

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 22A

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 22A

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
44<sup>th</sup> Parliament  
Wednesday  
4 June 2025

1<sup>re</sup> session  
44<sup>e</sup> législature  
Mercredi  
4 juin 2025

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Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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



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

ISSN 1180-2987

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 June 2025

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 juin 2025

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Good morning, everyone.

*Prayers.*

### ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Treasury Board president.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a message from the Honourable Edith Dumont, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2026, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Please be seated.

### MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2024-25.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LA GESTION DES RESSOURCES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 3, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors / Projet de loi 27, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le stockage géologique de carbone et modifiant diverses lois concernant les incendies de végétation, la sécurité des ressources et les arpenteurs-géomètres.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. It's—  
*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, colleagues. I appreciate that.

It's my honour—not always my pleasure—to rise in this House to debate this bill. There are a few things I want

to address. I'm focused primarily on the carbon storage, the geologic storage. My colleague the MPP from Mushkegowuk yesterday dealt with the other aspects of the bill—although I will speak a bit about the fire services.

There is a lot wrong with the geologic storage portion of this bill. I think the first part has to do with potential risk that comes from going ahead with pumping large amounts of carbon dioxide into fractured rock in southern Ontario without having done a study in advance as to the potential risks.

Speaker, if you get a chance—if you google “abandoned oil and gas wells in Ontario,” CBC has a really detailed map showing, roughly, the 27,000 abandoned oil and gas wells in Ontario. Many people may not know that Ontario was one of the leading pioneers in developing the oil and gas industry in the 19th century. Petrolia, Ontario, got its name not by accident. In fact, we were ahead of the United States in terms of developing oil and gas. We were pioneers. The oil and gas industry in the 19th century took full advantage of the geology of this area and continued on into the 20th century. Even today, we still produce oil and gas in Ontario. About 1% of our total supply comes from Ontario itself. What this means, though, is that we have literally tens of thousands of abandoned oil and gas wells across Ontario, heavily concentrated in a band that runs from the south end of the Niagara Peninsula, along Lake Erie, all the way to Windsor-Essex.

People may be familiar with the explosions that happened in Wheatley, Ontario, a number of years ago, covered extensively by the Globe and Mail—a failure on the part of the Ontario government to actually monitor, take action on, cap and make safe those abandoned oil and gas wells. So we have literally tens of thousands that are still seeping gas, seeping oil, with the risk that comes from that.

This bill allows those who are interested to pump carbon dioxide into abandoned wells to flush out the remaining oil and gas. I have problems with that. I think we need to be making a move away from fossil fuels. We have a climate crisis, and if I have the time, I'll get into greater detail on that. But unfortunately, in the course of developing this bill, what we in the official opposition found was that the government had not actually done a study of the potential harms that come from pumping that carbon dioxide into those abandoned and old wells. We don't know if pumping in one place will cause oil and gas to bubble up in another place.

So you've got a farmer's field. You've got an old oil and gas well. You may not have thought about it; you may not have seen it. It may be covered in dirt and just seeping

some natural gas, but once someone starts pressurizing that pool underground, then, one could assume, there's a risk you'll start seeing oil bubble up in farmers' fields where farmers, for the last few decades, have seen no oil activity whatsoever. You may not see it, you may not smell it, but natural gas may come up as well, in or near buildings. So you're setting yourselves up, and we are being set up, potentially, because no study has been done and we can't say with any certainty whether what's going to be done is safe or harmful—potentially setting up situations where we're getting oil leakage into agricultural fields, into what are now developed areas, gas into buildings or into fields. That is a huge issue and, frankly, this shouldn't be going forward until the study has been done to establish that this can be done without precipitating those oil and gas leaks from wells that have been long abandoned and not properly capped, not properly sealed. That's a big issue.

The second issue that I think is very important is this sense of why we're going to be pumping carbon dioxide into subterranean spaces. If you look through the number of documents that have been put out by the government on this particular project, obviously the one thing to do is stimulate oil and gas production. I've already talked about the risk there, setting aside even the climate implications. But part of what's being done here is to provide a place to put the carbon dioxide when you make hydrogen. Hydrogen, overwhelmingly, is made not by electrolysis, not by putting a current through water to separate hydrogen and oxygen. No, it's made by taking natural gas or methane and, with a very expensive and very energy-intensive process, breaking that natural gas into its component parts, freeing the hydrogen so that it can be pumped and sold, and taking apart the carbon dioxide. Now, currently, the carbon dioxide is just simply vented to the atmosphere. What's suggested here in the process that we've been given is that that carbon dioxide will be captured and pumped underground.

#### 0910

When you actually start to go through the studies on this so-called blue hydrogen—green hydrogen being the one that emits no carbon dioxide, but blue hydrogen emits a lot of carbon dioxide—you'll find that, in fact, the carbon dioxide emissions are very, very substantial, that the geologic capture of carbon dioxide is far less effective than is claimed. When you look at fields or industrial processes in Europe, they report an extraordinarily expensive process getting that carbon dioxide underground, but a very leaky process.

In general, the assessment of the environmental community is that making this blue hydrogen can be as damaging, or more damaging, than just simply burning natural gas in the first place. If you say you're trying to make things better for the environment and in fact what you're doing is, at a minimum, continuing the level of damage that you're seeing now, or, as is entirely likely, making things worse—I don't understand why on earth we would be doing this.

The other element in this, or reason that's given, is that we need to take carbon dioxide from industries that are hard to clean up, industries like cement that, at the heart of the process, are releasing carbon dioxide. Again, I go back to the European experience, which is of geologic storage, of taking the carbon dioxide and pumping it underground into rock formations, being extremely expensive and, frankly, very faulty, so that you continue to get substantial leakage. It would make lots more sense for us as a society, if we're going to do this, to invest in those industries to help them make the transition away from burning oil, gas or coal in order to make their product. That would economically make a lot more sense than what's being proposed here.

So for me, it seems that the process that we're engaged in is far more driven by the need to give a cover story to the natural gas industry to make their blue hydrogen, and say that what they're doing is environmentally defensible, and giving an opportunity for the oil and gas industry to squeeze a few last drops out of the lemon to get the remaining oil and gas out of the rocks underlying southern Ontario. That is not a credible approach.

But I think on top of all this is the government's argument that this is somehow going to help with fighting climate change. I don't think this government has any commitment to doing that, frankly, so I don't think it's credible when they make that argument. But beyond that, I think the government fails to recognize the scale and scope of risk that we're facing as a society.

Now, today, you can look up and you can see the smoke from fires burning in northern Ontario, western Canada, and get a sense that here, at the beginning of June, we are facing a crisis in wildfires that is driving people from their homes—and that will only get worse as the world gets hotter. Yet at the same time, this government has no credible plan to take on that issue.

We are in a situation where, as of April this year, reporting by the government of Canada showed that Ontario continues to climb, to increase its emissions, while almost all the other Canadian provinces are seeing reductions.

In 2018, this government was elected. That year and the year after, emissions went up. COVID came along. Provinces right across this country saw a big drop in emissions. As the pandemic eased, we saw a growth in emissions, most notably in Ontario and Alberta. But Alberta actually had, this year—I think they levelled out, whereas Ontario grew. So this government is not, in fact, taking on this issue.

And it isn't just the wildfire smoke that we see. If you look a little bit into the future—and you can look a bit into the future by looking at 6 o'clock news broadcasts from Louisiana and Florida. I know that's sort of an odd source, but the reality in those jurisdictions is that as extreme weather ramps up, and as it is ramping up more slowly here—but we'll get there—insurance companies are pulling out. They are saying these places are not insurable. So, increasingly, homeowners are either finding they can't renew their insurance or the price for renewal is beyond their means. In some cases, that means that people are



moving; in some cases, it means that people, as they say on the 6 o'clock news in Fort Lauderdale, are "going bare": They are going forward without any house insurance. That puts them at tremendous risk of either crushing debt or homelessness in the years to come.

We need to recognize that reality, and because those insurance losses are mounting in Louisiana, in Florida, in California, the North American insurance industry is spreading those costs around, so you will see upward pressure on insurance costs in Ontario from the losses insurance companies are taking down in the States. I've been told by one insurance executive in Toronto that their company pulled out of the southern United States a number of years ago because they could see where damage claims were heading, they could see what the trends were in terms of climate impact.

This government is not taking seriously the impact that is coming at us in terms of our homes, not taking seriously the impact that's coming at us in terms of higher insurance prices. It has a weak, a failing—well, "weak" is too generous. It does not have climate plan that is of any consequence whatsoever. It is more a document that can be pointed to when someone says, "Do you have a climate plan?" They say, "Yep. That's it right there. It's failing, it's not defensible in a court of law, but we call it a climate plan; we suggest you do the same." Those are substantial problems. Those are very substantial problems.

The government is not facing up to the fact that Ontario, which is a financial services sector hub in North America, depends on a stable finance system. The US Senate had hearings last year about the risk of climate change to the insurance industry, and they published a report in late December 2024 talking about how climate change was going to destabilize the insurance industry. Recently, a major insurance executive in Europe talked about the threat to the insurance industry from climate change and, with a threat to the insurance industry, a threat to the financial services sector in its entirety.

This government is not, in fact, acting as one would rationally to protect our economy and our livelihoods. Going forward with geologic storage and saying, "Well, this is one of our big answers to the climate crisis"—it is not a big answer; it is driven by oil and gas interests that want to squeeze more out of the ground; it's driven by natural gas interests that want to say, "We're making an environmentally defensible product" when, in fact, that is not the case.

I want to speak very briefly about the wildfire section. I didn't see reference to urban wildfire as an issue that needed to be dealt with, not to be highlighted. I raise this because—I'll just go through some of the places that have been hit by urban wildfire: Fort McMurray—if you get a chance to read John Vaillant's *Fire Weather*, you can get a sense of how scary it is when a city starts going up—Lytton, BC; Lahaina, Hawaii; Los Angeles—no one would have thought that Los Angeles would have a big chunk of that city wiped out by wildfire. In 2021, London, UK: very lucky that grass fires in the suburbs of London did not result in a much bigger fire. In fact, one senior fire

official said, if the wind had been different, we would have been looking at a second Great Fire of London.

**0920**

Alberta has now got six urban wildfire crews set up. Ontario needs to consider the potential risk of urban wildfire—and that's house-to-house burning. I'm not just talking about trees catching fire in a park. In any event, Speaker, there are fundamental problems with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the member opposite. We're all concerned about the environment, but this is the reason why it's now more than ever necessary to make these regulations. There are a number of benefits to regulating this technology, including contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in this province. Ensuring timely establishments and commercial frameworks is critical to enable industries to take advantage of federal funding incentives, such as the environmental and climate change—Canada's carbon capture. We're at a moment in time where we have to move now and I think that utilizing the storage investment tax credit, which will decline in value over 2030, is essential to moving positively in this fashion.

Will the member opposite support this bill so that we can not only preserve our communities and our industries but also our infrastructures?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the question from the member. I have to say, yes, we are all concerned. But if you're in at a house and the back room has caught fire and your response is to not get people out of the house, then I actually have to ask questions about how concerned you are. We are facing very profound threats and risks from climate change and a government that is not acting. What's in this bill will at best be inconsequential.

I have to say, the federal government does not have a good record on climate. We're not meeting our climate targets. The Liberals, who have been in power since 2015, have been appalling on the climate issue—appalling. And so to say we're going to take advantage of these tax credits doesn't mean you're actually going to take on the climate issue, it just means you're going to take advantage of tax credits.

We're considering supporting this on second reading to see if there can be amendments made in committee that make the bill useful, but to say—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I just want to say about my colleague and everybody in the House, the biggest concern that we have in the world today is climate change. If we don't have clean air and we don't have clean water, what future are we going to leave for our kids and our grandkids? I know my colleague has fought his entire adult life for environmental justice.

I'm going to ask you: This legislation basically sets up a new industry, quite frankly. Do you believe that we need extensive consultation before this bill gets passed?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the question. Yes, I think extensive consultation makes a lot of sense, and I particularly think that those communities along the north shore of Lake Erie deserve to be heard, deserve to have potential risks set out to them. They deserve to see the studies that have been done showing that that risk can be dealt with. Frankly, as far as we can tell, the consultation with First Nations—informed, prior consent—that, to my knowledge, has not been done, and this will affect First Nations communities.

The member from Niagara: His riding has an awful lot of abandoned oil and gas wells in it. All along the south side of the Niagara Peninsula and in and around Sarnia, lots of abandoned oil and gas wells. If I had that riding, I would be very, very concerned of the potential risk here that has not been explored and properly defined.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I appreciate hearing from the member opposite.

If we're not bold, if we don't have a vision, if we can't see the forest through the trees, if we can't understand that one way we combat climate change here in our Ontario is—look at our energy grid, look at our power generation. And we take it further; this whole concept of carbon storage is reminding all of Ontario that our government under Premier Ford is bold.

My question to the member opposite is, when we look to move forward in a way that is innovative, we can't go back to the days of the candle and the stagecoach. Our economy is not going to go back; we are going forward.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the question from the member, and I have a lot of respect for him. I don't know if you've seen Ontario's climate plan, but bold and visionary are not the terms that come to mind. Ludicrous, weak, inadequate: Those are the words that first come to mind. We don't even meet the targets that were set by the federal government, and the federal government is a slacker on climate issues. We're below the targets necessary to protect our future.

When you talk about bold and visionary, hey, show some bold and visionary. Geologic storage is not bold and visionary. Moving away from natural gas for home heating would be bold and would actually make a big difference. We moved away from coal home heating back in the 1960s. Last year, Bill 165, this government undermined the Ontario Energy Board, which was trying to protect consumers, protect them from higher bills.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from London West.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I very much appreciate the remarks from my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth. I wanted to point out that very soon, in July, we will be marking four years since the horrific explosion in Wheatley that rocked that community as a result of an explosion in an abandoned underground mine. I wanted to hear the member's perspective on whether any of the lessons from that tragedy have been reflected and incorporated into this bill.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the question. There are in this bill changes to the relevant act, oil, gas and salt, which I gather increase the powers of the province to take action around abandoned oil and gas wells. What's not clear to me, and I haven't seen it, is whether or not funds are going to be set aside to actually deal with these abandoned oil and gas wells. You may have increased enforcement powers, but if you don't have enforcers—officers trained and deployed to take on this issue—having a statute on the books will be irrelevant.

At the same time, because the bill is setting things up to pressurize the underground oil and gas storage so that abandoned wells that may not now be visibly problematic could become problematic, that says that we're going backwards and forwards at the same time. In fact, we may be going a lot faster backwards if we find that pressurizing one well activates five or 10 or 15 others. We don't know; I'm speculating. But I don't like to speculate about safety and risk. I don't like to speculate about the idea that you may be pumping natural gas into a school or home, into a downtown section of a place like Wheatley. If, in fact, you really cared about this issue and learned from the Wheatley explosions, you would not be allowing the oil and gas industry to pump up those old reserves.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** To the member for Toronto–Danforth: I have to say, I was a bit surprised to hear you bash down the record of the Liberals on the environmental aspect.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** Yes, what's up with that?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Well, I don't know. What about the phasing out of coal power, which brought down carbon emissions by 24%? What about the introduction of the cap-and-trade system? What about the expansion of the greenbelt and all the investment that we did in renewable energy? Like, I know it wasn't perfect, but I don't think that we deserve what you qualified the record that we have achieved.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I get along with the member, and we've had some jokes before about the necessity of disciplining members and the methods that can be used. That said, you know I was primarily focused on the federal Liberals, because they have not set targets that are consistent with what's needed in the world, and they're not meeting those targets. We are consistently one of the bad boys.

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I actually went to the climate conventions in Germany and South Africa. Canada was seen as one of the bad players by the rest of the world. When Jean Chrétien was in power, we were seen as one of the wreckers that were undermining climate action in the rest of the world. So what we see with the federal Liberal record is appalling and continues to be appalling. If you want to talk about the Liberal record here, the pressure to shut down the gas plants—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. Happy Bike to Work Day. I am sure many of you did that, and we got here safely in those bike lanes. Thank you.

I'll be splitting my time with my caring and compassionate colleague from Kingston and the Islands. I'm honoured to be here representing beautiful Beaches–East York and all Ontarians, addressing the House on another lovely morning.

The government proposed Bill 27, the Resource Management and Safety Act, 2025, on May 27, 2025. Bill 27 proposes four schedules. Schedule 1 focuses on forest fires. Beyond changing the title from the Forest Fires Prevention Act to the Wildland Fire Management Act, the act shifts all terminology from “forest fire” and “forest area” to “wildland fire” and “wildland area” to reflect the title change. The bill introduces officer positions and corresponding responsibilities. The bill also provides that wildland fire compliance officers may issue permits that would authorize the holder to have a fire outdoors during the fire season, subject to written conditions.

The bill adds a new section that demands municipalities in fire regions and any other prescribed entity in a prescribed location doing prescribed activities must create a wildland fire management plan and provide it to the ministry. The bill imbues the minister with the ability to issue orders restricting activities and permits for activities in these areas. The act also increases existing penalties and introduces additional penalties, such as remediation orders and administrative orders, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council's authority to create regulation is updated.

Schedule 2 enacts the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025. As a new act, the legislation would provide definitions, interpretive provisions, a purpose and prohibitions. In part I, the act would seek to clarify what activities would be considered research and evaluation activities; for example, using wells to explore storage repositories that may be used for the purpose of carbon storage. The act also details carbon storage activities such as using wells to inject carbon dioxide into a storage repository to serve as permanent storage of this CO<sub>2</sub>. Research and evaluation and carbon storage activities would be prohibited unless requirements are fulfilled.

In part II, the act touches on ownership and rights to pore space; in other words, voids or cavities within storage repositories. The act would allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to claim pore space as crown-owned in relation to lands identified in the regulation. Additionally, the crown would be empowered to authorize other actors to exercise those rights over pore space.

In part III of the act, the government lays out the rules around the issuance of various authorizations, notably permits that are provided for in the act, their transfer, suspension and revocation.

Part IV of the act addresses the obligations applicable to any person performing the activities mentioned in the act, as well as other provisions regarding the operation and closure of carbon storage sites, providing for powers from the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Part V then governs reviews and appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal regarding ministerial decisions to refuse or revoke permits.

Part VI provides for various enforcement measures, such as the appointment of inspectors and enforcement officers who are responsible for securing compliance with the act and its regulations.

Part VII establishes the Carbon Storage Stewardship Fund, to which authorization holders and other prescribed persons are required to pay money.

Part VIII of the act lays out more general provisions, but specifically with regard to authorizing provisions and regulations of a transitory nature.

Part IX of the act provides related amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, as well as provisions regarding the act's short title coming into force.

Schedule 3 of Bill 27 focuses on the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act that I mentioned in part IX of schedule 2. This schedule of the bill amends the act by adding a new section, 7.0.1.3. This section grants the minister the authority to take any action to prevent, decrease or eliminate a hazard to the public or to the environment regarding work in specific circumstances. This schedule would also permit the minister to recover the costs of any action taken from the relevant operator of the work or from the associated security.

Finally, schedule 4 pertains to the Surveyors Act. Just so you know, my father was a surveyor and had a great surveying company up in Collingwood, so he's very interested in this act. Schedule 4 expands the licences the registrar can issue, including limited and temporary licences, as well as reinstated retired members' licences.

The schedule also lays out more information regarding the requirements and qualifications that are necessary to obtain licences and certificates. For example, corresponding examinations and academic requirements would now be legislated if this bill passes.

Schedule 4 stipulates that the requirement for regulations and bylaws to be confirmed by vote of the members would cease. The schedule repeals the fees mediation committee and permits applicants to appeal to certain determinations or directions by the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee to the Registration Committee. And section 42 of schedule 4 is re-enacted so that service of documents or notices may also be made electronically or by fax.

Bill 27 is rich with information. However, for the purposes of my debate here, I will focus on schedules 1 and 4, the Forest Fires Prevention Act and the Surveyors Act, respectively.

The Forest Fires Prevention Act has not had a major update since 1999. We all know our world has changed drastically since 1999, from the frequency and type of wildland fires, the climate emergency, the resources and technology available, and the established infrastructure. Unfortunately, we are seeing just how drastically the climate and extreme weather events have changed in our province and country over time. It is alarming, and with the cost of wildfire protection at a staggering \$1 billion per

year—notably, severe single fire events may cost up to hundreds of millions of dollars, with health care costs related to fire events estimated at \$1.28 billion in 2023—this does not even begin to look at the costs to our climate, biodiversity, and mental health related to losing homes and communities in the blink of an eye. The importance of fortifying our wildfire prevention and response to the best of our ability cannot be overstated. We are seeing these costs accumulate right before our eyes. And we've been warned. We've been warned by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario over and over again.

Ontario wildfires, travelling haze and smoke: Yesterday, June 3, out on the front lawn of Queen's Park, MPPs, staff and organizations gathered for the glorious Pride flag-raising. The main event was set to the smell of fire smoke and the backdrop of a wildfire-induced haze. Not sure if you all noticed that, but it was quite apparent to anyone outside yesterday, and this is just early June. The sunny haze and distinct smoke smell are primarily the consequences of wildfires ablaze in the provinces west of Ontario, including fires in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and as far away as British Columbia. Alarmingly, Europe reports to be seeing the smoke from these fires as well. The fires to the west of Ontario are in addition to 14 active fires in Ontario's own northwest region as of June 2—can you believe that, already?—of which five fires are not under control, one fire is being held, six fires are under control and two fires are being observed, with five fires having been called out over the past 24 hours.

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This is a stark reminder that wildfires, their frequency and their severity, are evolving, and that the effects of these fires, no matter how far away they seem, are far-reaching. The impetus to work together across party lines to prevent fires before they happen, and manage them and keep communities safe when they do grows, stronger every day.

The current Manitoba wildfires are another terrifying reminder of the destructive potential of wildfires for the environment and for communities. As of June 2, Manitoba had a total of 27 active fires, with nine classified as out of control. Their powerful and passionate Premier, Wab Kinew—such a great Premier—ordered a province-wide state of emergency. These fires have resulted in tens of thousands of Manitoba residents being forced to evacuate to survive, with mandatory evacuations in place for communities including Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage and Pukatawagan.

Particularly affected are First Nations in Manitoba, such as Pimicikamak Cree Nation and Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, with hundreds of residents being evacuated to Ontario's Niagara Falls hotels. Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls.

These fires are reaching thousands of hectares in size, yet some of the affected First Nations remark that they are not equipped with the necessary tools to manage the fires and save more homes, augmenting the brave work of those currently fighting the fires.

Chief Gordie Bear of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation said that all the community has are two fire trucks, hoses to flood the hockey rinks, and cots—woefully insufficient to fight the current fires, especially considering that all but 50 of their essential workers have been evacuated. Chief David Monias of Pimicikamak Cree Nation requested a fire truck—just one, just one single fire truck—in the hopes that they could at least stop embers from spreading onto shingles and ravaging more homes.

Despite the clear desire, determination and initiative of both of these chiefs to contribute more to the team fighting these fires, without the proper support, their nations are unnecessarily suffering. This is why schedule 1 of this bill and strong prevention measures that I will touch on later are so needed. Without adequate supports, Manitoba families are forced to leave their homes, not knowing if this will be the last time they will ever see them.

Now I'll talk about Lytton, BC. Importantly, this is not a new phenomenon. Canada has a sordid history with wildfires. In 2021, the cute and quaint municipality of Lytton suffered a truly horrendous season of wildfires. We all remember it. It was on the news every day, beginning with record-breaking temperatures in June 2021, reaching up to 49.6 degrees. You remember that? Lytton was dangerously hot.

On the same day that Environment Canada sent out a notice on the extreme heat, 74-year-old Lytton resident Eric Siwik's home burst into flames within literally seconds. The RCMP station in Lytton exploded in flames. Tricia Thorpe and Donny Glasgow's home, barn, observatory, workshop and animals were ravaged by the flames. Soon enough, the entire village was engulfed in flames.

In total, the Lytton fires destroyed 124 structures, 45 structures in the adjacent Lytton First Nation and 34 neighbouring rural properties. Imagine that as your small municipality in your area, in your riding—imagine that. This amounted to 90% of local buildings taken by the fires, including Lytton's village hall, official records, two grocery stores, the farmers' market, pharmacy, bank, medical centre, coffee shop and outdoor benches, along with two civilian lives.

We really have to think about what it was like to be in Lytton then and what it's like to be there now, and how if it can happen in Lytton, BC, it can happen anywhere in Ontario—and it is. Imagine that: Everything you know is gone in a single flash.

Heat is rising and we need to be prepared for when it amounts to a fire. But regardless of their preparation, Lytton's local buildings and physical reminders of their history are gone. Reactive plans, while they may mitigate loss, cannot bring that back. Prevention of fire by employing strategies like clearing dry bush, building fire-resistant homes and establishing fire-breaking infrastructure are the more powerful tools to stop losses like this in their tracks.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the emergency responders who are currently and have historically risked their lives to save communities all over the province and the country. As you know—I've mentioned a few

times in here, and he's even been in the chamber—my second-oldest brother is the deputy fire chief in Collingwood, Ontario. So I hear from him first-hand how they struggle and how dangerous that job is, but they do it because they have heart and they care. They care about keeping us safe.

A couple of weeks ago, we all had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, who told us the importance of sustainable funding support, early detection and prevention of firefighter cancer—it's huge, guys; I know the government has done some work on that, and I think we should keep going on that front. Also, fire department billing to the MTO for no-service calls: That's an important one too. I'm sure the fire chief spoke to you all about that. If not, come and see me later.

This is in stark contrast to the government's move to decrease its budget for emergency forest firefighting from \$177 million to \$135 million. Even as evacuation orders are already in place in at least one northwestern Ontario community this spring, we must do better by those who always do good by us. Why would we possibly be cutting the forest firefighter budget? I'm just shaking my head over that one.

The Minister of Natural Resources claimed that these changes to the fire prevention act are the first step in making our emergency responders, specifically as it applies to wildland fires, safer. I think that this is certainly an important step, but it should neither begin nor end there. The true first step is prevention. The safest fires for community members, wildlife and the natural world and wildland firefighters are fires that do not happen, right? Prevention is key. As the critic for environment and climate change, and emergency preparedness and management, I am unwavering in my advocacy for addressing climate change and climate disasters through smart, long-term practices—preventative, as best we can.

One of the most important and impactful long-term investments we can make is education and awareness. Education and awareness do not just manifest as a one-time poster, speech or press release.

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I recently met with some stakeholders who came to Queen's Park to discuss how we as elected provincial officials could best support and forward their initiatives. Their primary emphasis was something that is very simple yet seems often overlooked in politics: consulting stakeholders and rights holders from the very beginning. Stakeholders range and each bring their unique experiences and expertise that augment and perfect our legislation. After all, we make bills to benefit the public, so why not listen to them? When we skip consultation, we often fail to capture their perspective. It is fine that we do not understand everything, that we do not immediately understand and capture the perspective of the animals or the manufacturers or the city sanitation workers. Expertise comes from lived experience and practice.

What is not fine is when we assume we know their perspectives and speak for them or when we ignore their

perspectives altogether. When that happens, we are left with incomplete legislation that tends to have the opposite-to-desired effect. As a result, these programs must be reviewed and edited, often by engaging the consultants who were missed in the first place, resulting in lost time and money.

This government speaks a lot about doing things faster and smarter. We all know and have seen the consequences of legislation and programs that are rolled out but must be retracted when the government realizes that this is not what the public wanted or will accept or the goal that they themselves were aiming to accomplish because it cannot be met in the bill in its current form. That's okay. It gets messy and then it gets fixed, but if we do it right the first time, like Billy Joel says, then we can be in a better place.

We have all experienced the outcry from the greenbelt and the court cases regarding the removal of bike lanes. We waste precious time in the Legislature discussing bills that should not have been proposed in the forms they were in the first place—when we could spend time on more important and positive bills—and cause unnecessary panic amongst the public that disrupts their lives, consuming time and energy that they could devote to other things.

So I beg this government to consult ahead of time. Propose bills that are not only well intentioned but reflect the lived experience and lessons of those who they will affect. Specifically, when it comes to the current bill, Bill 27, engage the communities who these carbon stores will affect, engage the wildland firefighters who will be tasked with keeping us safe and engage the current surveyors who are doing the job now.

I am now going to turn to specific ways in which we can and should engage the public on this bill, Bill 27. We can all agree that offering outside-of-court remedies for those who contravene the new wildland fire act is usually preferable to costly court procedures, but why not avoid court and alternative forms of reparation altogether?

We need to explicitly offer education to the public on what is prohibited under the new act through announcements, multiple public forums and community consultations, easily accessible and readable news articles, infographics in parks and fire zone areas and written pieces on public websites. Give the people a why.

With public safety being top of mind for everyone, what are all the important reasons to avoid actions prohibited by the legislation that could potentially start a wildfire? Why are our trees so important? What species and what ecosystems could these fires endanger? Just give people the information, the facts.

It is true that many fires are caused by humans, so it is paramount to not just threaten to punish people—but also facilitate justice and perhaps deter—but to prevent fires altogether. Punished or not, the fire still happens. Homes are destroyed, people are evacuated from their communities, habitats are ravaged and trees are lost. No amount of punishment will reverse these losses, so why not work together with people from the beginning?

You may recall, because I know that you are always attuned to my private member's bills—you're chomping

at the bit to hear about them—I did have two, three, four last Parliament. Most of them, except one, got killed. The one about extreme heat, which I've just revived—and also my flooding awareness private member's bill that I revived. But the extreme heat one, why wouldn't we get more information out to our residents? The difference with flooding: With flooding, there could be deaths. With extreme heat and the heat dome that will occur in Ontario at some point—sooner than you think—there will be deaths, thousands of deaths. All of that is preventable. In your spare time, take a look at my latest private member's bills and give them some consideration.

Moreover, however, there are a whole class of fires that are the result of climate. Those fires that are caused by humans are accelerated and exacerbated by climate change. Warmer temperatures, drier soil, dried and dead leaves, grass and trees, increased wind and flammable litter all contribute to wildland fire. Whether a human starts it or not, the severity and length of the fire is largely determined by natural conditions.

Inextricably connected to these conditions is the climate emergency, which causes warming and irregular weather patterns. Unfortunately, wildland fires create a cycle wherein fires release greenhouse gases, which increases warming, adding to the conditions that accommodate fires. Consequently, key to adequately preventing wildland fire is addressing climate change. Even if those words make you nervous, we are in a climate emergency, so we need to wake up over there.

