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of Ontario



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de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

HE-22

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

Building Billy Bishop Airport
Act, 2026

1st Session
44th Parliament

Tuesday 19 May 2026

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

HE-22

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

Loi de 2026 sur la construction
de l'aéroport Billy Bishop

1^{re} session
44^e législature

Mardi 19 mai 2026

Chair: Hon. Laurie Scott
Clerk: Tanzima Khan

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Tuesday 19 May 2026

Mardi 19 mai 2026

The committee met at 1001 in room 151.

**BUILDING BILLY BISHOP AIRPORT
ACT, 2026**

**LOI DE 2026 SUR LA CONSTRUCTION
DE L'AÉROPORT BILLY BISHOP**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to enact the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, 2026 / Projet de loi 110, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur la construction de l'aéroport Billy Bishop.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): Good morning, honourable members. It is my duty to call upon you to elect a Chair. Are there any nominations? MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I nominate MPP Babikian.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and MPP Babikian elected Chair of the committee.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to order.

We are meeting today to begin public hearings on Bill 110, An Act to enact the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, 2026.

The Clerk of the Committee has distributed today's meeting documents virtually via SharePoint.

To make sure that everyone who speaks is heard and understood, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. As always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we begin? Seeing none, I will now call Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria to make his deputation.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): As a reminder, each presenter will have seven—my apologies; I jumped the queue. I will now call on Minister Sarkaria. Minister, you will have 20 minutes to make an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questions from the members of the committee.

This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of six and a half minutes for government members, two round of six and a half minutes to the official opposition members and two round of six and a half minutes to the third party. Are there any questions? Seeing none, I call upon Minister Sarkaria to start his deputation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Good morning. Thank you very much, Chair, for the opportunity to be here and thank you to all the members that are present as well. I look forward to having this discussion with you and the opportunity to engage on this very important piece of legislation.

Our government is focused on Toronto's long-term success, and we have championed this city since we have taken office. We were elected on a promise to protect Ontario. This means protecting the economic engine of this province and country. It means stopping at nothing to elevate Ontario and Toronto's standing on the world stage. And it means doing everything in our power to unlock the full potential of Billy Bishop airport.

We've made historic investments in Toronto's infrastructure to tackle gridlock, shorten travel times and drive economic growth across the city and province. Our new deal for Toronto committed \$9 billion to support transit, housing and critical infrastructure. And as a part of that deal, we're conducting due diligence to upload the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway to the province. This will ensure that both highways remain safe, reliable and in good state of repair, and most importantly, that they remain toll free for the city's drivers.

We are building a new, state-of-the-art Ontario Place that will attract millions of visitors annually, generating economic benefits for years to come. We're investing in a new OPP detachment at Ontario Place to keep Toronto's roads safe. And now, we have the opportunity to unlock Billy Bishop airport, something that could accommodate millions of visitors each year and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic output for Toronto and our province.

The Toronto Port Authority has a bold vision to expand Billy Bishop airport to capitalize on the airport's full potential, and maximize good-paying jobs for Ontario's aviation, tourism and construction industries. It's our duty to protect Ontario—our duty to make the investments that will spur economic growth here in Toronto and across the

province. That's why we're proud to put our support behind the modernization and expansion of Billy Bishop.

Billy Bishop is a critical and underused part of Ontario's transportation infrastructure, and we are stepping in to help unlock its next phase of growth. Our government is supporting a long-term modernization and expansion of Billy Bishop airport by moving to assume the city of Toronto's responsibilities in the tripartite agreement and take ownership of the city-owned airport lands in exchange for fair compensation. An expanded Billy Bishop will help meet rising demand, relieve the pressure on Pearson, increase competition, give travelers more choice and create good-paying jobs. These are the kinds of infrastructure investments Ontario needs to stay competitive, support future growth and keep the people in this province moving.

We tabled the Building Transit Faster Act to streamline project delivery and accelerate provincial transit projects for the city, such as the Ontario Line subway. We introduced the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act to accelerate construction of Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, which will save drivers across the GTA valuable time each day. With the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, we are doubling down on our commitment to building infrastructure that will make Toronto stronger. We are taking a stand against the naysayers and showing what we can accomplish when the government of Ontario puts its full weight behind the city of Toronto.

Currently, Billy Bishop airport serves approximately two million passengers each year. Billy Bishop connects Toronto to about 20 cities across Canada and the United States. The airport generates about \$1.8 billion in economic output each year and contributes \$900 million to Ontario's GDP. But it could do so much more, and it will do so much more.

According to the Toronto Port Authority, expanding the airport could attract millions more travelers annually, contributing an estimated \$8.5 billion to Canada's economy each year by 2050, and support close to 23,000 jobs in Ontario's construction sector alone. We're doing our part to make that vision a reality—to unleash Billy Bishop airport's full economic potential by adding more routes, more convenience for millions of travelers across this province.

We can do this. And through our government's support [*inaudible*] make improvements to the terminal building and enhance access to Toronto's waterfront as a part of this process. We will stop at nothing to protect Ontario, and expanding the Billy Bishop airport will unlock opportunities that will transform travel across southern Ontario and northern Ontario for generations to come.

1010

We're only weeks away from FIFA World Cup 2026 kicking off right here in our city, in Toronto, with thousands of tourists from around the world expected to come through the city. Our government has gone to great lengths with the city of Toronto to ensure visitors to this city enjoy a world-class experience when they are here.

We supported the city of Toronto with a \$73-million investment to accelerate repairs to the Gardiner Expressway and, thanks to that collaboration and thanks to that investment, that work has been completed more than a year and a half ahead of schedule. That saves our economy almost \$273 million a year, saving 140,000 drivers who use the Gardiner Expressway up to 22 minutes per trip.

We knew we had to reopen the Gardiner, and we got the job done. That is just one example of this government's decisive decision-making that has helped improve travel options in Toronto.

We're restoring vehicle lanes on some of the city's busiest streets, so drivers spend less time in bumper-to-bumper traffic and more time with their families. We are harmonizing municipal road-building standards across the GTA so Toronto and other cities in the GTA can build the roads that people are counting on and using every single day.

In addition to carrying out due-diligence work to upload the DVP and the Gardiner Expressway to the province, we're also looking at bold new ways to fight gridlock in the GTA and the city of Toronto. That includes the studying of the feasibility of building a driver transit tunnel underneath a section of the 401 highway, a revolutionary concept that would dramatically improve traffic flow along one of the most congested highway corridors in North America.

We are building Highway 413, which will save thousands of drivers in York, Peel and Halton regions up to 30 minutes per trip. And last week, we announced shovels are in the ground on the Bradford Bypass, a new four-lane highway that will save drivers in York region and Simcoe county up to 35 minutes per trip.

We're twinning the Garden City Skyway bridge on the QEW, a critical route to Niagara Falls. We are laying the groundwork to widen Highway 401 in Durham region and Highway 400 in Barrie.

Drivers across the GTA have had enough of sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, and we've heard from them loud and clear. That's why we are making historic investments in transportation infrastructure to fight gridlock, cut commute times and keep people moving. Each of these investments in highways and roads will ensure drivers across the GTA can get where they're going quickly and easily each day, and ensure visitors to Toronto can experience everything southern Ontario has to offer without being stuck in gridlock.

The expansion of Billy Bishop airport is the next step in our journey to support Toronto's economy by investing in world-class transportation infrastructure, and we look forward to the city welcoming millions more visitors from around the globe each year.

Public transit is a key driver of our economy and our quality of life. As we move forward to enable the Toronto Port Authority's expansion of Billy Bishop airport, we'll be welcoming more business travellers and tourists to Ontario, and they'll be counting on our public transit to get where they're going.

Our government is investing nearly \$70 billion over the next 10 years. It is pegged as the largest expansion in public transit in North American history; it is the greatest and largest expansion of subways in Canadian history as well. With the FIFA World Cup just around the corner, these investments have never been more important.

We're increasing GO Transit service during specific events like the World Cup to accommodate larger crowds; to move them through public transit. We're adding more bus trips from downtown Toronto to Niagara Falls so visitors to this city can experience Canada's top tourist destinations. And our historic GO Expansion Program will deliver two-way, all-day services on GO Transit's busiest railroads. Our GO expansions and extensions will deliver new and improved service to communities in Durham region, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton and Niagara. To date, we've spent close to \$15 billion to deliver faster and more frequent service across the GO network, and we're seeing these results.

We've recently launched the first-ever weekend service from Toronto to Kitchener, making it easier to access the finest Oktoberfest activities outside of Germany. This summer, we're launching GO rail service from Toronto to Stratford, making it easier than ever for thousands of visitors to get to the world-renowned Stratford Festival. We've broken ground on a Bowmanville expansion, which will expand the Lakeshore line almost 20 kilometres deeper into Durham region. We opened the Confederation GO station in Hamilton, and completed upgrades to West Harbour GO station that are saving almost 250,000 commuters in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls 15 minutes per round trip. Construction is under way at Caledonia GO in Toronto, a new station on the Barrie line that will serve as a vital transportation hub for commuters and tourists. We have shovels in the ground at Woodbine GO, a new station on the Kitchener line that will provide a direct connection to Woodbine Racetrack. Each of these investments will allow commuters and tourists to travel throughout the GTA effortlessly.

The Eglinton Crosstown and the Finch West LRT are up and running, transporting more than 100,000-plus commuters across Toronto each day.

Construction is under way across the entirety of the Ontario Line, which will give the city of Toronto 15 new subway stations. Wait times for the next train on the Ontario Line can be as low as 90 seconds, and 400,000 people will move through this line each and every single day once it is operational.

We are moving forward to build the Yonge North subway extension, which will extend the TTC's Line 1 subway to Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill for the first time. The Scarborough subway extension will extend the TTC's Line 2 subway by almost eight kilometres. We're tunnelling the final segment of the Eglinton Crosstown West extension, which will bring Line 5 Eglinton to Mississauga, opening a new world of possibilities for thousands of commuters across the GTA. With each of these projects, we are building an integrated transit network that will improve connectivity across the GTA.

Whether you live here or you're visiting, it's never been easier to get around or more affordable. We've recently extended the One Fare program, which is saving transit riders up to \$1,600 a year by allowing free transfers between the TTC, GO Transit and participating transit agencies across the GTA. Since One Fare launched, the program has enabled 82 million free transfers, saving Ontarians more than \$264 million—money back into their pockets. We've recently tabled legislation that, if passed, would pave the way for One Fare 2.0. There has never been a better time to take transit in the GTA, and we're continuing to make service faster, easier, more convenient and also more reliable.

We're building a world-class transit network that will support growth, create jobs and keep our economy moving. By supporting the expansion of Billy Bishop airport, we are taking another step forward to strengthen connectivity across the region. As Ontario faces growing economic uncertainty, we have a responsibility to build the infrastructure our economy needs to stay competitive. I'm proud to be a part of the government that is taking action to support Toronto's long-term economic growth and strengthen Ontario's transportation network.

The Building Billy Bishop Airport Act would allow the province to take control of city-owned lands at the airport in exchange for fair compensation. The province would also assume the role of the city in the tripartite agreement governing the airport, allowing us to partner with the Toronto Port Authority and the federal government to make this expansion project a success. And as always, we will commit and fully meet our duty to consult with Indigenous communities. We will also continue to uphold strong environmental protections as we move this work forward.

1020

Billy Bishop has an enormous potential to support Toronto's growth, Ontario's growth, as well as Canada's growth. It can strengthen regional connectivity and give travellers more choice. We cannot let that potential go unrealized—and Toronto is a world-class city. If we look across major North American regions at Toronto's scale, relying on more than one commercial airport, or a multi-airport system, is necessary. Houston, for example, has Bush and Hobby; Dallas has DFW and Love Field; south Florida has Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach; New York has JFK, LaGuardia and Newark; Chicago has O'Hare and Midway.

The idea that a region the size of the GTA should make better use of Billy Bishop is not radical, it is common sense. We cannot, as I said before, let that potential go unrealized. That is why we tabled the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, to unlock that full potential of one of Ontario's most important transportation assets—something that will provide opportunities for generations to come. It will help reduce congestion, travel cost and economic competitiveness, and that is why we need to continue to drive forward on a project like this. Supporting the long-term modernization and expansion of Billy Bishop

airport is critical as a part of Ontario's plan for the future to remain competitive.

Chair, as we see south of the border, we need to ensure that Toronto, Ontario, Canada is more self-reliant, is more resilient, is more competitive when we look into the future. We need to ensure that our economy has every opportunity possible to build to scale. When we look across Canada, we see our political leaders speaking about nation-building projects; about making sure that we build not only for today, not for the next five years but for generations to come. At this point in time in our country's history we must unite under large infrastructure projects that will change the way we commute and change the way we do business in the province.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Billy Bishop is one of Ontario's busiest airports. It is one of the Canada's busiest airports, serving over 20 cities across Canada and North America. That is why we will continue to work to ensure that the residents of Ontario have better travel options, there is more competition in the airline industry and more service to remote rural communities that are serviced through Billy Bishop, like those in northern Ontario.

With that, Chair, I thank you for you the opportunity to speak before the committee and its members. I will turn it back over to you to start our round of discussion with our members with respect to this piece of legislation.

Thank you very much, Chair, and I will pass it back over to you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Minister, for your presentation.

Before we start the first round of questioning, I would like to bring to the attention of the committee two important issues to keep the decorum of the meeting and be more productive. First of all, when you ask questions, please allow the witnesses to answer the question as they see fit. Second, focus your questions on Bill 110 and don't try to interject any other issues not related to Bill 110. Thank you very much for your attention.

