Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

No. 33A

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Nº 33A

1st Session
44th Parliament

Tuesday
4 November 2025

1re session
44e législature

Mardi
4 novembre 2025

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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

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

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 November 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 novembre 2025

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PEEL TRANSITION IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA MISE EN OEUVRE DE LA TRANSITION DE PEEL

Mr. Flack moved second reading of the following bill:

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

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

Hon. Rob Flack: I'd like to begin by stating that I'm going to share my time with the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Today, it's my pleasure and privilege to speak to Bill 45, the Peel Transition Implementation Act, 2025. Speaker, our government's proposed Peel Transition Implementation Act represents another important step in modernizing how local services are delivered in one of Ontario's fastest-growing regions. If passed, this legislation will protect and strengthen communities right across the Peel region while also helping to streamline planning, improve local service delivery, and accelerate the infrastructure needed to support new home construction. It will ensure that the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon have the necessary tools they need to deliver high-quality, efficient services to their residents, all the while continuing to grow and thrive as strong, independent municipalities. That point bears repeating: while they continue to grow—again, one of the fastest-growing regions in Canada—because that is precisely what this bill is designed to do: to support the growth and long-term prosperity of the people and communities of Peel region.

To support the municipalities as they move into the future, through Bill 45, our government is transferring responsibility for two key public services from the upper-tier region of Peel to the lower-tier municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. Those services are (1) regional roads and associated stormwater infrastructure and (2) waste collection services. If passed, the transfer of regional roads, including stormwater systems, will take effect on July 1, 2026. The transfer of waste collection services would be in effect October 1, 2027. These dates are local decisions that align with a motion passed by Peel regional council on September 11 of this year, reflecting a locally agreed-upon transition plan among all the impacted municipalities.

Speaker, I want to emphasize that this legislation is not the product of unilateral decision-making. Our government does not believe it is in the best interests of Peel region to take a top-down approach to this legislation. These are changes to services that shared constituents rely on day in and day out. As such, we are working together to ensure we have an agreement in place and co-operation every step of the way. This process reflects months of consultation and close collaboration with all the municipalities of Peel, as well as the stakeholders, experts, and transition board representatives. Our government's goal throughout this has been clear: to strengthen local governance, support responsible growth, and help get more homes built faster.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the municipal representatives, subject matter experts and members of the Peel Region Transition Board for their leadership and their professionalism. Their recommendations were thoughtful, detailed and practical, and they have played a major role in shaping this legislation. On behalf of our government, I want to extend my gratitude for their tireless work in helping us arrive at this point. We could not have done this without them.

I would like to personally extend my congratulations to our partners. Mayor Parrish of Mississauga, Mayor Brown of Brampton and Mayor Groves of Caledon have done an outstanding job working collaboratively together. Working together, Peel region's leaders have been stalwart partners in advancing the cause of better planning, lowering costs and improving service delivery. Together, we are protecting and moving Ontario forward.

Furthermore, as members of this House will know, our government has introduced a series of housing and infrastructure reforms aimed at tackling Ontario's housing supply crisis head-on.

Just two weeks ago, I introduced Bill 60, the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025—legislation that builds on the foundation set by the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act passed earlier this year. These pieces of legislation, together, are forming a road map for

how services can be delivered more efficiently, saving residents and future residents time and money. That bill proposed to speed up decision-making and accelerate the construction of critical infrastructure, and innovated by introducing a new model: a publicly owned corporate model for water and waste water delivery. This model is being piloted first in the Peel region and hopefully will become a model throughout the province of Ontario. Peel region is the ideal partner as we continue to innovate and implement the new MSC model of public service delivery. I want to emphasize again: public service delivery, not private.

This is an important connection, because Bill 45 and now Bill 60 work hand in hand, glove in glove. They complement each other. Together, they modernize local governance and create the conditions for faster, more affordable housing construction.

Moving on, Peel region's water and waste water infrastructure is the second largest in Ontario, representing more than $40 billion in assets and serving over 1.6 million residents. This network supports the economic engine of southern Ontario and must continue to evolve to meet the needs of growing communities like Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

As I have said before, the days of failing to plan for growth are over in this province. We are ensuring we have the systems and tools in place to make sure we have the services they need. That is why our government is acting decisively to modernize the way these services are planned, funded and, most importantly, delivered.

Through the Peel water and waste water pilot and the creation of a publicly—again, I emphasize publicly—owned municipal service corporation or public utility, we are reducing red tape, shortening timelines and lowering costs, all the while keeping these essential services firmly in public hands.

Speaker, this public utility model represents a new made-in-Ontario model for delivering large-scale infrastructure efficiently, transparently and sustainably. This model empowers municipalities to jointly deliver water and waste water services through a publicly owned entity that maintains local accountability and democratic oversight. Every aspect of this model ensures that ownership and control remain with the municipal governments and, ultimately, the people of Ontario. By consolidating expertise, pooling resources and streamlining approvals, a public utility can move projects forward faster at a lower cost than the current fragmented system.

Crucially, this model reduces municipal reliance on development charges. Again, this project that we are building is going to help reduce the punitive development charges that fund critical infrastructure. That means lower cost for builders, greater affordability for homeowners, and more predictable funding streams for the municipalities they serve.

0910

Speaker, I have heard some unfortunate claims from the opposition that have been made this week about public ownership of this utility—claims straight off social media, without any backing in reality.

Let me be clear once more, undeniably: This is not privatization. They will remain publicly owned. It is public innovation—a smarter, faster, publicly accountable approach to managing vital infrastructure that supports Ontario's housing and economic goals. It's in the name, twice, actually—municipal service corporations, because it's municipally owned, a.k.a. public; and the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025—again, there goes the word "public." I don't know how much clearer I can be. Again, this is the direction we're going, and we will not be feared off this track.

The Peel utility pilot program will serve as a blueprint for how public ownership and efficient delivery can work hand in hand. This public utility will handle water and waste water infrastructure on behalf of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, ensuring standards and modernized project management are in place by leveraging economies of scale and shared capacity. The Peel MSC will accelerate construction timelines, reduce administrative duplication and deliver long-term savings for ratepayers and homebuyers alike.

The pilot will also demonstrate how an MSC can separate service delivery from political boundaries, allowing for coordinated planning across growing urban areas, all while maintaining strong public oversight and accountability. This is about modern governance for a modern Ontario while giving municipalities the tools they need to deliver faster, smarter and at a lower cost, without ever compromising public control or service quality.

Before looking ahead, it's important to understand from where we come. The governance of Peel has evolved repeatedly over more than two centuries, adapting to population growth, economic change and new challenges.

Speaker, please allow me to share some relevant history. In 1805, when the British crown and the Mississaugas signed the Toronto Purchase, Treaty 13, and provisional agreement 13A, which together covered over 70,000 acres of land that today form the city of Mississauga—and, no, I wasn't around when that treaty was signed.

From those early treaties through the establishment of the township of Toronto in 1806 and later the county of Peel in 1852, the story of Peel's governance has always been one of change responding to growth and challenges therein.

By the time of Confederation in 1867, Peel county had assumed responsibility for local infrastructure, emergency planning and health services, the building blocks of the municipal governance model we know today.

In the decades that followed the Second World War, urban and industrial growth accelerated rapidly, especially in southern Ontario. The population boom placed enormous pressure on county governments, prompting the creation of regional municipalities to deliver large-scale services such as transportation, policing, waste management, and public health.

I've got a great cheat sheet here that I'll dive into. In 1974, Peel followed the model of becoming a regional municipality—I was alive when that took place, and living in the great town of Streetsville, Ontario.

I've got to tell you this story: Back in those days, I was in early high school, and I will say that we were quite upset that regional governance was coming to Mississauga, to Streetsville, to Cooksville, to Clarkson, to Meadowvale, to Erindale, to Port Credit, to Malton. We were quite upset. We were fine just the way we were, all our neighbours. By the way, the mayor of Streetsville at the time was none other than Hazel McCallion. She didn't like it. We didn't like it. So what did we do? My first political activism was that we held a protest in front of Streetsville Secondary School. George Carlson, who now works with Mayor Parrish, and I were, I think, in grade 9 or 10. We held a public protest. And what did we do? We held up a sign, and the sign was "SOS." What did that mean? "Save our Streetsville." We did not want to be part of regional government.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Port Credit.

Hon. Rob Flack: Port Credit didn't want to. Clarkson didn't want to. We did not want any of this. But what we did was finally accelerate through that.

I might add that, a couple of mayors later, Ron Searle lost to Hazel McCallion—was it ward 3, Minister? Anyway, I forget the ward, what Streetsville was. She ultimately became mayor of Mississauga, and you know the rest of the story.

Peel county was my background, my playground. I played along the Credit River. We drove our bikes to Shoppers World in Brampton. I took a dinghy out and floated down from the Cataracts in Orangeville all the way down to Streetsville, hopped out, dragged them back through two backyards right back here. I fished, played and had a lot of fun. It was our background—great memories.

When I drive through that region today, I see what Mississauga looks like, what Brampton looks like, and what Caledon looks like. It's not how I grew up. I take a look at the great cultural mosaic that exists in that part of the province, the population growth, the density—when I grew up, Streetsville was 6,000 people, and I think the total Peel region was about 300,000 people; today, it's 1.5 million or 1.6 million people. It has grown exponentially. We all know this.

My parents still live in Streetsville. They're going to be 94 and 89 years old. We grew up on 3 Plainsman Road. It was a great place to grow up. It still is a great community.

The great thing that happened in Mississauga is that those communities still have their own identity. You can go to Streetsville and drive downtown, and you still get that flavour of it being a village. Timothy Street started it back in the 1800s, after the War of 1812. It is great, tremendous history.

When I go up to Credit River now—and where is the member from Mississauga–Malton? His backyard literally backs onto the Credit River, where we used to play. It has changed. It has evolved.

That is why this act is so important to implement. Streetsville, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have grown up. The need for the same services of regional government no longer exists. That is why we're devolving somewhat the services of Peel region and going to continue to work closely with all stakeholders in that region to make sure we deliver great service.

I know the members here in our caucus who represent all the ridings within Peel support this advancement. And we will continue to act in the best interests of all the people in Peel region. It really is a tremendous place in Ontario. Again, I want to thank them for their support.

The county was dissolved and replaced with a two-tier structure, where the upper-tier region handled the common services and the lower-tier municipalities managed the local needs. At the time, this structure made sense. It allowed for Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon to have a coordinated planning process, while avoiding duplication of service. But what happened in 1974 is not the reality today. That is why the Peel Transition Implementation Act, Bill 45, is being presented in second reading today. Back then, as I said, Peel's population was 335,000; today, it stands at 1.45 million—I think maybe even more, Minister—more than four times larger than it was back in 1974. Again, it's one of the fastest-growing in all of Ontario.

Again, I'll just reflect on what we're trying to accomplish here. We're growing in this province—16 million people now. As I have often said here, when I was in high school, the population was somewhere between seven million and eight million people. We have grown tremendously. Keeping up with that growth has been really hard. When we talk about infrastructure—which is near and dear to my heart, because without critical infrastructure, we can't build the homes we need for the people coming to this country and the people growing up in this country. The dream of home ownership has to be kept alive, and part of the Peel transition act helps keep that dream alive. Why? Because we're looking at new, bold and creative ways to implement infrastructure—critical water and waste water infrastructure. What is important to note is that this municipal service corporation, this public utility, I think will act as a catalyst to get that job done.

When I talk to other mayors in other municipalities across the province, they look at this in great anticipation. We're confident this pilot will work. In fact, others have already asked me if they can join in on the pilot and create new actions and new opportunities for that to grow.

Speaker, let me conclude by simply saying that we're committed. We're on board to get this legislation put through and get on with the important transition in the Peel region and ultimately create the conditions—not build; create the conditions—to get more homes built faster, support the great people of the Peel region, and keep the dream of home ownership alive in this province and in this country. After all, it is the quintessential Canadian dream, and we must keep it alive. The Peel transition act will help us get that job done.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Graydon Smith: It's great to be with you all this morning to talk about this bill. As the Minister of Munici-

pal Affairs and Housing said, today I'll be outlining some of the details in the proposed Peel Transition Implementation Act. As I go over the measures in the proposed act, the members of the House will see how they would, if passed, help the lower-tier municipalities in Peel to better accommodate the growth pressures they're experiencing.

I hope members will also gain an appreciation of the complexities that had to be sorted out by the municipal representatives, other stakeholders, subject matter experts and the Peel transition board, who made recommendations to the government regarding Bill 45. And as the minister did, I also wish to thank the transition board members and the municipal representatives, stakeholders and experts for their time and their hard work that ultimately led to the recommendations to our government. Some of those recommendations are reflected in the bill before us today.

Speaker, one of the more detailed pieces of this bill involves responsibility for waste collection services. If passed, Bill 45 would support the transfer of waste collection from the region of Peel to its lower-tier municipalities: Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. I want to be clear: This isn't something we are imposing. The municipalities themselves have already reached a local agreement on how and when the transfer should take place. The bill simply gives the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to make regulations that align with those local agreements, including their agreed-upon effective date of October 1, 2027.

I want to stress what the minister said earlier: These waste collection services will remain under public ownership. This legislation supports local decision-making. It provides the framework to make sure that what municipalities have agreed upon is locked in and respected. To add certainty, the bill also makes it clear that once the transfer happens, waste collection services can't revert back to the region for 10 years.

So how did we get here? What happened behind the scenes to get us to this point today? For a bit of background—back in March, the four municipalities came to a local agreement on transferring these services from Peel region to the lower-tier municipalities. At the time, they had set an effective date of January 1, 2026—happy new year—supported by bylaws at the local level and a resolution change at regional council. Since then, the date has been updated to October 1, 2027, again by local agreement. The transition committee, made up of representatives from all four municipalities, worked through a lot of details, such as service delivery, employee transitions, financial planning, and cost-sharing. Out of that work came a partnership between Brampton and Caledon for joint delivery of waste collection.

It's also worth noting that community recycling centres were not included in this transfer. Those centres handle more than waste collection. They are involved in processing and are staffed by unionized employees, while local collection uses contracted, non-unionized staff.

Speaker, as mentioned, the municipalities agreed to push the effective date to October 1, 2027. That decision, approved by Peel regional council in September, was made for very practical reasons. That decision to push out the transfer date was to avoid compliance and operational risks for the municipalities, and lines up with the end of the current waste collection contracts on September 30, 2027. It also gives the municipalities more time to set up their new programs to hire and train staff, and to align IT and operational systems. Importantly, it avoids overlap with the transition of the Blue Box Program to Circular Materials on January 1, 2026, and it keeps the changeover out of the peak winter and high-volume waste collection periods. So there are many very good reasons why the proposed change to the transfer date is a good idea.

Another point about Bill 45, which I want to repeat, is the stipulation that the waste collection services transfer cannot be revoked for 10 years. It gives municipalities stability and the time to make the new arrangement work. It also provides certainty across municipal election cycles and allows for the negotiation of new long-term waste collection contracts, which typically last eight to 10 years. That's exactly the kind of steady local planning we want to support through this legislation—local solutions driven by those municipalities.

That's what Bill 45 proposes regarding waste collection services.

Let's look at the current situation. The region of Peel operates the second-largest waste management program in Ontario. Peel provides collection services to approximately 347 curbside households and 107,000 units within 834 multi-residential buildings. The region handles some 555,000 metric tonnes of waste annually from the 1.5 million residents of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. And 70% of Peel's waste services are delivered by third-party contractors. That gives you an idea of the scale and complexity of this transfer of services.

Now let's look at the other service that's being proposed to be transferred from Peel region to the lower-tier municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. That is the transferring of jurisdiction over regional roads, including related stormwater infrastructure, from Peel region to the lower-tier municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. If the proposed Peel Transition Implementation Act is passed, under the legislation as currently written, the effective date of the regional roads transfer would be July 1, 2026.

I want to add that unlike the transfer of waste collection services, which were locally negotiated, the transfer of the regional roads and associated stormwater infrastructure would be facilitated by the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator. The costs associated with the provincial land and development facilitator's services would be covered by the province.

0930

Before I get into more detail, I want to say that one of the major factors that brought us to this point today was our government's More Homes Built Faster Act, or Bill 23. That legislation made several important changes, including transferring land use planning responsibilities from some upper-tier municipalities to their lower-tier partners. To put it simply, the act created two classes of upper-

tier municipalities: those that still handle planning, and those where planning authority now rests entirely with the lower-tier municipalities. This shift began with Halton, Peel and York on July 1, 2024, followed by Durham and Waterloo on January 1, 2025, and Niagara on March 31, 2025.

That earlier transfer of planning authority is key to understanding why we're now proposing to transfer regional roads and related stormwater infrastructure to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. Once local municipalities are responsible for planning how their communities grow, including the layout of their transportation networks, it only makes sense that they also take on responsibility for building and maintaining those roads and systems. This approach streamlines decision-making, reduces overlap, and gives councils greater control over how they manage growth and infrastructure in their own communities.

Peel region has a 1,682-kilometre network of regional roads. These corridors carry about $1.8 billion worth of goods every day, and 36% of all truck trips in Ontario start or end on Peel's road network. Those goods represent about 21% of Ontario's GDP—a reminder of just how vital these roads are to our economy.

All three lower-tier municipalities already maintain their own local and arterial roads. For instance, Mississauga and Brampton manage their own major routes, and Mississauga has been maintaining 20.4 lane-kilometres of regional roads since 2008. That experience gives us confidence that they are well prepared for this next step.

As for the related stormwater infrastructure, the region of Peel's regional stormwater infrastructure is primarily located along regional roads. It consists of both traditional systems and emerging low-impact development—or LID—facilities. I should explain that LID facilities include bioswales, which manage stormwater more naturally by improving filtration and infiltration. Infiltration—for the benefit of the members of this House—is the seeping of stormwater into the ground to recharge groundwater. This removes pollutants from the stormwater, slows runoff velocity and decreases the volume of stormwater runoff. The infrastructure includes ditches, underground storm sewers and specific LID facilities. The infrastructure can also be categorized as minor systems or major systems. Minor systems include ditches, storm sewers and certain LID facilities. These systems are designed for frequent lower-intensity storms. Major systems include overland flow routes and high-capacity watercourses for larger storm events. This regional stormwater infrastructure mostly runs along regional road corridors and is therefore an obvious accompaniment with the transfer of regional roads.

Speaker, Bill 45 is not the first time that the subject of transferring jurisdiction over regional roads in Peel has been considered or proposed. In 2004, a provincial facilitator, Justice George Adams, made recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on governance reform, including roads and land use planning.

Since 2005, Peel region and the three lower-tier municipalities have engaged in efforts to rationalize regional roads. Those efforts included, following an arterial road rationalization review in 2011, Peel regional council recommending transferring seven arterial roads to the lower-tier municipalities. This decision aimed to put the arterial roads under the appropriate municipal jurisdiction, although the full transfer process continued for several years. The roads involved were the Bolton arterial road, also known as Emil Kolb Parkway; Colerain Drive; Castlemore Road; Kennedy Road; Winston Churchill Boulevard; Embleton Road; and Mavis Road. Additional studies in 2016 and in 2019 also included looking at regional road transfers.

What must be kept in mind is that all of these earlier studies and analyses were done before land use planning was invested wholly in the lower-tier municipalities.

As I mentioned earlier, our government will provide the assistance of the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator, often referred to as the PLDF, regarding the transfer of these regional roads.

For the benefit of the members of this House, I'll explain that the PLDF was established in 2005. The facilitator and deputy facilitators of that office are appointed under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Act. The PLDF is an advisory agency under the Agencies and Appointments Directive and reports to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Its services include impartial mediation, facilitation and negotiation. These services are offered to municipalities to help resolve issues about growth management, land use and infrastructure planning, environmental protection related to land and development, municipal boundaries, economic development, and streamlining approvals to support provincial surplus lands projects to facilitate housing. Furthermore, the PLDF ensures that the following are considered as part of issues resolution: provincial land use policy, financial interests, and environmental objectives. As you can see, the PLDF would be a valuable resource and aid to the municipalities of Peel if this proposed legislation is passed.

Speaker, I know I've covered a lot of ground today, but I think it's important that we receive the full picture on the complexities of this bill—a bill that represents careful, coordinated work aligning responsibilities so that Peel's municipalities can plan, can build and can grow efficiently. These changes will support local decision-making, streamline services, and provide the certainty needed for long-term success.

0940

Speaker, for a number of years, I was involved in regional government in Muskoka—four of those years as the deputy chair of the district of Muskoka, and 16-plus in total as a councillor.

That importance of the relationship between upper and lower tiers, and the analysis of what occurs in terms of function between the upper and lower tiers, is certainly extremely important to review from time to time.

When we look at when regional government was established, thanks to the Robarts and Davis governments and Minister Darcy McKeough a long time ago, they did an incredible amount of work with an incredible amount of foresight to ensure that local services were delivered

effectively for the residents of the multiple regions in Ontario, including Peel region.

We are decades later, and it is always a good time, when you get decades down the road, to be taking a careful and close look at what that arrangement looks like today and ask the question: Is it effective for the residents of the region?

As the minister has talked about through his words of detail and his anecdotal stories this morning—which were great, by the way—we know that in Peel, it is definitely time to make some changes to ensure that the good people of Peel region and Mississauga and Brampton and Caledon are getting services delivered to them in the most effective way possible. They've done a lot of work on their own, and we'll continue to work with them, through the provincial land facilitator, to do the rest of the work on the table, should this bill pass.

Speaker, thank you very much for my time. I'll turn the rest of my time over to the member from Simcoe–Grey.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for sharing some of his time with me this morning, and to commend him for his hard work on this important initiative.

I also want to thank the Associate Minister of Housing for his background.

I would like to start just by picking up on parts of their comments. Where I am repetitive, I apologize, but what they've said is worth repeating.

I am the same vintage as the minister, so I can remember a time when you went out the door, you went to play in the golf course or the back fields of your area, and you were told to come home when the street lights went on. At that point in time, our population was, as the minister said, between seven and eight million; we're now 16 million people. Ontario has 40% of Canada's population, and we're growing faster than any other province in Canada and state in the US. We have huge growth pressures.

If we look in the context of the Peel region, when it was created in the 1970s, it had a population of less than 500,000. Now two of the municipalities, Mississauga and Brampton, far exceed that, and Caledon is quickly closing in on that mark. One of the critical pieces of this legislation, and the suite of legislation that we're bringing forward involving the Peel region, is that we need to evolve to recognize the demands that are changing on the ground in both of those municipalities, given the size, growth, growth pressures, the infrastructure pressures and everything that flows from that. So we want to make sure that we push down those responsibilities that should be local, and that we change service delivery for those services that should be raised up, such as water and waste water. The minister spoke at length about the municipal service delivery corporation that we're bringing forward in Bill 60, which is a complementary piece of legislation to this.

With that being said, I'd like to add a little more context and detail regarding Bill 45, the Peel Transition Implementation Act, 2025, in addition to what has been outlined by the minister and the associate minister. I want to reiterate that this piece of legislation is designed to help lower-tier municipalities in Peel more quickly and more efficiently plan for housing and new neighbourhoods in their communities, as they continue to grow at an incredible rate.

Let's start with that: How fast is the Peel region growing? We know the Peel region continues to be one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic areas in Ontario, with over 1.6 million residents today and projections showing growth of another 600,000—so it will be more than 2.2 million by 2051, which is the planning timeline. The energy, ambition and diversity of this region truly represent the best of Ontario's future.

To put that in perspective, let's look at the growth that happened between July 2023 and July 2024. Peel's population grew by approximately 4.4%, adding roughly 70,000 new residents. That's faster than Ontario overall, which grew by 3.2%—as I said earlier in my comments, we are one of the fastest-growing provinces in Canada and one of the fastest-growing regions in North America. It's also faster in relative growth than Canada, which grew by 3% during that same timeline. This growth demonstrates both the opportunity and the pressures that come with that growth, and the need to get more homes built to meet that demand. This growth also emphasizes the importance of integrating public transit and community services alongside new housing to ensure sustainable and livable neighbourhoods.