There is not one solution to climate change, but some major ones, including reducing the greenhouse gas pollution we contribute by adopting heat pumps over gas furnaces, reducing how often we drive our cars—especially on Bike to Work Day, which I mentioned already. Instead, opt for bikes and transit, carpool, do not litter, and minimize excess consumption.

As government, it is our duty to cultivate the conditions where it is easy, accessible and sensible for constituents to engage in green actions. Provincially, we may do this by using green and innovative materials and solutions in our infrastructure so our homes and businesses let less heat escape in the winter and less cool air in the summer, negating our need to use our heating and cooling systems as often, and introduce well-thought-out programs to incentivize people to choose green solutions for their homes; improve transit and alternate forms of travel—do not rip out bike lanes; ensure waste receptacles are well placed; establish fire-mitigating designs, such as creative use of open-space parks without fire starters, as well as rock formations and hardscaping as fire breaks; and plant climate-appropriate vegetation—and trees, trees, trees.

I'm going to briefly move to schedule 4. Schedule 4 of the bill pertains to surveying. The act would introduce a limited licence for the purpose of attracting more surveyors, specifically those who have less Canadian survey experience, as well as permit internationally trained surveyors to enter the workforce faster. This provision and its purpose needs to be reviewed in relation to the government's call for a Team Canada, Team Ontario approach

that prioritizes and supports Ontario-made materials. This applies to our workforce too.

While we may need more surveyors in the interim and need to expand the province's criteria for working in these positions to accommodate that, the government should also be seriously considering how to stimulate Ontario's surveyors—upscaling, graduating from the accreditation system, and eventually entering the workforce right here in Ontario. Because I don't think my father, a former land surveyor, wants to come back from retirement.

Additionally, the act would introduce a temporary licence that would allow surveyors from other provinces to provide survey services in an emergency event such as a flood or fire. That's good. That's good, guys, I'm giving you a compliment. It's rare, I know.

The minister and associate minister to natural resources spoke about this bill yesterday. When speaking on schedule 4 of the bill, they discussed the importance, particularly of this provision, to aid northern Ontario. I agree. We should use all of our Canadian resources, including surveyors from other jurisdictions, to lend help when necessary.

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However, I think it is important to think about how we can augment the survey profession and industry in the north and surrounding areas to ensure that they are equipped with a team of surveyors that, in fact, do not need to travel from Alberta, but can be called on right there in northern Ontario.

When we speak about a Team Canada or Team Ontario approach and the necessity of insulating Canada against the threat of US tariffs, promoting and preserving Canadian jobs and materials, we need to think about how we can ensure each region is similarly equipped. Each region should have the option to call in reinforcements if an emergency arises, without barriers. But more importantly, we need to tune in to their specific needs and make sure they have all the resources that they need right here at home in Ontario.

When surveyors are familiar with the region they work in, they are able to bring prior knowledge to the table and an understanding of process that would eliminate unnecessary back and forth between bureaucratic actors. We see the necessity of equipping regions with dedicated resources in addition to emergency support.

Right now, in live time in Manitoba, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak—MKO—Grand Chief Garrison Settee says that the lack of proper supports within the nations are an essential reason why the destruction from the fires and related mass evacuations are as bad as they are now, so listen to him if you won't listen to me.

A community should never be stuck in a situation where there is nothing that they can personally do to save their homes and livelihoods. People should not be forced to wait for help from other jurisdictions before the real work can begin when the need and want to act is there. These things may seem minuscule, silly or even unrelated to the bill. They are not. It is the little things that add up and prevent the big things from spiralling out of control.

I wholeheartedly support emergency management. Municipalities absolutely need a wildland fire plan, actors like surveyors and firefighters that are available to facilitate the plan, and a framework to hold those who violate provisions accountable.

I always have much more to say, but I'm going to hand it over to my cordial colleague now.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** It's a pleasure to stand up and speak to Bill 27 today. This bill largely does a lot of good things. Ontario's way of managing wildland firefighting and abandoned wells needs updating, and I'm glad that this bill attempts to do that.

But before I say any more, I want to start: This is a season where I think we should be thanking wildland firefighters. We've been hearing reports of fires in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, northwestern Ontario. The weather there has been very different than it has been here in southern Ontario. So I want to thank the crews on the ground, radio operators, pilots for all the work that they're doing protecting people from wildland fires.

I'm not going to speak at length about firefighting because my colleague from Beaches—East York has done a wonderful job of that. But one thing I want to talk about is why I'm really interested in following this bill through the committee stage, something that was skipped for several bills in the last week or two in this chamber.

For example, in this bill there's a clause which gives additional powers to a wildland fire compliance officer. They have powers to inspect computers. I understand that there are similar powers in other acts, but I think it's important to verify through witness testimony at committee that these kinds of powers are necessary and have the proper limits to protect privacy.

I'll read a little bit of the act. It says: "During the inspection, the wildland fire compliance officer may ... use or require the use of a computer system for the purposes of ... producing a readable record from the computer system" that they're looking into, or they have the power to "remove any computer hardware, software and any other data storage, processing or retrieval device required to produce a readable record."

So these are powers that, I think, would strike the average person as being a little bit surprising. Maybe they're needed, but I think we need to sort that out in committee. I think the people deserve to understand why these powers are needed to do a better job of fighting wildland fires, so I call on the government to make sure that this bill goes through committee, unlike many bills in this session of the Legislature which have skipped the committee stage and therefore have skipped detailed examination, and skipped the possibility of an articulation of the language to improve bills.

Let me now switch to the carbon capture and sequestration part of the bill, in the time I have left before we stop for members' statements. I'm glad that this bill emphasizes the need to examine long-term carbon storage in Ontario because it recognizes the growing impacts and the

urgency of climate change. We're going to have to look at every possible way to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This government has delayed, has not been aggressive in moving forward on clean and renewable energy and storage, so emissions are piling up. Emissions are piling up around the world, and we're running out of time, so we have to look at carbon sequestration and storage.

Before I speak about it, I want to talk about a project that's happening in my city of Kingston, Ontario, for carbon sequestration. There's a mine in Kingston. People may not know that. It's a surface mine. It would be an open-pit mine, for a mineral called wollastonite. It's a calcium silicate kind of mineral. They have partnered with a company from the United Kingdom called UNDO to work together to use the wollastonite, crush it up, spread it over farmers' fields to use as fertilizer to improve the soil quality and the pH, improve the yield from the farmland and, at the same time, sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This is actually a proven technology from the point of view of being able to sequester carbon.

I say that because it is the reason why, in the last few hundred million years, ever since plants developed roots over hundreds of millions of years, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere has been falling. What happens is that these silicate minerals react with rain and the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and produce carbonates. That has been over several hundred million years, that the level of carbon dioxide has been slowly falling, and it's only in the last few decades that the level of carbon dioxide has suddenly spiked up at such a rate that the biological systems and the kind of world that we live in are going to be changed radically, from one that has supported civilization to one that's going to give civilization a very, very hard time.

So this is a geological mechanism that's been proven, and this partnership between Canadian Wollastonite, who owns the mine in Kingston, and this company, UNDO—they're going to try to figure out if they can dig up, crush and distribute the wollastonite on farmers' fields in a cost-effective manner. It's all about cost. But if you want to figure out whether something is cost-effective, the best way is to do it, and then do it again and again until you figure out more and more cost-effective ways of doing that. So this is a very interesting test of a new-but-old technology to sequester carbon. It's related to this bill.

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I also want to mention that this collaboration between Canadian Wollastonite and UNDO recently—in fact, a couple of months ago—announced that they won a \$5-million XPRIZE. There's a competition for prizes. So their idea was so good that they won a \$5-million XPRIZE. This is a fund that awards money to help people develop innovations to restore the planet. So I want to wish them good luck. It's all about getting the cost down so that this technology can be more widespread.

The amount of wollastonite in Kingston is not going to solve climate change—but this is a much more common mineral, basalts, that are silicate minerals. If we can figure

out how to do it more cost-effectively with wollastonite, hopefully we can do it more cost-effectively with the much more common basalts around the world, and this could be one contribution to sequester carbon in the ground.

Geologic carbon storage, where you inject it deep underground, is a technology that we have to explore because of the urgency of climate change. But again, we have to figure out if it is cost-effective or if it can be done cost-effectively or not. Past pilot projects for carbon sequestration have failed in that respect, in being able to deliver cost-effective carbon sequestration, so this is the challenge. This is the challenge, and it's not easy. It's easy to pump carbon dioxide under the ground, but you have to be pretty sure that that carbon is going to stay in the ground for at least thousands of years. Why thousands of years? Because the current elevated levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will stick around for a thousand or so years.

So if we remove carbon dioxide, we have to keep it out of the atmosphere for at least that long. It's okay if it leaks out slowly over longer time periods, but right now, we really need to reduce the levels of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases, which have spiked up very suddenly on a geologic or even a civilizational time scale and are threatening our civilization.

I am pleased that at least this section of the bill is in place and that we are going to be examining the framework by which we regulate geologic carbon storage. I'm not sure if this act applies to the surface storage through crushing wollastonite and turning it into fertilizer for farmers' fields, but again, that could be sorted out in committee. I think that's something that we need to do.

Finally, I want to mention something about the government's press release. The government put out a press release. There's a new minister in this file, in natural resources. But the government repeated some figures that it put out in the last Parliament, when it had a previous version of this bill. It claimed that it could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by five to seven million tonnes, create 4,000 short-term jobs and lower carbon costs by a billion dollars a year.

That is completely unsupported, because we don't really know what the final cost of carbon sequestration will be. These are unfounded, unproven claims by the government, and I would call on the government to withdraw these claims, because they can't be supported by the facts. We have to figure out what the facts are, and we have to figure out what the facts are by trying out carbon sequestration. We have to keep trying to see if we can lower the cost so that it's lower than other ways of sequestering or reducing carbon emissions.

Again, this is the sort of thing—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** It is now time for members' statements.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### EVENTS IN ALGOMA–MANITOULIN

**MPP Bill Rosenberg:** Today, as we near the long, hazy days of summer, I would like to extend an invitation to members and all Ontarians to come up and visit our northern piece of heaven, Algoma–Manitoulin. There are many events, music concerts, family fishing derbies and celebrations across the region that bring together the community and visitors alike. You can try the numerous opportunities—ATV ride adventures, kayak trips—or just relax and take in the cool, clear waters. Our communities are planning street dances, music festivals, food festivals, parades and powwows. Classic car shows and motorcycle rides are well received, not to mention art shows and festivals and, many nights, car races at a local raceway. We even have a Winnie the Pooh festival in August.

This is just a glimpse of what is going on and more. Check out [algomacountry.com](http://algomacountry.com) to see the full list of events. From a cruise up on the Chi-Cheemaun to Manitoulin Island, to a ride up Highways 129 and 17 along Lake Superior, and take the Agawa train tour to Bridal Veil Falls and Black Beaver Falls—all that inspired the Group of Seven.

This piece of heaven is beautiful any time of year, but summer is the best opportunity to come and play with your families in beautiful Algoma–Manitoulin. I hope everyone has a wonderful and safe summer and I hope to see you in the north in our slice of heaven.

### LABOUR DISPUTE

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I'm honoured to bring the voices of Windsor West into this Legislature. Right now, there are three active picket lines in Windsor where workers are demanding better working conditions. I stand shoulder to shoulder with workers from CUPE Locals 2073 and 1750, as well as Unifor Local 195. The workers at Canadian Hearing Services have been on strike for six weeks asking for fair pay. CEO Julia Dumanian receives 122% more pay than her predecessor. Meanwhile, some CHS workers are forced to rely on food banks. That's not leadership—it's exploitation.

For the last two weeks, 3,600 WSIB workers across Ontario, including 300 in Windsor, have been on strike. One of their main concerns? The Premier is handing their jobs to a private company in Austin, Texas. Outsourcing Canadian jobs to the US? That's not working for workers; it's selling them out. Just days ago, members of Unifor Local 195 at Windsor's Best Western Hotel hit the picket line fighting for fair pay and job security.

Workers across Ontario are putting up one hell of a fight because they deserve better: better wages, better working conditions and a government that shows up. The Premier loves to say that he'll fight for every worker, but where is he now? Thousands are on strike and he's missing in action, spouting empty slogans while Windsor holds the second-highest unemployment rate in the country at 10.7%.



I'll continue to show up and fight for workers and to walk the picket line with them. They deserve better than a Premier who's full of slogans but light on substance.

#### FILIPINO COMMUNITY

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mabuhay. Kingston and the Island's small but vibrant and growing Filipino Canadian community is holding its very first Philippines Independence Day celebration on June 22 in honour of Filipino heritage, culture and contributions to Canadian society. Their theme this year is unity.

June is Filipino Heritage Month in Canada, and did you know that over one million people in Canada are of Filipino Canadian heritage? Filipino Canadians are known for their hospitality, super-friendliness and hard-working nature. Many first came to Canada in the caring professions and left behind their families to care for our families. It's a sacrifice that comes from their will to build a better life for their families.

Today, we have Filipino Canadians serving not only in critical front-line positions in health care, but contributing throughout society, including in politics, business, education and the arts.

Congratulations to Kingston's Filipino Canadian community, and Maraming Salamat. Thank you for enriching our community, and I'll see you at the Philippines Independence Day celebration.

#### GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Today I rise to celebrate the remarkable legacy of Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay—a true bridge between my riding of Oxford and Taiwan. Born in 1844 in the town of Embro, Mackay was the first Presbyterian missionary to serve in northern Formosa, as Taiwan was known back then. Arriving in 1871, he went on to found a mission in the town of Tamsui and dedicated his life to the local people. He embraced the island's customs, traditions, and learned to speak the language fluently. He even married a local Formosa named Minnie and started a family there.

1020

His accomplishments in Taiwan are extraordinary. During his almost 30 years on the island, he built a hospital, the first girls' school in Taiwan, and founded the Oxford College in Tamsui, named for his home county back in Ontario. Today, Mackay is celebrated in Taiwan as a national hero. Statues stand in his honour, and schools bear his name. He is remembered for his advocacy for women's rights, public education and medical care, and for all the people that he helped throughout his life.

His work also forged a deep and lasting connection between Oxford county and Taiwan. In fact, the county is now twinned with Tamsui district. As Ontario looks for more international trading partners, I'm grateful for the connection and enduring friendship between our province and Taiwan. Join me today in celebrating Mackay's leg-

acy. May we continue to advance the values that he championed.

#### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Young Ontarians are at the sharpest edge of both the housing and employment crisis. They're caught in the middle of soaring rents, impossible home prices and a job market that's shutting them out. Students and young adults across Ontario are looking for jobs to earn much-needed income, income they rely on to carry them through the rest of the year. But this year, their search is even more difficult. According to Statistics Canada, in February 2025, Ontario had the third-highest youth unemployment rate in the country. A staggering 15.5% of youth aged 15 to 24 were out of work.

We hear from young people in our communities who tell us how hard it is to find work and how this uncertainty weighs heavily on their mental health. They're doing everything right—pursuing education, applying for jobs and showing up every day with determination—and yet they're being left behind.

This is a critical moment to invest in our youth by creating opportunities that not only help them with their current economic struggles but also help them build their careers. However, instead of responding with urgency, this government's budget missed that moment. It failed to invest meaningfully in programs or pathways to employment that would help young people build a future with stability and hope. Youth in this province are working hard to get ahead. They need a government that's working just as hard for them.

#### SENIORS' MONTH

**MPP Chris Scott:** Last year, our government officially established June as Seniors' Month in Ontario. It's an honour to be able to stand today and recognize that fact and also to celebrate the incredible seniors who make communities like Sault Ste. Marie stronger. These are the folks who built the very foundations we now stand on today, raising families, running businesses, volunteering their time and shaping the values that guide us today.

Let me tell you, our seniors in the Soo are vibrant, they're active, and they're deeply committed to our community. Whether it's through the city's seniors drop-in centre or the northern community active living centre, our seniors are connecting, moving, laughing and living life more fully thanks to these programs. I hear it all the time from families: These programs matter.

That's why I'm also proud to stand today with and truly appreciate this government's leadership under Premier Ford and Minister Cho. They've made historic investments, adding 100 more seniors active living centres across Ontario, as well as expanding home care, modernizing long-term care and supporting local organizations through the Seniors Community Grant Program.

This is what respect looks like, not just in words, but in actions. To the seniors in Sault Ste. Marie and all across the province, thank you.

#### DALAI LAMA

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** I rise today to join the Tibetan community in my riding and across Ontario and, in fact, across the world in marking the “Year of Compassion” in honour of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, who turns 90 this July. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, an honorary Canadian citizen, is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and a powerful symbol of the Tibetan nation and people, a world leader whose teachings inspire people everywhere.

Dedicating the Year of Compassion to him could not be more fitting, as he has led the Tibetan people’s struggles to freedom and justice with his steadfast commitment to non-violence and has modelled what compassionate leadership can look like in the face of great adversities. Through his teaching, his advocacy, he continues to be an important voice for the Tibetan people: a voice of non-violence, of compassion, of world peace and interfaith harmony. We are very fortunate to live in a time guided by a leader of his greatness.

On behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park, I express heartfelt wishes to His Holiness for many, many more years of good health, happiness and long life. Here at Queen’s Park today, we are proud to celebrate the Year of Compassion with the annual—the 10th annual, in fact—Tibet Day, alongside the Tibetan community and the rest of the province. To my fellow members: We look forward to celebrating this special day with you.

#### EVENTS IN PERTH–WELLINGTON

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I rise today to invite all the members to my house—of this House—to Perth–Wellington and Stratford.

##### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Well, you can come to my house, too, everyone, but it’s not that big.

I know, everyone, the warm weather is finally here. It’s going to be a warm day today. I invite you to come and visit the Perth Farmhouse, the first winery in Perth county. We’re slowly catching up to Niagara, for my colleagues from there.

Whether it’s coming to the beautiful Stratford Festival—I know some members in this place take the pilgrimage there every year; they have a great lineup. Whether it’s coming to the Drayton Entertainment festival—I know the Minister of Tourism would love to come to that.

We have the baseball hall of fame in the town of St. Marys. The induction ceremony is this weekend. I’m looking forward to attending that. I invite all members to come and experience those historic memorabilia as well.

There’s so much to offer in Perth–Wellington, whether it’s the farm gate, whether it’s agritourism, whether it’s the

theatres, whether it is the craft breweries—Speaker, they are excited about our government’s cut to their taxes and ensuring that we put more money back in their pockets.

I really encourage all members of this House to visit Perth–Wellington, and if they can’t make it to Perth–Wellington, please take some time over the summer to visit a wonderful place in Ontario. Whether it’s the north, the south, the east, or the west, we have so much to experience.

#### EDDIE CHAN

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I rise today to recognize an exceptional person in my riding of Thornhill, Mr. Eddie Chan. Every year, on the Victoria Day weekend, Eddie hosts a spectacular event known as the “pyromusical.” It’s a stunning fireworks show, choreographed to music, all in support of cancer research.

Eddie began his journey and his artistry in celebration of his mother’s life so many years ago, and what began as a small tribute in 2011 at a local park grew extensively year after year. Eddie honed his craft and he enhanced the experience, growing his team of technical worker bees, and created a beloved community tradition, raising over \$15,000 to date for this important cause.

This initiative holds a very personal meaning for me. As someone who has faced a cancer diagnosis, I understand first-hand the importance of research, early detection and the hope it brings to patients and their families.

Eddie’s passion, generosity and creativity are truly inspiring. Through his efforts, he has brought joy to our community while shining a light on such an important cause that affects so many. I want to thank Eddie for including me and my family and our extended neighbourhood in that first fireworks show so many years ago, and for continuing that work year after year. I don’t believe I’ve missed a show since its inception. Thank you, Eddie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have with us in the Speaker’s gallery today a cohort of interns participating in the—

##### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I’m sorry. I apologize. We have one more member’s statement.

I recognize the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

1030

#### HAGERSVILLE 150

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** It gives me great pride to tell this House about the 150th celebration of the historic community of Hagersville this weekend. This is a celebration of Hagersville’s people, who are best described as salt of the earth. It’s a small community, but it packs a wallop when it comes to charm, rural beauty, peace of mind and fascinating history. There is a strong community spirit that is the catalyst behind plenty of annual events, and an ambitious and growing commercial sector.

I’m sure Charles and David Hager, the two brothers who were pivotal in the mid-19th century development of

this wonderful part of the province, would be very proud of what the area has become. Charles and David carved out roads, infrastructure and encouraged growth in all the resulting commercial interests. Before too long, Hagersville, with their help, grew into a going concern, with a railway station, post office and the foundation of what we would call today municipal services. Indeed, it was a railway hub for the Grand Trunk Railway. Just like for Canada on a whole, the railway meant jobs aplenty, and was a conduit for goods and services in and out.

As important as the Hager brothers were, I'd be remiss if I didn't pay homage to all the other early settlers who worked to clear the land, build the schools, build those rail lines and roads; plus, all the teachers, the farmers, small business owners, and tradesmen and women, without whom there would be no modern Hagersville.

Congratulations, and thank you to the Hagersville 150 committee for all the heavy lifting done over the past year in preparation for this event.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a cohort of interns participating in the Parliament of Canada's Parliamentary Internship Program. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, we have two former members, Rick Byers, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound in the 43rd Parliament, and Paul Miller, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, in the 39th, 40th, 41st and 42nd Parliaments.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** This morning, I'd like to welcome all the people in the gallery across the way who were here to make sure I read my statement today. It's Director Liang, Taiwanese director general, and members and friends of the Taiwanese community. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to introduce today our page captain for the day, Aastha—I'm not sure where she is on the floor. She is accompanied by her mother today as well, Kiran Jyoti, from my riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for the great—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Humber River-Black Creek.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I'm proud to be joined by my family today and welcome them to the 44th Parliament. I'm joined by my wife, Aleksandra, and my sons, Aleksandar and Ilija. I love you very much. Thanks for putting up with me every day.

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** I'm very pleased to welcome visitors from the Tibet community today for Tibet Day, and those that are the members of the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

I also look forward to seeing them at the reception today at noon and hope that we'll see some of our other members there as well.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I rise today with great pride and a little bit of relief to introduce two very special guests in the gallery: my two sons, Dr. Christopher Sabawy, who just graduated from dental school last weekend, and Dr. David Sabawy. David and Chris make me incredibly proud, not just with your accomplishments but with the way you've grown up into kind, compassionate and hard-working young men.

**MPP Mohamed Firin:** I'm please to welcome some special guests to the House today. Joining us in the members' gallery are the proud family members of Isabela Ramos Gaertner, one of our exceptional incoming legislative pages. Isabela will be representing my riding of York South-Weston during this session and will also serve as captain of the page procession.

I would also like to introduce her family: Luis, Livia, Felipe and Adriana Gaertner. Please join me in congratulating Isabela on this exciting opportunity to serve in the Legislature.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's my honour today to welcome Evan Ferrari, from eMerge Guelph, who joined me in the media studio earlier today. Welcome to your House, Evan.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Bear with me for a second as I have a few people to introduce today. I would like to introduce special guests from the city of Ottawa who are with us today: Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and of course his senior adviser John Light. I will also mention that joining them is Scott Phelan, executive director of our Ontario regional office in Ottawa. We want to welcome you to Queen's Park and thank you for being here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The leader of—oh, sorry. You still have more.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** I also want to congratulate Julia, who is today's page captain, and welcome her parents and family: Natasha Gill, Tim Bressmann and Natalie Gill. Julia is from the riding of Mississauga Centre. Elle est étudiante à l'école Jeunes sans frontières à Brampton.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Good morning. I'm very pleased to be able to welcome to the House this morning in the members gallery my parents, Katherine and Geoff Stiles, and my aunt Nancy Thomas, who's visiting as well.

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** I'd like to welcome two constituents from Minister Piccini's riding today. Joining us in the gallery are Avril and her son, Brodick Ewing, residents of Port Hope and proud members of the Northumberland-Peterborough South community. Avril is a dedicated wedding officiant who has helped countless couples begin their new chapter with warmth and grace. Her son is better known in the region as the "Port Hope Piper," a talented young man whose passion for bagpipes has been a beloved sound in the local community. Please join me in giving them a warm welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** J'ai mon épouse, Manon Gagné, qui est ici. J'ai mes deux assistantes, une législative et une est mon « EA », mais j'ai des amis aussi. J'ai Alain Trottier, qui est mon « riding association president », mais j'ai deux

amis aussi : Trevor Russell et son épouse, Sylvie Russell. Bienvenue à votre maison. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I want to say hello and take a moment to thank my long-time constituency assistant Robin Swainson for his nearly 11 years serving our community. Robin has been a cornerstone of our team, providing exceptional support and service to our constituents. His dedication, professionalism, warm presence and British humour have made a lasting impact on all who have had the pleasure of working with him. I hope everyone in the House will join me in congratulating Robin on his retirement this week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We are now out of time for visitors. We can introduce visitors once again at 1 o'clock. Apologies to those who weren't recognized. It's not your fault or the members' fault; it's my fault.

#### STEVE PAIKIN

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to pay tribute to Steve Paikin, with five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the third party, two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Clark is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to pay tribute to Steve Paikin, with five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the third party, two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to the government. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for London North Centre.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Steve Paikin has been a fixture in the homes of Ontarians. Since 1992, he's been a trusted source for news, and while *The Agenda* is coming to an end, we are grateful that we will continue to hear from him on TVO, through his column and on his podcast. But it's appropriate that after 19 seasons of *The Agenda*, we mark this occasion and thank Steve for his service to this Legislature and to Ontarians.

While politicians have come and gone from this Legislature, he has been a constant. He has worked to ensure that people get the information that they need and hear the perspectives of people from across the political spectrum. When the business in this House has gotten tense, when we've dealt with complex and technical matters, and especially when the various parties have disagreed on basic facts, people have counted on Steve to make this place make sense. Steve, we need you to make this place make sense.

#### 1040

There are not a lot of programs in this province that provide deep dives into the important topics of the day. Steve has said before that no topic is too complex to be discussed on *The Agenda*, and taking on that challenge has undoubtedly helped to elevate the tone and better inform

the political discourse within the province. While many places around the world, including in Canada, are becoming more polarized, Steve's reporting certainly shares some of the credit for resisting that trend in our own communities.

I know that I've tuned into his programs to help me get a broader perspective on the current affairs of the province—to make sure I don't get caught in that echo chamber, because even when we have disagreements, the conversations that Steve leads encourage healthy dialogue and debate. It's a hard job. Many of the people in this chamber have likely gone to him with a bone to pick about how something was reported, but we also recognize that we are fortunate to have reporters covering this Legislature with good judgment and in good faith.

It's a particular credit to the trust that people have in him—that all parties in this House believe in him—that he's so often selected as a moderator of the debates that people rely on to inform their votes. I think we've all seen political debates that have likely left people more confused and more angry than when they started. It takes strong leadership and the respect of everyone involved in the debate to keep things on track, and Steve meets that standard. He really is one of the best moderators we have in Ontario, and we hope that he will continue to serve in that role for many years to come.

Steve is more than just an exceptional journalist. He's a community leader and an author, having written about Canadian historical figures, the nature of politics in Canada and public life—and even hockey.

In 2022, I had the opportunity to provide a tribute to a family friend of the Paikins, Marv Shore, the former MPP for London North. I recommend to all members in the chamber that they read that article. One of the parts I liked best was how the Paikin boys all call each other "Marv." They call their father Larry "Marv." Steve's kids call him "Marv" to this very day. It speaks to the mark that some people have on us, on our lives and on our hearts. It's also really a testament to him that he was able to capture the life of a person that he loved in such a wonderful way.

We look forward to seeing what else you do with your extra time, Steve—maybe even more books about hockey, hopefully.

So thank you again, Steve, for what you've already done for our province and for what we know you will continue to contribute.

And to you, Steve: Marv Shore, London North.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I hope everybody bears with me. I got a little bit of late notice—no complaints—this morning. Some CP reporters know that because I texted notes to who I thought was my staff, and they got it. So I'm sorry that you got the heads-up.

I was struggling because there's so much to say. I thought I'd phone a friend, so I called my wife, Linda, this morning and I said, "Look, I've got all this great stuff about Steve, but I'm really struggling. I've got a problem." I said, "I've been here almost 12 years and I've never, ever

been invited to The Agenda. All my colleagues—everybody; even the new ones—okay?” And then she stopped, and she said, “John, you know I love you.” I said, “Yes.” She said, “You’re just not that interesting.” She’s right—but now that he’s gone, I’ve got a sliver of a chance of getting on.

Thanks, Steve. You’re so much a part of this place, so much a part of the history, and not the history that people would always read about, talking about things that affect leaders, what their lives are like and the things that they sacrifice—the things that people sacrifice in here. It is really important. It is important to us that people see that and acknowledge it. Not everybody’s going to read that; I know that. But that side of politics: It’s really important to all of us. That’s why we’re all here; we’re here for the right reasons.

And chronicling things like Bill Davis, who I have a deep, deep respect for, the kind of sacrifices that he made; John Robarts; Dalton McGuinty; and John Turner, who, not in this place, was somebody who was really important to me throughout my career—I won’t go into the reasons right now. You never made yourself the news, and I think that that’s sometimes hard to do when you’re in a position of profile like that. You made the history the news, the people the news, how people really were. And that’s, I think, such an important part of Ontario politics.

You did so much too—have done so much, I should say—just moderating debates, which I don’t think I could do, and you’ve done it in a way that has been really beneficial to our democracy. That’s a huge contribution.

I’m not going to use all this time, because the member from Toronto—St. Paul’s would like to say a few words. But on behalf of our party, I’d just like to thank you for your contributions. I know you’re going to continue to contribute more. We really appreciate the genuine interest that you take in the people who work in this place, the people who put their name on a ballot, and in the human way that you’ve told their stories. I think that’s really important.

And I can’t wait to get on The Agenda.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Toronto—St. Paul’s.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Thank you, Speaker. I’m looking up there for someone named Parker, not Steve, because this person Steve Paikin was known as Parker—i.e., the reporter in Spider-Man, the earnest reporter—back in the day when he was at CHFI and CFTR as a city hall reporter; and back then, I don’t know, 40-some-odd years ago, as earnest and amazing as we see today as he was then.