We will start this round with the government side—MPP Grewal. The government side has six and a half minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation today. The questions I want to put to you are more so—how is this airport expansion going to support Ontarians, not just in Toronto, but outside of Toronto? What kind of connectivity is this going to increase for the average commuter that flies? With this increased competition, would this have any impact on fares? And in general, what kind of economic impact is this going to bring to our city and to our province? I'm just going to start with you there.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much for that question.

Let's start with the first part, about northern connectivity or to communities in northern Ontario. We have seen, in the past couple of years, a significant reduction in service and options for passengers in the north. Having a

strong airport like Billy Bishop is going to be very key to continuing to ensure that communities like the north remain serviced.

Right now, there is a significant amount of individuals from the north that use Billy Bishop airport to commute into very important communities, Timmins being an example. I think you'll hear from the CEO of the Timmins hospital later today about the importance of making sure that you have continued access and what it means when some of that air access is then restricted: what it means from a health perspective; what it means for attracting physicians, doctors and the workforce in those communities to support a better quality of life.

So when we look at Billy Bishop and we look at the opportunity it presents, it's not just a Toronto opportunity, and that is what is so important. It is not only a Canada-wide, but also a province-wide opportunity, especially in communities like the north.

And when we take it a step further with respect to what it means for travellers or those who use air travel across this province, there are many advantages to having a second airport. You spoke to competition. Any time we have competition, we see an opportunity for prices to decrease. We have seen that Billy Bishop has just put forward and completed a \$30-million investment from the federal government in pre-clearance. That pre-clearance has now allowed additional flights into different communities in the US—I believe some of those being Chicago, LaGuardia and Nashville, as well—and that gives options for travellers in all of Ontario a different airport to use to get to where they need to go.

Pearson is one of the busiest airports in the world. It connects a significant amount of international passengers and they have done a great job at it. This could almost be seen as complementary, but also something that will support travellers across this province. So the more options our travellers can have—if you are coming in from the Durham region and you don't want to go all the way to Pearson and you want to use Billy Bishop, or you live in the city core and you can use Billy Bishop instead of having to go to Pearson—those are all the benefits that this airport can derive for an individual passenger.

The benefits are significant and that is why we are driving forward with this approach. We are supporting the north and also supporting more demand—more air travel options for consumers across the province.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Minister, in your remarks earlier, you spoke about this being a nation-building project: how it's something for Canada, something for Ontario, something for Toronto. What are we looking at in terms of GDP numbers, investments, job creation, job creation during construction and all the added benefits that come to local residents with this project?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: If we look at how important Billy Bishop is just for Ontario's economy, there are currently close to 4,900 people employed by Billy Bishop, almost directly through their services. As these operations increase, that number could get up to close to 10,000 employees. That tells you how many

people depend on Billy Bishop just for a paycheque every single day.

When you look at a 25-year period, you can see economic output of almost \$140 billion derived from Billy Bishop in the future as we continue this modernization and continue the opportunity to attract more investment, to attract more people, tourists, businesses—everything put together.

1030

If you look at just the economic contribution of Billy Bishop today in Toronto, it's close to \$900 million in economic output for Ontario's GDP. When we tie this all back, this is so important for us from a competitiveness perspective.

Why are we talking about a nation-building project today? It's because of the threat we face from south of the border where now we have to become more self-reliant, we have to become more resilient and we have to become a nation that can survive on its own. How do you do that? You build world-class transportation infrastructure across this province, and that's exactly what we are doing through this.

Not only it is going to create thousands of jobs during the construction time period, thousands of full-time jobs in the operations of this airport, but it will make Ontario, it will make Toronto, it will make Canada that much more competitive on a national scale. That is why we have to march forward on this project. That is why we have to get shovels in the ground, support the Toronto Port Authority on this modernization plan and continue to enable this airport to be a success moving forward.

We can also look at this from—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Minister. The time is up for this round for the government.

We move to the official opposition. MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll ask the minister to give brief, succinct answers.

Our members have come from as far away as Thunder Bay with questions that our residents have asked us to ask the minister. So, yes or no, has a business case been done for the expansion of Billy Bishop to allow jets?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Look, Toronto Port Authority has led numerous reports; a numerous amount of work on this process. You see to date that we've got over two million passengers. The federal government just invested \$30 million—

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll take that as a no because I didn't hear, "Yes, there is a business case." If there is a business case—

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: You can't put words into my mouth.

Mr. Chris Glover: You didn't say no.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm going to continue to tell you that they continue to do this and they continue—as they've been very transparent—

Mr. Chris Glover: I'm going to reclaim my time.

My next question is, on March 23, when the Premier announced that he would be expanding Billy Bishop to allow for 10 million passengers and jets, he said the federal

government is on board with the plan. When did the conversations with the federal government begin?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We always have conversations with the federal government on a variety of issues, and we'll continue to engage. Myself, as Minister of Transportation—I'll continue to meet with the federal Minister of Transportation. The Premier works very closely with the Prime Minister, especially in the wake of the threats south of the border, to continue to make sure that we are protecting Ontario and we are—

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll reclaim my time. Are you are confirming what the Premier said: that the federal government is on board with the plan to have jets at Billy Bishop?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: They're going to work with us, and you can see the statements from that. You can see the statements from the Prime Minister and see the statements from the federal Minister of Transportation on the modernization of Billy Bishop. If you would like to get their comment on it, I suggest you ask them. But we're working with them to move this forward on a process moving forward.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. The Billy Bishop airport is Canada's smallest airport, sandwiched between high-rises on the waterfront and the Toronto Islands, which acts as a bird sanctuary with 40,000 cormorants in high season, 1,100 Tundra swans flying across in the fall. There are literally hundreds of thousands of birds, which all could lead to bird strikes like the one that led to the crashing of the jet in the Hudson River with the miracle on the Hudson.

It's in the most dangerous location, and it's Canada's smallest airport, and your government proposes to have jets landing 200 metres from an elementary school every two and a half minutes. Would you send your children to that school?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: First of all, safety is our primary concern. Transport Canada guidelines will dictate the safety. This is why that we are moving forward with the first phase on the runway. To suggest that safety wouldn't be front and centre in that is kind of ridiculous, MPP Glover.

I think we should move away from the sensationalization and comments like that because Billy Bishop moves over two million people every single year. And a lot of people rely on that airport. It's done so in a very safe manner, and nothing would be done outside of those measures.

Mr. Chris Glover: The airport already operates with exemptions from Transport Canada's safety standards because it is too close to the schools. There are six schools within what would be called the prime hazard zone, according to Transport Canada. It's too close to the high-rises. It's too close to the bird sanctuaries both on the Toronto Islands and Tommy Thompson Park.

The risk that you're increasing—so you're going from having turboprops land every 20 minutes to having jets, which suck in birds and can cause catastrophic failure of the engines, land every two and a half minutes.

Would you commit to not allowing this airport to expand if it violates Transport Canada's safety standards?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Everything we do is with Transport Canada, MPP Glover, and you know that very well. Anything that's operating today on that island is with the support of Transport Canada. To suggest that they don't support, that the safety isn't in place or anything is quite ridiculous because they are the governing authority over it.

To suggest this isn't supported by Transport Canada guidelines is ridiculous. We need to move forward. Let's not sensationalize this.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll tell you it's not my statement—

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: There are two million people that use this airport every single year—

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll reclaim my time. It is not my statement that this airport operates with exemptions from Transport Canada's safety's standards; it is actually a document that we received. An email from an employee of Transport Canada says that this airport does operate with exemptions from safety standards.

I'll pass it over to my colleague.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation. I was listening very intently.

I'm very curious to know, with respect to business case follow-up questioning, you have not confirmed that the province of Ontario has carried out its own business case, yet you have made claims that \$8.5 billion of economic output will be derived from the expansion of Billy Bishop airport. How much money from the Ontario taxpayers are you committing to expanding this airport?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The only money that we are committing for this airport is the fair-value compensation to the city of Toronto. There were operating dollars that they lost. They will get that and fair market value for the real estate portion that the city gives. No other money will be given to anyone.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: So where is the business case coming from, then? Because the government of Ontario has not concluded its own business case, and here you are committing money to take over the city's choice.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We're committing money to the city of Toronto for taking over their role in the tripartite agreement. Any revenue that they lost for the yearly operating that they might have received or any real estate are the only dollars we are committing.

The rest of it would be governed as an expansion like, for example, Pearson. It's a self-funded expansion. Billy Bishop would be a self-funded expansion in their own—

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Where is that business case?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up for the official opposition.

We will move to the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. It's such a pleasure to be here with you. Thank you very much, Minister, for your presentation.

I just want to start with how we got here. We have a lot of things the province needs to deal with: health care,

housing, education, transportation—different transportation. I'm just wondering, what was the impetus of the history to get to the Billy Bishop proposed expansion?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much, MPP. I think we've seen in the past and we continue to see a lack of commitment from the city of Toronto to ensure that there's a long-term vision for Billy Bishop.

There are two million people who use this airport every single year. When we look at what's happening to this province and this country because of the threats we face from south of the border, we need to build a more resilient, self-reliant economy. Projects like this will help make Ontario and Toronto more competitive.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: There was a city council meeting in October of 2024, and there was a report that was Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport Runway End Safety Areas (RESA). We know that Billy Bishop airport is in violation of safety protocols and so it was proposed to look at the different types. Three different options for the RESA, 1, 2 and 3: RESA 1 included minimum land mass to meet the regulatory requirement; RESA 2 included that as well as additional taxiway; RESA 3 included additional airside roads, sound barrier and underground utility corridor.

1040

From what I'm hearing, RESA 3 would have been the best option, considering that eight vehicles a year pass over that runway, including school buses. That is worrisome for me. RESA 3 was not adopted. Is that why you are here today looking at Billy Bishop?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We're here on Billy Bishop because we think it is too important for us not to ensure that it's protected for the long term. It's too important for Toronto, it's too important for Ontario and it's too important for Canada to give up this opportunity and not ensure that it is here, from a long-term perspective. We've heard countless individuals ask for this airport to be turned into a park, for this airport to cease operations, and that just cannot happen. We have to realize its full potential. It's an underutilized asset of this city and this country and this province. That is why we are moving forward on plans to build this expansion.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I don't think it's as easy as waving a magic wand to accomplish what supposedly the government wants to accomplish; we haven't seen a plan, so we don't fully know. I think the reason people like Billy Bishop is it's a boutique airport—cute and quaint—and it works well as is, although it needs additional safety requirements. But it does not need to be blown up into a major airport, because we're already spending \$3 billion to expand Lester B. Pearson. We have a fantastic major airport there. It's great to have two. You mentioned cities with two. Chicago does not have a waterfront airport because of what Mayor Daley did in carving the Xs in the runway and saving the waterfront in Chicago to be the glorious sight it is.

But you are currently undergoing an expansion at Lester B. Pearson so the capacity will go from 40-some-million to 65 million passengers, a \$3-billion price

tag. We have the UP Express that gets you there. I personally take the TTC: three bucks right across, take the bus, easy-peasy lemon squeezy. So why would you want to shoehorn in a major airport down in one of the most congested intersections in the busiest city in Toronto? Where's the logic on that?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, it's complementary, MPP, and I think that's exactly what we're looking at. World-class cities, as I mentioned in my remarks—New York, Chicago, London city—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Not Chicago though.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: But they do have two airports.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Not on the waterfront.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: All of these airports serve a significant opportunity for those regions, those areas to continue to attract more business travellers, more tourists. You look at what we're doing on the waterfront—the revitalization of Ontario Place, the building of the Ontario Line, this new airport—it will significantly change the way that people interact with the city—

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: —on a global stage, and that is why it is so important for us to continue to move forward, especially at a time when we face uncertainty from our greatest trading partner in the past, in the south. We need to build these projects to make ourselves more self-reliant, to be more resilient. That is truly the reason behind the expansion of this project, and also give more opportunities for people in the north to travel, as well.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I just wonder what this government's obsession is with downtown Toronto, with the waterfront. I know from being on city council with the Premier, who was councillor at the time, there was a proposal for a Ferris wheel. There's the spa out at Ontario Place; there's a convention centre. There's now—well, there was a jet proposed, but now there's Billy Bishop. I just wonder, don't you, in your riding, and your other members' constituents—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, MPP McMahon. The time for the third party is over. That concludes the first round.

We will move to the second round, and we will start with the government. MPP Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you, Minister, for appearing before the committee and for your presentation. I would like to take this opportunity to first of all thank you and your entire team, and of course the Premier, for making historic investments in Toronto's infrastructure to tackle gridlock, shorten travel times and also that will drive economic growth for years to come. And especially, thank you for your and the Ministry of Transportation's investment in expanding the Billy Bishop airport.

At the same time, we are also building a state-of-the-art Ontario Place that will attract millions of visitors each year. Along with the Billy Bishop airport, it will not only be a great boost to Ontario's GDP, but it will definitely

help our small and medium-sized businesses because they rely on quick and reliable travel.

Can you explain how the project will help those small and medium-sized businesses?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Absolutely. Thank you very much for that question. It helps me answer MPP McMahon's question as well, which is, "What is the benefit to the rest of the province?"

It gives travellers across Ontario more options to travel.

