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Standing Committee on the Interior

Protect Ontario by Unleashing
our Economy Act, 2025

1st Session
44th Parliament

Thursday 22 May 2025

Comité permanent des affaires intérieures

Loi de 2025 pour protéger
l'Ontario en libérant
son économie

1^{re} session
44^e législature

Jeudi 22 mai 2025

Chair: Aris Babikian
Clerk: Tanzima Khan

Président : Aris Babikian
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON THE INTERIOR****COMITÉ PERMANENT
DES AFFAIRES INTÉRIEURES**

Thursday 22 May 2025

Jeudi 22 mai 2025

*The committee met at 1003 in room 151.***PROTECT ONTARIO BY UNLEASHING
OUR ECONOMY ACT, 2025****LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO
EN LIBÉRANT SON ÉCONOMIE**

Consideration 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 Second Vice-Chair (Mr. Jonathan Tsao): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on the Interior to order. We are meeting to begin public hearings on 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.

The Clerk of the Committee has distributed today's meeting documents with you virtually, via SharePoint, to ensure that everyone who speaks is heard and understood. It is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. As always, all comments should be through the Chair.

Mr. Mamakwa has indicated that he may be speaking in Oji-Cree during these hearings. There will be simultaneous interpretation to English and French. Members may use the earpieces at their seats to tune into English or French channels for interpretation. For any audience members, there are portable listening devices that will also allow you to tune into English or French interpretation. Kindly remember to return the device before you leave the hearings today.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Thank you, Chair. I have a motion that I'm going to read out.

I move that the committee meet for an additional day of public hearings on 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, on the following date: Thursday, May 29, 2025; and

That the hearings take place in Thunder Bay, Ontario; and

That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to immediately post notices regarding the hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel and on the Legislative Assembly website; and

That the deadline for requests to appear for hearings in Thunder Bay be 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday, May 26, 2025; and

That witnesses shall be scheduled and permitted to participate in person or remotely in the same manner as agreed to in the committee's previous scheduling motion on Bill 5; and

That the Clerk of the Committee shall provide the list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee on committee business and their designate as soon as possible following the deadline for requests to appear; and

That if all requests to appear cannot be accommodated, each member of the subcommittee or their designate may provide the Clerk of the Committee with the prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters for those respective hearings by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, 2025; and

That the deadline for written submissions be changed from 6 p.m. on Monday, May 26, 2025, to 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2025; and

That legislative research provide the committee members with a summary of oral presentations and written submissions as soon as possible following the written submissions deadline; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill be changed from 7 p.m. on Monday, May 26, 2025, to 2 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2025; and

That the committee's meetings for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 5 be changed from Wednesday, May 28, 2025, to Tuesday, June 3, 2025, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m. and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. and from 7 p.m. until midnight; and

That the subcommittee on committee business be authorized to revise hearing dates, deadlines, and clause-by-clause consideration of the bill if necessary.

Meegwetch.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): MPP Mamakwa has moved a motion. Is there any debate? MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: I support the motion, obviously.

Last night MPP Mamakwa called me, during the drive down, just to make sure I was going to make it on time, and we couldn't connect because I was outside of Innisfil. There are dead zones all the way between Queen's Park and my riding of Sudbury for cellphone service.

I know that people can deputize, come here virtually, but in the Far North there are a lot of areas where they don't have high-speed Internet or they don't have Internet access.

During the last mining bill, Bill 71, in the previous session, we went to Sudbury and Timmins.

A lot of conversation around this bill has to do with the Ring of Fire, and I think that it makes sense for us to go to a riding, in an area that is close to people who live near that riding, so they're able to come down—the same way that people from my riding are able to come to Toronto in a reasonable effort to make it.

So I think it makes sense, if we're going to be talking about northern Ontario—my member from the north reminds me that Sudbury is not quite northern Ontario—that we make an effort to move up towards where these resources are and the people who are being affected by bills like this are living.

1010

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: I also want to speak in support of this motion.

Bill 5 makes a profound change to the way that the government operates by allowing any minister to override municipal and provincial laws and bylaws. This should not be done without proper public consultation, without an opportunity for people in different parts of this province to be able to speak to it.

I fully support this motion. I hope everybody on this committee will vote in favour of this motion, to allow community members from northern Ontario to have an opportunity to speak about this profound change that's inherent in Bill 5.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Further debate? MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to express my support for this motion being put forward by MPP Mamakwa. I think we shouldn't ignore the gravity of what we're discussing today. It's a substantial bill. So these two days, already, I think, are just not enough.

We also have to be mindful of the impact, as my colleagues mentioned, about the people this bill will have a direct impact on. We owe it to them to get to the north—to actually have an opportunity to speak directly to this in their communities.

So I will be supporting this motion.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Further debate?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Recorded vote, please.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Okay. Is everyone ready to vote?

Ayes

Mamakwa, Tsao, West.

Nays

Cuzzetto, Dowie, Firin, Chris Scott, Vickers.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): The motion is lost.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINES

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I will now call on Minister Stephen Lecce, as the sponsor of the bill.

You will have 20 minutes to make an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questions from the members of the committee. The questions will be divided into two rounds of six and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of six and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of six and a half minutes for the third party.

I will provide reminders of the time remaining during the presentations and questions.

I recognize Minister Stephen Lecce.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Good morning. Thank you all, colleagues, for this opportunity. Thank you, Chair.

I want to acknowledge Minister Greg Rickford, Ontario's Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

I want to welcome Susanna Laaksonen-Craig, Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines; Suzanne Halet, director of mineral development program modernization branch; Chloe Stuart, ADM for land and water division for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Lisa Trevisan, assistant deputy minister, environmental assessment and permissions division, who is with us virtually; Tiffany Mah, director of corporate and policy services at the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, also virtually with us; and Tim Christie, director of electricity policy, economics and system planning branch, who is with us virtually. Counsel is with us as well.

I would ask, Chair, that those members of the public service be allowed to us join at the table to answer questions germane to the bill.

Honourable colleagues, it is a pleasure to stand before you, with Minister Rickford, at the Standing Committee on the Interior to highlight the importance of Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, a bill that, if passed, will implement several strategic measures that unlock our true economic potential as a province. As you all know, we are facing economic threats like we've never seen before. This bill gives government the strategic tools necessary to take back control of our economy and to position us as the global energy superpower that we are.

The jolting policy choices of the Trump administration have led to devastating impacts across North American markets. Our biggest and closest ally, ostensibly once our closest friend to the south, our largest trading partner, has launched a trade war with the deliberate intent to weaken our economy, which raises a public policy question we have to answer today: How do we ensure self-reliance is achieved across the board? For a President who was elected to restore the American economy, to create jobs and make the US prosper, he's doing quite the opposite, at the expense of Canadians and, frankly, his own citizens. Look at the stock markets. The S&P 500 lost 7.9% since he took office; that's \$11 trillion of value—the worst since the 1970s.

We know that US tariffs are taking direct aim at our economy, but our government is not going to back down. This is a promise we made from the beginning and we intend to keep—a promise that we made to protect workers, to protect families and businesses.

As the global landscape shifts, it is this government, led by our Premier, that is acting decisively to secure our future. It's why we introduced this legislation. We know Ontario has everything the US needs and the world needs. And frankly, we have what the world needs in large quantities.

As the global markets turn away from oppressive regimes like China, we know that Ontario is positioned to lead. Over 50% of the world's coal electricity comes from China alone. In 2024, China started construction on 94.5 gigawatts of coal-fired plants. I mention this because the World Economic Forum states that China is responsible for 80% of the world's rare earths. The world is looking for options to supply the necessary critical minerals to build a clean energy economy. And so is it us, or is it them? The world will need to rely on China when Ontario—if we don't step up, that's where many markets will rely on for critical mineral supports.

We are one of the most mineral-rich regions on the planet. Key resources like nickel, titanium, cobalt, lithium—this bounty of critical minerals we have has been directly tied to bureaucratic delay imposed by government. For years, we had the former Liberal government, respectively, that did so much to undermine the wealth of our province by keeping those resources in the ground. Through this legislation, we want to move forward—yes, in partnership.

Madam Chair, allow me to share some statistics with my colleagues today.

In the Philippines, in Australia, in the European Union, they open mines faster than Ontario. In Australia, it takes 27 months to grant a mining application, start to finish, and yet, in this province, it can take upwards of 15 years. I'm talking about comparable, democratic, industrialized economies as the comparator.

So when we're facing one of the most erratic opponents we've ever faced, the status quo is unacceptable. That is the position of this government. We went, in a campaign, socializing the idea of speed as a strength in this moment of time—and I believe Canadians know this.

According to the federal government, 90% of Canadians support an investment plan to grow the economy, to drive Canadian industries, to repatriate jobs to the province.

Data released from the Mining Association of Canada shows that 83% of Canadians understand the need for more mining projects; 80% say they want a stronger mining sector to propel the long-term health of our economy, as Canadians.

When we directly look at Ontario, in 2024, the Ontario Mining Association poll shows 60% of Ontarians see mining as an industry of the future; 86% in northern Ontario see mining as an industry of the future. We know this.

The Public Policy Forum released a report last week alone that effectively states that if Canada wants to build big things—and I'm going to quote from the report—they have to “scale up its own ambitions, harness its abundant natural resources, and get its economic house in much better order—tasks that are long overdue.” They're speaking about the federation, but it applies to the provinces too. According to the same report, Canada is the second-slowest within the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, when it comes to granting permits. It begs the question: How is that acceptable? How could any parliamentarian in this new world order say we should allow the status quo to prevail?

I think this disjointed system requires an element of leadership and courage to confront the big challenges facing the country.

Colleagues, part of this transformation is the idea that we're proposing the first-of-its-kind “one project, one process” framework. That is at the crux of this bill. It is what it's designed to do—to put accountability on government, on the public service, on politicians to make decisions, to do it in a timely manner, to allow us to attract investment; not to deter global investment because of the Wild West that can sometimes take place, where it can take thousands of days, with no accountability, no mechanism to drive a decision.

So, yes, we believe in imposing benchmarks that are publicly facing. A 50% reduction—that is the ambition.

1020

This new approach will deliver white-glove concierge service, to work with the project proponents and Indigenous communities to directly reduce the delays and come up with a more cogent process to move these permits through. It starts with a dedicated mine authorization and

permitting delivery team. This would be led in the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and they're going to really guide the proponents through this permitting process. They're going to create what's called an integrated permitting plan—a mature, comprehensive plan at the front end of the application that will be developed, incorporating all the approvals necessary across multiple ministries, really from the beginning of the process. The process will create a strategic road map. It will secure permits in a streamlined and sensible way that allows the project to move faster.

We will no longer allow outdated processes to hold back our province's potential, and that is the basis of the bill, overwhelmingly—to create that speed, efficiency and accountability. Not only this, but we're also implementing benchmarks, as I mentioned—service standards, in effect—to hold us in government accountable.

In the current process, there are a few deadlines the government has with respect to mining applications, and the few service standards that were in place were not being met. That ends with this legislation. Every permit and every authorization will have a review deadline that must be met.

This is a decisive approach that gives mining investors and industry and communities and Indigenous peoples the certainty they need to make multi-million-or-billion dollar investments. We're giving them confidence to invest in Ontario, not in spite of but because of a nimble regulatory system that can be better.

This process delivers shovels in the ground faster and will help us build the jobs that a self-reliant, economically sovereign nation—I think all parliamentarians here today want. But you can't want it without a plan to achieve it. Otherwise, it's just a talking point. We actually have a policy before us that enables that aspiration that I think unites parliamentarians. Economic self-reliance is fundamental to our future, so we've got to get on with building. We cannot be the last.

Friends, when we speak a bit about the opportunity to drive economic growth through the creation of special economic zones that the Ministry of Economic Development has brought forth, proposed in this legislation—it gives us tools to strategically deploy, in geographic areas of importance, led by trusted partners that will benefit from a streamlined requirement, to accelerate the permits thereto.

As you know, Ontario has one of the world's largest untapped critical mineral deposits—the Ring of Fire—that has the potential to build prosperity, to add billions of dollars to our provincial national economy, to literally create tens of thousands of jobs for Canadians.

We're not going to allow or follow the process of governments of the past, whose delays and inaction—bureaucratic red tape—drove companies to abandon multi-billion dollar investments.

You see, Madam Chair, if the historic legislation is passed, we intend to designate the Ring of Fire, with its world-class deposits of critical minerals, as the first such special economic zone, signalling its long-term strategic importance to the province, and we will do so in consulta-

tion and collaboration. But we've taken all our efforts one step further. Not only are we going to extract those precious metals—last week and just yesterday, we announced, through our budget, for the first time in our history, we're investing half a billion dollars in a new Critical Minerals Processing Fund to ensure we end the ripping and shipping that currently occurs in our mineral sector, to create value-added jobs here in Ontario and Canada. We can create those jobs and the better pay-cheques that we want for Canadians. But I know that—and I know Mr. Rickford would emphasize this, and I want to go on the record on this—this is about partnership with Indigenous leaders and local First Nations communities.

Let us be abundantly clear, to assure all involved: This bill does not impede or supersede Ontario's constitutional duty-to-consult obligations—in fact, colleagues, it is why it is codified in the schedules of the bill before you today. Under schedule 5, any service standard implemented as a result of Bill 5 will be non-applicable to the government's duty-to-consult obligations.

Moreover, our government intends to amend the preamble of this bill to clearly, unequivocally reaffirm the government's constitutional obligation to Indigenous partners and First Nation communities, ensuring that this core obligation stands among the very first words in the legislation. This comes after the work by Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict and my colleague Minister Rickford. I'd like to personally express gratitude to them. We want to demonstrate we are listening, to advance the cause of economic reconciliation and economic development as a Team Canada approach. We will respect Indigenous rights, and that is why we've built upon it and we are committing to strengthen it in the bill, as per an amendment by government.

Colleagues, the bottom line is that our government remains committed to consulting, committed to working in partnership. It's why, yesterday, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the Minister of Colleges and Universities and I announced \$3.1 billion to support the First Nation partnership in critical mineral development. This includes, germane to the issue of the duty to consult, a 260% increase in the Indigenous Participation Fund, which singularly enables capacity-building of First Nation communities to navigate the duty to consult. They asked for this, we're delivering this, and we're doing it simply because we recognize we want to aid in moving the consultations forward and giving that capacity to those communities that need it most. We also announced \$10 million for scholarships for the next generation of First Nation young people to pursue education in this space. That's wonderful, but I do want to emphasize the \$70 million which enables participation in the duty to consult—fundamental. It's not just about the bill that it codifies; it's about putting money on the table to deliver it.

We believe in developing our province in meaningful partnership with partners, and it has to revolve around fairness and respect. We recognize the unique opportunity to unlock the potential not just of the economics of the

north, but to enhance the economic health and social outcomes of the north. We recognize that investment and social infrastructure must be delivered in order to build out the north. We get that. We're there. We already have a proven record of delivering upon that, but we know there must be more to come.

When it comes to the duty to consult, each ministry is holding separate conversations about their components of the application. We know that there's a way we can deliver, through the "one project, one process" framework, more integration in how these concepts and projects get moved through government, as opposed to this piecemeal approach of multi-ministries getting different requests, different permits—literally multiple ships not talking in the night. There's no synergization of government; there's no overarching person responsible for bringing these things together, thus allowing us to be among the worst permitting regimes on earth. So it is a critical step, and it's about time the government does it.

In addition to standing up for economic development and economic reconciliation, we have to also safeguard Canadian resources and keep them in Canadian hands. I believe this is a real threat from foreign adversaries who seek control of our mineral assets. I should note that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, has explicitly warned that Canada's resources are rich targets for foreign interference.

Under the current legislative framework, pre-Bill 5, there are no specific tools to stop a hostile foreign regime or actor from registering or acquiring mining claims in the north. That is ludicrous.

The legislation introduces vital amendments to the Mining Act that grant new authorities to government to protect our Canadian strategic mineral resources. This includes the authority to restrict the transfer of a mining claim or deny the issuance of a lease to prevent the acquisition by hostile actors, as well as to suspend the processing of claims or other transactions within what's called the MLAS, the mining lands administration system, and, when necessary, yes, have the authority to suspend or remove a specific registrant from MLAS altogether if they are identified as a threat, not by government, but by our security agencies, informed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

These are necessary tools. This is about protecting our country, safeguarding our resources, putting us on the path of self-reliance. But these provisions are not intended to target any foreign investment—it's about protecting us from foreign, exploitative bad actors. It's about bolstering Ontario's reputation as a responsible, sustainable mining jurisdiction with world-class environmental labour centres. These are the gold standards of protection. We're not going to discourage investments from these countries—from the Australians, Brazilians or Swiss. We want that investment to keep flowing. They know that, and we've delivered that message. This is not about them. I think we all know who we're targeting in this plan. But those identified as threats to the strategic mineral resource supply chain, or they work on behalf of an adversarial

actor, like a state-owned enterprise—then simply put, you're not going to get your hands on Canadian resources.

1030

I want to speak about the energy infrastructure components of this bill, because the landscape is changing—escalating cyber threats; increasingly sophisticated, state-sponsored actors. It is essential we safeguard energy policy, too, from vulnerability. Part of this bill does that. Currently, the tools we have to address foreign-state influence in critical areas of the energy sector are inadequate. In today's new world, I think we all get this. We've got to smarten up as Canadians and protect our own, protect our critical infrastructure from foreign risk.

The bill now empowers government, through legislative-specific, regulation-making authority, to limit foreign-state-owned or state-controlled companies from specific jurisdictions from participating in designated parts of Ontario's energy sector. The objective in seeking this authority is clear: to proactively protect our energy sector from a wide range of risk. Ensuring security, resilience, sovereign provincial control of our energy grid is a fundamental responsibility of government. This proposed measure provides a critical, modern tool to help. Not only is it ensuring the security of our grid, but it's ensuring we meet the continued growth in demand as well.

Colleagues, the government remains committed to working collaboratively with all sectors to advance energy generation, transmission, storage and distribution, building the strong, clean energy economy we want to see for our country.

If this bill passes, it will implement measures specifically in streamlining the development of priority energy projects. It will create a formal process to identify, to prioritize, energy projects that are strategically important, that integrate them into permanent—an approval process across all other—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy):
Two minutes remaining.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Okay.

In conclusion, I will say the legislation seeks, for the first time, for government to get out of the way, to allow us to move with speed in this moment. The federal government, which does not share our party—parties across the provincial spectrum have come to a realization: Speed is a strength in the moment. But we will do so with real benchmarks in place—a 50% reduction in the time it takes to approve a permit; designating a new central point of contact through the Ministry of Energy and Mines to shepherd these projects from start to finish—all while enhancing competitiveness, unleashing our economic potential and respecting the Constitution. We will get critical minerals out of the ground. We will do it in partnership. We'll ensure Canadian resources stay in the hands of Canadians. It works. It starts today—creating the conditions so can work collaboratively with the private sector, with First Nations leaders, of course, and communities, municipalities and workers to responsibly build our resource economy that benefits all.

This is critical legislation. It's an important step forward in our province.

With that, I look forward to your questions.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Thank you for your presentation, Minister.

For the first round of questions, we will start with the government members. MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation.

You likely heard many times from me in the last number of years that my community of Windsor–Tecumseh has an unemployment rate—that actually just hit 10.7%. One of the best partnerships of recent memory between the federal and provincial governments and many stakeholders was the NextStar Energy EV battery plant. It's a perfect example of what you cited as a white-glove treatment, of all levels of government working together to expedite a project. We landed that project. Had we not had the white-glove service, with the great involvement of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and many others, we would not have landed that plant, and the people in my community would be looking at an even higher prospective unemployment rate today.

I also received some criticism for that white-glove treatment, because the properties next door have looked at three, four, five years of ongoing dialogue as to how to achieve an end date for implementation of their permissions to develop. They look at the NextStar project and say, "Why them and not us?" Is it because of the magnitude of the investment—and is there no place for smaller businesses and local businesses to benefit from the same?

I understand, having gone through that process—I used to be, in my past career, the regulator. I was the drainage superintendent. NextStar's site had two municipal drains, with the environmental permissions that come with that. These certainly need to be addressed. There are species out there that need to be protected. But we have an increasing complexity of environmental and infrastructure challenges.

Honestly, we can't pick winners and losers if we're going to have a successful economy and address our unemployment challenges.

I note, with this bill, the government has proposed a sweeping reform of a suite of regulations, to streamline the approval processes for, certainly, key resource projects, as you've mentioned, for mining and energy. Undoubtedly, it has impacts on our local projects too and the environmental assessment process for municipalities, which I also have a fair amount of experience leading and directing in my past career.

So I know that doing better is essential for us to not lose investments like the NextStar EV battery plant and its supplier plants, and many, many others that will create jobs for the people of my community.

I'm hoping you might be able to respond with how this legislation will ensure a balance between economic growth and robust environmental protections, and create a path-

way to development that is both responsible and sustainable.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I appreciate the question.

I should just first say, in this new world order, we are now competing with the United States, increasingly, to on-shore jobs. He has a stated explicit policy intention to undermine our economy for the benefit of America. This is the first time in my life that we can really say we now need, as a country, existentially, to figure out a path of self-reliance. It's not about one element of self-reliance at the exclusion of everything; it's an across-the-board application of the principle.

Colleagues, in the Ministry of Energy, we have brought forth policies to decouple procurements from America and China. We have brought forth measures to invest in Canadian critical mineral production so that we have value-added jobs here and we deny hostile regimes or competitors the value-added jobs we ought to be creating at home. When it comes to the environment, this is important.

I think it is important for all parliamentarians and for all Ontarians to hear loud and clear: The government of Ontario and Canada has among, literally, the highest standards of environmental protection on earth. It is important that those elements are safeguarded, which is why, in the bill before you, it is proposed, through my colleague the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks—a meaningful enhancement of compliance and enforcement. We're talking about jail time for non-compliance. The message of zero tolerance cannot be more manifested—in a signal that we will and can impose jail time, maximum penalties in the millions, should individuals or businesses violate the law. We care deeply about this, and that's why we, upon our own volition, strengthen the protection and the enforcement. We have authorities that didn't exist before. Now conservation officers can be deployed without notice into a project. That is strength. That is a value proposition that we didn't have before.

So I accept the premise that the environment must be protected, but so too must our economic interests of the province. I would reject, as some will try to make it seem like you've got to pick a lane—we pick both. I totally reject this premise that you cannot grow the economy while protecting the environment.

Respectfully, when we as legislators had options, including in the last mining bill, that did not include anything on environment, species at risk, waste management—none of these things were codified. Even then, not all parliamentarians—in fact, only our government was able to get to yes on accepting that we need to move quicker on building mining. So you speak about a project in your community that benefited from that, but we know the majority of businesses do not benefit, because that policy, that framework doesn't exist. "One project, one process" needs to be a reality—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry, Minister. That ends the round one set of questions for the government side.

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We will now move to the round one questions for the official opposition, and I look to MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Chair. I've got a question to the Minister of Energy and Mines.

What is your understanding of treaties with First Nations?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Well, obviously it is the government's intent to fully respect the Constitution, and that means that everything we do with respect to Indigenous communities—that there's a full, meaningful consultation with respect to the duty to consult. We clearly intend to respect treaties and to respect the law.

Of course, I may turn to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs—

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: No.

Earlier this month, I visited the Archives of Ontario to see the Ontario government's copy of Treaty 9, the James Bay Treaty, along with its adhesions from 1929 and 1930. Treaty 9 is the only treaty with Ontario's signature on it.

Can you explain in detail what Treaty 9 means to Ontario—particularly in your role as the Minister of Energy and Mines?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I'd like to ask Minister Rickford to respond.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I would like to hear your perspective, as the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: What I've mentioned to my colleague is that we will fully respect the treaties, fully respect the Constitution, and so much so, in addition to the codification of that principle in the law that we're proposing, the proposed legislation before the House, we are strengthening it in the preamble. So we are committed to fulfilling the obligations of the crown with respect to that nation-to-nation dialogue. We understand the importance. It is protected and enshrined in the Constitution, and the government of Ontario will fully discharge the obligations that government has. I really do believe, and I want to assure the member of this—which is why we're taking a step to strengthen that commitment in the preamble.

I would like to turn to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, because this is a collaborative effort, and obviously his perspective is important.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Thanks for the question and for the opportunity.

Obviously, the Ring of Fire is in Treaty 9, but so have been some other major resource developments. I'm thinking, in particular, of the De Beers mine site on the coast. Sadly, there was a lack of contour to considering the communities proximal to these sites as key areas to develop alongside the development of a resource project. So what did that leave us with? Well, in the case of Attawapiskat, I think it's well documented. The comment at the time—I was the federal Minister of Natural Resources—was that no government should develop or be in the business of developing a major resource project without developing First Nations communities proximal to it.

So I think we're talking about an opportunity here. There are other examples across or around Treaty 9 that

remind us that a coherent and comprehensive engagement with First Nations—

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Excuse me, Chair.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry, Minister.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I'd like to ask another question. You're not answering my question. You're just blowing smoke—

Hon. Greg Rickford: With respect, I don't think I'm blowing smoke. These are actual accounts.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Anyway, I want to ask another question.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Excuse me, MPP Mamakwa. Please speak through the Chair, if you don't mind.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Okay.