We know that we could all learn a lot from Parker—or Steve Paikin. We know that leaders’ debates are better because of him: the ability, the knowledge and the civility he brings to them. Politicians, as I said, could learn a lot from him, and maybe some of us have. When I first talked to Steve about possibly going into politics a few years back, he advised me to read one of his books. He said it was on sale for two bucks online.

But, to me, Steve, your knowledge is absolutely invaluable, and the Legislature needs more people like you

to help us understand what we do. Your dedication is parallel to no one, really. You are a scholar, you’re a gentleman, and I, too, was never on The Agenda, but maybe you and Mr. J.M. McGrath can get us on #onpoli at some point in time.

I just have to say to you, through my husband: We still love you, even though you’re a Ti-Cats fan. Oskee Wee Wee.

Thank you, Steve, for all you do. You’re amazing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I was on The Agenda. The member for Guelph.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** You know, Speaker, it’s a pretty special day when you have an opportunity to pay tribute to an extraordinary journalist, author and all-around great guy in Steve Paikin. I can tell you, for a political nerd like me, The Agenda is a staple in our house and has been for 19 years. I’m looking forward to continuing to see Steve on the #onpoli podcast.

I have a personal connection and gratitude to Steve, not only because he lets the entire world know Elizabeth May and I share June 9 as a birthday with Steve Paikin, but also because I have been on The Agenda.

I’ve got to tell you this story, though. After the 2014 election, I told Steve I thought I performed well enough that the Greens should be on The Agenda more—or at least on for once—and he said to me, scrupulously non-partisan, “I cannot make that decision, but I will allow you to convince the entire Agenda staff.” So I went in, gave a speech, and they all voted to allow Greens to be on The Agenda, I think just to stick it to the member from Ottawa South.

Thank you, Steve, for a great—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** Congratulations, and all the best to the illustrious Steve Paikin. As a broadcast journalism student, I’ve always looked up to Steve, who delivers genuinely, is known for fairness, impartiality and, indeed, keen interviewing skills. Recognized for his ability to engage and inform viewers on a broad range of public policy issues, Steve has undoubtedly been a significant contributor to public discourse in Canada.

**1050**

I have a cute story. After the 2022 election, when I first saw Steve here at Queen’s Park for the first time, he was a bit shy about admitting to me that, on election night, when Haldimand—Norfolk came across the screen, he said something to the effect of “Keep moving. That can’t be right. We’ll come back to Haldimand—Norfolk in a bit.” Of course, in true Steve Paikin style, he apologized profusely and has since made it up to me, especially after the most recent election—yes, on The Agenda.

I wish you well, Steve, and I thank you for being an incredible person and voice in Ontario politics. All the best.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the opportunity to say goodbye, I suppose, temporarily, to Steve Paikin.

I would say this, Madam Speaker: When a renowned journalist on a state-run news channel is told that they're going to retire, there is literally a Conservative stampede to the door of everybody that wants to wish them goodbye. I got there first.

It's no secret that, when I was in Ottawa, of course, we rallied and talked—still did—about getting rid of the CBC. Imagine my horror when I found out that, as Minister of Education, I run my own state broadcast.

I'll say that everybody has talked about all of the good things that he's done, and I would say this—he probably would agree; probably nobody knows this. One of my favourite Christmas cartoons is *The Year Without a Santa Claus*. There's a guy named Snow Miser in this commercial. He's a really good guy. He's really charismatic. Steve, you always remind me of Snow Miser. I don't know why.

But there is one person—and I'm going to look directly at the camera. There is one person right now who is watching, I know. He lives in a gated community in Markham, and he is horrified right now that I am doing the goodbye to Steve Paikin, because every single day for 18 years, this gentleman has sent me an email: "Steve Paikin said this. Why don't you do this?" So, guess who's saying goodbye, my friend? That's right; it's me.

Now, I think I was invited on *The Agenda*, but I would never go on *The Agenda* and I'm happy it's coming to an end, to be honest—only because, I will say this—and he's doing it probably right now. He has this look about him when he knows that you're ragging the puck or you're just trying to do something. He's got this look about him that is a half smile, half "I know what you're doing," and I've never wanted to be put in that position. So I thought, "I'm just not doing it. I'm not going to go on the channel and I'm not going to do that."

But Steve, I will say this, because I'm the only one who will say it: Everybody is thinking you've won lots of awards, you've done an amazing job, been a great broadcaster, according to a lot of people. I always thought you sucked.

I'm just kidding. I just wanted to see who applauded to that.

The others have touched on it, though, but just think about this for a second. Think about the anchor of TVOntario being asked to host national leaders' debates. Just think about that for a second and how amazing that is. I know the people in other parts of the country are saying, "Who the heck is this guy?" And it is, I think, something that we should all be quite proud of—the fact that that is the case. I am very proud of that, to be honest, and you've always done such a great job.

They talk about your starting off at 680 CFTR. I used to wake up to CFTR when it was a radio station. It's not anymore, obviously. I didn't know it still existed, but God bless them.

You have done an amazing job. We're all very proud of all that you have accomplished in this place. And I say in

a very real sense, you and I are alike in a lot of ways. We both love this place. We love the people who are in this place—some more than others, to be honest with you—and we are very jealous and guarded of not only this place, but what Parliament represents. You have been one of those people that helps us once in a while remember how important it is to be here. The personalities that have shaped not only this place but the province of Ontario—you're the one who's given voice to a lot of that very often in the books that you have written, that all of us have read and enjoyed. That, I think, more than anything for me, is your legacy, that you have been jealously guarded of how important it is to be in this place.

Now, I know you have an Italian wife, so what I have done for you—I do have some sandals and socks in the back and an Italian undershirt so that you can start tending the garden. I know that your tomatoes should be spectacular.

But can you imagine being Paikin's neighbour in retirement? Just imagine this: You go over the fence, you're talking, and he's going to start moderating and looking at you in that way. It would be the worst place to live because you would have Ontario's pre-eminent journalist right there all of the time. Usually, you have to die in order to get this type of a tribute.

I'll break one little piece of news, and then I'll sit down and say thank you. His family is across the political spectrum; they've worked for everybody. But, so everybody knows, Steve Paikin actually is a Progressive Conservative supporter—no, I'm just kidding. To the man in Markham, he is a Conservative. He has probably turned the TV off in anger—no, he has not.

Honestly, thank you so much for everything you've done. Congratulations. I know you're just retiring from one program, but you have done an amazing job for the people of the province of Ontario, and we are honoured to have had you for so long. Thank you so much.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Steve, if you would like to experience the debate in the chamber from a different vantage point, please feel free to join us from the Speaker's gallery down below. It's a little bit of a different perspective. You're more than welcome.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, before Steve leaves, I want to thank him—Steve, before you leave and head downstairs, I just did want to lend my voice as well to saying thank you so much for your extraordinary contribution to our province, telling our stories, telling the stories of this place. I can't wait to see what you do next, tomatoes or no tomatoes. Thanks.

My question is to the Premier: In the greenbelt scandal, powerful land speculators with connections to the Con-

servative Party stood to gain billions when the government removed their specific lands from the greenbelt. It all happened behind closed doors after the Premier had promised Ontarians he wasn't going to touch the greenbelt. But they got caught and now, Speaker, they are under criminal investigation by the RCMP.

My question to the Premier is, knowing all of this, why would anyone trust this government to give itself the extraordinary, extraordinary powers provided in Bill 5?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** This is all about cutting unnecessary red tape. You've heard it many, many times; you're going to hear it many, many more times from me today. We are under an extraordinary threat from the United States. Donald Trump is after all of our jobs, after all of our business. He wants to pull these out of Ontario and move them into the States.

We need to fight back. We know that there's only one way to fight back and that is to be prepared, to have our lands ready for the companies who want to come here, companies that are leaving the States, companies from Europe who are looking for places for their capital to land.

Speaker, this is us getting prepared for what we hope will be a huge addition to the \$70 billion we've already landed.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Let be very clear with everybody here: We don't believe that First Nations rights, treaty rights, are red tape. Protection for our clean drinking water, labour laws—not red tape, okay? And Ontarians have not forgotten the greenbelt scandal and neither have the RCMP. Nobody gave this government the right or a mandate to seize unlimited power, to run roughshod over treaties or create these no-law zones.

If Bill 5 passes, the government can suspend any law, anywhere, any time. Why would anyone believe that this government won't sell these no-law zones to the highest bidder?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, our special economic zones are all about unlocking Ontario's true economic potential, not about overriding any Indigenous rights, or anybody's rights, for that matter. This is all about being prepared. You have to appreciate the fact that we are in a war. We are in an economic war with the United States. They are taking our companies; they are taking our jobs; they are costing our companies and our families work. This is us getting prepared. We know that there is a chill on business right across the world, and all of the capital that is being built up will be ready to be unleashed somewhere in this world. It had better be Ontario and we'd better be ready, Speaker, and that is why we are preparing special economic zone legislation, so that we can be absolutely ready for the onslaught of capital that will come because it's getting a chill from going to the States.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, just like the greenbelt was all about solving the housing crisis, right? Not exactly, and we're not buying it, and the people of this province are overwhelmingly not buying it.

Speaker, Bill 5 is destined to join the ranks of Bills 28, 124—all those bad bills that have landed in the hall of shame of bad bills here at Queen's Park. At a moment when our province is truly vulnerable, when jobs are leaving the province, when people are looking for help, this is the priority of this government? It is about the government helping themselves. That's what Bill 5 is about.

The Premier likes to say that he's not afraid to admit when he's wrong. Well, he is very wrong with this one. Everybody is watching to see what this government is going to do today, what happens in the House, and when this bill comes to a vote, whether this government is going to vote no.

I've got to tell you, I think the Premier should do the right thing here. Will the Premier do the right thing, scrap the bill and go back to the drawing board?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, you heard it from the Leader of the Opposition: We are truly vulnerable. Jobs are leaving. Yes, yes, they finally have figured it out. We are in a vulnerable situation. We have companies who are leaving. We have companies who are closing. We have jobs that are leaving.

Speaker, this is exactly why we need to be ready with special economic zones, so when the onslaught does happen—and it will. It is coming. That capital is being—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The opposition will come to order.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** We want to be the only place companies from around the world will look at and say, "It's Ontario. We've got to be in Ontario. They have the land. They have the 70,000 STEM grads. They have the clean, green energy. They have all the things ready for our company to locate there." And that is exactly why we're building these zones.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, just like the government used the greenbelt as their excuse—that grab to build housing, so-called, but really it was all about giving insiders a lot of money and a big opportunity to make billions—Bill 5, just like everything else this government does, is always going to be another opportunity for this Premier to help wealthy insiders to make a buck. We know where this is headed. CTV News reported that York1, the company behind the controversial Dresden landfill that we've all been hearing so much about, took the government to court over the commitment to a full environmental assessment. Instead of standing up to the corporation and protecting the community, the Premier folded like a cheap suit, and Bill 5 fast-tracks that dump.

So I would like to ask the Premier, did the Premier break his promise to the people of Dresden to appease York1?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Yesterday, Reuters announced, with a very, very strong article, “alarm over China’s stranglehold on critical minerals” grows as their export ban takes hold. China has blocked the shipment of critical minerals to the United States. What have we got in Ontario’s north? Critical minerals. They’re buried in the ground. We want to get them out of the ground. We want to get the nickel. We want to get the chromite. We want to get the cobalt. We want to get the lithium. Yes, we want to take the gold up as well.

Speaker, that is why we need to have these special economic zones. We need to be able to get at those critical minerals and be able to capitalize on the wealth that will be created for all of our families in Ontario by pulling those minerals out of the ground.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Well, last I checked, there were no critical minerals in the Dresden dump, but maybe we’re missing something here. The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will remember—because the Premier stood with him as they promised that community that they would do a full environmental assessment before they moved forward with the dump. I hope other government members here are careful about the promises that they’ve made to their communities because the Premier has shown he will not honour them. Bill 5 can override everything, all of it.

Does the Premier’s word mean anything at all?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** These special economic zones are all about cutting unnecessary red tape, not cutting corners. Listen to what is happening around the country. The King in his speech said, “one project, one review.” The federal government has said that we will get building these super projects in two years. NDP Premier David Eby: All of these delays will cost us when we can least afford it. That is precisely why we need to be prepared with our special economic zones. We need to be ready.

Speaker, all around the world they are looking for places to put their capital and safe places to invest. They look at Ontario as that reliable, stable, predictable partner. They do not see that in the United States any longer. They look to us to lead the way and have these zones built.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This bill is not about meeting the moment, Speaker. This government is using this moment as an excuse to override any law in any community at any time that they wish. That means treaty rights. That means they’re going to override child protection laws, child labour laws, any labour protection law, any labour law—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** They can heckle me all they want to, but we see the writing on the wall. Safe drinking water and protection for farmland—that is what is at stake. With the stroke of a pen, every single law is going to be wiped out by this government.

I’ve got to tell you, there is unprecedented opposition to this bill. If the members opposite are not hearing that, let me tell them: People in Ontario will not stand for this.

The risk of more corruption, of more waste, of more delays—that’s what this bill will create.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** We have successfully landed \$70 billion worth of work. You don’t get to land that by doing what this Leader of the Opposition says. Speaker, we absolutely understand—absolutely understand—and we have shared this: You cannot compete globally when you lower standards. We understand that. This is about streamlining approvals. That is what the rest of the world needs to hear. They need to know that our properties are ready for them, that we have streamlined the approvals and that we are a completely predictable, stable and understandable economy.

These companies around the world are watching what we’re doing. They know what we’re doing, and they’re excited by what we’re doing, Speaker. That’s why we’re bringing these special economic zones.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** I’d just like to begin by thanking the Clerks and Hansard, translation services—everybody who worked so hard as we sat in committee last night until midnight. I want to say something about the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, who was a great Chair and did a great job last night. I thank him.

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Well deserved.

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What we hoped last night is that it would give the Premier and his ministers time to think about what the right thing to do is with Bill 5. The right thing to do is to kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right. Will the Premier do that?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** When we heard last night about changing the Travel Industry Act, the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, the Public Libraries Act—if they had actual, serious amendments to bring, that would be a thing. But instead, they chose to play games.

They do not respect how serious the situation is with our families and with our companies. We are at the brink here with President Trump. That is the actual situation of where we are. That opposition needs to begin to respect the issues that we have at hand. They need to completely understand that we are vulnerable to the United States right now. We need these special economic zones to be prepared to fight the United States.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The minister wants to talk about respect. They’re not respecting First Nations rights. They’re not respecting the promise that the Premier made to the people of Dresden, if you want to talk about respect.

The minister may remember that the government had a chance to get another 12 hours in committee last week, and all the government members of the committee voted no to sitting for 12 hours last Thursday, so don’t give me that.



Do you know what the Premier had to say when I said this last week? The Premier said to First Nation—this is what he said: “Don’t get left behind.” And like I said yesterday, what that means is, “We know what’s good for you.” First Nations have heard that for centuries, often with tragic consequences. Is it any wonder that First Nations leaders and others are going to be on the front lawn again today?

When is this government going to get it? You need to respect First Nations. They’re a partner. You can’t throw a couple of amendments in at the 11th hour and expect them to forget the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Response? I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** At the very time that the opposition was bringing forth thousands of political games and amendments to the bill, President Trump doubled the tariff imposed on steel and aluminum. So maybe you all could wake up—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Through the Speaker.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** —turn on the news and realize we’re in an economic war. Maybe the opposition could realize, Madam Speaker, that we have an opportunity to stand up for Canadian resources. We brought forth amendments to the bill to codify the duty to consult, and because of your procedural games, we couldn’t even get to that amendment. So the moral indignity of the opposition, lecturing us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Through the Speaker.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** —on respecting rights, when we brought forth an amendment to the bill to strengthen that commitment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I’ve got no sympathy for a government that treats First Nations’ rights as something that they can slide in at the 11th hour in the preamble. That’s a joke, Speaker.

I want to apologize because I again said, because I got worked up, “our First Nations.” It’s not what I believe, and so I want to apologize for that.

But what I do want to ask the government to do is to consider what First Nations leaders are saying to you. They’re saying, “What we’re hearing from the grassroots is ‘Idle No More,’ that people are upset, that you’re not respecting truth and reconciliation.”

We want to work with you, so the right thing to do is not call the bill for third reading. Will the Premier not call Bill 5 for third reading, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Response? The Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** The bill needs to pass so that we can get out there, perform the duty to consult, move beyond that and form meaningful partnerships with First Nations, because I’m hearing that from First Nations as well.

With all due respect, we will take no lessons from a party that took over 10 years and failed in its consultations

just to twin a highway through Kenora–Rainy River district; one who took the Far North Act—and this is a matter of fact as well—and ran roughshod over every First Nations community in the Far North in the name of putting a park up in northern Ontario, essentially freezing any development in that region, at more than 400,000 square kilometres, a country the size of Europe. There’s no record of consultation.

The fact that chiefs spoke out at the time against this tells us all that we must not take lessons from the Liberal Party of Ontario when it comes to how we engage and form meaningful partnerships with First Nations.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** It’s interesting that the minister mentioned a park because my colleague from Kiiwetinoong referred to a park yesterday. That’s the point here, folks.

First Nations have heard for centuries, “We know what’s good for you. Trust us. We know what’s good for you.” We know what the consequences of that are: what my colleague from Kiiwetinoong mentioned yesterday. We know what truth and reconciliation has told us, and the Premier continues to say things like, “Don’t get left behind.” We need to put the past behind us. It should be in front of us and a lens that we look through. That’s the point.

So the right thing to do is not to call Bill 5 to third reading. Go back to the drawing board, take the summer and get it right. Will the Premier do that?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** The member has a responsibility to proscribe, in the strongest of terms; to take a stand against any inference, implicit or otherwise, that confrontation is a path forward or an option forward for us as a government to move forward meaningfully with First Nations. The fact of the matter is that we put joint decision-making in the Far North Act as a remedy for the act that they imposed on this province.

The fact of the matter is that these special economic zones, done right, offer a rare opportunity to form the kinds of partnerships with First Nations communities and First Nations businesses that put meaningful prosperity in play for those communities that are desperate to have it and that we would love to see happen.

Madam Speaker, we look forward to the opportunity to consult with First Nations, form effective economic partnerships, build Ontario and build Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The Far North Act is one of some 800 acts in Ontario that this bill can override. I hope the minister knows that. Every bill that exists in Ontario right now can be overridden by this bill. That is a pretty—pardon my language, Speaker—crappy piece of legislation.

There's no thought into that—no thought into the kind of power that it puts in the Premier and the ministers. It's beyond executive power; it's like the power of a sovereign. It's like a king. They're the kind of powers that Donald Trump thinks he has—or does have—south of the border.

It's not just First Nations. The people of Dresden, all sorts of people across Ontario—you all know. We all know. We're getting the emails. We're getting the calls. So will the Premier do the right thing: not call Bill 5 to third reading, go back to the drawing board and come back here with something that will actually work and not end up in court?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I'm trying to reconcile that with comments I've made earlier when the member speaks.

Earlier this morning, the ever-Chatty Cathy member for Kingston and the Islands said that his party supports the mining aspects of Bill 5 on some channel 1010 or something. I don't listen to the media and I don't know anything about Toronto radio stations, but it appears as though there's some division in the Liberal Party.

Let me set it straight. We have an extraordinary opportunity to build out economic partnerships with First Nations and First Nations businesses in developing the kinds of partnerships that offer long-term prosperity and move us forward as a province.

Today, the weight of Donald Trump is upon us. The doubling of those tariffs put us in a vulnerable position. We need to do the right thing, form effective partnerships with First Nations and move forward on building prosperous communities—

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**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I'll caution the member to be careful of the words he uses to refer to other members.

I recognize the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I am shocked that the minister would say that.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Shocked, shocked.

**Mr. John Fraser:** No, I am. I'm shocked. And if being chatty is standing up for First Nations, well, then maybe he's chatty. If being chatty is standing up for the people of Dresden, then maybe he's chatty.

But you know what? What the member from Kingston and the Islands is doing is what we all need to be doing here, not just us but all of you, and that's saying to the Premier clearly, "You haven't got it right." You have passed a law that allows the Premier to break every law in Ontario wherever he wants to and whenever he wants to do that. The laws don't matter. It's not right.

It's a lousy, poorly written piece of legislation, and you need to go back to the drawing board. You can come back with something that has the mining pieces in it and the stuff that's good and just get rid of all the other stuff that you didn't put any thought into. It's ridiculous.

So don't call Bill 5 for third reading. Go back to the drawing board and come back here with some work that we can all vote for, that we can all support so we can get the things done we need to get done in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, unlike the member's party, who showed up with props last night, stacks of paper, pretending to bring something serious, we are here with serious legislation.

Our province, our country is under threat by Donald Trump. Please understand that. We are losing companies. We are losing jobs. We are doing everything in our power to prepare Ontario for the future.

We have 70,000 STEM grads every year; clean, green energy; land. We have everything that companies all around the world are looking for. We put our special economic zones in place, and we can get these things opened in two years instead of 15 years. This is what we need. That's the strength that we need here in Ontario.

## STEEL INDUSTRY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Premier. Trump's tariffs have caused enormous uncertainty and fear in Ontario, particularly for workers and their families in industries exposed to tariffs. Today, our communities are facing an increased threat with the doubling of steel and aluminum tariffs. Our steel industry is warning of "unrecoverable consequences."

USW national has warned that the steel industry is on the verge of collapse. They say they cannot access the American market at 50% tariffs. And it's worth noting that 65% of Canadian steel goes to the US market.

Steel leadership have told us, "Focusing on Canadian-made products gives us a better chance of treading water to get through this, keep our head above water and be successful on the other side." The storm is here.

My question is to the Premier: What specific measures has he taken to protect jobs of steel and aluminum workers in the province of Ontario? Because it certainly is not Bill 5.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Well, congratulations for acknowledging the storm is here. That's exactly what we've been saying.

The member asks, "What have you done specifically?" Well, \$30 billion is in the budget to help businesses all across Ontario. They continue to vote against every single thing that we brought forward. I could name you dozens of items—item after item after item, vote down, vote down, vote down.

It's just shocking, Speaker, that the member would ask, "What are you doing?" Read the budget: \$40 billion is in the budget, \$11 billion was announced earlier, \$9 billion worth of delayed payments to help them, \$2 billion worth of WSIB going back to them, \$5 billion of powder kept in the tank. There is item after item after item. Pick any page in the budget and you'll find what we're doing for the businesses of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Hamilton Centre.

**MPP Robin Lennox:** I stand here today to defend steelworkers in Hamilton Centre. As you know, Hamilton is Canada's biggest steel producer and we have more than 6,000 steelworkers in our community.

This is an opportunity for us to lead, rather than simply react. We can seize this opportunity to stabilize and even grow our steel sector if we prioritize domestic procurement, invest in modern infrastructure, invest in green steel initiatives and ensure that public projects use locally produced materials.

To the Premier: Will you take this opportunity to show leadership, to invest in Ontario workers, and secure the future of locally produced steel and aluminum?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, it sounds like somebody actually did look at the pages of the budget because that's exactly what we're doing—\$40 billion. If you've listened to the Premier lately, you would hear him say that every widget we buy, we want made here in Ontario. We want steel from Hamilton. We want steel from Sault Ste. Marie.

We have been meeting with them almost on a daily basis, looking for other things they can build out of Canadian steel. We've been meeting with Algoma. We've been meeting with Dofasco. We've been meeting with all of the companies down the supply chain, the fabricators who are making products. We have billions of dollars of help for them to pivot into new products that they can make out of our Ontario steel and out of the other products that we make here, Speaker.

Every page of the budget has another program. I encourage you to talk to your manufacturers in your ridings about the Ontario Together Trade Fund and all of the other programs that we've been putting together.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** The Premier wants to be able to indiscriminately override some of our most essential and important protections. Bill 5 lets him. Under Bill 5, corporate friends or wealthy insiders will be able to ignore the hard-fought laws that keep us safe, and they will be able to do it with absolute impunity. That means no Employment Standards Act, no Occupational Health and Safety Act. That means no Safe Drinking Water Act, none of the rules that keep workers, environments and communities safe.

Speaker, will the Premier scrap Bill 5, commit to rewriting it, and commit to respecting democracy and the rule of law?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Madam Speaker, the opposition's fearmongering isn't going to create a solitary job in this province. It's not going to open up one mine. It's not going to get one Canadian business working or employed. All it's going to do—all it does—is paralyze the ability of this government, like every government in this land, to move with speed to meet the moment.

While the opposition obstructs and filibusters, the President of the United States doubled the tariff on steel

and aluminum. You need to wake up to realize that the country is under attack, and the Speaker knows, like all parliamentarians should, this government is going to stand up for Canadian resources, for Canadian workers, and for Canada's self-reliance.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Speaker, Bill 5 is a direct attack on democracy, on health and safety standards, and the rule of law. It is fatally flawed. It must be withdrawn and completely rewritten.

This bill isn't about protecting Ontario or even creating more jobs. It's about protecting profits. We've seen it before. Corporations will cut corners to maximize profit, and when their negligent disregard for our health and safety costs the lives of one of our children or our community members, this bill will be to blame. And it will be my duty to remind everyone of that reality.

Speaker, the province is united in demanding action from the Premier. Will he do the right thing, withdraw and rewrite Bill 5?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I know the member is a former member of Parliament with the federal Liberals, and I wonder if she has expressed her disdain for the federal Liberal government's desire to have one project, one process; to cut impact assessments—not by 50%—by an even more aggressive posture from five years to two. But I appreciate she won't, because this Liberal Party, unlike the federal Liberal Party, is so extreme, so out of the mainstream, that they actually want to keep our resources landlocked, because yes, to the Minister of Education's earlier point, they want to empower the most autocratic regimes to win the day, and that is bizarre, that is offensive.

I think now more than ever, every parliamentarian, Madam Speaker, would like our government to work with the federal Liberals, work with the federal government in good faith, to get to yes on projects, to stand up for Canadian industry and make sure Canadian jobs prevail in this economy.

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#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** We know that the threat of crime is on the rise in many communities. I hear from my constituents from Markham–Thornhill. They see it in the news. They see it in the viral videos online. People are worried. They want to know that our government has their back. They want to know that their communities are safe.

Sadly, the federal government has failed to secure our borders, letting dangerous criminals into our communities and the country. This has made crime worse. But here in Ontario, we are taking action. We are giving police the tools they need to do their job. We are investing in technology, like helicopters, that help police catch dangerous criminals.

Can the Solicitor General please tell this House what our government is doing to keep Ontario communities safe and stand with our police?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to thank my friend for the question.

Look, I've said this before: There's never been a government in my lifetime that has prioritized our public safety more than this government, led by Premier Ford. What we did last year when we came forward with the air support, to give communities where people in the communities thought they had a helicopter but never did—we provided one for Toronto and we provided one for Peel and for Halton and a new one for Durham and especially for Ottawa, because the geographic territory of Ottawa is larger than some of the Atlantic provinces. I want to give a special shout-out to Ottawa's great police chief, Chief Eric Stubbs.

When it comes to an investment of \$191 million, when you add the helicopters for Niagara and for Windsor that are coming up soon, the message is simple: There's never been a government, there never will be a government, that takes public safety more than this government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member from Markham–Thornhill.

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you, Minister, for that response, and thank you for your leadership, fighting against crime.

We know that video technology can be a game-changer when it comes to catching criminals. It helps police get the evidence they need to put dangerous people behind bars. Our government has shown real leadership by investing in CCTV cameras to keep our communities safe. This is a smart and proven tool. It helps police find criminals faster and solve crimes.

Sadly, the federal government continues to fall behind when it comes to taking action on border security. That's why it is so important that our government continues to step up. Can the Solicitor General share how our investments in CCTV technology are giving police the tools they need to fight crime and keep Ontario communities safe?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Thank you to my friend, again, for the question.

The \$10 million that the government has invested in CCTV grants has made a difference. It's made a difference all across Ontario. I want to acknowledge—especially yesterday, when the federal government introduced an important piece of legislation, the Strong Borders Act. This will allow municipalities with CCTV cameras to share information to make sure that we will not rest until everybody that commits an act of criminality is where they belong: behind bars. That's why we will not stop.

I say again, Madam Speaker, show me a government that has done more for public safety, that's talked it up, that's respectful to our stakeholders, that's been bold and innovative, and I'll show you our government, led by Premier Ford.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** The WSIB, created to support workers injured or made ill on the job, has been turned into a pre-election handout to bosses by robbing from funds

intended to support injured workers. In the meantime, people who work at the WSIB have been striking for over two weeks to increase staffing so that they can provide timely service for injured workers at one of the lowest points in their lives.

Why is the WSIB, with the support of this government, imposing unsustainable workloads on their own workers, leaving them unable to fulfill their core responsibility to support those made injured or ill on the job?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

**Hon. David Piccini:** That's just patently false. Workloads have decreased by 60%. We're happy that both sides are at the table. We're encouraging a best deal to be landed at that table.

That member has consistently stood against investments in skills training, investments in projects that are going to elevate the lot of workers, investments that are going to bring good-paying jobs to support workers. Workers want to get back to work healthy. We've reduced the lost injury time because we have a sustainable WSIB. That member doesn't recognize that those are employer premiums. She thinks those are tax dollars, and that's patently false.

A strong employer is a strong worker. A strong worker ensures strong employers. Speaker, we recognize that partnership. That's why we're encouraging both sides to get back to the table so we can continue the good work of supporting workers, reducing lost injury time and ensuring a prosperous economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** The minister seems to be ignoring the 20,000 claims that have been suppressed that we know about. Those are just the ones that we know about.

The WSIB is already understaffed, and yet they are cutting 26 positions and sending their jobs to an American firm called Iron Mountain. Management has blown millions to rub shoulders with another American company called BetterUp. All that Ontarians are getting out of these deals is worse service.

We are in an economic war with the Trump government, so why is the WSIB outsourcing Ontario's services to American companies?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, I'm glad that they're finally waking up to the fact that we are at economic war and that we've got to create the conditions for economic investment so that workers can succeed.

A wise union leader once said that workers didn't abandon the NDP; the NDP abandoned workers. That's why those unions are backing this government. That member's assertion of 20,000 claims is false. Find me the claims outside and you show them to me. That's absolutely false.