It hopefully reduces the cost of airfare in this province, because of the individuals that have more competition in the space and opportunity to travel at cheaper costs. But when we look at it from the perspective of small and medium-sized businesses, this will help attract significantly more tourists, significantly more traffic into our cities. And when you have more options to travel—you make it easier, make it cheaper—you provide more competition. It allows for more people to get here.

And so, when you look at what is happening on the waterfront right now with Ontario Place, which I know you and your team have been working very closely and hard on to get it out of what it used to be—which was just sitting there idle—into a world-class feature on the waterfront, it's about driving more people and more tourism into our cities that will then ultimately bring million of dollars of economic output, which supports anyone, from a taxi driver, from a restaurant owner, to an inn owner.

Everything would be impacted through significantly increased access to the city of Toronto and to this province. If you're using that airport for business travel, it's even that much easier for you to be able to participate in those meetings and have access to Toronto, which is the financial centre of this entire country. So not only will it help you connect internally between the province, but it also helps you connect to the country and to other jurisdictions as well.

It would help a lot of people in northern communities. With Billy Bishop, hopefully we can get more access into the north through air travel. That will drive opportunities as we continue to build out the Ring of Fire and more investment into that region. It would hopefully drive more tourism and more individuals to get into those communities, which are hard to get to without—in some circumstances—air travel being a possibility.

I think, from that perspective, when we look at what the output is from a GDP perspective into the future, \$8.5 billion is a number we can look to that will then help support thousand of new jobs in construction, operational and other small and medium-sized businesses.

One of the most exciting parts about this expansion plan is really the full economic potential of what this airport could possibly be.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: How much time do we have, Chair?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Two minutes.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Okay, I would like to pass it on to MPP Saunderson.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you very much, Minister, for coming today and giving us a more fulsome background on this important piece of legislation.

You've talked about this not just being about Toronto and the economic impact, and I wanted to pivot a bit on that. As a former county council member of Simcoe county, I know the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport is part of the Southern Ontario Airport Network—and it's about leveraging, as Pearson hits capacity and other airports hit capacity. There are 11 municipal airports that are part of this, Billy Bishop being one of them. I think, as you said, it's the third-busiest in Ontario behind Pearson and the Ottawa airport.

1050

But it seems to me it would be helpful if you could talk a little bit about the higher-level planning. Because we want to leverage our existing infrastructure, and each of these 11 airports plays a critical role in moving people and goods across the province.

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

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I know when I was at the table in Simcoe county, they were talking about using that as a cargo airport to shunt cargo away. It's near the 400 corridor. So we need to be near arterial roads. Of course, Billy Bishop being right in downtown Toronto makes it an obvious choice for expansion. So I'm wondering if you can talk about the thought process and leveraging existing transportation assets across the province.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Absolutely, and that's a great question. I think each airport has its own opportunity. It's a function of our transportation assets working together collaboratively. How do we utilize the full potential of that? Whether it's cargo, for example, in Simcoe; whether it's business travel, tourist travel, in Billy Bishop—what this allows is an integrated approach. And it actually allows for more integrated access in between these airports as well.

Right now, we see Pearson that continues to expand, which is amazing and great. They've done a wonderful job, but they are at capacity. They continue to build forward, but there is an opportunity for a different type of—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Minister, the government time is up.

We move to the official opposition. MPP Bell, go ahead.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you, Minister, for coming in. Has the government done an assessment on the health impacts of expanding Billy Bishop airport?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We will work with the Toronto Port Authority, as they have in the past, and we will continue to do and account for everything. From a safety regulation, from a health regulation—everything will be in compliance as we move forward. It will be no different from that perspective as we operate with any sort of airport—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for answering the question. What I hear, given that you mentioned you are looking at moving ahead with working with the port authority, is that a basic health impact assessment has not yet been done.

This is from the National Institutes of Health. They have looked at the impact of ultrafine particles, which is the type of pollutant that will increase with an expansion of jet activity on the waterfront. The National Institutes of Health have found, conclusively, that this kind of pollution can lead, and does lead, to an increase in stroke, heart attack, lung cancer, cognitive decline, dementia, asthma, COPD and premature death.

So my question to you is, can the government commit to doing a full environmental assessment, which includes an assessment on the impact of health on nearby waterfront residents, on the impact of the airport expansion, before proceeding?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, look, as I have said to you in the past—

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's a simple yes-or-no question.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As I've said to you in the past, I want to move away from so much of the sensationalized approach to—

Ms. Jessica Bell: This isn't sensationalized at all.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: It is. Absolutely it is.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I am quoting the National Institutes of Health.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We're talking about an airport that continues to serve two million people every single day. We're going to have the highest standards of safety—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister, I asked you a very clear question.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Colleagues, colleagues—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you. I'm ceding back my time.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We're going to continue to have—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Minister, please—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister, I asked you a very—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Bell—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Can you commit—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Bell, the floor is not yours.

Colleagues, I mentioned from the beginning: Let's be polite to each other. Let the witnesses answer the questions. Don't interrupt them every second, because this is not productive for the entire proceedings of the meeting.

So, the floor is yours again.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you.

My final question to you is: All levels of government have made a decision to move ahead with housing construction in the waterfront area. We're now hearing concerns that the expansion of the airport will lead to a decline in housing construction, including affordable housing construction.

Have you done an assessment on the impact of the Billy Bishop expansion on housing starts in that area?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I am confident—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes or no?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I am confident that the expansion of Billy Bishop—everything can work

together with respect to that. Whether it's housing, whether it's having a world-class airport that supports millions of passengers and billions of dollars in economic output, everything can work together and happen at the same time—

Ms. Jessica Bell: So what I'm hearing from you is that you haven't yet done that assessment.

I'm going to be handing my time to MPP Mamakwa. Thank you.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:—and I'm very, very confident that that will happen and that will move forward.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Mamakwa?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: How much time do I have?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Three minutes.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Minister. I know that several times you spoke about northern communities, and I know the air travel in the north. I know that we can see that the Ministry of Transportation is spending their time and resources defending the expansion of Billy Bishop airport in downtown Toronto.

I know, in 2024, the Northern Ontario Aviation Committee was restarted by regional carriers to adjust the increasing regulatory and infrastructure challenges impacting air transportation services in the north. There are members from Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Indigenous Services Canada, NavCan and others. Only two weeks ago, we learned that the Ministry of Transportation, through the remote airports office, walked away from the committee.

Why is this government, the management of the remote airports office, walking away from the responsibility to improve air transportation in northern Ontario?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, look, I can tell you that, as the Minister of Transportation, we're going to continue to work and ensure that we improve transportation outcomes for those people in the north. Billy Bishop is a part of that plan.

One of the most significant beneficiaries of the Billy Bishop expansion would be northern communities, and we've seen how many people are supported in the northern communities through Billy Bishop today. That is exactly what we will continue to do and support over the next couple of years as this expansion continues to build out and as the consultation continues to move forward.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Gilmour.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you so much, Minister. I've been listening intently to what you've said, and my understanding is—when you were asked by my colleagues about the business case—that you were unable to produce one at the time that supports this \$8.5-billion economic potential claim.

It doesn't take into consideration the mitigation for the health, for cancer screenings, prevention care.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Similarly, you haven't mentioned the port authority's report, which was hidden from Ontarians until a freedom-of-information request brought it to light. It spoke about bird strikes, risks to small boaters

that would get knocked down by jet blasts. In addition to this, your own press conference failed to mention that Bill 110 gives your government the entire Toronto Islands.

So my question is, why did you not tell people that you'd be taking over the entire Toronto Islands, and if you are not, will you amend the bill to ensure that the islands remain Torontonians' forever?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: So just to be clear on that, ending the time: We're not going to take over the entire islands. The pins that have been identified are going to be surveyed, and whatever is not needed for the airport expansion will be returned to the city. And I've said that in my conference and I continue to say that today—

MPP Alexa Gilmour: So there may be more of the island being taken over for the airport.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Every pin that we have put forward has been identified. It doesn't mean the entirety of those pins will be taken—

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

We move to the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay; so many questions, so little time.

Back to the original question of how we got here, how you were just sitting around one day and came up with this wild and woolly idea: Were there any conversations with the mayor of Toronto?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The team—the mayor of Toronto with the Premier, absolutely. He said that in his press conference as well. Conversations—whether she agrees or disagrees is different, but absolutely.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay.

It's a tripartite agreement, right? So three parties, obviously. Do you believe the province can act unilaterally if this upload happens, if this land grab happens? Do you think the province can act unilaterally on that?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Look, we will continue to have conversations with the city of Toronto, take input from the city of Toronto, but we've made clear that this has to move forward and we have to give long-term stability to Billy Bishop.

We've heard numerous times a year, on councils, that there are individuals that want to turn this into a park, that they want to cease operations at Billy Bishop. We just cannot afford to do that. It's something that we're not going to entertain. So this gives a long-term predictability to Billy Bishop to support communities in the north, more access to air travellers across the province, and we'll build upon that—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So you will require consent from the other two parties in the tripartite agreement.

1100

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, this tripartite agreement, we will take over the city of Toronto's part of it—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right. But there will still be two other parties. Will you require consent from them and work with them, or will it just be the province of

Ontario, the government, just steamrolling unilaterally over the island airport?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The Toronto Port Authority continues to and has always consulted significantly on any of their proposals. Will we still have to—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So that's a yes?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: What we still continue to do—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Please direct your questions through the Chair.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, what we can still continue to do, MPP McMahon, is have those consultations. Everything will be consulted on, every plan that's put forward will be consulted on, but we will assume the city's tripartite agreement—of their portion.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. So, for the record, I think the island airport works well as is. I'm not proposing to carve Xs into the runway like Mayor Daley; I'm not proposing to turn it into a park, even though I'm a big green girl. But I think, leave well enough alone. Certainly do the safety measures. RESA 3 would have been—I think we wouldn't be in this situation had the city of Toronto adopted the runway end safety area number 3, but here we are.

So, down at the waterfront, at Eireann Quay, you have Little Norway Park, which—we know the history. If we didn't before, we know it now: a Norwegian pilot training base, very important in our history. You have a pin in that park, so it's looking like you would pave over a war memorial. We also have—I've been involved with the Corleck, the Irish immigration event space and museum right by Ireland Park, including—this government just gave \$2.2 million to them. So how will this proposal affect those two significantly historical entities?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Very clear from the start, again—I'm not sure why Little Norway Park became an issue, because we said from the start that—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: There's a pin in the map there.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: And we said that the park would continue to remain as is or even greater; the Toronto Port Authority has said and confirmed in their release as well. So we'll continue to work with everyone involved in that. Little Norway Park is going to continue to remain a park. The Toronto Port Authority has said that; I have reaffirmed that, and we'll continue to—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So can I have you on record: Little Norway Park will be untouched and the Corleck and Ireland Park will be untouched?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, I've said that in the past as well, MPP McMahon, and I've said that it's going to remain a park and it could be even greater—equal to or greater—than what we see. And that's the port authority's own words as well, just as recently as a couple of weeks ago.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: How do you feel this proposal will affect boat traffic? Cargo ships, eastern gap, western channel—

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:—how will all these jets taking off, and the expansion, and the expensive, complicated underwater infrastructure that will be needed to support the runway—how will that affect boat traffic?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Well, I think everything will be complementary. The Toronto Port Authority, once again, is the authority from a marine perspective on the port there as well. So you have the ability for everyone to work together very collectively, cohesively, to build a system from a transportation perspective that will work for every one of the users on the waterfront, including on the marine side as well as the Billy Bishop expansion side. Look, it's too important a project not to proceed with, and—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: When will we see the business case?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We're going to continue—over the next couple of months, you will see there is a lot of information that will be put to consultation, continue to be put to consultation with the communities, and—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. If it doesn't improve—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up. That concludes the panel for the first hour.

Thank you, Minister, for coming and sharing your input with us.

We will take a 90-second recess to reboot the mikes and also invite the next panel to take their seats. David Crombie and the city of Toronto are present here, and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association will join us virtually.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

MR. DAVID CROMBIE

CITY OF TORONTO

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Committee members, please take your seats. The witnesses are ready, so we will—

Interjections.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Please cut your side chat and take your seats.

We will start with the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. Please go ahead and state your name and your title. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Rick Dumas: Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Rick Dumas, mayor to the town of Marathon and president of NOMA, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. I certainly wish I was there in person, but I live in northern Ontario and it's a bit difficult sometimes to get to Toronto.

NOMA represents 37 municipalities across northwestern Ontario, spanning from Manitoba's border to the west and Hornepayne and Greenstone to the east. Together, our municipalities represent hundreds of thousands of residents across urban, rural, remote and Indigenous-connected communities throughout the region. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you via Zoom in committee today in regard to Bill 110.

The future modernization of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, from the perspective of northwestern Ontario municipalities collectively, is not a luxury; it is an essential piece of infrastructure for Ontario. For many northern Ontarians, Billy Bishop airport serves as a critical gateway between northern Ontario and one of the economic, medical, governmental, financial centres of our province and the country: Toronto. Reliable, modern air connectivity helps keep our communities connected to the opportunities, services and investments of this province.

But frankly, this issue is not theoretical for us. It's the reality of northern Ontario living. Just last week, NOMA staff, ministers and their government staff were travelling from Timmins to Toronto Pearson following the FONOM conference in Timmins, Ontario. Due to a slow boarding and loading delays, the aircraft missed its departure window and ultimately lost its landing slot at Pearson. Once finally airborne, passengers were then faced with additional delays for roughly an hour before landing in Toronto. That experience is all too common for northern Ontario. When flights are delayed or connections are missed, it does not just impact convenience; it impacts businesses, meetings, governmental engagements, health care appointments, workforce mobility and economic productivity.

