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**Standing Committee
on Heritage, Infrastructure
and Cultural Policy**

Protect Ontario by Cutting
Red Tape Act, 2025

1st Session
44th Parliament

Wednesday 3 December 2025

**Comité permanent du
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure
et de la culture**

Loi de 2025 pour protéger
l'Ontario en réduisant
les formalités administratives

1^{re} session
44^e législature

Mercredi 3 décembre 2025

Chair: Hon. Laurie Scott
Clerk: Tanzima Khan

Présidente : L'hon. Laurie Scott
Greffière : Tanzima Khan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE,
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Wednesday 3 December 2025

Mercredi 3 décembre 2025

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.

**PROTECT ONTARIO BY CUTTING
RED TAPE ACT, 2025**

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

Consideration of the following bill:

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

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting on the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to order. We are meeting here to begin public hearings on Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts.

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.

For any ministry staff on the Zoom call today: If you are called on to speak, please state your name and title before you begin the first time that you speak. As always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we begin? I see none.

I will now call on Minister Khanjin 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'll provide reminders of the time remaining during the presentations and questions.

Minister Khanjin, please start.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to appear before committee, and the committee members for inviting me before you today to talk about Bill 46.

I also want to thank the great staff who always support this committee. We couldn't do this without you. It's invaluable. It's always such a privilege to be here.

I just also want to thank my two parliamentary assistants, who work on a lot of red-tape-reduction measures,

who are subbing into this committee today: PA Kanapathi and PA Racinsky. Thank you. We're a mighty team.

But this bill, Bill 46, really shows you the teamwork approach that our government is taking. We take ideas from—whether it's our members in our caucus or whether it's taking ideas from the public. We have a portal that we advertise as often as possible to get ideas from all walks of life across this province.

It's a big pleasure to be here today here at the standing committee. I'm here to speak to you about Bill 46, Protect Ontario by Cutting Red Tape Act, 2025, and the broader 2025 spring package.

Before I begin, I also wanted to take an opportunity to thank my predecessor as the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, MPP Mike Harris. He did yeoman's work on putting this package together with so many of our cabinet colleagues, our caucus colleagues and Ontarians across this province to really make an impact, so I want to thank him for allowing me to take the torch and see this entire bill through.

I would like to highlight some of the things we can expect in this bill, so that we're ready to meet the challenges both today and tomorrow.

So what does the 2025 spring package do? Well, including the Protect Ontario by Cutting Red Tape Act, it reflects the contribution of 20 different ministries across government, each playing a vital role in making life easier for individuals, families and businesses. It demonstrates the power of teamwork and proves that under Premier Ford's leadership, we stand united in our effort to remove burdensome red tape and protect Ontario's future. This is not just about streamlining processes; it's about safeguarding jobs, attracting investment and ensuring Ontario remains competitive in a rapidly changing global economy.

What are we doing in this rapid-changing economy? Well, this government has made many investments across many sectors, but we're also reducing the paperwork, the red tape and really putting people in the heart of everything we do. As a result of those actions, today we've been able to save people and businesses \$1.2 billion, whether it's putting people at the heart of everything we do, whether it's regulations that are outdated, whether it's modernizing the system—because, after all, this is not about deregulation; it's about modernization and getting with the times.

As a result of these actions, we've also been able to save people 1.8 million hours in time. That is something that I hear a lot in my constituency, as we live in a very fast-paced world: Time is of the essence, and being able to get that very valuable time back to spend on the things that matter most is so important, and having a government that understands that is very valuable.

That's why we're going to continue to focus on cutting unnecessary regulations that were barriers to job creation, all while maintaining regulations that keep people safe and healthy and protect the environment. We're reducing the number of regulatory compliance requirements affecting businesses and, so far, we've been able to do this by about 6%. We have been able to achieve these savings by focusing on making practical and common-sense changes to remove burdens.

But now, this is even more critical than before. We must be nimble and act quickly. In the face of ongoing impacts of US tariffs, our government is taking action to protect Ontario so we can keep workers on the job, attract new investment and make life easier and more affordable for Ontario families. Our government is moving forward with our unwavering commitment to make Ontario the most competitive in the G7. We're going to be the most competitive in the G7 to live, to work, to do business and raise a family. It's about removing barriers that hold workers back and that hold businesses and communities back.

When others say no, this government says go. We say, "Go find opportunity. Go find more community events to attend. Go support your community." We're an all-go government that wants to attract businesses and give back to as many families in our province as we can in every sector of this economy, from the auto workers to forestry to our health care sector to our educators. Time back to these individuals is time back in our communities and to the charitable sector, to businesses and to creating more jobs. And so that is why we're unleashing the full economic potential of this province and we're protecting Ontario's future by acting decisively in the face of global uncertainty.

We live in a time of rapid change. Global economic pressures such as rising inflation, supply chain disruption and headwinds of geopolitics are shaping our landscape. Governments everywhere are being challenged to move faster, remove outdated barriers and create the right economic conditions where people, business and communities can thrive. This bill is about positioning Ontario to continue to succeed. It's a statement that Ontario is not going to maintain the status quo but instead challenge it head-on. And this bill is about building a province that's responsive to the needs of its people, resilient in the face of global change and confident in its ability to lead the next generation of growth and opportunity.

This is a bill where our government seeks to modernize outdated regulation, remove unnecessary barriers to economic growth and strengthen the foundation of a dynamic and competitive economy.

In the 2025 spring package, including this bill, we bring forward about 50 targeted proposals designed to make life easier for people and business in Ontario. They're proposals like strengthening consumer protections such as mitigating privacy concerns under the consumer reporting act, or supporting rural and northern communities through more effective and efficient snowmobile trail grooming and streamlining funding to northern small business enterprise centres.

We're improving public safety, including enhanced information-sharing with domestic and international partners, including the United States, under Christopher's Law. And Christopher's Law is something that our government members have been very passionate about. I recall a former colleague of mine, MPP Christina Mitas, who worked on this bill. Chair, you yourself have worked championing Christopher's Law. We have MPP Dave Smith, who has also championed this particular law. Time and time again, we've been the champions of ensuring that we put children's and public safety at the forefront of what we do, and this legislation gets this done.

We're also protecting income for vulnerable Ontarians, who we very much value, and that is something that our Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has worked tirelessly on when he heard first-hand from individuals who said it's great that the federal government has the Canada Disability Benefit that could see them get \$200 extra in their pocket, but they were very disenchanted to know that any other benefits could be clawed back. So we heard from them, we listened and that will no longer happen, so they can keep the full supports that they need every day for their needs.

So what does this do? All these proposals put together reflect our government's commitment for practical, people-first measures, ensuring Ontario remains resilient, responsive and ready to lead in a rapid-changing world.

Another important initiative in this package is modernizing the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act. This builds on our government's work through Minister Jones, where we put people above paperwork when it comes to our health care system. We know that any time, any minute, any hour that we can give back to our health care professionals is another minute, another hour they can spend with a patient doing what they love most, and that's taking care of people. But oftentimes, our regulations and legislation do not keep up with the rapidly changing technology. So what this will do is allow changes that will allow inspection reports to be delivered electronically, reducing time and cost for health facilities and governments alike. Believe it or not, this was not an option before. This is, again, an example of our government modernizing for the betterment of not only government but of our health care system.

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We're also introducing new online payment systems for X-ray machine approvals, making it easier and faster for clinics to comply with safety standards. Again, this is about making things more modern and easier, all while still complying with safety standards and our world-class

health care system that people rely on. This digital approach will eliminate delays caused by paper-based processes and improved transparency in compliance reporting.

These updates are a part of our broader effort to modernize Ontario's health care system by leveraging technology to streamline administrative tasks. By reducing red tape for clinics and health facilities, we free up resources that can be redirected towards patient care. This is a practical step forward that supports Ontario's health care system and reinforces that patient safety remains our top priority.

Chair, I know one of my colleagues, PA Kanapathi, is very passionate about health care. His wife serves in the health care system, runs her own clinic as a doctor and first-hand has seen the changes our government has made, reducing the paperwork so that she can do the work she does. I commend her for that work. I know the member's passion for continuing to reduce red tape in health care, so I wanted to thank you for that and the contributions to many of our government bills.

As we continue to see what we're doing for individuals, not only by allowing for a health care system that's more nimble and responsive to people but putting patients in everything we do, we also have to talk about other very important initiatives in this package, and that's expanding eligibility under the infrastructure loan program. Chair, I know you had many accomplishments under your belt being infrastructure minister, which is one of the reasons I have a YMCA today—and I know the Y is here on their advocacy day. But as a result of this change in infrastructure, we're allowing district social service administration boards, also known as DSSABs, to apply for affordable, short-term construction financing and long-term fixed-rate loans. They were not able to do this before.

This change will actually help these DSSABs fund critical infrastructure projects that support social services in rural and northern communities: projects like housing developments, service hubs and facilities that deliver essential programs for families and individuals. Again, we're putting people in the centre of everything we do—a practical change that we've heard from these administrative offices that really responds to the challenging economic times that we're in.

By improving access to financing, we're also enabling these boards to plan and build with confidence, reduce costs and accelerate timelines for projects that matter most to local residents. These improvements will strengthen community services, support economic development and ensure that Ontario's most vulnerable residents have access to the resources they need. It's a practical, targeted measure that reflects our government's commitment to remove barriers, foster growth and make life easier for people and communities across Ontario.

Next, I would turn to the areas of consumer protection that are in this bill. It is really all about consumer protection. Ontario is proposing amendments to the Consumer Reporting Act that are both timely and essential. The changes to the Consumer Reporting Act aim to eliminate unnecessary burdens on consumer reporting agencies,

creditors and lenders, while also helping to avoid exposing Ontarians to potential cyber risks.

I know how important cyber risks are to this committee and, of course, to one of our members, MPP Blais, who has a private member's bill today on protecting youth and cyber security. But this will protect all Ontarians, no matter your age, when it comes to identifying threats, especially identifying theft and fraud, that are of growing concern. Seniors, newcomers and other vulnerable Ontarians are particularly at risk, and that education is so important.

Many may not be aware of the dangers of sharing sensitive personal or credit information via insecure channels like email, and so we as members of the public in public service need to champion this education and awareness any time we can, and this particular change in legislation helps move us towards having that regulatory and legislative framework to protect Ontarians.

These proposed amendments will help mitigate these risks by eliminating requirements for consumer reporting agencies to provide consumers with certain third-party email addresses when they request their consumer file—again, protecting them. This small but significant change will help prevent the inadvertent sharing of personal data through insecure means.

At the same time, these amendments respond to industry stakeholders' concerns, which were about reducing compliance and operational costs and aligning Ontario's practices with other Canadian jurisdictions. It's a win-win: upholding strong consumer protections while supporting an efficient, rather than an inefficient, system and modernizing a regulatory environment. These amendments reflect our commitment to smart, responsive government, balancing protection with practicality and ensuring Ontario's regulatory framework evolves to the people's needs today.

Chair, another important initiative in this package focuses on strengthening Ontario's forestry sector through updates to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. These changes will streamline annual approval requirements and remove unnecessary steps in forest management planning. For years, overlapping permissions and outdated processes have created delays and added costs for industry—costs that ultimately impact jobs and competitiveness. By cutting this red tape, we are reducing administrative burden, lowering costs and helping the sector remain competitive while maintaining Ontario's high environmental standards.

These updates will also improve predictability for business, enabling them to plan investments with confidence and accelerate project timelines. Forestry is a cornerstone of many parts of our communities, specifically many northern and rural communities. These updates will help create jobs, support local economies and ensure Ontario's forestry sector continues to thrive. This is about building a framework that is efficient and responsive and sustainable, one that protects our natural resources while enabling growth and investment. It's a practical, forward-looking measure that reflects our government's commitment to

both economic development and environmental stewardship.

Now, next, Chair, I'd like to turn to the Ministry of Transportation. Our government is advancing legislative amendments to the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act. This summer, I had the pleasure of speaking at the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' annual general meeting, where many of the members were very grateful for this particular change.

I know, Chair, you have many avid snowmobilers in your community as well, and they will be pleased to know that with these particular amendments, they are going to bring, again, practicality and common sense to our rules. And I know another MPP, MPP Bresee, also an avid snowmobiler himself, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, also has been really working to champion our snowmobile sector. The contributions it makes alone are more than \$60 million annually to our economy and to our labour costs. And so what this does is it recognizes the contributing economic impact snowmobiling has.

But there was a technical change that they needed when it came to snow groomers. Believe it or not, there was one standard snow groomer for all our snowmobile trails, but for those avid snowmobilers in the room—I'm looking to MPP Saunderson here, who has some trails across the Lake Simcoe way—you could only use one type of groomer. But some trails are a little bit more narrow, and you need a smaller trail groomer. Well, the regulations didn't allow for a different type of trail groomer. And so, again, the regulation wasn't keeping in time with the technology and the changes and the fact that the snowmobile industry has really changed. If you look at some of these sleds, they're really advanced—I'm surprised they don't fly or anything—but it's incredible, the technology that has happened, and the fact that we can change the different type of groomers we use on these snowmobile trails. So, as a result, they're now able to use the different trail groomers, should this pass.