If we're going to land a deal, it's got to be both sides getting to the table, with truth at the table. That's what the union is doing and they're bringing forward good proposals. That's what the employer is doing, meeting at

the table to land a deal. The theatrics and the falsehoods spread by that member opposite—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I ask you to withdraw.

**Hon. David Piccini:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question?

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** My question is for the Premier today.

The Premier has said that he wants to unleash our economy, but actually, all he's unleashed has been half a trillion dollars in debt, a \$15-billion deficit and record unemployment. The man is all talk and no action, except when it comes to Indigenous people, when he has no interest in talking.

Now, with Bill 5, he's forcing through flawed legislation and isn't willing to work with First Nations or us to make it better. But last night, he had an opportunity—a great opportunity; 4,000 opportunities—to think twice in committee and take Bill 5 back to the drawing board.

Madam Speaker, will the Premier take our lead, listen to Indigenous people and rewrite Bill 5?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** As I have said in this place before, this is an opportunity for us to form the kinds of partnerships in this province with First Nations communities and businesses like they have never been or seen before.

We know that. Indigenous business leaders have spoken loud and clear in various forms over the past couple of months. They want to be part of building legacy infrastructures. They want to be part of building legacy resource development to build Ontario and make Canada stronger in the face of President Trump and these tariffs and various other activities that he has put out there.

We have confidence that, moving forward with the duty to consult and beyond, forming the kinds of economic partnerships and community partnerships contemplated under Bill 5, we'll be able to move forward with those communities and share prosperity more equitably across this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** The member for Kenora–Rainy River is listing a whole bunch of things that he purports Indigenous people are saying, but that's not what they're telling me; that's not what they've been saying outside the Legislature for the last couple of days.

We're here to say that we've had enough of the Premier's rushed reforms and broken promises.

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He rammed through Ontario Health atHome and left countless Ontarians without home care.

He complained about health care in hallways and then drove out the nurses and shuttered the hallways.

He promised a road map to wellness and then created HART hubs that are just old clinics with new names and not enough funding.

Now, he's doing it again with Bill 5 and ignoring Indigenous warnings while insisting that he's not.

Madam Speaker, why should we expect Bill 5 to be any less of a failure than any of the other solutions that he has tried to implement?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Obviously, the forums that I have been at over the past couple of months have told me that Indigenous business leaders in particular have sent a clarion call that they want to be involved in the kind of businesses that build legacy infrastructure for their communities, particularly in northern Ontario. Premier Kinew accounted for that at the First Ministers' meeting a couple of days ago, where he said this is the kind of opportunity that will help some of the most desperate, economically challenged communities that this country knows and should not have.

Madam Speaker, moving forward, we will not do things like run roughshod over northern Ontario vis-à-vis the Far North Act, as it did, and as First Nations leaders spoke out—I was a lawyer at the time and involved in that. No, this is about joint decision-making. It's a little phrase we put in the act when we came to power, and it's the approach we're going to take with First Nations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question?

#### TOBACCO CONTROL

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** My question is to the Premier. But first, credit where it's due, as this government, in the budget, has finally taken direct aim at contraband tobacco. I'm grateful because my area has been ground zero, and I've seen the effects of contraband.

I do suspect over the next few years, however, there will be a continued dramatic decline in legal tobacco sales, far outpacing smoking rate declines. In Ontario, legal carton sales have plummeted, from 36 million in 2017 to under 17 million today, while smoking rates have only declined by about 5%. Similarly, illicit cannabis sales continue to undermine the legal and regulated industry to the financial benefit of organized crime.

But now we have a second-generation issue: vaping and tobacco pouches, which are largely sold in sovereign stores. Nearly 80% of such stores in Canada are right here in Ontario and are a gateway to many illicit products.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Is this government aware of these sovereign stores and does it know where the products they are selling are coming from?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and through you to the independent member across the aisle: This government, since day one—since we came into power seven years ago—has been very focused on the unregulated tobacco market. There's no question that one of our goals has been to stop the unregulated market. That is why we've cracked down through various measures,

including, as the member opposite rightly points out, in this budget, yet again, providing more resources to the Ontario Provincial Police and other front-line officers to combat the unregulated market, the illegal market.

We're working with the federal government to strengthen our border. That's been an important part of our measures to combat the smuggling into this country.

And as the member opposite will duly note, we have modernized the Tobacco Tax Act, we've strengthened the oversight and we continue to fund dedicated police units to enforce the law.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I thank the minister for his response, but we have a new issue on our doorstep. I know where these products are coming from: They are coming from organized crime and they are coming from China. Allowing the proliferation of these shops is inviting human trafficking, illegal guns and other illegal products.

Many of these sovereign shops have an online presence. I counted 100 sites—none of which are on the dark web—where our children can place an order not only for illegal smokes, vapes or cannabis but crystal meth and cocaine under names like “white powder” and “glass.” These hard drugs are shipped to your door by Canada Post.

Like tobacco, the vaping industry will soon become a financial force multiplier for nefarious people sourcing a product that contains God knows what. Not so long ago, these criminals were operating out of the back of their cars. Now we're allowing them to set up shop in our downtowns.

I am sending this government some very subtle warnings. We cannot wait 20 years to deal with this problem.

Speaker, through you to the Premier, what action is this government taking to shut down sovereign stores and online shops selling drugs to our kids?

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Well, Madam Speaker, a very important question and a very important topic. I don't think there's been a government in the history of Ontario that's done more for law enforcement in this province to battle all forms of crime and giving our front-line officers, who put their lives at stake each and every day on behalf of all of us to keep us safe—that includes the illegal tobacco market and the unregulated tobacco market.

That's why the Solicitor General has provided more resources to front-line officers, including helicopters, including joint task forces, including funding for guns and gangs, for auto theft, operation deterrence at the border. This government has the backs of the hard-working front-line people who keep us safe, including the unregulated tobacco market.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Speaker, here is a tough question supporting our Ontario manufacturers—and my question is to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement.

As we all know, under the leadership of the Premier, our caucus is standing up for Ontario businesses. We are supporting workers and families by promoting Ontario-made products. We know that when people buy Ontario products, it means more jobs, stronger communities and a better future for our province. It supports our farms, factories and small businesses, and it builds up our economy. That's why we need to keep removing barriers, cutting red tape and creating new markets for all Ontario products. We need to make it clear that Ontario businesses are second to none.

To the minister: Can you share how our government's effort to promote buy Ontario is helping protect jobs and strengthening our economy?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the member from the great riding of Mississauga–Malton for that great question.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is taking decisive action to strengthen Ontario's economy and protect good-paying jobs across the province. By introducing the Protect Ontario Through Free Trade Within Canada Act, we're helping break down internal trade and labour mobility barriers that have held us back for far too long. This legislation will cut red tape, reduce costs and create new markets for Ontario businesses, workers and products.

Through the launch of Buy Ontario, Buy Canadian Day on the last Friday in June, we are giving Ontarians the tools to support home-grown success stories through programs like Ontario Made, Ontario Wood, VQA and Foodland Ontario.

Our message is simple: When we buy Ontario and buy Canada, we create jobs, build strong communities and drive economic growth right across this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the minister for the response.

Speaker, trade barriers within Canada cost the economy up to \$200 billion each year and lower gross domestic product by nearly 8% to 9%. These barriers also increase the cost of goods and services by over 14.5%. That's why our government is putting Ontario businesses and workers first and removing these barriers. We know when we prioritize Ontario-made products, we protect jobs and we build stronger communities.

But to truly unleash our potential we need to keep cutting red tape, clearing barriers and supporting innovation. That's why we need to keep making it easier for Ontario businesses to grow, hire and invest in our future.

To the minister: Can you share how our government's work to modernize and streamline processes is helping Ontarians lead and compete on the world stage?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Our government is delivering real results for Ontario businesses and workers by cutting red tape and modernizing how we do business in this province. With the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, we're removing the maze of outdated approvals and duplicative regulations that have stalled key infrastructure, mining and resource development projects.

That includes unlocking the Ring of Fire, an area critical for Ontario's leadership in clean technology and critical minerals.

We're also launching a new user-friendly, one-window permitting program that helps job creators spend less time navigating through bureaucracy and more time building, hiring and innovating.

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Speaker, by prioritizing Ontario- and Canadian-made businesses in our procurement strategy, we're making sure our public dollars support the strength, resilience and ingenuity of our local industries. Under the Premier's leadership, we are putting Ontario workers first, supporting businesses and driving sustainable, long-term growth from the north to the GTA and everywhere in between.

## HIGHWAY SAFETY SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** My question is to the Premier. Good morning.

Northern Ontarians are fed up. We are constantly raising the alarm on unsafe highways, and year after year, nothing changes.

We need significant improvement to make Highways 11 and 17 safer. We need stricter enforcement, better winter maintenance, and we must ensure that only fully trained, properly tested drivers are licensed.

Premier, how many more lives need to be lost before your ministry stops ignoring the north and takes real action to make our highways safer?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Madam Speaker, our government continues to make record investments in northern Ontario. In fact, just last year, we invested over \$600 million to support the work across northern Ontario in our highways.

I urge the member, every single time, including in this recent budget when we have tabled billions of dollars of spending to support—whether it be expansions, resurfacing projects or new projects like the 2+1 on Highway 11, that member has voted against it every single time.

On this side of the House, we're committed to building the north, investing in the north, and that is what we will continue to do. I urge that member: Support this government's initiatives in the north and vote for those projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Monsieur le Premier Ministre, durant l'élection, vous avez pris l'avion pour venir dans le nord de l'Ontario. C'est grand temps que vous vous mettiez derrière la roue et que vous veniez faire un tour sur nos routes.

Depuis 2018, j'ai présenté cinq projets de loi visant à améliorer la sécurité routière dans la province. Le gouvernement a voté contre chacun.

Aujourd'hui, je présente un nouveau projet de loi qui propose des mesures concrètes pour rendre nos routes du Nord plus sûres. Ce n'est pas une question partisane; il s'agit de sauver des vies, monsieur le Ministre.

Je m'adresse de nouveau à vous, monsieur le ministre des Transports. Le Ministre prendra-t-il enfin au sérieux les précautions des habitants du Nord et supportera-t-il mon nouveau projet de loi?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I urge that member—I agree, it's a non-partisan issue, and that is why it should be very easy for those members to step up and support the investments this government is making. Whether that's Highway 17 and some of the twinning work that has been completed and will continue, whether that was a commitment made by the Premier in this past election to continue the 2+1 pilot for over another 200 kilometres—the original pilot, the first in North America, on Highway 11 that this government will do, Madam Speaker. That is under the leadership of Premier Ford and this government.

When it comes to investing in highways and building in the north, there's only one government that has put forward and tabled concrete measures and plans and procurements, and that is this government.

Unfortunately, that member opposite, the NDP, the Liberals who left the north without any investments for over 15 years—unfortunately, Madam Speaker, because of them, we are going to continue to invest and ensure that we have the roads, the highways and the infrastructure needed to build—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Thank you. The member for Beaches—East York.

## MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Beautiful day, everyone.

Speaker, Ontarians want to live in comfort while saving money and reducing greenhouse gases. They are keen to do the right thing and protect future generations. Green development standards help achieve that goal.

Many municipalities all across the great province have implemented these guidelines as a way to help meet net-zero targets, like the rest of the world. It is also part of the green economy and innovative job creation. Reputable and respected home builders and developers—like Tridel, Tribute, Minto, EllisDon—strongly support sustainable development, especially the Toronto Green Standard.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: Why did you believe in the Toronto Green Standard enough to vote for them when you were a Toronto city councillor?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Rob Flack:** I appreciate the question opposite. As you know, Bill 17 passed yesterday. What we are going to do is we have capped the amount of studies we can do in this province and we're going to take a look—to key studies—at what we really need.

As for the building code in this province, Speaker, the code is king. We can't have hundreds of iterations throughout this province, to get shovels in the ground faster. It's bureaucratic, it's red tape; it isn't working. That is why we made changed to Bill 17. And she knows all too well—through you, Speaker—that the green standards act is part of the slowness of getting houses built. What we're going to do—why we're going to do it—is to make consistency work. The code is king in Windsor and Wawa, from Pembroke to Pickering—

**Interjection:** Port Hope to Cobourg.

**Hon. Rob Flack:** —from Port Hope to Cobourg. It is working, Speaker. This is why we're going to get shovels in the ground faster. It's time—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Beaches–East York.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** The code could be queen if it had the Toronto Green Standard in it.

Speaker, many beautiful towns and cities across Ontario are interested in ensuring development in their areas is not only affordable and accessible but also sustainable. Their councils have worked tirelessly on climate action plans that include all of their municipal departments. They want to ensure they leave this world in a better place than when they found it. Halton Hills, Oakville, Brampton, Aurora and others have done the work and actually created green development standards. These standards aren't political; they're practical, ensuring housing is not only resilient to future floods, fires and extreme heat but also providing cost savings and comfort for homeowners. It's a win-win.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: Why did your former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing write a letter to municipalities in Ontario stating your government's support for green development standards?

**Hon. Rob Flack:** Well let me begin by saying the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is a great leader and is doing a great job for this government as Minister of Education.

Speaker, as we know, in this province we need shovels in the ground faster and smarter. It takes too long and it costs too much to build housing in this province. The key here is we are ultimately going to have to nationalize our building code so we can create free trade right across this province—exactly what this Premier is doing, day in and day out, fighting for Ontarians, fighting for Canada. That is why we brought Bill 17 forward; that is why we are going to have one code in this province, not hundreds of iterations. At the very end of the day, Bill 17 is going to work—the member opposite knows it. We're going to get more homes built faster.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development regarding

WSIB. This matter will be debated today following private members' public business.

I recognize the member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Speaker, earlier in question period, the member from Kenora–Rainy River referred to me by—called me a name of a doll. So I just want to say, “No hard feelings.” But I'd like to buy him his own doll and I'd like to know if he'd like the Chatty Cathy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** That is not a point of order.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### PROTECT ONTARIO THROUGH SAFER STREETS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2025

##### LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN RENDANT LES RUES PLUS SÛRES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS PLUS FORTES

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

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les mesures visant les lieux où se déroulent des activités illégales liées à la drogue et modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la sécurité publique et le système judiciaire.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Members, please take your seats.

Minister? Can somebody get Lecce?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** On June 3, 2025, Mr. Downey moved third reading of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system.

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

#### Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Ford, Doug	Racinsky, Joseph
Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Sabawy, Sheref
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie



Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Quinn, Nolan	

Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
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**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Gretzky, Lisa	Smyth, Stephanie
Bourgouin, Guy	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Cerjanec, Rob	Lennox, Robin	Tsao, Jonathan
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vaugeois, Lise
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Watt, Tyler
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	

<b>Nays</b>		
Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hardeman, Ernie	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Quinn, Nolan	
Ford, Doug	Racinsky, Joseph	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 74; the nays are 43.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

#### PENSION PLANS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 5

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1208 to 1209.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Ms. Armstrong has moved private member's notice of motion number 5.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Lennox, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order, thank you, Madam Speaker: I'd just like to advise the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Trevor Jones:** Good afternoon, Speaker. I want to take a moment to welcome the Canadian Beverage Association. Thank you to my colleagues from across the aisle and from my caucus and our staff members who attended their very informative reception, and thank you for taking meetings with the Canadian Beverage Association.

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have the privilege of welcoming to Queen's Park today—he will be here shortly—my nephew, who's coming from southern Alberta and is

joining us. He's taller than me, but he's still younger than me and he's a good guy. Welcome to Queen's Park. I'm grateful you could be here.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm delighted to welcome London West constituent, Tina Stevens, who is a very strong woman, a fierce advocate for labour and for Indigenous rights. Welcome to Queen's Park, Tina.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** [*Inaudible*] happy birthday. We love you. Happy birthday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Can we turn the microphone on for that? Maybe the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, your mike wasn't on, would you like to repeat that?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Speaker. It's June 4, and I'd like to wish my wee brother, Edward Shaw, a very, very happy birthday. We love you. Enjoy your day.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Today I have Andrew and Annabella Pelizari. They've done a tour of Queen's Park and had lunch also here. Welcome to your House, and thank you for coming to visit.

**Hon. Andrea Khanjin:** I'm thrilled to introduce the team from red tape reduction who's here today: Tim Wontorra, Sehar Malik, Evan Holt, Ron Pineault, Sebastian Bonham-Carter and Mike Pew. Welcome.

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I am so happy to welcome Mr. Ponniah Balasubramaniam, a dedicated immigration and settlement consultant. He's also joined by his daughter Tharsiny Markandu, co-founder of Reach Beyond autism centre in Sri Lanka and a passionate autism advocate involved with Holland Bloorview and Sir William Osler High School. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I'd like to welcome Suzanne Kukko, mayor of Nipigon, who made the journey from Nipigon via Thunder Bay to be with us today.

I'd also like to welcome Harry Goslin, president, and the many members of the Ontario Compensation Employees Union, CUPE 1750.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to introduce and recognize the parents of page Abd-Ur-Rehman Chaudhry. Besides being an excellent page, he is also a prize-winning scientist, securing medals at the Toronto and Canada science fairs for his autonomous electric wheelchairs.

Congratulations to his parents, Dr. Mohammad Asad Rehman Chaudhury and Dr. Zakia Asad on raising a remarkable young man. Thank you for joining us today.

**MPP Jamie West:** I want to welcome, president for OPSEU/SEFPO, JP Hornick is here, along with many of her members of her union.

As well on the way in here I saw that Chris Moonias is here, former chief of Neskantaga First Nation.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** I would also like to welcome the members of OPSEU today, and in particular to highlight Shelly Gordon, who is a constituent and a strong local activist. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** I have also seen that Chief Sylvia Koostachin is here today. I just want to welcome her to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to welcome Patti Dalton, who is the president of the London and District Labour

Council, who is here today in solidarity with First Nations peoples.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I also want to welcome Laurie Ourette from London. She's also an OPSEU member and, I believe, has been recently elected as a regional representative. Welcome to the House.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker. It's not every day that we see constituents from Kiiwetinoong. We got some people from Muskrat Dam, Neskantaga, KI, Bearskin Lake. It's good to see people here, and we have to remember the First Peoples of these lands. Meegwetch.

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Madam Speaker, I'm so thrilled to introduce my brother, Mr. Thillainathan Kanapathipillai, former member of Parliament from Sri Lanka and tireless advocate for social justice and human rights.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to the order of the House dated June 3, 2025, the Standing Committee on the Interior shall report Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement to the House, no later than June 4, 2025. The House, not having received this report during reports by committees today, the bill, as amended, is therefore deemed to be reported to and received by the House. Shall the report be adopted?

Twelve members having stood in their places, we will now have a 30-minute report-stage debate on the adoption of the report on the bill, as amended, pursuant to standing order 38(b). In this debate, each recognized party is allotted eight minutes, and the independent members are allotted a total of six minutes.

I recognize the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** Before I begin, I do want to note that I will be splitting my time with the chief government whip, the member for Perth–Wellington.

I rise today to speak on the committee report regarding the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act that was referred back to this House, and I must begin by saying, Speaker, that it's disappointing that this bill came back from the committee on the interior without the additional language that our government proposed that would have strengthened, reaffirmed and, frankly, recognized the government's constitutional obligations to Indigenous communities, first by recognizing this obligation at the very beginning of this legislation; and secondly, within the schedules of this legislation.



has been no consultation—this government is simply looking to check a box. First Nations are not a check box.

One of the things I did as well over here a few weeks ago is that I delivered an invitation to the Premier from Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler to the chiefs' assembly. There was silence—no response. There could be so much dialogue, real dialogue, on First Nations terms. But the Premier did not respond and did not attend.

This government has refused to travel this bill. On May 26, after question period, the official opposition moved a motion for unanimous consent to bring public hearings to Thunder Bay. The motion was voted down by this government.

This government also voted down public hearings in the north. On May 22, May 26 and May 28, I asked the government to do that. In fact, the government voted against three additional hearings every time.

After refusing to travel the bill, the government continued to shut down debate by time allocating the rest of Bill 5. We also had no opportunity to debate amendments, clause-by-clause consideration.

Yesterday, last night until midnight, as I was sitting there, I was looking at the spam amendments taking up hours of no real discussion. I had asked them to withdraw some of these spam amendments. They refused. I think my concern was the real issues of First Nations people were never brought to light. I think it's important that we focus on making this bill better.

The last speaker just mentioned that they're going to pass this bill as is. We should be rescinding Bill 5.

Every time we give this government an opportunity for meaningful engagement and for substantive consultation with First Nations, they have rejected the opportunity. Instead of the duty to consult, instead of genuinely seeking free, prior and informed consent, they prioritize pushing their legislative agenda forward. They push their legislative bulldozer forward.

First Nations, rights holders showed up at the public hearings. There were so many of them. Despite the government's claims, First Nations leaders did not ask for Indigenous economic zones. But instead, they asked for the bill to be rescinded, for the process to begin with collaboration with First Nations. There's a clear difference, Speaker, if the government bothered to listen. But instead of listening, they are putting words in the mouths of First Nations leaders. When government does that, when settlers do that, it is very colonial. It is very disrespectful.

We heard from First Nations and rights holders that the lack of consultation in the drafting of this bill and the contents of the bill itself has been disrespectful. We heard from presenters that it is a sacred obligation to protect the earth, now and for our children and our children's children, and that Bill 5 is a threat. We heard that First Nations, we heard that rights holders will use every possible avenue—the Legislature, the media, the courts, eventually action on the land itself—to defend their lands, their waters and, most importantly, Speaker, their inherent rights and treaty rights. Meegwetch.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

1320

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'd like to talk about how we got here. Bill 5 is a direct attack on local democracy, endangered species and the rule of law. That's why it required a lot of detailed discussion in committee. That's something we were doing on Wednesday in the afternoon. We were going through amendments, and we got through to about the end of schedule 2. Then the government decided to propose a motion to have the committee meet from midnight to 9 o'clock in the morning, to extend the hours. We countered with—we said, "Why make all the staff and everybody stay up overnight? Instead of doing nine hours overnight, let's do 12 hours the next day, 8 o'clock to 8 a.m." But the government would not agree with that. We kept debating, we kept debating, and they kept not agreeing with that. And so we ended up with no agreement.

Why would the government refuse to have longer hours to debate Bill 5? It's incomprehensible, except if you take into account the fact that this government believes it has this majority, and so "It's my way or the highway." They should be able to have whatever they want. They should be able to have that unlimited power. That's what people are afraid of in Bill 5, that this government would have unlimited power to exempt companies and projects from any act or any regulation anywhere they want to designate a special economic zone.

We responded to this worry. We responded to the fact that the government passed a motion so that yesterday at committee, there was no debate and no discussion allowed in committee, which sort of eliminates the purpose of a committee. We responded to the fact that they're shutting down Parliament—several bills bypassed committee this week in the Legislature. And we responded to the fact that the government doesn't even like to have the Legislature, the people's elected members, meet and discuss the government's business. We've only met for about four months out of the last 12 months. This is how little the government regards our primary democratic institution here in the province of Ontario.

That's why we're here. That's why we pushed back, to make sure that we didn't delay for delay's sake. We delayed to defend democracy, to defend the purpose of the work we do in this Legislature, to defend our work representing and giving voice to the people back home in this Legislature in the face of the power that this government is trying to grab.

That is why I oppose what the government has been doing. We're not going to roll over and let them do whatever they want. That's not how democracy works, and we showed them yesterday in committee.

They should take Bill 5, go back to the drawing board, consult, especially with First Nations, over the summer and come back with a better bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the member from Haldimand-Norfolk.

Let's be clear: Bill 5 is a flawed bill that was developed with a flawed process that disrespects First Nations across the province, especially those in northwestern Ontario, and, quite frankly, disrespects people across Ontario. That's exactly why tens of thousands of people have signed petitions to kill Bill 5. That's exactly why over 100 organizations wrote a letter to the Premier to kill Bill 5, and their spokesperson called it the worst bill in a generation.

That's exactly why the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the National Farmers Union and others have expressed concerns around Bill 5. But it's especially why First Nations chiefs across this province have expressed outrage about Bill 5. It's why thousands of people were on the front lawn on Monday, telling this government to kill Bill 5.

Yet the government plows ahead with a flawed bill and a flawed process. The government, after last night's committee hearing, has even acknowledged that they weren't able to get their amendments in that were supposed to supposedly fix this bill, which I would argue they wouldn't have fixed the bill. That being said, they're still going to plow ahead with this bill.

I want to remember back to the last Parliament, when we had a mining bill that travelled to Timmins—at least to the northeast. It didn't go to the northwest; it at least travelled to the near north. I remember those hearings, where First Nations leaders came to committee and told us in Timmins and Sudbury that they were not consulted on that bill and that that was unacceptable. I recall members of the government saying, "We will do better next time."

Well, Speaker, the next time is here. And we actually have even worse consultation on this bill, which has bigger impacts—a bill that will actually give this government extraordinary and unprecedented powers to override Indigenous rights and attack environmental protections, labour laws and democratic oversight through these special economic zones, not to mention how many other schedules in this bill that are deeply problematic.

That's why people in this province, even mining companies that largely support the intent of the bill, are expressing concern. Glencore has written that the extraordinary power that this bill gives cabinet—the threat to the rule of law—will actually undermine the development of major projects in this province.

So, Speaker, I want the government to be on notice. People are already talking about how they are going to resist this bill. I'm already receiving requests to speak at rallies against Bill 5.

And let's remember, Bill 23 passed to open the green-belt for development, and it was a year later that the Premier finally backtracked on that. I guarantee the government, people will not stand by and allow our democracy to be attacked in this way.

You have an opportunity right now. Kill Bill 5.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** It's a pleasure to rise to speak about this important debate this afternoon in this place, colleagues.

I want to share with this House that Spinrite in Listowel, unfortunately, is closing its manufacturing production. That was announced yesterday—140 jobs gone from rural Ontario. And the number one reason is the US Trump tariffs, period. That is the reason.

The Minister of Economic Development has said it many times: We are in an economic war. He said this morning in question period that the storm has arrived. It has arrived in Perth–Wellington, and it has arrived across Ontario. Bill 5 before this place will protect Ontario and ensure that we are attracting and retaining those businesses and those good-paying jobs.

We've had extensive debate at committee. Many of my colleagues have been there to the wee hours of morning. I know the member from Kingston and the Islands mentioned that they proposed to have an 8-p.m.-to-8-a.m. sitting. They forgot to mention, Speaker, in his remarks, that last week at the Standing Committee of the Interior they wasted five hours—

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** You wasted five hours.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Liberals will come to order.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:**—debating time and sleep. We were prepared to debate amendments, colleagues, the entire night.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Ajax will come to order.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** We were prepared to debate amendments, important amendments, all night. They proposed an alternative amendment to meet on the Monday following, colleagues, for six and a half hours. We had five hours that night to meet, and they chose to waste it with tricks and filibusters. And then, they come back with the gall to propose 4,000 frivolous amendments.

I will give credit to the official opposition. They proposed amendments of substance, and I wish we had an opportunity to debate those amendments.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for St. Catharines will come to order.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Unfortunately, the third party proposed 4,000 frivolous amendments to Bill 5, and we had no opportunity to debate the substantive amendments proposed by the official opposition and the government, which is a shame.

I know our members on this side will continue to work to ensure that we attract good jobs to our ridings and support workers across Ontario. It's been said many times throughout the debate, over the past couple of weeks, how this place is the ultimate power; we're giving ultimate power to the Premier and cabinet. The number one power in this province, Speaker, is the people of Ontario, and they had their voice heard on February 27, loud and clear. They elected this government for a third straight mandate. That has not happened since the 1970s, 1980s, Speaker, in this province.

This Premier will continue to stand up for Ontario—

1330

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Windsor West will come to order.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:**—and continue to listen to the people of Ontario. I am proud, and I will go back to the people of Ontario every single time—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, come to order.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:**—because I choose Canada, and this government chooses Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I am reminding members that I have no problem warning members. I'm sure you would like to remain in the chamber for the remainder of the afternoon, but if I have to warn you one more time, people will be asked to leave.

I recognize the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I think now I've seen everything. I can't believe what I just heard. It shows the fundamental lack of understanding on the other side about what Bill 5 means.

The member was talking about things being gone. What Bill 5 means is that in any place in Ontario, at any time, the Premier or any minister can exempt that region from 800 laws—laws that protect water, laws that protect employment standards, laws that protect children. Every single law in Ontario would be gone. Think about that. Just think about that. Think about that one fact over there. Do you want it to be in your riding? Do you want it to be in your riding? No, you don't.

The fundamental flaw in this bill is it allows the Premier not just executive power—the power of a sovereign, of a king; the kind of power that Donald Trump wields south of the border. That's what Bill 5 does. Think about it. I'm not making this up.

And then, over here, you talk about debate. Well, you didn't want to debate any of those amendments about all those acts that you're going to negate and give power to the Premier.

All that aside—

**Interjection:** The Milk Act?

**Mr. John Fraser:** What have you got against dairy farmers? I don't know, but you can exempt a certain part of the laws that exist there. That's the point. We're in a democracy. The Premier doesn't get to choose what laws apply to what people in a place.

It's no wonder that First Nations are upset, because they've seen that for centuries—centuries. And the Premier's response—I'm sorry if I'm getting a little frustrated here—was, "Don't get left behind." He's warning First Nations, "Don't get left behind"—something they've heard for centuries. And the result of hearing that—"Don't get left behind," or "We know what's good for you"—think of the history. Think of the things. Think of truth and reconciliation that the government did for the good, what

was best. I don't have to tell you what they are. They've gone through generations, and they continue.

So when a government behaves in a way that governments have in the past and their solution to truth and reconciliation is a last-minute amendment to a preamble about their duty to consult and another meaningless amendment, it's like an afterthought.

Do you wonder why people are angry? Do you wonder why they're here? Do you wonder why they're on the front lawn? It's not like they come down the street. It's not like they get on the bus or on the subway. They come from hundreds and thousands of kilometres away from this place, and that's because you're doing the thing that governments did for centuries, the thing that we said we would stop doing 10 years ago—10 years ago we said that.

That's the problem with the bill. It's fundamentally flawed. I don't care what amendments this government thinks would have gone in there to improve it—any amendment. This bill should not go to third reading. You all have a choice. The House leader has a choice. Don't bring it to third reading. Go back and get it right. Respect First Nations, respect the rule of law and come back here with something that all of us here will be proud to support.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** Thank you to my colleague from Guelph for sharing his time. As we've heard this afternoon, the only thing Bill 5 is unleashing is a whole lot of emotion aimed at this government: anger, disgust, disappointment. My goodness; my office hasn't received so many emails on any other issue.