This is why strengthening and modernizing Billy Bishop airport as a stronger connection to the hub of northern Ontario flights, in NOMA's opinion, is a no-brainer, sir. NOMA supports the efforts of this and improving the modernization of the airport infrastructure in a way that strengthens safe, reliable and efficient transportation links between northern Ontario and southern Ontario.

1110

As Ontario continue to position itself as a global leader in critical minerals, mining development, forestry, energy, advanced manufacturing, northern Ontario will play a key and increasingly important role as the economic engine of this province. As you know, most of those individuals who live in southern Ontario and throughout the province travel to northern Ontario to work and provide those economic opportunities for the province, unlocking its full potential of the Ring of Fire, for example.

Strengthening the supply chain, supporting major infrastructure projects and attracting skilled workers to northern Ontario and far northern communities will require modern and dependable transportation networks. That includes aviation as a big part of this. Improved connectivity through Billy Bishop airport can help support faster business travel, improved workforce mobility and stronger economic integration between the north and the rest of Ontario.

It is also important to recognize the role travel plays in health care access for northern residents. Many northern communities' northern Ontarians regularly have to travel south for specialized medical appointments, treatment, surgeries and diagnostic services unavailable in smaller and remote communities in the north. Faster, safer and more reliable access into downtown Toronto can make a meaningful difference for patients and families already facing long travel distance and significant stresses.

This is equally important for Indigenous communities across the north and far north, where access to reliable transportation infrastructure is often directly connected to health care access, economic participation, education and essential services.

As municipalities, we believe that modernization efforts should focus on improving safety, reliability, resiliency and passenger experience while ensuring the airport continues to support Ontario's broader economic and transportation objectives. Northern Ontario does not simply pass through Toronto; we depend on Toronto. As our province continues to grow, a connection between northern Ontario and southern Ontario must continue to strengthen alongside it.

NOMA appreciates the opportunity to share the perspective of northwestern Ontario municipalities that we represent. I look forward to continued dialogue with all levels of government, strengthening transportation connectivity across Ontario.

I personally have to travel to Toronto in the next week or so to do a medical appointment. I have to travel from my community of Marathon to Thunder Bay, catch a flight, stay overnight a couple of nights in Toronto, do a medical procedure and then fly back. If any one of those things has any type of hiccup, I might not get to that appointment, so I might have to travel an extra day or two. That's the reality of northern Ontario individuals, sir, so that's one thing that we really support. The medical part is a big part of this.

But the reality is, it's not just medical; it's all the benefits that provide not only for the south to experience the economic benefits of the north, but for the northerners to have access to all those various things I just mentioned in my speech.

I want to take the opportunity to thank you and the committee members for listening. I'm certainly here to answer any of your questions you might have. Thank you very much—appreciate it.

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

Our next presenter is Mr. Crombie. Mr. Crombie, please state your name and title.

Mr. David Crombie: My name is David Crombie, and I'm a citizen. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to appear before you and the members today.

I want to make it clear that I'm opposing Bill 110. It is a unilateral and inexcusable move by the province to abandon the shared vision of the development of the Toronto waterfront, which has governed our activities for over 20 years. That vision was shared by all three levels of

government up until now. It's shared by all political parties. It's shared by a host of organizations, entities, communities, citizens who have a vision for the Toronto waterfront which brought them all together. It's a vision that calls for compatible, robust, sustainable balance of uses. That's its key. That's its strength. That's what gives it its purpose, all those uses: residential, recreational, commercial, environmental. It's that balance that's required, not the imbalance.

It's been enormously successful, Mr. Chair—enormously successful. I can give you a host of stats. Let me just try a couple. It contributes \$13 billion to the GDP. It attracts 18 million tourists every year. It leverages—it's really interesting—more than \$10.5 billion of construction value. It generates more than \$2.7 billion of taxes. I could go on.

And the work goes on. That work we've been talking about for the last 20 years—it's going on. It keeps producing all the things we need.

Let me give an example: the planned revitalization of Quayside and Ookwemin Minising. It alone will create 14,000 new homes, a good chunk of those affordable. There are an estimated 100,000 jobs—skilled jobs—in the development of those.

Bill 110, Mr. Chair, is a clear and present danger to all of the work that has been done by all of the people for so long. It is unconscionable to us who have been at it all this time that the province, with a wave of its hand, would unilaterally go about destroying it. I am asking you, to whatever strength you command: Please withdraw this bill. It'll wreck the waterfront.

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

Now we move to the city of Toronto. Please state your name and your title.

Ms. Annely Zonena: Hello, my name is Annely Zonena. I am the director of the city's waterfront secretariat.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Go ahead.

Ms. Annely Zonena: Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. As I stated, my name is Annely Zonena, and I am with the waterfront secretariat in the city planning division. The waterfront secretariat stewards investment in Toronto's waterfront in collaboration with our tri-government partners: the province of Ontario, the government of Canada and our shared agency, Waterfront Toronto.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on Bill 110. At its meeting of April 21 and 22, 2026, Toronto city council requested that I appear before hearings to provide a deputation on city council's position regarding proposed expansions to Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Today, as my predecessor did, I will emphasize that the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront has been one of the most successful examples of intergovernmental co-operation in Canada. That success has depended upon meaningful and equal partnership between all three orders of government, including the city of Toronto.

For more than 25 years, the Toronto waterfront revitalization initiative has delivered positive results for the public and has demonstrated what can be achieved when

governments work together toward a shared vision. Beginning in 1998, the city of Toronto, province of Ontario and government of Canada committed billions of dollars to transform an aging and industrial waterfront, contaminated lands, and parking lots to world-class parks, complete communities, flood-protection infrastructure, housing and public spaces.

Importantly, investment in the waterfront now generates, as Mr. Crombie stated, \$13 billion in GDP annually, supports more than 100,000 jobs and welcomes 18 million visitors a year.

Through approximately \$2.9 billion in tri-government investment to date, Toronto's central waterfront has been fundamentally transformed. In 2025 and 2026, all governments redoubled their commitment to Toronto's waterfront through investment of \$975 million in the next phase of waterfront revitalization and over \$3 billion in new transit infrastructure. These investments are delivering real public value.

Ultimately, our 25-year shared vision of Toronto's waterfront will result in housing for more than 165,000 people and create approximately 103,000 jobs along the waterfront. This work has been possible because the city has been at the table as a full and equal partner, and that must continue.

In response to early media announcements on the potential for changes to the airport, city council passed a resolution that the province should include Toronto residents and the city on waterfront decisions. This includes a municipal role in planning and governance of the waterfront and any future plans for Toronto city airport.

The city has demonstrated that a healthy waterfront can support both revitalization and a functioning airport. In 2024, the city approved the runway end safety areas, or RESA. City council supported a lease extension, providing for confidence in operations, and have publicly committed to working collaboratively with the Toronto Port Authority on the development of an airport master plan.

The city of Toronto recognizes the economic and transportation role that Billy Bishop airport plays, but we also believe that any future airport expansion must proceed with appropriate due diligence, with full consideration of broader public interests and with analysis and care to avoid unintended consequences of quickly crafted legislation. These include transportation impacts, change to housing delivery, air and water quality, the effect on the market and intrinsic value of the waterfront as an enjoyable and usable destination, among others.

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First, servicing an airport with passenger volumes approaching 10 million annual travellers, which is a five-fold increase from current levels, would have substantial implications for downtown transportation networks and congestion. Toronto's waterfront is home to major civic destinations and attractions—including Toronto Island Park, with over two million annual visitors—cultural spaces, professional sports facilities and the future Ontario Place redevelopment, which the province estimates will attract six million annual visitors.

The cumulative impact of these attractions drives trips in all modes. Increasing the airport's trip-generation for travellers and employees without proper transportation planning and transit investment will limit the success of these destinations, peoples' ability to get to them and enjoy them, and their desire to return.

Second, we must ensure that long-planned and approved housing intensification can proceed. The waterfront communities are key to unlocking housing supply critical to meet provincial targets. The central waterfront, Portlands—south Etobicoke, as well—will deliver tens of thousands of homes, including affordable and purpose-built rental housing. These plans have been developed through years of integrated planning.

An attractive market has emerged based on the character of the waterfront, including the current configuration and size of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. Any changes affecting aviation operations, height permissions, noise contours or safety regulations must be evaluated carefully. Proceeding without appropriate due diligence introduces unnecessary risks to the housing pipeline.

Third, given the airport's location on Lake Ontario, the province's Great Lakes Protection Act, federal acts and agreements, any proposal for lakefill must be accompanied by appropriate environmental due diligence. In particular, the western gap just north of the airport lands is how water circulates into Toronto's inner harbour. Impacts of constraining this waterway could result in severe degradation of the water in the harbour, exacerbating the impact of stormwater and combined sewer runoff.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the profound Indigenous significance of Toronto's waterfront and, in particular, the Toronto Islands where the airport is located. Over years of engagement with urban Indigenous peoples and First Nations, we have learned of the profound value as a place of ceremony, which endures to this day on Snake Island in particular, which is included in the lands listed in Bill 110.

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

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Any proposed land takings or airport expansion proposals should include robust engagements with Indigenous communities. For the city, the proposed Bill 110 approach to land-taking and compensation must be reviewed, as it significantly limits the city's ability to acquire land in the market to offset what may be lost.

The city of Toronto remains committed to working constructively with both the province and the federal government on the future of the waterfront. Beyond the airport, the waterfront belongs to us all, and its future should continue to be shaped through partnership, transparency and integrated planning.

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

We will start with the first round of questions. Please direct your questions and answers through the Chair. We will start with the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Thank you to Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, David Crombie

and also the city of Toronto. Thank you, Annelly, for the presentation.

Regarding the development of Billy Bishop airport—I'm quite a ways from where I fly from. One of the reasons why I'm here is I know the MTO owns and operates 29 airports in northern Ontario. And 27 of those 29 are First Nation airports in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory. I don't know if I should even call them airports, because they are gravel runways that are 3,500 feet in length. I know that two weeks ago, I mentioned earlier, MTO chose to walk away from the committee that's supposed to advocate on behalf of these airports, the northern remote airports division in Thunder Bay.

I guess just a quick question to Mayor Dumas: Can you tell me how many airports in the north can jets land at in northern Ontario?

Mr. Rick Dumas: Through the Chair: As far as I know, MPP Mamakwa, Thunder Bay and Kenora just most recently came back online. I have an airport in my community; obviously, the runway is not long enough to land. Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury: These airports are accommodating, if they can accommodate jets.

I fully understand your concern and I think that NOMA is there to assist in the discussions around the 29 airports you just mentioned. By all means, any time, you can reach out to us and have that discussion around how we can help to identify some of the concerns you just presented.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I think one of the things I heard during your presentation was equally important, talking about northern airports, remote airports, but also Billy Bishop. I know air travel in the north is critical. It's crucial. Would you agree that it would make more sense to push for more flights to the north than an expansion of Billy Bishop airport for jets?

Mr. Rick Dumas: Through the Chair: I think that they all work together. If there is more availability of flights to and from the city of Thunder Bay and basically all of our connecting points in the northwest—and then, of course, in the northeast, that would be Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury airport and Timmins, as well, heading off into Toronto—I believe it all works together. If there's more availability of flights more regionally, with us in the northwest and the northeast connecting through to Billy Bishop, it just provides opportunity for us to have access to the city of Toronto's downtown and have the availability—as I mentioned in my speech, about the availability of health care, the economics and future travel to other destinations, to and from Toronto.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll address my first question to David Crombie. It's an honour to have you here, sir. My father is a similar age, and my father said that when he was coming to the CNE grounds when he was a kid, you held your nose as you drove along Lake Shore, because there were abattoirs and soap factories.

You were the chair of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront from 1988 to 1992. Now, Toronto's waterfront is Canada's number one tourist destination with a record 28 million visitors in 2025. You

said in your speech that Bill 110 is a clear and present danger and would destroy the waterfront. Can you expand on how it would destroy the waterfront?

Mr. David Crombie: I don't know what more I can say about it. The crucial thing to remember is that people work very, very hard—institutions, levels of government—to drive a balance of the uses. It's not a very sexy kind of phrase, but the balance of uses is crucial to any balanced, good, useful waterfront in the world and that's particularly true in Toronto. When you move away from that balance, that causes the problem. People want more housing; if they use more and more, we've got less recreation or fewer flights. We need the balance, and what's happened with this bill has been a unilateral abandonment of that shared vision which the province of Ontario was a part of. It's a shame.

Mr. Chris Glover: Right. So, you're saying if this goes through, if we have 10 million passengers landing in jets that are landing and taking off from Billy Bishop every 2.5 minutes, that would dominate the waterfront and all of the other uses—all the tourists, all the boating, all the waterfront events like the Caribbean carnival and the CNE—would all be drowned out.

Mr. David Crombie: Absolutely. Not only will it hurt the future in terms of uses—because it's not about what's flying; it's what happens on the ground as a consequence. That's what makes the big change. What's also beginning to happen already is that it's placing a bit of a chill on investment and peoples' hopes and dreams of what they're going to do with the waterfront until the Legislature deals with this bill.

Mr. Chris Glover: Right, okay. Thank you very much.

I'll just ask a quick question to Ms. Zonena. You mentioned hydrology, that if the runways expanded then it will reduce the flow of water through the harbourfront and this would lead to catastrophic consequences. Could you expand on that?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Yes, thanks. Through the Chair: What we know is that the Toronto Port Authority's own EA from 2017 identified that as a primary area of concern that needs to be studied. What I included that in my remarks for is to provide evidence of the range of impacts and complexity that comes with this work.