Over the three seasons alone, to really recognize the impact of this particular sector, the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs have invested \$61.6 million, reinforcing their commitment to growth and sustainability, and this \$61.6 million wouldn't have been possible without our government's investment. So we recognize the work they do. We were able to give them some additional dollars for their operating expenses so that they can maintain these trails and the contribution they make to our economy, and the return on investment is grand. The more trails that we can have available and using these two different trail groomers is good for the people, the economy and, overall, again, a win-win. This will allow the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to use more efficient technology and snowmobile trails will be able to be really enjoyed for the coming season.

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The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: With one minute remaining: There are so many great measures in this bill. I didn't get

to all of my remarks, but that really speaks to the fact of how many people have contributed to this piece of legislation. I'm happy to answer many questions about the details of the bill, but overall, I will say there are savings in this bill, there are time savings in this bill, which I'm happy to elaborate on.

This is another example of how, in every corner of the province, from Main Street to industrial parks to farms to innovation, we're listening to all individuals to get our economy moving and reducing the red tape.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation, Minister.

I will now remind everyone: It's six-and-a-half minute rotations. We're going to start with the government side. I believe, MPP Kanapathi, you're up.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation. And I have to take the opportunity to thank you for your leadership. Sometimes we don't feel, working with the ministry, your passion. You have touched so many ministries and so many stakeholders within a short period of time.

You made an impact statement, and it really brought your good record to the taxpayers, Ontarians, especially, since 2018—nearly \$1.2 billion has been saved annually, or approximately \$12 billion over the next 10 years. So it's huge taxpayers' dollars saved—how we are respecting taxpayer dollars. But also 1.8 million hours saved annually—approximately 183 years. You've cut over 14,000 regulatory compliance requirements. It's the lowest regulatory burden per capita in Canada. The record speaks for itself. Thank you for that leadership and your record. Also, I'd like to thank your amazing staff. You work with them every day.

Minister, my question to you: We talk about these health care issues all the time. That's my passion, and with your guidance, we were able to do so many changes in the health care sector. Health care providers sometimes face administrative challenges when it comes to meeting regulatory requirements. We talk about primary caregivers and doctors and paperwork; they lose millions of hours, and we are working on that to help reduce doctors' paperwork in order to free up their time to see more patients. There are 2.8 million Ontarians without a family doctor. We are working on that direction too, under your leadership and the Premier's vision.

Please explain how the move to electronic delivery of inspection reports and the introduction of online payment options will specifically reduce this burden.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: That's an excellent question, and it really honours the spirit of what this bill, Bill 46, does and the spirit of all of what our government does, and that's ensuring government becomes not a barrier to success, but a partner in prosperity. When it comes to things like our great health care system, which we're constantly challenging to break the status quo on, it's no wonder our Minister of Health received the Golden Scissors Award from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for her work on putting people over paperwork.

You've really highlighted the importance of these changes in your question as well, but also the team approach. We've got an incredible Ministry of Red Tape Reduction and amazing individuals who work at that ministry. I know we're joined here today by Morella and Deputy Maud Murray, as well, who are on the line.

The heart of the public service keeps beating to find these types of changes that are practical in nature—what we hear from many health care providers. This is one where physicians were saying, “We have to mail in a form and we're waiting and waiting.” It delays them from doing the important work they have to do. It delays them on getting back to their patients. What this really does, instead of actually waiting on a physical thing to mail, is we're going digital.

A lot of the issues on health care are just that. We've seen other provinces—I met with my counterpart out in Nova Scotia. They're already ahead in terms of digitalizing a lot of medical records, so there are a lot of things within government services that could still be improved for the 21st century. This is a great example of moving things more online. That way, it actually also allows those inspection reports to be accessed more quickly too because now we're not digging through paperwork. So God forbid something happens on the inspection report; we're able to access it faster. Not only does it save the physicians time, but it actually improves patient outcomes and safety. It strengthens the integrity of the overall inspection system, because now you have things that are available electronically.

Again, I think it's very pragmatic. It's online. It removes that lag time that's unnecessary, and it allows for, again, saving time and eliminating this manual invoice system that we inherited. It really reflects our commitment to efficiency in allowing, again, physicians to do what they do best, which is seeing patients, rather than being buried in paperwork.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you. And also, yes, you're not only improving the safety standard in the health care system; you're also delivering high-quality service, also saving lives. At the end of the day, it's saving lives, especially the blood reports. They go to the different labs. By mail, it takes weeks and weeks. In the meantime, if you have a big risk factor, you lose a life sometimes. Electronically transferring the blood report back to the primary caregivers, is saving so many lives and also improving quality of life. Thank you for doing those changes.

Now I am going to pass it over to another wonderful parliamentary assistant to your ministry.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): MPP Racinsky, you have a minute left.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: So maybe in the second round.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): No, go ahead.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: You go ahead.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: I'll ask a quick question. Thank you.

Thank you, Minister, for your work. It's a privilege serving with you, reducing red tape. When I speak to my business community, my farmers or just people at the

doors, they're thrilled that our government is taking reducing red tape seriously.

I wanted to ask you just about KPIs. I think numbers are very important as a government. I know the numbers are important to our Premier.

When we look in this bill, what are we doing to track those KPIs to ensure that we are making progress and really having an impact on people in our communities?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Great question. Absolutely, we can't count what we can't measure. If you look at the measures that are in here, they will save \$58 million and 256,000 hours in this bill alone, which will actually be added to the \$1.2 billion in savings we've already found since 2018 and the 1.8 million hours.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm afraid we're out of time in this round.

Over to MPP Bourgouin.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you, Minister, for being here and answering our questions.

I want to speak on schedule 8. Forestry is so important in Mushkegowuk—James Bay, and we know what's happening right now with the Americans putting all this burden on forestry. In this bill, in schedule 8, what's the impact for forestry in what you're proposing? Is there any impact on forestry?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: If I go to schedule 8 here, which is great, basically what ended up—and you might be aware from the folks who you represent and work with. There used to be this requirement where they would have to do paperwork for multiple pieces of forestry land, even though it was owned by one company, one individual. So we're amalgamating that into one document, one process, and so it creates an efficiency. It's something that we heard from the Ontario federation of forestry and from their head there, Ian Dunn, who came to us and said there are minor tweaks that need to be made, but actually do help unlock more of those sustainable forestry practices we have, to allow them to get and do what they do best, which is export our great lumber that's state-of-the-art. Now we can take that same product and be able to use it in some of our home-building projects that we have, because we allowed for the wooden trusses—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So if I understand right, it's just some administrative changes for forestry.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: That's correct. That's directly from the sector.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Okay. As you know, Ontario forestry is world-renowned for how we manage our forests, and we should be proud of that. I'm very proud, because I'm a product of the forest industry. I used to represent a lot of workers, and I always promoted how good we do forestry in Ontario. They have a FSC certification that makes our wood so that we can sell it right around the world. Any changes in there will jeopardize their certification.

0930

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Basically, all this does is it just aligns Ontario's forestry sector strategy goals to improve cost competitiveness. The cost competitiveness I'm telling

you about is just that if you have, say, a project with multiple pieces that usually is done in stages, for every stage, there is a process. There's approvals. It's burdensome. We're just saying it's going to be one document, one process for those—very efficient.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So it increases their efficiency.

When I'm reading this bill, I see that there will be two standards for people operating in our forests. There will be a standard for forestry, following their regulations—which is world-renowned, by the way—and there will be other regulations for other companies: mining, aggregates; whoever wants to be operating, they won't have to follow the same regulations. Am I reading this right?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: There's two parts on sustainable forestry. One, I talked about: We're just streamlining so it's one process for the project as opposed to individually having to go in and survey every piece. Again, it's more sustainable. It's also less paperwork.

The other piece you're talking about, which is in regulation, just kind of looks at the overall Ontario forest sector strategy goals, and it's tweaking those manuals. So, again—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I understand that. So my question: Will there be two standards, one for forestry to follow and one for—because, as you know, right now, they have to get a permit to be able to, and then respect or follow the forestry agreement. So, my question: Will there be two standards?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: The bill that's in front of you only talks about forestry. So this is just—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Minister, I'm sorry to interrupt, but it also said that others won't need the permit anymore; they'll be able to process. So a mine comes in, for the sake of argument. They have to build a road. They won't have to follow the same regulations as forestry, and then when they get to the place, they won't have to follow the same regulations as forestry—marten habitats, endangered species, First Nations consultation. Am I reading this right, or maybe I'm just understanding it the wrong way?

Forestry, like I said, is doing an excellent job, and there's a reason why they're doing a great job: because of the regulation there is. What I'm reading in this bill is that there are two standards. It will be different for other operations in that they won't—because you mentioned in your opening remarks, to make them more competitive and expedite the process. We understand that mining needs to expedite faster, but what cost is it going to be compared to what we're practising right now in forests? How is that going to impact First Nations? Like remote, fly-in—all of a sudden, there could be something right beside them and then their place is not remote anymore.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): You have 60 seconds.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So are there two standards, or am I just reading this wrong?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I would say this is just addressing forestry. Then, just to talk about your other point, sustainability and respect for Indigenous communities is a non-negotiable for our government. This has nothing to do with that. It's just updating approvals and the streamlining.

We're not removing any consultations or environmental safeguards. This is simply making amendments when it talks to forest management and crown forests.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I understand that, but other businesses will be able to do this, because mining regulations are a lot more relaxed than forestry. So if they go in, they'll follow their own regulations?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: This bill talks about the changes we would make in regulation, and so that will be coming after the bill, but it only applies to forest management and the forestry sector. For example, even the section on permits—we talk about forest operations and forest resources and then crown forests in section 41.4.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry. We're out of time, Minister. There's another round.

The third party: MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Good morning, Minister. Thank you for being here. I'd like to call your attention, please, to schedule 5 of Bill 46. I noticed that you didn't proactively discuss schedule 5 and those particular changes to consumer protections in your bill.

The very first point of schedule 5 reads: "Section 47.1 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 is repealed and the following substituted" and then follows the schedule that's in your bill.

Minister, you're familiar with section 47.1 of the Consumer Protection Act?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Perfect. Section 47.1 of the Consumer Protection Act is effectively the contents of a private member's bill from 2016; it's a private member's bill I have with me right here. It's Bill 47, the Protecting Rewards Points Act, 2016. Are you aware of that?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Yes. And I apologize; I didn't get to do all my remarks, and I really wanted to talk about the Consumer Protection Act piece, as well, at the end, because we're strengthening consumer protections so people don't lose their reward points. But I know the bill that you're talking about.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I appreciate that. If I could just get my time back though and just ask for concise—

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: But you wanted me to talk about your bill, so I want to talk about your bill.

Mr. Stephen Blais: No, I just was wondering if you were aware that section 47 of the Consumer Protection Act is effectively Bill 47, which is the private member's bill entitled An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points, from 2016.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Yes, I'm very well aware. I'm also aware that when the Liberals were in government, they didn't go far enough on strengthening the consumer protection accord, and we're getting it done and going full-fledged on consumer protection.

Mr. Stephen Blais: This bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly unanimously in December 2016 and received royal assent on December 8, 2016. Voting for the bill, in a recorded vote, includes a half dozen members of the current government caucus, including the Deputy Premier and the government House leader. A unanimous

recorded vote in early December—a Christmas miracle even, you might say, Minister. It must have been a pretty good bill; you wouldn't agree?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Well, it sounds like you're going to be supporting our red tape reduction bill if you want to strengthen protections for reward points, so I'm thrilled to hear you're supporting our protections for reward points.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Nearly nine years later, Minister, we have your bill. So I think we have to ask ourselves, why was the unanimously approved Bill 47 from 2016 so popular?

I'll read clause 1 from the Consumer Protection Act, which is effectively that bill: "No supplier shall enter into or amend a consumer agreement under which rewards points are provided to provide for the expiry of rewards points due to the passage of time alone." In layman's terms, it says loyalty reward points can't expire due to the passage of time. Now, your government is proposing to repeal that schedule of the act.

So your government is proposing, in schedule 5—I'll just read your schedule:

"(3) A consumer agreement under which rewards points are provided shall not provide for the expiry, cancellation or suspension of rewards points except in accordance with the regulations."

Further, Minister, there is a section of your bill in section 5 that is entitled—this is the title of the section—"Same, modification, extinguishment of rights." And under that section, it says: "If the regulation so provides, have the effect of modifying or extinguishing any right, obligation or interest acquired or accrued under the agreement or related agreement."

So, Minister, if your government is committed to protecting reward points, if the current legislation prohibits the expiration of reward points, why does your bill give cabinet the authority to create regulations that would allow them to expire?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: We're fixing what the Liberals didn't get done when you first opened up the Consumer Protection Act back in 2018, that allowed a door and a loophole for people to lose their reward points. So we're coming in and fixing what the Liberals didn't get done—another thing.

As you heard the minister say yesterday in the House and the day before, there will not be a loss of reward points here; in fact, we're strengthening the response time with companies to be able to actually communicate with consumers as to the extent of their loyalty points. So no one will lose their loyalty reward points in this.