What is your position on, or understanding of, Aboriginal title?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I would just continue with your previous question with respect to Treaty 9 and how Aboriginal title interacts with the treaties.

Obviously, there have been a number of claims, particularly in the last six years—land claims and flooding claims that have respected and considered things like Aboriginal title and the treaties. Treaty 3 comes to mind. Treaty 9 comes to mind.

As the minister pointed out, the bill is explicit in terms of its duty to consult specific to an economic zone, and, I believe, a comprehensive approach to not just consultation for the purposes of checking that box, but for real engagement and accommodation for First Nations communities in and around any proposed resource development site.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I just want to say to both of the ministers: Do you understand that with this bill, you're not honouring the treaties, but you are actually—do you know that you are actually violating them?

Hon. Greg Rickford: With the greatest of respect, I disagree with that. I think it not only honours the treaty, but it's explicit in its additional efforts to accomplish two things—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry, Minister. That is the end of round two questions for the official opposition.

Questions now to the third party: I recognize MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to start by saying thank you to the ministers for being here today to take questions from the committee.

Through you, Chair: Ontarians want businesses to thrive and to grow faster, as you say, Minister. I think that's without question. But the concern here is creating the conditions for a race to the bottom. What we see in this bill is really a reckless plan to override laws, silence consultation and fast-track development.

I want to ask you, Minister, specifically about schedule 9 of Bill 5 and why you believe it's necessary to designate trusted proponents to be exempt from the Occupational Health and Safety Act or the Safe Drinking Water Act or

the Food Safety and Quality Act. Why is that necessary in Bill 5?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The application of the special economic zone, as proposed by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, is designed to have a mechanism to move with speed. What is relevant and has always been disconnected from questions on the SEZ concept is that everything we're enabling—we're proposing legislation that then gives the government the capacity to build the regulation. Those regulations are publicly consulted. Those regulations are publicly facing. Those regulations are scrutinized by all. So I will affirm to the member that the government will be judicious in the use—but that's not the intent. The intent is to give the capacity of governments to move with an element of speed in areas of strategic importance or of national security importance—which we would submit the Ring of Fire, which is the first. But in order to get there, we're going to consult meaningfully, and that's an obligation that we intend to fulfill.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Minister, I hear that, and when I read this bill, what I see here—enabling legislation going to regulation. But what I see a lot through this bill, again, is, “Trust me. Trust us. Trust that the government will do the right thing. Trust us that we will not put certain people ahead of others. Trust us that we will do the right thing.” Given this government's track record, to be frank, I think it's hard for many Ontarians to trust you.

I find it ironic that in one part of your deputation, Minister, you refer to the current situation in Ontario in terms of economic development as the Wild West, but that's exactly what you're trying to create. You're trying to create, through Bill 5, the Wild West.

1050

My question, Minister: I would like to know further about—when we look, again, back to schedule 9—these trusted proponents. Right now, in your mind, Minister, do you have the name of one company today that you believe is or would be considered a trusted proponent?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: What's proposed before the House is a commitment to build the regulatory framework that is in the public interest.

So the answer to the question is, there is not an example one would cite today, because the bill hasn't even gone to consultation yet, which would seem to negate the whole premise of your opposition to it, because we haven't heard from the people. Of course, we're not going to apply the principle without hearing from the communities impacted. There's a public posting. There's a public consultation. People get a say.

I want to believe we would agree, amongst more mainstream political parties, that there are good, socially responsible corporate actors in Ontario, especially in the mining sector, the forestry sector and in the energy sector. We are a world-class, tier-one mining nation. We should be proud of that. Some 25% of mining GDP happens in this province—and thousands of jobs.

The future of the clean economy that some in this room may aspire to—the EVs they may drive today to come to Queen's Park were built from minerals coming out of

China, which has no environmental or labour standards and uses coal power.

Let's not pretend the choice isn't binary for us as Canadians. It's either we step it up, or the Chinese or nations like that—or the mines of Africa that are literally exploited, when we use these words so casually—prevail. We choose Canada, and we do so while maintaining environmental rigour, strengthening compliance and sending a message of zero tolerance to those who dare violate the law or put someone at risk: You will go to jail. You will face million-dollar penalties—stronger than the ones your government had when they were there.

So I actually think this is movement in the right direction, and we're not going to prejudice the application of the policy, because we want to hear from the people impacted.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Minister, I hear you, and I thank you for your response, but frankly, when you talk about our opponents that we're racing against, like China and their regulatory regime—our standards should never be set to what China is doing, to what countries like that are doing.

I sat through debates in the House where China was given as an example of a special economic zone by your party, by a member of your party—an example of what we're modelling.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: That is not—

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: That happened. I was sitting in the House, and that was said.

Interruption.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Excuse me. Sorry, Minister.

If we can just put that time on hold—I'd like to remind the observers who are here in this room today that you are observers and you are welcome to be here. However, I do request that you refrain from clapping or participating in any manner. Thank you.

My apologies, Minister. Please continue.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Is there something not democratic about Italy, Singapore or Australia? Actually, I'd like to understand.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: No.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Amongst these OECD nations, is there something that is authoritarian in those democracies? How about Ireland, South Korea, Spain, or—

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Sorry, Minister. First of all, I'm not here deputizing to take questions; you are, as the minister, frankly.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: No, but you've asserted that the inspiration is an authoritarian regime—

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: No, I'm repeating what you're saying and what your colleagues are saying, Minister.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): MPP Tsao, remember to put your questions through the Chair.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Of course. I'm sorry.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: To my colleague: I have never made that claim.

The government's inspiration is to decouple from geopolitical threats, which is why the legislation allows us to procure away from China. It's why we've been intentional in our procurement strategy. On the US side, it's why we've announced a \$20-billion procurement to deny them from our supply chains. It's why there's no American booze at the LCBO. All these things add up to a broader theme of defending the country against risks.

I hear you, and I'm suggesting—hear it from the author of the provision specific to the SEZs, Minister Fedeli. He wouldn't be inspired by the Italys or the Singapores or—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy):

Thank you, Minister. That ends the round of questions to the third party.

We will now move on to round two of questions from the government side. I recognize MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you to the minister: As I was listening to you, I thought about all these rules and regulations that have been brought through over the years. In the last 30 to 40 to 50 years, people were bringing in more rules and more regulations. I wondered, did they ever realize what they were doing? I think over time it was just one more layer, one more layer, one more layer—in some ways, I feel, almost like a death of a thousand cuts. I think this is where this bill is maybe going.

What I'd like to ask you: What is the "one project, one process" approach, and how does it differ from what's being done now?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: How much time do I have? I feel like I was way too long on the former—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy):

Five minutes and 54 seconds.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Okay. I'm going to time myself.

Colleagues, the current process—when I use the language that was cited by the honourable member. The point is that, literally, there is no accountability mechanism on ministries or public servants or politicians to make a decision. There are many examples where it took a thousand-plus days for the ministry of whatever—natural resources, environment, energy, and formerly, mines—to make an assessment when we know it could be done in hundreds of days. It's not serving the economic interests of Ontario if we don't put some accountability on government.

This is not impinging on anyone else's rights. It's actually looking inwards to say, could we be better at this? Could we smarten up and understand there's a threat but an opportunity on the horizon for Canada to seize—a message echoed by the national government today?

"One project, one process" is a long-standing priority of job creators in the province. If we want to be competitive, yes, we need to move with speed while maintaining environmental protections, while respecting the Constitution, while fully discharging meaningfully the duty to consult. We can do both.

"One project, one process"—in a 30-second final: It is the shepherding of a permit across the enterprise of government, led by the Ministry of Energy and Mines

taking responsibility to get it done. We imposed deadlines on government, not on anyone else. No consultation is curtailed, no deadline is imposed on anyone but the public servants and politicians, so that when we make decisions, we do it with a sense of a bias of action. We still consult, and we still, of course, discharge the duties that are constitutionally protected under law. I think that aim is good for Canada. It is good for Ontario. It is how we become self-reliant and end dependence on anyone, let alone President Trump or President Xi. It doesn't actually matter. That's what we are trying to do.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I recognize MPP Cuzzetto.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the two ministers for being here.

In Ontario, you were saying that it takes 15 to 17 years to develop a mine. Today, we depend on jurisdictions around the world for cobalt. I always like to talk about cobalt, because a lot of people don't realize that the 13 pounds of cobalt that is in your vehicle—75% of it comes from the Congo. In the Congo, they use child labour. There's a book called *Cobalt Red*, by a professor from Harvard, and it says how the blood of the Congo powers our lives here in the world.

How can we pivot from taking 15 to 17 years to develop a mine here in Ontario—instead of depending on minerals from jurisdictions around the world that use child labour?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I have made this point, and we have made this point as a government—the binary choices before the world. The overwhelming majority of rare earths in the European Union are Chinese imports—I believe it's over 90%; I believe it's over 94% in the US. The dependence on China, which, through proxies, owns and exploits resources across the world—notably, in Africa, Indonesia and other parts of the world—is deeply troubling, as a Canadian and small-d democrat who went abroad in North Africa to promote democracy after the Arab Spring. This is a personal priority for us, when it comes to the promotion of human rights. But let's not pretend—if we don't move with speed, those nations, those violators of fundamental human rights and the dignity of the person, will prevail, and they are prevailing.

We have an opportunity with the US, whose Department of Defense has expressed real interest in our resources. We have an opportunity in the Asia-Pacific. We have an opportunity with Europe, who's looking for credible, dependable partners in the "one project, one process." Yes, it moves with an element of speed. It really puts pressure on government while maintaining rigour. And that's what we're trying to do today.

I will finally add, when you look at the energy supply, roughly 86% of Ontario's energy is generated from non-emitting sources. We have one of the cleanest grids in the entire world—an amazing story. And yet, we have nations building coal plants in a week. The supply chains undermine our workers. The energy sources are fundamentally dirtier. The standards are subpar by any industrialized standard. So it begs the question: If not now, when? If not us, who will win the day?

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On mining, on critical minerals, on these projects—I just want to remind my colleagues and us all that the EV revolution, the entrance of the clean energy economy, is entirely predicated on access to minerals.

It is ever so ironic that a battery being used by Canadians, under the guise of doing the right thing for the environment, feeling good about it, investing your hard-earned dollars—only to find out that, like all of your batteries, colleagues and all the folks in the room today who drove here, potentially, in an EV, it didn't come from a democratic nation. It didn't come from a rules-based nation. So let's acknowledge that—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Thank you, Minister. That's the end of round two for the government side.

We will now move to round two of questions for the official opposition. I recognize MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the minister for being here today.

First of all, I just want to state that I reject the premise that the only way to grow our economy is to undermine our democracy with Bill 5. For seven years, this government has been in power. They have overridden our charter rights. They have overridden our protections under the Human Rights Code. They have overridden our rights to democratic municipal elections. The Premier has boldly said that he wants to appoint partisan, conservative judges. All of this was done in the name of growing our economy and building housing. But the result is that we have the second-lowest number of housing starts of any province in the country and we have the second-highest unemployment rate of any province in the country. So the strategy that you've been using, that you're using again with Bill 5, has not been working.

There are no mines at Ontario Place, but the trial balloon for Bill 5 was Bill 154, which overrode the municipal and provincial laws for the Ontario Place project.

Now you're introducing Bill 5, which will allow any minister to override municipal and provincial laws in any so-called special economic zone in Ontario.

Ontarians elect municipal governments, who, in consultation with communities, make bylaws.

Do you realize how profoundly undemocratic Bill 5 is—to allow a minister, by fiat, to override those bylaws as well as our democratically created provincial laws?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Ministry of Infrastructure has brought forth a policy to open Ontario Place for public use, after decades of it sitting idle. I may turn to some of my officials in the public service who are part of the process, but what I can simply say is, I know, without a doubt, that this project has received 40 detailed studies and reports. I know that there are strong environmental protections in place at all stages. I also know, when complete, that the project will be the largest public park in the downtown core, and it will serve generations of families. So, yes, I appreciate the importance of listening to communities, and I also appreciate the importance of implementing a vision for reform—because I haven't heard

one Ontarian or one Torontonians say, "Keep it idle." I have heard from people who want us to move to get the project done, following assessments, following public consultations.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to pass my time to my colleagues.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I recognize MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Time and time again, both of you, as ministers, have told me that this bill won't impact the duty to consult. What I am finding, though, is that you're not listening to First Nations in the first place.

Former Chief Chris Moonias from Neskantaga has shared this: "As of right now there hasn't been any consultation nor accommodation to Neskantaga people. What are the real benefits of allowing a development up in our area and what are the real impacts? There's social impacts, there's environmental impacts—what's going to happen to our river? It surely will impact our treaty rights and our title to the land."

What I'm hearing, Minister, is that rights holders in Ontario are telling you that this bill does impact the duty to consult; not only that, but they're also telling you that you've already failed at this duty by pushing through this legislation without their input.

Minister, I ask you—I ask both of you: Are you saying that these First Nations are wrong?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I recognize Minister Rickford.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I know the member has studied what the duty to consult as a matter of law means for the federal Parliament and provincial Parliaments. Obviously, the prevailing duty for any government is to table legislation and then begin the duty to consult.

I not only look forward to—and I know the minister and I have talked about this—the feedback that we get here at committee, but then embarking on, obviously, a political consultation and engagement and the technical elements of the duty to consult.

I would refer the member to *Mikisew First Nation v. Canada*, where the Supreme Court of Canada was clear and absolute that the government's duty to consult is triggered by the tabling of legislation. That's precisely what is happening here in some form. Obviously, the broader opportunities of this particular bill are being discussed by both sides and interpreted, but the duty to consult is something different, and it's something that we have gone to great lengths in the bill to be explicit about. Not only is it protected, but in my respectful view, it will be enhanced.

Previous governments, including ones that I have been involved with, have seen major resource development projects occur in northern Ontario, particularly in the Far North, and they simply have not included the opportunity—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry, Minister.

I recognize MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I think living there and growing up there are very different.

When you say this bill triggers the duty to consult, does that mean there will be changes and you will accept amendments from the First Nations?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I'm sorry; that ends the second round of questions for the official opposition.

We will now move to the second round of questions for the third party. I recognize MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: We're going to be rapid-fire because I only have a short period of time and I have a zillion questions to ask you. We're starting with science.

We have the Endangered Species Act, which is working well, but it is being destroyed. A new one is coming in place, that you're creating, called the Species Conservation Act. In that act, a species will be protected where it sleeps and where it lays its eggs, and nothing in between. So you get your bedroom. You get to keep that. You don't get stairs. You don't get a kitchen, a living room. You get the local hospital, where you can birth your babies.

How do you expect a species to survive and thrive with that new legislation?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I appreciate the member's question.

I would like to call upon the assistant deputy minister from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to explain the current system, the new system, and to give some assurances that the system remains rigorous in protecting species at risk.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I would just ask you to say your name for the record, please.

Ms. Chloe Stuart: Chloe Stuart. I'm the assistant deputy minister for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, land and water division.

The proposed legislation really focuses on scoping the definition of "habitat" compared to the previous legislation. It includes clear parameters, focusing on core elements such as breeding, rearing, staging, wintering and hibernation areas, to provide greater clarity to proponents when they're taking the required protection steps as part of following the rules and regulation process.

1110

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Next question: With this new act, could someone just go out and kill an endangered species, and what is stopping me from doing that?

Ms. Chloe Stuart: That is a prohibition in the Species Conservation Act—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: What are the repercussions?

Ms. Chloe Stuart: There are a number of enforcement provisions in the new Species Conservation Act, including order provisions that would enable a provincial offences officer to stop you from doing that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: In your experience, do discretionary provisions work to protect species?

Ms. Chloe Stuart: Well, across Canada, a number of jurisdictions use discretionary protections—for example, the federal Species at Risk Act.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Does it work?

Ms. Chloe Stuart: Well, you can look at their evaluation of their legislation.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Thank you.

Next up, the Dresden landfill: This is actually complete trash. The local MPP is against this. The community is against it. You guys said a year ago that you thought an environmental assessment was necessary; the Premier said that.

Absolutely, we want to be responsible for our trash. I feel there are other ways, like tightening up EPR regulations, educational awareness for people—maybe starting with composting at Queen's Park, which we don't have, but stay tuned for that.

Do you not think it would be quicker, smarter, more logical to utilize existing landfills? For an existing landfill, you can grant a temporary exemption to receive more materials. Why not do that?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I think a material change that transpired over the past year is the election of President Trump—the fact that he can and he has, including during the pandemic, closed the border for essential materials that save lives. Some 40% of waste is going to Michigan and New York. The Governor of the state of Michigan has proposed a 1,288% increase per tonnage to waste.

As I understand, this particular location already has waste permissions, and it's not a new landfill. But with that said, it is still going to fall under an environmental compliance approval.

I would ask the officials, if they would be so kind—if one of my colleagues from the ministry can underscore what an environmental compliance approval looks like, because I think it's a subject of debate that there isn't oversight or rigour, and I respectfully will challenge that. I would like a public servant to dispassionately explain what that means for Dresden and for all landfills that are falling under the ECA. So if I, Chair, would turn to an official to explain that on the record—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, but another question for you, Minister, is, why this particular landfill in Dresden? There are, what, 5,000 closed landfills in Ontario? Why Dresden? What is the allure and excitement with Dresden?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has identified this particular location because they believe it's the fastest, to increase Ontario's internal waste capacity—which reduces us on international reliance.

With that said, though, I believe it is germane to your first question that we understand what an environmental compliance approval is, and I would like that on the record.

Chair, I would like the ADM to come forth and briefly explain what that means.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): ADM, come forth.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Hold my time, please. I have a minute left.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Okay. I'll proceed with you. Obviously, I respect the member, but in 30 seconds, it would be helpful to get it on the record. Let's assure us that there is rigour, there is an oversight mechanism, there is science-based—it's scientific, it's apolitical.

So if an ADM would be so kind to—they may be with us virtually, actually.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): If we could have the ADM come up—I think they're virtual.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: You're holding my time?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Yes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'm at two minutes.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I'm at 30 seconds.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Triple M has never been good with math, I think.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I've only spoken for two minutes, I think, right?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I'm going by the total sum here.

Okay—if we can recognize your name and your position, please.

Ms. Lisa Trevisan: My name is Lisa Trevisan. I'm the assistant deputy minister with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, environmental assessment and approvals.

To be very clear: This is not a closed landfill nor is it a new landfill. It is an existing landfill.

To the member's point: Yes, one of the things that government can do is allow an existing landfill to change its operations, to expand the—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I'm sorry, ADM. We are at the conclusion of round two of questions for the third party, and we will be moving to the next presenter.

I would like to thank both Minister Lecce and Minister Rickford for their presentations and answering questions today for the committee.

Given that our presenters will have to be coming into the room, we're going to take a quick five-minute recess to assemble.

The committee recessed from 1115 to 1127.

ONTARIO MINING ASSOCIATION

SANDY LAKE FIRST NATION

TORONTO ZOO

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I will now call on the Ontario Mining Association, Sandy Lake First Nation, and the Toronto Zoo, who have assembled here, so that's great.

As a reminder, each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation. After we've heard from all present-

ers, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of six and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of six and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of six and a half minutes for the third party.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): MPP Tsao?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I am requesting that, for Sandy Lake First Nation, Cynthia Fiddler and Adam Fiddler present together.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Is there an agreement of the committee? Yes. Thank you. Welcome.

We will start with the Ontario Mining Association, if you could please state your name for the Hansard. You may begin.

Ms. Priya Tandon: Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Priya Tandon. I'm president of the Ontario Mining Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Standing Committee on the Interior and speak to Bill 5. Our members believe this bill's key mining-related elements are vital to enhancing Ontario's economic competitiveness and unlocking the potential of its minerals sector.

The OMA was established in 1920 to represent the mining industry in the province, and it is one of the longest-serving trade organizations in the country. We represent over 80 members engaged in environmentally responsible mineral production and processing, as well as suppliers, contractors, environmental consultants, and others involved in the sector.

At the core of our mission to enhance Ontario's mining sector competitiveness is a foundation of collaboration and respect. Our members prioritize protecting people's health and safety, honouring Indigenous rights, and safeguarding the environment for future generations. We believe that this responsible approach not only aligns with our values but also provides a significant competitive advantage in the global marketplace.

Our members produce the building blocks of modern life and innovation that the world needs. The Ontario mining sector supplies domestic and international markets with a diverse array of metals and minerals, including precious and base metals, non-metallic minerals, as well as key battery supply chain minerals.

Looking ahead, OMA members, who include active operating mines in the province as well as some mines that are nearing construction, are poised to support the development of renewable and advanced manufacturing technologies in Ontario. The potential is transformational. But we need government in alignment with this end goal to make it a reality, particularly when we are in a geopolitical climate of uncertainty.

We are encouraged that this government has signalled its intention to strengthen Ontario's economy at home first.

Effective and proportional regulation is an essential part of good governance and plays an important role in fostering responsible mineral development. However, the

key to competitive success in the complex environment we operate in today is to minimize the time and money spent accessing services and navigating government processes.

Bill 5 represents a positive step forward, and its success will depend on adequate resourcing and careful, thoughtful implementation. Given the substantial scope of this task and what is happening in the current geopolitical context, the urgency to act cannot be overstated.

Currently, permitting a major mine in Ontario can take up to 15 years, with every stage and aspect of the mining process governed by comprehensive and sometimes duplicative regulations. For example, a representative Ontario mine might require over 20 permits from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks alone, which may, in some cases, be sequential and not allow for concurrent work. These duplicative efforts may have the direct cause of delaying and deferring crucial investments.

The OMA supports legislative measures that establish clear service standards for processing times, and supports moving towards an integrated, coordinated approach, where all relevant ministries review projects concurrently, supported by dedicated project management, to streamline approvals and reduce delays. The hard work in getting to organizational change and coordination will be in the details, and we are keen to work with the respective ministries to make this a success.

For example, the proposed regulatory framework will be able to prescribe service standards for review times within any ministry concerning designated projects.

In our view, mining projects across Ontario should be considered priorities, and all should benefit from improved service standards and review times. The success of one mining project signals future success for all, attracting more investment and creating more certainty in the sector. Our membership is diverse, and we maintain that given mining's strategic role in the economy, the sector as a whole should be viewed as a priority, and these changes should be commodity- and project-agnostic.

We welcome the introduction of a “one project, one process” approach. This concept brings provincial ministries together in a whole-of-government approach. As such, it's a step towards affirming mining as a strategic priority. Thoughtful, well-resourced implementation is essential to transforming this vision into a reality. We are committed to working with government to ensure that we see the process changes required to deliver results, and that ministers have clear mandates and robust staffing to ensure capacity to deliver on this “one project, one process” concept. We also emphasize that continued collaboration and alignment with federal authorities is crucial to effectively address intergovernmental permitting processes.

Relationships matter. Our members recognize the importance of meaningful Indigenous consultation and upholding the duty to consult. Building partnerships with a genuine approach to mutual benefits is essential for our sector.

We value economic reconciliation and remain respectful of section 35 rights. We know the future of economic

reconciliation lies in opportunities like procurement and equity partnerships that are the touchstone of our relationship going forward.

We were pleased to see government investing new resources and opportunities for Indigenous equity partnerships and capacity funding in last week's Ontario budget.

The OMA is clear that our members will maintain operational practices related to any delegated—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry. One minute remaining.

Ms. Priya Tandon: —procedural aspects of consultation with Indigenous communities. Transparency, consistency and community engagement remain foundational to our shared success.

With respect to “one project, one process,” we appreciate the intent to coordinate crown consultations, and this should not be limited exclusively to designated projects with delivery teams. Coordinated, effective and respectful consultation efforts should be extended to all mining projects. A clear, coordinated approach needs to be implemented to avoid duplication and further delays, and to refrain from inundating Indigenous communities with over 20 different consultation requests for essentially one project.

At its core, we believe this enabling legislation facilitates ongoing dialogue and collaborative efforts between the ministry and the expert practitioners within the OMA.

We stand ready to work with Indigenous community partners, governments and stakeholders to refine and implement a framework that effectively balances efficiency with environmental and social responsibility. Our shared goal is to ensure Ontario remains an attractive destination—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We will now move to Sandy Lake First Nation, if you could please state your name for Hansard. You may begin.

Ms. Cynthia Fiddler: ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
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My name is Cynthia Fiddler, and I'm from Sandy Lake, Ontario. I'm an elected leader in Sandy Lake First Nation.

Earlier, I said “ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ” “ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ” means “all my relations”—but when we take it to ceremony, it encompasses more than that. It encompasses our relationship to the land, to all living things, and to the water and to the plants and even the wind.

Our relationship to the land is important to us. We as Anishinaabe were placed where we are placed to protect her and take care of her. First, we are children of the land. We learn from the land; we play and we explore, and the laws of nature give us lessons. She teaches us and disciplines us, which then teaches us the respect we need to protect her.

This is why the people of Kiiwetinoong love the land so much, and this is why it's important for me to come and travel 15,000 kilometres to be here with you to say that—

Interjection.

Ms. Cynthia Fiddler: Oh, 1,500. Sorry.

It's like going to Florida. You guys go to Florida.

I travelled a long way to say this. This is an across-the-board principle for us.