My concern with this bill, like many others, stems from the fact that it would give the Premier and his cabinet unprecedented power over the province, plus the ability to exempt individuals and corporations from provincial and municipal laws, and bypass consultations with Indigenous groups. All of it is wrong.

Take, for example, the situation in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, where the Premier told the people he had their backs and then turned his back on those very same people. He promised an environmental assessment on the Dresden landfill site, and that became a broken promise. Nobody buys this government's excuse that naming the Dresden landfill site has to do with President Trump. This is about friends of the Premier. If this was about expanding capacity to deal with our own garbage, the government would have included all 800-plus landfill sites in this legislation. I think it's smelly.

The only thing that changed between the Premier telling the people of Dresden he had their backs and then turning his back on them was the ownership of that dump. Two of those owners control Empire Communities. Their signs are all over Haldimand county in my riding, and they've now requested a minister's zoning order to build a city of 40,000 at the Nanticoke industrial park. You can imagine the anxiety in my riding that this will be another curried favour.

Here's a smattering of what some of my constituents have been saying over the past few weeks: "While the hard reality of the impacts of Trump's tariffs does warrant

action, it should not be treated as the grounds to violate to the inherent rights and treaty rights of First Nations in Ontario, to further put at risk already endangered species, and to allow for exemptions from archaeological and environmental assessments. This rationale is harmful, misguided and an abdication of the crown's responsibility to the treaties and to respect First Nations rights."

Another writes, "We have to follow the best scientific knowledge and technology available when deciding how to govern and manage the country...."

Speaker, all of these are serious statements. The people of Ontario expect better from this government. The people of Ontario did not elect this government to railroad over their democratic rights. It's time you go back to the drawing board, get it right for the reputation of this House and for the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I would like to ask the Liberals: There were 18 seconds left on the clock. Did you wish to use that, or can we continue?

**Mr. John Fraser:** We're good.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We're fine? Thank you.

The following bill is deemed reported from the Standing Committee on the Interior, as amended:

Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement.

Shall the report be adopted? I heard a "no."

All those in favour of the adoption of the report, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the adoption of the report, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1339 to 1344.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those in favour of the adoption of the report, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Dunlop, Jill  
Fedeli, Victor  
Firin, Mohamed  
Flack, Rob  
Ford, Doug

Parsa, Michael  
Piccini, David  
Pierre, Natalie  
Quinn, Nolan  
Racinsky, Joseph

Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.  
Vickers, Paul  
Wai, Daisy  
Williams, Charmaine A.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those opposed to the adoption of the report, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Begum, Doly  
Bell, Jessica  
Blais, Stephen  
Bourgouin, Guy  
Bowman, Stephanie  
Brady, Bobbi Ann  
Burch, Jeff  
Cerjanec, Rob  
Clancy, Aislinn  
Collard, Lucille  
Fairclough, Lee  
Fife, Catherine  
Fraser, John  
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France  
Gilmour, Alexa  
Glover, Chris  
Gretzky, Lisa  
Hazell, Andrea  
Hsu, Ted  
Kernaghan, Terence  
Lennox, Robin  
Mamakwa, Sol  
McCrimmon, Karen  
McKenney, Catherine  
McMahon, Mary-Margaret  
Pasma, Chandra  
Rakocevic, Tom

Sattler, Peggy  
Schreiner, Mike  
Shamji, Adil  
Shaw, Sandy  
Smyth, Stephanie  
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)  
Stiles, Marit  
Tabuns, Peter  
Tsao, Jonathan  
Vaugeois, Lise  
Watt, Tyler  
West, Jamie  
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 43.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion carried.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

### PEEL TRANSITION IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2025

### LOI DE 2025 SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA TRANSITION DE PEEL

Mr. Flack moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting the transfer of jurisdiction within The Regional Municipality of Peel and the appointment of Deputy Provincial Land and Development Facilitators / *Projet de loi 45, Loi apportant des modifications législatives en ce qui concerne le transfert de compétences dans la municipalité régionale de Peel et la nomination de facilitateurs provinciaux de l'aménagement adjoints.*

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Would the minister like to briefly explain the bill?

**Hon. Rob Flack:** The proposed legislation, the Peel Transition Implementation Act, 2025, if passed, will support more effective governance and service delivery

#### Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler  
Anand, Deepak  
Babikian, Aris  
Bailey, Robert  
Bethlenfalvy, Peter  
Bouma, Will  
Calandra, Paul  
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon  
Cho, Stan  
Ciriello, Monica  
Clark, Steve  
Coe, Lorne  
Cooper, Michelle  
Crawford, Stephen  
Cuzzetto, Rudy  
Denault, Billy  
Dixon, Jess  
Dowie, Andrew  
Downey, Doug

Gallagher Murphy, Dawn  
Grewal, Hardeep Singh  
Gualtieri, Silvia  
Hamid, Zee  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Mike  
Holland, Kevin  
Jones, Trevor  
Jordan, John  
Kanapathi, Logan  
Kerzner, Michael S.  
Khanjin, Andrea  
Leardi, Anthony  
Lecce, Stephen  
McCarthy, Todd J.  
McGregor, Graham  
Mulrone, Caroline  
Oosterhoff, Sam  
Pang, Billy

Rae, Matthew  
Rickford, Greg  
Riddell, Brian  
Rosenberg, Bill  
Sabawy, Sheref  
Sandhu, Amarjot  
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh  
Sarrazin, Stéphane  
Saunderson, Brian  
Scott, Chris  
Scott, Laurie  
Smith, Dave  
Smith, David  
Smith, Graydon  
Smith, Laura  
Tangri, Nina  
Thanigasalam, Vijay  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Tibollo, Michael A.

within the region of Peel. The legislation increases the number of deputy provincial land and development facilitators the minister may appoint, enhancing provincial capacity for land and development coordination. It also enables the transfer of jurisdiction over highways, storm-water utilities and waste collection from the region of Peel to the cities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. These changes will help ensure municipal services are delivered more efficiently and in alignment with local needs.

PROTECT ONTARIO BY CUTTING  
RED TAPE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO  
EN RÉDUISANT LES FORMALITÉS  
ADMINISTRATIVES

Ms. Khanjin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the minister wish to explain the bill?

1350

**Hon. Andrea Khanjin:** The Protect Ontario by Cutting Red Tape Act, 2025, would not be possible without the officials at red tape reduction—so thank you thank you to them; my great parliamentary assistants, who are sitting beside and behind me here; the great team from red tape reduction; as well as the former Minister of Red Tape Reduction, the member for Kitchener–Conestoga and the current Minister of Natural Resources.

This bill will protect our economy by cutting red tape and making life easier for Ontarians, making it more affordable for people and businesses. If this bill passes, it's part of our broader red tape reduction measures and will help save \$5.8 million. That's the equivalent to 256,000 hours, which is 30 years. This builds on our red tape reduction measures to date, where we've saved Ontarians over \$1 billion.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

2512681 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Mr. Sabawy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr7, An Act to revive 2512681 Ontario Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

FAIRNESS FOR ROAD USERS ACT  
(CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH  
OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ ENVERS  
LES USAGERS DE LA ROUTE  
(CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSANT  
UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES  
CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to set penalties for contraventions causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour prévoir des pénalités en cas de contraventions causant un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** This is a reintroduction of the Fairness for Road Users Act, which would be a meaningful change for families across the province who know too well the pain of loss or injury on our roads. I'd like to thank the Bikers Rights Organization for their decades of advocacy on this issue.

This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. If a person causes or contributes to causing an accident which causes death or serious bodily harm and at the same time the person was contravening the Highway Traffic Act or its regulations, then the person is guilty of an offence. The court would be able to sentence the person to a fine of up to \$50,000 or to imprisonment for up to two years or both. The court may also suspend the person's driver's licence or permit.

The Fairness for Road Users Act would increase penalties if someone on the road breaks a driving law and hurts or kills someone. This bill would give the court options during sentencing so that families might no longer suffer insult after suffering injury.

UPLOADING HIGHWAYS  
174 AND 17 ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE TRANSFERT  
DE COMPÉTENCES RELATIVES  
AUX VOIES PUBLIQUES 174 ET 17

Mr. Blais moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the jurisdiction and control of Ottawa Road 174 and County Road 17 / Projet de loi 48, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun en ce qui concerne la compétence relative aux voies publiques connues sous le nom de Ottawa Road 174 et de County Road 17.

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



*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is the third time this bill has been introduced. It would upload Ottawa Road 174 and County Road 17, more generically referred to as Highways 174 and 17, to provincial responsibility, therefore relieving the city of Ottawa and the counties of Prescott and Russell of those expenses.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY 11 AND 17  
SAFETY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ  
DES ROUTES 11 ET 17 DU NORD

Mr. Bourgouin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to northern highway safety / Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun concernant la sécurité des routes du Nord.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Would the member like to explain the bill?

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** This bill adds section 5.5 to the Highway Traffic Act. Subsection 5.51 provides that the Minister of Transportation shall ensure scales and inspection sites along the portion of Highway 11 that is north of North Bay and along Highway 17 are staffed daily for a minimum of 12 hours.

Subsection 5.52 provides that the government of Ontario shall ensure traffic enforcement by the Ontario Provincial Police is sufficiently staffed to ensure enforcement of the act.

The bill also adds subsection 58.1(6.1), that commercial truck drivers act must now be tested by an examiner certified by the Ministry of Transportation before being licensed.

The bill also adds section 96 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. This section provides that winter maintenance operations for portions of Highway 11 that is north of North Bay and for Highway 17 shall be managed by the Ministry of Transportation.

I also want to thank the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, MPP Vanthof, and MPP Lise Vaugeois, for Thunder Bay—Superior North, for endorsing this bill and co-signing this bill. This is a common-sense bill, and we hope this government will pass it.

1400

NO FREE RIDE FOR FOSSIL FUELS  
ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À EMPÊCHER  
LES COMBUSTIBLES FOSSILES  
DE BÉNÉFICIER D'UN PASSE-DROIT

Mr. Schreiner moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 50, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 and the City of Toronto Act, 2006 with respect to fees and charges imposed on gas services and activities / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto en ce qui concerne les droits et les redevances fixés au titre de services et d'activités en matière de gaz.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'd like to first thank the member for Kitchener Centre for co-sponsoring this bill, the No Free Ride for Fossil Fuels Act.

I'd like to thank organizations like eMerge Guelph and other municipalities for supporting this bill, which amends the Municipal Act to give a municipality or local board the power to impose fees or charges on a producer, gas distributor, gas transmitter or storage company, as these terms are defined in section 3 of the Ontario Energy Board Act for services or activities, costs payable or the use of municipal property, like in other jurisdictions—British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and other provinces. The act also is amended to provide that a regulation cannot impose conditions and limitations on that power, which would be allowing municipalities to charge for the public use of land by gas distributors.

RENT STABILIZATION ACT, 2025  
LOI DE 2025 SUR LA STABILISATION  
DES LOYERS

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 51, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 to implement various measures to stabilize rent / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et la Loi de 2020 sur les services d'aide juridique afin de mettre en oeuvre diverses mesures destinées à stabiliser les loyers.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This bill is co-sponsored by MPP Gilmour, MPP McKenney and MPP Pasma.

This bill would bring in stronger rent control measures, rent stabilization measures to apply to all residential units in Ontario, including units built after 2018, and the purpose of it is to make rent more affordable.

EV-READY HOMES ACT  
(ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING), 2025  
LOI DE 2025 SUR LES MAISONS PRÊTES  
POUR LES VE (RECHARGE  
DES VÉHICULES ÉLECTRIQUES)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to electric vehicle charging / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui concerne la recharge des véhicules électriques.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Electric vehicles are the future, but we are not yet EV-ready. New homes should be built with the future in mind. There is a significant cost to installing after-market, at-home charging infrastructure, whereas it would be more cost-effective to have it already roughed in.

This bill is a reintroduction and amends the Building Code Act, 1992, to add a new section 15. This is required in order to permit the future installation of electric vehicle supply equipment that conforms to section 86 of the electrical safety code. The EV-Ready Homes Act amends the Building Code Act to ensure that new homes built in Ontario will be ready for future electric vehicle at-home charging infrastructure. The EV-Ready Homes Act is an important step to ensure Ontario is ready for its electric future.

SOCIAL ASSET MEASUREMENTS INC.  
ACT, 2025

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr5, An Act to revive Social Asset Measurements Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** C'est un immense plaisir pour moi de me lever en Chambre aujourd'hui. La francophonie définit mes origines et guide mon action politique. Notre langue et notre culture sont des boussoles

quotidiennes guidant mon action en tant que ministre des Affaires francophones.

Alors qu'il travaillait à la rédaction d'un discours à propos du débarquement en Normandie—dont nous commémorerons le 81<sup>e</sup> anniversaire après-demain—ce grand francophile qu'était Winston Churchill écrivait dans une ébauche qu'un livre entier serait nécessaire pour raconter cette opération, mais qu'il devait se limiter à quelques minutes seulement. C'est un peu ce que je ressens aujourd'hui en vous présentant les grandes lignes du rapport 2025 sur les affaires francophones.

Avant d'aller plus loin, je souhaite remercier sincèrement le premier ministre pour la confiance qu'il m'accorde, ainsi que l'ensemble de mes collègues du caucus gouvernemental. Je suis fier de le dire et de le répéter : notre caucus est le plus francophone et francophile de l'histoire de l'Ontario. D'une manière toute particulière, je salue mon adjoint parlementaire, le député de Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. Je tiens également à souligner les efforts dévoués de l'équipe qui me soutient vaillamment au sein du ministère des Affaires francophones, et en particulier, la sous-ministre, Madame Roda Muse. Ensemble, nous bâtissons un Ontario plus dynamique et plus fort.

Madame la Présidente, le rapport annuel 2025 sur les affaires francophones participe de notre volonté d'immutabilité. Il fait également état des nombreuses avancées majeures réalisées par notre gouvernement. Au cours de la dernière année, nous avons posé des gestes concrets, portés par une même conviction : celle que la francophonie ontarienne est une force vive pour notre province.

Nous avons renforcé l'accès aux services en français vers l'atteinte de l'objectif que chacun puisse vivre pleinement dans sa langue partout en Ontario. Nous avons investi dans l'entrepreneuriat francophone pour soutenir l'audace et l'innovation de celles et ceux qui bâtissent notre avenir économique. Nous avons appuyé la publication du deuxième livre blanc sur l'économie franco-ontarienne par la FGA. C'est un document phare qui confirme l'ampleur du potentiel de notre écosystème.

Sur la scène internationale, nous avons porté haut les couleurs de notre francophonie, que ce soit lors de la mission économique de l'OIF au Québec, ou encore au Sommet de la Francophonie à Paris—une année d'action, une année de fierté, une année tournée vers l'avenir.

Madame la Présidente, la mission du gouvernement, c'est d'abord et avant tout d'être au service de sa population—de notre population. Voilà pourquoi nous avons amorcé, en 2021, le travail de modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. Depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre, 2024, les services gouvernementaux de l'Ontario sont accessibles en français dans la ville de Sarnia. Quelle bonne nouvelle, et je salue le député de Sarnia—Lambton pour son travail excellent en faveur des francophones de sa circonscription. Dans le cadre de cette désignation, ce sont 16 ministères et agences gouvernementales qui ont déployé les capacités nécessaires pour assurer des services en français équivalents à ceux offerts en anglais.

**1410**

Notre engagement à améliorer continuellement les services offerts à la communauté francophone se traduit par des gestes concrets. En décembre dernier, nous avons franchi une nouvelle étape importante en proposant une mise à jour de la liste des régions désignées en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. Nous avons invité la population à se prononcer sur cette proposition d'élargissement parce que bâtir une francophonie forte, c'est aussi l'affaire de tous.

Madame la Présidente, je suis très heureuse d'annoncer que l'adoption de cette proposition permettra à plus de 7 000 francophones additionnels d'accéder à des services en français, là où ils vivent, là où ils travaillent, là où ils élèvent leur famille.

Autre initiative majeure, le ministère des Affaires francophones prépare une identité visuelle, pour rendre les services en français plus visibles et reconnaissables. C'est un geste simple, mais porteur d'un profond sentiment d'appartenance, qui unit et qui rassemble.

Depuis janvier 2024, toutes les offres d'emploi de la fonction publique de l'Ontario, la FPO, sont publiées en anglais et en français pour renforcer la capacité bilingue des services que nous offrons. Près de 3 000 offres d'emploi ont ainsi été publiées, positionnant le gouvernement comme employeur inclusif.

Madame la Présidente, la volonté d'assurer la pérennité de nos communautés francophones est chevillée au corps de ce gouvernement. Pour y arriver, nous pouvons miser sur les contributions des acteurs du milieu, parmi lesquels nous retrouvons l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, l'AFO. Par l'entremise d'une enveloppe de 175 000 \$ accordée à cet organisme, nous avons soutenu la formation d'employés et de bénévoles d'organismes franco-ontariens. Des communautés fortes et rassembleuses sont le gage d'une province vigoureuse.

Au-delà des affaires provinciales, cette approche de concertation se manifeste au niveau de l'étroite collaboration que nous avons établie avec le gouvernement fédéral. Celle-ci est porteuse de résultats tangibles pour la communauté francophone.

En 2024, notre gouvernement a conclu une nouvelle entente Canada-Ontario en matière de services dans la langue de la minorité, laquelle prévoit une contribution annuelle bonifiée de 4 millions de dollars pour chacun des quatre exercices entre le 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2024 et le 31 mars 2028. Avec cette nouvelle entente, nous avons réussi finalement à remédier au sous-financement historique des francophones de l'Ontario par rapport aux autres francophones en situation minoritaire dans les autres provinces et territoires du Canada.

Dans la même veine, l'enveloppe du Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne, le PAFO, est passée de 2 millions de dollars à 3 millions de dollars grâce à l'utilisation d'une somme de 1 million de dollars de l'enveloppe Canada-Ontario en 2024-2025.

Ce qui m'amène au deuxième volet que j'aimerais aborder. C'est reconnu : le développement économique est la marque de fabrique de notre gouvernement. Une

économie forte constitue l'un des meilleurs atouts pour s'épanouir et affronter les tempêtes. À cet égard, nous ne sommes pas peu fiers d'être le premier gouvernement dans l'histoire à avoir outillé la province d'une Stratégie de développement économique francophone. Dans ce cadre, l'un des premiers gestes posés par notre gouvernement fut l'octroi d'un fonds de démarrage pour jeter les bases d'un réseau d'affaires francophones, lequel est devenu la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario, la FGA.

La publication du deuxième Livre blanc sur l'économie franco-ontarienne par la FGA en janvier dernier est venue confirmer ce que nous savons déjà depuis longtemps : notre écosystème économique francophone est une richesse inestimable. Le livre blanc révèle également une donnée très parlante : les travailleurs bilingues gagnent en moyenne 10 600 \$ de plus par année. La langue française n'est pas seulement une caractéristique identitaire; c'est aussi un levier de prospérité.

Mais, madame la Présidente, ce n'est pas tout. En 2024-2025, notre gouvernement a consacré une enveloppe annuelle de 800 000 \$ pour des initiatives ciblées visant à renforcer le développement économique francophone. Cette enveloppe soutient notamment la croissance des petites et des moyennes entreprises francophones, le mentorat entrepreneurial, ainsi que les formations destinées aux femmes entrepreneures et aux nouveaux arrivants. Nous avons également accordé un soutien financier d'environ 250 000 \$ pour l'accord de coopération et d'échanges Ontario-Québec en matière de francophonie.

Notre stratégie de développement économique est porteuse de résultats tangibles. Durant la dernière année, madame la Présidente, nous avons assuré le maintien de l'enveloppe annualisée de 800 000 \$ pour soutenir l'entrepreneuriat, la formation et le mentorat. Nous avons déployé des initiatives ciblées pour les femmes entrepreneures et les nouveaux arrivants, en partenariat avec des organismes comme la SÉO et Impact ON. Nous avons accordé un soutien à la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario, à raison d'un financement de 250 000 \$ visant l'amélioration de ses plateformes numériques—Quartier d'affaires, Inkubo—l'organisation d'événements de réseautage économique et aussi la mise en oeuvre d'initiatives de coopération internationale. Nous avons participé activement à la mission économique de l'OIF et au Sommet de la Francophonie en 2024. Et, madame la Présidente, nous avons octroyé un soutien dédié de 25 000 \$ dans le cadre de l'accord signé avec la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.

Nous naviguons actuellement à travers les récifs de l'incertitude mondiale. La population de l'Ontario nous a récemment confié le mandat d'y répondre avec détermination.

Je viens d'illustrer à quel point la francophonie irrigue la prospérité économique de l'Ontario. Elle représente également un creuset de potentiel à l'échelle canadienne et internationale. L'homme d'État français Hubert Védrine pose un constat auquel je souscris pleinement lorsqu'il écrit que « le français est l'une des rares langues mondiales de culture, d'échange et de civilisation ». Nous

disposons donc d'atouts indéniables pour bien tirer notre épingle du jeu.

À l'échelle nationale, madame la Présidente, l'Ontario est fier d'être un chef de file au sein du Conseil des ministres sur la francophonie canadienne, le CMFC. Forum de concertation, c'est aussi un espace de mobilisation où se dessine l'avenir de la francophonie canadienne. Grâce à cet engagement, nous contribuons activement à prévoir des solutions à la pénurie de main-d'œuvre francophone, à renforcer la vitalité de nos communautés et à déployer tout le potentiel économique que représente la langue française au Canada.

En matière de collaboration interprovinciale, nous avons effectué une déclaration commune avec le Nouveau-Brunswick en matière de coopération, de main-d'œuvre bilingue et d'immigration francophone.

L'Ontario se démarque également au-delà de nos frontières. En avril dernier, j'apposais ma signature sur une déclaration historique avec le ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères de la République française. Ce partenariat stratégique renforcé s'inscrit dans la foulée du protocole que nous avons signé avec la Wallonie-Bruxelles en 2022 et qui témoigne de l'influence de l'Ontario sur la scène mondiale.

Deux mois plus tard, en juin, l'Ontario participait fièrement à la toute première mission économique de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie à se tenir en Amérique du Nord. Nous y avons réitéré notre positionnement en tant que partenaire économique de choix et notre détermination à stimuler l'innovation, la croissance et la solidarité à travers toute la Francophonie. Dans le cadre de cette mission, j'ai également pris part à une rencontre très productive avec la Secrétaire générale de l'OIF, M<sup>me</sup> Louise Mushikiwabo.

1420

Quelques semaines plus tard, je présidais la délégation ontarienne qui participait au Sommet de la Francophonie qui se déroulait en octobre à Villers-Cotterêts. En tant que membre observateur de cet organisme international de premier ordre, nous avons bénéficié d'une vitrine unique pour promouvoir l'avantage ontarien. Durant le sommet, le président français, Emmanuel Macron, nous rappelait que nous sommes porteurs, ajoutait-il, d'une langue « d'invention et de réinvention ». Le contexte géopolitique actuel nous appelle maintenant justement à nous réinventer.

Notre gouvernement incarne d'ailleurs un leadership incomparable à cet égard, comme en témoigne l'élimination des barrières qui enclavaient jusqu'à maintenant le vaste potentiel du commerce interprovincial canadien. Depuis plusieurs mois, le premier ministre multiplie les efforts généreux et soutenus visant à sanctuariser—protéger—l'Ontario des sautes d'humeur du commerce international. Notre francophonie souscrit à cet effort et nous avons des projets porteurs à cet égard dans nos cartons.

Madame la Présidente, au terme de cet exposé, un constat se dégage. La francophonie ontarienne est vigoureuse, elle est rassembleuse et elle est prometteuse. Nous n'avons pas chômé durant la dernière année, madame la Présidente, et nous poursuivons sur cette lancée. La francophonie

ontarienne ne mérite rien de moins que nos meilleurs efforts. Elle nous mobilise et elle nous inspire.

Car oui, la francophonie est bien plus qu'un héritage. C'est une force : une force qui unit, une force qui bâtit et une force qui propulse. Et, ensemble, madame la Présidente, nous continuerons de la faire rayonner. Vive l'Ontario et vive la francophonie ontarienne.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Response?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier la ministre des Affaires francophones. Je crois que c'est la première fois en sept ans de gouvernement conservateur qu'on a une déclaration ministérielle. Merci beaucoup de l'avoir faite, et de l'avoir faite en français.

J'essaie toujours de soutenir la ministre des Affaires francophones, qui essaie très fort d'améliorer la vie des francophones, des Franco-Ontariens, des Franco-Ontariennes. Par contre, son gouvernement, dans son ensemble, ça continue. On se souvient du jeudi noir où le député de Nipissing nous annonçait que le commissaire aux services en français ne serait plus, qu'on n'aurait pas notre Université de l'Ontario français. On continue, par le gouvernement dans son ensemble, d'être ni promu, ni valorisé. Les francophones, on est toléré—point à la ligne.

Si on commence par regarder nos écoles—c'est par nos écoles qu'on a un droit constitutionnel à l'éducation en français en Ontario. Mais, si tu regardes l'état de nos écoles dans son ensemble—les écoles francophones sont faciles à identifier. Ce sont celles qui sont les plus vieilles, celles qui sont les moins bien entretenues. Ce sont celles que les autres conseils ne veulent pas. Ça, ce sont les écoles qu'on donne aux conseils francophones, et on s'attend à ce qu'elles servent une population distribuée sur beaucoup plus de territoire.

Si on regarde du côté de la santé, c'est la même chose. On regarde les centres de santé communautaire francophones : ils n'ont pas reçu d'augmentation de leur budget de base dans les 12 dernières années. Ils ne sont pas capables de payer leurs employés à un taux plus haut que ce qu'ils leur payaient en 2017. Comment tu fais pour retenir et recruter du nouveau personnel quand tu n'es pas capable de les payer, quand tu n'es pas capable de leur offrir des avantages sociaux, un plan de pension, etc.? Ça, c'est la réalité des francophones dans le système de santé.

Si on parle de la santé mentale, c'est encore pire. Pour la santé mentale, le traitement est basé sur le langage. Si tu es une personne francophone qui a un trouble de santé mentale, tu dois être servie dans ta langue si on veut que le traitement, la thérapie, soit efficace. Avoir à demander les services de santé mentale en français—pour les enfants, un minimum de 12 mois, et pour les personnes adultes, un minimum de 18 mois—voyons donc, ça n'a pas de bon sens.

Si on nous dit que le gouvernement veut supporter la francophonie, qu'il est fier de ce qu'il a fait pour les francophones, bien, dans un minimum, assurez-vous qu'on soit capable d'aller dans une école où le toit ne coule pas, puis où on est capable de boire l'eau parce qu'elle n'est pas contaminée. Puis, assurez-vous qu'on est capable

d'avoir quelqu'un qui parle français quand on a besoin de services de santé.

Mais ça, ce n'est pas tout. Si tu regardes les jeunes qui ont de l'autisme, c'est la même chose. Ils ne sont pas capables d'avoir accès à un soutien en français pour les gens qui ont de l'autisme.

Du côté des bonnes nouvelles, c'est le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire—la ministre sera à Sudbury pour le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien. Je suis très fière de dire que le drapeau franco-ontarien a été levé pour la première fois le 25 septembre, et on va célébrer le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire cette année, le 25 septembre 2025, à Sudbury. Tout le monde est invité à la levée du drapeau, et il y aura un grand gala ce soir-là pour célébrer. C'est M. Gaétan Gervais, un homme de Sudbury, qui a cousu le drapeau. Moi, j'ai vu le drapeau original cousu à la main qu'il avait levé il y a 50 ans—quelque chose dont on doit tous être fiers.

Et je ne peux pas m'asseoir sans parler de l'Université de Sudbury. L'Université de Sudbury est une université pour, par et avec les francophones. Les gens du Nord veulent une université pour, par et avec les francophones, et ça, ce sera à l'Université de Sudbury. L'Université de Sudbury va commencer à accepter des étudiants. Ils vont offrir, je pense, une trentaine de cours cet automne, commençant au mois de septembre, et ils reçoivent zéro—pas un sou—du gouvernement provincial.

Comment est-ce que—le gouvernement provincial est en charge des collèges et des universités. Ce sont eux qui financent les universités et ils ne donnent pas un sou à l'université pour, par et avec les francophones dans le nord-est de l'Ontario, l'Université de Sudbury. Ça, c'est vraiment honteux.

Je vais laisser un petit peu de temps à ma collègue libérale. Bon 50<sup>e</sup> du drapeau.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Merci à ma collègue. J'apprécie la considération.

Je prends la parole, vraiment, en tant que Franco-Ontarienne, avec une profonde inquiétude, puis vraiment une certaine lassitude, parce qu'on a entendu une belle déclaration de la part de la ministre des Affaires francophones; malheureusement, il y a beaucoup de belles paroles, mais c'est tristement déconnecté avec les réalités qui sont vécues par les francophones de l'Ontario.

J'en ai parlé hier en Chambre. Il y a eu une réduction du financement des affaires francophones, puis ces coupures-là ont des impacts réels. J'ai parlé du Festival franco-ontarien qui n'a pas reçu de financement cette année alors qu'on célèbre le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire. J'ai beau plaider auprès de la ministre; il n'y a toujours pas de nouvelles au niveau du financement, et ça inquiète beaucoup la communauté francophone.

C'est un désengagement du gouvernement qui dépasse l'impact juste sur les arts et la culture. Ça touche le cœur de notre avenir; ça touche l'éducation. Non seulement nos écoles de langue française manquent de ressources, mais il y a une importante pénurie d'enseignants. Malgré cette réalité urgente, dans le dernier budget, il n'y a aucune mesure efficace pour attirer, former ou retenir les enseignants francophones—aucune incitation, aucun plan

d'action sérieux. Le gouvernement semble, en fait, ne pas reconnaître l'ampleur du problème.

Je ne suis pas la seule à le reconnaître. Nos porte-étendards francophones l'ont dit.