Let me just quote the minister. He said, "I want everybody in the House, and everyone in the province of Ontario for that matter, to fully understand what is in this bill. The government of Ontario under Premier Doug Ford have stood strong with consumers year after year. This bill is another example of that. We'll see if the opposition supports consumers because if they vote against the red tape reduction bill, this is what they're voting against...."

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"Businesses right now will have to respond when someone asks for their points back. If your points were frozen, cancelled or disappear, the company now will have to respond. And, for the first time ever, consumers will have the right to take legal action against the company if they unilaterally take away your points."

This is the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, who was working on this section of the bill. We're adding another measure so people have the legal action and ability when it comes to their reward points.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): There are forty seconds left.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Minister, if I could, I appreciate that there is a difference between what the minister is saying out loud and what he and his ministry have written down on paper—or, effectively, what your ministry has written down on paper and is asking the Legislature to vote on. In at least two sections of your bill, you and the Premier are proposing to give cabinet the authority to meet in secret and enact regulations that will allow reward points to expire.

You say your bill is about closing loopholes. Is the loophole you're closing that reward points can't expire today, but private interests want them to expire tomorrow?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Let me read you the bill because I think you have a misconception. It's actually something we highlighted in our background when we first tabled this bill for full public awareness—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Minister, I'm afraid we're out of time.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: If you look at section 4, it says we're protecting the rewards.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry. We're out of time in this round.

We're going to the government side now. MPP Saunderson, please begin.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you, Minister, for attending today and speaking to this bill. It's important legislation.

I'd like, actually, to give you an opportunity to finish your answer on the KPIs. You stated how much time and money it is saving, and I'm wondering if you can pick up there and then continue on and finish that answer for us, please.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you. I appreciate the time back.

Again, it speaks to how, in everything with we do in this government, the person is at the centre of everything we do. It's no different from what we're doing to strengthen consumer protections to put people at the heart of everything we do.

When it comes to our key performance indicators, again, this bill—being able to save \$5.8 million and 256,000 hours will be added to our grand total of \$1.2 billion that we've been able to save people, businesses and not-for-profits, and the 1.8 million hours.

To put it in perspective, we work really closely with small businesses. One of the organizations is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. For the longest time before Premier Ford was the Premier, Ontario had the lowest grade from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in terms of making the climate here competitive for businesses and people. We were overregulated, and so we had a failing grade. We were at the bottom of the pack in terms of the regulatory burdens compared to other provinces. Now we're at the top. We're top-two as a result, giving us a grade of A-, which was highly upgraded from the C- that we inherited under the Liberals.

Interjections.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I get some of the passion and frustration from some of my colleagues across the way, because we're finally seeing meaningful action that people can point to that affects their everyday lives.

We'll continue to work with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to do what we can to make that environment for jobs and people to succeed in this province.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you for that. Actually, we will be seeing the federation tomorrow when they speak to us on the upcoming pre-budget consultations.

Just switching gears a bit, but continuing on the theme of people over paperwork: I know this government has been working very hard on accountability and transparency in law enforcement. I know, under the guidance of the Chair, we brought in amendments to the name change act to prevent criminals, registered sex offenders from changing their names to avoid detection. Under this legislation, Law to we're bringing in some additional changes under Christopher's strengthen that accountability, to make sure that we're protecting the people of Ontario and, most importantly, our youth.

I'm wondering if you can tell us how removing barriers to share registry data with domestic and international law enforcement partners will improve coordination, support cross-border investigations and help authorities act quickly to prevent crimes.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for that question. I know you share our government's commitment to strengthening our law-and-order protections.

This is such an important section of this red tape reduction bill when it comes to, again, putting people at the heart of everything we do and, again, this gap that the government identified through the great work of MPP Laurie Scott and others. They recognized the fact that we do need to address Christopher's Law in this province, which was, if you're a sex offender in this province, to be able to know if you're doing a name change so that the people around you—the victims, the families—are aware of where they're going.

We have examples of where this has happened, and it's caused great harm and actually revictimizes those individuals. All that we're trying to do to help, whether it's the justice system or all the supports the government has for victims of crime and the vulnerable, is undone because of these types of changes where someone changes their name

and then no one is notified if that person is living close to them.

But this change goes even a step further, and that is working with our other levels of law enforcement, so again, closing what was a bit of a loophole that didn't allow for information sharing. Again, privacy is protected, definitely, but it's about safeguarding those individuals so that if we know that someone is, God forbid, being moved around, we know, working with different levels of law enforcement, the whereabouts of those individuals and we're able to save more children from these predators and predatory practices and able to do it faster.

What was happening before with a lot of different law enforcement agencies is that they weren't able to information-share, so there was a pause in the investigation or the case, and that's a shame. You're losing time, and, frankly, it comes at the expense of the child and the families who just want to be able to keep their children safe.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining. MPP Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: How much time?

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Oh, one minute. Okay.

I just want to thank the minister. Minister, thank you so much for appearing before the committee this morning and for your presentation.

Given the time I have, I just want to appreciate you for the tremendous work you're doing as the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, especially in cutting red tape and unnecessary regulations across the province. Your efforts are making a real difference in supporting municipalities, small businesses and everyday Ontarians who simply want their government to work smarter and faster. I just want to appreciate you, and thank you so much for the great work you're doing.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): We'll now go over to the official opposition. MPP Bourgouin.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I just want to continue on the same line we were on, schedule 8:

"The schedule amends part III.1 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, which deals with the removal of forest resources that are in a crown forest for the purpose of allowing an activity other than a forest operation to be carried out on the land that requires the forest resources to be removed. Such removal is not subject to a requirement to provide for sustainability of the crown forest."

That's why, Minister, in my first round of questioning, I was saying there will be two standards. Forestry, like I said, is instrumental, and they do a lot of good work. They do a lot of consultation with First Nations, which I want to go through now.

If there are two standards, will whoever is going to be operating on the forest—mining, aggregate or other companies—be also doing free and informed consent with First Nations? As you know, First Nations are saying that we need this to happen if we want to move forward with

government. Is that going to be respected from the First Nations perspective?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: As I mentioned, sustainability and respect for Indigenous communities are non-negotiable for our government. We will always look at sustainability and being able to work with our Indigenous communities. So that is not changing in this legislation.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: It's not, but they're not subject to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act as we speak, which forestry has to follow. My concern is, will there be any stipulation in their contract saying, "Before the operation starts, you need to have free and informed consent to be able to continue your operation"?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Again, in what is before you, we're not touching consultations; we're not touching sustainability. This is simply just a streamlined change. But those two things that you're trying to allude to are not being changed in this legislation—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I beg to differ, because, Minister—and I apologize; I don't want to cut you off, but we're very limited in time. I beg to differ because you changed the rules that will affect a lot of people, including First Nations. So it is not just simple legislative changes; it's more than that. There will be two standards now happening in our forests: one, rigid, for forestry, less competitive—I can use the same operation right beside them.

What's going to happen with the forest? When they clear for mining, let's say, what's going to happen to the trees? They're just going to be chipped or they're just going to be thrown, buried? There is a lot of valuable lumber in there. Forestry is very restricted. There are certain trees that, if you're not cutting them, they've got to stay standing up. So what's going to happen to that volume?

It's easy to say, "No, it's just regulatory; it's just to simplify the process for paperwork." But it's more than that. It's a lot more than that. Forestry has to do 10-, 20-year plans and consult with the residents also. Will that happen? Because right now, what I'm seeing, there will be two standards. Will there be public consultation? Because some people have camps in the forest. Trap lands for First Nations—that will affect the trappers in First Nations.

So Minister, I'd like to have an answer, because just to say "Oh, it's just regulatory"—I'm sorry; it's not. I've been in forestry long enough to know that there will be two standards in the forest, and we have to make sure that the trappers are protected because that's their traditional trapping lines. There are camps all over the place that they have to do. So will that change or not? What you're telling me is, "No, there is no change. It's just regulatory," but that's not what I'm reading, and I know how forestry operates.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for the question. Again, I'm looking at the section that you're asking about, and, again, if you read the section, as you have, it's clear that this is just about things like updating the forest management planning manual, etc. So we're looking at the forest management planning manual, the forest management plan approval under section 9, the forest operation prescription prepared for certification under section 16,

section 17 and subsection 42, all of which, again, what you're alluding to does not impact. We're talking about forest management planning manuals, which already apply to—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I hear you, Minister. It won't impact forestry. But the other people that will be operating on the limit are the forestry—on the crown it will be on a different set of rules. And I'm saying these rules need to reflect some of what's happening right now with forestry, respecting First Nations, respecting also the community that lives around that. Public consultation needs to happen, because we'll be impacted with those. For environmental, endangered species—the list goes on.

My question to you: Will they have to follow some regulations, some rules that are already covered in our forestry planning?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: This does not touch those. As I said in my opening remarks, the changes here do not change whether it's environmental standards or safeguards, and they do not compromise our work with Indigenous communities.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): There are 30 seconds left.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So I just want to finish on snowmobiles. I'm a big snowmobile fan too, and I know Moonbeam has received money from your government. I have to recognize how much that impacts our riding. And to MPP Bresee, if he comes down my way, he can call me and we'll go snowmobiling with him, because there's great economic development for us.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'll end on that invitation. Okay, now to the third party. MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to return to schedule 5, Minister, and given the shortness of time, if you could be concise with your answers. I'm looking for a yes-or-no answer, and you'll see, I think, it should be easy for you.

Have you or your officials met with any executives or lobbyists as it relates to reward points?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: This bill will continue to safeguard reward points, and—

Mr. Stephen Blais: Yes or no: Have you met with lobbyists or executives?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I have not.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. Has the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery or his officials met with any executive or lobbyist as it relates to reward points?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I am not the member of that minister.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Just yes or no, or "I'm aware" or "I'm unaware."

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I imagine he would respond that he's continuing to prepare reward points, but I know we have officials—if you want an answer, I know we have officials from the Ministry of Public and Service Delivery who can confirm that this is going to safeguard reward points. I would invite them, if they would like to—

Mr. Stephen Blais: That's not the question, Minister.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: You asked a question of another ministry.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Has the Premier—

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I'm here before you, and so if you want a response, I think we owe it to Ontarians to give you a response.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I want the response to my question. Can you stop ragging the puck and answer yes or no, or "I don't know" or "I'm unsure." Has the Premier met with executives or lobbyists of companies that offer reward points or participate in reward point programs?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I get why you are—you know, I know the Liberals had, when they short-sighted the changes to the consumer act in 2018, which we're now fixing.

Mr. Stephen Blais: So you're unaware. Okay.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): There are officials on the line, if you wish.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm wondering about their presence in meetings, not what the officials—

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: You asked about whether the member from public service delivery—and we have officials from that particular ministry that could answer your question, but—

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm asking you questions.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: You're asking questions that you're not willing to hear an answer to.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm looking for answers from you—

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Chair, do we not answer questions in committee, or is it question-question period in here?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Ministerial accountability requires the minister to answer questions or for me to have my time back.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): The way it is, it is the member's time, and I ask for civility and niceness, but it is the member's time.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I appreciate that, Chair.

Were changes to reward points included in the Conservative election platform last winter?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: We're always standing up for consumers. We've done it—look at our record: the Better for Consumers, Better for Businesses Act; the Homeowner Protection Act. Every step of the way we've introduced bills to protect consumers. I know you've voted against them, but we're always standing up for consumers—

Mr. Stephen Blais: So the answer is no.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: That is misleading, Chair. I did not say the answer is no. You're putting words in my mouth, which is—I don't know, maybe you're mansplaining on that side of the aisle.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): MPP Blais, just speak through me, too, please.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Fair enough. Thank you, Madam Chair. None of the mentions from the minister reflect that those actions or those provisions were included in the platform. I'd just like that to be reflected.

Does the expiry of reward points protect Ontario from US tariffs?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I would say any time we stand up for consumers, we're protecting them from what the impact of tariffs are. It's bringing up the cost of everything. I know you're familiar with that, because when the Liberals were in government, you brought up the cost of everything in this province. We're bringing down the cost of products, and we're protecting consumers—

Mr. Stephen Blais: Madam Chair, no answer. I'll move on.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I understand your passion and frustration, but we're getting it done.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Madam Chair, I'd like—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Yes, you can have your time back, but I do remind the member that you cannot say what the minister did not say. You're summarizing. The minister has the right to correct the record.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Fair enough. The written and video record will show what the answer was or wasn't.

Minister—or Madam Chair: If the government didn't campaign on allowing points to expire, if nobody has asked them to use that power, if—according to the minister—it's not the government's intent to use that power that's written in the legislation and if it doesn't actually protect Ontario consumers from US tariffs, I have to ask the question: Why does the Premier need the power to allow reward points to expire? But since he's not here, I'll move on to another point of the legislation.

Are you aware that, on Tuesday, November 25, we asked for unanimous consent of the Legislature to accelerate the provisions of schedule 3 of your bill?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I am aware that you are fearmongering to Ontarians at a very critical time of year, where people are now thinking their reward points are going to expire, and they're not. So I would ask you to stop the fearmongering. The line of questioning is very misleading. What you're creating is entire chaos, which is very on-brand with Liberals creating chaos and waiting for Conservatives to clean it up. And that's what we're doing: We're cleaning up the mess that you left when you opened up the Consumer Protection Act—

Mr. Stephen Blais: In fairness, Minister, I'm asking you—

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: —didn't go far enough, and now we are. And I'm sorry if you're upset with that, but I'm speaking to the facts and what's in the legislation.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm asking you about Christopher's Law, which is schedule 3, and I'm not sure how asking you about Christopher's Law is creating chaos.