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

We move to the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you to our presenters for coming in and Zooming today. Thank you, all of you, for your expertise and knowledge and experience, and most especially to our legendary speaker, David Crombie, who has a very illustrious history of city builder, community builder and politician, including “tiny, perfect mayor,” which we love. You've been around; you know the history of the waterfront. You are the biggest champion of Toronto's waterfront, in my opinion.

Can you tell us a little bit about the history of Little Norway Park, the significance of that and whether or not

you're disturbed to see a pin on a map for Bill 110 with Little Norway Park in it?

Mr. David Crombie: Yes, Little Norway Park—Little Norway began in 1942 with the Commonwealth aircraft force to train people for the war. And so there were people, mainly from Norway—other parts of Scandinavia, but mainly Norway, and they came to that part of the island airport to train. Many of them stayed to play and stayed on as citizens, so that's where it began. And so, to commemorate that—to commemorate the service that the airport itself served, as well as the people in it—Norway park was created.

If you go down there on May 17 every year, you will see all the Norwegians. They just changed it to another park, but historically, they've used Norway park for their May 17 national celebrations, and they invite people to come. It has an historic understanding of the waterfront.

But the waterfront—if I can hitchhike, Madam—has all of its history. Toronto history is made on the waterfront. The relationship between land and water is the crucial human need. The way in which humans have dealt with the relationship between land and water has been vital. Mostly it has required a balance of uses, and we need that.

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

There's also Ireland Park. Would you like to give us a little history on that?

Mr. David Crombie: Which one, sorry?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Ireland Park.

Mr. David Crombie: Ireland Park.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Yes, with the famine sculptures.

Mr. David Crombie: Some Irish nationalist, Robert—I can't think of his name—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Kearns.

Mr. David Crombie: Kearns—Robert Kearns started working on that part of the waterfront some time ago. It was dealing primarily with the Irish immigration in the 1840s all through the whole of the St. Lawrence, into Lake Ontario, and certainly here. It was a major, major transformation of the people who lived in the place. It was part, of course, of the great plague, and so it had enormous impact on the development of medical history and hospital history here in Toronto.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And so, when you see, in Bill 110, a pin in a map right down in Little Norway Park, with all this history—and we want to honour our people, our past, basically. Would you think that paving over a war memorial is something that we should be doing?

Mr. David Crombie: No, of course not. But let me extend that a little. It's really important that we understand that there will always be change on the waterfront. There will always be a change in the airport. There will always be a change in how—etc. etc. It's how you contain that change, so it doesn't have one use dominating the others. If you decide that in the future, we need to pave over Norway park because that's the way of success and opportunity, then I think you should have another thought coming.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you.

To the Waterfront Secretariat: Annelly, thank you very much for coming in today.

At what point was the city engaged in conversations with the government regarding Bill 110? Or did you just wake up one morning and read it in the paper, as most of us?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, to date it has been through media reports and the issuance of this legislation.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you think that's a respectful way to treat your political partner?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, I won't respond to that question directly, but what I will say is that the city of Toronto is a member of the tripartite agreement, and it is been our practice to work collaboratively with all member of that agreement to arrive at decisions that affect Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport as well as other areas of the harbour.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you. So definitely there are safety measures that need to take place at Billy Bishop. We know it's not meeting the safety protocols.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So the city of Toronto has chosen the runway end safety area number one. I think number three was possibly the happy medium, but what do you think of the investment—I mean, we haven't seen a business case, we haven't seen a plan, but do you think we should be blowing up the island airport to this extent that the government wants to do?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: Following the discussion at city council on RESA, city council directed city staff, including my own team, to work with the Toronto Port Authority on the analysis and collaboration on an airport master plan. It was through the airport master plan that we would be able to assess components of safety, design—

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

We move to the government side. MPP Smith.

Ms. Laura Smith: Through you, Chair, I want to thank all of the members and the individuals in this room for being here today. I was interested in quite a bit of the conversation, especially that around health, and Mr. Dumas actually brought up something quite significant.

Balanced infrastructure is something that's done in a timely manner. One of the things that pulls back communities is when they can't access health care. In northern Ontario, air travel is not just a luxury but a necessity for accessing health care, services and opportunities, and I'm wondering if Mr. Dumas could explain how this proposal will help improve health care access and connectivity to these communities.

Mr. Rick Dumas: Through the Chair, I believe that, as I stated, the health care aspect for northern Ontario and northerners—and I can only speak for NEOMA, but I do also have a great relation with my sister organization

FONOM, which represents 110 municipalities in the northeast.

We only have access to the big centre city hospitals through air, typically. To travel from my community of Marathon to Toronto, it's a 13-hour drive. I can't imagine travelling from Red Lake, as we hear from Mayor Mota, who has to fly directly from Red Lake via Winnipeg to Toronto, travelling 24 hours to do a medical appointment in Toronto.

The vital aspect of air transport to northern Ontario, specifically northwestern Ontario, is key to any—not just medical, but just our movement of life. MPP Mamakwa can certainly identify that. He lives up by Mayor Mota and understands completely opportunities to travel by air.

Medical is number one for us. There are so many residents in my community that have to travel. My own sister is in Toronto right now, who just completed a double lung transplant, and she has to stay in Toronto—she's been there about 21 months. You can imagine the costs associated with that, not only the transportation cost for her family to go visit her as she is recovering. So it's key to all of us in the northwest.

Number one aspect of mobilization for the north is through those smaller airports to the bigger airports to Toronto. So it's key that we look at the Billy Bishop as an access point for northern Ontario, 100%.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you, Mr. Dumas. You talked also about the impact of the economy as well and the Ring of Fire and the future potential with accessibility to major airports in not only Ontario but the rest of the country and North America, for that matter.

Mr. Rick Dumas: Well, 100%. The reality is, my own community is a mining community, and mining now has taken on a different life. The workers come from all over Ontario; for that matter, sometimes all over Canada. To get to those workplaces, they literally have to fly from Newfoundland, from Vancouver, via Toronto, Toronto via northern Ontario to either Thunder Bay—and then from Thunder Bay to the smaller flights into the communities where the mines are. So it is key to move those individuals economically.

The Ring of Fire is going to be a huge potential economic engine for Ontario, as we heard not only from the Premier, but the Prime Minister said it clearly. The future of Ontario and Canada is the critical minerals that we have in our backyard. So to access critical minerals and have the workforce—because we don't have the workforce in northern Ontario, so we need those individuals to come, and to get to northern Ontario they need to fly, and they're going to be flying via Toronto. So that's key to have that access point, and the Billy Bishop airport has a key role in the northern transportation corridor. We believe that has a huge economic impact to the province of Ontario.

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Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you, Mr. Dumas. You talked about 24 hours to literally gain access to the downtown core, which can be problematic. Planning for the future is important for a region the size of the GTA. There's a duty, one would say, to continue long-term projects.

Could you comment on policy, and perhaps discuss briefly how today's infrastructure decisions can create long-term constraints if they're not made properly?

Mr. Rick Dumas: Yes, 100%. As I said, through the Chair, 24 hours from Red Lake, 12 to 13 hours from Marathon; Kenora is 25, 26 hours—that's just to get Toronto by road.

So if we go in by flight, the constraints that we're going to have on us—we don't have the improvement of those accessibility flights, whether that's out of Red Lake to Winnipeg via Toronto, Thunder Bay to Toronto, Timmins to Toronto, Sudbury, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie. But at any one of those various points, they're connecting points from our First Nations communities, our small northern and rural communities.

Listen, I have an airport in my community, by all means, but I don't have regular flights. I have medical flights from Ornge coming in and picking up patients, bringing them to Thunder Bay, then up to Toronto. They land at Billy Bishop to bring them to the hospitals that are downtown in Toronto.

So those are all key aspects to us having the availability of that increased mobility for northwestern and north-eastern Ontario. And I speak for northwestern Ontario, but I could just share the stories I hear from all my fellow communities within the north.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you very much.

I'm now going to ask the same question to Mr. Crombie. Important decisions not only affect us now but into the future, and this has to do with infrastructure. We've just talked to Mr. Dumas, who has talked about how important that connectivity is for the future.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I think that planning for the future is an important issue. Balanced infrastructure planning is important for the future. We really have to perhaps correct underbuilding that has happened consistently throughout the GTA.

I'm wondering if, Mr. Crombie, you would agree. What lessons do you think policy-makers could also take to ensure infrastructure decisions do not create similar long-term constraints as they have in the GTA?

Mr. David Crombie: Well, I'm not sure I can address the GTA, but let me address it within the context of the airport.

The mayor is quite correct. The great service that Billy Bishop serves is to the north and for health reasons—health and hospital—medical reasons. It was one of the major reasons why it was thought to keep the airport—

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

We move to the second round with the official opposition. MPP Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, everyone, for your presentations.

Currently, out of Billy Bishop airport, we have Porter flying to at least six Florida destinations, and oftentimes it's vacation travel: West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Fort Myers, Fort Lauderdale, Miami. They also go to a

number of Caribbean destinations: Cancun; San José del Cabo; Nassau, Bahamas; Costa Rica; the Grand Cayman Islands; Montego Bay, Jamaica.

I know that there has been a lot of emphasis on travel to the north, which I think is very important and also being addressed through the Pearson expansion, but I recognize that there is also a lot of US and international travel.

The Prime Minister has stated that it's very important for us to reach out to international partners. Do you believe that's what he meant by expanding the Billy Bishop airport to allow for more international travel?

Mr. David Crombie: Do I believe that? I don't really know what the Prime Minister may have had in mind. Do we need to reach out to international travel? Of course we do. That's part of it.

Again, it's always misleading just to take one aspect and say, "That's the only thing that's important." So, yes, it's important to reach out; yes, we have to find the context of how we work internationally with Pearson and other airports, and not simply assume that we can make out of Billy Bishop another international airport.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Yes, thank you very much. That's really helpful.

Considering that we are seeing the cancellation of flights because the fuel cost has surged—we're seeing airports all pivot to address the new economic tariff reality—there is really no guarantee that the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport is going to meet the numbers that the provincial government is purporting. Is that a correct assumption at this point, Mr. Crombie?

Mr. David Crombie: I think you're better off to go to the expert here when it comes to those kinds of questions. I apologize.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. Ms. Zonena?

Ms. Anneli Zonena: Through the Chair: What's important to the city of Toronto is that, when we have a plan in front of us that we can assess, we are able to build a plan to deliver the appropriate infrastructure to support the type of growth that's being proposed. We are not the ones determining what flights are flying to and from the airport, but what matters to us on the land side is that we're able to accommodate the type of change to land-side uses that could have a negative or positive impact for the city.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. City council has been very, I think, loud and firm in its opposition to this massive land grab and unilateral takeover by the province over the city's direct interests in the tripartite agreement, as well as the ecosystem of the island. And you have confirmed that this was done without prior notice, without consultation; that you've only been notified through the introduction of Bill 110 and just reading what's out in the media reports.

At this point in time, my understanding is that the city solicitor and the legal team are reviewing the options of what legal options they may have to fight the province for this massive land grab. Can you share with us if the city solicitor has provided any guidance so far or when that guidance is to be provided by council? And I understand that there are client-solicitor confidentiality privileges, but

I'm just curious to know when is that report coming back to city council?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: You're correct; I can't get into details about work that the city solicitor is doing. But what I can say is that all city staff are working very intently on trying to use the information that's out there in the public realm, to inform reports that will start coming forward in the June cycle to assess the impact of what's currently known, based on changes that may come to the Toronto Island airport.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. And because the waterfront secretariat has the sole responsibility on behalf of city planning to direct all planning aspects of the waterfront, including the brand new, soon-to-be-revitalized and soon-to-be-serviced Port Lands, with its 800 acres of prime downtown land—which is the equivalent, for those members who are sitting here, of over two sizes of the downtown financial district right now, so we have a potential to rebuild a second downtown—I'm just very, very curious: What is the early indication of how the Billy Bishop airport takeover, the massive land grab of the island airport and the flight paths, is going to impact what the city has planned for the Port Lands?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: That is the subject of a report back in June. I will say that the Toronto Port Authority, on our staff report, did issue a letter in support of the zoning and official plan amendment that we brought forward for Ookwemin Minising, but it's very important to understand that the flight path also affects south Etobicoke. So whereas we had approximately 63,000 units in the development pipeline within the proposed expansion, we are now looking at over 10,000 additional units that may be affected and would have to be assessed for compatibility with the airspace requirements.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Would it be fair to say that, at early pass, even based on what we know without even the deeper research, tens of thousands of new housing units are at risk based on the Billy Bishop expansion?

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

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: It's too soon to say if the construction of that housing is at risk. However, we know that people are excited by the waterfront, based on the climate, the culture, the connection to nature. So the viability of the market of that housing, even for purpose-built rental, is something that we're very interested to assess when the plans are front of us.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: And the developers who own—

Interjection.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. Sorry. Go ahead.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: How much time?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): You have 30 seconds.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that this government is providing the logic needed to justify more southern Ontario infrastructure to help us in the north. I think it's

pretty wild: "Let's make Billy Bishop bigger," instead of improving the health care access across the north—

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

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We move to the third party.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Just following up on housing in the Ookwemin Minising area, I think, Annelly, you said there are 165,000 new housing units proposed?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, to clarify, 165,000 is the estimated full build-out from Fort York, Bathurst Quay all the way through to the Port Lands—approximately 40,000 units in all of the Port Lands.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And how many jobs, did you say?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: We estimated just over 100,000 jobs along the entire length of the waterfront.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And how many of those units would be affordable?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, at this stage, it is not possible to put an exact number. But city council has resolved that 30% of all new housing units in Ookwemin Minising would be affordable rental, which is approximately 3,000 units.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay—I'm losing my voice a bit.