I want to tell you about an elder, Sidney Fiddler. Right now, the old Berens mine is a big mess. There's nothing but yellow tailings. I've visited personally. The air smells dead. The vegetation is not nice. This is something we have been asking, as Sandy Lake, this government to clean up for years. Fast-track that. Fast-track the cleanup. We were told that they need to do environmental studies to clean up. Why can't that be fast-tracked? That mine was opened in 1939, and it took a lot of gold, a lot of silver and a lot of minerals. Some people got very rich off of this mine, but we didn't. An elder once told me the benefit that we got was going to get the scraps from the miners who were there. This is wrong.

This bill, this fast-tracking—that's not what we want. We want to protect our land. We will support Canada in your fight, with uniting, but it can't be at the expense of our lands and our families. That's not something that you'll have permission to do without our consultation. Meegwetch.

1140

Mr. Adam Fiddler: Δ"βσ² αCJβb<° ³Nσσbⁿ, αJΛ² ³JUⁱ, βb° ʏb"Δbσⁱ ³Jσ

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The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy):

Thank you, Mr. Fiddler.

Now we will move to the Toronto Zoo. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may begin.

Mr. Dolf DeJong: Good morning, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Dolf DeJong, and I'm the CEO of your Toronto Zoo. Joining me virtually is Dr. Gabriela Mastromonaco, our chief science officer. We're here, on behalf of our board, staff, volunteers, the 3,000 animals that call your zoo home, to speak for the endangered species we've spent decades trying to protect.

The vision of your Toronto Zoo is simple: a world where people, wildlife and wild spaces thrive. Today, we're concerned because Bill 5 may not protect the balance of those pieces and, quite frankly, may put our vision in jeopardy due to habitat loss and moving away from provincial recovery strategies. This bill, if passed, could undo decades of conservation efforts and threaten some of Ontario's most vulnerable species—species your

Toronto Zoo works directly for. These are species that can't speak for themselves—including the eastern loggerhead shrikes, Blanding's turtles, massasauga rattlesnakes, boreal caribou, and more. These are not just names in a report; they're living, breathing parts of Ontario's natural heritage and part of our identity. These are species we've been working with for decades with communities, partners, and governments of all stripes, including yours, to protect.

At your Toronto Zoo, our mission is connecting people, animals, conservation science and traditional knowledge in the fight against extinction. We believe economic growth and environmental protection can and must go hand in hand.

Bill 5 tells a different story, and that's why we're speaking to this legislation today, as this bill eliminates the Endangered Species Act and removes automatic habitat protection, replacing it with voluntary measures. It reduces the role of science in decision-making processes, leaving species listings vulnerable. And it may only consider protections and orders if a development eliminates the last of an individual species from Ontario, not if it significantly harms or fragments their habitat. As currently composed, we are concerned this act will result in the erosion of biodiversity and the loss of species at risk.

Ontario has long been a leader in conservation, and I do not believe our government's goal is to change the definition of "habitat" to exclude spaces that animals critically need to survive.

We do recognize the bill's commitment to enforcement, critical to protect the remaining species, and we do support swift and strong action against offenders. That said, we are concerned to see this legislation coming forward at a time when there are also rollbacks in the endangered species protections in the United States. I think we all understand that endangered species don't recognize political boundaries, and these policy changes make their survival on both sides of the border more questionable. In a world with a changing climate, protecting species at the edges of the ranges has never been more important.

Take the Blanding's turtle as an example. Together with Parks Canada, your Toronto Zoo has helped release more than 700 individuals into Rouge National Urban Park. While they may not move quickly, these turtles travel up to six kilometres a year around the watershed as they move between nesting, feeding and hibernation sites. Any move that could limit protections to where they are found in specific movements during their life cycle fails to reflect how they live, their need for a wide range of spaces, and what we need to do to conserve them.

The same applies to the eastern loggerhead shrike, a migratory bird that relies on habitat that goes well beyond the nests, found on grasslands, thorny shrubs and migratory stopovers found across our province, all critical for them to survive. In partnership with Wildlife Preservation Canada, we have raised, reared and released over 200 shrikes to protect and reinforce their populations. These initiatives, along with habitat restoration work, are deliberate, evidence-based, provincially driven recovery strat-

egies that are preventing extinction. The changes proposed in Bill 5 will undermine this work, and it's sad to think about Ontario potentially being the weakest link in this migratory bird's incredible journey between here and the southern United States.

The eastern massasauga rattlesnake is another species that is likely to be profoundly impacted by this legislation. Working with partners, our team has raised dozens of baby rattlesnakes as part of groundbreaking recovery initiatives. The reality is, without a connected habitat and an ongoing recovery strategy, they will not survive in the wild in parts of this province, no matter how many we raise and release from your zoo.

The final species that I need to speak for today are boreal caribou. These iconic animals depend on large, intact forces, and research has demonstrated that even small amounts of fragmentation of their range will increase calf mortality. Our zoo is proud to lead genomic analysis and biobanking efforts to help understand and protect these caribou, but that work may not matter if the habitat they need to survive in is negatively impacted.

We are proud of this work, as well as our partnerships we have made, including with this government, to support these species. We also have a fantastic track record of developing made-in-Ontario science and conservation technologies to help us protect species, support communities, and ensure benefits for local economies. That said, these tools depend on real habitat protection at scale.

I need to repeat this simple fact: We cannot fight the extinction of species in Ontario if they have nowhere to live.

We're not here today to defend the status quo, as almost all agree the existing legislative framework also was not successfully implemented to protect species at risk.

1150

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): One minute remaining.

Mr. Dolf DeJong: We're also not against the changes serving environment and speeding up processes for the economy.

Unfortunately, Bill 5 will not address endangered species issues and comes at a steep ecological, community and economic cost. So we urge the committee to reject the removal of the Endangered Species Act. As currently written, the bill will undermine species protection at a time when we need to restore and strengthen science-based decision-making rooted in deep and meaningful community consultation.

If the government decides to move forward, as written, we have one ask: Establish an insurance policy for these species and their well-being. This government needs to commit to funding to create an Ontario wildlife biobank at your Toronto Zoo. Our reproductive science team can play a critical role, working with partners across all walks of life to ensure we have a backup plan for future generations. This isn't a question of choosing between conservation and development.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Thank you for your presentation.

We will now move to the first round of questions, and this will start with the official opposition members. I recognize MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: ᑦᓴᓐ, ᐸᓐᐸ ᓂᓅᐸᓯ ᓴᓯᓂ ᐸᓐᐸ ᓂᓯᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ.

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Mr. Adam Fiddler: ᑦᓴᓐ ᓴᐸ ᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ.

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Mr. Sol Mamakwa: ᑦᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ.

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MPP Paul Vickers: Can I call a point of order, just for tech?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Yes.

MPP Paul Vickers: I can hardly hear the interpretation. Is there any way we could get it louder?

I really do want to hear what you're having to say, but—

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's a little louder now.

MPP Paul Vickers: Is it? It wasn't very loud before.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tanzima Khan): Are you at max volume?

MPP Paul Vickers: I think I am.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tanzima Khan): Okay. I'll check.

Interjections.

Mr. Adam Fiddler: ᑦᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ ᐸᓯᓴᓴᓐ.

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to consult on each one—it does not work. We need to fix it.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): I recognize MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: My question is to Mr. and Mrs. Fiddler—

Laughter.

MPP Paul Vickers: Maybe you aren't married.

Mr. Adam Fiddler: We're not a couple.

MPP Paul Vickers: You're not a couple? That's awkward. I apologize. I just assumed, and you should never assume. Sorry again.

In budget 2025, our government expanded the Indigenous Participation Fund to \$70 million, which will include hiring mineral development advisers to support Indigenous communities—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Sorry. That ends the government's round one.

We are now going to go to round one of questions for the third party. I recognize MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to start by saying thank you to all our presenters here today. I really appreciate you taking the time—especially to our friends from Sandy Lake First Nation, who made the trip all the way here. We do appreciate it, so thank you again.

The question I want to start off with is to Dolf from the Toronto Zoo. Dolf, you were ending your presentation talking about the establishment of an insurance policy, a biobank. Can you expand on that a bit and tell us a bit more?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: Thank you for the question.

Through you, Madam Chair: We believe that, if this were to go forward, we need to be thinking about backup plans for species conservation and protecting species diversity—so, establishing an Ontario wildlife biobank at a place like your Toronto Zoo, where our time already does protect and preserve reproductive material from across this country, and beyond, actually. This would ensure future species' lifelines if they are impacted by climate change or biodiversity loss. Of course, we wouldn't do that in isolation.

We have examples. We actually were recently with the northern First Nations, participating with them around caribou, to make sure they have that insurance policy in place. This could actually be a safeguard, in addition to habitat protection, that lets us make sure we have a backup plan. We talk about this not being a question of choosing between conservation and development. We really want to make sure that nature is not seen as a barrier to progress; it's a foundation for it. We see the need to break the status quo and the government's desire to go fast, but we want to make sure those animals can be protected in perpetuity, and this is a great tool to do that. It's a conservation technology developed here in Ontario.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Thank you for that.

I just want to highlight for the committee that I obviously have a bit of a bias. I was on the board of the Toronto Zoo previously. I do want to flag that.

The Toronto Zoo is one of the most well-respected institutions when it comes to conservation, endangered species protections not just in Ontario and Canada but around the world. So when we have such a respected body here raising such concerns about our environment, about endangered species, we need to be taking this seriously. It's really alarming what we're reading here in Bill 5 and the red flags are being put up by presenters here today, especially by the Toronto Zoo.

In my own riding, turtles are talked about a lot. Not a lot of people think, in Toronto, that we have this type of habitat, but these habitats are being threatened and this bill does nothing to protect it. I would like to ask you if you could expand a bit on that topic. You spoke a bit about the turtles and the definition of habitat. Can you expand a bit more on that?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: I think it's really important we consider all of the biological needs of an animal during their lifespan. So whether they're migratory, whether they're local and transient, dietary changes over the season—in Canada, what they need in colder weather, when you think of turtles and needing those ephemeral ponds in the spring differently than they need those stable water bodies in the fall to be able to get through the season—we need to make sure we take a holistic approach.

What's really important to us is, when we're not sure, we actually apply the precautionary principle. Again, I know that can slow things down, but I want to ensure we don't frame this as a conservation and species-at-risk problem. We've heard from the folks at the mining association. This is a collaboration problem—that we can have thriving ecosystems, with big, protected, safe blocks of habitats and populations that are not just surviving or being conserved, but are being restored to previous levels. I think that's the Ontario folks want to live in.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: You make an interesting point when you talk about applying a precautionary principle when we're talking about Bill 5 and its implications.

When we talk about species protection, when we talk about habitat protection—what is it in Bill 5, would you say, would be the greatest red flags that you're reading right now, and what changes would you like to see made to the bill to make this difference?

1210

Mr. Dolf DeJong: I think the key piece for us is the elimination of the Endangered Species Act. There's widespread agreement, I think, that it has not been applied effectively. The tools in place are reactionary—and often, that's too late. Yes, we want to count on industry partners doing things the right way, but for many of these species, it's going to be out of sight, out of mind and off the planet, and it may be too late.

We have governments at the provincial and federal levels that are committed to collaborating. Let's not let species at risk be seen as a barrier to meaningful development and progress. We can do this. Ontario has been a home of incredible innovation for decades. There's no way we can say that we're not solving this economic crisis

childhood in Sudbury. We have a re-greening story in Sudbury that I'll fight tooth and nail for anyone to turn back.

My pushback on special economic zones is the fact that you can overwrite the environmental protections, labour law protections, any protections you want on this. I don't believe this is what the mining companies want. I'm concerned that the OMA and mining companies in Ontario are being used as a shield for the Conservative government to push for an agenda that actually isn't going to help mining be more effective. Most likely, it will cause more protest and upset and will turn back the clock on the environment. I wonder what your thoughts are on that.

Ms. Priya Tandon: I can firmly say that our membership has many pillars that they look to for defining what mining means in Ontario, and that's upholding our very important relationships with Indigenous communities, building economic prosperity in the province, and keeping safety and environmental sustainability as core values. I think that's what we're going to continue to do.

MPP Jamie West: I want to echo that. I worked in the mining industry for 17 years. I've seen the progress in the past, where consultation was, we held up a piece of paper, said what we were doing and jumped in the bulldozer—as Premier Ford has said now twice, embarrassingly. I believe that the mining industry has changed a lot and is growing, and wants to help government to be more successful in this role.

As a final comment, because I'm running out of time, I just want to thank Cynthia and, I assume, Adam as well, for travelling the 1,500 kilometres to come here.

I'm not sure if you were in the room, but earlier, MPP Mamakwa put forward a motion so that we have consultations in northern Ontario, in Thunder Bay, to be able to speak to people who would be treaty rights holders. Does this make sense to you?

Ms. Cynthia Fiddler: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Adam Fiddler: መልሱ ለመስጠት ለሚችሉት ሁሉም ጥያቄዎች ለመመልከት ምስጋና ይገባል።

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The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): That ends the second round of questions for the official opposition.

I will now turn it to the second round of questions for the government side. I recognize MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: Thank you, Chairperson. And again, I'll say it—Mrs. Fiddler and Mr. Fiddler.

In budget 2025, our government expanded the Indigenous Participation Fund to \$70 million, which will include hiring mineral development advisers to support Indigenous communities in the mine permitting process. Additionally, we are committing \$10 million over three years to create new scholarship opportunities for First Nations post-secondary students pursuing careers in resource development.

Do you believe these investments will help empower youth in First Nations to take an interest in mining-related careers?

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Mr. Adam Fiddler: ጥሩ ምላሽ ሲሰጥኝ፣ "አዲስ ስሜት" ይገኛል።

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reproductive technology to certain species to help them recover.

At the end of the day, we talked about it in our intro, we need to be a voice for these species and make sure we have every tool possible in the conservation tool box to help them have a brighter and more viable future.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): MPP Cuzzetto.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank all the presenters for being here today.

I always like to observe things. I'm looking in this room, and I see computers—aluminum, lithium, copper. I probably could continue going on—our cellphones too. All of these minerals that we have—and a lot of them are not coming from Ontario, unfortunately.

I want to know—this is for the OMA—what Bill 5 would do to create more jobs and drive economic development here in Ontario.

Ms. Priya Tandon: I think the issue around permitting is the main aspect that would be beneficial to the mining sector, and really working together and collaborating in government to get a “one project, one process” approach in place.

Right now, the mining sector employs about 22,000 people directly in Ontario, and that goes up—add another 130,000 more—when you talk about indirect job impact in the province. So you can imagine what that means not just to northern Ontario families but families across the province who are employed or associated with mining companies, and the prosperity that builds.

I talk about youth recruitment to the sector because we need more youth. We need to build that talent pipeline. And we talk about the average job compensation in mining being \$150,000. So it is a big deal to ensure that this cornerstone of Ontario's economy is given the attention that it requires and the priority-level status to get more projects built, to employ more people.

Some 12% of our workforce is Indigenous. That's four times the all-industry average in the province. That sets us apart for a reason: because Ontario mining has historic relationships and historic practices in the last couple of decades to build that trust and build those relationships. Right now, there are over 140 active agreements in place or being worked on with Indigenous communities—and that's anywhere from impact benefit agreements or exploration agreements to government resource revenue-sharing agreements.

So we need to continue to see that prosperity, and we need to do it by maintaining our lost-time injury rates—

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): Thank you, Ms. Tandon. That concludes the second round of questions for the government.

We now move to the second round of questions for the third party. I recognize MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: My first question is actually from my colleague who is the critic for mines, Ted Hsu, from Kingston and the Islands—I just wanted to ask that to Priya.

Also, thank you, everyone, for coming down and making the trek to this scintillating committee.

What kinds of bad actors might need to have their mining lands administration system account suspended, or might need to have their prospector's licence cancelled or their lease denied—as in schedule 5 of Bill 5? Are there some from history you could name?

Ms. Priya Tandon: There are none from history that I could name. It's probably a question that's better meant for the Ontario Prospectors Association or the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada.

What I can say in terms of my knowledge around prospecting and what prospectors need to do—they do need to undergo training, and they do need to undergo Mining Act-specific training and get certified before being successful in gaining their prospector status. That's something for the ministry to be aware of. That's my knowledge on it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much.

Over to the Fiddlers, who are just friends, from Sandy Lake First Nation: Thank you so much for making the unbelievable trek of 1,500 kilometres. I come here and my trek is eight kilometres. I'm usually on a bike or subway, and it takes me 30 minutes. So I really appreciate what you've done here today, to come and have your voices and the voices of the north heard.

As you heard was mentioned by our colleague MPP Mamakwa—Sol asked specifically for a consultation in Thunder Bay. Do you think that is a good thing to do? How far is it for your trek to Thunder Bay from Sandy Lake First Nation—I'm not sure where that is; sorry. And do you think that would go a long way with the duty to consult?

Ms. Cynthia Fiddler: It would be a good start. It would show the initiative—that you are willing to make an effort to come and hear the voices of the true north.

Sandy Lake is only a fly-in community, and there are so many other communities that are like that. Before 10 or 15 years ago, this province didn't pay attention to us way up there. We were ignored for so long. All of a sudden, we have minerals on our land. All of a sudden, you're paying attention. I feel like saying, “Just go back to not paying attention to us.”

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And then, to the Toronto Zoo CEO—I was going to give you a fancy nickname: How horrified are you with the removal or the destruction of the Endangered Species Act, and how ludicrous do you think this new Species Conservation Act is, where we're only protecting the species where it sleeps and where it lays its eggs?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: Our commitment has to be to an animal's entire life cycle, all the components of it, ecosystems as a whole. We've talked a lot about this over the past years. I think a lot of people have probably been caught up in the hype around woolly mammoths and dire wolves. Technology isn't going to save these species; safe spaces will. So we need to make sure that we have the places protected, established, and we apply the innovation that we know this province has a reputation for, in a

creative way, to improve the processes to protect those species and to be able to get things moving quicker. We realize there are challenges. The old system wasn't as effective as it should be. This new system, as it stands today, will not improve it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: With regard to COSSARO, do you think this government actually respects that committee?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: We do have a staff member who participates in COSSARO and who has been doing a lot of work, particularly around monitoring of species such as bats. I have a huge amount of respect for those front-line staff who are in the field, and I'd like to think that our decision-makers will also extend that same level of respect.

We just want to make sure species at risk are not caught up in a political trade-off game. We need to make sure we have their voices stated, we protect their habitat and we protect the other elements that we can, whether its through frozen genetic material and spaces, to hand them off in better shape than we found them for future generations.

Our mission is clear: connecting people, wildlife and wild spaces and having it so they can all thrive. We want all those things. We have to not pick and choose.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you think the Premier understands science when he makes some flippant comment about a grasshopper hopping across the road?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: I haven't met the Premier; I can't speak to whether or not he's an entomologist.

I think often it's easy to see smaller species and question their significance. At the end of the day, we don't get to pick and choose. It's one planet; we are one species on it. And we need to be taking the steps to protect all of them.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: In your experience, do you feel that discretionary provisions actually work to protect species?

Mr. Dolf DeJong: I don't have any experience with that; unfortunately, I can't say. But we know that the more things get cut up, the worse off it goes for most species.

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): That concludes round two of the questions.

I would like to thank all of our presenters here this morning for coming out in person—the distances you've travelled. It is greatly appreciated.

The committee will stand in recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

I'd like to remind everyone to leave their audio devices here in the room. That would be appreciated.

MPP Chris Scott: Chair, just a quick point of order. Are you sure it's just until 1 p.m.? We could do, like, an hour—no?

The Acting Chair (M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy): No, we are commencing at 1 p.m. We will resume public hearings on Bill 5 at 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1233 to 1306.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Good afternoon, dear colleagues, witnesses, and audience. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on the Interior to order. We are meeting to resume public hearings on 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 ensure that everyone who speaks is heard and understood, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until you are recognized by the Chair before speaking. As always, all comments should go through the Chair.

Mr. Mamakwa has indicated that he may be speaking in Oji-Cree during the hearings. There will be simultaneous interpretation to English and French. Members may use the earpieces at their seats to tune in to English or French channels for interpretation. For any audience members, there are portable listening devices that will also allow you to tune in to the English or French interpretation. Kindly remember to return the devices before you leave the hearings today.

As a reminder, each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation. After we have heard from all presenters, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of six and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of six and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of six and a half minutes for the third party.

I will now call on the presenters to start deputizing their testimonies. When you are called—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Yes, MPP Mamakwa; go ahead.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Chair. Thank you. I'm just asking for agreement from the committee for Nishnawbe Aski Nation to have two presenters rather than one—I would respectfully ask.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Mamakwa made the request to have two people presenting from Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Is there consent from the committee? Okay.

IAMGOLD CORP.

NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION

MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): First of all, I will call upon Iamgold Corp. to start their testimony. Please identify your name and your title before you start speaking. Thank you.

Ms. Krista Maydew: Good afternoon, honourable members of the committee. Before I begin, given the importance of today's discussion and what we're here to review, I want to take a moment to briefly acknowledge that we're meeting here today in Toronto on the traditional territories of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and it's home to the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Chippewa, Wendat peoples, and many other nations.

Today, I'm here to discuss how Iamgold supports the objective of Bill 5 to establish efficiencies through the

“one project, one process” approach. Iamgold believes that responsible mining, safeguarding the environment for future generations and protecting Indigenous rights are not mutually exclusive.

My name is Krista Maydew, and I’m the vice-president of external affairs for Iamgold Corp. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

Iamgold is a Canadian-based mining company with operations in Canada and West Africa. In 2024, we completed construction of Côté Gold, an open-pit gold mine near Gogama, located between Timmins and Sudbury. Côté Gold represents a \$4-billion investment and is located on Treaty 9 territory, on the traditional lands of Mattagami First Nation and Flying Post First Nation. In co-operation and collaboration with Mattagami and Flying Post, Côté Gold has been a catalyst for a new level of economic prosperity for our partner communities.

We are at a juncture in history in which the geopolitical environment is creating an urgency to strengthen our economy while respecting environmental obligations and oversight, and respectful engagement and consultation with Indigenous peoples.

My remarks today will focus on three key areas: economic competitiveness, environmental stewardship, and Indigenous relations.

Bill 5’s “one project, one process” approach promises to streamline permitting, reduce administrative burdens and accelerate project delivery, making Ontario a more attractive destination for mining investments.

Iamgold is appearing today in support of the “one project, one process” aspect of Bill 5—particularly its focus on enhanced governance, accountability and predictability through various efficiencies that designated projects will benefit from. We also encourage Ontario to extend this approach to all mining projects and operations, not just designated projects.

As the proponents of one of the more recent mining projects in the province to have gone through the environmental assessment and permitting process, we believe the “one project, one process” approach is vital to enhancing Ontario’s economic competitiveness and unlocking the potential of its minerals sector. From our perspective, the ability to navigate a clear, accountable and timely permitting framework is paramount. Lengthy and often duplicative approval processes create significant uncertainty, delay crucial investments and hinder the development of mining projects that are essential for provincial, national and global economies.

The commitment within Bill 5 to streamline these timelines through an all-of-government approach to permitting offers the prospect of a more predictable and efficient path forward for projects. By consolidating and improving coordination of permitting requirements for mining, we believe Ontario can reduce administrative burdens, increase transparency and accelerate the delivery of projects without compromising the rigorous environmental and social assessments that are fundamental to responsible development. This modernization will make Ontario a more attractive jurisdiction for investment, allowing

companies like Iamgold to advance projects with greater confidence, and contribute to job creation and economic growth.

We encourage Ontario to also apply the same level of coordination proposed in the “one project, one process” approach to operating mines. This approach has the potential to significantly improve existing permitting processes and address delays in provincial approvals of routine and low-risk works that are essential to operating mines. Improving efficiency of approvals for low-risk activities is critical, and we welcome the proposed enhancements of compliance tools and the recognition of standard mitigation measures to help ensure that regulators focus on high-risk and complex works that require additional oversight.

In recent years, Canada has fallen into the lower tier among developed mining nations when it comes to the speed and efficiency of our mine permitting processes.

We support Bill 5 because the current regulatory framework is unnecessarily duplicative and the speed at which permit applications often move through the system is not inherently improving outcomes. Slower processes do not equate to better results. We support legislation that promotes good governance without compromising environmental stewardship or compromising the duty to consult with Indigenous groups.

It has often been said that projects move forward at the speed of trust. Trust in the context of mining is multifaceted and essential. Iamgold has placed significant importance on building trust with our First Nation partners. Responsible mining founded on relationships that foster trust, transparency and mutual respect can be a catalyst for meaningful social and economic development for communities impacted by our activities.

Our commitment is demonstrated through our participation in the Mining Association of Canada’s Towards Sustainable Mining program. This involves facility-level assessment and third-party verification against performance indicators, addressing key environmental and social responsibilities. Iamgold implements this standard at all of its operations, including outside of Canada.

We recognize the importance of meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities and the provisions within Bill 5 to fulfill constitutional obligations, including the duty to consult. We believe that the “one project, one process” approach proposed in Bill 5 brings with it additional clarity for proponents, Indigenous communities and government which, if well implemented, could support building trust amongst all involved and reduce the burden of duplicative consultation processes.

