immaterial—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Thank you very much. Question, please?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s interesting, the war of words between Mississauga and Brampton. I find it very fascinating. The mayor of Mississauga has said that they’re going to save over \$1 billion and that her city has been used as a cash cow for Brampton. But the Brampton mayor who wrote an op-ed against the dissolution showed up for a very awkward media conference on Bill 112, and this is what he had to say: Brown emphasized that Brampton must be made whole for any loss of regional assets that Brampton taxpayers have helped pay for, such as regional water, waste water facilities, Peel Regional Police headquarters. He said that Brampton would be owed a significant amount, north of \$1 billion, and prior to the tabling of Bill 112, the mayor actually threatened to take legal action.

How do you foresee these two cities, these two entities, growing together, collaborating together, when this entire thing has been imposed on the region of Peel?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I don’t know. A lot of people watched that press conference and a lot of people dissected it, unpacked it, were horrified by it, amused by it—I don’t know; there was a lot of response at that time. But this is going to be a process that takes a while to unfold, with a lot of questions, and we’re not doing any of the work here at Queen’s Park to help that process. We’re not doing the committee work to answer some of those questions. The mayors in this, there’s a lot at stake in their communities, and when it’s—I mean, it’s not even so much as he said, she said. It sounds like they’re trying to figure out who’s going to pay for what, who owns what, and the government hasn’t clarified that, from what I can see.

Whether those conversations are happening behind closed doors or with the municipalities—well, hopefully they’re talking to the municipalities—I think we’re all going to watch this play out, unfortunately, with interest, but probably not with much transparency and not with many answers. Hopefully that doesn’t leave the neighbours of what is now Peel in the lurch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions?

Mr. Graham McGregor: The member talked about things that the member may have voted against but supported in theory, so I'll rephrase my question a little bit differently. Theoretically, will the member be voting for Bill 112, against Bill 112 or abstaining from Bill 112?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As much as I would love to keep this member on his toes and waiting with bated breath, I have already said that I don't even know whether dissolution is a good idea or a bad idea because I don't know enough about it. Neither do you, I would say—that's conjecture. I don't know.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Through the Speaker.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Through the Speaker. I don't think that any government member actually knows what this is going to entail, and they will have a lot of answering to do for their municipalities. If this had been an actual process that this House could be involved in, like a committee and engaging with people, then I'd probably be a little more inclined to make a different decision, but this is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Thank you very much for the response.

We have time for one more question. Questions, please. The member—sorry.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: London West.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Where am I going here?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Go ahead, please.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much. I want to thank my colleague for her remarks, and I wondered if she

is concerned about the lack of safeguards in the bill to ensure that the transition board that is created fairly represents the interests of the people of the region and, in particular, the workers of that region.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is disappointing. A lot of people have questions about the security of their jobs and also about the continuity of service. We've heard pretty words from the government. I hope that is how it plays out, but there aren't guidelines to address impacts on municipal workers whose jobs are at stake, whose collective agreements are on the table. There's no provision—no provision—to compensate any municipality for the loss of access.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate? Further debate?

Mrs. Tangri has moved second reading of Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Orders of the day? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Madam Speaker. No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): There being no further business, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 2052.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjini, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

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Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

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Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kanata—Carleton	
Vacant	Scarborough—Guildwood	