So the changes in your bill, schedule 3, as they relate to Christopher's Law: I asked you, just simply—yes or no— if you're aware that, on Tuesday, November 25, we tried to accelerate the passage of that schedule of your bill.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: As I alluded to in my opening remarks and when my colleagues asked about Christopher's Law, this is a private member's bill that several of the government members have worked on to strengthen. There are sections of Christopher's Law that we've improved and—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry, Minister. I didn't mean to gavel so early, but it is 10:00 and the time is up. Thank you very much for your presentation.

This committee is now recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon. Thank you.

The committee recessed from 1000 to 1300.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Good afternoon, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to order.

We are meeting to resume public hearings on Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts. 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.

As a reminder, each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all the 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.

NINA DEEB

NORTHERN ONTARIO SERVICE
DELIVERERS ASSOCIATION

ACCESS2PAY

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I will now call on Nina in the first part of our grouping to begin. We have two—I'm sorry, the third presenter on your list is here, Anand, and in the middle they're going to be virtual. The Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association will go after. So each of the presenters go, and then the rounds of questions will start.

Please begin, Nina.

Ms. Nina Deeb: Good afternoon, Chair and committee members. My name is Nina Deeb. I've been a real estate broker in this province and I've studied real estate since 1995. I'm a full-time realtor.

This bill has 22 schedules, and I can get behind most of them. The schedules that I would like to see deleted—I'm going to just rhyme them off, because I'm not going to have enough time, I don't think, to go through my reasoning. I would like to delete schedules 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 16, and I will go through the reasons why. If I do run out of time, I would love to add the rest of the reasons through the question period, if that's a possibility.

The Consumer Protection Act does not apply to the largest purchase that consumers make, which is a house. This omission is problematic and extremely profitable for all of Ontario's new consumer protection agencies. These corporations are running the law for profit on behalf of the government of Ontario. These are red tape corporations. Administrative agencies are the P3 partners of government

that we did not elect. Only one of these tax-exempt corporations existed when I became a realtor.

Ontario's consumer protection laws have been designed to protect corporations at the consumer's expense—for example, Tarion. These agencies are often the subject of the Ontario auditor reports, and I do read them. Most of my opinion comes through the investigations of these organizations. These private corporations are not correctable. I was originally trying to correct them, but they're very arrogant; they're not correctable.

The guild socialism in Canada is a product of the free trade agreement. It is the pressure of America on Canada that has given us these administrative authorities that break the law for profit while defunding the province and the country, suing our municipalities and combatting new homebuyers. They increase the cost for consumers, making life more expensive. They create job losses. They have the power to obstruct an independent contractor's accounts receivable.

Expiry of reward points: Reward points are a form of corporation-created currency. These points are tender, since a consumer can make purchases with them. The main issuers are the five big banks, grocers and corporations. The banks create their own currency, and then they destroy the balance that consumers collect. That's been my experience. This is called "money-changing," and it's been around since Biblical times. It should be outlawed.

This benefits corporations at consumers' expense. The issuers have the power to deplete the value of your account with administrative tricks, platform migration and applying arbitrary conditions which result in the account holder having their balance reduced or completely depleted by the points issuer. A change of currency also changes what the points can purchase. That is theft. RBC depleted my rewards points that I had collected since 1998 when they migrated to a new platform in 2021. This wiped out my balance of approximately \$20,000. I don't know what the amount is; it was an online program, and once it was depleted I had no access.

TD applied my points to someone else's account, and when I inquired about them, they told me the benefactor had already spent them, so apparently they couldn't re-appoint the points that they had fabricated in the first place. And my Scotia rewards were drastically reduced when Scotia converted them to Scene points in 2021. I'd collected these points since I was 18.

Corporations are not honouring the currency they create. They are also the benefactors of the points program when the account holder dies. They decide their points are suddenly worthless and refuse to honour them. Points manipulation and refusing to accept their currency are theft.

The government stated they're getting rid of what doesn't make sense. We have over 400,000 laws and regulations in Ontario. The government stated plans to reduce the legal burden by over 100,000 rules, regulations and laws.

We don't need MPAC. They haven't bothered with a province-wide assessment since 2016. All they do is cost

municipalities money, which increases property taxes. This is a do-nothing corporation.

We don't need TRESA, which disguises five wealth transfers. Four of the wealth transfers are to RECO. Section 27 is a conductor of a wealth transfer from consumers to real estate brokerages. This small, little clause is worth \$130 million a year in interest on consumer deposits. This arrangement has set Ontario's brokerages up to profit from agreement breaches. This contradicts my business model and efforts to protect against contracts being breached.

We don't need any of the private corporations that are charging AMPs, collecting mandatory monopoly insurance while enjoying their tax-exempt statuses. This includes most of the boards and associations in Ontario.

Ontario does not need any of the delegated authorities. These corporations are new and a form of taxation by private corporations. The delegated authorities are wealth transfer corporations: Tarion, HCRA, CAO, CMAO, VQAO, OMVIC, TSSA, ESA, Ontario One Call, RHRA, TICO, RECO and BAO, which is the unnamed authority of schedule 11. Administrative penalties to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario are not supported. BAO must be dismantled.

BAO is the same special interest group as RECO. They share the same Royal LePage chair and is one of the start-up businesses of former Ontario information commissioner Tom Wright. RECO's dismissed registrar migrated from the BAO and should be investigated for insurance fraud.

RECO is a wealthy corporation. Before RECO is dismantled, RECO's reserve funds must be used to reimburse the agents' losses, and all consumers must be made whole on their deposits.

RECO must be made to pay for the mishandling of the iPro case. It isn't just iPro agents who are affected; it's every agent that sold an iPro listing. It also affects the employees of the 2,400 agents. Many agents are employers. My office has over 100 employees that are not employed by the brokers; they're actually employed by agents. If there are no accounts receivable, payroll cannot be met. RECO caused job losses. iPro commissions have not been paid since August 14, 2015.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

Ms. Nina Deeb: These commissions are not recoverable under RECO.

When RECO hid this, they took away both the consumers' and the registrants' abilities to protect themselves. No one knew the trust monies were not safe except for the registrar.

On Monday, the province took over RECO and dismissed the board of directors. The spouse of RECO's chair is the incoming chair of the Toronto real estate board. There's no accountability or fairness when it comes to corporate greed.

These associations were taken over and dominated by Brookfield. Often, 50% of the board are Brookfield brand agents. A broker that did not cancel a showing appoint-

ment was fined \$2,000; a broker that steals \$10.5 million of trust funds is charged nothing. The difference between these two brokers is that the broker not charged is a former RECO director.

Regarding reducing the burden of paperwork for businesses, my paperwork just gets more and more all the time, so that's not happening.

The red tape corporations have smothered housing. I have named them; we must remove them. Red—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry. Your time is completed, Ms. Deeb.

I'll now move to the second group of presenters in this, the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. Just again, I'll remind you to state your name before you speak.

Go ahead, whoever would like to start.

Ms. Michelle Boileau: Good afternoon, Chair, and other standing committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today. My name is Michelle Boileau. I am the mayor of Timmins and the chair of the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association, NOSDA. With me today are Brian Marks, lead CAO, and Fern Dominelli, the executive director of NOSDA.

I'm here to express our strong support for the regulation changes under Bill 46 that would make district social services administration boards, DSSABs, eligible to apply to the Infrastructure Ontario loan program.

NOSDA is the association of northern Ontario's service system managers—the 10 DSSABs plus the city of Greater Sudbury. Collectively, our members deliver essential human services across geography larger than many provinces. We deliver community housing, homelessness prevention, early years and child care, Ontario Works and paramedic services.

In housing specifically, NOSDA members directly own 9,322 community housing units and support an additional 7,513 non-profit units and 3,612 rent supplement portfolios. Except for Toronto and Ottawa, taken together, our members constitute the third-largest social and community housing provider in Ontario. That scale gives us both responsibility and urgency to modernize and expand the housing we provide in the north.

1310

Most of our publicly owned stock was built in the 1970s and 1980s. Much of it is at or near end of life and requires deep renewal or replacement to meet today's health, safety, accessibility and energy performance standards. At an estimated replacement cost on the order of \$375,000 to \$500,000 per unit, the north faces a multi-billion-dollar reinvestment requirement over the next two decades. Renewal is not an option; it's essential to protect vulnerable tenants, to keep families stably housed and to ensure that northern employers can recruit and retain the workforce they need.

Under the current framework, DSSABs, the very entities responsible for the capital planning and delivery of housing, are not eligible to borrow directly from Infrastructure Ontario. In contrast, local housing corporations that are wholly owned by DSSABs, as well as many of the non-profit providers we fund, can apply for IO financing.

This creates a misalignment: the accountable service manager with the balance sheet and the capital plan is ineligible, while its subsidiaries or funded providers are eligible. As a result, northern DSSABs have had to rely on private lenders at higher rates to proceed with critical renewal and development projects. Every additional basis point diverts scarce resources away from homes and tenants.

The proposed regulation changes would correct this inconsistency by recognizing DSSABs as eligible borrowers under the Infrastructure Ontario loan program. This is not about special treatment; it is about parity and practicality. DSSAB eligibility would allow the service manager—the organization already accountable for asset management, life cycle planning and municipal levy impacts—to match projects to the most efficient borrowing tool available. Importantly, every DSSAB application would still be subject to Infrastructure Ontario's standard project-by-project due diligence, financial merit tests and risk assessments.

Infrastructure Ontario typically provides borrowing at rates below comparable private market options. Even a seemingly modest rate advantage on the order of half a percentage point produces substantial savings over 25- to 30-year amortizations. For example, on a representative \$7.5-million, 20-unit redevelopment over 25 years, a 50-basis-points reduction in interest costs can save roughly \$600,000 over the life of the loan. Scaled across northern Ontario's aging portfolio, those savings translate into millions that stay in the system, funding more roof replacements, deeper energy retrofits and additional new buildings. For municipal taxpayers who already contribute a significant share of our operating budgets through the levy, this is a direct, measurable value-for-money outcome.

Extending IO eligibility to DSSABs advances the province's housing supply and infrastructure modernization objectives. It accelerates the renewal and replacement of aging community housing, supports infill and densification where services exist, and strengthens northern economic growth by ensuring safe, affordable homes for workers, seniors and families. It also supports resilient, better-built, energy-efficient housing; lowers operating costs; reduces emissions; and improves tenant health outcomes, delivering broader public value.

To summarize, NOSDA members manage one of Ontario's largest social and community housing portfolios outside the two biggest cities. Our stock is aging and we need to stretch every public dollar. Allowing DSSABs to borrow through Infrastructure Ontario is a practical, targeted fix that will save money, speed up projects and deliver better homes across northern Ontario.

On behalf of NOSDA, I respectfully ask this committee to support the Bill 46 regulatory amendments that make DSSABs eligible for the Infrastructure Ontario loan program and to move these changes forward without delay.

Thank you, merci, meegwetch to all members of the committee for your attention and for your work on this file.

I would be pleased to answer your questions and, in my inability to answer, to defer to one of my colleagues.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation.

I will now go to the final presenter in this round, from Access2Pay Ltd. Mr. Misir, please start.

Mr. Anand Misir: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, committee members. My name is Anand Misir. I'm the CEO of Access2Pay. We help municipalities modernize their revenue operations across Ontario. We are based in Ontario. We work with municipalities like the city of Brampton, the town of Oakville and Service New Brunswick out east, with the aim of removing manual processes, automating processes and getting rid of repetitive processes through the revenue collection process, so staff can focus on delivering service to residents.

I wanted to spend my time highlighting something that we've seen with pretty much every municipality that we've talked to across the province, which is a lot of manual work, a lot of disjointed systems that impact their ability to deliver service. Staff can't be expected to offer service, like what residents expect out of the private sector, if they are burdened with Excel spreadsheets, manual entry from one system to the other and, when something inevitably goes wrong when you're manually entering something, the resource-suck of finding that receipt from a month ago across multiple departments.

Just as an example, in terms of the city of Brampton, they weren't able to accept payment for a building permit prior to implementing our system. Developers needed to go to city hall and present a cheque before their permits could even begin to be processed. Just by integrating systems at a technical level and making sure that staff can focus on delivering service, rather than manual grunt work that any little robot could do, is, I think, an important foundation to accomplish the things that this bill is aiming to accomplish.

I'm going to go short on my time here, but that's pretty much all I've got.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Okay. Thank you very much to all the presenters.

We will now start with the third party, MPP Watt, for your first round of six and a half minutes, please.

MPP Tyler Watt: Perfect. Thank you, Chair, and thank you everyone for coming today to be a part of this important process.

My first question is going to be for Nina. When we're talking about private regulators and those delegated authorities outside direct government oversight, this could reduce transparency and impose costs on consumers. Bill 46 makes several changes through regulation, rather than clear statutory requirements.

My ask to you is: Do you see this as deepening reliance on delegated authorities and broad regulatory regimes? If so, what risk does this pose for accountability and fairness in sectors like housing and consumer protection?