From our perspective, Bill 5 represents a critical step towards making Ontario a leader in responsible mining, if implemented in a manner that balances respect for—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Ms. Krista Maydew: —Indigenous rights, environmental stewardship and economic prosperity. We are committed to working in partnership with the government of Ontario to ensure the implementation of Bill 5 achieves its goals of accelerating responsible development through a

we're talking about from here, from the corner of the property—yesterday, I walked that, and it was a 10-minute walk from there to basically downtown Dresden, 550 metres away from a high school. This whole community was thriving. Right here, you've got Molly's Creek, you've got Sydenham River, which is part of a major water stream. So the proposal is to say, "Don't worry about the environmental—we'll do it quickly and put it here."

Also, I want to show just that when I talk about the impacts of families and businesses—I want to show that down in the town of Dresden, they have a big festival. This is a picture of the festival that happens. Over 10,000 people come here twice a year. They have a winter one and a summer one. And we're talking about putting a major landfill within one kilometre of this. That is the biggest objection we have. There are a lot of objections, but when we look and say, "Location, location, location"—it's a terrible one.

The owners of these properties are trying to establish new waste, recycling and landfill uses under historic ministry approvals. Those historic approvals were for very narrow uses that had very limited impacts on surrounding properties in our community. Our experts indicate the types of environmental reviews that would be typical for a landfill, recycling and waste facility of this size would not have been performed when very limited waste uses were established in the 1960s.

This proposal, if approved, would have a devastating impact on the town of Dresden and the surrounding communities. This would also set a dangerous precedent for all rural communities. If a massive landfill can be forced on the edge of our town without full environmental review, whose town is next?

Our entire community is opposed to this, our neighbouring communities are opposed to this, and of vital importance, the Indigenous communities of Walpole Island First Nation and Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, which border Chatham-Kent, have strongly opposed this project as well. These nations have not been consulted and have serious concerns about the impacts that this proposal would have on their treaty rights. As stewards of the land, they're deeply concerned about the land and water that their nations depend on.

I want to be perfectly clear with you: I am far from a "not in my backyard" mayor, and Chatham-Kent is not a NIMBY community. We have been very supportive in addressing provincial priorities, such as significantly exceeding our assigned housing targets in the last couple of years; working collaboratively with Hydro One to facilitate development of various priority transmission projects in southwestern Ontario, the majority of which run through Chatham-Kent; supporting energy generation projects, including over 500 wind turbines. And, most significantly to the question, Chatham-Kent hosts an existing large landfill, known as the Ridge Landfill.

The company that runs the Ridge Landfill, Waste Connections of Canada, is a great community partner that engaged in a full environmental assessment process, as should be required for any landfill. Waste Connections has

shown themselves to be a transparent, community-minded organization. I've had a chance to speak to representatives of Waste Connections, and they believe they are both ready and able to help solve the landfilling problem for Ontario—amongst many other existing landfills—but to do so in appropriate locations and through an appropriate process.

Perhaps most importantly, unlike what is being considered in Bill 5, the existing landfill in Chatham-Kent was placed in a logical location, and one that allowed for the mitigation of potential impacts that come with a landfill.

The company that owns the property at the edge of Dresden is not a company that respects our communities. It is not a company the province should be exempting from full environmental assessment processes. They have not engaged. They have not been transparent. They have not tried to mitigate the impacts of their work. Rather, they are trying to force through a massive landfill on the border of our town. It is a location that cannot be supported. They are doing this without proper environmental, cultural, archaeological, economic, traffic and engineering studies.

So I stand before the committee today saying, "Location, location, location." How can we destroy a community of 3,000 people by locating a major landfill so close to the community—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: —as well as looking to bypass all the environmental, to say we can do all of this in a year, when, normally, it takes seven years.

If we need to do something, we need to improve the process, not bypass the process. And there are alternatives to this. If you look at the landfills across Ontario—talk to them and say, "What can you do to expand your landfills?" I get it; the province needs to be looking to the future. As council members, we need to look at the future—I get that the province needs to, but we need to look and come up with the best solutions.

Locating this dump right next to Dresden is not a good solution. Thank you.

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The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. Thank you to all of our witnesses and representatives.

We will start the first round of questioning, and this time we will start with a third-party representative. You have six and a half minutes. MPP Tsao, go ahead.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Mr. Chair, out of respect to Grand Chief Wabasse—I don't think he was finished with his deputation, so I would be pleased to provide some of my time to him to complete, if he would like.

Chief Archie Wabasse: Thank you, Jonathan.

We need to sit down together—First Nations, Ontario and Canada—to come to terms to co-develop pathways that uphold the honour of the crown, fulfill constitutional obligations, and to ensure equity, revenue-sharing, environmental stewardship and respect of our governance systems. We want peace, not legal battles. We want partnerships, not pipelines forced through our lands—in this case, mine. We want shovels in the ground, but only when the ground has been respectfully approached and the terms

have been mutually agreed upon. If Bill 5 goes forward in its current form, it sends a message: Ontario values speed and industry over reconciliation, and short-term profits over long-term relationships.

I urge you: Slow down. Include us. Honour the treaties. Let us walk forward together, not in opposition. Meegwetich. Thank you.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Thank you, Chief.

I would like to turn my attention now to Mr. Mayor. You spoke very passionately about the concerns of your residents of the town and the municipal representatives. It's clear this isn't wanted in your community. This isn't desired.

Why do you think Dresden landfill is specifically being pulled out in this bill and granted this special exemption?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: I don't want to speculate as to why it is.

I can tell you the history of it. They were looking at doing this and trying to get past the long EA process. And we thought we won, about three months ago. That's fine. Go through the long process, and it will determine that this is not a good location. But when we look at the overall—it's a terrible location. It was a landfill back in the 1960s—and there's a number of them across the province. There are probably hundreds of them that were used for various things. This one was used back in the 1960s and 1970s to deposit ash from an incinerator that was in Dresden—so it was very minor use. They found this has been dormant for 30 years.

Under the legislation, they said, "Oh, well, it's not a new one. We don't have to go through this long EA process." So that's why they probably identified this one and said, "Oh, good, this is a shortcut we can make, because it's an existing dump." But we were able to win that fight. I can't speak as to why this one was—because this is not going to be the solution for the future, this one dump site.

If we lose the 40% that we export to the United States, we're going to need a lot of extra landfills.

So, through you, Mr. Chair: I cannot say why this was selected.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I think if we see the passage of Bill 5, with regard to Dresden, it's clear that no environmental assessment would be needed, which will mean that the municipality would not be consulted when the environmental compliance approvals are considered. You'll be, basically, taken out of the loop.

When we look at Bill 5 and the municipalities' ability to control or regulate landfill development, what are the challenges you see for your municipality—as the mayor, as council—being able to have a say at all?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Well, that's a huge concern of ours as well. If they bypass this, what happens to the truck route? You're looking at 100-plus trucks a day. They propose 24/7 trucks coming into this a kilometre away. Imagine living there, and they don't consult with us on the truck route? Imagine going to downtown Dresden. A lot of the buildings are 100 years old. They're not designed to have truck traffic—100-and-something trucks a day going

down there. The vibration will eventually destroy the buildings. Who is going to want to live there—if you're living in a quiet town and now 100 trucks a day are coming through, and we don't have any say of what's going to be put in there. Will it be residential garbage? And all of a sudden you're downwind and—tough break—it's going to stink. We've all been by landfills that aren't run properly, and they have a real smell to them. Others do a better job of operating. But we won't have any say. And what's the community getting out of it? Right now, we're assuming, we have nothing to say about it.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I take that point of, "What does the community get out of this situation?" I think from your impassioned speech here, it's clear, as the representative of the town, that this is, again, not wanted.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Again, from the municipality perspective, have you conducted any studies on the long-term impact on property values, public health, or anything of that sort in the vicinity of the Dresden landfill?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: We haven't, because we expected to be able to do that over a seven- or eight-year period to do the elongated process.

I can speculate and give my opinion that, yes, land values will be down. Do you want to spend top dollar for a house that's less than a kilometre away—and two kilometres away would be the entire town. So 3,000 people live there—high school, public school. You've got a vibrant downtown that's growing. It's Christmas town—they've labelled themselves that. We have thousands of tourists coming every year to that. And to have that—it just kills it. Everyone is going to be saying, "I'm out of here."

Do we, as Ontario, want to destroy small communities? We don't. There are so many alternatives. I get that we need to plan for the future, but this is not the future. There are so many better options.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we move to the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa, the floor is yours.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetich to the presenters from Iamgold and Nishnawbe Aski Nation and, of course, the municipality of Chatham-Kent.

To Grand Chief Fiddler and also Chief Archie Wabasse: I've got a question that is very simple. Why are you here? Why did you come here?

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler: We are here to remind Ontario that they have obligations under the treaty, and we have this document here with us. If you don't know about it, you need to know about it. We have documents here, copies that we will leave here for you to pick up and read and learn, because you need to fulfill the obligations that you have under this treaty.

We are not part of an interest group. We are not part of the Toronto Zoo. We are a treaty partner to Ontario, and you need to be serious about fulfilling those obligations that you have, which includes respect—to respectfully engage our nations, especially when it comes to our territory and the richness of the resources that we have in our territory: our water, our trees, our minerals. We have

the second-largest carbon sink in the world in our territory. If you are serious about engaging us, you need to pause what you're doing right now and make space for our people to effectively engage in this process.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Chief Wabasse?

Chief Archie Wabasse: Thank you for your question, MPP Sol Mamakwa.

I would like to echo my letter that I forwarded to Doug Ford. I mentioned that the Supreme Court has consistently ruled in favour of protecting Indigenous rights and enforcing the crown's duty to consult. There are many cases that have won that said duty to consult should rest on First Nations—when you're coming with new laws that will affect our treaty.

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Why am I here? We call on the government of Ontario to, like my fellow grand chief said, halt the advancement of Bill 5 and initiate full and proper consultation; respect the treaties as understood by our elders and our ancestors, based on trust and mutual respect; comply with section 35 of the Constitution and Supreme Court rulings and recognize First Nations as self-determining nations, not mere stakeholders. Let it be known we are not stakeholders; we are rights holders. Our treaties are not optional. Do you know what? 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.

The crown signed the treaty, and we signed that treaty; we don't need to call for recognition. When the crown signed the treaty with us, it already had recognized that we are a distinct nation.

I want Ontario to respect that we are our own government on this land.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Earlier this year, former Prime Minister Trudeau said that he believed that President Trump's comments about annexing Canada were motivated by his wish to access critical minerals.

At the same time, Ontario's Premier has, for years, made comments about his wish to access the critical minerals in far northern Ontario, within Treaty 9 territory, even going as far as to refer to consultations with First Nations as ridiculous and saying he will hop on a bulldozer himself to build the roads to the Ring of Fire.

In your opinion, as a political representative of First Nations across Treaty 9 territory, what assumptions and values are shared in the approaches taken by Premier Ford and President Trump when it comes to accessing minerals in the Ring of Fire?

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler: I will just simply say this to Ontario: The minerals, the trees, the water—that's in our territory. It is not yours. It belongs to our children, and they have every right to decide how that will happen.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): The official opposition time's is up. We will leave it for the next round.

Now we'll move to the government side. MPP Scott, the floor is yours.

MPP Chris Scott: My question is for Krista.

It's good to see you again, Krista. Thanks for all that you do with Iamgold.

You led us off, and you made a lot of really great points about the opportunity. I just want to ask if you could expand on your thoughts and Iamgold's thoughts on, in your own interpretation, how Bill 5 can streamline the regulatory processes and some of the bureaucratic entry points, because I believe there are, in the current state, multiple future states—creating that single window on the permitting side, while maintaining the standard on environmental protections. So I was just wondering if you might be able to share from your perspective, in the current state, how many times you've got to engage, and how many permits you've got to do in the future state. What does it mean, and what kind of potential are we talking about for economic development, but also progress?

Ms. Krista Maydew: I'm happy to address that question. Before I address it directly, though, I do want to just take a moment to share that when we are developing a project, by the time we get to some of the elements of Bill 5, like the "one project, one process" approach—and I know that I've heard some concern about the perception that there might be a lack of consultation associated with that. I just want to note that when we're developing a project, before we even get to the items that Bill 5 addresses around "one project, one process," we've spent years developing relationships, through early exploration and advanced exploration with First Nations in the area on which our projects are located. So it's very important to us to develop good, strong, solid relationships. As an industry, our projects are successful when we have the support and the trust of the partner communities that we work with.

Where we see there being benefit of the "one project, one process" approach is really that coordinated, one-window process that we've been looking for, for industry, for years. Right now, our experience is that it's very much a patchwork of permitting to get a mine built. We're working with different ministries on overlapping elements, and we've experienced, perhaps, a lack of coordination internally within the government. So we see this approach as really a whole-of-government approach, looking at a project as an entire project versus individual pieces. We see that acknowledgement by government as a positive.

From our perspective, we encourage the government to take the comments and concerns raised by all of the stakeholders and rights holders around that "one project, one process" approach and consider those carefully, to ensure that we have a process that we can all feel confident in and want to move forward in together.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Cuzzetto.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the four presenters here today for your comments.

I'd like to speak to the mayor of Chatham-Kent.

I always look at my surroundings before I start speaking. I look right here in this room, and I see plastic bottles, aluminum cans. I come from the automotive industry—and not only that, but my father-in-law was also an importer

of Italian shoes. Shoes were all made out of leather at one time. Today, I noticed a lot of people's shoes have rubber soles. Now these all end up in landfills, pretty well.

Ontario pretty well exports most of our garbage to the US. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: My understanding is that it's 40%, yes.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Okay, 40%.

With what's going on in the US right now with President Trump, if he refuses to accept our 40% of garbage, what should we do here in Ontario?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Well, we're doing the right thing: exploring—to say, "What could we do if that happens?" Even if that doesn't happen, we have to look to the long term. So I agree with the province in looking at it—but I look and say that picking this location beside Dresden and destroying a community is not the option.

We have, I believe, well over 100 landfills existing in Ontario right now. Have we talked to all of them and said, "How can you expand?" They already have the roadways. They already have the permits. All those things are in place now. The first step is to talk to all those landfills and say, "What can you do to expand? What can we as a province do to work together to expand those sites that are already approved for that, that are already taking garbage, have the truck traffic—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Thank you.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Go ahead, Paul.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: I'd like to ask Iamgold, in what ways can Bill 5 create jobs and drive economic development in northern Ontario and mining communities?

Ms. Krista Maydew: That's a great question.

I can speak briefly to our own experience with developing the Côté Gold project. Côté Gold represents a \$4-billion investment—to construct the mine. We went into operations last year. Over the 18-year life of the mine, the mine is expected to return \$10 billion worth of GDP to the Ontario economy and approximately \$5 billion worth of wages.

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We look at the opportunities that we've seen grow out of our partner agreements with Mattagami and Flying Post, and we've seen both of those communities—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The government's time is up.

Now we've concluded the first round of questioning. We will move to the second round, and we will start again with the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you all for coming and sharing your thoughts and voices from your communities.

My first million questions will be to Your Worship, the mayor of the municipality of Chatham-Kent.

The Dresden landfill: We heard this morning that it wasn't new and it wasn't closed, but my understanding is that it hasn't been used for 40 years.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: I don't know the exact time, but I'm guessing it's 30 years-plus that it hasn't been used.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Yes. If we're using the emergency fallacy of the US situation for the landfill site, if we're in that much of a hurry, wouldn't it be smarter and quicker and more logical to just look at extending permits—like temporary exemptions for existing landfill sites—which would take a much shorter period of time than getting Dresden up to snuff?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: That would be my premise.

In speaking with the one that exists in our community already—it's a very large one, and they've said, "We can do it. We can take on more. We can expand more." They've already done all the environmental stuff to get where they're at now. So, to expand, it makes a lot more sense to say, "Can you take on 30% more, or 40%, now and expand over the next few years?" They've got an established process. That would be my suggestion—that we look at those in short order if we need to have that additional dumpage.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So if we're really worried about what Trump is doing, then that would be the logical route to go.

There are about 5,000 closed landfills in Ontario, apparently.

You're telling us all about your dreamy town. I'd love to go visit.

Why Dresden for the landfill—why, specifically, that closed landfill?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: We would love to have you visit Dresden.

Again, I can't speak as to why that one—there are a lot of closed ones because they were full, but there are a lot of them that were just abandoned or stopped. In this case of the Dresden—there was ash being put there. The incinerator is gone, so there's no need for that. But I can't speak as to why that one was chosen.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's very curious, indeed.

The Green Lane landfill, which the city of Toronto purchased—and I used to be a city councillor in Toronto. We purchased that landfill site. My understanding is that the landfill site in Dresden will be four times bigger than the Green Lane landfill, which takes all of Toronto's garbage. Is that your understanding—or am I giving you nightmares?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: You're giving me nightmares, because we don't know. We just know that it's going to be a spot to put it. We don't know the size of it. We're really kept in the dark as to what their plans are.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you also find it curious that the Premier, a year ago, agreed that an environmental assessment was needed, as did your current member of provincial Parliament, who was a councillor? They agreed that an environmental assessment was needed a year ago, but now—actually, one of them, your MPP, now has come out that he is not in agreement with this, with his party.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Again, it's the right thing to do—an environmental assessment, to say, "There it is." I under-

stand that it's a seven- or eight-year process, and when you look at it, you say, "We can't wait eight years." When you go to other provinces, the process is a lot shorter, but they don't bypass things. They just do things more efficiently. Again, we can be looking at the province and say, "How do we shorten that? How do we copy-paste what other provinces do?" Assuming that they're doing the environmental justice, which I believe they are—how do we copy that to get new sites, but look at the appropriate locations?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's not just one tool in the tool box—there are many other tools, to work on our waste diversion and waste reduction in Ontario.

My colleague was mentioning all the waste in here. Many of us use reusable products.

What about strengthening extended producer responsibilities? It's my understanding that this garbage that would be going—well, I know that the garbage we send to Michigan is primarily industrial and institutional.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: I can't speak to that, as far as what are other alternatives for—I can speculate, but I'm not going to do that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you think we should be looking at the—

Mr. Darrin Canniff: I think we should be looking at everything—the A to Z of how we reduce waste, how we properly dispose of it in the proper locations.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much. I'm going to visit your town one day soon.

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Please do. Let me know. We'll roll out the red carpet for you.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: To the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, the grand chief—either chief.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: First of all, how far did you come today?

Chief Archie Wabasse: I came from a place called Wunnumin Lake, Ontario. It's about—Thunder Bay, north about 500 kilometres, and then from Thunder Bay to here. That's how far I came.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Our colleague MPP Sol suggested, this morning, having a consultation in Thunder Bay, which we all agreed with—well, some of us agreed with. Do you feel that would be important—to have more consultations and at least one in the north?

Chief Archie Wabasse: This law, Bill 5—I've never heard about it. My people don't know about it. If you want a really true, meaningful consultation, come to my community and tell us what this law is all about—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Chief. The third party time is up.

We move now to the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa, the floor is yours.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. I've got a quick question to Iamgold.

I'm just wondering if any of your partner First Nations raised any concerns regarding Bill 5.

Ms. Krista Maydew: Thank you, MPP Mamakwa, for your question.

I have spoken with both of the chiefs of our partner First Nations, and I have heard concerns that they've expressed. I'm not going to be their voice to express those comments or concerns that I received, but we engaged in discussions about them.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch.

I want to go back to Grand Chief Fiddler. I know you mentioned that you were here a couple of weeks ago, and when you were in my office, you had this invitation letter to our Premier—and I hand-delivered that on the House floor, on your behalf—to attend the Nishnawbe Aski Nation spring assembly.

I'm just wondering, did this Premier accept this invitation, and has he made any efforts to facilitate real conversations with Treaty 9, Treaty 5 First Nations as equal partners and rights holders—especially those who the government doesn't have agreements with, like Neskantaga?

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler: I did take some time when I was here to hand-write a letter to the Premier, to invite him to our assembly that we are having here this week in Toronto—our NAN chiefs spring assembly—because I felt this was a good opportunity for him to speak directly to our leadership. But it has been total silence—no response at all from the Premier's office.

I should also note that when our government side committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, they did not want to engage with us. That sends a signal to our people that this government thinks that they can just ignore our nations and do whatever they want, and we are here to say that it will not happen.

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Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Chief Wabasse, this morning I presented a motion to bring this committee—to some of us, it's north, but it's not north—to Thunder Bay. This committee voted against it. How do you feel about that?

Chief Archie Wabasse: First, what I would like to tell the committee is that the current condition of our community is impoverished, and there are so many issues that we have to deal with. We are losing people through addictions, mental illnesses, and that has become the norm. The condition of our community needs to be better.

Although we are sitting on the resources that Ontario wants, the reason why we have the lands in its natural setting—it's because my bloodline comes from a time immemorial, and that's why I'm here today with the support of Mother Nature, with the support of—you call it the farmland, right? You have your farmlands where you grow everything and eat. Our farmland is the land, and it's very sacred.

So how do we justify our condition today that we're in? It's because of colonialism, the laws that are pressed against us. To clearly understand—the situation we're in is dire. If you take the resources from us and leave nothing behind, what does that tell you?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP West, the floor is yours.

MPP Jamie West: I wish we had more time than sharing six minutes between three presenters.

I want to direct my questions to Ms. Maydew from Côte Gold.

First, let me start by saying that I want to co-sign on what you talked about today. For seven years, I've been telling my colleagues in the House that the best mining companies in Ontario respect the environment and respect Indigenous rights and need support from the government to do a better job at this.

In 2020, I was at the groundbreaking ceremony, and there were politicians, including the Prime Minister and Premier, who were there. Notably, the chiefs were there—both chiefs. And you saw that true nation-to-nation relationship—not just as business partners, but as friends.

So I want to compliment your organization on doing that, in walking the talk. And I want to give you the opportunity to tell my colleagues how important it is to have relationships like this and how bills like this—aside from schedule 5, the one process—are making that system more difficult for organizations like yours.

Ms. Krista Maydew: That is a big question, so thank you for that, MPP West.

As I said, those relationships are foundational to success in this province. When we move projects forward—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

We move to the government side. MPP Gallagher Murphy.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: First off, I'd like to thank all of our presenters who have come in today in person to present.

My question is to Chief Wabasse. When we talk about the duty to consult—our government does remain committed to upholding our constitutional obligations. This bill does not impede on our duty-to-consult obligations in any way. Earlier today, we had the Minister of Energy and Mines, who made his presentation and reiterated that we will not, and this bill does not, impede upon that duty to consult.

I want to talk about what we want to continue to do in integrating this duty to consult throughout the entire process, to ensure that First Nations communities have a full scope of the potential projects, rather than reviewing them in a piecemeal fashion. First Nations are best positioned to identify opportunities within their communities, and our government has made tailored investments to ensure that First Nations have the capacity to do so.

So my question is if you are aware that in section 7 of schedule 5, it does reaffirm and protect the duty to consult for the “one project, one process” framework—that's my question.

Chief Archie Wabasse: I haven't seen that. I haven't seen a government official in my community come and say, “Let's sit down and talk about the new law.” My people have no idea what you're talking about.

This is what I would like to do: I would like to sit down with Ontario and talk about this Bill 5. We have terms and conditions too. We are government. The crown that signed the treaty already recognized our distinct nation. In order to respect that, your government would have to come and see and meet my people regarding this Bill 5 law that you

have. We have our own sacred law, natural laws that we go by, since time immemorial. Therefore, I don't recognize what you're doing, and it's impeding and it's troubling my people. So the only way out is to meet us. We're ready to meet and talk about this law, and talk about our law. Meegwetch.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: My question is to Mayor Canniff. Are you aware that Ontario exports significant portions of waste to the United States?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: Yes.

MPP Paul Vickers: If the United States refused to accept that waste, what do you propose Ontario to do with its garbage?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: As I've mentioned earlier, we've looked at all the existing landfills. I believe there are opportunities there.

I would argue that Ontario is one of the best places on this planet to live, and the reason we're here today is, our system makes it great—the ability to come together and say, “Let's make the best decisions.” That's why we're all here today—to try to come collectively together, ignoring political stripes, in order to say, “What is the best solution?”

I understand we need to plan for the future. Let's look at all the solutions that we have to mitigate that, if something like that did happen. That's what we're here to do today—to try to come up with a solution. I argue that Dresden is not the best solution—to put it right in the community, to destroy it.

There are lots of other opportunities. Chatham-Kent is willing to work with the province on a number of things, as I talked about—transmission and all of those things. To look at this problem, we are there to help. We are there to work with the province. We live in an amazing place.

MPP Paul Vickers: If household garbage wasn't one of the components going to this dump, to this landfill site, would that change your mind?

Mr. Darrin Canniff: No, because of the location. It's too close to the town—you're pretty much right in the town. You might as well put the garbage dump right in the actual downtown. I mean, it's just, “Location, location, location.” It's way too close. It will destroy the community.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you, Chair. Through you to Mayor Canniff: I know you've been working hard on economic development projects in Chatham-Kent, and we've run into a lot of barriers. A big chunk of this bill is looking at streamlining the processes. I'm wondering if you can offer your thoughts on that and its impact on Chatham-Kent.

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Mr. Darrin Canniff: Certainly, we're always open to streamlining processes, but we can't streamline a process and destroy the result of the intention of the process.

To get rid of inefficiencies—certainly, in Chatham-Kent and across the province, it's really important that we eliminate red tape. That becomes Ontario's competitive

Bill 5 can be viewed as circumventing protections that are seen as impediments or obstacles to development, and furthering the colonial regimes of old, and a continued disregard for the treaty relationship.