Can you talk about the Great Lakes Protection Act? How would this be affected?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, I'm not an expert in the Great Lakes Protection Act. However, what we would do if we were engaged in a more conventional manner on an official plan amendment is that we would review our own policies, which state that for necessary infrastructure, an official plan amendment would need to be accompanied by an environmental assessment to confirm the necessity of lakefill.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: All right. So that's just another area of concern.

We know that this proposed expansion will affect housing, and we know this government supposedly prides itself in the push for more housing. There are so many environmental concerns we need to worry about with this proposal—also congestion.

Annelly, it's my understanding the city of Toronto traffic counts right now—I don't think they've been updated yet, but the last report showed 400 vehicles an hour down at the Eireann Quay intersection. It's a tight little loop. So how would this proposal affect congestion in one of the busiest intersections in the busiest city in Canada?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, it is true that there's a single road that services Toronto Islands airport. The considerations that city council has directed staff to do is a full traffic analysis of the impact to Eireann Quay and Bathurst Quay adjacent to the airport.

What I will say is that the airport is one of a cluster of trip generators across the waterfront. We know the province has excitedly shared plans regarding the number of new visitors that will come to Ontario Place. That, taken

in addition to major sporting events and the actual use of the airport if it grows to 10 million passengers a year, in addition to the attraction of other areas along the waterfront and the need to cross town on the city's road network, is a significant consideration and needs to be accompanied by transportation planning and transit infrastructure investment.

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

Do you find it peculiar that Lester B. Pearson, Toronto's major airport—which is a fantastic airport, as is Billy Bishop. But I would categorize Billy Bishop as a boutique airport, which is why people love it so much. But Lester B. is undergoing a massive expansion—\$3 billion is the price tag, to my understanding, proposing from, I think, 41 million up to 65 million passengers' capacity.

We know to get to Lester B. Pearson—we're so proud of the UP Express, a hop, skip and a jump out to the airport. As I say for me, I take the TTC for \$3 and change, and shoot right across and take the bus up—no problem whatsoever to get to Lester B.

Do you think it's peculiar that this government would be obsessed with the dream—the fantasy—to blow Billy Bishop up into a major airport when we are already spending time, money and energy—and creating jobs—to expand Lester B. Pearson?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair, I can't speak to that exactly. But what I will say is that the city of Toronto is committed to working with the Toronto Port Authority and Transport Canada on an airport master plan that would bring forward reasonable growth and changes to Billy Bishop airport in accordance with municipal planning policies and the continued operation of the airport.

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

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

And then, what do you think of—you know, it's a busy area. It's a beautiful area. It's a busy area. People are there, as David Crombie mentioned, for leisure, for pleasure, for all the tourists who come down to the waterfront. People work down there. There's a school, community spaces. We've heard: Little Norway Park, historic relevance to that park; the Corleck, with the Ireland Park history there, the new building that's opening up.

So, how do you think this Bill 110, this proposal, would affect that beautiful area?

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

We to the government side. MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Again, thank you to our presenters for coming and joining online as well. My first question will be to Annelly. Thank you for being here.

I just wanted to start off with the discussion of Billy Bishop airport. I know Premier Ford and Mayor Olivia Chow originally, before this legislation was brought forward, had a conversation regarding this. Were you part of that conversation in any way?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: From our perspective, conversations happen, but a plan is what we can assess formally.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So, any reason why you wouldn't be privy to that conversation and discussion before this was tabled?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: Through the Chair: I can't answer that question, no.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Okay, so you weren't part of the original conversation though, right? Okay. Thank you.

After that, I just wanted to talk to you about the role the Toronto Port Authority plays and the Waterfront Secretariat plays. Looking at the economic vision, the vision of working together, how do you think those two parties align in terms of the way they work together?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: I will say that the city of Toronto, including myself, have daily interactions with the Toronto Port Authority that are very productive. The Toronto Port Authority is in charge of Toronto's harbour, and marine transportation is one area in particular where we work very, very closely together. I will say that—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'm just looking forward to the relationship between the two. Are you saying it's a very good standing relationship where both parties respect each other and work well together?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: In some respects. In some areas that we work together, it's very, very communicative. As you're aware, we have not seen plans for the airport itself under the tripartite agreement—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So far, as to date, what's been happening? Obviously, nobody can predict what's going to happen in the future in terms of conversations. However, the conversations that have taken place over the last few decades have relatively been good, and both parties seem to respect each other?

Ms. Annelly Zonena: We meet almost weekly, under the terms of the tripartite agreement, to advance the work—such as RESA—that the Toronto Port Authority is doing at the airport.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you. I'm glad to hear that everybody meets and works well together.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: That's not everybody.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Well, the two authorities that I'm talking about. Thank you, MPP McMahon, for interrupting.

My next question is going to go to Mayor Crombie. Again, thank you for your service as mayor of the city of Toronto and everything that you've done to develop the waterfront.

As we take a look at the past, you've sort of opposed the Billy Bishop expansion and the jets going back to 2013 when you spoke out against Porter's proposal with David Miller. So isn't it fair to say that your position today doesn't really relate to Bill 110 or the specific details of the legislation, given that it's been the same position you've had for more than over a decade? No jets, no meaningful airport expansion, no matter what safeguards

or economic benefits are in place, looking at jobs, regional transportation growth that has been put forward.

My question to you, sir, would be: Why should this committee treat your testimony as an objective of Bill 110, rather than the latest chapter of a decade-long campaign to stop Billy Bishop and the economic development on Toronto's waterfront?

Mr. David Crombie: Thank you very much for the question. Through you, Mr. Chair, my deputation was directed straight at what I think is the key planning instrument that is required by all three levels of government, and that is a balance of uses. The balance will always change, and the way in which you do the change is by a co-operative way in which you work with the other levels of government. You work with all the other agencies that are involved in the matter.

The fact is, unilateral is, in my judgment, an abandonment of the whole principle of shared use. The way in which the airport not only grows and grows well is because of that principle. That is the principle that is being absolutely destroyed by this legislation.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you, sir. But in general, over the last decade or so, regardless of this legislation being put forward, your position has been pretty much against the expansion of that airport—

Mr. David Crombie: No, no, no. I don't where you would have got that. I have no idea where you would have—I tried to say it's always changing. For example, we need to extend the runways, as the mayor points out, for medical health reasons. Absolutely. For better service to the north—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So, sir, back when you spoke alongside David Miller—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Will you let him finish?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): There is a point of order. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I would just ask that we be respectful and let David Crombie finish his answer.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Okay, thank you.

MPP Grewal, let Mr. Crombie answer the question first.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much, sir. I'll definitely let you answer your questions.

Thank you, MPP McMahon, for interrupting over and over again. We're having a very respectful dialogue here and I'm not pressuring him to say yes or no, question and answer, like the opposition likes to do: "Yes, no. Quick, you have 30 seconds." It's a very respectful dialogue.

I just want to dial back into 2013, when you were standing beside David Miller and you were opposing Porter Airlines's proposed expansions and what the thought process was there.

Mr. David Crombie: I've also supported the extension of the runways. Does the fit with your scheme?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: It's not my scheme. I'm just trying to understand your perspective—

Mr. David Crombie: No, you're not trying to understand. You're implying.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Sorry?

Mr. David Crombie: That's what you're doing. And I'm saying, that's wrong. I have supported extensions.

Who knows what we're going to do with the airport long-term? There has got to be a balance established by all levels of government and parties—

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

Mr. David Crombie: —not one.

Sorry, Chair.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So if the waterfront continues to—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Grewal, direct your questions through the Chair, please.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you, Chair.

Chair, through you, if the waterfront continues to maintain a balance in the future—which means respecting those that are using the marine rights, those that are using the air rights, those that are then using the general amenities that come forward with it—would you be happy with the airport expansion?

Mr. David Crombie: I haven't even seen the plan for the whole of the airport expansion. I am saying I'm happy with a process that actually goes about a balance of uses. If it respects the principle of the balance of uses, you can do all kinds of changes over time, whether that's residential, commercial, environmental or any other.

What's the problem here is it's an abandonment by the government all by itself, no discussion.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Sir, would you be able to—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much. The time is up. Thank you to all our three presenters for coming and sharing your valuable input with us. That concludes the second panel's time.

We will take a recess until 1 o'clock, p.m. The committee will reconvene at 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1204 to 1301.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): Good afternoon, honourable members. It is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations? MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I nominate MPP Anand.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): Does the member accept the nomination?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Yes, I do.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): Are there any further nominations?

There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and MPP Anand elected Acting Chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Good afternoon, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to order. We are meeting to resume public hearings on Bill 110—

Mr. Chris Glover: Point of order, Mr. Chair? You've got a lot of feedback.

Interjection: You've got to turn down the laptop.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Okay. Is the laptop off?

Interjection.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right.

As I said earlier, we are meeting to resume public hearings on Bill 110, An Act to enact the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, 2026.

To ensure that everyone who speaks is heard and understood, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until you are recognized by the Chair before speaking. As always, all comments should go through the Chair.

As a reminder, each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation. After we have heard from all three presenters, the remaining 39 minutes will be allocated for questions from members of the committee.

AIRPORT MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
OF ONTARIO
HOPE AIR
MR. GIL PENALOSA

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): At this time, I see we have the members from Hope Air, the Airport Management Council of Ontario and Mr. Gil Penalosa.

We're going to start with Hope Air. Please state your name for the Hansard. You have seven minutes. Just before one minute, I will be reminding you of a minute, so please continue. Do not stop. Thank you so much.

Failure of sound system.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): I think Hope Air is muted. Unmute yourself.

Interjections.

The Clerk pro tem (Mr. Stefan Uguen-Csenge): We still can't hear him. Why don't we go to the next presenter and then we'll come back to him if you want?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes, absolutely.

Let's go to the Airport Management Council of Ontario. We will come back to Hope Air afterward. We were not able to listen to you, sir, so can you please check your mike in between?

Over to the Airport Management Council of Ontario. Please go ahead and state your name.

Mr. Terry Bos: [*Inaudible*] from the Airport Management Council of Ontario, and I will turn it over to my colleague to introduce herself.

Ms. Laura McNeice: I am Laura McNeice. I am the CEO of the Airport Management Council of Ontario. We are a member-based, not-for-profit organization in Ontario representing Ontario's airports and aerodromes, including all certified airports—with the exception of one, and that does include Billy Bishop airport—as well as the remote northern airports owned by the province.

Mr. Terry Bos: Thanks, Laura, and thank you again, Mr. Chair. It's our pleasure to be here this afternoon to speak to this bill and support the takeover—or the change in ownership—of Billy Bishop airport property.

It's great to see that the province of Ontario is now recognizing airports as critical infrastructure and the much-

needed support that our industry needs. Airports are critical to their communities for many reasons: economic reasons, leisure travel reasons, tourism reasons, health care and many, many other reasons. In fact, I checked my logs yesterday and we had three Ornge air flights out of Sault Ste. Marie that went to Billy Bishop airport for much-needed medical service. Airports are also going to be playing a key to access the Ring of Fire until those roads are built.

Toronto Islands, as I noted, is especially critical for health care and medevac aircraft from the north accessing critical care in downtown Toronto. If it wasn't for Toronto Islands airport, where would these planes go and how quickly could those patients get to those hospitals in southern Ontario and southern Toronto?

In fact, back in the day, Toronto Islands and Porter Airlines were a key lifeline to northern airports and a number of regional airports. After the Air Canada and Canadian merger, there was really no competition left in the airline industry for our markets to serve, and so we were being served by one market, or one airline. Now, with Billy Bishop and Porter, we've been able to have two airlines and that was greatly helpful in increasing our passenger numbers.

As you know the main goal for airports is always safety. This is in many, many forms. We have safety management systems which are mandated; we have ARFF, which is aircraft rescue firefighting; we have security; and with all of these come with a cost, including RESA. RESA is the newest regulation to Canadian airports, and it is mandatory. The deadline for it is 2027. Without RESA, as you are probably aware, Billy Bishop would not be able to continue to operate, as it would not be able to meet its certification requirements.

As I noted already, Billy Bishop is a key airport for our entire industry and all of us rely on it—safety and the fact that Billy Bishop, due to the ferry, is unique. They have to do the infrastructure fighting as well as ARFF fighting and they also have extra vehicles that travel across the runways, which is an obstacle. The less vehicles on a maneuvering area, the safer the operation of the airport will be.

I should note that airports are a network, and there needs to be another airport to land and take off from to serve Billy Bishop, so the whole network is in need of support. Regional airports are struggling and still down more than 40% from pre-COVID service levels. There is real risk to survivability of regional airports, and we need a strong Billy Bishop for our regional airports to be able to access service there.

Toronto Islands is a major provider of regional connectivity for airports throughout the province and the north. And without Billy Bishop, we would have no other competition for our airlines to fly into, and this really helps our markets.

I would like to turn it back over to Laura.

Ms. Laura McNeice: Thanks, Terry.