We've seen that energy reflected in the leadership of Peel's three municipalities: Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. They have all stepped up in meaningful ways to create the conditions for new housing growth. Their mayors have shown real commitment and creativity in meeting this challenge. In particular, I want to acknowledge Mayor Carolyn Parrish in Mississauga, who took the bold step of being the first in the Peel region to reduce development charges in support of our shared housing goals. As we know from discussions in this House, getting that price point down for first-time homebuyers and homebuyers who are downsizing—a critical piece in that puzzle is the reducing of development charges to reduce that bubble. That's the type of leadership that's going to get these results for us, get the homes in the ground, and make home ownership affordable. We all know that not everyone has shared that spirit of co-operation in the past. But we're focused on moving forward. These three mayors are exemplars to the province in how to get that done.

The people of Peel expect progress, and that's what this government is delivering. We believe in Peel, in its people, in its local governments, and in its potential. We believe we can create the efficiencies necessary to help those governments, at all levels, work together collaboratively to meet the needs. We're committed to supporting innovative housing solutions, including mixed-use developments and affordable housing projects, to meet the diverse needs of these communities.

Through Bill 45, the Peel Transition Implementation Act, and through our broader action, we're giving these municipalities the tools and flexibility they need to build more homes faster. Whether it's supporting new infrastructure, modernizing local governance, or cutting unnecessary red tape, our government will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga to help them reach their housing targets and keep pace with their incredible growth.

One example of this collaboration, and as has been mentioned by the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: The three municipalities of Peel have already taken steps to make sure future growth planning and servicing are faster and more streamlined. That growth planning and servicing includes waste collection services for planned housing. The three municipalities have already agreed on transferring curbside and multi-residential waste collection services, which this bill supports. This is, in fact, a huge achievement. We must consider that Peel region has the second-largest waste collection system in the province; only Toronto's is larger. Peel's waste systems collect approximately 555,000 metric tonnes of waste annually.

I think we can all agree in this House that initiating, guiding and managing the transfer of authority and jurisdiction related to waste management systems is and will be a testament to the collaborative skills and strengths of all involved. Our government wants to help these municipalities with the transfer of this important service.

Let's begin by reviewing how waste collection in the three Peel municipalities has evolved.

In 1991, Peel regional council began discussing the opportunity and implications of the region assuming full responsibility for waste management operations—by "waste management operations," I mean not only curbside and multi-residential collection, but also the transfer, processing and disposal of residential waste. At that time, Peel's population was approximately 850,000 residents—slightly larger than the current population of Brampton—highlighting the smaller scale of the transition the region was considering in 1991.

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Three years later, in 1994, Peel council formally approved the transfer of waste management responsibilities from the lower-tier municipalities to the region, enacting a bylaw to authorize staff to implement the change in advance of a new regional waste collection and processing contract. Once that contract began, the region assumed responsibility for collecting, processing and disposing of residential waste across Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon.

It is important to note that this applies strictly to residential waste, not industrial or commercial operations, ensuring that Bill 45 remains focused on the services that directly impact residents' daily lives.

Today, as indicated before, Peel's population has grown to over 1.6 million residents and is projected to exceed 2.2 million by 2051, creating new demands and challenges for residential services.

Bill 45 responds to this growth by transferring responsibility for curbside and multi-residential collection to Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon, while maintaining processing and disposal at the regional level. Again, it's an opportunity to maximize the efficiencies and cooperation between the two levels of government. This ensures that municipalities can tailor collection services to their residents' needs, plan for future growth, and deliver efficient, high-quality service, all while leveraging the region's decades of experience.

Over the years, Peel has introduced modernized fleet vehicles and new routing technologies to increase efficiency and reduce emissions in waste collection. I know that in my upper-tier government in Simcoe county—which has waste management control in our area—by reducing and rerouting the routes across the 16 member municipalities, we were able to save almost a quarter of a million kilometres a year, which has a huge impact on the greenhouse gas emissions and the efficiency of the process. That is what we're working with the Peel region to do amongst those three municipalities. By doing so, Bill 45 provides the tools, flexibility and support necessary to meet the demands of Peel's rapidly growing population. Bill 45 ensures that residential waste services remain reliable, responsive and future-ready.

What we must also look at are the arrangements that the lower-tier municipalities of Brampton and Caledon have made to share curbside and multi-residential waste collection services once the transfer from the upper tier has been made. All three municipalities in Peel have been working to ensure that this transfer of services goes smoothly. They have set up a transition committee, including representatives from Peel, Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon, which has been actively working on the transfer process and defining future operational and service delivery models, employee transition, financial planning and cost-sharing considerations moving forward. Staff training programs are being implemented to ensure a smooth integration of teams and continuity of service during the transition.

Mississauga will be looking after waste collection services in its communities, and expects to find efficiencies, while, through discussions, Brampton and Caledon have agreed to partner to provide joint waste collection services in their communities to find similar efficiencies. This will ensure that current service levels are maintained, while also safeguarding long-term cost efficiency, stability and service continuity for all three municipalities. This partnership between the two municipalities will come into effect in the fall of 2027, and that is when the regional waste collection contract is set to expire.

As the city of Brampton said in a news release, "By restoring a responsibility that was previously managed at the municipal level prior to regionalization in the 1990s, this transition will improve service efficiency, streamline decision-making and empower Brampton and Caledon to tailor waste collection services to meet the needs of their growing populations."

Speaker, our government could not agree more. Our commitment to Bill 45, if passed, would do more than support the transfer of waste collection services; it would also support the transfer of regional roads, as indicated by the associate minister. This transfer to the lower-tier municipalities will provide the services—and working together with the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator to assist in those road transfers.

And Bill 45 would not be alone in supporting Peel region housing starts. Legislation introduced last month by our government would, if passed, help bolster further housing starts in Peel. The legislation I'm referring to is our government's proposed Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025. If passed, Bill 60 would, among other initiatives, cut red tape, get shovels in the ground faster and support the construction of homes, roads and other infrastructure.

As the minister indicated in one of his comments about the legislation, "Our government is building a more prosperous, resilient and competitive economy by fighting costly delays and regulatory burdens that slow the delivery of homes, roads and infrastructure that communities need. With tariffs and economic uncertainty taking aim at our economy, we're working with municipal leaders and home builders to get shovels in the ground faster so we can build more homes and keep workers on the job."

Speaker, Bill 60 aims to reduce barriers to building homes and infrastructure by streamlining approvals and site plan control in time for the spring building season.

As indicated in the minister's comments, one of the key aspects of that legislation is the creation of a municipal service delivery corporation, which will change how the critical infrastructure in waste water and water is delivered to our residents to enable the housing. Currently, it's done by municipalities, so it's governed by their debt-to-own-source-revenue restrictions that are set out in the Municipal Act. It's also subject to their financing arrangements that are also set out in the Municipal Act. Delivering the services through a separately operated, publicly owned municipal corporation will allow the corporation to operate a different debt ratio as well as enter long-term financial arrangements and commitments that would generate a better yield for the residents, while the long-term viability of the system is more sustainable and viable moving forward. It will also put the planning of this critical infrastructure on an upper level so it's not done on a municipality-by-municipality basis.

As we've seen and the minister has stated many times, on a conservative estimate, there's approximately $200 billion of infrastructure that needs to be put in across the province to enable the sustainable, intentional planning of communities moving forward. So the change proposed to the municipal service delivery corporation in Bill 60 aims to change that model to make it more affordable, to make it longer-term planning, to make it more resilient and allow the municipalities to move that debt load off their desks. That opens up opportunities for them, moving forward, to invest in other critical services that also will help to reduce development charges.

During the recent AMO conference, when meeting with municipalities, I learned that, on average, in those municipalities that do charge development charges, between 35% and 55% of those development charges relate to infrastructure like water and waste water. By removing that from their desks, we can lower development charges, which will help lower price points. We will get infrastructure in the ground in a faster, more efficient way so that municipalities can grow. And when municipalities grow, we can meet our housing numbers but also provide our municipalities with a feasible plan, moving forward, by increasing their tax base.

For the benefit of the members of this House, I will explain that site plan control is a planning tool that municipalities use to evaluate certain site plan elements, such as parking areas and landscaping.

I would add that our government is proposing to streamline site plan control to create consistent standards among municipalities across Ontario and, again, to lower the cost of building new homes.

In addition, Bill 60 aims to streamline road construction by moving forward with a common set of road construction standards across all municipalities.

Even more relevant to the goals of Bill 45 is that Bill 60, introduced last month by the minister, has items specific to Peel. If passed, Bill 60 will speed up decision-making and get shovels in the ground faster for water and waste water in Peel region by enabling a new public corporation model, as I referred to. That would change dramatically the delivery of those critical infrastructure systems, linear infrastructure systems, in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

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We must keep in mind, too, that like waste collection, Peel region's water and waste water infrastructure is the second-largest in Ontario. It has assets of more than $40 billion and services approximately 1.6 million residents. A corollary to that is, in the asset management planning that each of those municipalities must go through, it adds another burden to the municipal budget as they must plan for that maintenance and repair of that $400 billion in infrastructure. Again, if that comes off the municipal books, moves up to a municipal service delivery corporation, very similar to the models of the LDCs we have in the electrical world right now, it takes that burden off the municipality.

Currently, the water and waste water systems are under the purview of Peel region. That includes setting user rates, development charges for growth-related water and waste water infrastructure, financing and project prioritization, and also asset management planning. Peel region owns and operates these water and waste water systems, although some of the water systems are operated by the Ontario Clean Water Agency, OCWA, under contract.

Bill 60 also encourages innovative funding models and public-private partnerships to accelerate infrastructure projects while maintaining fiscal responsibility. All of these changes will be made while maintaining the water and waste water system as a publicly owned asset.

What our government is proposing in Bill 60 is to transfer jurisdiction over water and waste water from Peel region to the lower-tier municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. That's similar to how our Bill 45, which we are discussing today, transfers the jurisdiction of waste collection and regional roads to lower tiers.

Our approach, through Bill 45, focuses on enabling local governments to manage growth more efficiently by aligning planning decisions with service delivery responsibilities. This proposed legislation is designed to align local infrastructure responsibilities with the planning authority of municipalities. By establishing clear lines of responsibility for housing-enabling services such as roads and waste collection, communities can better manage growth and respond to changing needs. Infrastructure such as regional roads, stormwater facilities and waste collection are fundamental components of housing delivery. Effective management of these services ensures that communities can grow in a sustainable, cost-effective way while maintaining a high service standard for residents.

The proposed transfers recognize that Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are best positioned to make local decisions on behalf of their residents.

This legislation builds on previous efforts to modernize governance and improve service delivery across the region, ensuring that Peel's communities are well prepared to accommodate future population growth that we know is coming. In doing so, Bill 45 will help to make sure our communities are more viable and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Thank you.

Questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Thank you for the summary of this bill. From how I understand it, the government is looking at downloading the responsibilities of delivering waste water and regional roads from the region to the municipality. In addition, in a separate bill that used to be in this bill, you're looking at establishing a water corporation that combines Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon into one separate water corporation.

My question is this: Have you done an assessment on what impact these changes are going to have on an individual's water bill and waste water bill, and if you've done that assessment, could you share what you have found?

Hon. Rob Flack: We have done some assessment, but to be perfectly blunt, that is why we've set up a pilot project in Peel, to assess exactly what this is going to mean.

One thing we do know is that it takes too long and it costs too much to build housing in the province. I think the member opposite would agree.

I think she would also agree—through you, Speaker—that we need to get the costs of these development charges down. Growth no longer pays for growth. You can't expect new home construction or a new home buyer to pay for the massive infrastructure we need—not only new infrastructure, but aging infrastructure in this province.

That being said, we think this model, which exists in some places in Ontario, makes a lot of sense. That is why we set Peel up as a pilot project.

Ultimately, if we can capture private capital, public capital, pension plan infrastructure into this fund at good rates—and we're confident it will be. What we've seen—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you for that speech, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I was on the regional governance review committee, and we went all over Ontario, meeting local politicians from small communities, and it was very insightful. People are divided on their stance about kind of shaking this up.

In your speech, you mentioned that Peel is almost done now, but you might be rolling this out. I'm just wondering if you're considering this type of movement for other municipalities and regions as well.

Hon. Rob Flack: Obviously, as I think I said in my remarks, there are other municipalities that have phoned and been interested in creating their own pilot themselves or getting involved in the process. I think it's a little too early to jump into that. We want to make sure the Peel pilot is working and getting up to speed. This isn't going to happen overnight. As they say, measure twice, maybe three times before you cut. We really want to make sure we get it right.

Again, I want to emphasize: With the massive infrastructure we need in this province—not only for new infrastructure, but for aging. I'll give you an example in your own city of Toronto. I was with Mayor Chow and Minister Robertson, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure for Canada, a few weeks ago, and we were talking about this exact initiative. One of the city managers said, "Well, Mayor, for example, we had a water main break"—I forget where; downtown—"and guess what? That infrastructure, that pipe, was put in in 1875." It's not only new infrastructure; it's aging infrastructure.

This program is going to work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: As a former highly successful municipal politician yourself, you know the importance of empowering local decision-making, don't you?

For years, residents and local councils in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have called for a governance model that better reflects their size, growth and capacity to lead.

This legislation, if it's passed, responds directly to those calls by giving municipalities more authority over the services that matter most, from roads to waste collection.

Will the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing share how empowering lower-tier municipalities with these responsibilities will help them better plan for growth, serve their hard-working families and make decisions that are truly locally led?

Hon. Graydon Smith: I would like to thank the extremely high-performing member from Whitby for the question.

As a moderately successful municipal politician, I will say that—and I said in my remarks—the split between upper and lower tiers is really critical, because what it comes down to is about service delivery for the people in these communities.

This bill acknowledges that the region has been around for a period of time, but change is necessary and change will be beneficial for the residents in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. It has been discussed for a long time. At the end of the day, we know that when we take the time to work with all the parties involved and do this work thoughtfully and carefully, we get a good outcome. And we know that's what this bill is going to deliver for those people in those communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The minister was talking about what they're doing in the Peel region. Right now, their water and waste water is run directly by the region. The other bill is going to be creating a corporation to run that.

The only real difference that we can see between the current system and this other system is that the current ratepayers will be responsible for subsidizing the development—the creation of the infrastructure for water and sewers in new developments. So ratepayers are going to see their utility rates go up in order to subsidize costs that were previously incurred by developers.

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Do you think it's fair for Peel ratepayers to see their bills go up to subsidize developers?

Hon. Rob Flack: That's a good question.

The water and sewer main construction association—I'll make sure I get the name right—estimates that in this province, over the next 15 years, we're going to need $200 billion to $250 billion of infrastructure to replace aging and new infrastructure. Development charges are not going to cover that. Municipalities don't want to raise taxes. We're not going to raise taxes. The feds don't want to raise taxes. So where is it going to come from? We have to find a source of revenue to fund that infrastructure. Amortizing it over seven or eight decades—rather than just new home builders—I think is fair and, at the end of the day, is a more equitable way to get the infrastructure in the ground.

We pay enough tax in this province. We pay enough tax municipally.

Development charges, while needed in their time, have become a cost barrier to getting shovels in the ground faster. We're going to change that.

This program is going to work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): New questions? I'll go to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Hon. Graham McGregor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You look great this morning, by the way.

I want to thank my colleagues, all three of them, for their speeches and for their work on the file.

Being a Brampton boy, we know our region is fast-growing, fast-changing—1.7 million people in Peel region. Brampton actually outpaced Mississauga last year to be the third-biggest city in Ontario. Because of that growth, obviously, there are a lot of changes that have taken place. I know the minister has been very diligent in putting this plan together to help manage that growth.

Could the minister give us a little bit more of that due diligence and talk about the work that has been put in, the experts that we've consulted with, and provide some reassurance to my residents that this is a thoughtful plan that the government is putting forward?

Hon. Rob Flack: I would say, simply, that Brampton is a great example of why this is going to work. Brampton, when I was a kid, I think, was 20,000 or 30,000 people. What is it now? Close to a million people?

Hon. Graham McGregor: It's 800,000, yes.

Hon. Rob Flack: Close to a million people. It has changed; it has evolved.

That is why we need to look at new sources of creating funding, investment, for infrastructure. Again, as I said earlier, I think amortizing these costs over a period of time is important.

In terms of the due diligence, we have put a pilot together that brings expertise, brings people who have done this before, finance—again, strong expertise, who understand this.

We are not ready to hit the "go" button. We are ready to consider this, put the plans in place—again, measure twice, three times, maybe four times—before we hit the "go" button.

The bottom line is, it has got to work for residents—it will work for residents, and it will download these services.

Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have grown up. They can do this. We're confident in this.

We will always continue to look out for the residents, their costs, and the benefit they get from their municipalities and their province.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

REMEMBRANCE DAY

MPP Monica Ciriello: Every November 11, Ontarians pause to honour the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve our great country. We remember those who gave everything—their youth, their future, their lives—so that we could live in peace and freedom.

For me, Remembrance Day is deeply personal. My grandfather proudly served in World War II, and my grandmother was a nurse caring for those who returned home. Their courage reminds me that service isn't just on the battlefield; it's found in compassion, in sacrifice, and in love of country. Their stories remind me that remem-

brance isn't just about the past, but about the values we carry every day.

At the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 163 on Hamilton Mountain, veterans, families and neighbours come together not just to remember, but to support one another.

This Remembrance Day, I encourage everyone to visit your local Legion, take a moment to thank a veteran, wear your poppy with pride, and make sure that the sacrifices of those who served are not forgotten.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Jessica Bell: Down south, President Trump is dismantling democracy day by day—defying congressional votes, ignoring court rulings, and directing law enforcement to target American cities and citizens.

We are not the United States, but here in Ontario, the Conservatives have taken many steps to undermine democratic norms. Let me give you some examples: ramming through far-reaching omnibus bills at breakneck speed; banning public participation in committee hearings; stripping school board trustees of their job to oversee the operation of our schools; setting up special economic zones exempt from democratically decided local rules and regulations; forcing municipalities to bring in strong-mayor powers so one mayor can overrule decisions made by the majority of city councillors; eliminating fixed election dates, giving themselves the sole and distinct advantage of choosing when Ontarians go to the polls; overriding democratically negotiated collective agreements and imposed wage suppression on public sector workers.

This growing list reveals a troubling disregard for the democratic principles that are fundamental to Canada and Ontario.

Dismantling democratic institutions, concentrating power in the hands of cabinet and the Premier, shutting down public input, secrecy, and a refusal to be accountable—this is not how democracy is supposed to work—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Members' statements?

BERNARD GRANDMAÎTRE

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Mardi dernier, la francophonie ontarienne a perdu un géant. Bernard Grandmaître, ancien ministre responsable des Affaires francophones, nous a quitté.

M. Grandmaître a consacré plus de 30 ans de sa vie à la politique, tant au niveau municipal qu'à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Il a toujours placé les défis et les aspirations des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes au coeur de son engagement public.

Son legs le plus marquant demeure sans aucun doute l'adoption, en 1986, de la Loi sur les services en français, une avancée historique qui aide à garantir encore aujourd'hui l'accès des francophones aux services gouvernementaux dans leur langue.

Je considère un privilège d'avoir été élue pour représenter la même circonscription pour laquelle il s'est tant dévoué, et tout son travail m'inspire à continuer à défendre la place du français dans notre province.

Bernard Grandmaître était un homme de conviction, d'une grande gentillesse et d'un profond respect pour les autres. Il a inspiré toute une génération de leaders francophones et son influence se fait encore sentir dans notre travail ici, à Queen's Park.

La communauté franco-ontarienne a perdu un véritable champion. Au nom de tous les Ontariens, je voudrais offrir mes plus sincères condoléances à sa famille et à ses proches.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Laurie Scott: As we approach Remembrance Day next week, I rise to recognize and thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces who serve today, the veterans who have served before them, and to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the peace and freedoms we are privileged to enjoy in Ontario and in Canada.

Over the coming days, I will be visiting the many Legions and cenotaphs across Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock to pay tribute to the men and women who answered the call of duty.

Our communities have a proud and deep military history.

During the First World War, the 109th battalion drew its ranks from Victoria and Haliburton counties—Company A from Lindsay, Company B from Omemee, Company C from Fenelon Falls, and Company D from Haliburton county. Many of these men were later deployed to the Somme, Hill 70, Passchendaele, Vimy, and Amiens—including my grandfather Wallace Scott, who fought at Vimy Ridge and Amiens.

I also want to acknowledge the men from Brock township who served in the 116th battalion and fought in France and Flanders.

Additionally, men from Millbrook served in the 39th battalion and others.

Let us remember those who have served, those who continue to serve, and those who gave their lives so that many may live free.

Lest we forget.

SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

M. Guy Bourgouin: La semaine dernière, nous avons présenté le projet de loi 49, la loi sur la sécurité des routes 11 et 17 du Nord, un projet de loi essentiel pour protéger les familles, les travailleurs et les communautés du nord de l'Ontario.

Malheureusement, le gouvernement a choisi de ne pas soutenir ce projet de loi. C'est profondément décevant, car il ne s'agit pas seulement de politique, il s'agit de vies et de moyens de subsistance.

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Chaque jour, des camionneurs, des automobilistes et des familles du Nord affrontent des routes étroites, des conditions hivernales extrêmes et des camions qui ne respectent pas les normes de sécurité.

Le refus du gouvernement d'appuyer ce projet de loi envoie un message clair : que les préoccupations de la sécurité communautaire du Nord ontarien ne sont pas des priorités. Nous continuerons à apporter la voix du Nord à Queen's Park, à défendre des routes plus sécuritaires, des conducteurs mieux formés et de l'entretien hivernal fiable. Les familles du Nord méritent des routes sécuritaires et un gouvernement qui prend leurs besoins au sérieux.

Imaginez à quel point nous pourrions rendre nos routes sécuritaires avec un minimum de 12 heures de personnel dans les postes d'inspection de camionneurs; avec une formation, une certification, délivrée par le ministère du Travail, des permis de conduire; à ramener la gestion des opérations d'entretien hivernal dans le ministère. Imaginez seulement à quel point nos routes seraient plus sécuritaires.

Je continuerai à me battre pour que nos communautés ne soient pas oubliées.

MAHI SEHMBI

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I rise today to recognize the courage and resilience of a remarkable young girl from my riding of Brampton West, 12-year-old Mahi Sehmbi.

Mahi lives with McCune-Albright syndrome and fibrous dysplasia, rare conditions that cause severe bone weakness and have led to repeated fractures, leading to surgeries throughout her life. She underwent a full liver transplant at only 10 months old, making her the first and only child in the world who had a liver transplant due to McCune-Albright.

Yet, despite these challenges, Mahi continues to face each day with a bright smile, a hopeful spirit and unwavering determination.

Recently, at the 12th annual co-ed charity softball tournament organized by Clubhouse Charities in support of SickKids hospital, Mahi's story was shared with hundreds of community members who came together to show their support.

Her strength serves as a reminder of the power of hope and community, and the difference compassion can make in the lives of children and families facing rare diseases.

Madam Speaker, it is truly heartwarming to see our community come together to stand behind Mahi and her family. Their courage and the community's kindness reflect the very best of Brampton West.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: Last week, I spoke about the urgent need for rebuilding and modernizing the outdated Welland Hospital. Recently, the Welland Hospital operating room required extensive repairs after being forced to close in May due to a severe water leak caused by aging infrastructure. These repairs were not only costly, but also significantly disruptive, resulting in 263 surgeries being affected by the closure, including 215 ophthalmology cases, 38 orthopaedic cases, and 10 general surgeries. Other procedures had to be directed to the Marotta Family Hospital in St. Catharines and the Niagara Falls Hospital.

Unfortunately, we can expect this pattern of disruptions caused by outdated infrastructure to continue until this government takes meaningful action.

After repeated attempts to get a clear answer last week, the Minister of Health still refused to say either yes or no to providing the necessary planning grant. Each time, the minister deflected, speaking instead about hospitals in Lincoln and Niagara Falls, ignoring Welland, Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

Every time the minister mentions the Lincoln hospital, I'm reminded that it's actually part of Hamilton Health Sciences and not even part of the Niagara Health System. Perhaps the minister needs a map of Niagara.