L'AEFO l'a bien résumé : « Le gouvernement affirme faire de l'éducation une priorité, mais le budget révèle une réalité bien différente. »

Même constat du côté de l'AFO, dont le président Fabien Hébert a exprimé de vives inquiétudes : « Aucune des recommandations soumises dans la déposition budgétaire n'a été retenue. »

Madame la Présidente, chaque fois que le gouvernement coupe dans les affaires francophones, il envoie un message clair que notre culture est secondaire et que notre langue est accessoire. Moi, je refuse d'accepter ça. Je sais que je ne suis pas la seule, et on va continuer à dénoncer cette injustice. On va continuer à défendre les droits des francophones à vivre et à s'épanouir en français ici en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 32(b), the time allotted for the afternoon routine has expired.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### PROTECT ONTARIO BY UNLEASHING OUR ECONOMY ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN LIBÉRANT SON ÉCONOMIE

Mr. Lecce moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement / Projet de loi 5, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les zones économiques spéciales, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les espèces en voie de disparition et la remplaçant par la Loi de 2025 sur la conservation des espèces, puis modifiant diverses lois et abrogeant divers règlements en ce qui concerne le développement et l'approvisionnement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the minister.

1430

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Good afternoon, honourable colleagues. I rise to lead third reading debate for Bill 5, the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act—a decisive piece of legislation that reduces regulatory burden and really ensures Ontario becomes a global leader in resource development.

I want to start by noting that I'll be splitting my time with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

I want to define the problem we're trying to solve. Certainly, from the Ministry of Energy and Mines, when it comes to permitting of our resource projects, we have a

challenge. We are literally amongst the slowest countries or jurisdictions in the industrialized world. We believe we have to confront this challenge. We believe, post-Trump, we have an obligation to confront this challenge.

That's why we brought forth legislation. It's why, through my ministry, specifically, we initiated the "one project, one process" vision, which has now been echoed by the federal Liberals, echoed by the New Democrats in BC, echoed by the New Democrats in Manitoba, echoed by the Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador. Literally everyone supports "one project, one process." I'm speaking very specifically to the provision most relevant to my ministry, most relevant to the spirit of what we're trying to solve as a nation: self-reliance from a man who seeks to destroy our country, our economy and our sovereignty. That is a serious threat.

Madam Speaker, when I often hear people say the government seems to be invoking the President as rationale for this advancement of public policy—I remind the member that literally 24 hours ago, this President imposed the doubling of tariffs, literally in the midst of this debate, on steel and on aluminum. That impacts tens of thousands of Canadian workers, many of them within our ridings today. That's why we believe, in order to counter this plan, this attack, we have to move with a sense of speed while fully respecting the rights—to uphold the Constitution, to protect the environment, and to grow our economy.

Members opposite will want us to believe that we have to choose a lane—"It's an either/or proposition; you either grow the economy or you protect the environment, but you couldn't do both." That's what members opposite are submitting today.

Madam Speaker, we know when we see the President of the United States take action, literally invoking chaos in the markets—the largest upheaval in the market since 1928. The S&P 500 plummeted by 14% because of his chaos, because of his determination to ensure American dominance. This is a man who approved a uranium mine, over the weekend, in 14 days—unprecedented; literally unheard of in the Western world. But no one is suggesting that is who we want to emulate.

My goodness, we saw an election earlier this calendar year—to stand up to President Trump and the chaos that he's ensuing on our democracy and, frankly, on allies east and west.

This is a path to harness Canadian resources, Canadian technology, built by Canadians, for Canadians, because the reality is, everything we need to provide for the country and the world is right here below our feet.

As global markets turn away from those oppressive regimes that violate labour laws, that disregard environmental standards, that are building a coal plant a week, Ontario is ready to lead. This incredible country is ready to lead.

And when 90% of Canadians want to see investment to grow our economy, when 80-plus per cent believe we need more mining to compete with those very regimes, when 86% of northerners see mining as an industry of the future, we need to heed that call to action today. We cannot be the

second-slowest country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Madam Speaker, I remember there were moments where opposition members would say, "We're not against building mines faster; it's the other ancillary schedules brought in by the Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Economic Development or the Ministry of Infrastructure." But we've heard this story before, because there was a piece of legislation brought forward by my predecessor that singularly focused on permitting approvals, opening mines faster—legislation that was designed to help get a more nimble version of our permitting system.

When that bill was before the House—this was, of course, pre-election—New Democrats and Liberals, some of whom hail from northern mining communities, voted against this bill or didn't show up to vote for the bill at all. That's not leadership. There wasn't the inconvenient excuse of other chapters or provisions of the bill that they didn't love. How about when the bill just dealt with mining permitting? Even then, they couldn't get to yes.

There is an ideological adversity to resources because many opposition members believe they're best placed in the ground. They would rather bury their head in the ground, allowing Chinese minerals to prevail the day.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Absolute nonsense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** The Leader of the Opposition could choose to stand with the federal Liberals and the New Democrats of BC, who literally have a very similar bill before them. In fact, the New Democrats of BC actually passed—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Madam Speaker, the New Democrats of BC passed their bill, and we have a bill before the House. We have the "one project, one process" framework. What is it designed to do that the opposition opposes? They oppose cutting the time—because you had an opportunity to vote for this bill and the mining provisions before, and you voted against it. You have northern members who are going to have to look at your economic chambers of commerce in the eye, your local mining companies in the eye and the workforce, and you're going to have to explain to them why you believe they shouldn't have a job when Canada is up against the US, China and many geopolitical adversaries.

So we have a "one project, one process" framework. It's designed to deliver coordination. It's designed to concierge service to bring these permits across government, because it takes thousands of days to get to yes. We brought forward this bill to introduce benchmarks on government, and government alone, to set services standards and certainty. This is a policy that opposition members would not want because they created a policy before our government got in in 2018 that was literally designed to fail. There are billions of dollars of investment that left Ontario, businesses that stalled or projects that

never got off the ground because the opposition designed a system to halt it to no. That's really regretful, because we know that there are billions of dollars of investment that could be unlocked to drive the clean energy economy that I think all parliamentarians want, but they're not prepared to enable through legislation.

We know 15 years is too long. We know 15 years to open a mine is unacceptable. We know it as amongst the slowest in the world. When it comes to this plan, we brought forth legislation designed to meaningfully move this project along. Because in the one project, one process vision, it's designed to put a permitting authorization office in place, to empower this individual with the authority, ministry by ministry, to force each public service or politician to make a decision, within the rule of law, according to the policies of that ministry. But they need to make decisions in a timely manner, because speed is a strength, and we recognize this.

We also recognize that accelerating key infrastructure and energy projects must be done in a manner that is responsible: where consultation is embedded. That's why, in the bill, we commit to respect the duty to consult. But we understand that in order to build a prosperous and united Canada, we need partnerships. It's the cornerstone of mutual prosperity. I appreciate that every time we've built a transmission line in this province in our ministry—I'll speak from my own experience—it has been done in partnership with 50-50 equity. Every battery storage project—I believe at least nine of 11 to date are equity partnerships. Everything we've done in net nuclear, in medical isotopes, has been done in partnership, where Indigenous leaders are leading the way.

In hydroelectric power in northern Ontario, not even a month ago, I stood with Indigenous chiefs who brought to government an innovative idea to get back in the game of net new hydro because we need more power for the north. We approved it, we supported it, and we are standing with them as they are in the driver's seat to drive generation and growth for northern Ontario.

1440

This is the track record. That is our plan. It is sort of the basis for how we choose to govern ourselves going forward. Those examples, I believe, are meaningful reminders to all of us that we have and we will continue to consult, to partner and to build together.

Many Indigenous nations and chiefs have said to us, "Look, we want to buy in, but not many entities or people or businesses or First Nation governments have access to hundreds of millions of dollars to buy into these equity projects," which is a fair concern, and which thus disabled their ability to be equity partners or to own the project. So in this most recent budget our Premier and Minister of Finance tabled a plan to put \$3 billion for equity participation on the table. The national government has \$5 billion. To put this into scale, Ontario alone put \$3 billion on the table over the next three years to meaningfully ensure they are in the driver's seat and they're able to share in the prosperity.

We also recognize it can be challenging from a bandwidth perspective. We heard this before from the Chiefs of Ontario about navigating the consultations. There could be many multi-ministries, sometimes half a dozen, seven, eight, 10 at the same time. They asked for more funding, specifically the Indigenous Participation Fund, which is designed to support capacity. So we increased the fund 260% in the most recent budget—it stands at \$70 million today—to literally, singularly enable that outcome.

Madam Speaker, we've made clear we want to build together. We've made clear we want to lead a clean energy economy. We've made clear that mines in this province have the ability to drive the energy superpower vision many governments, from the Prime Minister to our Premier down, aspire to build. We can't be left behind as a country while mines get opened in regions like Indonesia and Africa—all Chinese-owned. We know we've got to move with speed, but we also recognize we've got to ensure we create the pipeline of capacity of skilled labour and lasting careers.

We also recognize that a basis of this bill, the one most germane to my ministry as well, is about protecting Canadian resources and keeping them in Canadian hands, because we live in a new world order. There are great threats in the geopolitics of Canada and the world. We recognize that there are real adversaries who seek to either landlock our resources by design or exploit them. We don't have the authority today, in our Ministry of Energy and Mines, to tackle that issue. I think that's a challenge. Post-Trump, I think that is a vulnerability. And while this is not designed to in any way speak to or respond to American policies of late, this is largely designed for adversarial foreign regimes. I think of the Chinese or the Iranians—I'm talking about the governments—or Russia, who have perverse aims for Western democracies, including Canada.

That's why, Madam Speaker, we brought forth legislation to implement important amendments to the Mining Act that grant new authorities to protect our strategic mineral resources and to keep Ontario's rich energy infrastructure—our critical minerals—out of the hands of foreign authoritarian regimes.

Ontario will now have, through this bill, should it pass, the necessary tools to suspend the processing of claims or other transactions with the Mining Lands Administration System, the MLAS. When necessary, we also will suspend and remove a specific registrant from the MLAS if they are identified as a threat. That's informed by national security agencies and, of course, the Solicitor General. We will even revoke existing claims and terminate mining leases held by those foreign, hostile entities.

But I want to be clear, Madam Speaker, these provisions are not intended to target all foreign investment—not at all. We want to encourage more FDI in the province. We're home to many great international partners. They provide jobs and expertise. They bolster our reputation as a top-tier mining nation, a tier 1 mining nation.

But we will not discourage investment from them—I think of the Swiss or the Australians or the Brazilians—

not at all. But those identified as a threat to the strategic national mineral supply chain or working on behalf of an adversarial actor against Ontario’s interests—sometimes state-owned enterprises—we will make clear: You will not get your hands on Canadian resources. I think that’s something that actually unites most of us today.

This is the road to securing economic sovereignty. On the mining side, on the energy side—on the elements that I’m most passionate about—we are making clear that Bill 5 will embark on a long road to build up our energy capacity, to stand up for our energy workers, to displace those nations who do not have any standards that any Canadian can accept.

We recognize too that the end result is a permitting system that has reduced the timelines by half, which leads to a 24-month permitting approval. When you benchmark Ontario to other industrialized economies, like the European Union—they’ve launched a post-Trump policy of permitting acceleration of 27 months—meaning we will be on the cutting edge of approvals, still within the relative norm but ahead of the EU, ahead of other jurisdictions because we’ve got to have a competitive advantage for investment.

Since we announced our mining critical mineral strategy, we’ve seen over 45% increase of investment over the past few years since we were elected—since that plan has been unveiled by our government—but we know there’s much more to do. Last year—it took 17 years, if I’m not mistaken, to open a gold mine in the province of Ontario, not 25 years ago, citing precedent from back in the day, like, last year—that was the story of one mine of the two that opened last year alone.

We know we can do better and we’re challenging the status quo, but we recognize the importance of collaboration, of consultation. The Minister of Economic Development has affirmed that he will and the government will lead consultation on, for example, the special economic zones that his ministry is leading. The government has a constitutional obligation for which we plan to fulfill and to discharge fully. We’ve invested funding to enable it. The Ministers of Indigenous Affairs have committed at the political level to continue meeting with other ministers, with the leadership, to listen on the action plan, the regulations which will inform this legislation. The government’s also said they will not use those authorities until a consultation is done.

We recognize in this moment we have an opportunity to stand up for Canada, to stand up for 250,000 energy workers that could be unleashed, jobs that could be created, if, Madam Speaker, we get our resources out of the ground. The Ring of Fire is a policy, for example, that has been socialized and discussed since literally I was born, and I’m not that young. For 40 years, this has been a discussion of governments and communities.

At what point do we say together, in this new world order: We’ve got to move on with an element of speed but—yes, with balance; yes, by listening; yes, by doing it in partnership? That is the government’s intention as, for

example, we build the roads, that enable, in partnership, led by Indigenous nations, to create access. It’s why we’ve committed to continue to build a modern economy and a clean energy economy by getting these resources out of the ground.

We’re going to continue to work together, continue to make the case for speed, continue to make the case for better for the people of Ontario.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** ᐱᓐᓇ ᓄᓐᓇ ᐱᓐᓇ

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Speaker, ᐱᓐᓇ for allowing me to be able to stand up in this place over the last seven years, that I have learned, is still colonial.

I will say this, Speaker: This government cannot and will not special-economic-zone our lands—period.

1450

We should not be here today. This government has avoided every opportunity to meaningfully engage with First Nations on Bill 5. They have been told to start over by First Nations. They have been told by rights holders that they must be at the table when legislation like this is created, not be consulted afterwards.

Over here, we have used all available legislative tools, but the government insists on using its majority to stifle debate and minimize opportunities for democratic processes, just like the contents of Bill 5 itself.

In committee hearings, we heard from many First Nations, many leaders who told us what we’ve heard before. First Nations are not against development, but development can only go ahead with the proper consultation and in respect of the principles of free, prior and informed consent. This includes the right to say no.

We heard a similar message from many of the hundreds of First Nations organizations and people who submitted written comments. This government has harmed relationships with First Nations and will harm the relationships with First Nation leadership. This government has demonstrated their willingness to violate First Nations treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights. The final stage, the royal assent, which will officially put Bill 5 into law, will mark the symbolic breaking of the crown’s treaties and agreements with First Nations in Ontario.

I want to acknowledge the many rights holders joining us in the galleries for this vote. We are joined by Deputy Chief Cecilia Begg and Councillor Sam McKay from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. In 2008, both were politically imprisoned, along with the chief and three other councillors for the peaceful actions that they took to defend their territory from unwanted mining by Platinex.



The KI6 were sentenced to six months in jail after being charged with contempt.

At the time, John Cutfeet, who defended the KI6 to the court, said that First Nations gained the right to sit at the table, but they don't have the right to leave the table, which is not legitimate consultation. In the end, Ontario announced it would pay Platinex \$5 million to surrender their exploration claims near Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. The leadership of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug continue to advocate for the right to say no.

I know there's a lot happening in the country. The north is covered in smoke. We see a pattern emerge from governments across the country who are bringing forward legislation, like Bill 5, that aims to fast-track projects of national interest.

For First Nations who value a nation-to-nation relationship with the crown and the treaties that were signed, this forces us to ask: Whose national interests do these bills serve? Whether it's the Premier, the Prime Minister or President Trump, the rhetoric and the legislation are attacks on First Nations' inherent rights, treaty rights and Aboriginal title.

I want to emphasize again that First Nations are not against development. But development and economic ventures must be done right. This means on our terms as rights holders. It needs to happen with proper consultation. The government of Ontario has an unfortunate record of telling First Nations what they need instead of listening to what First Nations are actually saying. We, as First Nations, are not okay with that.

As Grand Chief of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Joel Abram, shared in a press conference last week, "Economic reconciliation without legal and moral responsibility is just another form of coercion." This government cannot use the promise of economic opportunity or investment to try to get consent. That is not how free, prior, informed consent works. You cannot just buy us off with \$3.1 billion. We are worth more than that.

Consent must be freely given. More and more First Nations leadership and rights holders are speaking out to say if these pieces of legislation and projects move forward without their consent—these are their words—they will once again be idle no more.

Though this vote may mark the last stage of this legislative process, make no mistake that this vote is not the end of the conversation. You don't need to look further than the galleries that we see up here to see the resilience of these rights holders, or you could look at the front lawn on Monday where hundreds of rights holders, leaders, gathered outside to say our rights are not for sale.

We had representation from across Ontario and even the country, including Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse and former-National Chief Phil Fontaine; Chiefs of Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict; Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler; Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige; Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Joel Abram. The message is strong, Speaker, and even stronger still was the showing of unity.

The more oppressed we are, the stronger we become as nations. This government's colonial tactic of attempting to divide and conquer our nations is failing. First Nations rights holders are coming together instead, stronger and more unified than ever, to assert their right, their sovereignty and their jurisdiction over the lands we've lived on since time immemorial.

**1500**

It's always important to talk about the issues that are happening on the land. It's important that, in the north, Treaty 9 territory, the homelands—we are so rich in the lands that we have. That's where the language comes from. That's where the identity comes from. The teachings of our people, that's where it comes from, and it does not cost \$3.1 billion.

I want to share this quote shared by the committee from Chief Archie Wabasse, Wunnumin Lake First Nation: "Let it be known: We are not stakeholders. We are rights holders. Our treaties are not optional. Our voices will not rest until the crown honours its obligation to engage peacefully with us in a true and meaningful treaty relationship, one based on recognition, respect and reconciliation at the nation-to-nation table."

This bill does not do that. This government has totally failed in the truth and reconciliation of where we want to go.

But again, I just would like to close by sharing what rights holders continue to remind us: If the treaties are violated, the land will revert to its original occupants and stewards.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I want to begin my remarks on the debate for Bill 5 by acknowledging the presence of many First Nations and Indigenous people who are watching from the visitors' gallery above. I find it ironic that I say they're in the visitors' gallery, because as my friend the member from Kiiwetinoong has taught me, they're not the visitors; we are. Here in Toronto, we rest on the traditional territories of several Indigenous nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. And if land acknowledgements like that mean more than the paper that they are written on, we have an obligation to fix Bill 5.

We heard from the Minister of Energy that we face an unprecedented crisis, that there is global instability, that we need to be able to rely on our forestry and mining sectors and we need to increase our resilience. On those things, all of us in this House are agreed.

But the question before us, and the one that we must answer as we consider whether to vote for Bill 5—and I encourage all members in this House not to vote for Bill 5—the question we must answer is: Do the ends justify the means? What I will say today is that if the means are Bill 5, then the answer to that is no.

Beyond that, I will go further and say that this government, even if entrusted with Bill 5, has given us no confidence that they can deliver on the things that they are promising to. Time and time again, since they came into power seven years ago, they have made lofty promises that

they have failed to deliver on. They failed to deliver on these things because they conceive legislation, they rush it through, they ignore consultation and then they end up backpedaling.

When I first spoke about Bill 5, I reflected on my experience as an emergency doctor, where oftentimes, in some of the most critical scenarios, rushing, even when someone is dying, is not the right thing to do. The right thing to do is to be thoughtful, deliberate, avoid making mistakes, and get things right the first time. Surgeons know it. Carpenters know it; that's why they say, "Measure twice, cut once." Special forces learn it. Race car drivers learn it. Slow is fast; fast is smooth. Don't make mistakes, and get it right the first time.

This government hasn't learned that lesson. It's why they backpedal on everything—on the greenbelt, on many other government flip-flops: Bill 28, Bill 23 with development charges, Bill 124 with our public sector workers. And every time they do that, this government sets us back and decreases trust in their ability to deliver on promises for Ontarians.

When we talk about things like special economic zones, they're not that different from other things like ministerial zoning orders, where authoritative, independent, non-partisan officers of this Legislature have warned us how when this government wielded that power, they made major mistakes. The Auditor General, in their report on ministerial zoning orders, warned us that in many cases, because this government skipped significant, important municipal planning steps, projects were delayed not by years, but in some cases are expected to be delayed by decades. We've heard about the urgency of introducing special economic zones because other authoritarian regimes have them. And while it is true that we must be independent from those regimes, we must do it without becoming those regimes, as some members in this House have advocated.

And finally, I will say that we must do it by earning the trust that has been given to us by the people of Ontario and by Indigenous people. We have an obligation to listen, to hear, to consult with First Nations and Indigenous people. The government has insisted that they will, and my answer to that is that they should have done it already. First Nations and Indigenous people are here right now—have been here for weeks—urging us, telling us that this government has not listened to them, is not addressing their concerns and, worse, is speaking for them. I, as a humble servant in this Legislature of the people of Ontario, am here merely to amplify those voices.

We have before us a critical period, but a critical opportunity. We should accelerate the permitting of mines, but it has to be done the right way. We must increase our economic resilience, but it has to be done the right way. This government is not offering that with Bill 5, and it's not taking the opportunities that have been afforded to it to fix Bill 5, which is why I must urge all members in this House to vote against it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I'd like to say a few words about what this bill means to me, my community, the people who care about the planet, because there is no planet B. We try to go to Mars all the time and see what it's like up there; we haven't found life, so we have to really work hard to protect the planet that we have. And as Justin Bieber would like to say to the Premier, it's not too late to say sorry and rescind this bill.

I think this is our Amazon rainforest. This is our Avatar movie. Too many movies have been produced right now that show that when we put a price on the minerals without consideration for the future of humanity and the destruction caused in the pursuit of excess profit. So this is not about trying to survive; these are not people who are just trying to make do; this is about excess profit of the super-wealthy who are going to be capitalizing on this.

I want to say a deep bow of gratitude and thank you to our Indigenous leaders, community members, who have travelled far and wide regularly, all the time, with determination, fortitude, courage and power. We hear you, and we thank you. I deeply appreciate all your determination to protect your treaty lands, because we know Indigenous consent is not red tape.

**1510**

We are in an emergency—not just an emergency against Mr. [inaudible] from the south, but we're also in a climate emergency, and we shouldn't use this person to the south, to act like Donald Trump. And we need to be careful on what damage we do.

I deeply respect the work of Autumn Peltier, our water walker from Manitoulin Island—the resident of my esteemed colleague to my right here. She says you can't drink oil and you can't eat money.

We need to remember the wise words of our Indigenous community members who have been saying this for so long—that we need to be protecting the planet that we live on and living sustainably within it.

These special economic zones are greenwashing. They're a ruse, and they really undermine good process.

I always say, measure twice, cut once, because—in the words of Joni Mitchell—you don't know what you've got till it's gone.

I urge all of the members of the government to go up to the Ring of Fire, also known as the Hudson Bay lowlands, and the biggest boreal peatlands. This is the carbon sink. You talk about investing billions of dollars into carbon capture—nature has given it to us in a beautiful, green, blue and brown platter. We need to value that carbon capture that nature has afforded us. We need to visit those places and understand what we're doing right now, because once it's gone, it's gone.

I urge the government to reconsider, take this moment before you head back to your ridings to face your communities and explain what you've done, because this is the last chance you have to put pause on a really harmful bill that will create sacrifice zones—using the words of our experts in the field.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I would like to remind members that you are not allowed—you're more than welcome to join us in the gallery, but you may not participate; otherwise, you will be asked to leave.

Further debate?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Bill 5 is many things, but mostly, it's disrespectful.

It's disrespectful to Indigenous communities—ignoring the duty to consult. In 2025, we're ignoring the duty to consult. Let that sink in. This government rejected a proposal from the member from Kiiwetinoong, who suggested us having another consultation in Thunder Bay, closer to these communities. Instead, this government rejected it, forcing the First Nations to come from thousands and thousands of kilometres away, navigating transportation, paying out of pocket just to have their voices heard. That is wrong.

It's disrespectful to species. I'm not sure if this government—how many of you passed science class, but it doesn't seem like you did, if you actually think that protecting a species where it sleeps and where it births its babies is enough. These aren't just cute little pets in pet stores. They are part of a vital ecosystem that ensures our world survives, and every one of them serves a valuable purpose.

It's disrespectful to people working in conservation. We heard from the CEO of the zoo—don't even take your kids there this summer, if you're passing this bill, or maybe go every day to learn.

And the conservation authorities and scientists: How disrespectful are you, that you think the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario, the experts who are there, who have years of experience and education and have been working in that field—you're smarter than they are; you, who haven't even passed science class, I don't think, and that the minister will trump COSSARO—literally trump, as in Trump-trumping.

It's disrespectful to the people of Dresden, the people that you promised—you promised them you would do an environmental assessment, you would look at other sites. There are thousands of sites to look at all across Ontario. If you were truly serious about finding space for our waste, you would grant temporary exemptions to existing landfill sites to receive more materials. That's smart. That's logical. That's financially sound. But you're not serious.

And you know what? I don't think you realize, but what you are proposing in Dresden—that landfill will be four times as large as the city of Toronto's landfill. If that doesn't give the members of Dresden and yourselves nightmares, it should.

Speaking of sleeping, I don't know how the Premier or the MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex can sleep at night. Kill Bill 5 and kill it now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise to participate in debate on Bill 5. I want to be clear, Speaker: Canada is not for sale. Indigenous rights are not for sale. Our environment is not for sale. Our democracy is not for sale. Protecting Ontario includes protecting the people and the places and the

species we love. I'm so grateful for all the Indigenous people, the rights holders, who have travelled here to defend your land and our collective environment.

To members opposite: There are moments in time when you have a historic vote to make, a historic decision. What will your kids say when they ask you how you voted in this place the day a bill was passed that attacked Indigenous rights, that overturned environmental protections, labour laws and democratic oversight? What will your kids say when they ask you why Ontario brought forward special economic zones modelled on countries like China and Russia and Saudi Arabia that give government the power to hand-pick corporations that obey the law or have no laws applied to them. What will they say when you say how you voted on whether you were going to defend our democracy and democratic and legislative oversight and the importance and power of this House that we're so privileged to be a part of to say we can create zones that are lawless and that democratic oversight and legislative laws don't apply to?

I want to fight Trump too and, yes, I agree with the members opposite: We are in an economic war. But when you're at war, you bring people together. The other day when we voted, all of us unanimously, to remove inter-provincial trade barriers, that's how you show Trump strength through unity. You don't do it the way we're doing it today: dividing nations, dividing people, attacking labour laws, attacking environmental laws, attacking Indigenous rights and democracy. That is not how we unify to fight Trump.

Government members, you have an opportunity: Kill Bill 5.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Nepean.

**MPP Tyler Watt:** I rise today to speak out against the disastrous Bill 5, because it is not just bad policy; it is a direct threat to the rule of law, to environmental protection and to the democratic process in Ontario.

Let's be clear about what this bill does: It gives cabinet the power to override local bylaws, bulldoze environmental safeguards and silence the voices of Indigenous communities, municipalities and everyday Ontarians. Just before I came down to debate this bill, I had a constituent call my office to say, "I hope you're going down there today to vote against Bill 5."

This bill hands sweeping authority to the Premier and his cabinet without meaningful checks and balances, and we've seen, time and time again, how that works out for Ontario. This is not how democracy should work.

This isn't about speeding up mining approvals. If that were the case, we'd be having a very different conversation. In fact, the Ontario Liberals have said clearly that we support accelerating responsible mining projects. We know that critical minerals are key to Ontario's economic future and the global fight against climate change, but Bill 5 is not the way to get there. This bill was rushed. I don't understand why this government is so obsessed with passing it right now and today. They should be taking the time to actually listen and get it right. It doesn't need to be

passed today. It was poorly consulted on, and even Minister Lecce admitted it still needs work.

**1520**

So let me ask: Why are we voting on a bill that the government themselves have said isn't ready? Why are we giving cabinet a blank cheque to rewrite our laws behind closed doors?

If this government truly cared about getting it right, they'd kill Bill 5 today. They'd take the summer to consult meaningfully with Indigenous communities—I'm sorry that you had to travel all the way here today to stand against this—to consult with municipalities, with the environmental experts and to reintroduce a new bill in the fall that will actually help speed up mining projects without bulldozing public trust in the process.

Speaker, this is about our air, our clean water—could be your farmland, your wetlands. If you live in a municipality that worked hard to create a responsible development plan, Bill 5 gives this government the power to throw your plan in the garbage. If you live near environmentally sensitive land, this bill puts that land and your community at risk, all to do things like build a fantasy highway tunnel under the 401 and fast-track pet projects with no accountability. This bill allows the Premier to gamble with our future. It guts the protections that keep our communities livable and strips away the voices of the people most affected.

To every member in this chamber considering voting for this bill in its original form, you are voting for failure. You are admitting that you are okay with a government that governs by force and not by consensus.

Speaker, Bill 5 is not just flawed; it is fundamentally undemocratic. I urge this government to listen to the people, listen to Indigenous leaders and respect environmental science. Protect local democracy. Kill this bill and let's get to work on doing it right.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Sudbury.

**MPP Jamie West:** We are in favour of development—we heard that on this side of the bench, we heard that from treaty rights holders, we heard that from First Nations—but not in this way. Bill 5 is a broken bill. It was done with zero consultation before, with multiple amendments—last-minute amendments—and the government admitting that it was flawed and broken.

During debate, the last 18 minutes, during the one-hour lead debate and during committee, the only thing the minister will speak about is the “one project, one process.” That is six pages of a 200-plus bill. That's the part they angle against; that's the part they wedge and say, “You're not in favour of.” We're in favour of those six pages. Rip them out; throw away the rest. We heard this in deputations. Even the people who spoke in favour of the bill, the Ontario Mining Association, mining companies, the chambers of commerce in Sudbury and Timmins would only speak to those six pages and would talk about the importance of Indigenous consultation, First Nations consultation, working with treaty rights holders. You don't

have an endorsement from the people you're saying you're trying to help.

Let me tell you what we did hear, though. Chris Moonias had said, “You have cleaner water in your toilets than my people have to drink.”

I ask you, Speaker, where was the “one project, one process” for First Nations when it came to clean water, when it came to suicide, when it came to the need for health care, for housing? Where was that process when they're overwhelmed with MLAS requests? Why is it the only time the Conservative government sees value for First Nations is when it comes to extracting valuables from where they live? It is a shame.

And we're not as dumb as you think we are. We all see through you. Where was the debate on the special economic zones? Where was that debate in this conversation about how great this bill was, overriding labour laws and child care laws and any law you want? You're under criminal investigation for the greenbelt scandal, but if that was a special economic zone, you wouldn't be. We do not trust you.

Where was the debate on the archaeological sites that they're wiping away? The treaty rights, the environment, on the amount of silent voices? They do not care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I've spoken many words about Bill 5, so I want to kind of give a bottom line to remember for the future about this bill.