Ms. Nina Deeb: That's a great question. Thank you for the question.

There's a section regarding the Bereavement Authority of Ontario. Although it's not named, it does name the administrative authorities in general. The powers that I see in that schedule—I've asked for that schedule to be taken out. It looks like it's for funerals, but it actually involves a lot more than that; I think it's 12 pages long. What's in there is the registrar powers. There is also a change in the minister being able to appoint the registrar.

RECO was just taken over by—this bill came out June 5, so RECO has happened since. So even being able to incorporate RECO and their registrar into this is fantastic. But on Monday, the government took over the Real Estate Council of Ontario for bad behaviour, and they dismissed the board. But what has happened now is, with this bill, this will expand the minister's reach into the sector of regulation through the administrator that has been put in for RECO, who has all the powers of the board of directors, the registrar and the CEO. One person now has all those powers. I don't agree with that.

I'd like to see RECO disbanded; what they did was horrible. But the registrar powers, the one-man powers, have to go. Registrars, as a private corporation, should not be entrusted with one-man powers to make decisions like this. He was within his powers to do what he did with the iPro case. The reason that happened is because registrars were given too much power in 2020. I did speak on that bill when that happened.

So registrar powers are a big issue. I don't want to see the registrar powers expanded or the minister appointing registrars. The board of directors does that.

MPP Tyler Watt: Thank you. This question, again, is for you: Do you believe that Bill 46's approach, which shifts many statutory duties to regulation or exemptive powers, undermines property rights or housing security for Ontarians? Which provisions raise the greatest concern for homeowners and renters?

Ms. Nina Deeb: Yes, I do. I think that it makes it worse. One of the reasons: There are 20 ministries that got together for this bill. There were a lot of ministers putting in their input.

One of the things that I see—I see the Consumer Protection Act and the changes that are there. Allowing corporations to expire your points: How does that protect the people of Ontario against anything? That actually puts the people of Ontario at risk. We don't want our points to expire. We don't want corporations coming at us and saying, "Well, you can hire a lawyer now and come after us. You can have your day in court."

The person that needs their day in court, like with this Bill 46, is the widow who is losing her day in court to Iamgold. Schedule 9: I'd like to see schedule 9 come out of there, because as a citizen of this province, I find that nauseating. That must absolutely come out. This isn't what we use the Ontario Legislature for. It's not to get in the way of a widow's day in court. She should have her day in court. That's not the purpose of this Legislature.

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MPP Tyler Watt: You bring up schedule 5. I know this has been a hot topic in the news and the Legislature lately,

but the purpose is supposed to be to actually protect those points, right? It all sounds good until those last few words about it being subject to regulation. Is that your concern?

Ms. Nina Deeb: That absolutely is my concern. When something is subject to regulation, it doesn't come back to cabinet, it doesn't for a decision here, and I don't get to say anything about it. I can talk to the private corporation, maybe, that has been given this extra power. But I don't talk to these private corporations anymore because, like I have mentioned, they're not correctible. These are wealth-transfer corporations, and I'm not negotiating with them anymore. My only opinion on them is that they have to go. They must be disbanded.

MPP Tyler Watt: Would you be supportive of that schedule if that regulation piece was taken out?

Ms. Nina Deeb: I think so. I didn't see anything else there other than that. I think that I could be supportive of that. But, like I said, giving the consumers the option of going legal on a large corporation, like David and Goliath, really isn't enough. When you look at that, they can say, "We're giving you this possibility"—\$500 an hour for a lawyer to get your points back from a corporation? I don't see that as enough.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds remaining.

MPP Tyler Watt: Okay. I was going to ask NOSDA something, but we don't really have enough time. In my next round, I'll come back to you all.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Okay. Thank you very much.

To the government side: MPP Racinsky.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to all the presenters for coming and speaking to this important bill, Bill 46, and for your insights on it.

I want to ask Mr. Misir a question. I used to be a Halton Hills town councillor before going to this place. I think I might have used your services, but I'm not sure if you're in Halton Hills or not.

Mr. Anand Misir: No, they're not a client.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Not yet? No. But I really appreciate your advocacy on trying to find ways that we can streamline processes and digitize processes.

I wanted to ask how simplifying regulatory processes supports your clients.

Mr. Anand Misir: Well, it helps with procurement. If they have a need for something like our solution in terms of delivering service, the whole mandate out of the bill is: How are you going to be able to deliver a service at a better level? Looking with that mandate, they can look to the market and see that there are solutions out there that can help optimize internal services and operations so they can deliver service better and cut red tape.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: And how does modernizing these processes improve trust between businesses and government?

Mr. Anand Misir: At a certain point, it's expectations. After COVID, everybody expects to get their stuff immediately and you'll click a button on Amazon. I think meeting expectations builds trust.

There's also a level of transparency to the process, where now you can report, you can provide updates on your permit, where it's not just you don't hear from somebody for 30 days. You can get up to the day, up to the minute updates with where your file is within that system because things are speaking to each other—automated; it's not just somebody manually punching things in. The resident can have a portal where they can look at it and get updates right away, ask questions and even interact about their file.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you.

Chair, I'll cede the rest of my time to my colleagues.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Okay. MPP Saunderson, please.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank all our presenters today for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and present to us.

My question is going to be to the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. It's great to see everyone again. I think the last time I saw you was at AMO, where we were talking about Landlord and Tenant Board issues for you guys. I appreciate knowing first-hand the incredible work that you do in your communities up there. Thank you for that.

Thank you for also participating in MOI's regulatory registry for your input on this legislation that we have before us today.

Michelle, in your comments, you were very specific about some of the numbers. I think you told us for a \$7.5-million project, this could save your organization about \$600,000 over the course of the loan. It's that kind of granular information that's very useful to us.

You've told us you're the third-biggest landlord association across the province. I'm wondering if you can give us some numbers in terms of your current inventory and how this could assist you in adding to that inventory, adding to moving forward. This is a big part of our efforts in this province to get rental housing out there, and we've had some good results. But getting it affordable and in a rent-controlled area is very important for us all across the province but particularly, as you said, in northern Ontario where there is such a need.

I'm wondering if you can tell us how this will translate to boots-on-the-ground numbers increases for your portfolio.

Ms. Michelle Boileau: Thank you for the question. I will definitely ask one of my colleagues to speak further to this, but I'll start us off. It wouldn't guarantee projects moving forward by any means, but it would allow our members to have more options, to be able to find a deeper depth of affordability for the projects that we're moving forward and finding the best loan rates possible.

It may very well mean that in the future, market loans, market rates, would be more competitive and would allow for deeper affordability in any project. However, in the case where the IO loan program would be more feasible, then that would become an option to us. But right now, we just don't even have the option to be exploring that and to

be able to try and crunch those numbers to find more affordability.

But I'll ask one of my colleagues, either Brian or Fern. They're working in the numbers and the spreadsheets where they're collating all of the information across northern Ontario, so they might have a better idea, in terms of dollars and cents, how this could really impact.

Brian or Fern?

Mr. Brian Marks: Sure. Think of it in much the same way that cost inflation factors are determined by a basket of goods. If you think about that in a construction context, the cost of money is one of the large drivers, in addition to the cost of materials and cost of property, and then all of the factors that go into it after the fact, like operating costs.

The way we create affordable housing without provincial or federal grant money—which hasn't been on the table for northern Ontario service deliverers over the last decade—is to drive down all of those costs to the lowest possible denominator, including going to municipalities to waive property tax rates for affordable units. And certainly one of the best ways to do that—to drive down one of the key costs such as long-term financing—is to access innovative programs like Infrastructure Ontario or Build Ontario. So that's what we're looking for in this case, just to provide another lever that we can access to create affordable rents.

Mr. Fern Dominelli: Just to give you an idea: Of the \$600,000 to replace our 9,300 units that we directly own, that could be savings of about \$250 million over the next 20 or 30 years, and that money would come straight out of the local property tax base. That's why it's important for us.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): There's about 30 seconds left.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thirty seconds?

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Yes.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Not a lot of time, but again, I want to thank you for your comments today and for your input on this.

Michelle, you've made a good point—well, you've all made good points; thank you—but the dynamic of building homes in the market that we're living in right now is very difficult, so I want to thank all of you for your input and helping us to push this forward. We look forward to seeing the results should this bill pass, so thank you very much.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): We'll now move over to the official opposition.

MPP Tabuns, six and a half minutes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate the opportunity.

Ms. Deeb, I found your presentation to be quite interesting. Could you speak to the total value of the points that will be lost—the dollar value to consumers—if this change goes ahead, essentially extinguishing them?

Ms. Nina Deeb: I think it will be in the billions of dollars. Myself, I went through what my point values were. I've collected my points most of my life and I've saved them for—I saved them for some day going to Bora

Bora on my 25th anniversary. That was really my intent with those RBC points. So when those got depleted, it was a real eye-opener for me to see that corporations can do this because they have record profits. The five big banks have record profits. They issue this currency, and then they wipe it out. In my situation, I lost probably about \$25,000 worth of points through those three big banks. From those three banks alone, I lost about \$25,000 in points. Other people—how much could they lose? What are we now, about 14 million people in Ontario? And a lot of people collect points. We rely on points, and those points should be there when we go to use them.

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Saving your points shouldn't mean that you lose them. It's an account; it's a type of account. Often, it's online so that you get no records on these points.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Interestingly, the minister said that it was a misrepresentation to say that people would lose their points and, in fact, that there would be an increase in the rights of points-holders through adoption of this bill.

In your earlier commentary, you said giving points holders the opportunity to go to court to fight these corporations was not necessarily a gift, and very few people have the money that would allow them to carry forward a successful legal action. Can you expand on your assessment of the minister's trade-off on this issue?

Ms. Nina Deeb: It's tricky words. The words that are being used in that schedule are tricks, because to be able to do it later through regulation means it doesn't come back to cabinet. We don't get a chance to say anything about this. So it can be done later. It can't be done now, as she's stating, but it can be done later through a regulation, and that's the loophole that I don't want to see. I want that loophole closed. I don't want these points to expire, and the corporations that are behaving this way, that are expiring points on individuals—I don't think me being a David taking a Goliath to court is a good solution. It should be illegal for them to expire your points on you like that.

I've got decades' worth of points that I've lost. At the end of the day, the banks have a lot more money than I do. They're reward points. The Visa I have actually has a very high interest rate if you carry a balance, and you get more points because you have that Visa. So to have your points depleted later—if I was to carry a balance on that card, because it's a points card—and that's why I chose it, because I wanted the points. What I also took with that is, I'll have to pay a higher interest rate if I carry a balance, and the reason for that was because they'll give you more points on a card like that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What you're saying effectively is that you've been paying for those points.

Ms. Nina Deeb: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You've been paying with a higher interest rate for those points.

Ms. Nina Deeb: Yes. Yes, you pay for those points. You're buying certain things because you'll get more points, like at Shoppers, where if you buy this product instead of that product, you get more Optimum points.

When you're grocery shopping at FreshCo, if you buy three of these instead of this, you can buy them at this price with your points—again, you have Scene points, that one. But the value of the points can be changed without the consumer's consent, and the consumer's only recourse is to take them to court. I don't think that's a good recourse for consumers. I don't think that's consumer protection at all.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for that. One other question: If I understand correctly, you feel that TSSA, amongst other organizations, should not be around. Did I misunderstand you?

Ms. Nina Deeb: No, I think they should all be removed.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do you think they should be replaced by direct regulation on the part of the provincial government?

Ms. Nina Deeb: That is what we had before. Before, the government was regulating these severances from government to these private corporations. RECO alone has collected over a billion dollars. It's a very new corporation, and they've collected over a billion dollars. They don't pay taxes. What do we get from this thing that is just siphoning up all this money?

TICO spent the compensation fund. I look at TICO and say—what's my issue with TICO? Don't you want this? They spent the compensation fund—it's in the Ontario auditor's report—and we gave them \$10.3 million during COVID relief to businesses. I don't see these entities—the TSSA, the propane explosion.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

Ms. Nina Deeb: I remember the propane explosion in Toronto. That's one of my reasons and my issues with the TSSA.

The other issue I have with the TSSA is that it's only two floors up from the Real Estate Council of Ontario; they're in the same building. The CEO of the TSSA travelled a whole two floors down to be the CEO of the Real Estate Council of Ontario. So it's a very small group of business interests, what's happening within these delegated authorities. It's only about 300 or 400 people, but these are special-interest businesses that are not government.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you. I know my time is short, so—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): It's only 20 seconds left, yes. Thank you very much.

MPP Watt, you can go for your last round.

MPP Tyler Watt: My question is for NOSDA. It's great to see you all here virtually.

There is some good stuff in this omnibus bill—another omnibus bill for us here at Queen's Park. You've highlighted one of them that you fully support. My concern is the centralization of power that we're seeing in this bill. We're seeing it really in every omnibus bill that's being put forward here.

Bill 46's tendency to allow ministers to regulate by decree, bypassing more transparent legislative and municipal oversight, could, in effect, centralize power. From

your point of view, does this centralization erode local autonomy and democratic accountability for northern service boards? And what safeguards should be in place to protect local control and transparency under this bill?