Mr. Chair, what we are saying is that Billy Bishop is very important to the entire network of Ontario's airports

and aerodromes. They are a major connecting point for all of Ontario, and so we support actions that will allow them to continue to modernize and to enhance their services to Ontario's citizens.

Another aspect of what AMCO is advocating for is support of the entire network, particularly with funding programs for small airports and aerodromes, so that they can continue to also operate safely and up to standards, so that the network of airports within Ontario is enhanced as one network, as opposed to individual airports.

Mr. Terry Bos: Mr. Chair, again we are here in support of Billy Bishop airport, and we need a strong Billy Bishop airport and a safe Billy Bishop airport in order to keep our networks strong. I shall say that a mile of runway will take you around the world, but a mile of highway or a mile of rail will only take you one mile.

1310

Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity, on behalf of the Airport Management Council of Ontario, to speak today. We'd be happy to answer any questions when that time comes. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. Now we'll be moving back again, trying to do Hope Air once more.

Mark, go ahead, sir.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Thank you very much, Chair. I hope you can hear me this time.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Absolutely. Go ahead.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: My name is Mark Rubinstein, and I'm the chief executive officer of Hope Air. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of the government's intention to modernize Billy Bishop airport.

Hope Air is a national charity that was founded in 1986, headquartered in Toronto, with a mission to support families, individuals and children in financial need who have to travel long distances to reach medical specialty care. Last year, Hope Air delivered over 38,000 medical travel arrangements for patients in need across 700-plus communities in all provinces and territories.

Hope Air provides its programs to deliver on our mission in several ways, but our foundation is free airline flights for patients and their caregivers, and we coordinate this in two ways: First, through partnerships with airlines like Porter Airlines, we provide airline travel for both patients and family members. Second, Hope Air operates a Volunteer Pilot Program where accredited pilots volunteer their time to fly with smaller aircraft into rural or remote areas where commercial airline service may be limited or unavailable.

Hope Air patients represent some of the most vulnerable in the province of Ontario, including children, seniors, disabled persons, low-income families, new Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Without Hope Air, the majority of our clients would postpone or cancel their medical appointments due to cost. This would lead to significantly poorer health care outcomes, suffering and shorter lifespans, or people would be pushed into poverty

by borrowing money they don't have to pay for airline and other medical travel expenses.

Hope Air supports families and individuals travelling for any recognized health condition, including cancer, cardiac, orthopaedic surgery, diabetes, ophthalmology, obstetrics and a wide range of pediatric health issues, amongst many others. We also operate two unique medical travel programs supporting organ donors—both donors and recipients—and pediatric cancer trials at UHN and SickKids Hospital in downtown Toronto, respectively.

In Ontario, Hope Air supports families and individuals living in over 70 northern Ontario communities, both big and small, including Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Sudbury, Hearst, Kenora, Rainy River, Cochrane, Manitoulin Island etc. We support families living in other communities, such as Windsor, Ontario, and parts of eastern Ontario.

Over the last year, Hope Air provided over 1,000 patient and caregiver trips for medical travel arrangements for Ontario residents. This represents close to 2,000 flights. All of these individuals and families are travelling for medical specialty care unavailable in their home community, and most are travelling to leading hospitals in downtown Toronto.

Billy Bishop airport provides a lifeline for so many people travelling to reach our best specialty hospitals here in Toronto. First, there are many communities where regular commercial airline service is primarily scheduled via Porter or Air Canada flying into Billy Bishop. Second, Hope Air volunteer pilots routinely land at Billy Bishop, avoiding the congestion or delays that would be experienced at an airport like Pearson.

In times of national emergency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022, Billy Bishop airport was often the only realistic airport available in Toronto for non-emergency medical travel from northern Ontario. When people's lives were at stake, we realized we should never take this airport for granted; we should cherish it, strengthen it and be proud that we have it available for critical health care. When Hope Air patients land at Billy Bishop, and in partnership with others, they can reach hospital in 15 minutes—something that's simply not possible when flying through Pearson.

For people who are very sick and going through the most stressful experience of their life, Hope Air and Billy Bishop and our airline partners represent a critical part of their successful medical journey. For many Hope Air patients, travel is not a common experience; some have never travelled outside their home community. Hope Air and Billy Bishop, together with our partners, provide a true lifeline for so many patients.

Enhancing and modernizing Billy Bishop airport will reduce total patient travel time. The length of hospital stays will be reduced as patients are able to return home sooner after treatment, and it represents significantly less stress for people who are very, very sick. Modernizing Billy Bishop can increase the frequency and reliability of airline service to and from Toronto.

In conclusion, in the preamble to the bill, the government cites, “Modernizing Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport will unlock the airport’s economic potential for all of Ontario.” That, of course, is very true. But I would add to the preamble to the legislation the role that Billy Bishop plays in supporting equitable and effective access to health care for people living in northern Ontario and other regions of the province who have no choice but to travel to Toronto for life-saving medical care.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear today, and I’d be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right. Thank you so much.

Now, we’ll be moving over to the last presenter for this section, Mr. Gil Penalosa.

Mr. Gil Penalosa: Thank you for the opportunity—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Can you start with your name so we can register it for Hansard?

Mr. Gil Penalosa: Okay. My name is Gil Penalosa. I’m the founder and chair of 80 Cities and Cities for Everyone. But I’m here not on behalf of them; I’m just here as a citizen.

What a beautiful image, the islands and the possibilities—and yes, we’re going to talk about this. First, I want to say this has nothing to do with political parties—nothing. It is not left or right or centre—nothing. So it would be nice even if they mixed. Also, it has nothing to do with the city or the province. It’s not city versus province, “This is a city”—no. Everyone should be coming to the same decision.

The greater Toronto area is going to grow by more than 50% in the next 40 years. We have about 7.5 million people in the extended; in the greater, five million, 50% more. So we need more green space. We need more recreation. We need to decide, how do we want to live? We have not thought about that.

It’s incredible that we know that the GTA is going to grow by 2.5 million and we have no idea where they’re going to live, how they are going to go to school, what they are going to do on Saturdays and Sundays, what type of housing—as I said, how do we want to live? Because elected officials at all levels should have one foot on today and the other on 50 or 100 years from now. I think most elected officials have 99% on today, putting out today’s fires, without thinking what’s going to happen around the corner. So we need to think about equity and sustainability—and playfulness, where everyone can really live healthier and happier.

Let’s put an umbrella: What if everything that you did here at Queen’s Park, the umbrella, you evaluate it by equity, sustainability, playfulness? Actually, just now I didn’t hear any of them, almost, mention the words “people” or “equitable” or “sustainable” or “playful,” where everyone can live healthier and happier. Those should be the elements to evaluate this decision.

We need to have a vision, and we do not have a vision at the city or at the province. I asked the mayors in the GTHA, how do you see your city in 2076? They have no

idea. The vision is like an image on a jigsaw puzzle: It doesn’t matter which pieces of the puzzle you do as long as they are pieces of the same puzzle. But when we don’t have a vision, we’re doing here, here, here—it’s like a Frankenstein. So we need actions. But if we’re doing actions without a vision, what we are doing now with much of the waterfront happens. The waterfronts are almost God’s gift to everyone. It should be freely accessible to everyone. Waterfront Toronto has done amazing things. It’s the city, it’s the province, it’s the federal working together.

1320

Imagine if 10, 15, 20 years ago we had given them Exhibition Place, Ontario Place, the Gardiner, the airport. We would not be having these meetings. The airport land is a lifetime opportunity, but also a lifetime opportunity—we have done some huge errors that had nothing to do with political parties. Ontario Place into a spa that I think eventually is going to be a casino: billions invested; horrible. We’ve seen the elevated Gardiner—what a fiasco, and multiple billions of dollars were invested in that, missing gigantic opportunities.

What if all these issues—if we had taken equity, playfulness and sustainability, we would not be doing this spa or the elevated Gardiner. There is no city in the developed world that is doing elevated highways by a waterfront—none—except Toronto. It’s incredible. The GTHA leaders—I think that we have not had that vision. You could lead a shared vision.

But let me close on Bill 110. The Malton airport, which now is called Pearson, and the island airport, which were done at a similar time, around 1939. At that time, the Malton airport seemed like it was way up north, very far, so that’s why the island airport was done. But imagine that we had not done it and that today we had this piece of land. Does anybody really think that we would be building an airport where we have five million, which is going to be 7.5 million around there in the next few years? Not at all.

The island airport—let’s go back to the umbrella. If we were thinking about equity and sustainability and health and happiness, it fails every category: the quality of the air, the level of the noise, how dangerous it is—everything. We’ve been investing billions and billions, and people talk about economic development: “It’s going to be good for business.” Yes? I haven’t seen one single argument. Where are the studies? They say, “People are not going to come in to the island.” Yes, but Pearson is—if you go from Union Station to the island, it’s 15 minutes. From Union Station to Pearson, it’s 25 minutes. We’re just talking about 10 minutes. It’s as if those airlines were going to close. No, they’re just going to move to Pearson.

Even the hospitals—from the island airport, it might be 15, 20 minutes. From Pearson, it might be 20, 25 minutes. It’s a five-minute difference. All of the money, all of the jobs can be moved.

I think what is real about economic development is how to retain and attract the best people. That’s economic development: attracting and retaining people. That’s why—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Gil Penalosa: No, I think we have two because you were counting when they were talking about this.

This is Billy Bishop airport. I think that one of the things that you should be doing—as I said, Ontario's island park could be Canada's best urban park. We're going to have over 11 million people within 90 minutes of this park. The Billy Bishop airport decision-makers—I invite you to do as the Ellinikon did in Athens, Greece: closed in 2001 and created an amazing park, part of it housing, part of it park and it's wonderful.

Or you can talk about Berlin. Berlin closed this 380-hectare airport, also in 2008 through a referendum, and now has an amazing park. I've enjoyed those parks many, many times. They are fantastic. They are vibrant. They're not doing it because they are dumb; they are doing this because they want to retain and attract people.

The Premier loves Chicago, so look at what Chicago did: Once again, they took an island airport and turned it into a fantastic park for all people. Let us do that. Is a boutique airport really the best—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much.

Interjection.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much, Mr. Penalosa. There is going to be a round of conversation, but at this time—

Mr. Gil Penalosa: Can I have 40 seconds?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Hopefully you will have time when the questions will be asked. You can answer at that point of time, but we have to be fair to everybody. We gave equal seven minutes to everyone.

At this time, I will be moving over to the third party. MPP Margaret.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much and thanks to all the speakers. I'm happy to cede 40 seconds—only 40 seconds—for you to finish.

Mr. Gil Penalosa: Okay, 40 seconds. It's really simple. What to do, I think, is not rocket science. It's the public good over the private interests. It's our constitution. Please do not expand the runway—not through Bill 110—and move Billy Bishop's flights and jobs to Pearson. Merge the airport lands with the Toronto Island. From airport lands to island park—80% park, 20% housing—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you. That's 42. Sorry—I'm very tight on my time because I only have six and a half minutes. Thank you for that great presentation and thank you to everyone for attending today.

My first questions go to Hope Air. I just want to take a moment and thank you from the bottom of my heart—and pretty much, probably, everyone here—for all you do for humankind. It is very benevolent. Thank you.

But on that note, we know that jets currently are permitted under the current operating agreement for medical emergencies at Billy Bishop—that's my understanding—for passengers and for organ deliveries. Is that your understanding as well—to Hope Air?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: I can't speak to that, but what I would say is, to understand the work of Hope Air, you

would have to think about us as the non-emergency version of Ornge.

To give you a great example, if you're living in Hearst, Ontario, and, God forbid, you suffer a traumatic car accident, Ornge will come and pick you up and take you to downtown Toronto, if that's where the closest trauma centre is. If you're diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer—which is life-threatening, obviously—Ornge is not going to pick you up, except under exceptional circumstances, and you or your doctor would typically reach out to Hope Air for support.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Primarily, do you only fly into Billy Bishop, or do you fly into Lester B. Pearson?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: We fly patients into both airports based upon scheduling and availability and, really, around medical appointments and what's most efficient for patients and their families.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: What would be your breakdown of how many flights would go to Lester B. versus Billy?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: That's a good question. I don't have that handy. I'm happy to provide the committee with those statistics afterwards.

What I would say, for example, is all of our volunteer pilot flights are typically only coordinated through Billy Bishop airport because smaller aircraft, general aircraft aviation are discouraged from landing at Pearson. In addition, it tends to be much more expensive in terms of landing fees and other attributes.

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

Now onto the Airport Management Council of Ontario—AMCO. Laura and Terry, thank you for coming in.

It's my understanding that there was a Toronto city council meeting back in 2024 where the issue of the safety requirements for Billy Bishop was discussed in a report. The council and mayor were to choose from three different scenarios for the runway end safety area—the RESA: (1) minimum landmass to meet the regulatory requirement; (2) additional taxiway; and (3) additional airside roads, sound barrier and underground utility corridor. I think RESA 3 was the one that people wanted to meet the highest safety requirements, but RESA 1 was adopted by council. Would you have been fine with RESA 3?

Mr. Terry Bos: Yes, I think RESA 3 would have been much more supported as it would have provided the opportunity to take a lot of the vehicles that are actually travelling over the airfield out of the airfield.

Vehicles should only be on an airfield for emergency purposes or needed purposes. To taxi, or transport, vehicles across an airfield just to get to the other side of the island really puts those vehicles and the travelling public—it's a little more unsafe, right? The less vehicles out there, the safer it would be. So RESA 3 probably would have been the best solution at the time because it would have provided that opportunity to get the vehicles off the airfield.