Bill 5 is an attack on local government. This bill breaks a promise to the Chatham-Kent landfill and the residents around it. It's not about Donald Trump; if it were about Donald Trump, they would have put forward a strategy about landfills. For example, let's put forward a process to grant special permits to existing landfills to increase their capacity temporarily if Donald Trump cuts off the border. Instead, this bill is about one particular landfill where the owners have connections with the Ford government.

This bill attacks endangered species protection. In human history, we have consumed nature and natural spaces. But we've decided to draw a line, and one of them is no more extinctions, and this government is putting that at risk. They don't believe in that; they don't believe in protecting endangered species. That is what is fundamentally wrong about that part of Bill 5.

When it comes to mining, we fully support this “one project, one process” part of Bill 5. We don't want the government to be wasting its time or unnecessarily slowing down mining or other infrastructure projects. We want them to be more evaluated on their merits, not on trying to speed up or slow down something.

Finally, in schedule 9 of this bill, I think, is the worst part of this bill, and that is, Bill 5 attacks the rule of law. If I follow rules and you follow rules and everybody follows rules, we know from human history that that leads to stronger and more prosperous societies. These are the societies where people fulfill their lives, where life is good and we can express our values. If we value taking care of each other, having a strong and prosperous society allows us to do that. If we want to have equality of opportunity, it

helps to have a strong and prosperous society, and a lot of this is based on having a society where I follow laws, you follow laws and everybody follows laws.

Schedule 9 gives this government the power to exempt any company or project from any law, any regulation. This is the fundamental problem. We don't need that to speed up development, to make sure that there aren't unnecessary delays. We don't need that to respect the rights held by our Indigenous communities.

Bill 5 has to be stopped. I'll say this for one last time, to remember for the future: The government should withdraw Bill 5. It should go back to the drawing board. It should consult this summer—consult across Ontario, but especially with First Nations—and if it listens carefully during these consultations, it will come back with a better bill for all of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's not too late. The clock is ticking, but you still have time. You can reconsider this. You can be on the right side of history this time.

If you have listened to what we have said here today; if you have listened to the hundreds of thousands of people that have been reaching out to each and every one of your offices; if you have listened to the First Nations leaders, the farmers, the experts, the engineers, the rights holders, you will understand the importance of getting it right the first time.

It is time to do the right thing. Put this bill back; scrap it. Go back to the drawing board. Travel across the province. Listen to the people who are here in the gallery and out front of the Legislature and in every corner of this province. Do the right thing. Consult with the people before you take their rights away.

With that, Speaker, I want to give the government an opportunity to reflect and rethink this, so I am moving adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Ms. Stiles has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1530 to 1600.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Members, please take your seats. Please take your seats.

Ms. Stiles has moved the adjournment of the House. All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 44; the nays are 73.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 3, 2025, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Lecce has moved third reading of Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1603 to 1608.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Lecce has moved third reading of Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement.

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

#### Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hardeman, Ernie	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Fedeli, Victor	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Quinn, Nolan	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Racinsky, Joseph	

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

#### Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Cerjanec, Rob	Lennox, Robin	Tsao, Jonathan
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vaugeois, Lise
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Watt, Tyler
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie

Fraser, John  
French, Jennifer K.

Pasma, Chandra  
Rakocevic, Tom

Wong-Tam, Kristyn

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 44.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order. Order. Order.  
*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I'm calling a five-minute recess.

*The House recessed from 1612 to 1617.*

#### 1976998 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Dixon moved second reading of the following bill: Bill Pr1, An Act to revive 1976998 Ontario Inc.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 89(b), the bill is ordered for third reading.

#### 1976998 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Dixon moved third reading of the following bill: Bill Pr1, An Act to revive 1976998 Ontario Inc.

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

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

#### MFIS HOLDINGS AND INVESTMENTS INC. ACT, 2025

Mr. Riddell moved second reading of the following bill: Bill Pr2, An Act to revive MFIS Holdings and Investments Inc.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 89(b), the bill is ordered for third reading.

1620

#### MFIS HOLDINGS AND INVESTMENTS INC. ACT, 2025

Mr. Riddell moved third reading of the following bill: Bill Pr2, An Act to revive MFIS Holdings and Investments Inc.

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

#### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LA GESTION DES RESSOURCES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors / Projet de loi 27, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le stockage géologique de carbone et modifiant diverses lois concernant les incendies de végétation, la sécurité des ressources et les arpenteurs-géomètres.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to this bill. What we're going to speak to is putting a rural perspective and grounding it in place, so thank you, Madam Speaker. My time will be split with the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

It's an honour to rise today as the member for Sarnia—Lambton and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Rural Affairs.

When we talk about rural Ontario, we're talking about places with grit, pride and a deep sense of place. We're talking about the communities where people don't just live, they build, grow and lead.

Sarnia—Lambton is one of those places. We're known for our farms and small towns, but we also anchor some of the province's most important industrial and clean energy developments. Our region is home to Nova Chemicals, Shell and Imperial Oil, companies that support thousands of good jobs, and just as importantly, are at the forefront of reducing industrial emissions and building a cleaner economy.

That's why Bill 27, the Resource Management and Safety Act, matters not just to me as an MPP but as someone who understands the opportunities and challenges facing rural Ontario today. This is not just a technical bill. It's a set of tools to help rural Ontario communities grow, adapt and lead, especially in places like Sarnia—Lambton, where industry, innovation and the environment are all part of the local identity.

Madam Speaker, rural communities have a long history of solving hard problems with practical tools, and that's exactly what this legislation represents when it comes to, for example, carbon storage and unlocking rural innovation and investment. That part of Bill 27 that enables geologic carbon storage creates a framework to store carbon dioxide safely underground using proven methods and extensive safeguards. It supports industries that want to cut their emissions and invest in Ontario's clean energy future.

Nowhere is that more relevant than in Sarnia–Lambton. Our region has some of the most promising geological formations in Ontario for storing carbon, including 71 active salt caverns and an estimated 290 million tonnes of carbon storage capacity. That's not just geology—it's economic opportunity. It's a chance for our community to lead Canada in responsible, rural-based carbon management.

Think about what it means in practice. The Corunna, Moore and St. Clair River sites of Nova Chemicals already produce billions of pounds of polyethylene annually.

The Shell refinery and Imperial's integrated fuels facility serve consumers across the province. They're producing goods the world needs, but they want to do it more sustainably.

By establishing clear rules for carbon storage, Bill 27 will enable industries in our region to capture their emissions and store them safely without having to look elsewhere, and that means keeping jobs here in Ontario and in my riding, creating new ones across the province and attracting more clean tech investment. This aligns directly with the rural economic development strategy's pillar of growing the rural workforce. We are building the conditions for success in high-potential rural sectors like hydrogen, advanced manufacturing and sustainable energy.

We're already seeing that momentum. The Bowman Centre for Sustainable Energy, right in Sarnia, has long advocated for carbon capture as a way to decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors like cement and steel. The Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park is supporting a real-world commercialization of these ideas in projects like Woodland Biofuels, which aims to turn construction waste into renewable fuels. They are waiting on the very carbon infrastructure this legislation would support. This is what rural leadership looks like: local institutions, local industries and local people driving global change.

The Surveyors Act is also important, Madam Speaker, and let me turn briefly to another important component of Bill 27: the amendments to the Surveyors Act. In rural Ontario, land surveyors play a quiet but critical role, whether it's planning a new subdivision, repairing a washed-out bridge, laying fibre optic broadband or rebuilding after a flood. None of it gets off the ground without a surveyor. But in many rural areas, finding one can be a challenge. Bill 27 offers a smart solution: By creating limited licences and new temporary licensing options, Ontario can get more qualified professionals working faster, especially in areas where the demand is high and services are sparse.

The changes also provide a clear pathway for internationally trained surveyors to become licensed here in Ontario, strengthening our workforce while upholding that quality. And, by making it easier to mobilize surveyors during emergencies, the bill recognizes the real-world conditions rural communities often face, from seasonal flooding through infrastructure emergencies. This work speaks directly to the safe and strong rural communities pillar of the rural strategy, because having the right pro-

fessionals in the right place is just as important as the funding or the permits themselves. When we reduce bottlenecks, we accelerate rural projects, and when we accelerate those rural projects, we build stronger, safer communities.

Madam Speaker, while the components of Bill 27 may seem technical on the surface, from a rural perspective, they are deeply aligned with the priorities we have laid out in Ontario's rural economic development strategy. This legislation supports the strategy's three core pillars: safe and strong rural communities, business development and attraction, and growing the rural workforce.

First, on safe and strong communities, changes to the Surveyors Act help rural municipalities access the professional services they need to plan and build safely. Whether it's responding to flooding, rebuilding a road, or expanding housing, rural Ontario can't wait months for a land surveyor to become available. This bill helps us move faster and smarter when our communities need it most.

Second, on business development, by establishing a clear, made-in-Ontario framework for geological carbon storage, Bill 27 will help unlock this new investment in rural innovation. It allows companies like those in Sarnia–Lambton's Chemical Valley to lower emissions, stay competitive and continue growing right here at home, and it sends a signal to clean tech firms that rural Ontario is indeed open for business.

Third, on growing the rural workforce, this legislation helps expand those opportunities in key trades and sectors, including surveyors, engineers, energy workers and advanced manufacturing. In regions like mine, where we have a strong base of skilled labour, this is about keeping talent here in our communities and in Ontario, creating new pathways in giving young people a reason to stay and build a future. Taken together, these changes reflect a clear message from rural affairs that rural Ontario isn't just ready for the future, we're ready to help shape it.

In closing, I'd like to talk about, Madam Speaker, how I'm proud to support Bill 27, because I know what that means for the people of Sarnia–Lambton. I know what it means for our farmers, our engineers and skilled trades and our young people. And I know what it means for every rural community in Ontario looking to grow responsibly, sustainably and with pride. Let's give our communities the tools they need to lead.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Mississauga–Erin Mills.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** It's my honour once again to rise in this Legislature to speak about our government's plan to protect Ontario. Today, I'm here to show my support for the Minister of Natural Resources and his bill, the Resource Management and Safety Act.

This bill continues to follow our government plan to create jobs, protect communities and build our province. Particularly, it addresses key issues surrounding environmental sustainability, technological innovation, resource management and public safety. The Resource Management and Safety Act would ensure that our government can continue to fulfill its mandate to protect Ontario.

**1630**

We know that wildfires are becoming an increasing challenge in Ontario every year. Towns are being evacuated and smoke is contaminating our air. This is a serious problem, but, unfortunately, this problem is only going to get worse. Warm, dry weather is causing lots of dangerous conditions for fires, and high temperatures are also causing more storms with lightning. Over the next few decades, Ontario's fire season is expected to become 20 days longer. Just this week, we have all seen on the news about the devastating wildfires in northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and throughout Canada. This is a serious issue.

Before we discuss this bill, I want to send my thoughts and prayers to all those who have been affected by wildfires. Please accept our best wishes. We are thinking about you, we are here for you and our government will do everything we can to support you. We are also thankful to the emergency personnel and first responders who bravely protect, serve and assist with evacuation and firefighting efforts. There are many people who make this happen: firefighters, police, medical services, emergency management, volunteers, charitable organizations, neighbourhoods and friends.

This is a team effort, and it couldn't be done without everyone working together. It is at a time like this that we see the best of humanity: when everyone comes together. Thank you for all your services.

We know that wildfires are a serious problem. We know that this problem is getting worse. We know that our strategy must be continually adapting and innovating to address these challenges. It's not enough to enhance the existing wildland fire programs; we must ensure an ongoing development and modernization of our wildland fire management approach. That's why our government is acting to strengthen community preparedness, improve prevention of fire and mitigate the damage caused by wildfires.

In addition to those legislative changes, the government has been addressing wildfires. Ontario has increased wildland fire staffing with a focus on recruitment and retention. There are now hundreds of staff trained in wildland fire management. Ontario is preparing with the federal government for a \$64-million investment to mitigate and prepare for future wildland fire challenges. The province is contracting more aircraft, creating new permanent positions and providing wildland firefighters with WSIB coverage.

The Resource Management and Safety Act, 2025 includes changes to the Forest Fires Prevention Act and Ontario's wildland fire program. The new Wildland Fire Management Act will allow Ontario to adapt to those challenges and strengthen our emergency preparedness. The Wildland Fire Management Act would, if passed, require municipalities and industries to establish wildland fire management plans. This is important because we need to ensure that everyone in the fire region is prepared to prevent and mitigate fires. Also, the act would, if passed, allow the minister and the emergency officials greater

power in emergencies for effective management and emergency response. For example, the minister may issue fire evacuation orders and limit public access to areas where firefighting is taking place.

This act also allows for privately owned equipment to be used to respond to fire emergencies, and gives the power for proper compensation and terms and conditions.

Finally, the Wildland Fire Management Act would get tough on those responsible for human-caused fires. Emergency management and fire suppression teams put their lives at risk in responding to these devastating fires. We must stand for them by cracking down on those who do not follow Ontario fire laws. Speaker, 50% or more of Ontario's wildland fires are human-caused; this is too much. This bill would, if passed, modernize enforcement and penalties for violations of the law, including monetary penalties, remediation orders, and compliance tools.

In addition to wildfire management, I am happy to hear that the government is supporting the forestry industry.

For example, this government is encouraging the use of Ontario lumber in construction, including the newly permitted 18-storey wood buildings.

Additionally, the Ontario Sawmill Chip Support Program and the forest biomass program are cleaning up the landscape while simultaneously providing economic value.

Our government is supporting environmental sustainability and strengthening the economic viability of the forestry industry.

Our government also continues to protect Ontario through our focus on environmental responsibility and energy management. This can be clearly seen in the Geologic Carbon Storage Act. This proposed act would regulate carbon storage to allow for safe, responsible, permanent storage of carbon dioxide.

Carbon storage helps mitigate against climate change by capturing carbon dioxide and storing it under deep rock formations in the ground. This benefits both the environment and the economy, while protecting public safety. There is a possibility for up to 4,000 jobs in this industry, and the price Ontario industries pay on carbon may reduce by close to \$1 billion a year. I look forward to seeing the possibilities of this industry when we are able to safely and sustainably capture and store carbon. If this is properly regulated, as the bill proposes, then Ontario may be able to reduce gas emissions by five million to seven million tonnes per year; this would be the equivalent of 1.5 million to two million cars.

Likewise, it is important to address the environmental damages that could be caused by deteriorating oil and gas wells. If well operators are unable to clean up their own hazards, such as if they are bankrupt, the government must have the authority to intervene. This is a matter of public safety and environmental protection. The amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act would, if passed, give the ministry the power to take action by preventing, decreasing or eliminating a hazard. The government would take over, solve the problem, and then recover the costs from those responsible. This would allow us to



preserve the environment and maintain our resources sustainably.

Finally, the proposed changes to the Surveyors Act would, if passed, support housing and infrastructure development. Surveying is a critical industry for resource management, expansion, and development of infrastructure. Therefore, it is important we treat this industry with the importance and respect it deserves.

**1640**

The proposed bill would offer new types of surveyor licences, attracting more people to the profession. It would increase availability of the survey services in under-serviced regions. This bill would also allow internationally trained surveyors to enter the workforce faster. This is yet another way that we are removing barriers and reducing red tape to make it easier for newcomers to find work in their careers. Our government has already removed Canadian experience requirements from many occupations and made it easier for many immigrants to find work and get certified in Canada.

In conclusion, our government is moving forward with our plan to protect Ontario by strengthening our approach to resource management and safety. We are promoting innovation and new technologies to strengthen our energy advantage and maintain environmental sustainability. We are encouraging the new industries of carbon capture and hydrogen energy. We are protecting jobs in our community by attracting more surveyors and enhancing the vital role they play in the province's growth. These changes are positive—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** As I stand here, this government has just passed Bill 5. It's a controversial and far-reaching bill. They did not, in any way, consult with First Nations. This is a bill that has brought dishonour to this place and dishonour to every member of the government who voted in favour of this bill.

The crux of this bill is that you are creating zones where no laws apply, where no consultation with First Nations is required, where no environmental laws will be respected. You are passing a law that will allow you to do whatever you want. You've made your illegal actions legal with this bill, and now you bring forward Bill 27 and expect us to trust the government with these powers.

To the member from Sarnia–Lambton: You have record numbers of abandoned oil and gas wells in the province. You haven't even cleaned those up. You won't take responsibility for that, but you expect us to trust your government with the environment and the protection of people, after the explosion that we saw at Wilmot? I don't think so.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you very much for the faith in the Ontario technical community. I'm quite familiar with underground storage wells because, like you say, the birthplace of the oil and gas industry was in Petrolia and Oil Springs, as your NDP critic mentioned this morning. I didn't get the chance to comment then, so I will now.

It's nowhere more relevant than in Sarnia–Lambton. We have the largest underground storage facility, in the hub. I don't know how many people in the room here know it, but we pump natural-gas carbon underground all summer long, and that's how the people in Toronto and in this great building here heat the place all winter along. So we're very comfortable with underground storage.

When I worked at Nova Chemicals, we had six storage wells, I think, when I was there. We pumped the ethylene below ground, which is another form of carbon. We pumped it underground, kept it under pressure, never had any leaks and when we needed to sell the hydrocarbon, the ethylene, to customers, we would displace it with water. The ethylene would come to the surface and we'd ship 'er down a pipeline or on a rail out to the customers in Ontario, and that's why I'm quite comfortable with responsible management that I know we'll have.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Hon. Andrea Khanjin:** My question is for the great member for Mississauga—Erin Mills. He had such good cadence in his speech, but I couldn't hear the end of it. I was wondering if you could just elaborate on what more you were going to say about this bill.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Our government continues to protect Ontario with a plan to create jobs, protect communities and build our province. I fully support the Resource Management and Safety Act, and I hope all my colleagues will join us in our efforts to responsibly and sustainably stew our resources for our great province.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In schedule 1 of the bill, it is said that the new positions of officers will have the right to seize, search and enter a fire zone.

We have seen all of the First Nations that came to say that their land is who they are. Their land is how they learn to see the world, to connect with the Creator. How do we ensure that an officer who now has the right to seize, search and enter a fire zone will interact with First Nations and their traditional territories in a good way?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I appreciate the question from the member who I was elected with 18 years ago—some time now. Thank you very much.

I think we all want to prevent. We see every night on the news all these fires in Manitoba, northern Ontario, across the west. I know when I worked with the Solicitor General in his office, we interacted with the First Nations fire departments. They always need more equipment and more training, and I know the Solicitor General is always working with them to do that.

I would think that these compliance officers would certainly—I'd hope they would come from the First Nations communities themselves, so they would respect those kinds of customs from there, and they would certainly be able to respect the First Nations community.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to both my colleagues for their remarks this afternoon. My question is for the great member from Sarnia–Lambton. I know he touched on it in his response just now to our NDP colleague, but I was wondering if he could elaborate a little bit more about the Ministry of Natural Resources fire response.

I know the ministry has increased the government's base spending from \$69.8 million in 2028 to, last year, \$134 million. Last October, in the fall economic statement, the ministry announced a \$64-million additional investment for the province to hire and train these professionals to fight our forest fires. I was just wondering if the member could elaborate how this bill will support those important initiatives and continue to be there for our northern communities.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you to the member from Perth–Wellington, who outlined that question—very good.

The money that we're reinvesting and new money invested into fire safety is something else. I already said a little earlier it was an issue when I was with the Solicitor General. He always asked the question, "How can we help you in the north?" They need new fire equipment, pumpers and maybe a new building to keep the fire engine in as well. It was always at the front of the show, I guess would be the word; a question at every time we had an event. Every time we met them at AMO or Good Roads, wherever we were, they always were there, and they made a great case for their communities, and the minister and this government will be responsive.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to my friend from Sarnia–Lambton. You held some attention, I guess. I don't know about the cadence of your former colleague.

I do want to say we have some concerns with Bill 27. There has been very little public consultation. I know it's a huge inconvenience, public consultation on legislation, but what we know for sure is when you consult, you get feedback and you talk to people—for instance, did you go talk to the people in Wheatley? Because they've got strong opinions of storage.

Why are the approval-holders and the site operators being allowed to close a repository site without ministerial approvals. It's not the Wild West out there. We've learned some good lessons over time. We should be applying best practices when dealing with issues like this. Explain yourself, for the love of humanity.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you to the member from Waterloo, who's always got a great take on the questions.

I guess I'm familiar with underground storage and old wells. In the town I live in, Petrolia, we're on a whole raft of former wells. As they build new subdivisions, they find the old wells, they cap them. They drill down, seal them off and cap them. I'm probably sitting on one in my home, at least one. My whole subdivision is.

1650

That one in Wheatley—and that was a real tragedy there—it was probably an old well. Somebody built a

building over top and it wasn't sealed properly. But if the work's done properly—and, I mean, people build million-dollar houses on these properties.

Like I said, we're quite familiar; we've got four plants there with the Nova Chemicals who use underground storage for all their products, and then we ship them out by pipeline or by rail, and we've had no issues there. I'm quite confident in the industry and what they can do.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Earlier in this debate, I posed a question to the member from Sarnia–Lambton about Bill 27. I meant to reference the explosion at Wheatley, which was a terrible disaster—abandoned oil and gas wells. I think I said Wilmot, which is another disaster that this government is unfolding in the province. But I meant to say Wheatley, not Wilmot, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I would like to share my time with the member for Nickel Belt. Thank you.

Bill 27: I'm looking at the firefighters and the working conditions for firefighters. People may recall, as far back as October 2023, I was asking the then Minister of Natural Resources to reclassify wildland firefighters as firefighters. He didn't answer the question. And then my colleague Guy responded and said, "Minister, they don't want your thanks; they want to be reclassified." That did not happen.

Four months later, Guy Bourgouin was pressing the Minister of Labour on the issue. MPP Bourgouin said, "Will the government finally do the right thing and classify forest rangers as firefighters? The minister said, a short answer to the member opposite, "Yes." Here we are now, summer of 2025, and that reclassification has not taken place and that promise has been broken.

I'd like to read something from the point of view of a wildland firefighter. In 2005, Ontario had 214 wildfire crews; 20 years later, in 2024, we had 143 wildfire crews. So 214 in 2005; almost 100 less in 2024. That's worrisome. That's a significant reduction of wildfire crews.

The Ontario wildfire program is hemorrhaging experienced firefighters and is in a state of crisis, with a simple solution: reclassifying wildland firefighters. Behind closed doors, the government's negotiators told firefighters that the only way they would be reclassified is if Minister Mulroney signs off.

Question: With the wildfire program in crisis and such a simple solution available to these heroes, why won't Minister Mulroney reclassify wildland firefighters today? Well, it's a very good question, but I must say that it's interesting that the Minister of Labour didn't make the promise and, apparently, didn't actually have the capacity to fulfill the promise.

Wildland firefighters are exposed to life-threatening amounts of smoke and carcinogens during the wildfire

season, yet the legislation penalizes them for only working seasonal contracts. The thing about wildland firefighters is that, as yet, there's no protective equipment. They breathe in these toxins all day long. The best that they have is a bandana. So that, in itself, brings me to question: Where's the research? Why has this not been prioritized for those workers?

We also know that they sleep in carcinogen-soaked uniforms, sometimes for two weeks at a time. So they're sleeping on the fire lines, often on the ground, living in those toxin-saturated clothes, with no relief from that. The reason they want to be reclassified is because then their job descriptions would have to be reviewed, and they would have to be paid properly. Right now, you can be a volunteer firefighter and be classified as a firefighter and have the benefits of being classified as a firefighter, but if you fight wildland fires, you're not a firefighter. You're a resource technician or you're something else, but you are not classified as a firefighter.

We're looking at a very, very intense fire season that is coming to us. So, first of all, I'm very concerned about what is going to happen to—because we have a lack of firefighter crews in this province, and we know this. But it was interesting seeing the minister of—well, it's the Honourable Mike Harris. I'm not sure which ministry he has at the moment. But I want to point out that, according to the budget, there's been a \$42-million cut to base funding for wildland firefighting. So I'm very confused when I hear members keep saying that there's been some kind of increase because, according to your own budget documents, there's a \$42-million cut.

The Honourable Mike Harris spoke about the retention bonus that was offered last year, but according to people working in the field, nobody new was hired. The same few people came, the same rollover of people came, and nothing was cured. So, the question is, how many short are we now, today? The minister also said something strange, that somehow these efforts are building forests. Perhaps he misspoke. Only planting builds forests and wildland firefighters don't tree plant.

Then there's a comment about acquiring new assets: helicopters. But the helicopters purchased were for southern Ontario municipality policing and not fire response—more misdirection. And the province is not buying new bombers. If they are, the firefighters want to see the proof. Right now, they cannot hire enough pilots in Ontario because they don't pay enough. So instead, we're paying a lot more money to bring in bomber pilots from Quebec and from the United States.

The reality is that wildland firefighting in Ontario is in complete disarray. Whatever people say about how they love the work that they're doing, that they're saving lives—which they are—and attempting against all the odds to protect property, there is no respect for these workers and the work that they do. It's interesting, though, that the minister also talked about the need to extend the fire season quite a bit longer. That to me is a tacit admission that we're dealing with climate change.

But, again, how are you going to get people working? First of all, everybody's let go at the end of the summer. Back in the 1990s, the Mike Harris Conservative government got rid of full-time wildland firefighters. They're just short-term contracts, which is a big part of the reason why you can't retain staff. The other piece is that we need full-time wildland firefighters who are there to address those fires no matter what time of year they happen—and they are happening more and more frequently, with more intensity. You can't build a response when your program is based on 90% seasonal employees, and you certainly can't attract people to work longer without better pay and longer contracts.

It's interesting that we've heard twice in this House about how people are responsible for 50% of the fires that start. There's some truth in that, but it's lightning strikes, actually, that cause over 81% of the damage in the forests. You have to ask yourself: What's going on that our forests are tinderboxes—that it takes so little, really, to start a forest fire? They are spreading so broadly, so quickly, and so many communities are getting evacuated—

*Interjection.*

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** It seems that the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has something to say about this. Perhaps he can wait for his turn.

*Interjection.*

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Lovely.

So, what we are dealing with, frankly, is a very under-resourced department, a very under-resourced ministry that doesn't seem to be capable of actually protecting the people of Ontario. We know that there's an unlimited emergency budget, so who does that go to? Well, we fly people in from Mexico, we fly people in from other parts of the world to deal with their own fires, but we do not support the people who are actually in the service. That's a crime, frankly. We need them. We need them.

**1700**

There's some other things that I wanted to look at—I'm almost done here. As I say, what I would like to see is the numbers from this government—they're talking about increases, but the budget actually says there's a \$42-million decrease. Where are those numbers coming from? And what exactly is being done to make sure that you have enough fire crews, that they are paid properly? And what the heck is the problem with reclassifying them so that they are treated as firefighters? The minister promised last year. It never happened. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan was in a private meeting in which it was promised that that would happen. It never happened. We're still waiting for those results.

I'd like to pass things on to the member from Nickel Belt to take over.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I will ask the members to keep it down to a low—I'm having a hard time hearing the members present.

I recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will just add a few words about the wildland firefighters before I go to the other parts of

the bill. A big reason why wildland firefighters want to be recognized as firefighters is that if you are recognized as a firefighter in Ontario, there are lots of cancers for which you will have earlier detection. We all know that with early detection, it's often a whole lot easier to treat—it's easier to treat a cancer at stage 1 than it is at stage 3. And if you are a firefighter, because we know that the rate of cancer in firefighters is through the roof, we allow them to be tested sooner.

We also allow them, without having to do too much—it's still a process but not as huge a process—to basically say that the cancer came from your work and get them WSIB coverage so that they can take time off to have treatment for their cancer. Hopefully, the treatment is successful, but at least they are supported through WSIB.

None of that is available to wildland firefighters. They are firefighters. They get dropped off in the middle of an out-of-control fire. They will spend 10 days, 14 days, non-stop fighting those fires that are out of control in northern Ontario. I have seen it in my riding, unfortunately, way, way too many times. Yet, we give those people part-time jobs. In October each year, after the snow starts to come, they lose their job. They need to reapply for their job in the spring. If they're lucky, they get hired again. That's not a way to build a strong wildland firefighting group.

Other provinces do this differently. I'm sure when you look at the work that they do, we would all agree that they are firefighters. Why won't we give them the same benefits? They do have a higher rate of cancer. The data and the evidence are there. Why don't you want them to be covered by WSIB like we would do to a firefighter who works in town or who works in any community, a little village? If they work for a village, for a city, for a community, we cover them. If they work for the provincial government as wildland firefighters, we don't.

Don't you think that we could do a little bit better? Do we really have to be the worst employer out there? I don't think so. We have the resources to do this. We are the provincial government. Why is it that a little municipality of 6,000 people can offer better benefits to their workers than we can as the province of Ontario? This is what my colleagues have been trying and all of us have been trying to do.

The next part that makes me worried is the power of officers to seize and search and enter in fire zones. There are lots of fires in northern Ontario, where I'm from, where those fires are on First Nations territories. This is where they hunt, where they fish, where they harvest, where they live, where they have been for thousands and thousands of years. And now we are giving officers new powers to seize and search.

You saw the people. There were people from Sagamok who were here today. There were people from Neskantaga that were here today. There were people from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug that were here today. The trusting relationship with the government is not very high. The truth and reconciliation recommendations—none of them that fall on the shoulders of the provincial government have been acted upon, have moved. We owe it to them to show

respect, to establish a trusting relationship. But now, I can see conflict where a white guy from down south will come up to my riding or come up to any other ridings that have First Nations communities, and then they have the power to seize and to search without being respectful of the culture, without being respectful of the people, without being respectful of the treaty, of the land. Am I the only one who can see problems ahead? I can see a serious problem.

You need to do consultation. You need to establish trusting relationships. None of that work has been done. But the white guy from Toronto will have a right to come onto First Nations territory in my riding, in every riding in the north, and have the power to seize and search. I'm not saying that they shouldn't have this power; I'm saying that it has to be done in a good way, but none of that is in the bill.

When we asked the question, the member from Lambton said hopefully they would be First Nations people who would have those jobs. I would say I'd love that, but I don't see that in the bill. It is not. We have to trust the government that they will do it in a good way for First Nations. I'm sorry; the trust scale right now is at zero. You have a lot of work to do before First Nations people will start to trust you. So where is the public consultation? I don't know.