The minister even had the nerve to tell people in Niagara that they should feel "blessed" for the work this government is doing for health care in the region. Ask anyone in Niagara if they feel blessed by this government when it comes to health care.

The time for excuses is over. It's time for the minister to stop deflecting and start delivering. Our communities and the Welland—

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

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: This week marks Skilled Trades Week in Ontario.

I'm proud to share some good news from my beautiful riding of Markham–Thornhill. Enercare Home Services has received $186,170 through the Ontario government's $8.6-million Skills Development Fund to support women in skilled trades. Last year, I visited one of the eight boot camps that this fund supports for young women from grade 7 to grade 12. I was inspired by their passion, commitment and enthusiasm. This program opens doors to rewarding careers and builds their confidence through hands-on experience and mentorship in plumbing, electrical and HVAC trades.

Our government has also supported other innovative training programs in 2024-25 in Markham–Thornhill. Voyzant Inc. created 160 jobs in travel and tourism with $1.144 million through the Ontario leads the way program. JVH Masonry Ltd. will deliver a 12-month practical masonry training program for 100 workers, including francophone and Indigenous participants, with $1,031,303 in funding.

Under Premier Doug Ford and Minister Piccini, Ontario is strengthening its skilled workforce.

Thank you to the member for Scarborough Centre for passing—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Whitby.

NUCLEAR POWER FACILITY

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, as part of our plan to protect Ontario and build a more competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy, the province is investing $1 billion through the Building Ontario Fund in the first small modular reactors in the G7, at Darlington nuclear station in Mr. McCarthy's riding.

Ontario's SMRs will create 18,000 jobs during construction, with 3,700 jobs during operation, while contributing $38.5 billion to Canada's gross domestic product over the next 65 years.

As we navigate tariffs and global volatility, it has never been more important to create a more competitive, more resilient and self-reliant province that can withstand whatever comes our way.

The investment to support the first SMRs is a down payment on Ontario's nuclear energy future.

We're protecting Ontario by supporting good-paying, long-term jobs for Ontario workers and building the energy infrastructure—including both SMRs and new, large-scale nuclear—needed to make Ontario an energy superpower.

THE ELLIOT COMMUNITY

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to recognize the Elliott Community in Guelph for its ongoing commitment to transforming long-term-care environments into homes that prioritize dignity, connection and quality of life.

This summer, I attended the Elliott Community's Butterfly Approach accreditation celebration. Not only are they the first long-term-care home in Guelph to be accredited in the Butterfly Approach, but they were also recognized with an "excellent" level accreditation from Meaningful Care Matters. MCM describes an "excellent" outcome as a highly engaged service that prioritizes meaningful moments, where emotion-focused care is consistently seen, felt and heard in the interactions with people. Individuality and self-expression are encouraged.

The Elliott Community is a municipally owned, non-profit, long-term-care home.

My constituents tell me over and over again about the positive impact the Elliott Community has had on their loved ones and their families.

I'm so grateful for the important work they do to make our community a better place. I'm proud of the level of excellence they've achieved, and I look forward to working with them to expand the butterfly model.

I especially want to thank the front-line staff who adjusted their approach to care in order to make the butterfly model work.

REMARKABLE WOMEN AT QUEEN'S PARK

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Colleagues, as you will recall, I recently launched the Remarkable Women in the Workplace initiative, a monthly recognition program celebrating the outstanding women who work for the Office of the Assembly. These individuals exemplify dedication, professionalism and leadership in their roles, and this initiative is a small but meaningful way to honour their contributions to the Legislature.

Today, I am pleased to draw your attention to the Speaker's gallery and introduce our newest honouree: Sheila Alfonso, accounts payable team lead in the financial services branch. Sheila's commitment to excellence is unwavering. She is constantly going above and beyond to ensure her team meets critical deadlines, even in high-pressure situations. Her mentorship and support of her colleagues foster a culture of growth and empowerment, and her integrity and problem-solving skills make her a role model not only in financial services, but across the assembly.

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Sheila, I know you are very uncomfortable with all this attention, but it is well deserved.

On behalf of all members and staff, I extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Sheila.

Thank you for your remarkable service to Ontario's Parliament.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: It is my pleasure to take this opportunity to welcome the members of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association who are joining us today at Queen's Park.

Since 1971, the OSWCA has represented over 850 companies across Ontario. They build water and waste water infrastructure as well as roads and bridges across our province.

Please join me in welcoming OSWCA to the Ontario Legislature and thanking them for all that they do in building a stronger Ontario.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à plusieurs membres de différents conseils scolaires francophones qui sont ici avec nous pour la journée de représentation de l'ACÉPO, l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario : M. Denis Labelle et son équipe.

Aussi, représentant le conseil CEPEO de ma circonscription sont Samia Ouled Ali, la présidente; Gilles Fournier, vice-président; Christian-Charles Bouchard à la direction; et Guylaine Scherer, directrice des communications.

J'ai bien hâte de me joindre à eux pour participer à la première pelletée de terre d'une nouvelle école à Rockland vendredi. J'aimerais leur souhaiter la bienvenue à Queen's Park.

M^me^ Marit Stiles: Aujourd'hui, nous somme rejoints par l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario as well as the Ontario Book Publishers Association and the Council of Ontario Universities. I want to thank you so much for bringing your work to Queen's Park, and bienvenue à l'Assemblée législative.

M^me^ Lucille Collard: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux représentants de l'ACÉPO et souligner quelques conseillers scolaires qui ont peut-être été manqués : Denis Labelle; Michel Faucon; Samia Ouled Ali; Gilles Fournier; Anne-Marie Gélineault; Francine Vaillancourt; Régis Desrochers, un étudiant-conseiller; Geneviève Oger; Emmanuelle Richez; et Jeannette Labrèche. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour today to welcome the recently installed University of Guelph president and vice-chancellor, Dr. Rene Van Acker, who is here with the Council of Ontario Universities. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to introduce, from Balance Support and Self Care Studios, Sara Klodnicki and Myra Zettel.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with you after question period.

Mr. Billy Pang: I'm pleased to welcome the Ontario Book Publishers Organization for their made-in-Ontario book fair. I invite all members to join them in room 228 for the lunch event.

Ms. Doly Begum: This morning, I'm very pleased to welcome our page Taylor James, who is actually our page captain today, from Scarborough Southwest. I would also like to welcome her parents, Patrick James and Mara Trokova, who are joining us in the gallery.

It is a pleasure to have you all in your House. Welcome to the House.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of welcoming today to the Legislature Dave Peters, coming all the way down from Vineland. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Stan Cho: We have, from the OBPO, Emily Ferko, Noelle Allen, Christine Handley, Karen Boersma, Karen Brochu, James Saunders, Heather Campbell, Crystal Sikma. They're here for their day at Queen's Park.

Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'd like to welcome Dr. Muneesh Jha to the Legislature today. He's the president of the Medical Staff Association at Michael Garron Hospital. He's joined by his children Maya and Jaiyan.

Jaiyan turns 13 tomorrow, so I want to wish him a happy birthday.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature my staff members: Destinee Taylor, Micaela Krawczuk, and Riley Williamson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'ai deux personnes qui viennent bien de chez nous. Je voudrais présenter Natalie Joncas-Raymond et Guylaine Scherer. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I would like to welcome to the House the staff, parents and students from Medical Staff Association at Michael Garron Hospital.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I would like to welcome the Council of Ontario Universities' Steve Orsini, Catherine Bruce, Jacques Beauvais and Kevin Wamsley. I'm sure I missed a few names, as well. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M. Stephen Blais: Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue aux membres de l'Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario qui ont été avec nous aujourd'hui. Particulièrement, je voudrais reconnaître Samia Ouled Ali, Gilles Fournier, Christian-Charle Bouchard et François Laperle. Merci pour notre discussion ce matin.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: Welcome to the members of Innovative Medicines Canada. Thank you for the great work you're doing for patients across the country.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Premier.

As Ontario continues to face what is an unfolding jobs disaster, people are wondering why tens of millions of dollars are going to organizations that just cannot meet their targets. The Trillium reported that despite missing key targets, the majority of the applicants from the first round of the SDF grants funding kept receiving that funding in later rounds. I want to be very clear: They did not meet their targets in terms of how many participants were enrolled or how many completed the program, let alone the number of participants who actually became employed.

Can the Premier explain why organizations that failed to meet their targets continued to receive funding from your friends-and-family fund?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: Looking back, the fund was first established in the pandemic to support critically affected sectors, with one goal and one goal in mind, and that's to support employers and support training. Since then, over successive rounds, we've taken steps to improve what was a pandemic-response program and add things like social insurance number tracking—something I mentioned yesterday—which tracks, six, nine, 12 months out, the long-term employment outcomes.

We're working hard to support men and women who are trying to access better training in Ontario. When we think to why this is so essential, we need look no further than tariff-affected industries like the steel sector, sectors like automotive, and then, moving beyond that, the need for sectors like the skilled trades.

I was with the elevators union this morning. We're getting a next generation of young men and women into elevator training. Our stats are showing it's working, because apprenticeships are up, getting more young men and women into the trades.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, let's talk about one grant recipient. Since 2022, Zlatko Starkovski's enterprise, which is called—and you can decide whether this is aptly named—the Social Equality and Inclusion Centre, has received close to $10 million. You may remember them, Speaker, because this is the Premier's favourite nightclub owner, getting $10 million to run his clubs and venues—venues that have hosted many Conservative fundraisers

and now host an adult entertainment operation. Even the Premier's campaign manager Kory Teneycke's wedding was hosted there.

Interjection: Oh, wow.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes. The connection between this government and this company is a straight line. You can't even make this stuff up.

Speaker, can the minister tell us exactly how that $10 million of public money was spent?

Hon. David Piccini: That specific reference is unfounded.

What I can say is, when we're in the middle of a global pandemic, supporting sectors like the hospitality sector does matter. This is a sector that was hit hardest during the pandemic and that all experts said would take the longest to recover. That's why we've worked with partners. Hundreds received training; over 400 achieved employment, looking at recent rounds.

And then, when we think broadly—I've mentioned organizations like Unite Here. They're doing incredible work training and supporting hospitality workers. As Toronto welcomes the world with the World Cup, as we think to important sectors like the tourism sector, it's important that we have a talent pipeline to support people into meaningful training. It has taken people who were previously underemployed or unemployed and offered them training into employment. I think it's important that we stay rooted and stay focused on just that.

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The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, I wish we could say that this government was focused on jobs and training.

Anyway, no answer—no answer over there because they're not tracking the outcomes.

We saw in the Auditor General's report that the government doesn't even follow up with the companies that are getting public funding.

Let's follow this thread. The government is doling out public tax dollars to their friends and insiders, and they're not even holding these projects to any reporting standard or following up to make sure that the money is being properly used.

Does the Premier believe that it is acceptable for millions of dollars of public funding to be doled out without any checks and balances?

Hon. David Piccini: As I've said, that is simply incorrect. After every successive round, we've implemented and strengthened measures through the program. I referenced tangibly tracking social insurance numbers. Most colleagues know there are few programs in Ontario that actually track long-term employment outcomes through social insurance numbers. It's able to track those who are unemployed or underemployed, those on Ontario Works, on ODSP, and it's able to track them and their employment outcomes long-term. That's important.

We've also accepted recommendations of the Auditor General, who noted the strength of the KPIs—meaning we do follow up and assess those KPIs, make sure they're met. And we've publicly committed to publishing programmatic KPIs publicly for all Ontarians to see, as well.

We'll continue to support Ontario workers with rapid training. This is the first time in Ontario that we're offering rapid training in an organized, meaningful way to support people with better training for better jobs with bigger paycheques.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: On the one hand, we have programs that clearly fail to meet targets, funding that is going to very questionable companies with very close ties to this government—adult entertainment spaces/wedding venues. I can't make this up.

And then you see, on page 24 of the Auditor General's report, that she says very clearly that the minister's office was repeatedly providing inaccurate rationales for the funding to her. They presented applications as being scored high by the professional ministry evaluators when in fact they had been ranked, actually, very low—very low, or even medium.

My question is, how bad does this scandal have to get before the Premier puts an end to this pay-to-play scheme?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: Again, that's simply incorrect. Calling organizations like LIUNA questionable, like Carpenters questionable, like Unite Here questionable is completely unfounded. Calling hospitality sector employment and training partners questionable—again, unfounded.

We have to, again, look back, in the origins of a global pandemic, when people were all at home. Nobody was working. We came up with a fund designed to instill confidence in employers and employees alike, to train workers in sectors all across Ontario's economy, because they all matter to this Premier.

Hospitality workers matter to this Premier. That's why we've taken steps to ban taking tips—when employers would take tips from hospitality workers. We've taken progressive steps there to publicly post salary disclosures, benefiting the lowest-wage earners. These are steps we've taken to support that class of worker. They all matter in this province.

That's why we're working hard with employment training providers and non-profits in every corner of this province to support meeting the priorities of this government and the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Do you know what, Speaker? There are children in the room, so I'm going to be very careful how I talk about this. But just so we're all clear, I think LIUNA knows perfectly well what I'm talking about here, and they would be ashamed to be associated with a minister who would support an enterprise—and would give $10 million to an adult entertainment club.

What kind of training are we talking about here, Minister?

Interjection: One time.

Ms. Marit Stiles: This was not a one-off; I wish it was. This is a pattern of behaviour in this minister's office, and it has raised more than a few red flags.

It seems like the staff in the minister's office gave the Auditor General the wrong scores. They knew it. They knew what they were doing.

I'm just going to ask again: What is it going to take for this Premier to clean up his government and fire this minister?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, that is incorrect.

The hospitality sector, writ large, does matter, and that's what I've said here; that's what everyone on this side of the House would believe.

Training a next generation of workers, supporting in the government's build agenda—that's a $200-billion articulation of our priorities to build hospitals, to build roads, highways, bridges. These are things that the member opposite fought against. That is why those aforementioned organizations I mentioned abandoned them in the last election. They know that their men and women, their members, get real paycheques thanks to investments this Premier has made in infrastructure—roads and bridges. These are roads, highways that they fought against. Then the people went to the polls and elected PC members in every riding in Brampton. People went to the polls, they elected members to get hospitals done, to get transit done, to build energy infrastructure, new nuclear. Folks in my community know they wanted to close those very investments down.

We're going to make those—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, man. I'm just going to look out at the members of this government and say to you, is this what you want to be associated with?

If we were really talking about building roads and highways and training the skilled workers we need with this fund, I'm all for it.

But what has happened under this minister and your government is, there is a cloud hanging over skills development right now. It is shameful. The government members should be ashamed of this.

We're not talking about innovation here. We're talking about $400 private rooms in an adult entertainment venue, and you're trying to hold that up as somehow defensible spending for skills training.

So I want to know, once again, when is this Premier going to fire this minister, or is he going to continue to stand by his man?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, that's just, again, simply incorrect.

What this fund is doing—as I mentioned, through every successive round, we've taken measures to improve the integrity of that program.

The member opposite mentioned LIUNA. Let's actually quote them: "The Skills Development Fund has invested in real people, real jobs, real second chances and real pathways forward"—no matter your pathetic attempt to smear otherwise. I quote Victoria Mancinelli: "These are programs that change lives, giving justice-involved youth, women in trades, newcomers, marginalized communities and workers across hospitality, health care and construction a chance to build their future." That's Victoria Mancinelli from LIUNA. That aptly summarizes, as I said, in the wake of the pandemic, a fund that can support rapid training.

Through every successive round, we've improved the program, and we will continue to do take steps to do that.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: I never thought, never dreamed, I'd be saying these words in this place: Did the Premier actually give $10 million of taxpayer money to the owners of a strip club?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: No.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Well, I think you've got some explaining to do, Minister.

Speaker, I think most reasonable people who read the Trillium article—and some of you have it here—would say that we can do better than this. We can do better than giving millions of taxpayer dollars to the owners of a strip club. Does the Premier agree?

Hon. David Piccini: Again, we did not.

What I referenced was meaningful training, for example, in the skilled trades, a priority of this Premier. Young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24, who, statistically—we've seen an increase in apprenticeship registration thanks to the Skills Development Fund. We've seen an increase in under-represented groups statistically, according to Skilled Trades Ontario, because of programs like the Skills Development Fund.

We're going to stay focused on making sure we have a next generation of men and women who can nation-build. We're talking about one Canadian economy, about breaking down barriers to nation-build, once again, as we are less reliant on our friends south of the border. We need to do that, and we need a program that supports rapid training linked with employers, that leads to jobs, that leads to training, and we're going to keep staying focused on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary?

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Mr. John Fraser: That's not the answer that Ontarians deserve.

The Skills Development Fund was set up for good. It was supposed to be there to lift people up. It was supposed to be there to lift young women up. It was supposed to be there to lift up newcomers. It was supposed to be there to lift up people who needed a new career. That's to lift people up. Instead, the Premier has let us all down.

Does the Premier not agree that giving $10 million to the owners of a strip club is the wrong thing to do?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, he has asked that question; I've given the answer: No.

What this Premier, what this government is focused on, is meaningful pathways into careers. The member said that, yet they voted against this fund. They said this fund isn't good—so that's all aspects of this fund—and they voted against it every time. But it's not surprising, because they vote against the very things that this fund is supporting: building new hospitals, building new roads, building new bridges, building new nuclear plants, building new hydroelectric dams—these are all the things that require rapid training and rapid training programs to support. We're going to keep supporting the Ontario workers who elected us to do that—organized labour that supported us in great numbers to keep delivering on that plan to nation-build, to build a strong economy. We'll keep doing that. These parties don't support that initiative.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: Back to the Premier—and it's a simple question, and Ontarians deserve an answer from the Premier.

If you read the article, which some of you have, you'll read that a worker is quoted as saying, "They did not want to work at a place like that." Another quote said, "Both women said some of their fellow trainees left after seeing what they were expected to wear."

Premier, if they didn't want to work in a place like that, why did you fund them?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'll remind members to ask your questions through the Speaker.

The Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: Again, that's incorrect.

What this fund is focusing on is supporting people with meaningful training opportunities—whether it's the hospitality sector, whether it's the construction sector, whether it's health and safety training.

This morning, we were down with the elevator union, and they know that the only party with a plan to build is this Ontario PC Party, when they look to Toronto and they look to the skyrises. This morning, we talked about health and safety training. We talked about Skills Development Fund initiatives; in fact, Jim Miller mentioned that this morning, at our Safety Stand Down—the second initiative. We're working with them to build.

We're not going to apologize for meaningful training opportunities—that we are strengthening that program, after every round, as I mentioned: key programmatic indicators, improving our IT tracking, improving the SIN tracking.

This Premier recognizes that training at any age matters—has a fund to do it, to support building a stronger Ontario. And that's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I don't know how this minister is defending $10 million to the owners of a strip club. It defies reality. This is really serious.

I'm going to remind you of what I said in the last question, which is, "Both women said some of their fellow trainees left after seeing what they were expected to wear." They wore red corsets, high-cut black thong-like bottoms and fishnets.

Are these the jobs for young women the Premier had in mind in the Skills Development Fund?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, if the member actually read that article, he'd realize no skills development funding went to this. So let's talk about what it actually goes to.

The member opposite mentions how we can support young women, young men alike.

In my community, they're treating the exterior facade of a building in a heritage downtown as a real training opportunity, recognizing that at any age, it matters. I met a young guy there from my hometown who's getting better training. I met someone mid-career who's getting better training.

A Women's Work—she was here; that member didn't take an opportunity to talk to her.

The Premier and I met two young women, mid-career, who are getting training.

If that member wants to talk about young women getting training, he could meet those actual women who have come to this place.

That's what we're going to stay focused on—training at any age, at any stage, and in every corner of this province to support, with meaningful opportunities.

Whether you're young and looking to join an apprenticeship, whether you're mid-career, we have a fund to support you.

We're not going to stop supporting Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: Your skills development money, $10 million of it, went to the owner of a strip club. That's a fact.

Here's another quote from the article—there were lap dances: "Access to private rooms was offered, too, at a fee of $400." We all know what that means.

We all also know that there is a personal connection between the owners of the strip club, Kory Teneycke, and the Premier.

There is no possible world in this universe where the Premier can explain this away: $10 million to strip clubs, from a fund that was supposed to lift people up.

Instead, the Premier let all of us down. Why?

Hon. David Piccini: Again, Speaker: Incorrect.

Let's talk about the food and beverage sector, contributing over $15 billion to our economy—the hospitality sector. These are important sectors of an economy—an economy that this Premier and this caucus are working to grow through creating a low-tax environment to attract investment.

Manufacturing investments: We've helped create the conditions for over a million new jobs.

They don't want to talk about that because they support a high-tax agenda, a high-government-spend agenda.

We're making those investments in real infrastructure, real projects, and putting real people to work. You heard from Victoria Mancinelli—real jobs, real impacts. That's what this government is focused on.

We'll see the fall economic statement this week that's going to continue these investments in hospitals, in schools, in bridges, in highways. For those projects to succeed, we've got to support training. We know that training occurs in colleges, universities, union halls and non-profits, and we have a fund to support that. We're going to continue doing just that.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, I'm a fan of Candu nuclear. They are Canadian, with a 94% Canadian supply chain, and they're best known for projects that come in on time and under budget.

Meanwhile, GE Hitachi is a US company. They don't have a 94% Canadian supply chain. According to the Globe and Mail, GE Hitachi originally promised that their SMRs in Ontario would cost about $1 billion per reactor—that's $4 billion for four. But instead of $4 billion for four, it will now be over $20 billion. That's more than five times the original estimate.

Why is the Premier paying a US company five times more than estimated?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member opposite for his question.

I was very pleased to join the Premier and the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago at Darlington, where we announced a historic investment of $1 billion going into the small modular reactors. We were joined by partnership from the federal government—some $2 billion being invested into these projects.

We can ask the question of why these investments were made. It's because we know that these projects are good for ratepayers, they're good for taxpayers, and they're good for our economy, with over 80% of the entire supply chain being kept here in Ontario, supporting 18,000 jobs—thousands of workers across this province who are being supported as a result of this. The best part: It's going to ensure that power remains affordable, reliable and secure for many, many decades to come.

That's a far contrast with what we saw under the previous government—the Liberals, propped up by the NDP—when they were in power and you had a chance to make a change.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member.

MPP Jamie West: The Premier is not just buying American; he's paying almost $16 billion more to buy American. I don't know how that helps taxpayers or ratepayers.

Let's review.

GE Hitachi: American SMRs, American fuel source, with an estimate that has already ballooned from $4 billion to over $20 billion.

Candu nuclear: They're Canadian. They have a 94% Canadian supply chain. Their fuel comes from Saskatchewan. And their projects come in on time and under budget.

My question: Instead of buying American, will the Premier buy Canadian and prioritize Candu nuclear technology?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: We are very proud of the robust nuclear supply chain that has been built here in the province of Ontario.

Today, Minister Lecce is giving a keynote address at the world nuclear foundation, where he's speaking about the fact that we have demonstrated world leadership. We are the first sub-sovereign jurisdiction in the G7 to build out these small modular reactors, providing tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to our GDP in the years to come.

Don't just take my word for it. Speak with the Power Workers' Union; speak with those who are in the skilled trades, those from communities around Darlington and across the province.

I know there are small businesses in my riding, there are small businesses in yours that help supply—that over 85% of the components that are in those small modular reactors support good Ontario, made-in-Canada jobs.

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We're going to be unapologetic about our commitment to a world-class industry we have built right here in this province. Small modular reactors are part of that industry, ensuring that jobs are being protected.

When will the member opposite stand up and support those workers, support those jobs, and keep rates affordable for the people of this province?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Tyler Watt: This is serious. This is $2.5 billion in this Skills Development Fund that was supposed to go towards training people to help them build up Ontario—a premise and goal we can all get behind. But while Ontario's public colleges and universities are cutting programs and laying off thousands of workers, this government is funnelling millions through the Skills Development Fund to private career colleges and insiders connected to the labour minister.