I caution you not to sell out our First Nation rights, heritage and history in your frenzied attempt to appease the US President, unleash our natural resources and establish a foothold in the global economy. Do not sacrifice our environment, our water and our species at risk in a desperate attempt to compete with the United States. Money will not bring back water, resources, species and historical artifacts once they are gone.

Ignoring First Nations and treaty rights to implement Bill 5 is a recipe for conflict that history has proven to persist in the public's memory.

We are all aware of the tragedy of the expedited processes that led to the Oka crisis in 1990 and Camp Ipperwash in 1995, and how those failures continue to be associated with the administrations of that time—federal, provincial and municipal. Oka and Camp Ipperwash have produced a resentment that has set back First Nations-government relations in Ontario, resulting in damage to the relationship that continues to be repaired and a loss of trust that impacts many negotiations today.

The destruction of burial grounds is widely seen as a direct attack on First Nations identity and culture, and we will stand up to protect our resting ancestors.

Let me ask you: How would you react to someone who had just desecrated the remains of your loved ones? Just think about that before removing any protections currently in place.

Considering the limited time to present to your committee, I have provided you with our Anishinabek Nation submission that provide solutions for your consideration as it relates to the nine pieces of legislation Bill 5 amends or creates. In the bill's current form, it is anticipated that conflicts and court challenges will be triggered. We believe that considering our proposed solutions and submissions by our First Nations and First Nation organizations will mitigate conflict and court challenges, allowing you to uphold the honour of the crown; strengthen Ontario's economic future, inclusive of First Nations; advance reconciliation; and build an economy for all.

My message today: You need to learn from the past to avoid conflicts resulting from government-expedited processes, with the hope that we can work together to strengthen Ontario's economy—together with all First Nations, as we come together as treaty partners. First Nations have the right to protect our rights, water, land and environment, ancestors, heritage and culture as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow. We want to participate in a meaningful way in a strong, vital economy, so let's ensure our relationship is not further eroded and begin meaningful dialogue to ensure not only that our voices are heard, but we are included consistent with the spirit and intent of the founding relationship in our treaties.

I want to thank the committee for allowing me to present the concerns of the Anishinabek Nation for your consideration.

I turn to Chief Duncan Michano, a member of the Anishinabek Nation who is joining us on Zoom. Meegwetch.

Chief Duncan Michano: Meegwetch to the committee for allowing me to speak. My name is Chief Duncan Michano—of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, also known as the Ojibways of Pic River. I'm reading from text here because I've only got three and a half minutes. We're located on the north shore of Lake Superior.

I'm here on behalf of my nation to speak about Bill 5, the special economic zones act; the mining lands administration system, the MLAS; and the mining claims and unresolved land claims that affect our people. I would like to stress that Biigtigong Nishnaabeg holds the constitutionally protected rights to our unceded lands, waters and resources. The bill has wide-ranging implications not just for your municipalities and industry, but more importantly, for First Nations, our inherent rights, our lands, and our way of life, and the future of our children.

As chief, it is my responsibility to raise serious concerns and ensure that our voices are heard before any decisions are made that impact our lands and our people. Economic development zones are often promoted as tools for investment, jobs and economic growth. That may be the plan, and they may bring real opportunities, but only if First Nations are meaningfully involved from the very beginning. Economic zones must not override or impede First Nations rights, particularly on unceded lands, but on treaty lands as well.

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When done right, with First Nations input, EDZs can support economic sovereignty and self-sufficiency for First Nations. They can create jobs and training opportunities for youth, help grow First Nation businesses, and potentially improve critical infrastructure like roads, power and broadband. If structured fairly and honestly, they can generate long-term revenue to support First Nation governance, education and community programs. But First Nations must be involved.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Chief Duncan Michano: Many First Nations face capacity barriers: limited access to capital, legal resources, and fair negotiation tools. EDZs must be shaped in meaningful collaboration and consultation with First Nations, not around them.

We must be clear about the risks of development. Development cannot proceed without First Nation consent. There are serious concerns about land rights, especially when we are witness to all mining activities taking place on our lands without proper consultation.

Ontario continues to allow mining claims on disputed lands without real consultation. The MLAS system lets companies stake claims online with just a few clicks on a computer, prioritizing profit over our Aboriginal and treaty rights. Bill 5 only worsens this by weakening environmental protections and reducing our say in what happens on our lands.

First Nations are not against mining but want to be included—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

We will move to Energy Storage Canada representatives, who will join us via virtual deputation. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Andrew Thiele: Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm Andrew Thiele, senior director of policy and government relations for Energy Storage Canada. We currently represent over 110 members from Canada's energy storage value chain, which includes developers, tech providers, utilities and investors, all working to deliver clean, reliable and affordable energy to Canadian and Ontarians.

Ontario's electricity demand is forecasted to grow by 75% by 2050. This presents both a major opportunity and a major challenge. Energy storage is essential to meeting that challenge. It provides the flexibility and reliability that the grid needs. We commend the government on taking bold steps, including the largest battery procurement in Canadian history, with its previous LT and E-LT processes.

Over the last three years, the IESO has run two procurements that procured 2,813 megawatts of storage. In the last procurement window, all but one of those projects had Indigenous equity of over 50%. In the LT1 process, 10 projects, for 1,883 megawatts—all but one had Indigenous participation. And in the expedited process, 15 projects were awarded for 930 megawatts; all but six had 50% or more Indigenous equity participation.

Moving forward, as we look to future energy procurement, all projects will continue to respect and ensure that they honour the commitments as set forth through the duty to consult.

These procurements are an important opportunity for our system reliability but can also serve as an opportunity for economic reconciliation with Indigenous nations, when done correctly. I'm not here to tell you how to do that correctly, but Ontario's energy system and transformation can provide a significant opportunity to create targeted programs, policies, and substantially contribute to advancing Indigenous participation, allowing equitable access to energy while simultaneously advancing the reliability and security of our energy sector.

We support Ontario's vision for becoming an energy superpower through Fortress Am-Can, building supply chains, unlocking critical minerals and using energy as a tool for economic development.

We understand that Bill 5 is about protecting Ontario's economy and energy system from foreign threats. International trade and security issues are shifting in a very dynamic environment. We understand why the government of Ontario may want to enable legislative tools to deal with these issues. Cyber security and the reliability of our electricity system is paramount to our economy and our day-to-day life. We support those objectives, but how these restrictions are implemented matters.

We want to ensure that the government implements these tools in the right way, and we offer the following feedback—as presented in the legislation.

Avoid retroactivity: We support the government's recommendation to not apply this legislation to any existing procurements or projects.

Preserve core investment paths: Ensure that all storage types can and still will be able to move forward in future energy procurements.

Target specific risks: Focus restrictions on components with cyber security risk, like telemetry, and base them on facts, not broad exclusions.

Recognize what's feasible: Many key components like battery cells aren't made domestically today. Let's ensure rules reflect the world supply chain challenges.

Use country-of-origin rules at import: A "best-integrated" in the US or Canada should count as a North American system.

And expand incentives: Align with the federal government ITCs, introduce Ontario-based tax supports and grow our manufacturing base here at home.

We'd also like to acknowledge the positive elements of the new Species Conservation Act included in Bill 5. It modernizes species protection, reduces duplication and shifts to a registration-first model, allowing developers to start projects more quickly once requirements are met. This approach provides clarity and flexibility—a win for both development and conservation. It is important to our members, as we have several projects under way at the moment, and ensuring that there is clarity around these requirements will be very important moving forward. We look forward to working with the government on these upcoming regulations.

In closing, Ontario is showing real leadership in its energy transition, and Energy Storage Canada is proud of its role and the future role it will continue to play. We support the general goals of Bill 5 and urge thoughtful implementation that maintains investment momentum, supports domestic growth, protects our energy system and our duty to consult.

Thank you. We're happy to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you.

Now we will start the first round of questioning, and this time we will start with the government side. You have six and a half minutes, MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank all of our presenters for being here. They actually have been very informative and educational for me, as a member of the committee.

I'd like to ask Mr. Moonias and both chiefs—I look back home, and Hydro One launched an equity partnership with a lot of our local First Nations, where a 50% share of the revenues from transmission lines were now to be shared with the local First Nations, giving them a stable income for their nations.

Yesterday, our government announced a \$3.1-billion investment to support First Nations partnerships in critical mineral development.

I just wanted to understand, from your perspective, are these equity partnerships impactful to the community? I think I heard, especially from Mr. Moonias—I think you said no earlier, and if I heard wrong, please correct me. I just wanted to have an understanding as to, is this the wrong approach, to involve First Nations in this way—having an equity partnership and having a consistent source of revenue from these projects?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Well, my view and the view of some community members I talk to in my nation—we have to have that discussion. But doing it this way, with Bill 5, is not the way to do it. You cannot promote economic reconciliation while you're trampling on our inherent Aboriginal treaty rights. It cannot happen. It cannot be forced upon us.

We have to be equal partners. How can we be equal partners when we're living in Third World conditions, like I said before? How can we be equal partners when we don't have the ability to have free, prior, informed consent? How can we be partners when there is no consultation happening in the community, in the language that they understand?

I've invited government before—I'm a former chief, and I wrote letters. I even sat outside, waiting for Doug Ford to come and meet me a couple of years ago. I had a table there. He didn't come and meet me.

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How can we move on if we're not going to be sitting at the same table? How can we move on when you continue to trample on our rights? How can we move on if your Premier says, "We'll bulldoze your area"? How can we move on? How can we have reconciliation?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you for sharing.

I'd love to hear from the chiefs. I'd love to get your comments.

Chief Duncan Michano: Meegwetch. I have mixed feelings in regard to that \$3-billion economic incentive. On the one hand, I see it as a good thing, particularly for my community. But knowing how slow government works to get some of these things approved, I see issues in regard to trying to actually put projects in place. A lot of times, when you're working on projects, you need to move fast, and I know from experience—we've worked on a land claim for 40 years, and the governments don't work very fast. Trying to get the economic incentives in place and through this \$3-billion loan is—I think it's crucial that we move fast if we want to do things like this. The government has basically got to free their bureaucrats up to get things done and put things in place. I see some benefit to it. We're always looking for opportunities to enlighten our economic development projects, so I see some good to it. It may not be good for other communities, on a community basis, but I can see it benefiting our community. Meegwetch.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Gallagher Murphy.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you, Chair, and through you to Mr. Andrew Thiele of Energy Storage Canada: As Canada faces growing demands for resources, infrastructure and sustainable energy solutions, the

government is moving forward with legislation designed to enhance investment, reduce bureaucracy and fuel job creation.

Given that Ontario has the largest storage fleet in Canada and, in fact, the third-largest on the continent—equivalent to storing enough power for three million homes—how do you see our government's efforts in driving this record and working with all technology options to expand affordable electricity generation, transmission and storage for our future generations?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The government's time is up. You can keep that thought for the next round.

We move to the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: ᑦᑕᑦᑭᑦ ᑲᑲᑦ ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑕᑦ, ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑕᑦ ᑲᑲᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑕᑦ.

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I'd like to say thank you to the First Nations leadership who have shared their thoughts and disapproval of this bill to the government.

Today, when the government answered my questions—the two ministers who sat where you're sitting now. When I asked the questions about Treaty 9, for example, what I heard were colonial explanations of the meaning of Treaty 9. I asked about the free, prior, informed consent in Ontario.

Chris Moonias, I ask you, what does Treaty 9 mean to you, as a rights holder? And do you think this Ontario government is living up to their treaty obligations to you, as a rights holder?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Well, that's the reason why I'm here, as a rights holder to Treaty 9—it's not being honoured. Especially with this Bill 5, we're being trampled upon. As a rights holder, Treaty 9—it should respect my way of life, should respect my free, prior and informed consent, should respect my ability to understand what is going on here.

Treaty 9 also, for me, is sacred because of the fact that my relatives signed this—Treaty 9, in Eabametoong, Fort Hope. Chief Moonias signed this treaty, and I was told by my dad, my father, my late father, that that's his grandfather. So the signatory of Treaty 9 is my great-grandfather.

We're supposed to share the land, but that's not happening. Heck, resources are being extracted without our consent. Roads are being built without our consent. It doesn't do justice to the treaty I believe in. We signed Treaty 9, we signed treaties, because you couldn't beat us. We're not a conquered nation. We signed treaties because we decided that we can live together, share. We're not conquered people. That's what "treaty" means to me. It's signed by nations.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Chris Moonias.

Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige from Anishinabek Nation, you said you represented 39 First Nations in your area. We also had Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Fiddler here, who represents 49 nations.

It was very clear in your presentation—I'm just going to take some words out of your letter: "In the bill's current form, it is anticipated that conflict and court challenges will be triggered. This will further stall out the vision of the province and will not be beneficial to anyone including our Anishinabek First Nations."

I said to the government this morning—reiterated—it's like taking a step back 15, 20 years on the work that has been done, the relationships that have been built.

I wanted to get you to expand on—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa:—when we talk about conflict and the court challenges.

Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige: Meegwetch, MPP Mamakwa. The 39 First Nations in the Anishinabek Nation territory—and we heard from Chief Duncan Michano today—are very concerned about this bill and are concerned that the government's response to what we've heard prior to this committee—the duty to consult was triggered once the bill was introduced. It may have been triggered in this building, but there has been no consultation, engagement or accommodations throughout any of our First Nations territories.

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What I've provided as part of our submissions is consistent with our communities' concerns, consistent with the concerns of our unceded and unsundered territories, as well as with our treaty nations. They are giving this an opportunity, as is the way of the Anishinabek people—to provide an opportunity for government to respond to our very serious concerns and to accommodate our suggestions.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): The official opposition's time is up.

We move to the third party. You have six and a half minutes. MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to start off with Mr. Moonias. First of all, thank you for making the trip down here—for the time it has taken you, and the financial resources. It's really important that we as legislators and, I think, we as non-Indigenous Ontarians hear your voice. So thank you for doing that.

In your testimony, you started to talk a bit about the fact that your community has had over 1,000 days' boil-water notice—over.

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Eleven thousand.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Eleven thousand.

This is modern-day Ontario. I am just astonished when I hear these things on the news and hear it directly from you.

I want to give you an opportunity to share more about the reality of what it's like in your community, to open the floor for you to tell us more about that.

As well, Bill 5—when you see a bill like this, what message does this send to you and to Indigenous communities? How do you feel when you read this bill?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: When I heard that these committee hearings are happening, I applied right away, because I knew it wasn't going to come to our community.

I did it on my own, and I was fortunate enough to be able to get the support from MPP Mamakwa to get in here. Then I started planning.

Life is not about doom and gloom, where we're from. We have fishing. We're land users. We have a lot of land-based activities, and we're on the land all the time. That's our connection, that's our healing, and that's our way of life. We fish all year, we hunt all year to sustain ourselves.

A bag of milk—I don't know if they still use bags, but a four-litre jug of milk will cost 26 bucks.

They talk about economic reconciliation. They talk about promises. But you just never see them.

We're in an 11,068-day boil-water advisory. For 30 years, we've been under a boil-water advisory.

We don't have a high school. My daughter left to high school when she was 13 years old. She went through high school. She finished high school. Then, from there, she went to college. She finished college. She got a job. When was the last time I was a parent? When she was 13 years old, when she left. How come she can't have a high school in Neskantaga? There's a lot of disconnection when that happens, when children go to high school at a very young age—13 or 14 years old.

Last year, when I was chief, one of my council members—her granddaughter was found deceased in the water in Thunder Bay—grade 9. There are stories and stories of young people like that. They can't educate their children in their communities—a lot of stories every year.

Almost every month, we take an elder home from Thunder Bay or wherever—because we don't have the facilities, we don't have a hospital or care to provide for them. We don't have those resources. We don't have that capacity.

My parents died in Thunder Bay. My dad died in the hospital. My mom died in her home. My mom was there to access dialysis. My dad got too old, and we couldn't take care of him in Neskantaga. So we had to fly them home, back to Neskantaga, and lay them to rest there. That happens almost every month in Neskantaga.

We have had our young people die on the streets because of a lack of housing.

For a community of over 500 members, we only have 80 homes, and a lot of those homes are being crowded. I know there was one time there were 15 people living in a two-bedroom house.

Those are the realities that we live in. Those are the things that we fight for. But if it's going to be forced on us, we have to oppose, right?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Yes. We heard the minister, this morning, talking about unleashing economic potential through this bill.

Do you think that this bill, if passed, will make a positive difference—to unleash any potential in your community for economics?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Well, right off the bat, you're trampling on my inherent Aboriginal treaty rights. You're not giving me the right to free, prior and informed consent. How can that be positive?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): That concludes our first round of questioning.

We will move to our second round of questioning, and we will start with the government side again. MPP Gallagher Murphy.

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to go back to Mr. Thiele of Energy Storage Canada to see if he can respond to my question that cut off—I managed to get the full question. Do you remember the question pretty much?

Mr. Andrew Thiele: Yes, I do. Thank you for the question. I really appreciate the opportunity to answer it.

As you correctly highlighted, it is a critical time for government to be investing in our energy infrastructure. This government has taken unprecedented steps to invest in all technology types. We are seeing the largest procurements for storage, as you mentioned, as well as nuclear and wind and solar at the same time. Energy storage, fundamentally, is a complementary technology to all of these technology types.

As we continue to move forward, our members recognize that policy certainty for project development, while there is an increasing demand for energy, is extremely pertinent. That is why the IESO, under the direction of this government, has undertaken the procurements it has to date, with many planned in the future.

We believe that Bill 5 can be a tool to speed up project timelines, provide greater certainty for proponents and reduce duplication while maintaining the appropriate protection.

We also recognize, however, that Bill 5 aims to address foreign investment in Ontario's energy infrastructure, especially as trade tensions rise.

Therefore, I would just like to reiterate again that as the government continues to consider this bill and it continues to consider its path forward for the implementation—that a few things are kept in mind; that is, avoiding retroactivity to any impact of contracts already awarded; preserve investment pathways for companies all around the world; base restrictions on the market reality, what is possible today based on our supply chains; prioritize high-risk technologies; and expand supply chain incentives.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Scott.

MPP Chris Scott: My question is for Andrew Thiele.

The gap between mineral reserves and processing potential has resulted in significant volumes of Ontario-mined minerals being shipped overseas for processing. It's a lost opportunity for Ontario to capture more of the value chain, create more jobs and see some of those benefits and really create that wealth that I think we're all after.

1500

I want to ask you how your company views made-in-Canada solutions, including access to home-sourced critical minerals, especially as the demand for critical minerals and resources grows in the coming years.

Mr. Andrew Thiele: Thank you for the question, MPP.

I would like to say, first and foremost, that our members continue to look for opportunities to invest in Canadian technology, invest in Canadian resources, and amplify our Canadian and, to a certain extent, broader North American—

despite some of the trade tensions right now—supply chains. Given the current environment with the United States, it is critical that we as Ontarians and Canadians ensure that we have energy security.

Our province and this country are extremely rich in critical minerals, many of which are very important components to energy storage projects—lithium and many others. Our members are fundamentally supportive of ensuring that we can unleash the full value chain from extraction to project and invest in our domestic supply chains to ensure that we are maximizing the value of the resources we have, but also the expertise and technology that we've started to present with these procurements from the IESO.

Again, I would say that we believe Bill 5 can be a tool to achieve many of those things, while reducing duplication. I look forward to working with the government to ensure that happens.

MPP Chris Scott: Thanks so much, Andrew. I really appreciate the response and the thoughtfulness of that response.

How important would you say the geographical location or the “where” is when it comes to access to critical minerals for Energy Storage Canada, and how does it impact the industry's ability to meet demand today and as a business model going forward?

Mr. Andrew Thiele: Many of the projects that I outlined that have been procured—nearly 3,000 megawatts. Those projects, at this particular point in time, have already procured resources or are very much in the process of doing so. Our members, through those processes, have stayed committed to looking for domestic solutions where possible, and they will continue to do so.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Andrew Thiele: There is a strong push from the industry to, where possible, as soon as possible, ensure that they get those resources from what would not be considered potentially dangerous foreign partners. But moving forward, it has to be done in a manner that is marked and demonstrates a path from where we are today to where we want to be and provides the right incentives to do so.

Our members remain committed to Canadian projects, but we must make sure that we're not shocking investment or potentially risking energy reliability when making these decisions.

MPP Chris Scott: It makes sense. Thanks a lot for that insight, Andrew.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We move to the official opposition. MPP West, the floor is yours.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to our presenters.

I'm going to start with Christopher Moonias. Welcome back to the Legislature.

MPP Mamakwa moved a motion—and it was discussed earlier—to have discussions about this in Thunder Bay, which is still 500 kilometres for you to travel, but would be a lot closer to northern Ontario. I find it ironic—in this bill and Bill 71, our previous mining bill—that we didn't go to Thunder Bay. We talk a lot about the Ring of Fire,

but we don't tend to go anywhere near there. It reminds me of years ago, when we were looking at mining legislation for health and safety. They wanted to have all the meetings in Toronto. The co-chair of our health and safety organization in Sudbury said, "How many mines have you got down there?"

I think you spelled it out really well—11,068 days of boil-water advisories; and that Victor mine, which did a lot of business and made a lot of money, didn't really prosper you. Very often, I'll hear from the Conservative government about how there's a mine that's going to open up and it will benefit First Nation communities—and you're here telling us in person that it didn't. You have boil-water advisories. You have a lack of housing, a lack of health care. Suicide is high. You're bringing children home in body bags.

Where is the disconnect in these conversations, between what I am hearing from my colleagues in the Conservative Party and what I'm hearing from people like you in First Nations?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: I find that a lot of the disconnect is between—it may not be the distance, but the lack of will.

The reason why we're under an 11,000-day boil-water advisory is because of a lack of government will to fix this. We fought and continue to fight to be heard. We even went to court. I was one of the lead plaintiffs in the First Nations drinking water class action that we took to Canada. Is that what it's going to take to be listened to? Did that solve the problem? Did we get out of the boil-water advisory because we went to court? No.

When the foreign legal system is imposed on us, it's not going to work. We have to be sitting at the table together. We have to talk about those things, talk about what the disconnects are. We have to have that communication.

I'm willing to talk. Twenty other people travelled here to support me, from Neskantaga. They want to have that discussion. But, no, you just want to ram the legislation on us.

Do we ever see an Ontario government official in Neskantaga? Not at any time when I was chief. I was chief for two terms. I never saw one.

MPP Jamie West: In your deputation—I may have written my notes down not exactly as you said it, but it was basically, "We will oppose the bill publicly—in the media, in the boardroom and in the land"—I think "in the courts" was also in there. It made me think about how business can be successful.

It costs a lot of money to open a mine. So if you have angel investors looking at opening a mine, and you have a mine site that doesn't have opposition from treaty rights holders and you have a mine site that does—I think in terms of return on investment. It's going to be hard to get a return on investment if the community members in that area—you'd be treaty rights holders, but I mean just any community members in the area—say that they're going to be fighting this in court, in land, and protesting.

Am I accurate about this not being a good way of doing business?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Are you doing business in a good way when you're imposing this bill on us? Is this doing business in a good way? No. Not at all. So we have to react accordingly.

Were we at all consulted while they were drafting this bill? No. Were we partners of the drafting of this bill? No. Did they come up north and talk to us about this bill? No.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

MPP Jamie West: That fits into my final question—you've sort of answered it. I was going to ask you about that.

If you weren't consulted in the drafting of the bill, you weren't consulted in any part of this—there hasn't been consultation in the past. Do you believe the government when they say that this is not going to reduce their ability to consult with First Nations communities?

Mr. Christopher Moonias: Well, they're already doing it—when they're not consulting and trying to get that bill.

You can make the best bill all you want, the best legislation that addresses everything, but if you're not going to involve the people, you're still going to face opposition. I learned that a long time ago. It doesn't matter how well written the law, policy or whatever is; if you don't consult the people, you're still going to get opposition, because they're not involved.

1510

MPP Jamie West: I hope my colleagues are listening.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we move to the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you, everyone, for coming in today and sharing your experience and your words with us.

My first questions are for former chief Christopher and Grand Council Chief Linda and Chief Duncan.

I read this quote from the government, that "the duty-to-consult obligation will not be compromised as part of this process."

I'm wondering if you feel the duty-to-consult obligation is being compromised right now.

Mr. Christopher Moonias: It's already compromised, because I have to travel 1,400 kilometres to be here to talk.

If you were serious about your duty to consult, you would move this session up north, to where the people are who are affected. Give them that opportunity to speak.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Chief Duncan?

Chief Duncan Michano: There was no consultation whatsoever in regard to this bill, and there are clearly some issues that the First Nations have with this bill.

When you're looking at the whole issue of mining, most First Nations in my area, the north Superior area, are not against mining and not against development, but they want to be involved, so they need to be consulted.

First of all, the bill needs to either be amended or suspended until there is full, transparent and meaningful First Nation consultation.

First Nations rights and legislation need to be protected. Section 35 rights need to be protected.

We need to establish a co-governance model where First Nations are equal partners in planning and decision-

making in those special economic zones. We want to be included in things. We need to develop our economic base for our communities, so that we can move forward for the future of our kids.

In our area, really, we need to remove mining claims from where First Nations deem mining should not take place. There's a whole balance of things that need to happen, so consultation and communication needs to take place between First Nations and the government before these things move forward.