Ms. Michelle Boileau: Good question. Bringing it back to the local service boards.

Mr. Brian Marks: Well, I would just suggest that, given the fact that housing is a priority for all parties and over the last 25 years since we've been in business, there have been a number of governments that have failed to invest in housing, I'd suggest that by implementing the ability for DSSABs to be able to borrow funds in an objective way actually secures our ability to be able to develop housing, regardless of political stripe, post-election.

It's just one more tool in our toolbox to be able to get the work done that we need to get done, because we're desperate for people to remain in northern Ontario and to build affordable housing, to be able to attract our youth back after university or to serve as a destination of choice for new Canadians so that we can alleviate capacity problems in southern Ontario.

Ms. Michelle Boileau: I would just add that our district social services administration boards are comprised of elected officials from member municipalities, so it's actually municipal elected officials that sit at those board levels.

Not speaking to any of the other parts of the omnibus bill, this section specifically is fully supported by NOSDA because it would give us that ability to be able to make better choices, in the sense that there are just more options present to us and those decisions are made by local municipal officials.

MPP Tyler Watt: Good. Thank you very much.

I'm going to move on to Mr. Misir. I want to talk about some of the security and cyber security behind this. You're a good one who knows lots about this.

Schedule 6 reduces what consumer reporting agencies must disclose to a consumer, removing email addresses and limiting identifiers. Does this reduced transparency create challenges for fraud prevention or identity verification processes in cloud-based POS systems, and how might it affect your ability to detect suspicious activity?

Mr. Anand Misir: So when we deploy POS systems, which is exactly what we do, we don't look at what the law is; we look at what the standards are in the industry. There's SOC 2 standards; there's OAF standards. We're deploying on large cloud environments—like Google and Amazon, who have data centres in Canada, in Ontario—who make sure that the data is stored in a manner that is compliant with the law. We adhere to the standard of the industry standard, which also complies with the law, but it flows up.

The infrastructure guy is somebody like Google; they will adhere to the law, and they won't let you do anything outside of the law. Using a solution where somebody is hosting something out of their basement—that's a different discussion. But delivering a municipal-level solution, the municipalities are going to have standards. Those standards are going to match what the industry expects, and

then you flow up there to the big infrastructure providers—so, short answer, no, in terms of your direct question.
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MPP Tyler Watt: Thank you very much. Your systems also handle very sensitive consumer and transactional data. Given this bill's weakening of disclosure requirements, do you believe that this could make it harder for consumers to detect unauthorized access or fraud? And how might that impact POS providers who rely on accurate, transparent credit access records?

Mr. Anand Misir: Part of those standards is you have to disclose. If we have a breach, within 12 hours we have a disclosure period that we have to provide to customers or anybody whose data we're holding. Again, that is the industry standard. You lose certification and then you lose standing in the market when you're not adhering to those standards.

We go through a very rigorous process beyond just technology to achieve these certifications. To lose them is a really, really big deal, and it affects the business tremendously. So to a certain extent, the reduction in terms of what the legal requirement is, the market has already established a higher requirement than—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

MPP Tyler Watt: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm happy to cede the rest of my minute if anyone wants to speak more.

Ms. Nina Deeb: I'd love to speak more.

MPP Tyler Watt: Sure. Go for it.

Ms. Nina Deeb: The red tape corporations have smothered housing, and we must remove them. Red tape reduction now means cutting corners. It means shortcuts for chosen corporations. It means MZOs, special economic zones and ex parte proceedings. It means red tape for some and a green light for others, which takes me to schedule 8, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

I agree with the member of Parliament that this is selective deregulation. The schedule must be deleted. It jeopardizes our forestry sector. It will cost us more job losses. We grow some of the best trees in the world. Ontario has our very high-quality lumber to create economic opportunities—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. Your time is out, Ms. Deeb.

The government side—MPP Racinsky.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate it.

I want to ask NOSDA a question as well. I'm not from northern Ontario; I'm from Wellington-Halton Hills in the sunny south here. But I was newly elected alongside MPP Rosenberg from Algoma-Manitoulin, who is doing a fantastic job with our government.

I wanted to just ask you if you could elaborate on the benefits that this amendment could have for DSSABs and northern Ontario communities in general. You mentioned in one of your statements you were desperate to try and get people to come to the north, to stay in the north. I've had lots of conversations with MPP Rosenberg about the needs

in his community, so I just wanted to give you the opportunity to elaborate a bit more on how this will help that goal.

Ms. Michelle Boileau: Thank you for that opportunity to continue to expand on this. As was mentioned, we have an aging stock in northern Ontario, and the stock isn't sufficient. We need to continue to build more. That being said, with the cost of money, as Brian pointed out, it often leads to projects not being able to move forward. All too often, I've been around the table where we've had to make the decision not to move forward with a project because of the cost to borrow.

With that being said, eligibility for DSSABs for the Infrastructure Ontario program would allow us, again, to be able to shop for the cheapest dollars to be able to move forward with projects.

We've mentioned the aging stock. Fern had shared that over the next 25 to 30 years it could represent a savings of over \$250 million. Those are dollars that can remain with our members, with the service boards, and can be repurposed to, again, retrofit, maintain or build new. Essentially, it would just let us be able to do more with what we have.

I don't know if Brian or Fern wants to expand on that, perhaps even mentioning the number of projects that we have currently in the hopper, that we're currently working on the financial models to be able to deliver on.

Mr. Brian Marks: I was just going to say, Halton is no stranger to having rural communities. In northern Ontario, of the 140 municipalities covered by the 10 DSSABs, 90% of them have a population of under 5,000 people. They need housing, and they need the housing that they have to stay standing. For us to be able to access innovative financing programs is one of the ways that we can keep housing standing, but also deliver new, to the point where we've actually accumulated just over 1,000 units for new construction in a portfolio-level build from Quebec to Manitoba north of Parry Sound. I'm presuming that not 100% of that will be grant money, so we're going to need to access as low of financing rates as we can through whatever means we can.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: That's great. Unlike some claims we heard today, I don't believe cutting red tape is about cutting corners or that that's what is presented in this bill. I think this is about reducing complexity and simplifying processes.

Would you characterize this change as that or as cutting corners?

Ms. Michelle Boileau: No, the change regarding the DSSABs' eligibility to Infrastructure Ontario I wouldn't characterize as cutting corners per se. This is something that our team has been working with the Ministry of Infrastructure's team on for well over a decade, if not more, trying to figure out why it hasn't already been considered and how we can make it work.

So this is work that has been done over a long period of time and we're finally at this point, so we would see this as just being an enhancement to the tool kit that our service managers have available to them.

Mr. Fern Dominelli: Of the over 140 municipalities, those municipal councils all sit on our DSSABs. Every time we go to borrow, they ask us, "Why aren't you using IO?" We say, "We can't." Every time we're going to the banks, they're saying, "There's got to be better ways and better interest rates." For us, it's a practical solution.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: I got into politics to solve problems, so I appreciate that.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much.

Mr. Dominelli, just state your name for Hansard and recording purposes.

Mr. Fern Dominelli: It's Fern Dominelli.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. There's a minute and 45, if anybody—MPP Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to thank all the presenters for their presentation today and for being here.

I would direct my question to Mr. Anand Misir. Being a Brampton member, could you please share with the committee the work you've been doing with the city of Brampton and how your work would help cut the red tape at the city and across the province.

Mr. Anand Misir: The city of Brampton went through an RFP process, and they selected us to modernize their revenue collection infrastructure. We deploy over the counter; we have clerks using our solution in the back office and they have online portals that residents can log into and pay. When somebody pays for something now, opposed to before, that payment record gets into what they're paying for immediately.

I mentioned building permits; previously, the payment mechanism was a cheque that somebody had to mail or walk into, and a clerk would need to take that cheque and manually enter it into the permit issuing system to get the permit issued. Now all of those things are connected. Whether it be property tax, parking tickets, building permits, even wine and beer at the theatre department, everything is reconciled immediately because we also do the accounting records to the accounting system as well.

It takes away a lot of manual work from clerks and from your accounting folks to make sure they can focus on doing their job at the next level.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): There's roughly 20 seconds left, MPP Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I just want to thank you for the great work you're doing, and I want to thank the presenters once again for being here.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thanks so much.

We'll now go to the final round of this round. MPP Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm curious: We have the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association; can you tell me again what the advantage is to your projects to have a reshaped relationship with Infrastructure Ontario?

Ms. Michelle Boileau: The advantage would be that our service deliverers, our housing system managers, would be eligible to Infrastructure Ontario's Loan Program, eventually allowing us to find the best possible interest rate for any loan that we'd be engaging in.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Have you done a calculation as to how much that would be of value to you in terms of number of units that you would be able to build if you were not otherwise eligible to access those funds?

Mr. Fern Dominelli: Typically, we're saying it's about 0.5% we would save by having an IO loan as opposed to a bank loan, and we're saving about \$600,000 on a 20-unit build. With \$600,000, you could build at least one more unit, so out of the 9,300 units that we currently own, we would save about \$250 million over the next 20 to 30 years as we replace them. For every 20, we'd get an extra unit. It is significant. I'm just assuming 0.5%.

1350

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay.

Chair, I actually have no other questions. I cede my time.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Okay. Well, thank you very much to all the presenters. I'll give you a minute to step away from the table.

POLICE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF
SNOWMOBILE CLUBS

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): For the next round, we're going to have the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, which is going to be virtual; and the second presenter is the Police Association of Ontario, and I believe they're here. When there's time, you can just come to the table. Thank you.

Mr. Baxter, when you get a minute—because we haven't got the federation of snowmobiles online. If you would be able to go first—

Mr. Mark Baxter: Sure. I just wanted to greet everyone.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Oh, I'm sorry. Good?

Mr. Mark Baxter: We're moving right along today. Do you want me to start?

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Yes, when you sit down.

You know how it goes: Just state your name at the beginning for Hansard and recording purposes. You have up to seven minutes, and you can start when you're ready. Thank you. Yes, we are ahead of time. I do apologize; I just saw that.

Mr. Mark Baxter: Thank you. It's Mark Baxter. I'm the president of the Police Association of Ontario.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Police Association of Ontario, which represents over 32,000 uniform and civilian police personnel from 46 police associations across the province. Our members are the dedicated men and women who serve on the front lines, keeping our communities safe every single day.

My remarks today address schedule 3 of Bill 46, which amends Christopher's Law, the legislation establishing Ontario's sex offender registry, which was created follow-

ing the tragic abduction, sexual assault and murder of Christopher Stephenson in June 1988. The registry's purpose is to ensure that police have essential tools to monitor sex offenders and protect communities. This is accomplished through requiring individuals convicted of sexual offences to register in person and to provide updated, relevant information upon certain triggering dates.

Currently, access to the registry is restricted to the ministry and to Ontario police services for crime-prevention and law-enforcement purposes. Although this model has served Ontario well for 25 years, unfortunately, the landscape of sexual offending has changed dramatically. Offenders now operate in digital environments, move rapidly between jurisdictions and often interact with multiple supervision partners beyond the police. The current law does not allow for the seamless sharing of registry data with those partners, even when they play a direct role in monitoring the same offenders.

Bill 46 addresses that gap by introducing two significant amendments. First, it permits registry information to be disclosed to prescribed entities named through legislation, not just to police services. These entities will include law enforcement counterparts who play a vital role in supervising individuals on the registry, including law enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions, including here in Canada; child protection agencies; border security partners; and specialized multi-jurisdictional investigative teams such as those in the United States with the Department of Homeland Security or through Interpol.

Second, before disclosure occurs, the ministry must enter into a formal agreement with each prescribed entity. These agreements govern what information can be shared, how it may be used, what security safeguards must be in place and how accountability requirements will be met. In effect, these amendments expand access only where necessary and only under structured, enforceable conditions that balance individual privacy and crime prevention in equal measure.

From the perspective of our front-line members, these changes are both important and overdue. Gone are the days of siloed law enforcement techniques. Modern sexual offence investigations and supervision often require multi-agency co-operation, and police regularly work alongside partners who need timely access to the same information to manage risk effectively. Under the current law, these partners may be unable to access crucial data, creating information gaps that hinder prevention and supervision. Allowing prescribed entities to receive registry information ensures that no organization responsible for public safety is forced to operate in the dark.

The amendments also reflect the digital and cross-border realities of modern sexual offending, where offenders use online identities and mobility to avoid scrutiny, making coordinated responses essential. Critically, these advancements will align with other police initiatives and operations, more accurately reflecting the original utility of the database.

The Police Association of Ontario supports the mandatory agreement requirement, as it is a key measure that ensures information sharing is properly structured and controlled. These agreements define exactly what information can be exchanged, establish clear protocols for handling sensitive data and prevent any unintended expansion of how the registry is used. They also help maintain confidence in the system's integrity. This approach ensures that the registry continues to function as a tool that enhances safety and supports effective policing, while minimizing unnecessary complications or disputes over its use.

Overall, the Police Association of Ontario supports these amendments because they strengthen officer and community safety, they improve investigative capabilities and update a system that must meet today's operational realities in sexual offence prevention.