We've recently learned that those close to the labour minister have been lobbying for private colleges, some of which have received millions of dollars from the Skills Development Fund.

Madam Speaker, how can this government justify pouring education dollars into private institutions with PC Party political connections while Ontario's public colleges and universities are left to crumble?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I always enjoy standing up to highlight the investments we made in budget 2025.

A billion dollars have gone to our post-secondary institutions: $750 million went to STEM programming—another 20,000 world-class STEM graduates on top of the 70,000 we are graduating every single year; $75 million in construction-related programming—whether that's in planning or in the skilled trades, that's another 7,800 new seats that we brought online this year; another $56 million to expand nursing seats—another 2,200 spaces for nursing seats across the province; as well as $55 million for teaching seats, another 2,600 new teaching seats. This is on top of the $1.3 billion we invested into the sector last year, when the federal government made many unilateral changes.

I recommend that member, when he meets with Prime Minister Carney, which he does often, to maybe suggest to stand up for our post-secondary education system.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Nepean.

MPP Tyler Watt: That all sounds like great statistics, right? Billions here—

Interjections.

MPP Tyler Watt: Okay. But here's—

Interjections.

MPP Tyler Watt: No.

Here's the reality, though: Colleges and campuses are closing down. Algonquin College closed their Perth campus altogether. Hundreds of programs are being cut.

So while you pretend that these investments are creating an exceptional post-secondary system, that's not the truth.

The Auditor General has said that political staff overrode non-partisan advice to give millions of dollars to low-scoring applications—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Excuse me. You'll have to withdraw.

MPP Tyler Watt: Withdraw.

Incredibly, $10 million was given to a non-profit that then funnelled the money into a company that operates an adult entertainment club.

Speaker, this is not just bad optics. This minister is in direct conflict of interest.

Meanwhile, 700,000 Ontarians are out of work—record high unemployment and youth unemployment in this province. A quarter of all visits to food banks are done by students. Private colleges are receiving millions while our public colleges and universities wither.

Why does this government always find money for insiders but never for students?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Let me be abundantly clear: We've invested a billion dollars in budget 2025 for our post-secondary education system.

Speaker, I know it has been a while since the Liberals or NDP had to balance a budget—and I know that member is really good on TikTok.

We'll ensure that we'll continue to be there for our post-secondary system.

That member knows that the federal government made multiple unilateral decisions without interacting or consulting with the sector. Whether it's Ontario, BC, Alberta—nobody was consulted under the unilateral changes that the federal government did to the international student market.

That is why we are going through a funding formula review right now. We are listening to the sector. We're listening to our stakeholders and our partners to understand where the funding formula needs to go.

We'll continue being there for the sector. You can continue making TikToks all day, but we'll continue to meet with the sector stakeholders and ensure that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order.

A reminder to direct your questions through the Speaker.

Question?

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Speaker, building homes isn't just about bricks and mortar. It's about making sure every community has the critical infrastructure needed to grow. That means reliable water, waste water and servicing systems that can keep up with demand.

Across Ontario, municipalities are ready to build. They want to get shovels in the ground and bring new homes online, but to do that, they need faster approvals and modern tools that remove delays and cut red tape.

Great organizations like the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association have been strong advocates for this approach to meet the urgent needs of housing-enabling infrastructure.

Can the minister please explain how our government is protecting Ontario's future by strengthening the infrastructure needed to build more homes faster?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you to the member from Brampton West.

Really, what we're doing is laying the foundation for success. In the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, Bill 17, we started that. We're debating Bill 60 now to get that job done.

We're doing a pilot project in the region of Peel to ensure that we get meaningful public utility in place to build the infrastructure we need over the decades to come. It will remain in public hands. Unlike others who are saying that we're going to privatize—it will not be privatized. Let's get that straight. Accountability will remain in local hands.

Ultimately, what we're going to do is reduce the burden of development charges in this province. They're punitive. They hurt first-time homebuyers. They hurt new home construction.

Speaker, growth no longer pays for growth. We're changing that, and under the pilot project in Peel, we're going to get it right.

Ultimately, we're going to build more homes faster and keep the dream of home ownership in this province alive and well.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Brampton West.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I want to thank the minister for his response.

Every community, large or small, depends on strong servicing infrastructure to build new homes.

Across Ontario, municipalities have told us that outdated and duplicative approval processes are holding projects back. These delays make it harder to build the homes families need and drive up costs for everyone.

We know that faster approvals, modern tools and strong partnerships are key to unlocking more housing. By removing barriers and supporting local governments, our province can help get shovels in the ground faster.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is helping municipalities deliver the water and waste water systems needed to build more homes across Ontario?

Hon. Rob Flack: The member from Brampton West is absolutely right; infrastructure is the key ingredient to get more homes built faster. And there's an insatiable need in this province to get infrastructure built—water and waste water, in particular.

As the member said in his opening question, the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association estimates, over the next 15 to 20 years, 200-plus billion dollars will be needed to replace aging infrastructure and put in new infrastructure in this province.

Aging infrastructure needs to be replaced. What the project we're looking at in Peel does is it amortizes the cost of that massive investment over decades—not just on the backs of new home buyers or new construction buyers. It's logical. It makes sense—again, keeping the dream of home ownership alive.

Costs have to come down. New construction costs are too high, and it takes too long.

That's what Bill 17 did. That's what Bill 60 will do once we get this approved—please, goodness.

At the end of the day, we'll keep the dream of home ownership alive. It's the quintessential Canadian dream.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Premier.

Ontario lost 38,000 jobs in the second quarter of 2025, and there are currently 700,000 people unemployed in Ontario.

The Skills Development Fund was supposed to be helpful to workers and to businesses. In fact, the ministry website makes this claim, but it fails to note that the selection process would not be fair or transparent or, as we were learning, even ethical. The selection process needs to have integrity, and we all know that.

The minister has already admitted that he wasn't tracking the actual performance measures or the job numbers, although I'm sure he was tracking some donations.

How can the Premier guarantee that with the remaining $700 million that's in the Skills Development Fund, the preferential treatment will not continue? And why, after everything that we've learned, do you trust this minister when he has been compromised?

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: As we heard from the Auditor General, strong KPI metrics are in place, and through successive rounds, this program has improved.

This program is delivering real results. You heard the quotes I read earlier—real results for real Ontarians with real training. That is a concept foreign to the member opposite.

The folks who actually deliver that real training long ago abandoned that party. They abandoned it because they saw in this PC government a government that's building; a government that's going to ensure that their members—men and women—have a paycheque, have a meaningful job to go home to feed their family with.

We've got the sewer and water main association here today. They know that the infrastructure commitment this government is making is going to support contractors, workers and employers alike. It will ensure generational prosperity for Ontario—for a Premier and a government laser-focused on building a stronger Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Madam Speaker, the owners of strip clubs were never supporting the NDP, and we're actually okay with that.

The Skills Development Fund needs a reboot, which means the minister needs to resign.

In fact, there was a time and place in Ontario when a minister who has been so compromised would actually do the right thing and resign.

This fund has been tainted, trust has been lost, and this is compromising our economic potential. We need to ensure that the remaining $700 million in this fund is used for high-ranking applications to address Ontario's labour market needs, which is what the fund is supposed to do.

To the Premier: The economy is at a standstill. Our underfunded educational institutions, which have supported the economy, are actually cutting jobs. We can't afford to waste the potential of the Skills Development Fund by a minister who has been compromised.

Premier, will you fire the Minister of Labour?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, again—an article that itself cites the inaccuracy.

This matter is before the Integrity Commissioner, someone I will continue to work closely with.

We're going to keep working hard for Ontario workers, to make sure we're investing in their training. And that's exactly the impact that this fund is having. It's supporting key pillars of our economy—be it infrastructure, be it health care, be it our hospitality sector, our tourism sector.

It's supporting vital sectors of this economy with rapid training.

I've referenced so many stories, but later this month, we'll be going to northern Ontario, where we'll see first-hand the mining investments; the new training centre with boilermakers that this fund is supporting in Sudbury; the expanded supports for drywalling in communities like Sudbury.

We've got to build homes to support a growing north and a mining sector that those members just don't support.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Speaker, there's an old adage: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. So, for the life of me, I cannot comprehend why this government is obsessed with messing around with great programs and organizations that are already working well in Ontario—the Skills Development Fund, road safety, green development standards. And now the new focus is flooding—slicing and dicing the 36 conservation authorities, rolling them into seven entities, supposedly redeploying senior officials, and all the while expecting Ontario not to flood?

My question to the Premier: How will you ensure that local watershed-based protections are maintained with these new entities covering vastly different parts of the province, and what is the expected cost compared to the successful program you are erroneously eliminating?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I am proud to confirm to this House that our government is leading a transformational change in conservation authorities to ensure that, more than ever, they fulfill their core mandate of preventing floods, of managing watersheds. We are proposing and consulting on potential legislation that would consolidate or amalgamate conservation authorities from the current 36 into seven regional watershed-based conservation authorities.

And guess who, among so many, is supporting it? The mayor of Vaughan, the former leader of the Liberal Party, the member's party, the Honourable Steven Del Duca. We welcome that support because there are times when a non-partisan approach to making a system better is the best approach. We welcome that non-partisan support, and we will get it done. We will get it done right.

We will support conservation authorities. No community—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will caution the member for Ajax on outbursts.

I recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Just a quick flooding refresher for this government: For every dollar invested in climate adaptation, there is a savings of $3 to $8 in cost avoidance.

Speaker, 10% of homes in Canada are no longer insurable relative to flood risk. Flooding is the number one cause of public emergency in Ontario. There is a high cost of inaction, with $1.2 billion in total insured catastrophic losses in Ontario in 2022.

My question to the Premier: Instead of blowing up these important conservation authorities, why not give them the support they deserve—electronic permitting systems, flood mapping, planning? Why not help them with modernization? Heck, why not give these conservation authorities some of that skills development slushy fund?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Let me be clear: The regional conservation authorities that we proposed, watershed-based conservation authorities, will continue, better than ever, to focus on managing natural hazards and watershed health, consistent with the current mandate for conservation authorities, drawing on decades of local knowledge and partnerships. We're taking action to improve conservation authorities, to deliver faster and more efficient outcomes for the communities they serve.

And we are creating, for the first time, a new central agency to guide those regional watershed conservation authorities. The new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency will help standardize processes and procedures among Ontario's conservation authorities. This will include introducing a one-window permitting and approvals platform to support faster, more predictable approvals of new housing and infrastructure, to serve Ontario better.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: This month, electricity prices went up again—29%, actually. Life just got more expensive and stressful for millions of Ontarians.

Meanwhile, this Premier is pursuing a pipeline pipe dream, which isn't about reducing energy costs but is a massive giveaway of taxpayer dollars to oil and gas companies.

You say you believe in a fair market, yet you make it challenging to build renewables—the fastest and cheapest way to bring costs down and create jobs now, not in 15 years. Ontario is virtually absent from the $2-trillion green tech economy. We should be creating jobs now, using Ontario steel to build made-in-Ontario, low-cost renewables.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: Will he make life more affordable and create jobs now by using Ontario steel to build Ontario low-cost renewable energy instead of doubling down on the dirtiest, most expensive gas pipelines?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for her question this morning.

I have to take her on a little trip down memory lane. When we think about the history of what we had in this province when the Liberals were in place—we saw a 300% increase in energy rates because of the Green Energy Act that we saw the Liberals bring in. We saw 350,000 manufacturing jobs leave this province as a result of their policies. That was really damaging for families, for industries. And, frankly, those were bad days.

When you look at the fact that we've created over a million jobs in the province of Ontario, we've been able to do that because we've had a laser focus on affordable energy. I would hope the member opposite was supportive of the Affordable Energy Act earlier this year, which was our focus on demonstrating that competitive procurement can keep costs low, bring prices down for ratepayers—and that's, in effect, what we have accomplished.

You look at a 30% reduction, on average, through renegotiating over 2,000 bad contracts that the Liberals had in place when we came to office, and our continued commitment through competitive procurements like the LT2 program, which is ensuring that an all-of-the-above energy approach keeps affordability top of mind for consumers, for ratepayers—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Kitchener Centre.

1120

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I hope the government will look at its own IESO rates before they comment again to these questions.

This government is so in bed with big oil and gas that they are doing their job for them. Who asked for this tax-funded feasibility study? Was it the richest people in Canada, in Ontario? I didn't get a flood of emails asking for this.

The government brags about our clean grid, yet they make it dirtier every day.

And when they fantasize about a multi-billion dollar pipeline to make their friends rich, they jeopardize investments in Ontario.

Doubling down on pipelines might create stable jobs in 15 years—if you don't believe in climate change—but we have a jobs disaster now.

Speaker, again to the Premier: Why, when people need jobs now, when people need more energy now, are you doubling down on a commitment to subsidize oil and gas companies, which are known to have the largest profits known to man?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I hope that the member opposite has read the electrification transition panel's report, where they talk about our plan getting to net zero by 2050. How? As a result of nuclear energy—building out an aggressive plan that supports workers.

The member opposite talked about jobs. Yet, when push came to shove and she had a chance to vote in support of the tens of thousands of jobs that are in our nuclear sector, they said no. They don't actually care about putting their money where their mouth is and investing in made-in-Ontario industries that support workers, that support affordability and support reliability.

We know that the members opposite have a pipe dream when it comes to their vision of the future.

We're being focused on practical, pragmatic solutions that keep rates down, that protect workers and, frankly, at the end of the day, ensure that the industries that we rely on here in this province are also being supported. And we've seen success: $21 billion in green bonds have been issued as a result of this government's investment. Those are capital markets globally looking at Ontario, saying, "We want to invest our money in Ontario because they are clean, they are building out their grid, and they have a plan for the future."

I hope the member—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Essex.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Anthony Leardi: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Speaker, building homes starts with strong foundations, like water, sewer and servicing systems that make housing possible. Groups like the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association have long called for upgrades to these systems so communities can keep growing.

For years, towns in Essex county and communities across the province struggled with old pipes, broken mains and red tape that stopped new projects before they began.

But our government is changing that. Through new investments in the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, municipalities are finally getting the tools they need to build and grow.

Speaker, will the minister share how these investments are helping communities repair and expand the infrastructure that is needed to make home ownership possible?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Madam Speaker, through you: Thank you for the great question, to the excellent member for Essex, a great advocate for his community.

Indeed, our government's new $1.6-billion top-up to the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, or MHIP, builds on the success of this critical program. It helps fund new housing in every part of Ontario. So far, our investments are helping to unlock about 800,000 new homes. That includes over $770 million in central Ontario, $360 million in the east, $90 million in the north, and $450 million in the west.

Madam Speaker, municipalities need the right tools to repair and upgrade the water systems that make housing possible.

Unlike the previous Liberal government that left communities with aging assets, we are delivering real results.

Thanks to Premier Ford's leadership, we will keep investing, we will keep building and make sure no part of Ontario is ever left behind.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the minister for that response.

Speaker, families across Ontario and in the county of Essex want to see real action to fix the problems that have slowed housing for far too long. They want clean water, safe roads and reliable infrastructure that helps to build homes faster and keep costs down for families.

Under the previous Liberal government, years of inaction left municipalities with aging water systems and limited capacity to grow.

But now this government is stepping up with real support through the new $1.6-billion investment in municipal housing infrastructure.

Speaker, will the minister please share how this investment is helping municipalities upgrade infrastructure and support home building?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member—through you, Madam Speaker—for another excellent question.

Our top-up investment will indeed be allocated through new funding streams. This will help municipalities fix and build critical water and waste water systems. These funds will target the most urgent needs, repairing aging systems, expanding capacity and supporting new housing construction.

The previous Liberal government, enabled by the NDP—that party propped up the Liberal government in its failure on infrastructure. The failure to act for years, the inaction, left communities with broken infrastructure and stalled housing growth.

We are cleaning up that mess and getting Ontario building again.

I want to thank, in particular, the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association for their partnership and advocacy on this important file.

Because of the leadership of our Premier, we're delivering real results for families, we're helping municipalities grow, and we're building the Ontario of tomorrow.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier: Toronto's green roof program for new buildings saves money for residents and owners by cutting energy use, and 1,600 Ontario workers depend on it for employment.

The Premier is eliminating this program. Why is he putting these people out of work?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: Our government has been very clear: Ontario can no longer afford costly boutique requirements when getting homes built.

Speaker, Toronto is the only municipality in the province that has mandatory—I repeat, mandatory—green roof requirements. We're standardizing this across the province. They are optional. People who sell green roofs throughout this province—in Windsor, London, Ottawa—can do so in any jurisdiction. It's just not going to be mandatory.

We need to lower the cost of getting homes built. It's over $200 a metre to get this construction built. We're changing that; we're standardizing. It takes too long and it costs too much to get homes built in Ontario.

We're sticking to our guns. This is a good policy for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again, to the Premier: We could get rid of the building code. Houses would be a lot cheaper.

What we actually need are the investments that cut people's operating costs.

The Premier likes to claim that he helps workers, but he is a jobs disaster. When he gets rid of 1,600 Ontario jobs, hurts Ontario farmers and manufacturers, he can claim whatever he wants, but we know the reality.

Why is he putting these Ontario workers out of jobs?

Hon. Rob Flack: Speaker, anything but—read the record: over a million jobs created in this province. And we will continue to fight for the workers in this province like we do every day, day in and day out.

The member opposite talks about the building code. The building code is a very good code. What we're looking to do is standardize it so there's one code across the province. The code is king.

We need to reduce the time it takes to get shovels in the ground. We can't have different iterations throughout the province. This is part of our problem.

When you build a house in Toronto, it can cost 33% of the total selling price—33% in fees, in taxes, in a timely waste of these studies.

We're standardizing, we're lowering costs, we're lowering the time. Guess what? It's going to work. More houses will be built. The dream of home ownership will stay alive and well.

SUBVENTIONS DESTINÉES À L'ÉDUCATION

EDUCATION FUNDING

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Madame Speaker, les conseils scolaires francophones de l'Ontario font face à une double crise : il y a une pénurie d'enseignants importante et un manque d'écoles partout en Ontario. D'ailleurs, les conseils scolaires francophones sont ici aujourd'hui pour le rappeler au gouvernement.

Pendant que la demande pour une éducation en français continue d'augmenter, le gouvernement distribue des millions de dollars du « Skills Development Fund » à des amis politiques plutôt que d'investir dans notre système d'éducation.

Alors, je vais demander au ministre de l'Éducation : quand ce gouvernement va-t-il enfin investir dans les enseignants et les écoles dont nos communautés francophones ont désespérément besoin?

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

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie la députée pour sa question.

On sait très bien que la pénurie des enseignants ici en Ontario est un problème très grave. Malheureusement, ce n'est pas juste un problème qui affecte l'Ontario; c'est un problème à travers le Canada. Et c'est pour ça que notre gouvernement a pris des mesures très importantes pour remédier à ce problème.

1130

En 2021, nous avons lancé pour la première fois en Ontario la Stratégie ontarienne de recrutement et de

rétention du personnel enseignant de langue française. Madame la Présidente, nous avons investi plus de 30 millions de dollars depuis 2021 dans cette stratégie. Nous soutenons la création de nouveaux programmes de formation à l'enseignement en langue française à l'Université d'Ottawa et à l'Université de l'Ontario français, ainsi que l'augmentation des inscriptions dans ces établissements.

De plus, madame la Présidente, on a développé un portail en ligne qui a permis à plus de 350 enseignants francophones formés à l'étranger à obtenir leur certification d'enseignement ici en Ontario. On continue à investir dans ces stratégies. C'est un problème que nous allons remédier.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Ottawa–Vanier.

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Without qualified teachers or proper facilities, there's no quality education and no equality of opportunity. French-language education is not a privilege; it is a right protected by law. But this government prefers to talk about accountability while failing to be accountable for its own misuse of public funds—and what misuse have we learned today.

So again, I will ask the minister: When will the government do what's right—invest in teacher training, retention and school infrastructure—instead of rewarding political allies?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je ne sais pas si la députée a écouté la réponse que j'ai donnée à sa première question, parce que dans cette réponse, elle a vu qu'on a investi plus de 30 millions de dollars. Notre gouvernement, pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Ontario, prend ce problème au sérieux, avec le développement d'une stratégie dédiée à la formation et à la rétention d'enseignants francophones en Ontario.

Nous avons créé des centres. On a créé le portail en ligne qui a permis à plus de 350 enseignants francophones qui sont formés à l'étranger à obtenir leur certification ici. On a même créé des services de mentorat et d'accompagnement professionnel qui ont bénéficié à plus de 1 500 enseignants pour qu'on puisse les accompagner quand ils viennent ici en Ontario et au Canada.

Mais encore plus important, on travaille avec le gouvernement fédéral à l'Université de l'Ontario français et à l'Université d'Ottawa pour créer des programmes de formation pour les enseignants. C'est un programme très populaire, madame la Présidente, parce qu'il y a de plus en plus de gens qui veulent devenir des enseignants francophones—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

ROAD SAFETY

MPP Monica Ciriello: My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

Speaker, we all want safer roads—we can all agree on that—especially in front of our children's schools. But too many municipalities are not taking action to reduce speeding. Instead, they set up speed cameras and issue thousands of tickets, while investing none of that money back into safer roads or into the city. This is not a safety strategy. It's a financial strategy. People want safer communities, not a money grab.

Speaker, can the minister assure parents that our government will take meaningful steps to address the misuse of these speed cameras?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the member for that question. It's about proactive measures rather than reactive measures.

Getting a ticket in the mail three weeks later does absolutely nothing from stopping the individual—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: —from stopping the individual from getting a ticket.

We've got cameras in the city of Toronto that have issued over 70,000 tickets, on just one camera—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Because they're speeding.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: —continue to increase, telling us it just simply does not work. It's a cash grab.

We are going to continue to work with municipalities to ensure that we protect public safety in some of the most important areas across our cities and province.

We're going to build traffic-calming measures that will stop speeding from happening at the time of entry into any one of these zones—not by getting a ticket three weeks later.

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

MPP Monica Ciriello: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

Speaker, parents in my riding are deeply concerned about speeding near schools.

As the minister has mentioned, hidden speed cameras don't stop dangerous driving in the moment; they simply issue tickets after the fact. There's a disconnect between the money collected from these cameras and the real results for safer streets.

The last thing that parents should have to worry about is a dangerous driver in front of their kid's school.

Can the minister explain what steps our government is taking to actively reduce speeding in school zones?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We'll take real action against speeding in our school zones, and that's why we have committed to doing that across these municipalities that have misused these—proactive measures versus reactive measures.

Once again, entering into a school zone—we all agree we need to ensure that the speeds are lower.

These cameras do absolutely nothing to stop an individual from speeding, and that is the issue that we will address with traffic-calming measures, whether that be speed bumps, roundabouts, or other measures that can be implemented across many of these municipalities that we work with.

Here's another fact: Out of the 444 municipalities, only 37 municipalities currently use municipal speed cameras. That's why we're going to continue to work with all municipalities on how the majority of them access and control these school zones in their communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GROVES MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ACT, 2025

Mr. Racinsky moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr32, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I am pleased to be able to rise today to table a petition entitled "Withdraw Bill 33." I want to say thank you to Skyler Maharaj and Candace Young, along with Jennifer Duncan, who collected the signatures on these petitions.

The petitioners note that the Conservative government has taken more than $6 billion out of our education system and that our kids are paying the price every single day, with larger class sizes, a shortage of qualified teachers, concerns about mental health and the lack of supports, and a growing crisis of violence.

Democratically elected school boards are essential in leading community responses to these concerns and in fighting for our kids. They ensure that the voices of parents are heard in the governance of our local schools and in the decisions about what programs will be offered, where resources are allocated, even where schools are located and which schools our children go to. But Bill 33 allows the Minister of Education to take away that right, that capacity of parents and communities to have a say in our local schools and in our children's education.

It also takes transparency and accountability out of the education system. We can see already in Ottawa and Toronto and other boards that have put under supervision that the supervisors do not feel accountable to parents, that they are trying to keep us in the dark. They are making misleading statements. They're not attending committee meetings. They're not answering questions. None of that is the solution to the challenges, which require actual investments in schools.

The petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw Bill 33 and respect local democracies, to stop playing political games with the well-being of our children and fund education.

I fully endorse this petition, Speaker, will assign my name to it and send it to the table with page Mansahaj.

FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This is a petition about the changes to the first round of getting into a medical residency. It's the restrictions that have been brought about on international medical students if they haven't spent two years in high school in Ontario.

The petition asks that the government reverse the Ontario high school attendance requirement so that it's an even playing field, particularly for these international students who have already invested, are already expecting to be considered for the first round and are being excluded from that.

I fully endorse this petition, and I will give it to Finley.

PHARMACARE

M^me^ France Gélinas: I would like to thank Bev Desjardins from Lively in my riding for these petitions. They're called "Pharmacare."

As you know, Speaker, a lot of diseases can be controlled using medication. The programs that we have in Ontario to reimburse medication leave lots of people behind, which means that those people are stuck trying to pay for their medication or pay the rent, feed their kids and everything else. It doesn't have to be like that.

Expert studies show clearly that a pharmacare program increases the amount of people who can safely stay at home, don't need to go to the emergency room as often, don't have to go see their physician or nurse practitioner as often because they have access to the medication they need to control their sickness.

The people who signed the petition are asking that the government implement a universal, publicly funded pharmacare program that would ensure that every Ontarian can access the medications they need.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Ishaan to bring it to the Clerk.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition from my constituents in Kingston and the Islands. They're asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take action to improve accessibility for individuals in wheelchairs and with other disabilities in both new and existing buildings.

They give five different actions that could be taken. They're also asking for government grants to assist smaller businesses—maybe not-for-profits—in making these changes so that the disabled can thrive.

CHILD CARE

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank the good people from Humber River–Black Creek who signed this petition to create child care spaces now. Basically, what they're talking about is the cancellation of the 48 school-based child care projects, and five of them were in the constituency of Humber River–Black Creek.

We already have a critical shortage of child care spaces. Longer and longer wait times mean that parents are having a harder time going back to work, returning to normal lives and being able to provide for their families.

We know that our families deserve safe community and affordable child care spaces, and so they're petitioning the Legislative Assembly to immediately restore the funding to those five cancelled centres—and, I would assume as well, to the other ones that were cancelled—and commit to building additional spaces to meet the demand.

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Ollie for the table.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Ted Hsu: This petition from my constituents is entitled "Ontario Isn't Ready for an Electric Avenue".

The idea here is that they're calling on the Legislative Assembly to enact legislation or put forward regulations which implement a long-term plan to not only pilot but build out cost-effective distributed energy systems.

This is the future of our electricity grid, and so they're calling on the government of Ontario to collaborate with local distribution companies, who will be essential in this whole process, and also calling on the government to direct the Independent Electricity System Operator to aggressively prepare for the electrification of our communities—not all the big grids that go across the province, but our communities and neighbourhoods.

FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm pleased to rise to table a petition entitled "Ontario Needs Doctors, Not Discriminatory Rules."

So the Conservative government recently changed the rules for medical residencies in midstream, saying that applicants needed to have at least two years of high school in Ontario. This means that there are many people who are Canadian citizens who did not go to high school in Ontario who are excluded—internationally trained doctors and others who arrived after high school who are perfectly qualified to practise medicine in Ontario, but because they didn't go to high school here, they're not allowed to do that.

A couple of weekends ago, I was out speaking with constituents on Gladecrest Court in my riding, and I spoke to someone who was absolutely outraged because he doesn't have a doctor. He said, "Why do I care where my doctor went to high school?"

We should be doing absolutely everything we can to bring as many doctors as we can into our health care system in Ontario, not making it harder and not making it more discriminatory. I completely agree with that constituent.

And so what the petitioners are asking for is that the Legislative Assembly reverse the new high school attendance requirement for current and upcoming residency applicants, and that we create a fair and inclusive pathway for internationally trained immigrant physicians so that everyone can get the health care that they need.

I fully endorse this petition, will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Bani.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

M^me^ France Gélinas: I would like to thank Christine Séguin from Azilda in my riding for this petition. It's called "Let's Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant."

As you know, there are many health care services that are not available in northern Ontario. We get referred to Ottawa, Toronto, cities in southern Ontario, for those services—people, like me, who live in northern Ontario. Unfortunately, the Northern Health Travel Grant falls really short of being able to allow people to access those services. The rate for hotels has now been raised to about $150 per night. It is really almost impossible to find a hotel room close to a big hospital in Toronto for that price, which means that people in the north don't have equitable access. They end up making decisions to not pursue their treatment because they can't afford to go to southern Ontario for those services.

1510

So they're petitioning the Legislative Assembly to put together a committee that would look at how we make it more accessible for northern Ontarians to access services through fixing the Northern Health Travel Grant.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask my good page Theo to bring it to the Clerk.

POST-STROKE TREATMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu: This petition from my constituents in Kingston and the Islands is entitled "Timeline for Post-Stroke Rehabilitation Program."

It's pretty straightforward. It calls on this government to commit to a timeline for rolling out the new post-stroke rehabilitation program, which was announced in 2022, and do that so that crucial rehabilitative care can become universally accessible to stroke survivors of all ages.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "To Raise Social Assistance Rates." I want to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for collecting petitions from all across Ontario. These particular petitions were signed by people in Wasaga Beach and Hamilton.

Basically, what they talk about are the low rates of social assistance. People may not know this, but OW, Ontario Works, has been frozen at $733 for a long time. ODSP was raised by 5%, but it still caps out at $1,368, which makes it very difficult to make ends meet.

If you're wondering about the growing number of people who are homeless in your communities, a good portion of those could be on ODSP and, perhaps, workers who are injured in the trades—which the government loves to brag about, but you can't support trades workers without supporting injured trades workers.

Basically, the petition is asking for a doubling of OW and ODSP. This is an ask that has been going for a long time. We need to move forward on this. The poverty line is here, OW is way down here and ODSP is here. But both of those groups of people are drowning in debt and affordability. We know that the crisis with affordability continues to rise and the cost of living continues to climb. We need to address this and not leave people behind. We noticed, for example, that CERB, when it came out, had a basic income of $2,000 a month. OW is way below that, and ODSP is just slightly more than half of that.

I support this petition. We have to help pull people out of poverty. It is cheaper for all of us in the long run and better for the people of Ontario.

I will affix my signature and provide it to page Ishaan for the table.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I am rising to table a petition entitled "Real Rent Control Now."

This summer I spent some time handing out copies of my tenant guide in Parkwood Hills, where residents in the Minto buildings there have received notices of AGI increases year after year after year, despite the fact that necessary repairs and maintenance isn't always being done to their homes.

These tenants don't have anywhere else to go because the cost of rent is now so unaffordable in Ontario. Many people in Ottawa are paying over $2,000 for a one-bedroom apartment, and nearly half of Ontarians pay unaffordable housing costs because they're spending so much of their income on rent.

This is something that we could do something about very easily—if we actually reinstated real rent control so that the amount of the rent was only able to increase by a set amount in every rental unit, regardless of when it was created, but also if the rent stayed the same from one tenant to the next. Because now there's an incentive for landlords to push tenants out so that they can jack up the rent on the next tenant.

What the petitioners are asking for is that the Legislative Assembly pass rent stabilization legislation that would, in fact, do that and that we would implement a public rent registry so tenants can find out what former tenants paid in rent and ensure access to legal aid for tenants who want to contest an illegal rent hike.

I have a building, 2400 Carling, in my riding, where they are also facing an AGI, despite the fact that what the landlord did was change the balconies in a way that actually made them less accessible. This was not a needed capital project for the building. But these tenants, who are largely seniors, have been left on their own to try to contest this rent hike at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

I think in a situation like that, when a corporate landlord has access to lawyers to fight seniors living on fixed incomes, there's an imbalance that we need to do something about. So I wholeheartedly endorse this petition, will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Ollie.

UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Mr. Ted Hsu: The next petition I have today addresses Ontario's young people and their situation. It notes that the ongoing austerity measures at universities driven by the dire financial situation in Ontario's universities is severely reducing the quantity and quality of educational opportunities, which means stifling productivity and innovation. It's causing job losses and downgrading Ontario's competitiveness and reputation.

So this petition calls on the government to boost Ontario universities' base operating funds to the level recommended by its own Blue Ribbon Panel on Financial Sustainability in the Post-Secondary Education Sector.

LUPUS

M^me^ France Gélinas: I would like to thank Marlynn Paul from Capreol in my riding for this petition. I have hundreds and hundreds of people that have signed this petition from Lupus Ontario.

Basically, lupus erythematosus is a complex, chronic, debilitating autoimmune disease, and it affects about 40,000 Ontarians, mainly women and people of colour. Every patient is affected differently, and that means that different treatment plans and different medication and treatment cannot be used for all of them in order to improve their quality of life.

There are new medications, biologics, that can really help, but they are only available to people facing lupus under the Exceptional Access Program, which makes this very difficult. As more biologics and biosimilars are coming down the pipeline, are becoming available, they would like to make sure that the Ontario government makes those treatments available to people who face lupus—most of them are really sick—and to change them from the Exceptional Access Program to make it more accessible to people on the formulary under the limited use code.

Hundreds of people facing this disease are asking for this change. It would make a great difference in their health and their ability to enjoy life if they had access to those medications a bit easier and a bit faster.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Bani to bring it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO BY SECURING AFFORDABLE ENERGY FOR GENERATIONS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN GARANTISSANT L'ACCÈS À L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE POUR LES GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES

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

Bill 40, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to energy, the electrical sector and public utilities / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'énergie, le secteur de l'électricité et les services publics.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Continuing with questions and responses on the speech by the members for Bay of Quinte and Simcoe–Grey—do we have questions?

MPP Jamie West: Bill 40 raises a lot of concerns about cost. Yesterday, during debate, we heard a lot about the sell-off of Hydro One by the Liberal government and how that raised costs and led to the fall of the Liberal government.

My question for the member from Bay of Quinte is, are there any concerns with the movement for the Conservative government supplementing a way to offset that high cost that led to the Liberal sell-off and led to the high cost of hydro? The Conservative government now is still supplementing that so that people don't feel it in their wallets. But is there a plan moving forward to get away from that so that people are actually paying what hydro is and to bring those costs down?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I'm going to turn to the member for Bay of Quinte.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I appreciate the question from the member from Sudbury. It's so critical that we are in this moment right now where we need to increase our capacity for energy. We know that by 2050 our energy demands are going to go through the roof, and it really is a barrier to economic development not to have that sort of energy system in place. We've seen an explosion of tech businesses under the leadership of Premier Ford, increasing employment in the sector by 100,000 people to 424,000. No one has felt that expansion more than the city of Waterloo, increasing their tech employment by 88.5% since 2018.

1520

I want to read a quote right now from the mayor of the city of Waterloo, Dorothy McCabe: "Securing Ontario's electricity grid is not just about keeping the lights on; it's about powering the next era of technological advancement. With the tech powerhouses we have in Waterloo, this is a welcome move that will protect the energy infrastructure that fuels our digital economy. This will help ensure our region and Ontario remain a leader in innovation."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Mr. Ted Hsu: My question for the government about Bill 40 is that it contains rules about connecting to the electricity grid. It sets up the framework for that, but it contains no guidelines on how to set up these rules. This is my worry: that there will be some point system, but it will be about as visible as the point system for the Skills Development Fund. So this is the danger: that something similar will happen, that we are not able to debate here what the general principles are for deciding whether a load can connect to the grid or not.

So my complaint to the government, which I invite my honourable colleague to respond to, is, why don't you put some general principles in? Why don't we go to committee and add some general principles that the regulations will be based on? Is my honourable colleague across the way willing to allow this bill to go to committee?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I go to the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the member opposite for his question. This is a critical part of this legislation, that it is looking at demand and making sure that the applications that are coming to the IESO are not just first-come, first-served, that there's a way of filtering those. We know that data centres have huge requirements, and so applications over—I think it's 5,000 megawatts will have to go through a process to make sure that there's both energy available, the value of the project, and also we're dealing with a local distribution company in doing customer impact assessments. So all of these things will go into the formula to make sure that the decisions that are being made to award the energy are being done in a way that's sustainable, recognizing the huge load but the economic opportunities data centres bring, but also understanding the load for our residential clients and local businesses. It's a balancing act, and that is exactly what this act is set to address.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I just want to ask the government—because the policies here are not either technology-agnostic or affordable when we're investing in the two most expensive forms of energy possible. But I just wonder, if we're going to be doubling down on gas—70% of which comes from the United States, which is very risky—are you so sure that climate change doesn't exist and we can expand gas production and gas emissions? And are you ready to take the responsibility when climate disasters continue to balloon from 19 per decade 40 years ago to 133 now, getting worse? Are you ready to take that responsibility for the impact of expanding fossil fuel in the grid that is American?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Bay of Quinte.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: Thank you to the member for the question. There is no denial of climate change that is happening in this government or on any side of this House, and you can see it in our policies. Take a look at the expansion that we're doing in public transportation,

because we know that that will help keep cars off the road and it will help lower emissions. Take a look at what we've done with EVs, bringing that EV supply into Ontario, making sure that it's built by Ontario workers under some of the highest standards on one of the cleanest electricity grids anywhere in the world. Take a look at what we did with ArcelorMittal Dofasco, helping support their changeover to an electric arc furnace, which significantly cuts down on emissions in Ontario.

So instead of just screaming "climate change" as loud as we can and hoping that it forces us to enter a period of glaciation and cools the climate, we are actually taking practical steps to help reduce our impact on the planet, and the best thing for this planet is to make high-quality products right here in Ontario on one of the cleanest grids in all the world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I'll go to further debate, please.

M^me^ France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to put a few words on the record regarding securing affordable energy. I represent a large riding in northern Ontario. I can tell you that between Sudbury and Timmins, which is not that far, there are some of my communities, like Biscotasing, who are not connected to the grid. They still get their power through a generator, through a diesel generator. You would figure the government would do something about this—absolutely not.

But I also want to talk about the Home Renovation Savings Program. The Home Renovation Savings Program was there to help Ontarians improve home energy efficiency. They said if you add rooftop solar panels, you can get up to $5,000, and a battery, you can get up to $5,000. The whole thing looked so beautiful—but, really, only in writing because none of them are allowed to connect to the grid. Most people are not home during the day when the sun is shining and making energy, so they cannot use that energy. It goes to waste.

How can we have a government that says that we need to secure affordable energy and yet put a program forward where they give tens of thousands of dollars to people who cannot take the energy and connect it to the grid? But they don't say that clearly. People—only after they've put out tens of thousands of dollars to put solar panels on their roof do they realize that they are not allowed to connect to the grid. Not only are they not allowed to connect to the grid, but their address is forever forbidden from connecting to the grid to get a discount on their monthly hydro bill.

This makes no sense. It makes no sense in northern Ontario. It makes no sense in all of Ontario. Most of the sun—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs debate to continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, please adjourn the debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA GESTION DES RESSOURCES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I very much appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House this afternoon and to bring some brief remarks on behalf of the good people of Niagara West, who I wish to thank for the privilege and the honour of being able to represent here in this esteemed chamber.

I also want to acknowledge that I will be sharing my time today with the excellent member for Eglinton–Lawrence, a true champion for her community and a real trailblazer here in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, I'm privileged to be able to speak today to the proposed Geologic Carbon Storage Act—a portion of this legislation—Bill 27. I want to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Natural Resources, a friend of mine and a friend of so many in this House and across Ontario, as someone who has really led the charge on this legislation. I also want to recognize the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs, who I worked with closely on this legislation in a previous iteration, who has just been a real champion for the industries that this will support and ensure that the workers in those industries are being supported as well.

Last week, on Friday, I had the great privilege of joining the member for Sarnia–Lambton in beautiful Sarnia–Lambton. As I was in Sarnia, I had the privilege of announcing that today is the first day of the opening of the Hydrogen Innovation Fund. So, all of you who are in this House, get ready, get your letters to your constituents ready, to your industries. Let them know that the 2025 Hydrogen Innovation Fund is open, and that's good news.

Here's why it's good news and why it's relevant to this legislation, where we are talking about the Geologic Carbon Storage Act. When I was there, I had the privilege of walking through a place called Suncor. Some of you might have heard of it, a little business called Suncor Energy. There at Suncor, we had the chance to see how they're producing 100,000 barrels a day of oil products that specifically go into transportation, primarily into—they have a little bit of jet fuel, quite a lot of gasoline, and diesel products. The last remnants of their products end up in asphalt, important for the roads and, of course, the infrastructure that we're building across this province. I wanted to thank them for that tour.

As we drove around their property, visiting the various components—and it is a remarkable thing. You look at how here, in Canada, we have built an industry from the Athabasca oil sands all the way to Sarnia, Ontario, and everywhere in between, where so many workers are involved in that energy sector, and also the contributions that those products make to so much of our regular day-to-day life. Whether I'm driving home tonight or people who have a cellphone might have a plastic case on it and it has components in it that are made out of oil and petroleum, it's foundational to everyday life.

1530

When we were going through Suncor, there was a pipeline in the corner, and they said that the pipeline that was coming across was a hydrogen pipeline. It was a dedicated hydrogen pipeline. So if you've had a chance to go through Chemical Valley, you'll see pipes absolutely everywhere, and a lot of those pipes are really one particular producer; in this case, I believe it was Air Liquide or perhaps Air Products—I can never quite keep the two apart—who produce hydrogen. They send it to these factories and they send it to these producers, these refineries, who then use it to help break down, create the heat and the pressure that's needed in order to create the products that we use and refine, like gasoline and diesel and other products that we use in day-to-day life.

This hydrogen is not what we would call green or clean hydrogen. It is, in fact, grey hydrogen, which means it's a by-product of another process, where natural gas is used to create hydrogen, and that hydrogen is used through SMR, steam methane reformation. That steam methane reformation is what creates this hydrogen, which is quite affordable, it's quite cheap, but they have a really high carbon by-product as a result of that process.

What are they interested in doing with that carbon by-product? Well, there are a number of different things. There are different folks in the area who are looking at creating additional by-products with that carbon and looking at opportunities to decarbonize and use those products. But one of the big things that they can do, if this legislation passes and when the regulatory framework is put in place, is that they can put that carbon deep, deep, deep into the ground, where it will never come out, through carbon storage: CCUS: carbon capture, utilization and storage.

So now what you would do is decarbonize a massive amount of operations in arguably one of the most energy-intensive and industrialized heartlands in our entire nation, in Sarnia, Ontario. Sarnia, Ontario, is an incredible place. It's a testament to human ingenuity and achievement when it comes to engineering, when it comes to technological innovation. The companies there, many of them we've never heard of, but they produce foundational elements of everyday life. But they're very carbon intensive, predominantly.

Speaker, they're also often globally trade exposed. What means is, they're competing not just with each other in Sarnia. They're price takers. They're dealing on the global commodity market. So when they're able to decarbonize in a way that is cost-effective, in a way that protects consumers and also ensures that they're able to still operate here instead of having those businesses—not those individual plants, but just the global commodity markets move to places like Turkey or Indonesia or China or India, where they have a less rigorous environmental and a less rigorous human rights compliance regime.

When we're able to help them decarbonize in a cost-effective way to avoid some of those carbon prices, that's good news. And we've seen that these industries are very interested in decarbonization and using carbon storage and sequestration as a result.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC—I know some members in this House who love to quote the IPCC, and I will as well—they've said that there is no path to global net zero without the massive deployment of carbon management systems by 2050. Their deployment, according to the IPCC, must be rapid and immense, scaling up by nearly 200 times in order to reach net zero.

I can tell you, Speaker, one of the ways we can ensure that that happens is passing this legislation. This legislation will help establish the framework so we can ensure that industries in southwestern Ontario, northern Ontario and across this province have a clear regulatory framework to sequester that stark carbon in a way that is safe, that supports industry and protects the jobs that come along with those industries.

At the end of the day, we want to ensure that energy-intensive industries, which currently do produce a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions and want to decarbonize—these aren't industries that are saying, "Forget it. We're cowboys. We don't care." No, these are folks who I've had the privilege of working with now over the last year and a half in this role who care deeply about climate change. They care deeply about sustainability. They care deeply about reducing emissions. And they also care about being competitive on the world stage, and this is a tool. It's not the tool, right?

You're going to hear some comments from some members of the opposition who are here, and they're going to say, "Well, you have to do this. You have to do that. You have to do this. So why are you even bothering with carbon storage anyway? Why are you even talking about CCS? This is a red herring. You should be turning everything into a solar panel. Everything in Canada should be a solar panel, and then we won't have to talk about carbon storage and sequestration."

Speaker, I hate it break it to them, but a solar panel is not going to provide the case covering that I have on this phone. It's not going to provide some of those elemental requirements that require, yes, oil, that require some of the things that we need.

And if we can decarbonize those processes, reduce emissions, we don't have to penalize the workers who are in those industries, tens of thousands of workers in Sarnia alone, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, across Canada—I know for a fact hundreds of thousands in

Ontario—and those made-in-Ontario, made-in-Canada products that then go on to become everything else we use.

One of the sites that I had a chance to visit, they create—I'm going to get the name wrong, but it's propylene pellets. Propylene pellets are these tiny little plastic pellets that are produced, and they're used to turn into the plastics that we use for absolutely everything else. Dog bags—that was the one that kind of got me. When I was there, they were showing some of the products that these tiny little pellets turn into. The dog food bags that a lot of people purchase—you go to a Costco or anywhere else and there are these big dog food bags. They're not all paper. A lot of them are plastic, especially the bigger ones. It all comes from this plant in Sarnia with a name that I cannot remember. It has some acronyms.

But they want to decarbonize. They care about decarbonizing. They want to be responsible stewards. They want to be good corporate citizens, and what they are simply asking for is a regulatory environment that allows them to make investments in emerging technologies like carbon capture and sequestration.

No, I don't believe that on its own carbon capture and sequestration is going to solve all the world's problems. And when you hear members of the opposition stand up and pretend that it will, or that we think it will, they are creating a straw man argument.

But what I do want to say to the members opposite and to anyone who's watching is that it's another tool in the tool box. We have an aggressive agenda to decarbonize in Ontario in a way that's sustainable, that protects jobs, that's affordable, that doesn't penalize people for driving to a soccer game, that doesn't penalize workers in Sarnia for getting up in the morning to produce a product that we rely on. We're not going to virtue-signal about that. We're going to go there and say, "Yes, we want to protect those industries, protect Ontario jobs, protect Canadian jobs." This legislation, Bill 27, is a way that that can become a reality.

I know we had an election. When this was on the table previously, I heard—

Hon. Graham McGregor: What happened?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I think we won. And I'll tell you right now, I heard some members on the opposite side say, well, they weren't too sure about this bill. Now is your chance. It's back. Vote for this legislation, fight climate change, decarbonize, protect jobs, care about future generations. I know you can do it.

And with that, Speaker, I'll turn it over to the excellent member for Eglinton–Lawrence for her thoughts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Welcome. So, this is Bill 27 that we're discussing today. Okay. Terrific.

Speaker, members of the House, the measures our government is proposing in this bill reflect our steadfast commitment to building strong, resilient communities, communities that are prospering today, better prepared for natural resource hazards, able to grow with access to the survey services they need, and able to build on new foundations.

When uncertainty from powers abroad put our economy, workers and communities at risk, Ontario will rise above it. Bill 27 is part of our plan to protect Ontario. Just last week, Ontario marked the end of the legislated wildfire season, and I think I speak for all members in this House when I say thank you to all the fire rangers, pilots, support staff and everyone else who supported Ontario's response this fire season.

Although this fire season was more active than last year and got off to a particularly active start, their bravery and dedication to protecting Ontario kept people and communities safe this season. Not only did they respond to fires here at home, but from coast to coast, Ontario fire rangers helped respond to wildfires in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick. Over 400 fire personnel and six aircrafts provided support across Canada.

We know that fires are becoming larger, more frequent and much more severe across Canada. Our province is no exception. Because of that, Speaker, we need to make sure that the framework that governs our wildfire management program reflects modern standards.