That's our community's take on that. Meegwetch.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Linda, did you want to add?

Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige: We have our belts with us here today—and that's the relationship that the government is ignoring. The government cannot shuck its fiduciary responsibilities off onto proponents in order to expedite mineral extraction, resources extraction, or unleashing the economy.

There is a duty and obligation the government has to our nations, our treaty nations, our unceded and unsurrendered nations, and our Aboriginal title nations, that needs to be respected, and they also need to be honoured. This is the relationship that's being ignored through this process—through it starting; through this process, as well—and is likely to continue.

We are hopeful that the solutions we are providing are taken seriously. We are here to work together, but only when we have a respectful and willing treaty partner. Meegwetch.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much.

I have time for one quick last question, and that would be to Andrew Thiele from Energy Storage Canada. Thank you for the work you do for energy storage.

You mentioned that this bill is a win-win for development and conservation. I just want to know why you think that Bill 5 is a win for conservation.

Mr. Andrew Thiele: Maybe I misspoke, but I want to clarify in terms of the environmental—I'll clarify on two fronts, perhaps.

In terms of the duty to consult, ESC recognizes and acknowledges that the duty to consult—it's a constitutional right. Our members respect them in all the work that they do as they develop projects. As such, we support the implementation of Bill 5 in a manner that continues to respect and uphold the duty-to-consult requirements, and will into the future.

In terms of the environmental protections, again, just to clarify, we support the new streamlined process for the Species Conservation Act to the registration-first model that is already used in 95% of ESA-regulated projects today. All energy storage projects that are currently under way, that have occurred in the province and will occur in the future—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sorry; I've got to cut you off because we barely have time.

Do you respect the COSSARO, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario?

I'm not sure if you heard Dolf from the zoo speak on conservation today—they're very concerned about the new Species Conservation Act.

Mr. Andrew Thiele: I was unable to take in the committee sessions this morning. I did not hear the remarks that were provided, so I would be unable to comment on those.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Maybe you could watch them. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): That concludes the second panel's time.

Thank you very much, all of you—either here or via virtual presentation—for your thoughts and ideas.

We will take a short recess so that we can prepare the third panel's set-up.

The committee recessed from 1517 to 1525.

GREATER SUDBURY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WALPOLE ISLAND FIRST NATION, BKEJWANONG UNCEDED TERRITORY KINROSS GOLD CORP.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We're back. This is our third panel for the afternoon. We have with us the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce; Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong unceded territory; and Kinross Gold.

I'm going to ask the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce to start their deputation. They are with us via Zoom.

Please go ahead and state your name and your title.

Ms. Marie Litalien: I am Marie Litalien, president and CEO of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): You have seven minutes.

Ms. Marie Litalien: Thank you. I'm honoured to be here to represent the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, our board of directors, and our membership of nearly 800 businesses.

Part of the chamber's role and perhaps one of the most impactful is to respectfully hold government to account and to ensure their policies work with, not against, businesses.

Our businesses build strong, resilient communities and a globally competitive economy. When it comes to critical minerals, Sudbury and northern Ontario are essential to unlocking that growth.

I am here today to speak about the impact of this bill on business. I hope the government of Ontario is listening to the feedback of other partners, some of which are here today, to ensure that Bill 5 eliminates red tape, but not to the detriment of meaningful consultation with our First Nations people—and potential negative impacts on the environment. While I know these subjects are outside of the scope of the chamber's mandate, I do support our First Nations and environmental partners as they also seek to

ensure Bill 5's impacts do not have negative outcomes for their communities and our environment.

A healthy economy and a healthy community are interdependent, and when we get the process right, we can have both. Finland and Sweden demonstrate that it's possible to pair rich critical mineral resources with world-class environmental safeguards. Both countries enforce the European Union's stringent mineral mining directives and have layered on even tougher national regulations, all while holding some of the largest nickel, cobalt and lithium reserves on the planet.

Our province, with its skilled workforce, technical expertise and rich resource base can follow other successful examples in mining and exporting critical minerals without compromising on environmental leadership or on the rights of Indigenous people. Sudbury has seen the positive and impactful relationships between businesses and First Nations. We are an example of how achievable and effective clean and environmentally sound practices in mining are possible. This is critical for us, for our businesses and for the sustainability of our province. We urge you to do the work to streamline your own processes without negatively impacting these critical steps.

Outside of environmental regulations and the important need to consult with impacted communities, there is a lot of work that could be done by eliminating red tape. I have heard from our businesses about the impact of outdated bureaucratic processes that hold up development in the critical minerals sector. I have heard of permits sitting on an employee's desk for months, with no path forward for applicants. I have heard of existing mine sites waiting for years for simply an expansion permit. I have heard of differing requirements for projects of the same scope. I have heard of requirements being added after initial approvals. And the list goes on. The effects of these unacceptable timelines mean investment is done elsewhere. It means the loss of good-paying jobs for our northern communities. It means fewer municipal taxes to pay for services and infrastructure renewal we desperately need to continue to grow. It means we all lose. It is time to bring Ontario in line with other countries and neighbouring provinces. We know their timelines are much shorter. We know Ontario has fallen behind.

Bill 5 should take real steps towards modernizing outdated regulatory systems, reducing unnecessary red tape, and helping Ontario reclaim its role as an economic leader, not just in Canada but around the world.

Sudbury sits at the core of Ontario's mining, mining supply and service and critical minerals economy. For generations, our region has supplied the materials that build the cars we drive, the infrastructure we rely on, the technology we use every day—and now, the batteries that will power our future.

Critical minerals are the building blocks of clean energy, advanced manufacturing and technology innovation. From electric vehicles to renewable energy storage, Ontario has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to lead, but that opportunity comes with a clock ticking in the background. Countries like China and Indonesia have already

saturated much of the critical minerals market with subsidized production and strategic investments. If Ontario fails to respond with urgency, we will be left behind.

1530

Ontario's current system is among the slowest in Canada today. It can take up to 15 years or more to bring a mine into production in Ontario, largely due to overlapping, confusing regulatory processes and requirements that stretch across multiple provincial and federal ministries, none of whom have service levels or performance measures to adhere to. Requirements are applied inconsistently, with no clear lines of communication or accountability.

Meanwhile, other provinces have taken action to address these delays. Quebec is targeting a 40% reduction in permitting timelines for critical minerals projects that meet strict environmental engagement and social standards.

Bill 5 simplifies approvals by introducing a "one project, one process" team whose job is to accelerate decision-making, while enforcing mandated service-level targets. This cannot be underplayed. This is an essential piece. It takes the growth of our province out of the hands of individuals and into a measurable, accountable and consistent process. This gives industry the clarity and predictability it needs to invest and expand. It allows planning and the ability to make good, sound business decisions. It eliminates volatility for those who are making significant investments into our province. We hope this regulation will remove duplication, reduce administrative gridlock and clarify the roles of ministries and agents so that projects can move forward faster responsibly, transparently, in partnership with municipalities, Indigenous communities and environmental regulators.

Our goal as a chamber is to hold government accountable to these commitments, while continuing to bring forward solutions that help local businesses grow, compete and succeed at home and on the global stage. When government works with business and other partners, it reduces barriers and provides clarity, certainty and speed. We attract new investment. We create good jobs. We build stronger, more resilient communities.

I look forward to continuing to work with the province to ensure Sudbury businesses thrive for the benefit of our region, our province and the country, at the pace of business. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much.

I call upon our next presenter, from Walpole Island First Nation, to start her deputation.

Please identify yourself and who you represent.

Chief Leela Thomas: I also have presenters virtually, online: Stefan Premdas and Amanda Lackie, for Dresden CARED.

Remarks in Anishnaabemowin

I come before you on behalf of Bkejwanong unceded territory, also known as Walpole Island First Nation. I say meegwetch for the opportunity to speak today for the seven minutes I'm given.

I come here grounded in the belief that treaties are solemn nation-to-nation agreements—not land surrenders, but commitments to share land and protect rights. These agreements carry mutual obligations for both the British crown and our nations, including stewardship of the land.

Canada's treaty relationship has international weight. In the early 1980s, First Nations challenged Canada's constitutional patriation in the UK. The English Court of Appeal, led by Lord Denning, affirmed that the crown's treaty obligations could not be erased, stating that they should be honoured by the crown in respect of Canada and that no Parliament should do anything to lessen the worth of these guarantees.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764 affirmed our sovereignty and our role as partners, not subjects. Yet today, we continue to see provincial governments act as though these legal obligations do not apply to them.

Under *Haida Nation v. British Columbia*, 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that the crown, both federal and provincial, has a legal duty to consult Indigenous peoples when there is a real or constructive knowledge of potential impacts to Aboriginal or treaty rights. Even without formally proven title, consultation must be meaningful, timely and reflect the honour of the crown.

Today, however, this relationship is being undermined and our ancestors disrespected and our future generations put in danger, particularly in the case of the proposed Dresden landfill and the ominous Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act.

Over a year ago, York1 Environmental Waste Solutions submitted a proposal to resume and expand landfill operations at the former Dresden tile yard. Our nation never received any notice—no outreach, no consultation. We sent letters of opposition and tried calling, and we never heard anything back.

On April 17, 2025, we received a letter from the Ministry of the Environment, proposing to remove environmental assessment requirements for York1's landfill expansion. We were given two weeks to comment online.

On May 5, we finally met virtually with ministry representatives, and what we learned was disturbing: that York1 had supposedly sold the land, and so we didn't really know who the applicants are. They didn't know who was going to operate it, what the activities are actually going to be, and what potential contaminants could be from this landfill site. They admitted the site was contaminated by previous operators, and not much was done by them to stop it. No EA was ever done at this site. They said that technically, they do not have to consult with us, nor does York1.

Let's be clear: The site was never officially a landfill. Claims that it was simply dormant for four years or it's expanding are misleading. The land was never officially designated as such, confirmed by the municipality of Chatham-Kent.

York1 refuses to meet or speak with us, and yet the government deems them a trusted proponent. How can you build trust when you can't even meet with us to discuss

our concerns, so that we can learn all that the project entails and how it's going to impact our communities?

The process by which Bill 5 and the proposed Dresden landfill were proposed is not constitutional. A one-hour online meeting, a website comment box, and seven minutes here does not reflect the honour of the crown, nor does it show that you are acting in good faith. I commented on the ERO site, and yesterday I got an email saying that they will not accept my comment, because it went off topic. But the stuff I put in there is exactly what I'm sharing with you guys. So, again, our voices are being silenced when we are told to comment on the ERO site.

Since there's no application yet for this landfill, how can the ministry claim the waste will be non-hazardous? If you look up "demolition waste," it often includes toxins—lead, arsenic, mercury, asbestos—all of which threaten drinking water, the health of people and wildlife. And yet, these critical concerns are being sidelined.

With Bill 5, this government is proposing to give certain projects and trusted proponents sweeping exemptions, bypassing legislations, regulation and municipal bylaws within these new special economic zones.

What laws, exactly, are you so freely willing to ignore? In the case of the proposed Dresden landfill, we're looking at:

- the federal endangered species act;
- the Ontario Endangered Species Act—we have 88 endangered species in the Sydenham River;
- the Ontario landfill act, which says you can't put a landfill in wetlands and flood plains;
- the Environmental Protection Act, when you are limiting the environmental assessments;
- the Ontario Heritage Act, when it comes to reparation of our ancestors and burial sites and artifacts;
- municipal zoning laws and regulations; and
- section 35 of the Constitution Act, which guarantees our rights.

The government has failed in its duty to consult First Nations with this bill and the landfill project. It also has betrayed the people of Dresden, Chatham-Kent by quietly abandoning the promise of an environmental assessment.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Chief Leela Thomas: If this government truly believes this landfill is safe and you're so confident in York1 and its subsidiaries' operations and the ministry's oversight, then I ask: Why not put it in your own backyards and leave Dresden out of it? It's like the mayor of Chatham-Kent said: It's all about location, and we have numerous and fearful concerns for our lives.

Treaties are not relics of the past. They are solemn, living commitments to share the land, to respect and to protect resources.

I urge this assembly to honour your legal obligations; respect our treaty partners; protect the land, the water and the well-being of the people, both First Nation and non-First Nation; protect our children and future generations; and revoke Bill 5 and stop the Dresden landfill. Meegwetich.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now I call upon Kinross Gold to start their presentation. Please identify your name and your title.

Mr. Ben Little: My name is Ben Little, and I serve as senior vice-president, external relations, global, at Kinross Gold Corp.

Thank you, Chair, members of the committee and my fellow presenters on this panel for the opportunity to speak before you today.

1540

Kinross is a proudly Canadian company headquartered right here in Toronto, operating globally, but now focused heavily on investing where we live.

I'd like to begin my presentation by sharing a bit more about those investments—specifically, the Great Bear project, a world-class asset located in the Red Lake district in northwestern Ontario. Kinross acquired the property three years ago for \$1.8 billion and has since invested significantly in advancing exploration, permitting and engagement with local communities. Great Bear is a potentially multi-generational project. It is positioned to become one of Canada's largest gold mines once it is operational—a multi-decade mine projected to produce over 500,000 ounces of gold annually, support hundreds of direct, local jobs, and generate \$420 million in GDP and \$90 million in provincial tax revenue annually for many years to come.

This project reflects our long-term commitment to Ontario, to invest where we operate, where we're based, and create value that stays here. It is an estimated \$4-billion commitment to this province's future, supporting growth and opportunity in northwestern Ontario, building infrastructure and delivering lasting value for communities and the economy.

As we advance this project, our commitment to Ontario is grounded in meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities. We are proud to have strong, respectful, collaborative relationships with our partners at Great Bear, Lac Seul First Nation and Wabauskang First Nation. We are working closely with each of them to reach a long-term agreement that addresses environmental stewardship, employment and shared prosperity.

More broadly, I want to make it clear that we remain fully committed to transparent, good-faith consultation with all Indigenous rights holders identified by the crown. We recognize the communities may hold different perspectives, and we fully agree that maintaining the duty to consult is essential to responsible development of the mining sector in Ontario. Meaningful consultation and strong environmental and social practices are not at odds with development. They are essential to ensuring projects are built the right way, on a sustainable foundation, and they're essential to our approach at Kinross globally and, of course, here.

With this, I'd like to turn to the broader environment we are all currently experiencing, not just in the mining sector. The current global geopolitical context is highly uncertain—not a surprise to anyone in this room. From the threat of tariffs to supply chain instability and conflict,

jurisdictions are competing more aggressively than ever to attract investment and secure domestic resources, whether that's critical minerals or other.

Canadian mining companies are among the most environmentally responsible in the world. That is our reputation; operating internationally, I can vouch for that. We're not looking for deregulation. We're not looking for relaxed standards. We simply need clear processes and more timely decision-making.

Ontario has what it takes to lead. To do this, we need systems to provide the clarity, confidence and efficiency that support large-scale investment while upholding high standards of environmental protection and, of course, Indigenous rights.

Bill 5 is an ambitious and necessary step that meets the moment. It sends a strong message that Ontario is ready to modernize its permitting system, improve coordination, and position this province as a top-tier jurisdiction for responsible mining development.

To fully appreciate the value of this legislation, I think we need to first acknowledge some of the challenges of the current system. My colleague from the Greater Sudbury area, I think, itemized a good list of those in her initial remarks.

Ontario remains one of the world's leading mining jurisdictions and gets a lot of things right. But as it stands, proponents can face a system that is fragmented, duplicative and difficult to navigate. Timelines can be uncertain, responsibilities split amongst ministries, and consultation processes sometimes disconnected from each other. We recognize that this is structural, not intentional, but the consequences are real: project delays, increased costs, inconsistent decisions, lack of transparency, and difficulty sequencing approvals with confidence.

These challenges affect not just industry but also communities, rights holders and government itself. They create confusion around project scope, exacerbate consultation fatigue amongst Indigenous communities, delay economic benefits for all parties, and can ultimately fail to deliver better outcomes. In today's environment, that approach is no longer sustainable.

With that, Kinross welcomes the government's decisive action on Bill 5. We support efforts to simplify the regulatory system and improve clarity and coordination. A permitting process that is transparent, efficient and predictable benefits everyone.

We understand this new legislation proposes several structural changes intended to streamline in these areas: approvals, aligned administrative responsibilities, greater efficiency and accountability. In particular, I point to the new "one project, one process" model as a meaningful step forward. A single, coordinated process with defined service standard timelines and a dedicated project lead will help reduce duplication and allow inclusive consultation to occur more holistically.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Ben Little: Rather than focusing on the specific mechanisms, though, I'd like to focus on outcomes.

Ontario needs a system that allows responsible development to move forward with certainty and clarity while maintaining high standards that do not compromise our shared values. This legislation moves the province in that direction. We welcome the government's efforts to strike the balance, and we look forward to being part of the conversation as these reforms are further clarified.

Ontario has an opportunity to lead the next era of responsible mineral development, not just in Ontario, not just in Canada, but globally.

Ultimately, Bill 5 represents an opportunity to reinforce Ontario's global competitiveness—current crisis context—unlock greater socio-economic benefits for all stakeholders, and strengthen confidence in the province as a place to invest higher and build for the long term.

To conclude, Kinross is proud to be advancing a world-class project here in Ontario. We're deeply committed to responsible development in this province and equally committed to working—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you. Your time is up.

Now we will move to the first round of questioning, and this time we will start with the official opposition. MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to all the presenters. I'm going to start with Ben Little from Kinross Gold.

Just for everyone presenting, schedule 5—the “one process” system—is something that we're in favour of. It's the other parts of the bill—including the importance of consulting with First Nation treaty holders—that we have major concerns with, as well as the environment aspect.

Ben, in your opinion, what is the government's role in achieving free, prior, informed consent through the duty to consult?

Mr. Ben Little: I guess I can comment more broadly on the duty to consult. The duty to consult—and I see it appearing in many of the deposed remarks today—is pretty clear: It's an obligation of the crown underpinned by constitutionally protected rights and Supreme Court case law. I'm not here to discuss that specifically, but I don't see how any legislation can sidestep the duty to consult.

MPP Jamie West: The mining sector—maybe you can speak on behalf of them.

What requirements does your organization have when it comes to consultation?

Mr. Ben Little: The requirements are around the crown, and often some consultation is best performed by the crown and some consultation is best performed by the proponent. I think both have a role in it, and it's a serious, sober responsibility that has to be carried out in the most efficient and effective way possible. So that's our approach.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch to the three presenters: Marie Litalien, Chief Leela Thomas, and Ben Little.

Chief, I know you mentioned that you have some colleagues here.

Stefan Premdas and Amanda Lackie, I'm just wondering if you'd like an opportunity to say a few words. If you have any commentary, I'd welcome that.

Mr. Stefan Premdas: Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to speak today.

I'm actually sitting in the home of the first Black doctor in the Americas. This house was moved onto site, and it sits on the estate of William Whipper. That man wrote down the names of slaves as they ran away to freedom. I'm only a couple of blocks away from the Josiah Henson museum, formerly known as Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Our community has been investigating every aspect of this project since we accidentally discovered it on the first day of Black History Month.

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A lot of this project has caused concerns for us. We were elated when it was decided to be designated for a full, comprehensive environmental assessment, because we had seen information in the documents provided by the Minister of the Environment to us—they had grave concerns. They outline no less than five different areas of compliance that York1, as a proponent, would need to fall under—as well as requesting a full environmental compliance.

A couple of the concerning things for us, as a community, was when the Ministry of the Environment warned York1 that the level of ground cover they would put down, as well as the shallow depth of the aquifer—in addition to the fact that York1's numbers were based on nothing the ministry could substantiate. The ministry warned of a catastrophic aquifer collapse. Underpinning our concern is that when York1 was doing drilling, they hit the shale layer and observed higher than the lowest expected explosive gas levels, which, in a community like ours where just down the street we had a gas explosion which took out two homes—we're a little bit concerned that the aquifer that runs under our town is also intermingled with the gas layer. Any sort of collapse would potentially trigger a catastrophic explosion that would take out our entire town.

In addition to this, the federally protected Sydenham River, which is home to over 88 species, is also a spawning grounds for fish like perch, pickerel and gar. Perch and pickerel appear on our plates across this region. So the concern when we saw the direct discharge application where York1 showed they would be directly discharging their chemical-laden waters from the soil-washing process, directly into our river—it concerned us that the toxic bioaccumulation within the fish that we eat would happen within a very short period of time. The fact that our river experiences the 100-year floods every 20 to 50 years, where the town is inundated—but on a more annual basis, we experience flooding where the river rises between 20 feet and 50 feet into our backyards. Their direct discharge would eventually cause our own properties to be chemical-laden with the four pages of water-soluble chemicals from the soil-washing process.

Additionally, some of our concerns were that York1 has stated that 80% of the material they would be processing

on-site would be commercially sold to the United States markets, which does not escape the Trump tariff—and it does not deal effectively with Ontario's waste issues.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Stefan Premdas: Additionally, we found in York1's documents that they had taken up a surety bond—legally required under the ministry's rules—to conduct work on that site. However, they insured the neighbour's property; not the property they owned. They had done so providing false and misleading information to both the ministry and insurance companies for several years.

Some of these concerns are why we are asking the question, how does this company become a trusted proponent—as well as, while undergoing this process, when the EA was announced, they did not conduct the preliminary terms of reference. And while this was still ongoing, they failed to record 458 truckloads of contaminated soil in their Toronto property, racking up penalties of \$62,000. They were also fined for providing false and misleading information in that case.

The additional owners of this property, Dan and Andrew Guizzetti—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

We move to the government side. MPP Gallagher Murphy.

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you, Chair, and through you, I'd like to pose my question to Ms. Litalien of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

I noted in your comments, Ms. Litalien, that you talked about the red tape, bureaucracy, the length of time that it takes to get any of these mining projects approved and moving. You made the comment of, if we could do something similar to Finland—I think you mentioned Finland as a comparison.

Earlier this morning, when the minister was giving his presentation, he gave a comparison of Australia and that taking 27 months to get mining projects approved, compared to Ontario's 15 years to get mining projects approved. We also heard from the minister about the thousands of jobs that this can unlock and unleash—and being good-paying jobs.

Also, you mentioned in your deputation that you want to ensure that the duty to consult is not infringed upon. That has been discussed today. It does not impede on the duty to consult, as noted in section 7 of schedule 5.

All of this being said, could you please explain to the committee the importance of mining to the local Sudbury economy, as well as how many people it employs? Could you also please elaborate on the sector's presence there in Sudbury?

Ms. Marie Litalien: Outside of public sector, mining and mining supply and services are the biggest employers in our community. We have two very large mining companies that have many full-time, permanent jobs—in the thousands—not to mention the trickle effects on the mining supply and services that supply those mining companies with labour, with workforce, with contracted services, with all of the corporate services and the

cleaning, and all of those ancillary economic impacts that those large employers have.

When you think of the auto sector and the significant impact that happens when we talk about that in the media—when those close—the same goes for Sudbury in the mining and mining supply and services sector. That's how important it is to us, but also to ensuring that good-paying jobs exist for residents and that the local businesses and our small businesses have customers who spend money in their stores. So, really, the ripple effect is significant. It has significant effects on us.

Our mining companies here in town—even ones that have headquarters here or are based here—and our mining supply and services have absolutely expressed concerns about the time that it takes, the layers that they have to go through, the different people to speak to who have different takes or perhaps even, dare I say, opinions on maybe a permit that's going through the process. The concerns I've heard from businesses are not related to First Nations partnerships or environmental requirements. They're more related to the bureaucratic processes and administrative processes that are very slow and not modernized.

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I have to say, as part of this legislation, that's what we're tackling—trying to reduce the government side by 50%, so to really eliminate some of those delays that you were talking about.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: This is to Ms. Litalien.

Are you aware that this bill enhances environmental protections and toughens the legislation—that includes new enforcement measures, including jail time? Were you aware of this—in Bill 5?

Did you hear the question?

Ms. Marie Litalien: Oh, sorry. Is it for me?

MPP Paul Vickers: Yes.

Ms. Marie Litalien: Sorry.

I don't want to give an opinion on what the environmental changes or the changes to other aspects—

MPP Paul Vickers: Would it help if I give you the question again?

Ms. Marie Litalien: No, I don't think so. I am not an expert in environmental—I don't have an issue with that.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Ms. Marie Litalien: My speech today is about the red tape and that process and the administrative process.

I am aware of the bill and what it means for environmental protections and sustainability and for First Nations communities, but I am not here to speak on behalf of those or on behalf of those people.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Scott.

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MPP Chris Scott: This one is for Ben Little, senior vice-president, external relations, at Kinross Gold.

Mr. Little, Bill 5 is about delivering certainty, coordination and speed for responsible mineral development in Ontario, and it's doing that without compromising environmental integrity.

As one of the largest players in the sector, how do you see these reforms helping Ontario compete globally for critical mineral investment, and what message do they send to companies like yours about the kind of jurisdictions—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up. Keep that thought for the next round.

Now we move to the third party. MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to thank all of our panellists for speaking today and providing their deputations.

I want to move back to Chief Thomas, who we are lucky to have in the room today.

Earlier, we had the mayor of Chatham-Kent here, who made his position on the Dresden landfill very clear. But I would like to hear more from your perspective, from your community's perspective, on this landfill.