The amendments provide the right balance between enabling broader, needed information-sharing and maintaining strong, practical accountability measures. They update the registry in a responsible, practical way that aligns with front-line needs and supports consistent, effective use across the province. For these reasons, the Police Association of Ontario supports schedule 3 of Bill 46 and encourages the committee to adopt these changes.

We want to thank the Ontario government for taking concrete steps to strengthen these mechanisms of accountability and collaboration. Ontario's police personnel will continue to do our part to ensure the effective and purposeful functioning of the Ontario sex offender registry. Never again should a family like the Stephensons have to experience a coroner's inquest into the circumstances around a loved one's death and the failure of our criminal justice system to protect our communities against those with histories of sexual violence.

We look forward to working together to ensure these reforms are implemented effectively and deliver the results that Ontarians expect and deserve: a justice system that prioritizes public safety, supports crime prevention and protects victims, not offenders.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions at any time.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much, Mr. Baxter. We'll now go to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs.

Mr. Eickmeier, you're on. If you could just state your name before you begin. You have up to seven minutes, so please begin.

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: I'm Ryan Eickmeier, the CEO of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. On behalf of our federation and our 178 community-based member clubs, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present today and speak about proposed updates to Ontario regulation 186/01, trail grooming.

The comments I share today in our support for these amendments reflect a motion passed at our annual general meeting three years ago by our members. In short, these proposed updates will ensure snowmobile operations are compliant with all provincial legislation and regulations. If adopted, these changes will make snowmobile oper-

ations more effective and efficient, while allowing the OFSC better manage our grooming fleet.

Before we get to those details, I would like to spend a moment establishing the scope of the impact for this regulation.

The OFSC is a program delivery partner on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, where we deliver two key programs: the snowmobile trail permit program and the snowmobile driver training program. As part of our role pertaining to snowmobile trail permits, the OFSC maintains trails stretching from all corners of Ontario. In order to ensure safety and an enjoyable experience for the 80,000-plus permit buyers, the OFSC deploys upwards of 280 industrial snow groomers which work to pack, cut and groom snowmobile trails throughout the winter.

1400

Since the inception of this regulation, the OFSC has exclusively operated these larger industrial units, which indeed do an excellent job of maintaining our trail network. In recent years, however, changes in weather conditions in the province, escalating costs of operations and purchasing this equipment, geographic limitations and improvements to what we call non-industrial equipment have created an opportunity for our federation to utilize smaller equipment in certain areas.

In our submission, we have provided detailed information on these types of equipment, but I'll speak briefly to the recommendations and conclude with a summary of the positive impact that these changes will have to our operations.

In our submission, we focused on three main aspects: Operational efficiency, modernization and safety. On the operational efficiency side, we have proposed that the definition of "groomer" be expanded to include new vehicle types that can bring efficiencies to our operation. Notably, these could include side-by-side vehicles and/or work utility snowmobiles with adequate horsepower and accessories, accessories being tracks, cabs, lighting and heaters to pull a grooming drag.

The local market for these units is plentiful, and the options to accessorize for our purposes are as well. At roughly one eighth the acquisition cost of industrial grooming equipment, an equivalent of \$50,000 versus \$400,000, and less than half of operating costs—roughly around \$35 to \$40, as opposed to \$80—these units can be deployed in many areas in southern and central Ontario, resulting in considerable savings versus our current options. As well, the relative weight and width of these units provide increased flexibility for navigating through more technical areas and over frozen bodies of water. The Canadian Shield is an excellent example of geographic limitations.

On the modernization side, we suggest clerical language changes that reflect modern practices and/or equipment. Notably, drags, which we tow behind our groomers, do much more than just flatten snow. They can pack, they can cut, they can churn, they roll—they do a variety of things depending on the conditions of that trail. With various options now available on the market, we have sought

to update this language to provide flexibility on our snow processing equipment.

Further, the OFSC once used Alpines that were regularly equipped throughout the province. Their inclusion was originally in that regulation because they were widely used. They are no longer manufactured and have not been in use for many years, which is the reason why we've requested them to be removed. Finally, we've recommended the removal of a minimum weight for groomers. It's no longer a relevant metric, given the innovation and the space and the availability of lighter, cheaper equipment.

On the safety front, which of course is always top of mind, we have recommended clerical language changes to ensure our groomers always have their lights on and always have slow-moving vehicle signs attached.

In conclusion, these changes will ensure enhanced safety, updated language and considerable operational efficiency for our federation and volunteers. Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentations to both of you.

We'll now start, if it's okay, with the official opposition, with some questions for their six-and-a-half-minute round. I know we're a little ahead of time, but I think we're all set to go.

Interjection.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): They're deciding.

MPP Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To Mr. Eickmeier from the snowmobile clubs: Could you tell us how these changes will make snowmobile operations more effective and efficient, something you said at the very beginning?

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: Sure. It's largely around our operational costs. Right now, in trying to use large, industrial equipment to groom trails that may or may not need it, we're over-investing in a problem that could take a more efficient, cost-effective approach. An example would be using large, heavy industrial equipment in the Parry Sound area that could actually use smaller, lighter equipment at a much cheaper cost. Those would be more effective uses of our permit fees and permit revenue, ultimately to put better trails on the ground for snowmobilers.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): MPP Rakocevic.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you very much for being part of this committee and being part of the hearing.

You're obviously supportive. Are there things that you would like to see further towards what you're looking for with regard to this legislation? Do you feel it goes far enough? Could there be more that could be done? Since you are speaking to a committee of the government here in Ontario, what else would you like to see?

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: In terms of this regulation, I believe the proposed changes will be exhaustive. It will give our federation the flexibility we need to adapt and utilize equipment that will be better suited for our purposes.

Largely, this is a federation that is community-based, volunteer-based and supported by permit buyers across Ontario. Anything that we can find legislatively or regulatory-wise to make those operations more efficient, we are open to. This is an excellent example of one, in multiples of 80,000, which is approximately the amount of grooming hours we do each year. That can have a big effect on our overall efficiency.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Okay, that's great. But, again, is there perhaps next steps or other things you would like to see for your club, and anything else you would like to say? Again, you are speaking in a hearing to government. Are there things you would like to see for the future that you would like the members to consider?

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: Yes. I think, as we look at red tape—obviously, the purpose of this bill—there are always updates to pieces of legislation that we can look at. Top of mind right now, there is nothing that comes to mind. But this is an excellent first step in finding those efficiencies. We are always open to discussions around different pieces of legislation that affect snowmobiling.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I have no further questions.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Okay.

We'll go to the third party. MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you, Mark and Ryan, for being here.

I'll start very quickly with Ryan. Thank you for your presentation. I think what you're talking about makes a lot of sense. I'm wondering, if you have it offhand, if you might be able to share with the committee any information or statistics around the economic impact that snowmobiling has on the economy here in Ontario in terms of sled sales, gear, your fees etc.?

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: Thank you for the question. Snowmobiling can generate up to \$6 billion in economic activity in Ontario alone. That would include your direct, your indirect and your induced revenue or benefit. Obviously, the scope of that is determined by the co-operation of Mother Nature: The more it snows and the more cold we have, the better we're able to groom and, ultimately, make trails available.

It is a critical economic driver in this province. It is a critical economic driver in rural Ontario—and urban Ontario, for that matter. But it creates a lifeline, a connection, an economic activity for many small and rural communities in Ontario.

As costs have risen across multiple industries, we are not immune to that. We consume things like fuel and lumber and steel, all of those things that went up during the COVID years and never quite came back down. Those are all things that we use in a significant amount. This would be an opportunity for us to throttle that back while not affecting the quality of our trails—in fact, if done correctly, probably increasing the quality of trails.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Absolutely; \$6 billion is an enormous impact. From an economic perspective, obviously, ensuring that the snowmobile community is well taken care of is important, but obviously, the recreation and

mental health benefits of people being able to enjoy some recreation is important.

I know Tim Krause very well; you probably know Tim out in eastern Ontario. He was talking to me maybe about a month ago, maybe six weeks ago, about the loss of the trail network in some parts of the province and, obviously, the potential impact that might have. Can you explore that a little bit for us and just let us know what the threat is and, again, whether it's the regulations or the aspects of this bill or perhaps other things you might need help with that will help keep that trail network as robust as it has been?

1410

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: Yes, thank you. Obviously, it's been a challenging off-season for us as we've sought to navigate rising costs and the increasing costs of the equipment and all the things we do.

One thing I will mention before I get to that answer is, our sport is subsidized to the tune of about \$16 million annually by volunteers. That's volunteer labour to get trails ready, volunteer labour to prep, to do signage—all the things that make this sport go. We obviously have publicly noted our financial challenges, but they're not insurmountable, nor are they going to bring the federation or snowmobiling to its knees, by any stretch.

We work very well with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation as our program service delivery partner. We continue to work with them on how to sustain this sport and ensure that that economic benefit continues to thrive across Ontario. So as of right now, I'm confident that we'll be able to make these operational efficiencies where we can and get ourselves back in investing in our equipment, in our fleet and in our trails and, ultimately, in our communities.

Mr. Stephen Blais: The early snowfall this year probably helps a little bit with that, I'm guessing.

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: It does, but the ironic thing of this sport is that the more it snows, the more it costs, right? So it's a fine balance on that front.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I appreciate that.

Madam Chair, how much time is left?

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Two minutes for you.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Two minutes—Mark, I'm going to come back to you in the next round, just to make sure we have enough time. I appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): To the government side. MPP Sandhu, you're up.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to both the presenters for the presentation.

Good to see you, Mark. I would direct my question to Mark Baxter, the Police Association of Ontario. First of all, we truly appreciate the great work you guys are doing in supporting and advocating for our police officers and also supporting our communities.

One of the key goals of this proposal is to improve Ontario's ability to track and monitor high-risk offenders who cross borders. So from your perspective, how would enhanced information-sharing with the US and other international law enforcement agencies strengthen this capability? And could you please share some examples or

scenarios where timely access to information from foreign partners would have made a significant difference in preventing harm or solving crimes? And in your experience, how often do offenders exploit jurisdictional gaps, and how would this legislative change help close those gaps to protect communities more effectively?

Mr. Mark Baxter: Thanks so much for the question. Yes, the changes here certainly are going to allow for the sharing of information for offenders who are on the registry with some of our policing partners—as an example, in the United States, the Department of Homeland Security.

Currently, what happens is—we have two registries in this country. There's a national registry and the Ontario registry. The Ontario registry is far more comprehensive and really has a lot more teeth in it than the national registry. What unfortunately happens too often is offenders convicted of a sexual offence end up automatically—if they're convicted of a designated offence, they automatically are on the Ontario sex offender registry for a minimum of 10 years. That doesn't mean they're going to be on the national registry. So when that happens, for a variety of different reasons, they may not be on the national registry, or they may be on the national registry for a period of time that has expired, but in Ontario, because of their offence, they're going to be there for life.

What happens is, Ontario has a difficult time sharing that information with partners, as you've indicated, across the United States. So what can happen is an offender who's being regularly supervised decides, "I don't like these reporting requirements. I don't like being on the sex offender registry in Ontario. I'm going to move to the United States." And right now, the local police or the law doesn't allow them to share that information with the Department of Homeland Security or something like that, so when they go to cross into the United States, they're not flagged.

As I was preparing to come to committee, I met with a detective who has dealt with for a number of years specifically with and works with offenders in maintaining the sex offender registry within their local police service. He gave me an example of a very dangerous offender who decided, "I'm going to up it. I'm going to leave and I'm going to go to the United States," and they're prohibited from sharing that information to that jurisdiction. So one of the great things about these changes is that information will be allowed to be shared. The OPP can enter into an agreement, as an example, with Homeland Security, and then they can readily share that information, because US jurisdictions are able to share their information with us, but in Ontario we're struggling to be able to share it across to our US partners.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you so much.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): MPP Kanapathi, there's three minutes left.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you all for coming out and making your deputations, thank you for participating on this bill, and especially thank you to the Police Associ-

ation of Ontario's president, Mark Baxter. Thank you for your leadership.

I have been engaging with the York region for this, especially in my district, district 5. I had a meeting a couple of weeks ago. We had a community safety meeting with Chirag Bhatt. He's my local chief. Thank you for the amazing work you do. I have to thank you especially for bringing your voice. I'm also glad you are happy with this bill filling some of those gaps—trying to help you, trying to give you more tools to fight and protect our communities.

My question to you: I know you were talking about high-risk offenders. The public expects law enforcement agencies to work together to keep communities safe, especially when it comes to high-risk offenders. So how do you think this proposal supports Ontario's policy in meeting those expectations? That is the first question.

The supplementary question is, do you believe the public will feel more confidence knowing that Ontario police can collaborate seamlessly with the international partners you are talking about, the US and other jurisdictions, tracking and monitoring offenders?

Mr. Mark Baxter: One of the things I think that is going to help maintain confidence in community safety and policing is the ability, first of all locally, to be able to share information. If you've got a local child and family services agency that's conducting an investigation into a home, right now, if there's an offender from the sex offender registry who's in the home, the police aren't able to share that information with child protective services.

Now, that's not to say that child protective services can't figure it out by other means, but the police can't directly share that information. So, this is going to really bolster public safety in the sense that local police agencies will be able to share this information once the MOU is in place with child protective services, as an example.