1540

The Forest Fires Prevention Act is the primary provincial legislation that sets out rules and regulations for managing wildfires in Ontario. It sets obligations for fire prevention measures, authorizes enforcement and defines offences and penalties. Bill 27, the Resource Management and Safety Act, if passed, would amend this act. No significant changes have been made to this act since 1999, and we need to update this act to address the escalating threat of wildfires.

The act, as it stands, enables the ministry to enter into agreements for the prevention, control or extinguishment of grass, brush or forest fires. In keeping with our vision of an Ontario that works together to reduce wildfire risk, this bill, if passed, would enable the ministry to enter into agreements on all aspects of wildland fire management. This could include agreements on wildland fire management training with a municipality or a First Nations community. That is why the Resource Management and Safety Act proposes to amend it. The amendments we are proposing would allow greater ministerial powers to take proactive measures to prevent and prepare for wildland fires, while at the same time updating the act's enforcement and compliance tools.

In addition to these changes, we have also been absolutely clear: We will spare no expense when it comes to protecting Ontario from the threat of wildfires. Not only have we increased the base fire management budget by over 92% since 2018, but we have also added 100 new permanent fire personnel positions and, along with the federal government, invested $64 million in training and equipment for our fire response.

Speaker, it is a sad reality that almost half of all wildland fires are caused by human activity. The amendments to this bill do enable more prevention and mitigation of

these fires, but the number one thing we can do is educate the public. Ontario is working to promote awareness through FireSmart programs, which give the public tools to prevent fires and also protect their homes if they live in a fire region.

Another important change being proposed is the requirement for municipalities and industries in fire-prone areas to have comprehensive fire management plans. These plans must meet clear provincial standards, ensuring consistency and effectiveness across the board. This will help to enhance preparedness and ensure that in the event of a wildfire everyone is prepared.

We have heard a lot of positive feedback about the changes to the Forest Fires Prevention Act. AMO applauded our changes to modernize wildfire management, saying that "Provincial-municipal partnership to prevent, prepare for and mitigate and respond to wildfires is needed to protect our forests and keep our communities safe." That's exactly what we are proposing here: a framework that makes it easier for us to work together to protect our communities.

Rick Dumas, president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, said, "The ministry's proposed amendments to the Forest Fires Prevention Act sends a clear message: Protecting our forests and reducing human-caused fires is a shared responsibility that requires strong action and commitment from everyone. Expanding prevention efforts marks a critical step in safeguarding our communities and the environment."

I do hope the members of this House can join me in supporting Bill 27, the Resource Management Act, so that we can take this critical step forward.

I also want to mention the carbon storage framework that this bill proposes to introduce. Geologic carbon storage offers Ontario a unique opportunity to preserve and create thousands of high-value jobs, attract significant investment and help our industries remain globally competitive. Over 400 carbon-capture projects have launched around the world over the past decade, including in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The Geologic Carbon Storage Act, if passed, would authorize regulations for the design, development, operation, maintenance, decommissioning, closure and restoration of carbon storage sites, as well as activities associated with carbon storage. The goal is to create a carbon storage framework that fits Ontario's unique needs, with safeguards in place to protect people and the environment while also unlocking the new tools to protect our economy's competitiveness.

Ontario's natural resources hold incredible and unbelievable potential in sustainable and environmental prosperity. We must work together to unleash their full potential. This bill is not just about the future of our economy; it is also about the future of our communities. By investing in our natural resources, we are creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and strengthening our province. By embracing innovation, investing in our natural resources and working collaboratively with industry, Indigenous communities and all stakeholders, we can protect Ontario.

I encourage all members to join me in supporting this bill because, through Bill 27, our government is taking steps to protect our natural resources sector by supporting innovation and building resiliency for Ontario communities. Carbon capture is part of $11 billion in new investments and nearly 120,000 new good-paying jobs Ontario welcomed over the last year.

I'm reaching out to ask you to support this bill and encourage everyone here to join me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries. I appreciated listening to the remarks.

This bill has a couple of areas of focus, and in terms of carbon storage, I know that when we had this discussion with Bill 46 before, and now we're seeing it in this Bill 27—there are important issues of safety when we're talking about carbon storage that I know how important it would be for all of us to learn from industry and safety experts. I want to be clear that we should be hearing from outside sources in this place.

My question is, we need extensive public consultation and study. Is this government going to allow the committee hearings and public consultation, or will they rush through and skip committee, as we've been seeing with other bills?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for her question. I would say you're absolutely right that there has been extensive consultation into this legislation, and there will be continued extensive consultation as we move forward. You look at the regulatory framework that's going to be established through this legislation and, as the member knows, whether it's postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario, whether it's outgoing and ongoing conversations with industry leaders, but also with concerned citizens, those who might have questions—this is new; it's progress, but progress can be difficult for some people when they see the future coming. It can be challenging. I know that the member opposite wouldn't want to hold up progress. I know that she would be in support of progress.

We're going to make sure that people are brought along and that they're able to see their concerns addressed and safety protected as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: My question is in regard to the part of the bill that deals with wildland firefighting. There's a section which gives powers to the wildland fire compliance officer, and it's powers to get into computers, take away equipment if they want. Actually, there's a whole section here about the powers that the wildland fire compliance officer has over computer systems.

1550

Now, I'm not asking my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence to answer the technical question of why this is in the legislation, but I do think we should look at this in

committee. And so my question to my honourable colleague is, would she be willing to support going to committee to find out why the wildland fire compliance officer has so much special power over computer systems and the ability to look into them and take away equipment?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: I think you're talking about modernizing wildland fire prevention. Ontario is building stronger, more resilient communities by addressing the growing risks of wildland fires with changes to the Forest Fires Prevention Act and modernization of the ministry's wildland fire program to ensure communities are safe and Ontario continues to be an internationally recognized leader in wildland firefighting. The Ministry of Natural Resources is working with residents, Indigenous communities, industry and other levels of government to proactively reduce the risks and impacts of wildland fires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries. Speaker, natural resource-based industries across the province provide a broad range of benefits to the people of our province, including well-paying jobs and essential goods and services. Since this bill, if passed, will enable the development of commercial-scale carbon storage projects in our province through the proposed Geologic Carbon Storage Act, it could lead to the establishment of a new industrial activity in our province.

The associate minister noted the rapid expansion of the carbon management sector around the globe, with 700 projects in development in 50 countries. Speaker, can the associate minister tell the House how commercial-scale geological carbon storage projects, if established in our province, could benefit the hard-working families in our province?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: My gratitude to the member for Whitby for his strong advocacy and work on so many files, but also on this legislation as well.

There are a couple of pieces to it. One would be the new industrial activity and jobs that would be entailed in the actual work to build out carbon storage projects. There would be pipelines bringing the carbon to where it needs to go. There would be injection. There would be maintenance. There would be upkeep. So there would be jobs created through that investment itself.

But there are also the foundational jobs that are being protected through these kinds of opportunities and technologies that can help reduce emissions. Because, of course, you're protecting the industries in the petrochemical sector, in the cement industry and in the steel sector—some of these really heavily carbon and energy-intensive sectors that are taking drastic steps and intensive steps to decarbonize. This would help them achieve that and protect the workers in those areas as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I'd like to address the problem of retention in wildland firefighters. It's something that the ministry is reluctant to acknowledge, but there are huge issues with retention with large numbers of front-line staff, including water bomber pilots and mechanics, who are leaving the forest fire work because it's grossly underpaid.

We were promised a categorization change two years ago by the Minister of Labour, which has never happened. Right now, they make about 40% less than they need to. You can be there for 14 years, have a nine-month contract and still not be making enough to put a roof over your head or feed your family.

So my question is, how does the government intend to fix the retention problem for wildland firefighters?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Compensation for fire rangers, aviation staff and conservation officers, like all unionized employees, is negotiated through a collective bargaining process. We are actively working to enhance recruitment by adding 100 permanent positions, reimbursing tuition costs for new recruits, and increasing standby pay and on-call entitlements. The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development has also expanded presumptive coverage for fire rangers to include occupational cancer and heart injuries.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Stephen Blais: For my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence: I'm wondering what specific benchmarks or timelines the government will use to measure whether its emergency management strategy is actually improving outcomes for Ontarians.

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Once again, I want to go back to the fire rangers, the pilots and the fire personnel who have worked super hard and diligently to protect Ontario from over 600 fires this fire season.

This year we've added 100 new permanent positions in fire management to help ensure people and resources are in place to protect communities. Since taking office, we have increased our base spending on fire management by over 90% to $135 million. In partnership with the federal government, we are investing tens of millions of dollars to hire and train personnel, purchase critical equipment and add an additional four helicopters and evacuation planes to our fleet.

We will continue dedicating every resource necessary to protect Ontario communities from wildland fires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Hon. Laurie Scott: To Minister Oosterhoff: Under the Resource Management and Safety Act we're discussing, we've heard the government is building resilience in communities. I know that in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, in the Kawartha Lakes part anyway, I had two wildfires this summer—and a shout-out to my municipality of Kawartha Lakes and the two municipalities that did help, Trent Lakes beside it and MNR water bombers that came.

I know that our government is supporting municipal governments with increases in OMPF. I just wondered if you could expand on the interaction with municipalities going forward, please.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to acknowledge the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for her incredible leadership in working with municipalities. I know that you're one of the reasons that that increase from $500 million to $600 million of the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund became a reality. Your strong advocacy for working with municipalities, continually investing in municipalities—and this is a response to that.

The president of AMO, actually, had this to say about this legislation specifically because there has been such close collaboration with municipalities: "AMO applauds provincial action to modernize wildfire management. More frequent and intense wildfires create significant risks." This partnership will help "prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond" to those.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Before I begin my remarks, I wanted to take an opportunity to recognize and congratulate the many residents of London West who were honoured with volunteer service awards late last month. With Remembrance Day just a week away, I want to recognize in particular the volunteers of the Byron-Springbank Legion who received pins that evening for their years of service: Jamie Hughes was recognized for 25 consecutive years of service, Henry Klausnitzer for 20 years of service, Wayne McGregor for 10 years of service, Karen Northgrave for 15 years of service and Terry Crawford also for 15 years of service.

Speaker, I'm very proud to be a member of the Byron Legion. The Legion has been supporting veterans in London since 1952. This Saturday, as the Legion does every year, there will be an annual Remembrance Day parade and service. I will be proud to stand alongside the members of the Legion to remember and honour the courage and sacrifice of the Armed Forces members who have died in the line of duty, who returned forever changed, as well as all those who serve. Lest we forget.

I'm now going to change the focus to Bill 27. I am very pleased to rise to speak to some of the concerns that have been expressed about this bill from farmers, from environmentalists and others.

1600

There are four schedules in this bill, but I'm going to focus my remarks on two in particular. I'll begin with the first schedule of the bill, the Forest Fire Prevention Act. There are some amendments made to that act to increase the powers and the scope of wildfire inspectors, to allow conservation officers to be designated as wildfire inspectors and to extend the fire season—potentially year-round, so instead of April to October, we could have a fire season that runs all 12 months.

Certainly, Speaker, on that last point, extending the fire season—there are good reasons to be concerned in this province about the impact of climate change and the significant increase in severe weather events and wildfires burning. We just got data yesterday, in fact, from the Ministry of Natural Resources that says that in 2025, which is the wildfire season that just ended at the end of October, wildfires burned nearly 6,000 square kilometres in this province, which is significantly more than the kilometres that were burned last year and almost three times higher than the 10-year average.

This year, we had 643 wildfires between April and October, which compares to last year's data of 480 wildfires and just 900 square kilometres that were burned. We went from 900 square kilometres in 2024 to 6,000 square kilometres this year. This really should be a wake-up call for all of us about the impact of climate change and the urgency of taking very concrete action.

A concern that has been raised is that instead of taking those bold actions necessary to combat climate change, it's like this government is saying, "This is the new norm. This is the new reality." We're going to have a fire season that's going to extend the entire calendar year. This government is basically acknowledging that climate change has accelerated the impacts of wildfires, and yet this is one of their solutions: to just say that we will change legislation to extend the fire season potentially year-round.

Unfortunately, Speaker, what this legislation does not do is make any reference to a workforce strategy to ensure that we have people who are able to fight the wildfires that are the new reality in this province.

I want to reference some of the comments that my colleague the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay, who is our shadow minister for natural resources, made on his remarks to this bill when he spoke to Bill 27 back in June in the spring session of the Legislature. He points out that this government has really done nothing to ensure the recruitment and the retention of the wildfire firefighters that we need in this province.

He reminds the government that, in their 2025 provincial budget, the emergency forest fire fighting allocation was reduced by $81 million. It was cut from $216 million to $135 million, and that followed a previous funding reduction cut back in 2019 when the emergency forest fire fighting budget was decreased by $142 million. Altogether, that reflects a cut of $224 million in that period from 2019 to 2024-25, as we are seeing this very alarming spike in the number of wildfires in this province.

But at the same time, because of these budget cuts, we don't have the firefighters we need to deal with these wildfires. There's already a severe shortage of wildland firefighters. There's a lack of expertise among those who remain because workers are not encouraged to stay in the industry. They don't get the wages that are going to enable them to stay. They don't get the benefits and the health care coverage that would ensure that we have a stable workforce with the capacity to respond to wildfires. There has been a 33% decrease in the number of wildfire crews that we have in this province since 2005. It went down from 214 wildfire crews to just 143 back in 2024. So clearly, Speaker, there is a lot more work that this government has to do to deal with the reality of climate change and the severity and frequency of wildfires in Ontario.

Unfortunately, this bill really reinforces the public's awareness that this government is not taking climate change seriously. They are not, as I said, implementing the bold measures that are necessary to achieve our climate

goals and to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the warming of the climate. This government's track record, Speaker, does not inspire confidence. We saw, when this government was first elected, one of their very first orders of business was to rip out all of the electric vehicle charging stations across the province and to cancel green energy contracts that were in place at the time.

This government does not have a plan to deal with climate change, and this has been made clear by bureaucrats within the environment ministry, who were very open with the minister, very up front. The minister was told back in the spring that the province will fall short of hitting its target of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 by the target date of 2030. Ministry officials told this government that what this government is doing is not going to enable Ontario to meet its climate targets; that was confirmed, Speaker, in the Auditor General's report that came out in October.

You may remember, Speaker, the Auditor General's recent release of four very important reports. Now, one of them was on the chaos in the Skills Development Fund. We are learning daily more and more information about the misuse of that fund—the taint that has been associated with that fund since the Minister of Labour started using that fund as his personal piggy bank to reward donors and Conservative insiders with hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, not because the skills development projects had merit, but because there were lobbyists associated with them, lobbyists who were well-connected with this government, or projects that were headed up by Conservative friends and insiders. So obviously, the report that the Auditor General released, or the series of reports that were released on October 1—a lot of the media focus has been around, with good reason, the Skills Development Fund.

1610

But there was another report that was released that same day by the auditor, and it was a report on Ontario's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Auditor General confirmed what ministry bureaucrats had been telling the minister back in the spring. The Auditor General confirmed that not only is Ontario going to miss its 2030 climate targets, but greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be even higher than estimated because of the government's failure to take action—concrete action—to reduce emissions in some of those high-emitting sectors like transportation, industry, buildings, agriculture, waste and electricity.

In light of this climate crisis that we are facing, in light of this dramatic increase in wildfires, in light of the Auditor General's findings that this government is nowhere near on target to meet its climate reduction goals, what do we have before us in Bill 27? We have legislation that includes a schedule, schedule 2, called the Geologic Carbon Storage Act. Schedule 2 basically creates a whole new industry in the province of Ontario, an industry focused on the storage of carbon in underground geological formations. So what this schedule does, what this new legislation does, is allow greenhouse gas producers to store emissions in, as I said, underground geological formations.

Now, this government is touting this new bill, this new industry, as its solution to address the growing greenhouse gas emissions in the province. Certainly, there are some who do view this as one tool, one small tool, that could be used to address increased emissions. But the unfortunate thing, Speaker, is that there's not a lot of research about the impact of storing carbon in underground geological formations, around the cost and the environmental impact of this new industry.

A lot of people have raised concerns. The National Farmers Union of Ontario sent a detailed letter to the ministry raising a number of concerns about this plan for geologic carbon storage. They say, right upfront, that geologic carbon storage "does not 'support the transition to a low-carbon economy,' but rather the opposite; it creates an illusory 'greening' of the very industry that is responsible for global warming." They also raise a number of concerns about the cost of proceeding with geologic carbon storage.

Those concerns are echoed by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, who also sent a submission earlier last month, in October. And one of the points in their submission is that "Considering the cost of establishing, operating and policing a geologic carbon storage framework," the Ontario Federation of Agriculture "recommends the provincial government determine whether redirecting efforts towards reducing emissions of carbon-intense industries" is a more feasible approach than creating this framework for geologic carbon storage.

The concerns about cost are well-founded. There was a very detailed report from the McKinsey climate change special initiative back in 2007 that looked at a wide range of strategic options to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They compared those options on the basis of which options generate economic savings and which options have significant economic costs. What they found is that the initiatives, the measures, the strategies that generate the greatest savings are all around conservation. Building insulation, fuel-efficient commercial vehicles, lighting systems, water heating, sugarcane biofuels: These are all strategies that will generate savings. But on the cost side, they found that industrial climate storage strategies are absolutely the most costly approaches to dealing with climate change mitigation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Now, I just wanted to go on—oh my goodness, in the last minute that I have left, I want to talk a little bit about the other concern that is related to the geologic carbon storage, and that is the number of underground unused gas and oil wells that we have in this province. There are approximately 15,000 abandoned gas and oil wells in Ontario, all concentrated in southwestern Ontario, which is where this carbon will be stored in these geologic rock formations. There's a real concern about what's going to happen to those abandoned oil and gas wells once this new industry starts up. Those concerns are real, Speaker, because we saw what happened in the community of

Wheatley four years ago, when an explosion from an abandoned underground oil well kind of destroyed the downtown—injured 20 people. So there's a right to be cautious—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Thank you. Looking for questions.

I go to the member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and I wanted to thank the member from London West for her presentation.

Speaker, you will know that we're building housing all across the province—of all kinds—so that everyone can find an attainable place to call home. Consequently, that has increased the demand for land-surveying services. That particular piece of the legislation, the proposed amendments to the Surveyors Act—that act has not changed since 1987, and the proposed changes are presenting an opportunity to make surveying services more accessible in all regions of the province. That's a good thing.

The executive director of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors agrees with me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Question, please.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I want to share his quote with you: "These changes will modernize and enhance the skilled profession of land surveying in Ontario and allow our association to continue—"

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker.

There are some measures in this bill, but it would be helpful to hear from surveyors. It would be helpful for all Legislatures to hear from people who are involved in wildfire firefighting. It would be helpful to hear from farmers and their concerns about geologic carbon storage, to hear from environmentalists, to hear from the people of Wheatley who went through the devastation of an explosion in an abandoned oil well. I am concerned, however, given the track record of this government, that we won't have an opportunity to hear from these people; that this bill is not going to go to committee and get the careful consideration that it merits.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you to the member from London West. I really appreciated your presentation, and I also appreciated that you referred to wildland firefighters as wildland firefighters and not as fire rangers. Unfortunately, the government continues to use that term and they do not find that respectful.

Over a year ago, the Minister of Labour promised to change the classification of wildland firefighters to match the same classification as structural firefighters, and hence, that would also lead to better pay, because we know they're not making a living wage and it's a very, very dangerous job.

The ministry is actually fiddling around with the existing contract—just fiddling with existing categories but not actually changing the classification. So my question to the member is, do you think fulfilling the promise that the labour minister made would make a difference to the retention problem of wildland firefighters?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question from my colleague the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North, who has been a fierce advocate on behalf of wildland firefighters.

I do think that changing the classification of these firefighters as the firefighters that they are would help. But I also believe that this government has to provide the funding that is necessary to compensate firefighters at the level that they deserve, because they are not staying. They are not staying because the compensation is too low, and the benefits and supports aren't there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

MPP Jamie West: I appreciate the opportunity to ask my colleague a question about this.

One of the things you talked about was carbon storage. I think the member previous said it's going to be an $11-billion investment. This is a fuel source that is going the way of the dinosaurs, literally. As people transition away from gas into other cleaner forms of energy, the government seems to be really intent on investing in gas and oil at a time when people are transitioning away from it. The beginning of this seems to be because there is a way to make hydrogen out of this, but aren't there cleaner ways of forming hydrogen, where we wouldn't have to invest in this? Hydrogen is a key component in water. That's the H in H_2O.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question from my colleague the member for Sudbury about the cheaper or less costly ways to deal with carbon that goes into our atmosphere.

Certainly, as I had referenced that study that showed the many options that there are to deal with greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and they found clearly—and the experience in other jurisdictions that have introduced geologic carbon storage has shown—that this is extremely costly. This is a very expensive way to deal with greenhouse gas emissions—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Land-surveying businesses are vital to growth and development, and we're proposing changes to help them incorporate modern technology and business practices. This will benefit communities across the province—particularly, benefit Indigenous, rural and northern communities where limited access to survey services can impede development.

Speaker, to the member from London West: Would she agree that the proposed changes to the Surveyors Act will help build resilient and safe communities in Ontario?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I thank the colleague across the aisle for his question. He mentioned the impact on Indigenous communities. One of the concerns that we have about this legislation overall, and in particular schedule 2, is that the changes that have been proposed by the government have not been subject to free, prior and informed consent consultations with First Nations.

That is a big gap, Speaker, in this legislation. It allows industry to decide whether sufficient consultations have taken place, and we have to respect the sovereignty—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

MPP Jamie West: I wanted to ask my colleague about the wildland firefighters. You had mentioned that in 2024, there were 900 square kilometres of fire, and last year 6,000 square kilometres of fire. What needs to happen in order to ensure that we're funding this properly and turning back the amount of fires that are happening in Ontario?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to my colleague the member for Sudbury for that question. He asked what needs to happen. Speaker, Ontario needs to have a climate plan. As I pointed out, from the Auditor General's report, this government does not have a credible plan to address climate change.

This government has failed to fulfill its obligations to have a climate strategy, to table a climate strategy, to get input on a climate strategy and to include in that strategy the actions that are necessary to actually deal with climate change. The government doesn't seem to be concerned that it is coming nowhere close to meeting the climate targets of a 30% reduction in emissions by 2030.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I would say we move on to further debate now. I recognize the member from Kanata–Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Today, I'm going to follow up a little bit on statements made on June 4, in the opening debate of this bill, from my colleagues the members for Beaches–East York and Kingston and the Islands.

The member from Beaches–East York noted that the cost of wildfire protection is a staggering $1 billion a year, and severe single events may easily cost up to hundreds of millions of dollars. Health care costs related to the fire events in 2023 were estimated at $1.28 billion, and that figure is likely much higher in 2024.

This does not begin to look at the cost to our climate, our biodiversity, even our mental health when it comes to people losing homes and communities in a matter of minutes, if not seconds. The importance of fortifying our wildfire prevention and response to the best of our ability cannot be overstated.

First, I'd like to acknowledge the courage and efforts of Ontario firefighters and first responders, as well as that of fire crews who came to help us from British Columbia and Wisconsin. Aircraft and equipment came from Alberta, Quebec, New Brunswick and the United States. Once the situation calmed a little, Ontario was able to send resources to help other provinces, like Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and BC, as well as across the border into Minnesota, and that is how it should be. But wildfire costs continue to accumulate because this government doesn't believe in climate change, a principal cause of the increase in the number and severity of wildland fires that we are experiencing year after year.

1630

Wildland fires were extremely busy. The firefighters were working really hard in parts of Ontario, especially in the north. The interesting thing is, just a few weeks of dry weather combined with high winds and low humidity can produce extreme fire behaviour in forests because they have not greened up yet. People think it's always later in the season, but actually wildland forest fires can happen very early in the season. Such early conditions in Ontario resulted in over 560,000 hectares burnt by 435 fires in the northwest region alone.