But I saw the time is running, so I want to go to my next worry. In schedule 2, it says that the crown will assume liability in some instances where the site has been decommissioned. There are more abandoned mines in my riding of Nickel Belt than, I think, in all of the rest of the province put together. I think I'm at something like 47% of abandoned mines that are in my riding. All of those fall on the shoulders of the provincial government.

The number one for the last 16 years has been the cleanup of Long Lake Gold Mine, which leaches arsenic into Long Lake. For the last 16 years, this abandoned mine, the responsibility of the provincial government, has been their number one file, because it's leaching arsenic. I don't have to explain to you what arsenic is. It kills everything. The fish, the birds, the people—it just kills everybody. And 16 years after being identified, 16 years after good people from the Ministry of Mines working on it, nothing has been done. Not one shovel has hit the ground to get this leaching arsenic out of there, but more and more arsenic is leaching into Long Lake.

From Long Lake it goes into Panache. Atikameksheng Anishnawbek gets their water—it's just horrible. A thousand people live on Long Lake, and now they can't use the water, they can't fish, they—

*Interjections.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** —but it is the number one responsibility.

**1710**

Now we have a bill that says that the crown will assume responsibility in some instances where sites are decommissioned. This is not going to fly in my riding. We know what that means, when the crown assumes responsibility. It means they promise you that you are the number one,

that things have to be done, that they fully understand that arsenic should not be leaking, and 16 years later, nothing has been done.

There's a whole lot more that I wanted to talk about, and I just have one minute, so let me go to the fire management plan—great thing. I think every community should have a fire management plan. The problem always comes down to who will pay for those plans. There isn't the knowledge, the skills in many of the 33 little communities that I represent to be able to put that together themselves. They will have to hire people to help them put a plan together.

They should have a plan, fully agreed, but the—I forgot what it's called; the money that comes for this. There's \$1 million that has been there for years to help municipalities and communities put fire plans together. I don't think this is enough, but I don't see an increase in the budget in order to get this done. And would that also apply to unorganized areas like Chapleau, Biscotasing, Westree, Shining Tree? I can name you all of Nickel Belt. Would that apply to us also?

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. John Jordan:** This bill is designed to protect Ontario and strengthen communities. Wildfires, as we know, are unfortunately back in the news again. I want to thank the wildfire workers for their preparedness and willingness to take on this work. I know, back in the day, that included the member from Spadina–Fort York and my son as well—a couple of white guys going up there. Last year, they managed 480 wildfires, and the year before, there were 700 fires.

Being prepared is important, having a plan in place is important and sharing resources is important—provinces to provinces and municipalities and regions and even private resources. This bill facilitates access to those additional resources. I know there's a bit of an aversion over there to private resources, but I'm wondering if the member agrees that the formal sharing of resources is important in this case with the wildfires.

**MPP Lise Vaugois:** Sharing of resources makes sense, but it does not make sense to be cutting the base budget of wildland firefighters by \$42 million so that our own Ontario cohort is understaffed, under-resourced and underpaid.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank both members for their comments today. I'll ask my question to the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North.

This government has incredible timing and foresight. In 2020, just when we were heading into the pandemic, they had cut \$120 million out of our public health budget, and every public health department in the province was deciding how they were going to cut the budget when we were hit with the biggest global pandemic in 100 years.

And two years ago, we had a forest fire season that was record-breaking, that destroyed 5% of the boreal forest in the province of Ontario, that sent smoke all the way down

to Toronto and New York. This year, the smoke—we've got another forest fire season that started out west. It's moved to the east. It's moved to northern Ontario. The communities up there are engulfed in smoke. The smoke is heading our way again. And this government had the foresight to cut the wildland fire budget by \$42 million. Their timing is just impeccable.

Can you make a comment about just how this government keeps us prepared for the emergencies that are—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**MPP Lise Vaugois:** Thank you to the member for the wonderful question.

You know what? We've already had a wildland firefighter within the city limits of Thunder Bay—already this year. I believe this is the earliest fire ban in my experience of living in northwestern Ontario, my part of the province. So we are not prepared; we know that from the wildland firefighters themselves. Cutting that budget makes no sense whatsoever. It is humorous in its way, but it's deadly.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Tout d'abord, je voudrais juste faire un petit commentaire. Vous avez bien remarqué qu'on a fait une coupe dans notre budget, mais ce n'est pas vrai. Franchement, depuis 2018, nous avons augmenté nos dépenses de base de 69,8 millions de dollars à 134,9 millions de dollars. Donc, ça veut dire une augmentation de 92 %. Donc, ça, c'est tout d'abord.

Alors, ma question est pour la députée de Nickel Belt, et c'est concernant la Loi sur les arpenteurs-géomètres. Nous avons un programme de croissance solide. L'Ontario investit des milliards de dollars sans précédent. Les arpenteurs-géomètres professionnels de l'Ontario sont essentiels à l'accomplissement de ce travail. Donc, ma question pour la députée : est-ce que vous pouvez supporter les—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I feel like I should answer it in English so people know what we're talking about—mais je vais te répondre en français.

La disparité qu'on a entre les chiffres que tu as nommés pour le budget et les chiffres qu'on nomme pour le budget, c'est qu'on regarde le budget pour embaucher les pompiers forestiers spécifiquement, tandis que le budget dans son ensemble, oui, a permis d'acheter un hélicoptère et, oui, a permis d'acheter d'autres instruments, mais qui ne sont pas disponibles aux gens du Nord et qui ne sont pas nécessairement directement reliés aux pompiers forestiers.

Donc, si tu regardes les pompiers forestiers, le budget pour embaucher ces gens-là, on en embauche environ la moitié, en ce moment, de ce qu'on faisait il y a 10 ans, ce qui veut dire, en chiffres de 2025, c'est 42 millions de dollars de moins que l'on met pour l'embauche.

Mais le budget total a augmenté parce qu'on a acheté des hélicoptères.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to both of my colleagues for the debate.

My question is for the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North. I have to say, Speaker, since she was elected, the work that she has done for injured workers and workers in general has been tireless, especially when it comes to wildland firefighters. Every time we have a labour bill, the member is always coming over to talk to me about the importance of the wildland firefighters—the members from OPSEU—and how they aren't included. They talk about firefighters, but never the wildland firefighters.

This bill has a \$42-million cut to that budget, on a system that's already struggling. I know she talked about it in her debate, but maybe she could expand on what this means for the people who are going to be protecting the fires that are already burning in northern Ontario.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** It means that there's less money to hire people, to make sure that they have the equipment that they need, to make sure that the organization is placed where it needs to be placed.

I also want to take the opportunity to come back to the reclassification of wildland firefighters as firefighters, because that was a commitment made in this House. It's in Hansard. It's a commitment. It never took place. That commitment was reiterated later, in another meeting, and the commitment was never fulfilled. So I do wonder what the problem is and why this government is so unwilling to support the work of wildland firefighters—first, by reclassifying them, and second, by making sure that they have the appropriate wages and that they have full-time positions, so that we no longer have a retention problem, so that people want to work and will stay.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I want to thank my colleagues for their contribution to the debate.

I've been hearing from other members of the opposition—one of the criticisms we've heard is around our plan on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We know we need to reduce them. We've been putting a lot of effort into that.

1720

Part of this bill is around carbon capture and carbon storage. We've heard some criticism from opposition members. I'm just wondering, under an NDP government, what emissions reductions initiatives they would put forward that are maybe missing from this bill that they think we should consider.

**Mme France Gélinas:** We are living in an environment where the level of CO<sub>2</sub> is causing a lot of damage to our environment, to the plants, to the animals, to us and to the air we breathe. I wish we had a secure CO<sub>2</sub> carbon capture backed by a body of evidence.

We certainly are encouraged that the government recognizes that the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and carbon have to be dealt with. There are many different ways. We could decrease how much of it we produce.

There is nothing wrong with studying and bringing forward capture. I would tell you that I'm hoping the body

of evidence for what's moving forward will be there soon in the future, but right now, it's not quite.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I just want to let you know that I'm sharing my time with the member from Orléans today.

I rise today on behalf of my constituents in Toronto—St. Paul's as the Liberal critic for ethics, accountability and integrity in speaking here to Bill 27, the Resource Management and Safety Act, 2025. This legislation proposes reforms, as you've all been hearing, that are long overdue, particularly in how we manage wildfires and regulate carbon storage.

Just coincidentally, as I speak now, Nav Canada just put out a tweet about wildfires across Canada displacing families and placing immense strain on communities, especially many First Nations; how they're grateful to the communities for opening their doors for those in need etc.; and about just how wildfires are very much on the radar right now in Ontario and across our country.

You know what? The United States is feeling it as well, thanks to the smoke from our provinces that is heading south—not only that, but east and out to the Atlantic.

As with so many pieces of legislation introduced by this government, the promise of progress is undermined by loopholes, lack of transparency, inadequate funding and a troubling concentration of power in the hands of ministers.

**Mme Lucille Collard:** Again?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Again.

Let me begin with schedule 2, the Geologic Carbon Storage Act. Speaker, this section creates a permitting and regulatory framework for the underground injection and the long-term storage of carbon dioxide. It's framed as a forward-looking measure to address climate change.

On the surface, it does seem like a reasonable step, but when you scratch the surface, as we have, you find a policy that's built on more wishful thinking than sound planning. In a government press release dated November 25, the Premier claimed that carbon storage could reduce emissions by up to seven million tonnes per year and save Ontario industries \$1 billion annually. But where's the evidence for that?

Experts agree we are still in the early stages of understanding whether carbon capture and storage is viable at scale. Global pilot projects have shown high costs, technical complications and safety concerns. These are challenges that demand further research, not premature promises.

Speaker, we do support innovation, and we support research, but this government is once again rushing to declare victory before even running the race. It's inappropriate and misleading to project billion-dollar outcomes based on incomplete data.

What's more concerning is that the bill exempts carbon dioxide injected for enhanced oil or gas recovery from the main carbon storage regulation. In other words, if a company injects CO<sub>2</sub> to extract more oil or gas, they don't have to follow the same rules, and yet they still may

benefit from carbon storage credits. That's a dangerous loophole, and it turns what should be a climate tool into a mechanism for extracting even more fossil fuels.

Carbon storage only works if the carbon stays buried permanently. If we're rewarding companies for using CO<sub>2</sub> to produce more oil, we're moving backwards, not forwards.

Let's also talk about land rights and consultation. Sound familiar? This bill gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council the power to vest pore space—the underground voids that are used for carbon storage—in the crown with minimal consultation and no guaranteed compensation. It also allows for unitization, meaning that the Ontario Land Tribunal can compel multiple landowners to combine pore space into one storage project, even if some owners object. And nowhere in this process, Speaker, is there a clear, legislated requirement for Indigenous consultation. This is a glaring omission. These projects could occur on or near traditional and treaty lands.

The honour of the crown requires meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, and to leave that out, not just in practice but in the legislation itself, is unacceptable. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past—oh, an hour ago—and even further in the past. We must not bulldoze over Indigenous lands and voices in the name of expediency.

I want to turn now to schedule 1 of the bill, which is the wildland fire management. The bill renames the Forest Fires Prevention Act as the Wildland Fire Management Act and introduces new powers for officers, updated penalties and requirements for municipalities in fire-prone areas to produce fire management plans. These are all, in theory, steps forward.

But once again, the details reveal some deep flaws. Let's start with the funding. The bill mandates fire plans from municipalities, but it provides no guarantee of support, no training, no new equipment funding, no operating grants. Rural and northern communities, some of which are already stretched to the limit, are expected to manage a growing climate crisis on their own. Just think: northern Ontario, again, this summer, right? There's no point in creating plans if they're not prepared to fund prevention.

We have to acknowledge that many of the communities most vulnerable to wildfires are rural and remote—places where access to emergency services is delayed, evacuation routes are limited and municipal budgets are stretched to the breaking point. This bill places new mandates on these communities, but it doesn't offer any clear supports. There's a gap between expectation and capacity, and it puts real lives at risk.

Wildland fires aren't just affecting remote regions anymore. Smoke from Ontario's wildfires last summer and the summer before choked the air across the GTA. Schools had to be closed. Do you remember that? Vulnerable people were hospitalized. Our urban centres are now part of this crisis, yet the government still treats wildfire policy as a niche, rural issue. It isn't anymore. It's a province-wide public health and safety emergency.

We often praise the bravery of the first responders, and rightly so, but what we fail to do is make the long-term investments that could reduce the need for emergency response in the first place: controlled burns, vegetation management, community education, Indigenous land stewardship. These strategies cost less and they save more. Yet the government continues to approach fire management reactively rather than proactively.

Ontario's wildland firefighters are stretched thinner every year, and we're asking fewer people to do more work under worse conditions. Burnout is rising. Retention is falling. We need more than seasonal contracts and vague acknowledgements. We need a proper workforce strategy that includes year-round employment, benefits, mental health supports and career development for these essential workers. Wildland firefighters are often living out of trailers. They're eating reheated meals after 16-hour shifts, with no guaranteed contract for the following season. Some are flown into remote regions to fight multi-day fires with limited communication and logistical support. These aren't just jobs; they're lifelines for the rest of us, yet the government fails to even mention them in the legislation.

Firefighters need a seat at the table. They need to be consulted in the creation of these new fire management regimes. They know where training is inadequate, where equipment fails and where communication breaks down. They are the experts in wildfire response, and their insight should be shaping this legislation.

#### 1730

We should also be creating clear pipelines for young people to enter wildfire services. Ontario should be a leader in wildfire training and recruitment, not a province where seasonal contracts and limited pathways deter the very people that we need the most.

This bill also gives wildland fire compliance officers some extraordinary powers. They can actually enter private property, seize equipment, stop vehicles and even remove computer systems, often without a warrant. These powers should only be granted with rigorous oversight and public input. Yet, this government has a track record of—you might know—rushing bills through committee without listening to Ontarians. We've seen this before; we just saw it today. Once again, we're going to lose the chance to ensure these powers are applied responsibly and fairly unless we have that chance at committee to hear from civil liberties experts, Indigenous leaders, firefighters, environmental scientists and municipal officials. Testimony is not a delay tactic; it is democracy. Cutting off those voices would be unconscionable.

This bill, if it sounds familiar, it's because it is reflecting a familiar pattern from the Ford government: Concentrate power in the hands of ministers, bypass local input and call it streamlining. But climate safety is not something that should be governed by ministerial decree. We need strong institutions, public transparency and participatory decision-making, not backroom deals and unreviewable discretion. Let's not forget the government's record: They cut wildfire management budgets, they eliminated Ontario's \$50-million tree program, they

ignored expert warnings about climate adaptation, and they've continued to centralize decision-making while pushing responsibility down to municipalities and officers with no resources.

Meanwhile, communities in Canada, across Canada, are burning. In Lytton, BC, an entire town was erased in under 20 minutes; in northern Manitoba, Indigenous families were airlifted from their homes under choking skies; and right here in Ontario, we're seeing longer, hotter, more destructive fire seasons. Just yesterday, we saw this smog—the haze from the fires—and more vulnerable lives were put in danger. Of course, we can't forget Jasper last year.

Speaker, it's easy to inject carbon dioxide underground, but what happens after? Who monitors it? Who's liable if something leaks? This bill doesn't provide clear answers, and that is a serious problem because, unlike a fire, a leak underground might not be visible until it's already a disaster. We also need to ask, as always, who benefits? If carbon storage is structured to prioritize industrial actors without clear thresholds for environmental or public benefit, we're at risk of creating a system where profit is privatized and risk is socialized. This cannot happen under the guise of climate action. Leadership isn't about rushing a bill; it's about making sure the decisions we take now can stand 50 years from now.

Climate change doesn't care about our political cycles—I think I said that yesterday or the day before. It demands policy that is inclusive, transparent and based on evidence. No one is denying the urgency of the moment, but urgency without precision is just panic. We have a chance to craft a thoughtful, future-ready, accountable bill. Let's fix this bill, get it to committee, have conversations, meaningful dialogue back and forth, hear from everyone—witnesses, etc.—amend the flaws, and then let's finally start treating the climate crisis like the defining challenge that it is.

We want to support this bill, but we want to work with you to get it to that level. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Orléans.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** I rise today in tepid support of the Resource Management and Safety Act—Bill 27—because the legislation does respond to some real risks: worsening wildfires and aging oil and gas infrastructure, as well as the urgent need to reduce emissions. But the bill also demands closer scrutiny in committee, not because we disagree with the goals, but because the details matter.

This is a bill with potential, but as is too often the case with this government, that potential is buried under broad ministerial discretion and unanswered questions. As one of my personal political heroes, a great conservative, Ronald Reagan, was fond of saying—and I think it's very appropriate as it relates to this government—"Trust, but verify." And that's why we need rigorous conversation, discussion, debate and testimony at committee, Madam Speaker.

So let me begin with schedule 1, formerly the Forest Fires Prevention Act, now updated to be the Wildland Fire Management Act. This section is very personal to me,

Madam Speaker. My father-in-law spent his career as a Ministry of Natural Resources official in the north, spending the bulk of his career and time working out of Wawa. He told stories of racing to the front line of forest fires in northern Ontario—of the danger, of the smoke and the moments when things could have gone very wrong, and some very, very close calls that he and his colleagues experienced while doing that work.

These men and women deserve our thanks and their support: That means funding; that means training and better conditions; that means recognition of their role as firefighters and the benefits that they may be able to receive as a result of that recognition. It requires all those things, Madam Speaker, not just new legislative powers.

While the bill recognizes the heroic work of these wildland firefighters, it doesn't give them that extra layer of protection. It does modernize enforcement. It does expand fire seasons and it creates mandatory fire plans, but as has been mentioned, it doesn't necessarily provide municipalities and jurisdictions the funding necessary to keep those plans up to date. So, Madam Speaker, in doing that, it's like handing these municipalities the hose and asking them to fight the five-alarm fire, but not actually giving them the water to do it.

In addition, there is the issue of expanded inspection powers. Wildland fire officers are given the ability to inspect computer systems, extract data and even remove equipment. Madam Speaker, those are very serious powers, so you have to ask yourself, why do wildland fire officers need to be able to inspect computer systems and extract data? We need to be able to ask these questions to the minister and to experts, and to understand why these extraordinary powers should be provided. Witnesses should appear before committee to ensure that these provisions can't be abused. Again, Madam Speaker, that's why we need to have a rigorous opportunity to get into the details of this bill at committee.

Now, I want to spend the last couple of minutes of my time talking about carbon capture. Schedule 2 creates Ontario's first legal framework for geologic carbon storage, also known as CCS. Now, on the surface, Madam Speaker, that's very good news. We do face a climate emergency. Emissions need to go down and we need every viable tool in the tool box to get that done. And, certainly, CCS can be part of that.

Carbon capture has promise, but it's not magic. It needs research, not hype. So let's keep investing, let's get the science right, but let's not pretend that we can simply bury our way out of the climate crisis while emissions rise and renewable investment stalls. So we're glad to see that there are supports for research and pilot projects.

Now, Madam Speaker, this could also be an excellent opportunity for coordination with Ontario's universities—if only this government would fund Ontario's universities. Ontario ranks last in Canada for investment in research and development at the university level when we compare ourselves to Massachusetts: Massachusetts is at 5.8% of GDP; California is at 4% of GDP; Washington state—prone to have wildfires, Madam Speaker—they are at



3.8% of GDP. And the average for the OECD is at 2.7%. Ontario is at 1.75%. We are not even reaching the OECD average and we're nowhere near the largest jurisdiction in North America. We need to invest more in our universities and colleges, and asking them to take on some of the research into carbon capture and storage might be a good opportunity to have some cross-coordination between ministries here.

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As I said, there are some good things in this bill, some things that we believe that we can support, but the details do matter. We need to be able to hear from the minister directly, exchange questions and answers with them; hear from experts; hear from people on the ground in these communities; hear from some of these officials that go and do the fire fighting and what the needs are; and hear from community leaders about the kind of resources they're going to need in order to be able to fight an ever-growing number of wildland fires even more effectively. We hope that the government will engage in constructive and productive use of committee time so that these answers can be sought out and we look forward to that conversation.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I was pleased to hear some of the words from the member opposite. This is a period of significant disruption and uncertainty for the people and businesses within the forest industry across Ontario, so the support that he provided was important. The forest sector plays a critical role in Ontario's economy. It actually generated \$22 billion in revenue in 2022. Our government recognizes its importance, particularly for the northern and rural and Indigenous communities that rely upon it for their economic development.

With that being said, and with the comments that I think I heard from the member opposite, will the member support to protect the forestry industry and strengthen the provincial economy by supporting the implemented target measures that foster stability, drive innovation and support long-term growth?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** I mentioned that parts of this bill are very personal to me. What I didn't mention in my remarks is that my grandfather actually sold mechanical seals to the pulp and paper mills up and down the Ottawa River. That's how he earned his living and raised my mom and her sisters. And so the pulp and paper industry, the forest industry, was very important to the success of my grandfather and my mother's family. So ensuring that the forest industry is able to continue its success and valuable role here in Ontario is important, and of course, we support that. But as I mentioned before, the devil is in the details, and we look forward to a rigorous conversation at committee.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is for the member from Toronto–St. Paul's. You know, such a discouraging day here today. It's a damper on the engagement that we would normally have on a piece of legislation, because of

course, we all want resource management to be key and centre, but also housing, which Bill 27 deals with. Ontario housing starts are collapsing. We are at 1955 levels of building new homes. It has never been so stressful.

I will tell you that the member for Toronto–St. Paul's referenced budgets, and if you want to follow the real priorities of any government, you'll follow the budget. Budget 2025 contradicts both of the goals of this legislation by not allocating enough resources to protect the environment, especially around wildfires, and then also housing. Can the member speak to the importance of resource allocation to protect our resources?

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from Orléans.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Obviously, if we're going to achieve our housing targets—or the housing targets that the government has set for itself and most recently admitted they're not going to achieve. If we are going to build the homes that we need for residents of Ontario, and we're going to do that in an affordable way, home builders are going to need access to lumber to build those homes. If we can ensure that there is protected supply and obviously the use of that lumber here in Ontario to ensure that home builders in Ontario are investing in, buying that lumber from Ontario and not from other places, obviously, that's going to be great for the economy. And if we can do so and keep housing prices down and encourage more housing construction, that's going to be great for everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Today, we saw a bill that aims to destroy what is a carbon capture that exists already, and here, we're looking at a bill that aims to spend lots of taxpayer dollars to put one in. Can you explain why you think that is happening?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Thank you—I apologize for having my back. It's hard with the microphone here.

Look, we saw with the debate an hour ago that the government has different priorities when it relates to the environment than you do and than we do. They're obviously going through a process that we disagree with in terms of how they're handling it.

At the same time, there is great potential in carbon capture and storage. As I said in my remarks, it's not magic. There is a need for more research in there, and if it's going to be successful, we need to ensure that the carbon stored underground is stored there for thousands of years and not coming back up tomorrow or the next day or the next day after that.

There is a great opportunity for that investment to happen here in Ontario, research and innovation at Ontario universities, and so I'm encouraged by the government's openness to that. Certainly, you are right: Natural carbon sinks like bogs and forests and everything like that are obviously a much more affordable way of doing it. But in the absence of the government's willingness to protect those things, investing in artificial carbon capture and storage is perhaps the next best thing.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question? I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Rob Flack:** I acknowledge my colleague—plural—for that wonderful applause.

My question is to the member for Toronto—St. Paul's. We've tabled Bill 27: It acknowledges, as the member for Orléans has stated, that we need to reduce emissions and that we need more carbon storage as part of the plan. I think that bill acknowledges this.

My question is three parts. What would the Liberal plan look like to reduce emissions or to add to what we've done in this bill? Would it include a policy of cap-and-trade, would it include a policy on the price of pollution, and would it include a carbon tax?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Thank you for the question. Green, green emissions, no, and thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** In this bill, we finally, maybe, have got the government acknowledging that we're in the middle of a climate crisis, because they potentially will be extending the fire season year-round. Maybe that's their final recognition that climate change is really a reality and that that's why we have this impact of wildfire in this province.

But my question really is: How can we take this government seriously, when we see what they did with Bill 5, rammed this through the House without consultation? We also see a government that has cut the funding for wildland firefighters by over \$42 million. We also see a government that refuses to classify these firefighters in light of the extreme danger that they face. It's not just the fire; it's the smoke, the toxicity, the fine particulates that these people inhale. These are huge risks. So this government puts this bill forward, but would you agree with me that they don't take the time to make a bill that responds to the needs of the people that it most affects, as we saw in Bill 5?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Thank you for the question. I think it is all about time and not rushing—time to consider all these things, which is what we hope can happen at committee, what we can see come up, whether it's Indigenous rights or dealing with the firefighters.

Every summer, I head north and I go through the Temagami region. It's still devastated by fires—years and years ago. You still see the effects of that. It's something that has to be prioritized in every which way from a climate perspective, the First Nations issues, everything, funding, you name it. This is what we hope continued discussion will provide at the committee level. And again, the thought is to agree with this bill, but with revisions that will make it acceptable.

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**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** My question is to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's.

Carbon storage technology has been in use for more than 50 years, and around 300 million tonnes of carbon is currently successfully captured and stored globally and injected into the ground. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency, they have noted that there is no credible path to net-zero emissions without carbon management technologies. So, Madam Speaker, the deployment must be rapid and immense if we are going to get there.

My question to the member is: With the advanced technology—and this is what it's about, is advanced technology—why would you not want to go with carbon storage?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** I said that we agree with the option of carbon storage, but it's not magic. It needs—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I'm grateful to be here today to talk to this bill. As you know, climate change is important to me. I'm here because I can feed my kids broccoli all day long, but if they don't have clean air, what am I doing here as a parent? Right now, the fires are burning so far away and our air is dirty, and our hospitals will soon be full of people with asthma who are drowning because they can't breathe fresh air.

This is the result of wildfires. I know that we talk about human-caused wildfires, but I need the government to recognize it is because we are burning fossil gas. We are burning fossil gas. Our emissions are going up. Our grid here is as dirty as when we shut down the coal plants. Alas, we are back in the same position we were. We did all that work, and now, because our gas plants are running 24/7, our grid is as dirty as it was then. This is truly why the fire season has grown.

In the words of António Guterres, who is the United Nations's Secretary General, climate change is a defining crisis of our time: "This is climate breakdown—in real time. We must exit this road to ruin—and we have no time to lose."

If you look up the stats, the International Energy Agency—which is an oil and gas supporter, typically—says that oil and gas companies need to start "letting go of the illusion" that implausibly large amounts of carbon capture are the solution to the global climate crisis. So we do need to hold these big companies—oil and gas companies—accountable for gouging. They're gouging us. If you go to the pumps, they're gouging us. If you look at oil and gas salaries, they're gouging us, right? So listening to them about how they can keep doing what they're doing and using carbon capture as a way to spend money, we're wasting time. We could be investing in wind and solar and storage, which is half the cost of renewables. Cutting emissions is the path forward.

If we want to talk about forest fires, in 2005, we had 214 wildfire crews. In 2024, we had 143. So let's start by having enough crews. Let's not cut \$42 million from the budget. Right now, \$42 million was cut from the wildfire budget this year in 2025. So we need to make sure that our money talks.

Above all, nature is the best and the cheapest way to sequester carbon. We don't need to make up magic pipes that go into the ground; we need to plant trees. We need to protect the peatlands that are at the Hudson Bay lowlands, also known as the Ring of Fire.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question? I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

**MPP Jamie West:** You did it.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I did it, yes.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you, colleagues. I know, I know. My question will be a little more calm than my remarks earlier today.

Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's work on this file and knowledge. She will be aware that carbon capture and storage is used across Canada already, across North America and across the world. Ontario is actually behind currently on this. This is why this bill has been brought forward by the Minister of Natural Resources and the Associate Minister of Forestry: to bring Ontario into the 21st century, colleagues, and have this option for large emitters to reduce their carbon emissions and store these carbon emissions safely.

Can my colleague please elaborate on why she doesn't want Ontario to move into the 21st century?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I would argue that modelling our climate plans after countries like Australia is ridiculous. They spent billions and billions of dollars giving money to the worst polluters in the world and delivered less than 10% of the results. So we should not be following countries like Australia who have wasted billions and billions of taxpayer dollars and have not delivered. The only thing that we're capturing is taxpayer dollars into the pockets of very rich and greedy oil and gas companies that have undermined climate action for decades and decades and want to continue to milk this cash cow as long as they can. They will take our humanity and our planet down with them.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I share with you your anger, really, at a government that has spent their entire time here—seven years—denying the fact that we're in a climate crisis. They don't even have a climate plan. They don't have a credible climate plan. Under their watch, things have gotten worse.

And then they bring a bill forward that doesn't consult scientists, that doesn't address the fundamental existential crisis that we're facing, and they expect us just to trust

them, given what we saw in this House with the way that they ran Bill 5 through without consulting First Nations and changing the Endangered Species Act so that politicians can decide what species are at risk rather than scientists.

I want to tell you I share your anger. I have not given up hope, but it's hard with a government like this.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I think the hardest part in this bill is blaming our forest fires on humans. We have always had humans. We're ignoring the elephant in the room by not reminding everybody that by burning gas, we are escalating the climate crisis. This is hundreds of years old. We are making the bed for our next generation and even ourselves to breathe clean air, have a livable planet.

More and more of the planet will be unlivable. We will not be able to eat. We will not be able to breathe clean air because we can't even say openly and honestly in this place that burning more gas is the reason why we have more forest fires than ever before.

So yes, we need to raise awareness with humans, but let's call a spade a spade and remind everyone that burning more gas escalates the climate crisis, and we're past the tipping point.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** If passed, this legislation would establish a comprehensive framework for commercial-scale carbon storage, and it would be for the safe and responsible use of carbon storage. This includes licensing and permitting and ongoing consultations with municipalities, Indigenous communities, among others. The ministry has already said that we would only approve permits for carbon storage projects once the necessary consultations are complete.

My question to the member is, won't you support a bill that promotes economic growth—

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** There is \$2 trillion in the green economy, and 92% of the energy projects last year were in renewables. I urge this government to use critical thinking. I know your leader calls me crazy. Your leader calls me a wacko. I don't appreciate the discounting of environmental specialists.

If you really want to do something good for the planet, ensure your consultation includes everybody that cares about this issue. There are—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Orders of the day?

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*Report continues in volume B.*



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McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	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	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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	
<b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
<b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	