In terms of sharing with our partners in the United States—and I've mentioned Interpol as well—the more information that we can share about known offenders will enhance public safety, not only here but in other jurisdictions as well, and it will certainly lead to the much easier free-flowing of reciprocal information back and forth where we will be able to freely share information about offenders from our registry that are in the United States and they'll freely share information back. So I think this bill achieves the desired public safety enhancements.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: What about within the province? Can you share information with other jurisdictions within Canada?

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry, you guys. I didn't give you a warning, but we're out of time in this round. I apologize.

Over to the official opposition, MPP Rakocevic.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you, Mr. Baxter. I'm going to have my questions for you this time. Welcome, and thank you very much for being here—and my deep and profound respect to police across this beautiful province. We've heard you loud and clear. Police have come in many different ways to speak to government, to

speak to us individually as members. Thanks to your advocacy on the issues of notices of security interest, for instance, we were able to work together, all MPPs in this House, to ban things like these NOSIs, for instance, that were taking advantage of seniors.

There are many ways in which you advocated. Unfortunately, we could never have a chance to hear from you about speed cameras and their use in deterring speeding in communities, because, unlike this bill, which actually came to committee, that was time allocated and sped through. But I think police did speak loud and clear about the needs to reduce speeding in neighbourhoods.

I'm really happy to hear you talk about this schedule in particular. It was really eye-opening to see that the United States is in fact sharing more information with us rather than the other way around. Are there other issues that you have concerns with? Like, I know that we're dealing with sex offenders in this way, but are there other ways in which we are not sharing information in other areas, with people who have committed crimes—or vice versa, as well—that you're aware of, that you might want to let us know?

1420

Mr. Mark Baxter: I'm not. Certainly I've prepared for this and done a lot of research around—I've never had the opportunity. When I was an active police officer, I didn't work in the child sex offence or any of the sex offence units, but certainly lots of my colleagues were in those units and I met with some former colleagues in prep for today.

So yes, this information-sharing piece is really important. In terms of outside of what we're talking about today, I'm not prepared to—

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Of course. No, I just thought if you happened to have it on hand, because obviously we would want to ensure that people have the information necessary to make decisions about their safety and the safety of their families.

Maybe you could once again reiterate how implementing these changes, if this bill should pass, will make a difference in terms of safety for Ontarians.

Mr. Mark Baxter: One of the things that's going to also help is the ability to now share this information from the registry with organizations in the community that may be, as I said, child welfare agencies or other agencies that are tasked with victim services, that are partners with the police, that are tasked with ensuring safety and security of community members.

This bill also—the changes here will allow us to more easily share information throughout the country. Right now, if the offender is on the national registry, every police agency in the country has access to that, but police agencies from across the country don't have the same access to the Ontario registry. This will allow us to share information for when offenders have left the province, but also when offenders have moved into the province. It's going to really open up the flow of information between jurisdictions even within our own country.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Considering your answer to the other one, I don't expect that you would have this infor-

mation, but again, you're highlighting a situation where the registry of a province and the national registries are different, and you're highlighting an example of a change that would be very helpful.

Again, are you aware of any other situations or differences—like, what do the provinces have that the national registry doesn't? Who has generally more information? Is it the national one? Is it the provincial? What else needs to be done?

Mr. Mark Baxter: I can speak only to what I know about the Ontario registry. The Ontario registry has far more teeth than the national registry. The Ontario registry is very clear: If you're convicted of a designated offence, you're on the registry. And in terms of how long you're on the registry for, that is spelled out in the various schedules depending on the offence that you've been convicted of.

Some of the problems with the national registry are that not all offences that are captured in Ontario are captured on the national registry. There's also an ability during sentencing for defence lawyers to make a submission to the judge as to why their client who's just been convicted of a sexual offence shouldn't be on the national registry. Judges do have some discretion as to whether or not they allow folks onto the national registry, but they don't get the same discretion with Ontario, because of the way that the registry is structured and the way the law is written. They are automatically here.

So I think one thing that would be really helpful would be for some advocacy at the federal level from the folks in this House to say, "Hey, we're doing our part in Ontario to keep communities safe, to keep children safe from sex offenders and child sex offenders. You need to do more on the national registry to beef up the requirements there."

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Yes, thank you for sharing that. What rationale are the judges generally giving to not share that information with the national registry? So you're saying that the provincial registry, obviously, as you said, has more information, is more fulsome in terms of what it has. But decisions aren't made to go to the national level, meaning that, I guess, if there's any—anyway, that's obviously providing less information for other provinces with regards to an individual living in this province, as an example. What is the rationale for the judges to not share?

Mr. Mark Baxter: The one case specifically that I have been made aware of—

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

Mr. Mark Baxter: —just has to do with the context of the nature of the offence. In the one case that I was made aware of, the judge determined—and I disagree with this—that it was a "lesser threshold" to the offence, so they decided that they agreed with defence that they shouldn't be placed on the national registry for this.

My view is that what we're doing in Ontario is working and is keeping people safe in Ontario to the best of its ability, and that should be the national standard.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you so much. Well, information and knowledge is power. We really appreciate your

submission and all of your incredible work, and thank you so much for answering my questions today.

Mr. Mark Baxter: Thank you.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): I will now go to the third party. MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's great to see you, Mark. It was a pleasure to speak to the association last week. Thank you for everything you and your members do.

I just want to start off by saying we fully support this schedule. In fact, we introduced it as a separate piece of legislation a couple of weeks ago and tried to have it fast-tracked, because we have some issues with other elements of this bill which, depending on how committee goes, might stop us from supporting it—but not as it relates to schedule 3 and these provisions; we are very clear about that.

You mentioned that there are designated offences that kind of turn this on. Do those get updated regularly or are you aware of how often they get updated, and what that process looks like?

Mr. Mark Baxter: Yes. It's my understanding that when new offences are created within the Criminal Code, then the registry becomes updated at that time.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. So later this evening, we're going to be debating a bill around online cyber security for kids, as an example. As part of researching that, I've come across a stat where there are 100,000 reports about online sexual abuse every month.

Has our registry been modernized to capture cyber sexual interference or those kinds of cases that are happening online?

Mr. Mark Baxter: I can't speak specifically to that. Particularly with what you're talking about, I'm not familiar with the bill that you're debating, but if it's provincial legislation, I'm not sure where it fits into the registry.

Certainly Criminal Code amendments, Criminal Code offences, are captured within the registry.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. So as long as the Criminal Code is capturing some kind of new activity that is against the law—and I mean new activity in that technology changes; new things can happen—our registry, the Ontario registry, kind of picks that up.

Mr. Mark Baxter: That's my understanding, that the list of designated offences will change with the Criminal Code.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. That's good to know.

And then, I guess it's not perhaps necessarily related to the bill itself, but it tangentially touches on it because of your role with the association: I imagine that police officers who have to work in this domain see some stuff and talk to people about some stuff that's not pleasant, obviously. Are there enough supports for them to get the kind of post-incident or PTSD kind of support in dealing with those issues? We often think about PTSD is because of more physical things as opposed to that aspect of it. I was just wondering if you might give us some thoughts about that side of things.

Mr. Mark Baxter: Sure. First of all, thanks for asking me about that. I'm a strong advocate for the mental health and well-being of all of our members.

I'll start by saying—you know, I said earlier that I had never worked in the child abuse and sexual assault unit, and part of that was by choice. I have the utmost respect for the officers, the men and women, who work in those units. They are exposed to some really awful and horrific things. I know, myself, I'm not sure that I can handle it the way that they do.

What we do—there are lots of supports in place. Often-times, members that are working in those units are subject to mandatory—either six months or yearly—check-ins with a psychologist. I think all police services now have the safeguard program in place. And whether it's six months or yearly, they're checking in with a psychologist because of the material that they're exposed to and the interacting with victims that they're exposed to.

So yes, there are lots of supports and we continue to have lots of supports within the policing community for members struggling with mental health. In terms of navigating WSIB and challenges around the way police services are handling claims, that's a conversation I'm happy to have on another day.

Mr. Stephen Blais: In parallel, sure—fair enough.

I think as it relates to Christopher's Law, I'm good, Madam Chair. I appreciate the ongoing conversation, and again, thank you for everything you and your members do to help keep us safe.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): We'll now go to the final round on the government side: MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to both our presenters today for taking time to speak to this important legislation.

Mark, it's always a pleasure to see you and I get the thrill of welcoming your association up to the Town of the Blue Mountains for your annual meetings. So that's always a pleasure.

I want to thank you for the hard work your association does. This has been a priority for this government. As you know, we brought—well, it was the Chair who brought a private member's bill that was an all-party bill to look at human trafficking and work together with the police boards—the OPP actually—on cutting down and preventing human trafficking and protecting the public. Christopher's Law was also part of that.

1430

You've spoken at length today about the impacts of schedule 3, so it's really just sort of a cleanup question as we just finished the prevention of abuse of women month. Also, we're in the 16 days of action. I'm just wondering if you can comment on the gender-based violence aspects of this and the powers that come with schedule 3. Do you see that as playing a helpful role in that campaign to prevent abuse of women?

Mr. Mark Baxter: Thanks for that important question. I think the more that we talk about it, we'll continue to raise awareness around gender-based violence and supports, particularly for women. I think that any time

we're having a conversation around making changes and strengthening the existing processes that we have in place, it's going to lead to more awareness, which hopefully turns into prevention and encourages victims of gender-based violence, of all violence, to come forward in a safe and supportive environment so that they can receive the support they need, not just from the police but from the other great community partners that we have to support victims of violence, and then the police can do their part and ensure that these offenders are dealt with appropriately within our criminal justice system and, where appropriate, entered into the Christopher's Law sex offender registry.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Great. Thank you. Just before I move on from that, is there anything else about schedule 3 you'd like to say? I know you get very limited time here today, so if there are any other aspects of schedule 3 that you think are helpful, now is your time, please.

Mr. Mark Baxter: Just overall, we're pleased to see the changes that we're hearing, and it's changes that the law enforcement community have been asking for. The OPP, who look after the registry for the province—I've met with some of their senior commanders around some potential changes to this registry, and everyone is pleased to see the changes and the advancements that we're making that are going to really have an impact and keep communities safe.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Great. Thank you very much for your time today, your expertise and your input throughout on this.

My next question will be to you, Ryan. I know we've heard evidence today already about the global economic impact of snowmobiling across the province, over \$6 million annually. I think you said you've got 178 member clubs across the province. I'm wondering if you can just talk about—and way back when I did drive an Alpine machine, so I'm surprised that's still in the legislation, because I was much, much younger then.

I'm wondering if you could talk about how you think the ability to use smaller machines—lighter machines that are more nimble to get into harder places, or are safer crossing bodies of water—will impact not only your user groups and the community, but also the economic spinoff.

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: That's a really good question. One of the things that we like to do at our AGM is, obviously, provide the opportunity for our members to put forward concepts or ideas. Now, they can't affect the overall budget of the organization, because the not-for-profit act prevents that, but they can ask our board to explore things.

This concept came directly from our annual general meeting, and the idea was that we do cross a number of bodies of water. We will not take industrial equipment on those bodies of water any more for obvious health and safety reasons. We do take snowmobiles on water. We can't take side-by-sides on water. All of those things are fairly common practice, and with the proper health and safety policies and procedures, our volunteers are well-equipped to handle that.

Where we see this being really effective is in the clubs that have those geographic barriers. I use the Muskokas in Parry Sound as a really good example. The Canadian Shield will squeeze you on either side to get through. We can't really go over it; you can't go under it, so you work with it. Industrial equipment just doesn't have the clearance to do that.

In southern Ontario we look at varying snowfall patterns. We look at clubs that have perhaps less trail availability than they did 20, 30 years ago. This equipment is the perfect option for them. It costs less to buy, and it costs less to operate. They're readily available and they are perfectly suited for their local conditions. So I think you're going to give a shot in the arm to our volunteer base who had their idea accepted, and ultimately, hopefully, passed in a regulatory amendment, and then you're going to see the longer-term operational efficiencies that our organization can gain from this.

As I said, last year, we groomed 80,000 hours across the province. In kilometres, it was approximately 16 times around the circumference of the earth. We groom a lot. There's a lot of trail. There is a lot of grooming, so if we can take a portion of the grooming hours and do it at half the cost—if we can take a portion of our 280 groomers and replace them with units that are \$40,000 or \$50,000 as opposed to \$400,000—all of those are major wins for our

organization and our tools that our volunteers want to be able to utilize. The regulation right now prevents them from doing it.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Well, thank you very much for that. I also want to thank you and your association for your input. That was critical to the drafting of this legislation, so thank you very much for your feedback.

Hopefully we get a winter like we got last year. It would be great to see you on the trails.

Mr. Ryan Eickmeier: We're hoping. Fingers crossed.

The Chair (Hon. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much—perfect timing, since I didn't give you a warning.

Thank you to the presenters. Just a reminder: 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 Thursday, December 4, 2025.

For committee members: Please note that the deadline to submit amendments to this bill is 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 4, 2025.

There being no further business, this committee is adjourned until 9 a.m. on Monday, December 8, 2025, when we will conduct clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Thank you, everyone.

The committee adjourned at 1437.

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