If you compare that with the 2024 season when just about 70,000 hectares burned, it was an eightfold increase over 2024. About 35% of the total hectares burned over the 2025 fire season—the statistics that are kept from April to October 31—just came from one fire, and that was Red Lake 12, which started on May 28 and was finally declared out in mid-October, but not before it had burned 196,974 hectares in total. It was eventually declared the largest wildland fire in Ontario's history, exceeding 2021's Kenora 51 fire.

The fire forced the evacuations of Sandy Lake and Deer Lake First Nations, which are about 65 kilometres apart. Residents from the First Nations communities were accommodated in various hotels around the GTA. I can't even begin to imagine the trauma experienced by these residents relocating to an unfamiliar environment 1,000 miles away from your home, not knowing whether your home will exist when you are able to return.

Sometimes I have a hard time believing that this government believes there is an Ontario outside the GTA, except when it comes to the Ring of Fire. If it did, then it would show respect and send this bill to committee for proper study and consultation ahead of ramming it through the legislative process. If this government is so concerned about this issue, why did they schedule an extended summer break, one that coincidentally spanned almost the entire wildfire season in Ontario?

Topic 2: On June 4, my colleague the member for Kingston and the Islands stated that he was glad that this bill emphasized the need to examine long-term carbon storage in Ontario, because it recognized the growing impacts and the urgency of climate change. However, this government has delayed. It has not been aggressive in moving forward on clean or renewable energy—or storage, for that matter—so the emissions are piling up.

Emissions are piling up around the world, and we're running out of time, so we have to look at carbon sequestration and storage. It's only in the last few decades that the level of carbon dioxide has suddenly spiked up at such a rate that the biological systems and the kind of world we live in are going to be changed radically from one that has supported life and civilization to one that's going to give civilization a very, very hard time. Geologic carbon storage, where you inject it deep underground, is a technology that we should explore because of the urgency of the climate crisis.

But, again, we have to figure out if it is workable and if it can be done in a cost-effective manner. Past pilot projects

for carbon sequestration have failed in being able to deliver cost-effective carbon sequestration, so this is the challenge.

Sure, it's feasible to pump carbon dioxide under the ground, but you have to be pretty sure that that carbon is going to stay in the ground for at least thousands of years. Why thousands of years? Because the current elevated levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will likely stick around for at least a thousand or so years.

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

Like my colleague the member for Kingston and the Islands, I'm content that this bill seeks to explore long-term carbon capture and sequestration; however, it is unforgivably reckless to charge ahead and institute a long-term carbon capture and sequestration program without a thorough analysis of all of the risks involved, including the financial ones.

Given the stakes involved for the future of our province, I simply don't understand why this government is so anxious to ram through as much legislation as quickly as it can without proper consultation and consideration.

The government will allege urgency, but these urgent situations have largely been as a result of this government's inattention and inaction. Rather than urgency, I sense fear. Why is this government afraid of consultation and learning from the experts and the people who will be impacted by this very technology?

As other members noted in June, the 2021 Wheatley disaster should inform the government's decision-making process. The honourable member for Toronto–Danforth observed that just because they can't be seen or smelled, it doesn't mean that problems are not lurking in abandoned wells and mines. Before we begin forcing carbon dioxide underground, we have to make sure that it's going to be safe and that it will stay there.

There are a handful of carbon-storage operations up and running in western Canada, and several in other countries. The province cites studies showing that the geological conditions in southwestern Ontario—in particular along the shores and below the bottoms of Lake Erie and Lake Huron—could potentially store carbon emissions. But when you're talking about southwestern Ontario, you're talking about the most heavily populated areas of our province.

The government argues that underground storage space could be used for greenhouse gases produced by Ontario's concrete and steel businesses. I know it's difficult for them to operate without fossil fuels because of the extremely high temperatures required for their production. The government is pitching commercial carbon capture and storage projects primarily in Lake Huron and Lake Erie, yet this is where thousands of old and most likely improperly plugged oil and gas wells are. We don't know where they all are, but we know where some of them are.

A Globe and Mail analysis in 2022 showed that 7,424 oil and gas wells across Ontario were potential orphans, meaning that their operators, who are normally held responsible for their capping and their safety, may have gone bankrupt or no simply longer exist. Before any carbon capture projects are undertaken, the public must be consulted and made aware of the risks involved.

1640

Areas proposed for carbon storage must be clear of faults or cracks that could allow carbon dioxide to escape. Thick layers of rock are necessary to keep the gas trapped underground. I have a good working relationship with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other farmer advocacy groups, and they are all raising concerns about the potential for leaks that could poison well water that is needed to feed livestock.

A huge risk is the government using its new special economic zone powers to avoid environmental laws. Another risk is companies looking to greenwash themselves to make themselves look better.

The reality is that carbon capture and storage has a mixed track record. In September, the CBC reported that in a study published in the journal Nature, a team of researchers in the UK, Austria and US analyzed a wider range of risk factors than conventional assessments for carbon storage potential. They found that, globally, about 1,460 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide can be safely stored underground. That is significantly less than the current projections of about 12,000 billion tonnes. That means that using all of the safe areas for carbon storage would cut global warming by only 0.7 degrees Celsius, much less than the previous estimates of around 6 degrees Celsius.

I'm glad to see that the provincial permits for storage projects would require municipal approval and the evaluation of any impacts on water quality and farming, as well as consultations with First Nations for any proposal that affects their treaty rights.

A fund would also be established to require proponents to cover future decommissioning costs. That's welcome news, but I have reservations about enforcement. One has only to look at Alberta, where taxpayers are increasingly on the hook for the remediation of tens of thousands of orphaned wells.

The legislation also states that any proposal within 1.6 kilometres of an existing underground gas storage area would need to be referred to the arm's-length Ontario Energy Board for review, although the Minister of Natural Resources could make an exception. The details still need to be fleshed out in regulations. The operative words here are "exception" and the details still needing to be fleshed out. The government is fond of making exceptions and consistently short on details.

Speaker, I think we can agree that this bill is not overly partisan or controversial, so I hope that the government will allow the legislation to go to committee so that it can be properly studied.

Because the bill expands ministerial powers in areas like permit issuance, order powers and remediation orders, and shifts more decision-making to regulatory frameworks, there are concerns about transparency and checks and balances. This is a trend that people should be familiar with in other government bills.

Speaker, while stronger powers are provided for things like wildfire management and carbon storage, I worry that the legislation alone isn't enough. Without sufficient funding and staffing, this new regulatory regime will not be effective, neither in reducing the carbon in our atmosphere nor at keeping Ontarians safe.

The government must look at this initiative through a climate change lens; to do otherwise is irresponsible. There is passion on both sides of the argument, and I suspect the reality is probably somewhere in the middle. Like my colleague the member for Kingston and the Islands, I am alarmed that this government tosses around statistics without proof. Carbon capture and storage must be considered honestly and with humility, in other words, with an open mind and a willingness to remain teachable. Let's learn from the experience of other countries that have tried carbon capture and storage. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, but we do have to consider the reality of what is geologically possible.

I urge the government to take pause, stand back and remove the ideology from the equation. This is too important a measure to charge ahead. There is just too much at stake. The Resource Management and Safety Act, 2025, is a good start, but it is only one tool in the tool box. This government has the power to reconsider this initiative. There is no need to misuse or abuse its majority status. Being able to do something doesn't always mean that it should be done.

Once again, I urge this government to have the courage to study carbon capture and storage. Listen, really listen, to those who live closest to proposed storage sites. Take the time to weigh all of the options. Acknowledge the risks and work to mitigate them. Then, move forward thoughtfully and deliberately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Hon. Graham McGregor: One of the reasons Ontarians are abandoning the Ontario Liberal Party is because they just don't take climate change seriously. This government has invested in arc reactor furnaces at Dofasco; they voted against it. We've got the largest expansion to transit in North America; the Liberals voted against it. We put together an investment plan to bring EV production to make Ontario the EV capital of the world; they voted against it.

Here, we have a measure in this bill to advance carbon storage. It's another way that we can fight climate change as a province and take proper leadership. The Liberals have abandoned the fight on the examples I gave earlier. Will they be supporting the government on this initiative and take climate change seriously for once?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Okay, that's interesting. In 2018, when the Conservatives took over the government of Ontario, they destroyed in the order of $400 million to $500 million worth of EV infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Ripped it out of the ground.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Ripped it out of the ground and just threw all that money away.

We understand and we would have hoped that we would have advanced renewable energy quicker—I think the potential was there—and maybe the need for carbon sequestration wouldn't be so great. But we didn't do what needed to get done and now we're at the position where we have to consider this technology.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: We know that this government has abandoned consultation in the same way that they have abandoned people paying auto insurance in Brampton. It's something that they're really good at, which is abandoning people. In fact, they've abandoned the north in many different ways. For instance, there are people in the north who call 911, and guess what? There's no answer because there's no 911. It's simply not a priority for this government. People are driving all over the north in very unsafe conditions, white-knuckling steering wheels on roads, and, yet again, they've been abandoned by this government.

Why does this government care so little about consultation and about the north in general? Why?

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Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Oh, come on; that's not a fair question.

No, I have no idea, because we're a democracy, and part of a democracy is going out and consulting with people and finding out the data, the evidence, the science, the statistics, what the experts say, how the people that are going to be impacted by any new change—what they have to say about it. So their reluctance to get out and talk to people I don't understand at all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Speaker, I want to ask about this bill going to committee or not going to committee, because I understand there's a possibility this government may avoid detailed scrutiny of this bill in committee. I'm particularly worried—there's a part in the wildland firefighting where these wildland fire compliance officers can go in and take out computer equipment or get into computers and look at what's inside. I don't know why that is in the bill, but I feel like we can't answer that technical question here; I feel like we need to go into committee and call some witnesses and try to understand that, make sure it's okay.

My question to my honourable colleague is, does she agree with that, that we should look at this bill in detail in committee?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Wholeheartedly. I think there are just too many risks involved with this particular bill and too many unknowns, and we're missing the details on a lot of it. So where do we get the details? We get the details, often, in committee. We learn what the actual risks

are and how we can mitigate them and what the reasons are for parts of the bill that we don't understand. So yes, I honestly believe this needs to go to committee so that we can consult with people and get the answers to the questions that people deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I found this debate very interesting in the sense that I feel the member opposite maybe hasn't gotten out onto the ground to be properly informed. My riding runs the shoreline of Lake Huron from Southampton down to Grand Bend, and had she taken time to get out and actually talk to people and understand the geology, she would know first-hand that for decades natural gas has been pumped into our porous rock because that rock serves as winter storage. Then larger communities in my riding draw from that natural gas that is stored in the porous rock throughout the winter. There is a proven application for sequestering and using that type of geology and that type of rock formation in my area, which I call home.

So I'd like to ask the member, how has she informed herself about the realities of using our geology around Lake Huron?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Well, it's been a while since I've studied geology, but I have, and I think that we have to understand this new technology has to be taken seriously. If the minister is offering to have all of these carbon sequestration storage facilities in her riding, then she should go ahead and just say so. But I wouldn't want to do that until I had talked to every single expert available who could vet. I know the experts, how to find them and how to get those answers, but I want them to be at committee. I want everybody to hear their answers, not just me. Everyone has to have access to that expertise.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to my colleague from Kanata–Carleton for sharing their thoughts on this bill. You mentioned that this bill does some tinkering around the edges with wildfire management. One of my concerns is its utter failure to address the health and safety impacts for the firefighters and for the communities. These firefighters are being sent in without proper PPE, including respirators, even though we know that there are more carcinogens in a wildfire than there are in a municipal fire.

We are experiencing, even in Ottawa, challenges with air quality—community events needing to be cancelled because the air quality is so bad. Our children are in schools where there is not proper ventilation to protect against particulate matter coming in. We know that this has an incredibly detrimental effect on our children, our seniors and anyone with respiratory conditions.

So what would the member like to have seen that would actually take the crisis of wildfires seriously?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I thank the honourable member for her question. We just had to be in Ottawa last the last couple of summers to realize fires that are thousands upon thousands miles away have an impact on our ability to breathe.

I know that those wildland firefighters are up close and personal with these fires, and they deserve the best protection that we can get for them. They shouldn't have to be second-class citizens. We need to look after these people. If they are going to keep our wilderness safe, they need to be invested in and treated fairly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions? I recognize the member from Mississauga–Malton.

Interjections.

Mr. Deepak Anand: That was good applause. Thank you.

As you know, the government is working hard to protect the economy of today and build the economy of tomorrow by investing in infrastructure, schools, hospitals, public transit, roads, bridges.

What I want to ask to the member is about the Surveyors Act. Thank you to the surveyors for doing an incredible job, but, as we know, the act has changed little since 1987. The executive director even said, "These changes will modernize and enhance the skilled profession of land surveying in Ontario," allowing our association "to continue to advance."

My question is very simple. This bill is talking and making sure that the people have affordable housing. Member opposite, do you support affordable housing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Kanata–Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: It does do a couple of things to introduce new licensing types to address some labour shortages and maybe some emergency deployments when they're required—that, I get. It allows the recognition of internationally trained professionals and modernizing some of the guidance.

However, I think the piece that's missing for me when I read it is that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Hon. Trevor Jones: I'm honoured to rise today to speak to the Resource Management and Safety Act, 2025, specifically on the amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act. I'd also like to add that I'll be sharing my time with my friend, neighbour and colleague the MPP from Windsor–Tecumseh.

If passed, this act will help protect communities across Ontario from hazardous oil and gas wells.

As the honourable Minister of Natural Resources mentioned, those of you who know your history will know that well before Alberta or Texas, southwestern Ontario became one of the birthplaces of the North American oil and gas industry. As a matter of fact, in the mid-1800s, a man you may know named James Miller Williams drilled in an area called Black Creek, where he struck oil and soon after established the Canadian Oil Company. The portrait and the name of James Miller Williams will be here in this place because he served in the first, second and third Parliaments as MPP for Hamilton right here in this Legislature.

This area quickly became known as Oil Springs in Lambton county, near present-day Sarnia, where you can now visit the Oil Museum of Canada where the Fairbank Oil Fields, the world's oldest oil company, still operates today. After the discovery of oil, the Lake Erie shoreline around Wheatley in my riding became a booming drill site, and people drilled literally thousands of wells across southwestern Ontario.

Just last weekend, I had the pleasure of welcoming the Minister of Natural Resources as well as my colleague and neighbour, the MPP for Essex, to Wheatley, where our government announced an investment of over $10 million to diversify the economy and upgrade two fisheries management units, including the Lake Erie management unit. This investment will upgrade and expand their operations so they can create and sustain local jobs—again, diverse jobs—in local food production and stay competitive to withstand the economic uncertainty from US tariffs.

1700

Today, beautiful Wheatley has the largest freshwater commercial fishery in the world. But during that period in the mid-1800s, Wheatley was a small lakeside fishing village hit with the excitement of oil. The oil boom came with both danger and uncertainty. Early drilling, as some may know, used open flame lamps, steam boilers and wooden rigs, so fires and explosions were commonplace. These wells often leaked oil and gas, turning fields into little oil puddles and polluting the environment.

The mid-19th century in southwestern Ontario was an exciting era, but it predated safety rules and regulations. We don't even have very detailed maps of all the wells that people were literally free to drill as they pleased. These wells did help propel Ontario's early industrial growth, but it also left long-term environmental and safety challenges that communities around Wheatley and all over Ontario have to deal with today.

I think everyone knows where they were that day when Wheatley had that emergency. I know where I was. I was talking to my former colleagues from the Ontario Provincial Police detachment in Leamington. We were chatting over the community, community safety, what was going on in the world, life, politics, farming even, and a call came in.

That call changed the way we react now to these types of emergencies. It changed the way this government reacts to making strategic investments and creating a safer, more prosperous Ontario for everyone. Collectively, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade have all contributed close to $51.5 million to Wheatley. That high concentration of know-how and expertise probably, I'd argue, makes Wheatley one of the safer jurisdictions that was an oil jurisdiction in North America.

Today, I'm very proud of our government and grateful for the minister and his team taking meaningful action, strategic action, to keep people safe through the Resource Management and Safety Act. This piece of legislation, through the amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, gives the Ministry of Natural Resources the tools to address aging oil and gas wells which have deteriorated over time and continue to leak. It allows the ministry to address immediate risks to public safety quickly, without unnecessary red tape that we've become all too familiar with under previous governments.

Mr. Speaker, our government stands by the people of Ontario. The amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act allow the ministry to put the safety of the people of Ontario first.

Ontario has records for somewhere around 27,000 oil and gas wells, primarily on private land in southwestern Ontario. That doesn't even take into consideration the water wells that were drilled with the same indiscriminate excitement during times of drought, like the former colleagues from the first, second and third Parliaments did. It was actually drilling for water during a drought in what is now Enniskillen township that found oil.

Many of these old wells were dug over a hundred years ago. They're drawn out, and often there's a drawn-out, complicated process of determining who was the rightful owner and chartering that ownership over many, many years. In some instances, owners, of course, died, passed away. Some companies and private enterprises have gone bankrupt or otherwise were just unable to work with the ministry to address a dangerous, or potentially dangerous, oil well on their property.

In situations where the government needs to act quickly and decisively because of an immediate threat to public safety, this legislation will make those corrections, and I look forward to those opportunities to do just that. This is why it's critical in certain circumstances to enable the ministry to address a hazard without the consent of the well operator. There may not be one known, or there may not be one willing to work with government.

Again, our minister and his exceptional staff in natural resources are taking productive approaches to address the safety of people in communities in my riding and across Ontario by fixing these hazardous wells right away instead of waiting for a potential disaster to happen. Along with the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and many municipal partners, I welcome this measure and thank the Ministry of Natural Resources, our MNR, as they're known, for their plan to increase our understanding, to educate us in communities across Ontario of the risks due to aging wells, develop decisive risk management strategies and support emergency planning and emergency preparedness—something, as you know, I'm passionate about.

I'd also like to thank the ministry for the funding they've contributed to southwestern Ontario and my riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington through the Abandoned Works Program to keep municipalities safe from the risks associated with old oil and inactive oil and gas wells. Their continued investments and continued expertise are helping municipalities in enhancing emergency preparedness, risk assessment, training, equipment and planning tied to these legacy wells.

Another way the Ministry of Natural Resources is prioritizing the safety of the people of Ontario in this bill is through amendments to the Forest Fires Prevention Act, something we've heard about a little bit earlier today.

This summer, I had the opportunity to visit farmers all across Ontario and learn from them, speak to them on their farms, at their kitchen tables, in their barns and on their properties. And these were farmers, many times, impacted by extreme drought. It's a true reminder of how delicate and fragile farming can be, especially with the risks of wildfires nearby.

The people who work for the Ministry of Natural Resources do a tremendous job at detecting, preventing and managing wildfires. But, as said before, no one is immune. Wildland fires have the potential to spread to neighbouring farms, which can be devastating to farmers, who work very hard to feed the people in our communities.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture outlined that wildland fires are a serious and imminent risk to farms across Ontario. There are risks to human and animal safety, where rapid evacuation might be necessary. Poor air quality can cause respiratory stress in livestock and humans and, of course, reduce feed intake and cause major vulnerabilities to our food systems. Fire damage to barns, fencing, equipment and power lines can disrupt our food processes, animal care and containment. Ash and fire retardants, again, coming from firefighting, can contaminate feed supplies and surface water sources. Road closures, as you know, and reduced visibility can delay the movement and feed of animals and supplies, which is critical. It must be timely.

In summary, wildland fires have the potential to disrupt entire communities and supply chains of food. I'm so proud of my colleagues at the MNR, who see the importance of protecting farmers, their livelihoods and the land we live on.

If this bill is passed, it will change the name of the Forest Fires Prevention Act, and the new act will be called the Wildland Fire Management Act—again, a modern twist but more appropriate and bringing up our potential and capacity to modern times.

The Wildland Fire Management Act would reduce the risk that wildland fires pose to people, farms and critical infrastructure to protect and preserve our $52-billion industry, which is food.

So, again, thank you for your time today. Thank you for your attention to these very important facets. Again, oil, gas and salt resources and wildland fires are two vital components in a very critical piece of legislation that I know will have the confidence of this House. I hope my colleagues across the aisle can support it. Thank you.

I'll now cede my time to my colleague the MPP for Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm delighted to speak at the House this evening. Really, Bill 27 provides a lot of modernization related to some of our activities having to do with the earth. One that I'd like to zero in on is the amendments to the Surveyors Act that are proposed under this bill.

It wasn't long ago; just before I was elected, I was able to serve on the council of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors. And I remember we were going through some workforce challenges. It's really an association of the profession. However, a lot of the feedback that came back was that a lot of individuals were leaving surveying. It's having kind of a double-edged problem. There's a lot of business to go around, but there are fewer and fewer people coming into surveying and fewer practitioners to carry the load. Even though it's a viable and tremendous career, it is just one of those disciplines that even though you get to spend a lot of time outside and you see a lot of different places that Ontario's geography can give a great experience for, for whatever reason, it just isn't really attracting workforce.

1710

So these amendments really help Ontario as it continues to mature and we continue to drive economic growth. We know that the changes will help to attract more surveyors to support this growth. The association has been involved in consultations leading up to this bill, and I know they're supportive of it because we know that land surveying talent and services are truly essential to our government, our industry and our growing communities.

What would we do without land surveyors? You've got an iron bar at different corners of your property. You don't really know it exists. You can't see it; it's underground, but it's vital not only to delineate the perimeter of your property but also the elevation. You use different types of levels. Sometimes there's a Leica machine that you can use with a laser that helps you to zero in on those geographic coordinates. But really, it's sort of at the foundation of our whole property system, our land registry, that we have these tools. And so, fewer practitioners means that we won't be able to tell the stories very well.

I think back to my time as a municipal councillor. There were a lot of neighbour disputes for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it's on minor variances, sometimes it's on overhangs, or, "Is my neighbour flooding my yard now?" But fundamental to this is where's the property line and our zoning laws. Our different attempts to find equity in solutions runs aground.

Our land surveyors truly provide a vital service, but they also help manage our natural resources. We rely on them to help to build some infrastructure. When we need to really zero in on that elevation. The designer needs appropriate information as to how high you need to go or what direction you need to go, the angle, and the only way to really understand that is by the land surveyor really perfecting their craft and demonstrating it.

Our natural environment is the same. We need to understand where things are at, and ultimately, the discretion of the land surveyor can make or break a successful project.

We also know land surveyors are essential to expanding and redeveloping our province, really building up our housing, setting aside our rights of way, our building lots

and really having that that firm ability to even create a deed.

Lawyers are so reliant on land surveyors in their own right. But we know, though, the Surveyors Act hasn't seen too many amendments since 1987. Even though the world is modernized—we have GIS software. We have any number of—I call it open data sources of systems that residents of Ontario and then throughout the world use to create content—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Sorry to interrupt, but pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, please adjourn the debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

PEEL TRANSITION IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA MISE EN OEUVRE DE LA TRANSITION DE PEEL

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 45, about the region of Peel.

I was in the chamber this morning for the government's lead, and I promise mine will be just as riveting as those three members that I heard this morning—

Hon. Rob Flack: What? As riveting? I told stories.

Mr. Jeff Burch: At least as riveting.

Speaker, the government wants to paint a picture as if this is a new, well-thought-out bill that municipalities are voluntarily taking part in—I heard that this morning—but I think we all know that nothing could be further from the truth. This three-year saga is a lesson in how not to make public policy, how not to implement public policy, why it's dangerous to ignore your own experts and why it's undemocratic and irresponsible to avoid meaningful consultation.

The government speakers conveniently left out of their speaking notes the story of how we got here, but that's the most interesting and tragic part of this story. It started with what the Premier described as a deathbed promise to his friend Hazel McCallion to dissolve Peel region—what could possibly go wrong, Speaker—and after that time, it threw Peel region into a state of chaos.

I thought I would start by talking about Peel and giving a few facts, just so that we understand the scope of what the government thought would be an easy task to break up a region as large as Peel. When the region went into a panic after the government initially announced what it intended to do, there was a council meeting, and the region wanted to impress upon the government exactly what kind of a huge undertaking it would be to dissolve any region, but especially the region of Peel.