When listening to your presentation, the thing that stuck out to me the most was when you mentioned issues of respect and honour.

Looking at Bill 5 and the decision-making process around the Dresden landfill so far, do you think it respects your inherent right to self-determination and your right to make decisions regarding your lands and resources?

Chief Leela Thomas: No, I don't feel like it does. We weren't consulted at all. Usually, the proponent itself would do the consultation with us, so I found it really odd that the Ministry of the Environment would come and try to do some consultation with us. They're supposed to be the government arm to help protect us against these proponents, so why are they doing the consulting on their behalf?

Walpole Island First Nation isn't—and hearing from other First Nations, we're not opposed to economic development. I was an education program manager for five years, and I know how important it is to have an economy and jobs for the people.

Walpole Island First Nation, because we're non-ceded territory, in my opinion has given much to the provincial and the federal government in terms of boosting the economy, and we don't get any of the benefits, but we're impacted daily and will continue to be impacted for the future. We are the ones who have to suffer.

Take, for example, Sarnia Chemical Valley. There's a possibly trillion-dollar industry, and yet they leak waste water in there. And we have crude oil. We had a crude oil spill back in March, and we had to shut off the water, and that was a big scare for our community. Hydrocarbons—and we have forever toxins that are leaching into our sediments in the water. We don't see anything from Chemical Valley industry helping us, yet the health of our community is impacted because of that—our drinking water; the fish; all the wildlife in the Great Lakes, in our river. That's our primary drinking water.

Not only that, but we've helped with the dredging in our community so that ships can go by, and then again, we don't see any benefit from that, yet we have boats that brought in the phragmites. Our community is surrounded by phragmites, and it's impacting our hunters and fishing—

their way of life, their sustenance. Again, we don't see any benefits from that.

We don't have the Ministry of the Environment going after industry for all the stuff that they're polluting and the environmental stuff that's happening to our community.

Not only that, but the ships are bringing in other invasive species like zebra mussels and other dangerous fish that can overtake our lake.

With this landfill, it's just another prime example of no one listening to our concerns, and we're going to have the long-term impacts from that—not just now; we're talking about future generations. That water flows into our community and impacts our way of life and our future generations. To our community, that's environmental racism. You're impacting First Nations communities, small communities, poverty communities for other people. What do we see out of it other than hurt and harm for our communities?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to stress that fact back to the committee—not a single group that provided deputations today is against economic development. This government tries to frame it as a question of whether you are for economic development or you are against it. Every single person who has come here today has said, “We are for it,” but what they want is respect. They want to be part of this conversation.

Just to come back to the Dresden landfill a bit more—I just keep coming back to that issue of respect and honour that you were referring to, that this bill just seems to fly completely in the face of.

When you see this decision in Bill 5 to exempt this landfill from a comprehensive EA that was promised, can you feel anything other than disrespect towards Indigenous rights entirely?

Chief Leela Thomas: That is exactly what we feel—like our voices don't matter, after all that our First Nations people have given up since the settlers came. We came in good faith with the government and the crown to have these treaties established. With this Bill 5 that you are pushing through, it feels like a slap in the face.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Chief Leela Thomas: All First Nations across Ontario are going to be impacted by it. Again, we aren't against economic growth, but we want to be consulted. We want to know what the full impacts are going to be because we have to protect our people, our future generations.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Chief, with my final minute, please, if you have anything else that you would like to say to the committee, feel free.

Chief Leela Thomas: I shared a video with you guys just because I had only seven minutes today, and I hope you guys had a chance to watch it and to get a full impact of what this Dresden landfill will entail and how it will impact not only Dresden and Tupperville and Wallaceburg and our First Nation, but all those who are drinking from the Great Lakes. They are all going to be impacted by this landfill.

I'm coming to you on behalf of our First Nation, begging you to think about us, because we are suffering—we are

suffering from these economic developments for other industries and for the province—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

We will move to the second round of questioning, with MPP West from the official opposition.

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank all of the presenters. I won't have time to speak to all of you because the time is so short. I really think we should have more consultation on a bill like this because it is so important.

I want to point out that there have been a couple of paper tigers discussed today, in terms of fines and penalties. We are told about how important the duty to consult is, but we heard several times today from different First Nations treaty rights holders that they weren't consulted on the forming of this bill, so I don't think that holds water.

Then there were questions that were raised about fines and the maximum fines that people could get. I'm reminded, as the shadow minister for labour, that there has been the doubling of maximum fines for labour, but they didn't use the previous maximum fines. So these feel like paper dragons to me. Not to mention that we have \$60-million worth of wage theft which hasn't been collected—that the government is aware of but hasn't collected. It doesn't make it fair for other members of the chambers of commerce to be successful.

I want to ask my friend Marie Litalien, from the chamber of commerce in Sudbury, a question.

Before I ask the question, I want to let you know that my party—as New Democrats, we're very in favour of this one-stop process. We think this is the good part of the bill, and if we had our druthers we would simply erase the rest of the bill. The rest of the bill is the part that is nonsense—the environmental side, the side that is affecting First Nations, the kind of get-out-of-jail-free card that the special economic zones create, causing such frustration. Sometimes they won't listen to me because I'm a New Democrat, and if I say, "White," they say, "Black"—that kind of thing.

As the present chief executive officer for the chamber of commerce, can you explain how it negatively impacts business in our community in northern Ontario when we are not consulting with First Nations properly and we are not following environmental processes properly?

Ms. Marie Litalien: Thank you, MPP West, for the question.

Sudbury believes strongly in these things, and if you look—in environmental sustainability and stewardship. I think you can see that, from our world-recognized re-greening efforts to the awards that some of our larger mining companies have had for their emission-reduction projects. There are multiple economic development corporations we work with that are led by our First Nations—and part of our First Nations—and even joint ones, and joint projects between businesses and First Nations, where there are equal profit-splitting and agreements between those businesses. So Sudbury does believe strongly in both of those things.

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I do believe that the bureaucracy and processes have the ability to make significant change in the timelines that are currently in place.

As I said, there are many very smart, passionate groups who are advocating on behalf of First Nations and their consultation and their rights, and many who are talking about the environmental side of things. So I do believe that it's very important to listen to that feedback, and that I focus on where my priorities should be, based on my area of expertise.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you.

I'm going to pass it to my colleague MPP Mamakwa.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Thank you, Chair.

I have a quick question to Chief Thomas from Walpole Island.

One of the things I heard in your speech was on betrayal from this government and this bill, especially from a First Nations perspective, from a rights holder perspective, where we talk about free, prior and informed consent.

I'm just wondering if you have any working relationship with your MPP, Steve Pinsonneault, and if you have had any chats or if there's any discussion on what you're concerned about.

Chief Leela Thomas: Unfortunately, no. We did send some letters, and I sent him my video as well. Dresden CARED has been trying to reach him. A lot of his constituents have been trying to reach him—against this Dresden landfill. The only thing we heard recently was a video he posted on his Facebook page, where he's saying he's just one vote out of 80-some votes. Nothing communication-wise has gone back and forth with our First Nation.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that he's a representative for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I know that much. And I know that CBC News was reporting that he has been silent for too long, and he doesn't support the proposed rural dump. I'm not sure where he is. If he doesn't even respond to you, where is he? Is he here? I don't know.

Chief Leela Thomas: I think that's a question a lot of us are asking. Where is he?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Where's Waldo?

Chief Leela Thomas: Yes.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I think that's one of the reasons why we ask—because, again, there is such an infringement on the rights of First Nations people in this bill. All day, that's all we heard from leadership and rights holders of these lands. Yes, there are some industry people who support certain areas of the bill. But again, it's going back to the old colonial way of divide and conquer—the colonial way of, "This is our land. This is not your land." They're being told.

What type of action do you think the rights holders, the leadership, will take if this bill goes through as is?

Chief Leela Thomas: Unfortunately, I think you have a lot of First Nations that will be taking this to the courts, if that's our only recourse, and possibly protesting in

certain areas. This all could be avoided if the consultations started earlier.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: That's one of the things that's very clear. This bill is—we're taking a step 15, 20 years backwards on the path of reconciliation. Certainly, I would say that's not right. There are so many organizations, so many people in industry that have worked towards creating these relationships, and it's going to fracture these relationships—and this bill will do it.

I thank you for coming here. I saw your video. Meegwetch for that. It's very clear and straightforward on the messaging. Meegwetch.

Chief Leela Thomas: Meegwetch.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We move to the government side. MPP Scott.

MPP Chris Scott: We're going to try this one again—to Ben Little at Kinross.

Mr. Little, Bill 5 is about delivering certainty, coordination and speed for responsible mineral development in Ontario without compromising environmental integrity.

As one of the largest players in the sector, how do you see these reforms helping Ontario compete globally for critical mineral investment, and what message do they send to companies like yours about the kind of jurisdiction this government is building in Ontario?

Mr. Ben Little: Thank you for the question.

It's well known in the mining industry, globally, that it takes—I think there was a reference to this earlier—approximately 15 years to develop a mine in Ontario, in Canada. Some jurisdictions in Canada have addressed that and are making efforts to shorten that timeline; I believe Ontario is now. I think in mining it really is a global competition for capital and investment, so the reference points can't just be other provinces; they have to be other jurisdictions. The United States has classified gold as a strategic mineral now—and all those projects are subject to a more efficient permitting process.

So I think the message that it sends to the industry is that concerns about delays and permitting are being addressed, and it's sending a positive signal to the mining world that Ontario is a beautiful jurisdiction; it's a place to do business; it's a low-risk jurisdiction—rule of law. It's got all the things you look for when you're looking at large-scale infusions of capital, creation of jobs. I think this effort is consistent with that and sends a positive signal not just to Ontario, not just to Canada, but globally, to the mining sector.

MPP Chris Scott: I really appreciate that insight. Thank you, sir.

Just to build on that really quickly before I turn it over to my colleagues—do you see Bill 5 as the kind of policy signal that helps de-risk investment in Ontario compared to other jurisdictions? If so, how important is that certainty when you're making long-term decisions about major mining projects here or elsewhere?

Mr. Ben Little: I think there are parts of the legislation to be fleshed out in regulations, and then we'll have a

picture of the whole thing. But I think, yes, an effort of this nature is de-risking.

We're a publicly traded company listed in New York, listed in Toronto. We need the support of our boards, we need the support of our shareholders before we put \$4 billion into a jurisdiction. I think that in making that case, these sorts of initiatives, done right, are helpful.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Cuzzetto.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank all the presenters who came out today and the ones who are online here.

I'm going to ask Ben Little a question.

I drive by your office here in Toronto when I come to work every day.

Ben, you've mentioned the duty to consult. As you mentioned, section 7 of schedule 5 is reaffirming that here—that we're going to still continue doing that.

You've mentioned, as well, that it takes 15 to 17 years to open up a mine here in Ontario. If I started my career in the mining industry at 25, before we even open that mine, I'll be probably 40 or 42, probably at the end of my career.

What would that do to our markets, and how can we create more jobs in the province of Ontario—if we would reduce the time to open up a mine?

Mr. Ben Little: It would attract capital, first of all. As I mentioned, when we look to allocate capital on projects, to develop projects into mines, we pay careful attention to the jurisdiction, and we assess risk. Fifteen years has a monetary value. You're just counting your cash flows etc. So to the degree that that is de-risked and reduced in a manner that makes it more competitive with say, Australia, you're creating a higher present value that can support a decision to proceed with the investment.

1620

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: How much more time do we have?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute and 40 seconds.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Does anybody want to ask or—no? We're okay.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We move to the third party. You have six and a half minutes. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you, everyone, for coming in today and sharing your stories, thoughts, voices from your communities with us.

My first questions will be for Ben Little from Kinross Gold.

Thank you very much, Ben. It's nice to meet you—online, I guess—and hear about your company and the story of the Great Bear project. It was very enlightening.

You mentioned that you're not looking for relaxed standards. As was iterated already from our colleagues down the table, the Liberals as well agree with—I'm not going to say cutting red tape, because that means something to this government, but definitely streamlining processes. And “one project, one process” is absolutely the way to go.

My colleague and I both were at city hall and know bureaucracy full well—how it can hold up things.

You mentioned you're not looking for relaxed standards, and you feel like you want to uphold environmental

standards and Indigenous rights. It seems like Kinross Gold does that with their projects, from what you say.

I'm just wondering, if you're upholding environmental standards, what you think of the government ripping up the Endangered Species Act and coming up with this new, weak, confusing and ridiculous Species Conservation Act.

Mr. Ben Little: I think on that, generally, it's shifting process around a little bit—is my understanding of the act. A company must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines etc., and if they don't, they can be sanctioned. So I think the teeth in terms of the environmental standards remains there.

Again, a lot of things need to be fleshed out in regulations, so we look to that—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, I don't know if you've dug into the details, but essentially, with the Species Conservation Act, where the species sleeps will be protected and where the species lays its eggs will be protected, and that is it. I'm sure you go outside your bedroom, right? And you go to the hospital, maybe. Your whole life revolves around other areas, rather than just where you sleep, right? So does that make sense to you from a logical point of view? You seem pretty logical to me.

Mr. Ben Little: Thank you for your explanation and interpretation of those provisions.

I don't have much of a comment without becoming more familiar with those provisions.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: As with most businesses, you want certainty, transparency, predictability.

Mr. Ben Little: Yes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: In this government, their modus operandi is to create a crisis; give everyone heart attacks; incite people to protest, stand up and rally for their rights; walk it back; repeat, repeat, repeat. I think that Kinross Gold would not want to be caught up in that mayhem, that nightmare.

Do you think the government is coming at this bill the right way, when you're hearing from other people here today that they haven't done it right—the duty to consult?

Mr. Ben Little: That would be a question that would fall a little bit outside my bailiwick as a corporate proponent of a mining project in Ontario. That's a political matter.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I know that Kinross wants certainty, like everyone else. Thank you very much.

Over to Chief Thomas: The mayor of the municipality of Chatham-Kent came in this morning.

What do you think of the fact that the Premier did say the Dresden landfill would need an environmental assessment, to be revived after decades of lack of use?

Also, your current representative, your member of provincial Parliament—when he was councillor, he said that there needs to be an environmental assessment, and now they are flip-flopping on that. What you think of that?

Chief Leela Thomas: I wouldn't make a promise and then go back on it, but that's my character.

I just find it odd that the proposed Dresden landfill is the only project, under Bill 5—that the province is

planning to revoke its EA requirements. Why is that? I've never seen a bill do that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you find it curious that the government is focused on the Dresden landfill site versus the others? There are 5,000 closed landfills in all of Ontario. Why Dresden?

Chief Leela Thomas: That's a good question. Again, I can speculate like everyone else, but it just seems odd to me.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: If they were really worried about threats from the US and not shipping our trash to Michigan, why not grant temporary exemptions for existing landfill sites to receive more materials? That is a quick, logical, smart thing to do.

Chief Leela Thomas: We have hosting agreements with various landfills in all our traditional territories, and one is Ridge Landfill. We were told the same thing that the mayor was told: that they have the capacity to take on the extra waste—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

That concludes our third panel for this afternoon.

Thank you very much to all of our presenters. Thank you for sharing your valuable time with us and your valuable input. Have a nice day.

We will take a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1628 to 1633.

TIMMINS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ROBINSON HURON
WAAWIINDAMAAGEWIN
CANADIAN RENEWABLE
ENERGY ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We are back. We have Timmins Chamber of Commerce, Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin, and the Canadian Renewable Energy Association. So we have our final three presenters, and we will start with Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

Of course, it goes without saying, when you start presenting, please state your name and title.

I believe Timmins Chamber of Commerce is joining us virtually. Go ahead. The floor is yours.

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee. My name is Tom Faught Jr., and I am the 2024-25 president of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. With me today is Keitha Robson, our CAO, and MJ Filo, our communications and policy lead. We appreciate this opportunity to share the perspective of our northern Ontario business community on Bill 5.

The Timmins chamber represents a vibrant and diverse business community deeply invested in the prosperity and responsible development of northern Ontario. Northern Ontario holds vast critical mineral deposits, vital for a green economy and global supply chains. However, complex regulatory processes have long created investment barriers. Bill 5, the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our

Economy Act, aims to address these challenges by streamlining. We commend its intent.

The proposed mine authorization and permitting delivery team—a “one project, one window” approach—is a significant step. We also acknowledge the potential of specialized economic zones to attract targeted investment and stimulate economic activity. However, Bill 5 introduces broad changes that require careful consideration. Our recommendations build on Bill 5’s positive intentions, aiming for a balanced approach to ensure a strong industry, empowered Indigenous communities and a protected environment.

To ensure Bill 5 effectively achieves its goals while upholding responsible and sustainable development in northern Ontario, the Timmins chamber offers the following recommendations.

We begin by addressing the crucial need for enhancing process efficiency and accountability within the regulatory framework. MAPDT, as I’ll call it, should be granted a clear, legally defined lead-agency mandate, with the authority to genuinely coordinate and enforce timelines across ministries. This team must be heavily invested in—including specialties in environmental and Indigenous affairs—to ensure thoroughness is never sacrificed for speed.

Strategic investment and leveraging the Digital Twin Ontario initiative will create comprehensive virtual models of major projects, facilitating data-driven decision-making, enhancing predictive analysis, and supporting more efficient regulatory approvals. Building on this, project efficiency should also be strengthened with a public-facing online tracking system for all major project approvals, creating a centralized portfolio for a seamless user experience.

The adoption of a concurrent approval and permitting process, supported by risk-based assessments, will allow various approval stages to run in parallel, to significantly compress overall project timelines. To support this, clearer statutory timelines for all stages of approvals should be implemented, defining stop-the-clock events to ensure both agency accountability and transparency.

Beyond process efficiencies, our recommendations also extend to fostering genuine Indigenous partnership and economic opportunity. All development processes must foster respectful engagement and true collaboration with Indigenous communities, explicitly recognizing their rights and interests. To support this, frameworks that support Indigenous-led economic development should be established, including core mechanisms for benefit-sharing resource projects, and supporting Indigenous capacity-building in the resource sector.

Crucially, our perspective encompasses upholding high standards for sustainable development, particularly as we consider new tools like special economic zones. Any expedited development process must maintain and, where possible, enhance high environmental protection standards. This includes leveraging innovation and best practices in environmental litigation and rehabilitation, along-

side robust requirements for long-term monitoring site closure reflecting a commitment to future generations.

For specialized economic zones, clear criteria for their designation and operation must be developed and publicly consulted on. This process must adhere to strict principles of clarity and transparency, specifying precise limits on any regulatory exemptions, and mandating robust mechanisms for local and Indigenous community input and ongoing accountability. Furthermore, it is imperative to explicitly confirm that all existing provincial labour and safety laws will apply fully within the special economic zones, ensuring no compromise on worker protection and to ease concerns.

Finally, to truly unlock northern Ontario’s potential, we must also focus on strengthening our investment in climate and workforce development. Strategic infrastructure investments such as roads and energy grids must be prioritized to enable responsible resource development across northern Ontario. Similarly, targeted workforce development programs should be developed in collaboration with industry and educational institutions, ensuring northern Ontario is prepared for the jobs created by these new projects.

The Timmins chamber believes that these recommendations offer a pragmatic path forward. They will help build strong public confidence and foster a truly sustainable and prosperous northern Ontario.

I want to thank all the members of the standing committee for your attention and consideration, and I welcome any questions.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much.

Before we hear from our next panellist, MPP Mamakwa has a point of order. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Chair. I’m just, again, asking the committee for an agreement between ourselves, for Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin to have two speakers within their presentation. Meegwetch.

1640

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you. Do we have an agreement? Okay.

We go to our next presenters, Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin.

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: Meegwetch.

Remarks in Anishnaabemowin.

My name is Scott McLeod. I am the regional chief with the Anishinabek Nation, of which you heard our grand chief speaking earlier today—Grand Chief Linda Debassige. I’m here today representing 21 of the First Nations within the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory.

I would like to first acknowledge and thank you for the opportunity to present here. But I want to start with a reminder, and the reminder is that Ontario is not a nation. The Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 is pre-Confederation—it’s pre-Canada and definitely pre-Ontario. It’s based on a nation-to-nation relationship, and within that, there are treaty obligations that contain free, prior and informed consent. Notably, in those three terms, “prior” is the operative word here. We are not getting prior consent on this bill. It’s also a message that the obligations to treaty

are not unnecessary red tape. We've heard a lot over the day, even from some of the opposition MPPs, that this entire bill is based on promises and—"Trust me that we're going to do this."

I pose the question to the government of Ontario: What reasons do we have to trust you? If we look at our relationship over the last 170 years, I think you'll struggle to find a reason as to why we should actually trust you.

That's why we're asking for non-derogation and non-abrogation clauses built into the legislation—not in preamble, not in appendices, but built into that. If your commitment is that strong to comply with the consultations, regarding treaty—free, prior and informed consent—then build it into the bill. We don't see that, and we don't trust you. I'm just being blunt. We don't trust that it will be upheld.

Again, we are not in opposition to any development; we are looking for responsible development.

This bill was introduced without consultation of First Nations, without consent—and disregard for any Anishinaabe laws and jurisdictions within our territories.

The legislation centralizes decision-making in cabinet. It overrides land uses, processes and environmental laws, which is the basis of our treaty. The basis of our treaty was based in environmental protection. These are our homelands. It fast-tracks development at the expense of oversight.

We heard Mr. Lecce speak earlier this morning—and then it was reiterated by MPP Gallagher Murphy—about the example of Australia. Well, there's one thing that he failed to tell you about Australia: While Australia is advancing mineral development through strategic mineral zones and streamlined approvals, it does so within a legal framework that requires meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples under the Native Title Act. Companies must negotiate agreements with traditional owners before proceeding, often resulting in benefit-sharing agreements that include jobs, training, compensation and environmental protections. Unlike Ontario's Bill 5, which proposes fast-tracked development without clear mechanisms for First Nations consent or involvement, Australia's approach embeds Indigenous rights in law, making consultation and partnership mandatory, not optional. So you have to include everything when you're using these examples.

When my friend Mr. Mamakwa pressed Mr. Lecce and Mr. Rickford about their understanding of Aboriginal title and treaty, they had no answer. They kept deflecting to section 35 of Canada's Constitution.

Let's be clear: Our relationship is not based on Canada's Constitution. Our rights do not come from section 35. They are inherent rights. Our relationship is not defined by section 35. They are defined by treaty.

On May 20, 2025, the Robinson Huron chiefs passed a unanimous resolution opposing Bill 5, called for immediate pause on the legislative process and directed RHW to pursue political, legal and diplomatic strategies. It affirms that no free, prior and informed consent has been provided.

Bill 5 treats us like stakeholders, not as governments, not as nations.

We also heard yesterday about \$3.1 billion in investments, which have been earmarked for investments in First Nations.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: Investments in First Nations are mandatory, regardless of Bill 5.

It's repulsive to listen to this government use treaty obligations as political leverage to pass their bill. Our First Nations, particularly in the north, have been suffering for over a century from neglect of this government.

We hear industry talk about how economic benefits are going to save the livelihoods and the way of living for Canadians. I'm sure they have fresh drinking water in their taps. I'm sure the water in their toilets is cleaner than the tap water in some of our First Nations.

Our treaties need to be upheld. Ontario does not outright own the lands in our treaty territories. We agreed to share them.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

Now we move to our third presenter, Canadian Renewable Energy Association. Please state your name and title.

Mr. Leonard Kula: I am Leonard Kula, vice-president of policy for eastern Canada at the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, or CanREA for short. CanREA is the national industry association advocating for wind energy, solar energy and energy storage solutions supporting Canada's energy transition. Our network of about 350 companies represents all portions of the value chain that develop and operate facilities across Canada.

Ontario has a very reliable and clean power system. The foundation is a diverse resource fleet that provides electrical energy where and when needed. This includes about 8,000 megawatts of wind and solar generation that have been successfully operating for up to 20 years in Ontario.

Ontario's electricity system faces a monumental challenge. Over the next 25 years, demand for electricity in Ontario is projected to grow by at least 75%, presenting a significant challenge to build new and replace retiring generation. The narrative has changed somewhat over the last six months, but the imperative for action remains.

The electricity sector can support many objectives, including energy security, infrastructure jobs and investment to diversify the Ontario economy, and energy to support strategic initiatives. We are already heading down the path of meeting these needs. Over the last three years, Ontario has procured about 3,000 megawatts of energy storage facilities, which you have heard earlier. CanREA and its members are proud to note that in last year's procurement of battery energy storage facilities, nine of 10 projects selected by the IESO had 50% or greater Indigenous ownership, and all projects will engage with Indigenous communities on the duty-to-consult requirements.

CanREA supports the triple goals of a reliable, affordable and clean electricity sector. Wind, solar and energy storage are clean, low-cost and quickly deployable resources.

Having set this context, CanREA has several comments regarding Bill 5.

For the last 20 years, wind, solar and energy storage facility owners have dutifully followed the environmental laws and permitting requirements in developing and operating our facilities. It hasn't been easy. At times, the rules we follow have been unclear and inconsistent.

1650

CanREA is generally supportive of efforts to provide regulatory clarity and certainty for the development and operation of wind, solar and energy storage facilities.

Clear, balanced environmental processes are essential to ensure streamlined and cost-effective deployment, operational certainty for current and future projects, strong partnerships with Indigenous communities and local stakeholders, and long-term investment confidence in Ontario's clean electricity future.