So they put together a list of all of the things that Peel did. It was educational for me, and there are some really incredible facts. One in 10 Ontario residents live in Peel, Speaker. Peel's population is 1.5 million—and this is from 2023, these facts, so some things may have changed—making it the second-largest municipality in the greater Toronto area and larger than six of Canada's provinces.

Peel is financially secure and stable. It's maintained an AAA credit rating for 27 consecutive years. In 2022, it was one of 14 Canadian municipalities to receive the AAA credit rating, and one of eight to receive AAA credit rating from Moody's Investors Service. So it's a very stable organization. I am going to talk a little bit about the debt and some concerns around that later on.

So $1.8 billion worth of goods travel to, from and through Peel every day, and 36% of truck trips in Ontario start or end on Peel region roads. Peel's goods-moving industry contributed $49 billion worth of gross domestic product to regional, provincial and national economies. Their roads carry 21% of all goods-moving GDP in Ontario.

Peel has the second-largest water and waste water system in Ontario and the fourth largest in Canada with an infrastructure replacement value of $26 billion. I'll touch a little bit on the water/waste water issue later which was carved out of this bill and introduced in Bill 60. Peel's utility rates remain 30% lower than other GTA municipalities. Why would you want to change that?

Peel Regional Police is the second-largest municipal police service in Ontario, third largest in Canada.

This is where is gets interesting because a lot of people don't realize the breadth of health care services in Peel—Peel paramedics is the second-largest paramedics system in Ontario and respond to over 140,000 calls in a typical year.

It's the third-largest community housing provider in Ontario.

Peel Public Health is the third-largest in Ontario and one of the largest in Canada, and it has the second-largest waste management program in Ontario.

1720

Peel includes over 200,000 businesses. Some 8.6% of their population live in poverty, with approximately 25,000 residents receiving Ontario Works, and depend on Peel region delivering uninterrupted service. Of course, when this started in 2023, it threw not-for-profits into a

state of anxiety, Speaker, because of the number of clients across Peel that depend on Peel region and all of the services that they support. As a service manager and primary funder of Peel's affordable housing system, Peel froze federal, provincial and regional funding to 51 community housing providers, including Peel Housing Corp., which is the largest community housing provider in Peel.

Some 69% of individuals in Peel identify with a racialized group, the highest percentage of racialized individuals in the GTA, and their long-term care was the first to receive Butterfly Model of Care accreditation in Ontario. We all know they're home to Canada's busiest airport, the Pearson international airport. They provide $10.3 million annually in funding to over 150 community agencies in the non-profit sector.

As I go through this list, Speaker, just imagine the fact that a Premier of Ontario made an offhanded promise to a former mayor of one of the three municipalities to break this up: "Hey, no problem, we're going to dissolve the region."

I'm from a two-tier municipality, and I think, as a former municipal councillor, I have a pretty good understanding of the role that the Niagara regional government plays in the Niagara region, and it pales in comparison to this. How anyone could think that they could break apart our region and not have a tremendous effect on everything from private businesses to not-for-profit agencies that care for one of the highest populations of unhoused people and people in need anywhere in Canada—really, it's incredible. And that's Peel region that this Premier and this government thought they could break apart on a whim.

Speaker, there's a long history to this issue, as I've mentioned. Mississauga Mayors Hazel McCallion and Bonnie Crombie long supported the dissolution of Peel. Responsibility for regional infrastructure costs was an ongoing source of conflict between Mississauga and Caledon, in particular, and a major driver of Crombie's long-standing desire for independence. In contrast, municipal leaders in Brampton and Caledon have opposed dissolution.

In June 2023, the Ford government passed Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act, that I mentioned earlier—the start of what ended up being the bill we're discussing today—which provided for the dissolution of Peel and the establishment of a Peel Transition Board to make recommendations on how this dissolution would occur. Bill 112 was time-allocated—we're well familiar with those words, especially since the most recent election—bypassing the committee process and any kind of public input that that would have gleaned, any opportunities for amendments to improve the bill.

Despite this aggressive legislative move, six months later the government backtracked, announcing that it would not dissolve Peel region after all. The dissolution provisions of Bill 112 were repealed in schedule 7 of Bill 185, which also limited the mandate of the Peel Transition Board to recommendations concerning land use planning, water and waste water, stormwater, highways and waste management. This flip-flop was reportedly prompted by unpublished reports showing that the cost of dissolving Peel region would be enormous. This is where it's hard to believe the government went down this path without doing the homework ahead of time. A Deloitte report found that the dissolution of the region would cost taxpayers an extra $1.3 billion over 10 years—that's a Deloitte report—driving up property taxes by 17% in Mississauga, 34% in Brampton and a whopping 256% in Caledon.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has not disclosed the findings and recommendations of the Peel transition board to the public—something we're also used to seeing from this government—or even to the affected municipalities. The town of Caledon passed a motion asking that these recommendations be published, but they have not been.

And I have to mention—and I'll talk about this a little more in a minute, but the Peel transition board was not even notified when the government changed course and decided that they would not dissolve the region of Peel. Nowhere was this better described than in an article by Colin D'Mello, a Global News article. It was entitled, "'Any Chance of a Call?'....

"In early December 2023, as the Ford government considered backing away from dissolving" the "region, the man tasked with managing the government's decision suddenly found himself out of the loop"—and that was John Livey.

"The plan to split up the region … into three separate cities was on the edge of being cancelled but John Livey, chair of the Peel Region Transition Board, wasn't even being offered a meeting with the government to ask what was going on.

"'Any chance of a call?' Livey asked Michael Klimuntowski, chief of staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in a text...." He received no reply.

"The next afternoon he tried again.... The text also went ignored.

"It was four days after Livey's first request that he finally got a reply....

"The text exchange is one of several communications obtained by Global News using freedom of information laws"—because the government wasn't communicating with anyone.

"Together with emails, the text messages tell the behind-the-scenes story of how" this "government initially failed to engage its own expert panel in its plans to reverse course on the region of Peel. And then how it was forced to change course once again when it did.

"Ultimately, during the first two weeks of December and after an intervention from" Mr. "Livey and the Premier's office, the government settled on a watered-down plan for the region of Peel"—which is what we're discussing today—"downloading some powers to its three members: Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga....

"The ... plan to dissolve the region of Peel—which would have granted ... Hazel McCallion a lifelong dream," as I mentioned earlier, "didn't last for long."

And it was in May that the Premier announced the plan.

"To manage the move, his government struck a five-person transition board. The panel included Livey, another former Toronto civil servant, a former Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario, a former York region police chief and an infrastructure lawyer.

"Through the summer and fall, the board set meetings and started to study how it could complete the complicated task"—the impossible task of breaking apart the region. "Even as its work got started, discussions about reversing the plan were under way."

It was December when Mayor Patrick Brown—who, to be fair, "had opposed the split from the very beginning—began to complain publicly about the potential costs to taxpayers. The complaints escalated and rumours percolated" here "at Queen's Park that the government was having second thoughts....

"As questions continued, the government kept a tight circle....

"Even Livey and the transition board, the group supposed to advise the government over the split, were kept in the dark." Imagine that, Speaker: keeping their own transition board that they put in place completely in the dark about whether or not they were going forward with, really, what was a ridiculously impossible task of breaking apart a region.

Again, Livey asked for an update. He was told he would get a call later—no call.

And the communications that Global News had to obtain through freedom of information show that Livey was finally given a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who's now the current education minister.

"Bringing the chair of the transition board back into the process ... changed the plan. The government" shifted "from potentially scrapping its transition team altogether to working out how to recalibrate its approach"—and that's how we're starting to get to the point that we're at now with this bill.

1730

"Sources told Global News Livey and those around him called the Premier's office to discuss the impending reversal around the same time they appear to have been ignored by staff in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing." And then, "the strategy quickly changed."

"An email sent on Livey's behalf, also obtained using freedom of information laws, contained a memo and a folder of files from the transition board's chair with options for how to handle the dissolution the government wanted to scrap."

This is where it comes to cabinet, Speaker: "Discussions on exactly what the split would look like continued through early December, as staff and politicians scrambled to sort out the announcement, which eventually came on December 13."

All the while, Patrick Brown, mayor of Brampton, was "banging the drum for reversal, suggesting the split would be financially ruinous for local taxpayers." No one was listening.

"On December 8, Livey suggested in a text that the mayor's public statements weren't aiding the process....

"'Patrick Brown is making an announcement at noon. So far it hasn't been helpful or well informed.'" So it sounds like throughout this entire process, the mayor of Brampton was really the one that was out there warning taxpayers this was going to be a ruinous plan for Ontario and for Peel.

"A cabinet meeting leading up to the announcement included Livey's suggestions for how he could continue working on some kind of watered-down dissolution," and that's what this bill is. Many of my colleagues across the way were probably involved in those meetings.

"The transition board"—and this is this is important, as well; folks who were around last term may remember this—"billed the region of Peel $1.5 million for its work," which basically consisted of being left in the dark by the provincial government, and that remains in place until 2025. I'm not sure if it's still in place.

"The government spokesperson told Global News that the minister 'remains open to scaling up transformative ideas,'" and that's all the information they got.

At that time, I was the municipal affairs critic, and I questioned the value that taxpayers in Peel region were receiving for that $1.5 million, the bill the transition board had racked up so far with months left in their mandate. I said Peel taxpayers were on the hook, and I thought the government would be hard-pressed to say what citizens got for that money, and the answer to that was never given.

What value did taxpayers get for that money that has been spent on the Peel Transition Board? To stick Peel taxpayers with a $1.5-million bill for this fiasco is really irresponsible, and we think the Premier should pick up the tab for his own government's incompetence, I said, but the government refused to pick up that tab and Peel taxpayers had to pay.

In question period, I asked who would pay for the bill. I asked my question around this government's "flip-flop on the Hazel McCallion Act, an ill-conceived and poorly thought-out plan by the Premier to dissolve Peel region—a plan that resulted in chaos and an exodus of qualified staff."

At the time, I said, "Yesterday, taxpayers in Peel region were outraged to learn from the Toronto Star"—and we got lots of calls from Peel taxpayers—"that they're on the hook for a $1.5-million bill from the Peel transition board for" what was billed as "'efficiencies.' Local leaders who only met with the four-person board once said it has been a 'non-transparent process,' and residents are now being forced to pay for the indecisiveness of the province.

"Does the Premier feel it is fair for property taxpayers in Peel to pick up a $1.5-million tab for his poor performance?" The minister at the time, who is now the Minister of Education, said that he thought taxpayers would be happy with what the government was going to do.

I went on to ask—the board billed the region with two invoices, one for $858,000 and a second for $635,000. Councillor Medeiros said that it's unclear who's getting paid and for what. This is a councillor in Peel who didn't even understand what the transition board was being paid for. We don't know how these board members were selected. How much are we paying them? Now they apparently hired consultants. How much are they getting paid, and for what? We don't know anything. This is the kind of lack of transparency that existed at the Peel region because of this government.

Of course, I asked the Premier to admit that there was nothing efficient about this fiasco and if the government would pick up the tab, and, of course, they refused to do that.

Now we pivot from dissolution to restructuring, but we know that this government did very little to reassure staff. I've been on the phone the last three years off and on with CUPE, the union that represents many workers in Peel, thousands of workers, and the anxiety that they've been through because of the actions of this government really is incredible.

It's a situation where this government could have done itself some favours and had a dialogue. It wouldn't have been that difficult. I come from the labour movement myself and the municipal sector. I've been through hospital restructurings, where hospitals are merging and union contracts are being merged. It's a lot of work, but it's not difficult—well, it's difficult, but it's not impossible to do, to sit down with the unions affected.

Peel has some of the best workers anywhere in Canada in their region. I read a list of all of the things that Peel region does. It wouldn't have been that difficult to have a meeting with that union, to have a meeting with Peel region and be transparent through the process and reassure them about their jobs, because what happened really was a disaster.

There was an article by the Trillium that kind of outlined that disaster. They reported that employees had a lot of fear about how this government would restructure the region. The article goes on to say, "As anxious municipal employees look for work elsewhere, Peel's council is asking Ontario to hurry up with a decision about the future of the region," and this is why.

"On Thursday"—this was back in July of 2024–"Peel regional council passed a resolution calling on the Ford government and the transition board to 'recognize and protect our employees in any decision made by the provincial government, and provide a decision in an expeditious and timely matter.'" They were bleeding employees, Speaker, and they still are.

"Last month, The Trillium broke the news that the transition board—tapped by the Ford government to find ways to streamline Peel's services—had recommended in its draft report that responsibility for Peel's water and waste water services transition from the region to a provincially regulated utility."

As you can imagine—and this has continued with water and waste water being dealt with in Bill 60—there's tremendous anxiety. CUPE has been out there in the field, polling, trying to address the fears of their members about privatization, about restructuring, about whether their collective agreements are safe, whether their conditions of work are safe. This stuff creates a lot of anxiety, and I see no effort on the part of this government to reassure employees, many of whom have worked decades in these jobs and been loyal employees to the region.

"It also suggested road maintenance and waste collections be downloaded from the region"—this is back in July of 2024—"to the three municipalities.…

"Many workers have been anxious about their fate since the government announced its intention to split up" the region.

"There's a lot of fear amongst the workers about what's next," said Wayne Broderick, a water and waste water operator in Peel region. There was a report on just how bad things were getting at the region due to lack of communication, uncertainty and the chaos that the government created. He said, "Trained and specialized employees have been applying to and accepting work elsewhere due to the uncertainty of their future with the region."

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Peel at that time—and this is incredible, Speaker—had lost about 400 staff, or a combined 13,000 years of experience, since the government first floated the idea of dissolution. These are talented, well-trained employees that can get jobs all over Canada, and the government should have known that creating this kind of chaos was going to result in the region bleeding workers and talent. And that continues to this day and, as far as I know, the government has not really improved their communication with Peel region or with the workers.

The workers and councillors urged the Ford government to release the transition board's report and go public with its plans. "I don't know why it's a secret. It's all taxpayer money," said the president of CUPE Local 966, which represents Peel region municipal workers, in an interview. I just talked to CUPE, to this local and to CUPE Ontario, late last week, and their members still feel that this government is abandoning them, that the communication is not there, that the government hasn't done the work necessary to protect their collective agreements and to let them know that their jobs are safe and secure.

And Broderick said, "It's hard to believe that such important decisions are being made without transparency and" without "public knowledge."

Carolyn Parrish was even more blunt, and she said, "I think when the history books look back on this whole year and a half"—this is in July 2024—"it's going to be the biggest disaster ever caused by, I hate to say, the whim of

a certain person.... It's a disaster. We've lost a lot of people. The morale has been terrible. It's cost us a fortune." That's what the actions of this government leading up to the bill that we're discussing now—a drastically watered down version of dissolution—caused.

But I do want to applaud CUPE, Mr. Speaker, for the work that they're doing, attempting to protect their members, attempting to get information on behalf of the public—for actually doing what the government didn't do and going out into the field and polling residents of Peel, who are greatly concerned, not only about the workers who serve them but about the affordability of Peel services, because a lot of the experts including AMO and the municipal managers and many others say that, without question, water rates, in particular, are going to go up. And that was the interesting discussion that I saw, Speaker, around Bill 60.

There was some back and forth about the issue of privatization and I understand that. A lot of that confusion is due to the way the government brought this bill forward. The government is imposing a municipal services corporation, and that's just not the way things are done in the municipal sector. Those corporations are entered into voluntarily. I do realize they can be a way to ensure actually that a municipal utility remains public. But at the same time, there are models such as a public utility model that can result in the privatization of services like water/waste water where private shares can be issued and the private sector can own portions of infrastructure rather than the municipality. By not being clear, by not communicating, this government created an awful lot of anxiety and a lot of confusion around the issue of public versus private.

But the one issue that no one is really confused about, Speaker, is that water and waste water is going to get more expensive, that rates will go up for the residents of Peel—and that's a very important message because while we can debate things like privatization, everyone agrees that imposing a municipal services corporation onto the region of Peel is inappropriate.

Municipal service corporations, if anyone has studied them—we know that they are for smaller and medium-sized municipalities. They're a vehicle for them to come together and, by economies of scale, increase their ability to take on debt and invest in infrastructure. And it's happened across the province.

But what AMO says, what every professional that I've talked to says, is that it's not appropriate to impose, especially on a region as large as Peel, and that it will result in an increase in water rates. That's what the people of Peel need to understand and what I want to get on record very, very clearly here: Their water rates are going to go up. Everyone says it. AMO says it, and AMO rarely comes out and makes such blunt statements.

And not only because that system is inappropriate for a region the size of Peel, Speaker, but also because what it's doing is it's transferring development charge expense from developers and builders and the ministry—we talked about this a little bit and kind of admitted it—onto the backs of ratepayers. So it's an inappropriate corporate model and it takes development charge revenue and puts the responsibility for that on the backs of ratepayers—very, very dangerous, and something that will result in an increase in water rates for the residents of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

This bill, which is similar to Bill 240, has a few key differences. It transfers jurisdiction over regional roads and stormwater drainage infrastructure to the lower-tier municipalities in which the infrastructure is located. Those transfers are going to occur on July 1 of 2026, unless the minister changes that date.

We've talked about the waste water infrastructure and I'm sure we're going to have many more conversations about that when people's water rates start going up. It transfers jurisdiction over waste collection to the lower-tier municipalities. Bill 240 only transferred jurisdiction over waste collection in Mississauga. But unlike Bill 240, this bill does not transfer ownership of two recycling centres to Mississauga. Instead, those remain with the region, and I'm not sure we've got an answer as to why. These transfers will occur on January 1 of 2026.

The bill also allows the minister to make regulations providing for these transfers, including the power to amend agreements, make financial adjustments, compel the co-operation of officials and take any action with respect to operational manners. It's a huge overreach into municipal jurisdiction. It includes broad indemnity provisions to block lawsuits or damage awards for anything done under these provisions, and it allows the minister to appoint up to six deputy facilitators, up from the current four. These facilitators will assist and advise the ministry with respect to the transfers.

That's where this entire three years of chaos ended up. We've backtracked to the point where it's a bill not for the dissolution but for a kind of bumbling reorganization of some of the region's services, which is still creating great amount of anxiety among staff and resulting in the loss of employees.

So what's missing from this bill, Speaker? It's still not clear what problem Peel restructuring is meant to solve. While the cost savings have been mentioned by various proponents of restructuring and dissolution—we heard some of them yesterday—no evidence has been published showing these changes will actually save anyone any money, and there are legitimate concerns, as I've mentioned, that they might increase costs.

The projected financial impact of these changes remains a secret, not only to the public but also to the municipalities themselves, and that's according to a September of 2025 report from regional staff. The government is still operating in secret.

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A previous proposal for the full dissolution of the region was scrapped, as we know, after leaked reports

indicating that dissolution would come with massive costs. So we have to wonder if there are reports out there not being shared about the cost of what the government is doing here.

Bill 45 provides only incremental clarity for municipal employees, at least until the next policy lurch.

That, to me, Speaker, is the real tragedy of this bill, as I have talked about the disrespect for the thousands of workers in Peel region, many of whom have already left for other municipalities. It's damage that cannot be undone. But in speaking to their union last week, there's such a great amount of anxiety still out there because of the actions of this government.

The government has already reduced the region's role by taking away Peel region's planning responsibilities, transferring these to local municipalities with varying levels of planning capacity. This bill does nothing whatsoever to stop that sprawling into planning decisions that drive up infrastructure costs and development charges, which are the purported reasons for regional restructuring in the first place.

Speaker, there's a lot about borrowing costs that we have to consider as well. There have been a lot of questions with a report that I have here regarding borrowing costs by Isaac Callan and Colin D'Mello talking about—and I'll quote from the report:

"The original Hazel McCallion Act, unfortunately, had a clause in it that said the transition board could amend things, and that clause had an unintended consequence that we didn't feel we could enter the capital markets....

"If the legal clause was there, the transition board could renegotiate things. Someone purchasing our debt might say, 'Well, how do I know they won't decide to execute that option and my money vanishes?'

"As a result, Peel was out in the cold unable to borrow money for all of 2023 and all of 2024." Incredible, Speaker.

This government's actions also caused chaos for green projects in Mississauga and Brampton. A lot of that is detailed in an article in the Pointer on May 19 of 2025. This journalist points out, "Ambitious zero-carbon retrofit projects in Mississauga and Brampton are facing mounting political and procedural hurdles." More unintended consequences of this bill, Speaker. "Uncertainty stemming from Doug Ford's political tampering with the future of municipal governance in Peel has impacted long-term decision-making and funding for key initiatives across the region.

"Buildings currently account for 45% of all greenhouse gas … emissions in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, making them the top contributor to urban pollution in Mississauga and Brampton.

"The Canada Green Building Council recommends two key strategies for reducing these emissions, including recommissioning large buildings ... and undertaking deep retrofits in older structures, particularly those more than 35 years old….

"In line with these recommendations, Brampton and Mississauga launched critical decarbonization projects: a deep energy retrofit of Mississauga's Weaver's Hill residential complex and the transformation of Brampton's Susan Fennell Sportsplex into a zero-carbon facility."

So this is the region trying to do their job in cutting down carbon emissions.

"If successful, it will be the first of its kind in Peel's housing portfolio; a model for how aging infrastructure can be transformed into climate-forward, low-emissions living spaces.

"Brampton is undertaking a major retrofit of the nearly 30-year-old Susan Fennell Sportsplex.

"The plan includes replacing gas-powered boilers and ice resurfacers with electric versions." The reductions equal 550 cars taken off the road for one year.

"Together, the initiatives have secured $20 million in loans and grants from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' … Green Municipal Fund … to boost energy efficiency and drive emissions down." This is one of the functions of a region, especially one as large as Peel, that they can use their power to attract and leverage more investment in things like deep retrofits.

"'Investing in deep retrofits to reduce emissions and build more efficient infrastructure is a critical way we can fight climate change and support cleaner communities. These retrofits will result in significant cost savings for the municipality as well as providing a state-of-the-art net zero facility that residents and families can enjoy'….

"At a Peel regional council meeting on May 8, staff warned that political instability—triggered by Ford's snap winter election call and the process to download certain responsibilities to the lower-tier municipalities as part of his ongoing tampering with Peel's governance structure—could derail these critical climate efforts."

That really is tragic, Speaker. We've talked about increased water rates. We've talked about the anxiety that employees feel, the fact that many staff have left the region. But even things like leveraging money from other levels of government and doing the work necessary on climate has been affected by this government's ill-advised tampering.

I'm not sure how much time I have left, Speaker, but I know that I will be continuing tomorrow morning. At that time, I'm going to be talking about an agency called Metamorphosis and the missed opportunities that this government had to engage with a group of not-for-profits in Peel who came together out of anxiety about the government's decision to try and dissolve Peel region. They represent over 100 non-profit agencies in Peel and advocate to ensure that community services meet the needs of Peel's communities. One of the things I learned about Peel through the last three years of this debate was just how many health and social services this regional government offers people in Peel.

They work with social policy-makers in the municipalities of all three municipalities—Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon—to support communities facing a wide range of challenges. Their efforts focus on newcomers to Peel, including refugees and immigrants, as well as survivors of

gender-based and intimate partner violence. This is all done through the region. They assist children, families and individuals living in poverty or experiencing food insecurity and provide support to seniors who require in-home services or are seeking long-term care. They also help people with health, mental health and addiction support needs; youth and individuals who are unemployed and in need of employment supports; and those who are unhoused or facing housing insecurity.

Speaker, this group came together because of the Hazel McCallion Act—perhaps an unintended positive consequence of a very negative action by the government. But they decided that they would come together to try and advise the Peel transition board on health and social services. While the surprise turnaround brought relief to thousands of regional employees and hundreds more working in partner organizations with respect to this plan to dissolve the region, leaders of the local social service agencies said there should not be a return to the status quo. So they're in favour of making changes, but they've wanted to engage this government and the region on how to better deliver services in Peel region.

I look forward tomorrow to talking more about this.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): It being 6 o'clock, it is now the time for private members' public business.

Report continues in volume B.

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Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	