CanREA acknowledges that several changes in the legislation are enabling in nature, and we appreciate the government's commitment to posting proposed regulations on the Environmental Registry of Ontario for further consultation, review and input, and we look forward to commenting at that time.

Bill 5 enables the government to prohibit participation by foreign-owned companies and exclude components from some foreign countries in electricity sector procurements. On this, CanREA agrees that bad actors, especially those that are foreign state-owned entities, should not be allowed to participate in the Ontario electricity sector. Cyber attacks could have significant impacts on our electricity system, and bad actors should not be permitted to own or operate facilities in Ontario.

CanREA understands the challenging geopolitical environment in which we operate and that government needs tools to manage threats to our economy and electricity system. CanREA also understands the significant evolving needs for new sources of electricity supply in Ontario. To support electricity sector objectives, we know that the best outcomes arise when a broad set of participants compete in procurements. In addition, for some technologies, there are very limited sources of supply. If we choose to limit components from certain jurisdictions, then we should manage these transitions carefully, perhaps coincident with the development of domestic supply chains. Ultimately, we are committed to helping ensure that all electricity technologies can continue to participate in Ontario's resource procurements. This is essential for grid reliability, economic growth, community benefits, and affordable electricity for ratepayers.

CanREA offers the following advice as the government considers prohibiting participation of foreign-owned companies and excluding components from foreign countries:

First, any new component restrictions should be applied prospectively, as retroactive restrictions could undermine existing and ongoing procurements; jeopardize near-term grid reliability and affordability; disrupt Indigenous equity partnerships, municipal and community benefits, and local job creation; and diminish investment confidence in Ontario's electricity sector. We support the government's

approach that any new rules apply only to future procurements.

Second, any new sourcing restrictions should be implemented gradually and pragmatically to allow for the development of alternative supply chains. Technologies like solar energy and battery energy storage are heavily reliant on components manufactured in China and are not yet available from other regions. Sudden restrictions could delay or prevent project delivery and increase costs for ratepayers.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Leonard Kula: Third, incentives should be introduced to build domestic and North American supply chains, including incentivizing sourcing components from outside of China, growth of domestic manufacturing and continental partnerships, and private sector innovation and investment in Ontario-based production.

Fourth, consultation with the sector on future regulations is critical. To avoid unintentional consequences, we recommend that government share any proposed regulations or policies with the sector, provide time for industry feedback and collaborative problem-solving, and work with stakeholders to protect technology diversity, resilience and procurement fairness.

In conclusion, CanREA members, working with our Indigenous partners, are eager to help meet Ontario electricity challenges and support Ontario prosperity and security.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you.

We will start our first round of questioning with the third party. MPP Tsao.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Chair, my question is to the representative from CanREA.

We've had the opportunity today to hear from a number of Indigenous groups on their take on Bill 5 and their relationships with organizations that would also be impacted by Bill 5 on their territories.

My question to you that I'm interested to learn more about is, what would your expectations around member organizations of CanREA be, working with rights and title holders to develop projects and ensure equity partnerships?

Mr. Leonard Kula: It is foundational to the way that we expect to do business. We have a number of Indigenous members of CanREA. We have an Indigenous board seat. It is foundational. We think of no other way of doing business but to engage with our Indigenous partners. So it is fundamental to the way we think about things.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: And then for existing projects that you have right now, that members have ongoing—what would some of the impacts of Bill 5 that you can foresee have on some of these existing projects?

Mr. Leonard Kula: I'll maybe raise the response a little bit higher.

The government of Ontario and the IESO have signalled the need for significantly greater amounts of electricity going forward. We've got important resources like Pickering nuclear going offline. We've got projec-

tions of higher electricity demand, and there are signals that we need a lot more electricity.

There is significant competition in the world for capital, for labour, for people's attention. Canadian companies, international companies are looking for places to put that. Supply chains are stressed. So it's important to create an environment of stability, of certainty, to go ahead and create that right investment climate, to go ahead and build electricity generation in Ontario. To be honest, that speaks for almost every technology, not just the CanREA technologies.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: In a past life, I did a lot of work in economic development with the province, on the bureaucratic side. One thing I always heard a lot from businesses was that when you're changing policy, what's most important is that they have the proper runway to adapt to changes, whether it be regulatory or otherwise.

Given this short time frame—that we're seeing the introduction of this bill now being run through committee very quickly and potentially being implemented quite quickly—are there any drawbacks that you see to such a speedy implementation of such a huge bill, with huge implications for your members?

Mr. Leonard Kula: I think it comes down to a question of balance, frankly.

There are a lot of challenges to developing projects across Canada; Ontario certainly has its challenges. The development community is very keen to go ahead and address those challenges.

Of course, everything needs to be done in a balanced and sensible and reasonable way. We both want to address issues, but we want to do it in a sensible fashion. We've already signalled, with my comments, that over the past number of years, we've been very engaged in responding and working with government to go ahead and address issues, and we intend to do that going forward as well.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you to everyone for coming in and sharing your information and experience with us.

I'll talk to Tom from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

Tom, a couple of things jumped out at me from your presentation. Something you said—thoroughness should never be compromised for speed. You talked about data-driven decision-making.

Just from your knowledge of Bill 5, do you think this is data-driven decision-making—proposing this bill?

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: A quick answer would be yes, as long as you adopt the recommendations we have, going towards a more streamlined process with modernized processes, improved coordination and effective digital tools. Eventually, the efficiency would drive the streamline or the ability to fast-track without compromising anything else.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I think we agree with the “one project, one process” idea. But what about the removal of the Endangered Species Act, which is working

quite fine now and with experts in that field who are on COSSARO, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario? Do you not think that we should continue to respect to them because they practise data-driven decision-making? They're experts in their field, not the government.

1700

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: We actually consulted with a couple of our members who are Indigenous partners, and we did prepare for this specific question.

Quite frankly, we do recognize and deeply respect the grave concerns raised by our members on these specific points. Our general recommendation for maintaining and, where possible, enhancing higher environmental protection standards is intended to comprehensively cover these critical areas. While our submission doesn't detail specific legislation sections like the—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. We move to the official opposition. MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to everyone who presented.

Chief McLeod, I don't know if you had time to finish. Was there more you wanted to say?

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: I would like a chance for Dean to speak.

MPP Jamie West: Okay.

Mr. Dean Sayers: Meegwetch, everybody.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Identify yourself, please.

Mr. Dean Sayers: Yes.

Remarks in Anishnaabemowin.

My name is Dean Sayers. I am from Bawating—a similar location to MPP Scott. I am a member of the Crane clan, Ajijaak. The Crane clan are hereditary leaders, chiefs. We have been involved with relationships with Ontario ever since we saw your ships coming on the horizon, and we remember our relationship.

I wanted to say my name to my ancestors.

Remarks in Anishnaabemowin.

Meegwetch for our grandfathers and our grandmothers and the Creator for blessing us with their time today, to look down upon the work that we're doing here. Out of respect for this place, I wanted to pay you the highest honour by standing to introduce myself. When we wear these hats, we are actually in connection with the Creator through these hats, and the wishes of the Creator will be spoken through the leadership and, vice versa, the wishes of the people come through the chiefs and the leadership to the Creator, and all of Creation is in concert, really happy that we are actually following those original ways.

I have accompanying me today many of my relatives, including this birch bark tree and this birch bark, the wampum, these shells and these belts, the eagle, the porcupine—many other relatives who are happy that we came here today to share some words with you.

I'm going to take my seat and continue with a few more comments.

I have been a spokesperson for the Robinson-Huron Treaty chiefs for almost a couple of decades now. I've been here many times—to Queen's Park and the Legislature.

I remember, if you can bear with me, in 2012, the 21 chiefs asked me to serve the crown, represented by Ontario, with documents to compel them to attend in a courtroom, so that we could find justice with regard to the escalator clause or the annuity clause in the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. Up until the time that we served you in September 2012, we had corresponded with you regularly to try to resolve this outside of court processes.

So, in 2012, the 21 chiefs and a couple hundred of my people came here to serve you notice that we would see you in a courtroom. We went to the front door of the Legislature, and you wouldn't let us in. They said, "Sorry, you can't come in." So we went to the side door—and when I went to the bathroom today, I said "Oh, this looks familiar." I looked out the bathroom window—and that's where I served you guys. I went to that side door of the Legislature, I knocked on the door, and your Ontario security guard opened, and I gave him the documentation. I said, "You've been served on behalf of the 21 chiefs, on behalf of the 40,000 of us who have been waiting for justice in regard to our share of half of the wealth of these lands." Since the 1870s, we've been getting \$4 a year as our half of the revenue generated from the resources.

I'm saying this because I know the eyes of the world are watching. In particular, the South American Indigenous people are watching, South Africa is watching, Jamaica is watching today. People from all around the world are watching what's happening here in Ontario. because they were all watching what we ended up doing with the annuities issue.

We finally got a settlement of \$10 billion because Ontario and Canada did not honour the promises they made in the treaty, and we had to take you to court.

When are you going to learn? Why do we have to continue to go to these—and this is very disrespectful today, to my people, to our leadership, that I have seven minutes to share with my colleague here, as chiefs.

Thank you, MPP West, for yielding your time to me to be able to speak. But I shouldn't have seven minutes, on my land, with my guests, to talk about the challenges we're facing in 2025, as the original peoples of these lands.

I could go through a litany of obligations you have that are still legally enforced. Somebody has been ill-advising you that what you are doing is actually aligned with the law. You are breaking Ontario law. You are breaking Canada's law. You're breaking international law. And, most importantly, you're breaking Anishinaabe law, our law—our promises we made in witness of all Creation. I'm not sure I would be so proud of that.

You need to align yourself with the reality of what you actually have. When we made treaties with you, in particular, our treaty—we went to that treaty—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Dean Sayers:—and we had a canoe full of everything that we were going to exercise as our inherent rights: our own law, our own language, our own people, our own

culture, our own—everything that it is, including the moose, the deer, the fish, and the trees. Everything. And we gave you a little bit in your canoe—a little access to natural resources.

We didn't give you all of these jurisdictions you're exercising—you need to take inventory of what you have. What you need to do is take that inventory and act aligned with what you actually legally have jurisdiction over.

In the meantime, if you're going to do something on our lands, you need our permission. Read my lips: permission. Consent doesn't rise to the bar that I need—because I don't want to misinterpret it according to UNDRIP. So let's engage, let's consult, and then maybe we'll give you our permission. If you don't get our permission, you ain't doing it.

MPP Jamie West: I think I have 30 seconds. I'll yield.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we move to the last round of questioning. We will start with the government side. MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: I would like to ask Tom Faught a question.

What role does mining currently have in Timmins, how many people does it employ, and can you please elaborate on the sector's presence up in Timmins?

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: It's a major part of our local economy. We've got three major mining companies operating multiple projects, being producing companies, and then we have multiple, multiple magnitudes of junior miners and exploration companies that are also operating. As far as an actual numeric value of—the population based in the workforce in that field is beyond my knowledge. However, it is significant, especially since forestry has taken a fall in Timmins. It is very significant—and not only the mines; many of the businesses operate on behalf of the mines. It's a major part of our economy.

MPP Paul Vickers: What impact can Bill 5 have on helping unlock new mining opportunities in Timmins?

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: Any streamline, any reduction of duplication, any reduction of needless barriers is great for business. However, that can't be done at the compromise of due consultation and partnership.

But, by all means, if we could streamline bureaucracy, then it will be extremely helpful to our members.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Gallagher Murphy.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: First of all, thank you very much to all the presenters I heard this afternoon. I greatly appreciate your comments today.

My question is to Leonard Kula from the Canadian Renewable Energy Association.

You made some great comments—talking about wind, solar and energy storage, and particularly about the growth that we are seeing in energy. I believe you said 25% growth in the demand of energy—I wasn't too sure if I caught over what time frame—I think over the next decade, I'm not sure. You can clarify that in your response. To me, that's pretty significant, what we're talking about for this province.

When I think about that, and knowing that critical minerals are the building block for clean energy technolo-

gies, how important is the geographical location—or the where, let's say—when it comes to access to critical minerals for the 350 companies? I believe you said you represent 350 companies. So when it comes to access to these minerals for those 350 companies, how does it impact the industry's ability to meet such a growing demand for energy?

1710

Mr. Leonard Kula: Thank you for the question.

The 75% growth projection is over 25 years—and that's the latest study that the IESO put out.

So, yes, our technologies are wind, solar, storage. Solar and storage, in particular, use a fair number of critical minerals. At this point in time, the bulk of that is manufactured—the components are manufactured in China. They've invested tremendously in that manufacturing capability. Our member companies that go ahead and develop wind and solar projects would buy their components from China. China, of course, sources their materials from a variety of different places, but they have tremendous manufacturing capability.

It would be wonderful if alternate supply chains were established to go ahead and buy it from anywhere else in the world. That's not a small undertaking, but certainly a foundation of that would be the critical mineral capability that is an input to the manufacturing process.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Just to follow up on that real quick, if they are sourcing it from China right now—and, obviously, it would be great if they could source it here. What would be the impact on Ontarians if they can source that here?

Mr. Leonard Kula: There would be a tremendous impact from the standpoint of both the primary and secondary industries—to go ahead and mine, refine, and then go ahead and turn that into manufacturing. It would be a great source of jobs and probably more opportunity to get access to those supply chains.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you, Chair. How much time is left?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'll be very quick.

Thank you to all the presenters.

I did have a question for the Robinson Huron First Nation. Scott and Dean, thanks so much for being here.

I wanted to best understand, in terms of consultation that has happened in the past, how does it work? When a resource company approaches you, where does the system fall apart today?

Mr. Dean Sayers: Meegwetch, MPP Dowie.

We really work hard, in our particular instance, to garner the ability to have free, prior, informed consent, for lack of better wording. We prefer to reserve our right to say yes or no to any project on our territory. We have our own environmental assessment, in particular, in our community—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up.

We move to the third party for their round of questioning. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: That was very powerful, what you just said, Dean.

I would like to give my six and a half minutes to Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin, to Scott and Dean, if you'd like just to speak freely for six and half minutes.

Mr. Dean Sayers: I can share a couple of more insights with you.

We are pro-economic-development, but not at the sacrifice of our inherent obligations as the original people of these lands. We will work with Ontario to develop a relationship with you that's based on this.

We have our reserved rights within our canoe, and you have some in your ship, and never do these two paths cross. We will continue to exercise our nationhood rights. We don't represent the nation—but we are 21 bands within our nation that do have that obligation, and we will follow that. So we need to have this recognized in your legislation.

There are things that you might have the ability to do within your legislation based on what we've given you, but we didn't give you everything, so that's something that we really need to revisit.

There are many treaties in Ontario, and they all vary as far as reserve jurisdictions of Indigenous people. There's no one-size-fits-all anywhere across the province. What happens up in NAN, what happens up in the Ring of Fire area, is up to the leadership in that area. And whatever they determine is their course of action, what they need to feel good about the development in their territories—or lack of economic development, at least, from the sacrifice of our relatives—we'll support that.

This is a slippery slope. It can happen in our backyard—but we're telling you now, it won't happen in our backyard. We'll make sure that those things that we don't give permission to can't happen.

I went to the Treaty of Niagara gathering in 2014, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and we recited this 21-nation belt that was shown earlier. There are 21 chiefs there, the ship and the rock. That really was an obligation that was made at the time, that the crown would provide us any gifts that we wanted—the fishery, the nets, the pots, the fabric etc.—if we let them stay. Anything we needed, those 24 chiefs would just pull on that rope and bring that ship full of all those gifts, so that we would have this ability to have you share lands with us.

In 2014, Ontario actually came to Niagara-on-the-Lake and they presented me with these two strings of wampum on your behalf, saying, “We still recognize your law as Ojibway people, as Anishinaabe. It has never been extinguished,” and that you're going to honour all other promises that were made to us. So you guys inherited this. This is in witness of all of Creation, from the deepest ocean where these shells came from to our grandfather's son—

stronger than a handshake, stronger than this paper. You inherited all this. All your ancestors are watching how you behave, too, to these kinds of promises.

So this is really important for you to be aware of. This was given to me on behalf of the Ojibway nation. All the 24 other chiefs who were there, on behalf of their 23 other nations, also received the same thing from Ontario in 2014—just a few days ago, in the blink of an eye, in the line of time. So those are some of the things that are still alive.

In our particular treaty territory, the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, we have always retained underlying title, and we reserve the right to say yes or no to any project.

Additionally, the last thing I wanted to make mention of—the Tsilhqot'in Supreme Court decision that came out a few years ago actually said that our consent is required where underlying title has been proven. So what you're doing with this legislation is a violation of your Supreme Court. Where underlying title has been proven, you need our consent—consent, consent, consent; permission, permission, permission. You cannot impose this illegal legislation. You need to pull it, stop it and work with us according to what we've delegated to you as authorities and mandates, and work from that perspective.

Chief?

1720

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: Yes, I just would like to follow up. I ran out of time to answer the question on impact benefit agreements from industry. For the most part, they actually work well with First Nations. The problem is that Ontario has given open recognition to a lot of illegitimate groups claiming to be Indigenous people—for example, the MNO, which have no land base, have no history in this province, but yet under the recommendation of the province of Ontario, are negotiating impact benefit agreements with industry in our territories. There has been no due diligence in looking at the history that they're claiming to have—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: —and it can't go on any longer. So we have to look at walking back that recognition. They are guests in our territories. They have no land entitlement. They should not be collecting money that is rightfully the money of the First Nations people in those territories. And yet, they're collecting, since 1990—from your government, from the federal government, from industry—billions of dollars on the basis that they may or may not have Indigenous blood somewhere down their line, and calling their crown corporation a nation. It is not a nation. Nations aren't created under legislation, under crown entities. That's not how nations are created. Yet, this government continually waters down our rights as—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): The time is up.

Now we move to the official opposition. MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Chief McLeod, did you want to finish your comment?

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: We are the treaty holders. We are the lands holders and titleholders. The treaties need to be upheld. This Bill 5 is an attempt to consult after the fact.

These bills need to be made with us present at the table and in co-operation and in consultation, and have our full consent. Meegwetch.

MPP Jamie West: Meegwetch.

Dean, I want to thank you for standing during your introduction—and I think it's important to recognize that my riding of Sudbury is also within the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory of 1850. My riding doesn't include Whitefish River First Nation, but Greater Sudbury does. I'm in the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek treaty territory.

I think something is important to echo, that—and my apologies to the other people who deputed. I wish I had time to speak with you. I'm going to try to squeeze in some time.

Chief McLeod, one of the things you said that really stood out to me was—and I'm paraphrasing a bit, because I tried to write it down as you were saying it—"I'm sure the water in your toilets is cleaner than the water in some of our First Nations."

I've been here for seven years. Time and time again, I've been trying to explain the difficulty of building true nation-to-nation relationships with a nation that is not seeing a positive impact at their end. If we have nations that we're supposed to be in partnership with, and we're extracting millions of dollars or more from their lands, and they have situations with high suicide rates, without housing, without proper medical conditions and care, how in the world can we expect that we're going to be building a true nation-to-nation relationship, and how in the world can the Conservative government expect to believe that we can be trusted this time in this situation? Is there something I'm missing?

Regional Chief Scott McLeod: No. And those are the exact questions that I posed to the Ontario government—"How can we trust you?"

Developing these pieces of legislation without consulting us, without working with us at the table is not gaining any trust. You can't preamble your way into us agreeing that we can trust you. It has to be written down. We've seen that time and time again—even when we write it down, we're sitting in the courtroom with you guys proving that you're wrong. And when we do that, you take it to your appeal courts and you try to win there. And time and time again, we beat you on those, yet you're sitting here asking us to trust you. The short answer is, we don't. So let's get over that part and start working together.

We don't trust you. I don't know how much more clear we can be. And that's not just the Conservative government—that's every government in Canada.

Put your money where your mouth is. If all of those things that you said today—and Mr. Lecce and Mr. Rickford—are actually true, then let's put them down in writing, in the legislation, like Australia did, the example

you like to use. They put it right in their legislation so that there is no ambiguity. We need to be clear on what we're saying here. We've learned from the treaty that you guys use the English language to interpret it the way you want so that you can do what you want to do on our lands.

It's time that we actually work together. We have the same interests. When First Nations do good, the entire province does good.

Why are we, in 2025, when we have First Nation youth suicides skyrocketing, when we don't have clean drinking water, when we have underfunded programs in our communities, dealing with the traumas that you guys have created? Our policing is not even yet an essential service; it's a program that has no guaranteed funding. The amount of crime in our communities is caused by the trauma that we've endured for 170 years, yet we're funded less to deal with it. This has to stop.

Trust me, it will be better if we're all doing well. You guys have tried to destroy us over the last 170 years, and it failed. We are still here.

It's time we start working together. I don't care—I don't carry any party colours. We're all human. Let's treat us that way.

MPP Jamie West: How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): You have one minute.

MPP Jamie West: Okay.

I want to thank Mr. Faught from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce—similar to what Ms. Litalien from the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce said. I want to request that my colleagues from the Conservative Party review what was said here, because they're echoing much of what's being said by First Nations communities, much of what's being said about concerns with the special economic zones, much that has been said about the concerns about environmental exceptions. If you think you're helping business but ignoring what the chambers of commerce are saying, that are being echoed here, and pretending that all you're doing is ignoring what I'm saying, you have lost the thread. This is not good policy.

I live in a mining community. I worked in mining for 20 years. This bill is going to drag mining back 20 years. It's going to drag the mining relationships back 20 years. All you're going to get out of this is court challenges, protests in person, and the public genuinely disrespecting the authority of the Conservative government and your ability to do business.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we move to the government side. MPP Cuzzetto.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank all the presenters who have come here today.

My question is for the Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

Can Bill 5 help to unlock the mining opportunity in Timmins?

Mr. Tom Faught Jr.: I think we've gone through that. As long as all of our recommendations are followed through with, it would streamline the process. It would

help industry. But again, we cannot do this while forgoing proper consultation and environmental standards.

If Bill 5 should be passed, with its likely underlying intent, it would help industry, absolutely.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'll ask another question—to Leonard.

How will Bill 5 help to protect our energy grid, moving forward?

Mr. Leonard Kula: Bill 5 has the opportunity to go ahead and streamline some of the processes that are there to help develop projects. As we face these significant challenges, it will help create that certain environment.

As I mentioned, there is great value in having a diverse set of technologies. Some of those technologies are from China. So I think we need to thoughtfully address how we manage that.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you, Chair, and through you to Leonard once again: I think of some of our broader environmental goals, and one is sustainability. We're developing, certainly in my community, the electric vehicle industry and, ultimately, for the success of that industry, mining of critical minerals is vital. Also, I find, having now purchased an electric car—I bought it used—boy, I feel like I'm saving a lot of money by not having to fuel it up and use fossil fuels. I feel my environmental footprint is far better than it was before.

There have been some measures introduced earlier this year—the energy-efficiency framework, with an almost \$11-billion investment to help Ontarians reduce their costs. It includes support for behind-the-meter types of initiatives—wind and solar, roofed energy storage—so just in line with what you're doing.

I feel I've experienced it—not paying for gas, I save a lot of money. Spending a bit more to get energy efficiency in place seems to drive some affordability improvements.

Do you have anything you can elaborate on in terms of energy storage, how costs can be addressed or will be addressed, and how economic growth can be driven for the people of Ontario?

Mr. Leonard Kula: Ontario has, as I mentioned, a very diversified resource fleet. It is a tremendous source of strength. We've got multiple technologies: nuclear, hydro-electric, gas, wind, solar—energy storage is coming. It is a tremendous strength. I'm very aware of what's going on across the country. I know where that diversified resource fleet isn't there and the impacts it has on those areas.

One of the great opportunities that we have is behind the meter. We tend to think in terms of, going forward, given that there's so much to do and there's also value in a diversified fleet—an “all-of-the-above” solution is the language that we use, and CanREA and our technologies expect to be a part of it.

A great opportunity is to go ahead and further enhance and grow the behind-the-meter resources—that's rooftops, solar, local storage, and things like that—in addition to the things that we're doing on the bulk electric system.

The devil will be in the details as we go ahead and figure out the programs that go along with the energy-efficiency framework. But to go ahead and earmark and make that commitment to energy efficiency is a tremendous benefit for Ontario.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Chair, how much time is left?

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Two minutes.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you. I'd like to follow up a bit on that.

In terms of deploying alternative electricity generation—wind, solar and storage—do you see measures in Bill 5, as written, that will help facilitate a more rapid deployment of those technologies that support renewable energy?

Mr. Leonard Kula: Yes. As I mentioned, we are very interested in regulatory clarity and certainty—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Leonard Kula: —for the development of wind, solar and energy storage facilities. We see elements of that, and we're eager to participate in the consultations that go ahead and prepare the regulations in support of that.

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): No more questions?

Thank you to our presenters for coming and sharing your valuable input with us.

That concludes our witnesses' testimonies for today.

If you would like to submit any written materials to the committee in addition to your presentation, the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on Monday, May 26, 2025.

A reminder to all audience members: Please leave the audio devices for interpretation in the room.

There being no further business, this committee is adjourned until 9 a.m. on Monday, May 26, 2025.

The committee adjourned at 1734.

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