1330

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right. It's my understanding it's about 800 vehicles a year that traverse the runway, including school buses. Is that your—

Mr. Terry Bos: That's my understanding as well. Billy Bishop is a member airport, but we're obviously not overly familiar with the entire operation.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So maybe if we adopted RESA 3, we wouldn't be here.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you want to speak to the congestion at the airport—like, in the Eireann Quay, Terry? If this proposed expansion, to the extent the government wants, goes through, would you think that they would need a parking garage and a restructuring of Eireann Quay?

Mr. Terry Bos: I'm not familiar with the master plan of Billy Bishop, I would suggest that, with that many more passengers, there would need to be an opportunity for parking to be somewhere for those people to park. I'm sure in Toronto, a lot of people could commute and avoid parking, but again—and a lot of the people coming in obviously wouldn't have vehicles either. They would be commuting via public transit.

So it would be based on the mix of passenger levels. That would dictate whether official parking would be—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right. That concludes the six and a half minutes.

We will be moving over to the government side. I see MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: My first question would be to Hope Air. I just wanted to ask you guys, on Bill 110, what does this mean for Hope Air? How is the expansion of the airport going to further benefit those flights coming in and out, and what do you hope to see with the expansion of this airport?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Mark, can you hear us? We can't hear you, so can you unmute yourself, sir? Go ahead.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Can you hear me?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Yes, I can hear you.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Thank you very much; apologies for that.

The modernization of the airport really speaks to the ongoing demand that families, individuals, children, patients have to increasingly travel long distances to get to our best specialty hospitals in Toronto for often life-saving treatment.

If you go back and if you look at what happened during the COVID period, as I think I referenced in my opening remarks, 2020-22, there were significant flight reductions, especially between northern Ontario communities and southern Ontario, and Toronto in particular. Once we came out of the pandemic, the airlines that are operating at Billy Bishop today, Porter and Air Canada, recalibrated.

My hope would be, with the modernization of the airport, it may offer more flight frequency between the 70-some-odd communities that we presently support all across northern Ontario and other parts of the province.

The other benefit would be that it would allow us to increase the frequency of our volunteer pilot program, where, for many people, it's the only option they have without a very long, arduous journey to get from their home community to Toronto. Think about a community like those living on Manitoulin Island, where there's no commercial airport service.

I think, in every respect, recognizing that lives are at stake and people's health care journey is what we're talking about, it's all that we can do to ensure that for the million-plus people living in northern Ontario, for example, who don't have the same advantages of access as those who are living, for example, in Ottawa or in the greater Toronto area. By modernizing the airport, we're providing a lift to more equity in our health care system and ensuring that more people can travel to life-saving care efficiently and compassionately.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much, sir, for your comments.

I'd like to move my second question to the Airport Management Council of Ontario. My question really is around airport expansion, economic growth, future travel demand. How do you foresee this legislative change growing Billy Bishop, growing the future and building for the future in this particular project?

Mr. Terry Bos: This is a great opportunity. Obviously, airports need a lot of money in order to operate and to build, and if the province is willing to put up the funds that the city hasn't been able to, that will be great.

As I mentioned in my opening, regional airports are still really hurting from COVID, and we need to see growth that will allow this to happen. And right now, for instance, for a passenger to leave Sault Ste. Marie to connect to Porter's jets, we would have to either take the UP Express or carry on to Ottawa to catch those jets.

This will be an opportunity for passengers from the north to have more opportunity, through Billy Bishop airport, to hit more markets throughout North America, likely, depending on what the plan is for the airport, eventually. But it's certainly going to open up a lot more networks for people to travel—and a lot less need to change aircrafts and change airports if we can just connect through Billy Bishop on one stop to many more airports.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much, sir.

My last question is going to be to a presenter who is here in person, Gil. I looked at your plan, and your plan really is about turning everything into parkland. What about all of this economic opportunity that we're generating? There is ample parkland in the area. We've invested in so many national parks across this province. Why is it that you want to turn this airport into a park?

Mr. Gil Penalosa: For health and happiness. What I'm talking about: health. They are talking about the people that don't arrive on time—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Sir, since we only have two minutes, I'm just trying to keep everything brief—

Mr. Gil Penalosa: Health: physical, mental and social health—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Yes, health. But now my question comes back to health: This airport is going to help provide access to health for thousands of people that are going to be travelling from the north down into downtown Toronto's core, where we have the best hospitals around the world, giving them immediate access and life-saving treatments. Don't you believe that this airport is an asset to help save the lives of those up in the north?

Mr. Gil Penalosa: No. Any life saving would arrive to the airport and take a helicopter to the hospital. The time would be the same out of Pearson or out of Billy Bishop.

From the economic point of view, all of the jobs will be moving to Pearson—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much.

I just want to flip it back to Hope for the last 30 seconds. Can we talk about what kind of time this will save those patients that are in critical care for their support? If we're able to—

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Is that a question for Hope Air?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: For Hope Air, yes.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: It will make a dramatic difference, as I have said previously, for people living in rural, remote and underserved communities, especially when they are travelling using Hope Air, small aircraft, private flights. It is the only airport—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time to the government.

We are moving over to the official opposition. MPP Glover, please.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you very much, everybody, for being here today.

I'll start my questions with Mark Rubinstein of Hope Air. Mark, I think we've had a couple of conversations in the past, or at least I've had conversations with other members of your organization. I want to thank you for your service, bringing patients from across Ontario to get hospital care. I think that's a really vital service that you provide.

You mentioned that you've got a number of volunteer pilots. The last time we spoke, if it was you that I spoke with, Hope Air, they were talking about the closure of airports across Ontario, that a lot of the smaller airports are being lost because the municipalities just don't have the tax base to actually keep them going. How important is it to keep those small airports going in order for people to be emergency evacuated to hospital care?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: It's critical. It's absolutely critical and I would encourage all levels of government to do everything possible to keep smaller airports in places like northern Ontario. They are lifelines. And as I said in my earlier comment, you can talk about economic activity, which is important. You can talk about tourist activity, which is important. But if it's your partner, your child or yourself who is very sick and needs to get to medical treatment that will save your life, extend your life, it's critical.

Mr. Chris Glover: A lot of northern airports have gravel runways; they're not even paved. What's the difference for a pilot between a gravel runway and a paved runway?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Well, all of our pilots, all of our volunteer pilots who are flying in—first of all, they are accredited pilots, usually ex-commercial airline pilots, and their aircraft are capable of landing in rougher terrain, but it certainly makes things easier when the runway is paved.

1340

Mr. Chris Glover: You mentioned that the volunteer pilots are flying smaller planes. What kind of planes do they typically fly?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: It could be a two-seat to six-seat aircraft, could be small Cessnas, Pipers, those kinds of aircrafts.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. Beavers? Twin air?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Occasionally.

Mr. Chris Glover: Occasionally? Okay. I used to work in Geraldton, and the Beavers were still the bush plane for northern Ontario.

So those planes can land now at Billy Bishop. Prop planes can land at Billy Bishop.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Yes.

Mr. Chris Glover: It's the jets; it's the expansion for jets that is being proposed here. So this expansion will not necessarily help those volunteer pilots and the planes that they're landing. They can already land at Billy Bishop.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: That's true. However, just given the sheer volume of patient requests we get—I think I mentioned, over the last 12 months, we supported over 2,000 flights. There can't be enough volunteers to support that, so relying on commercial airline service—in particular, Porter Airlines, which of course grew out of northern Ontario, founded out of northern Ontario—their route connectivity is essential in order for us to deliver on our mission.

Mr. Chris Glover: One of the challenges for this expansion is that there was a 2017 environmental assessment done for the possibility of allowing jets at Billy Bishop, done by the Toronto Port Authority. They said that if you extend the runway at that point by 400 metres—200 metres in each direction—it would reduce the water flow into the harbour by half.

And now, the proposal is to extend the runway by 900 metres and then have another 1.5 kilometres of lighting into the water. We don't know what the environmental impact would be, how much that would reduce the water flow, but we had somebody from the city of Toronto here talking today that there's already raw sewage that flows into the harbour. It would have no place to go, and the Toronto harbour may become, basically, a stagnant swamp.

This is one of the concerns that we have, that we need to do a proper environmental assessment, but the government, who has introduced this bill, is saying they're not going to work with the city of Toronto. They're going to utilize Bill 5 to make it a special economic zone, so they won't look at the health or safety of the people that use the waterfront, the 28 million visitors or the residents there.

Is that a concern? Is that a legitimate concern for the residents and the visitors to the Toronto waterfront?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: If you're asking me my opinion, I'll give you my personal opinion, which is that I believe that consultation should take place with all stakeholders and that based upon that consultation, government will make the decisions that are appropriate.

Mr. Chris Glover: Actually, that's what we heard David Crombie, the former mayor and former federal cabinet minister, say today. He said we need everybody at the table, but this bill that's before the House would actually eliminate the people of Toronto and the city of Toronto from being at the table. That's one of our concerns.

Thank you again. Thank you so much for the service that you provide. It's life-saving service, and we want to make sure that people are able to get to the hospital.

Let's see, my next question—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Chris Glover: One minute? Okay.

To the airport management council, you said that the province needs to put up the funds that the city is not able to, and we just heard from Hope Air that we are losing municipal airports across the province. Rather than investing money at Billy Bishop, should the government not be investing at these small airports that we are at risk of losing across Ontario?

Ms. Laura McNeice: We believe that the province, the government of Ontario, can invest in Billy Bishop as well as investing in the small airports and aerodromes. We have actually come up with a program called the Ontario airport capital assistance program, which would be a \$10-million funding program, annually, to support these small airports and aerodromes in order to prevent the closure. But these are two separate projects.

Mr. Chris Glover: And has the province committed to—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the six and a half minutes.

We will be moving over to the Liberal Party. MPP Hazell.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you to everyone that presented today. I'm going to get right into it. My first question is going to be with the AMCO organization. I want to focus on gridlock and congestion in the city. So my question to you is, expansion of the Billy Bishop airport, it is going to add to, already, the gridlock and the horrible congestion that we are currently experiencing in the downtown core.

I just want to list this to you. I'm not too sure if you're aware of it, so I just want to share this information with you: In Ontario, about \$56.4 billion annually in economic and social costs—that is what the congestion and gridlock is causing Ontario; in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, about \$44.7 billion annually. Congestion contributes to roughly 112,000 fewer jobs across Ontario and 88,000 fewer jobs in the GTHA alone. The government at the federal level, they have given a cost-benefit analysis of what is going into the expansion of Pearson airport. We do not have that at Billy Bishop airport.

So how would this expansion help your organization, and to the people outside of Ontario?

Mr. Terry Bos: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Chair. So we don't have those numbers in front of us either, but I'm sure, just like Pearson did, Billy Bishop probably has those numbers prepared and can share them with you as well. I understand they speak later today, if I'm not mistaken, as well.

But certainly, it's going to help all airports throughout the province by opening up the airport even more to allow for more air traffic to come in and out. It will allow for more connectivity for different communities that currently don't have service to potentially get service. You've got to remember, we're talking small regional aircraft. Pearson is more into the big international flights, right? I think a lot is mistaken in that our industry is not recovered. The major airports have recovered. Pearson international has recovered, doing international flights. But regional airports have not recovered. Billy Bishop, I don't believe, is back to where it was pre-pandemic. Almost every regional airport in Ontario—and, if not, the entire country—is not back to where it was.

I'm not sure how much it's going to impact gridlock in downtown Toronto. But you've got to remember, some of these people are going to connect to different locations. They're just going to fly through the airport. Some will take public transit. So it's not necessarily that they're all going to be residents of Toronto that are going to be using that airport, but there's going to be people coming into Toronto as well.

MPP Andrea Hazell: In essence of time, I want to follow up with another question. From your response to me, I can see you are supporting the expansion of the airport. I'm going back into the downtown core: Do you know the impact that this will have to the people in Toronto?

Mr. Terry Bos: I can't officially say that I do know that. No, I haven't been privy to the master plan of building Billy Bishop nor am I familiar with—

MPP Andrea Hazell: I want to ask you another question. The same way you are not privy to a master plan—there is no master plan, okay? The government came out with Bill 110, and that's the information that is in Bill 110. We have to make a meaningful expansion of what is in that Bill 110. So thank you so much for your contributions to my questions.

I'm going to move on to Hope Air. Hope Air, I thank you for everything that you're doing for our vulnerable people. When you talk about seniors and children and Indigenous people, you are doing the right thing to move them around the city and to move them around the province. I thank you for that, because sometimes we forget about those people; we really do. These are people that paved their way with paying their taxes and deserve these services as well, especially for our underserved people. So can you, on record, put what the expansion of Billy Bishop airport will—how will that impact your organization?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Well, our hope would be, as I said in my opening remarks, several-fold, first of all, that it will increase the frequency or availability of commercial

flights, primarily Porter Airlines but perhaps Air Canada as well, from northern communities south, where many of those routes were cut or reduced during the pandemic and never fully restored; secondly, that it would allow us to continue to support and grow our Volunteer Pilot Program so that we can reach those seniors, those children and those low-income families living in communities where there is limited commercial airline service or no commercial airline service. And the modernization of the airport, ultimately, for vulnerable people, which is the entire population that Hope Air supports—no one else, only vulnerable people—

1350

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: If you compare the stress, the frustration and the challenges of flying into a bigger airport like Pearson airport compared to Billy Bishop, it's just day and night. It's a 15-minute Uber ride or taxi ride to a university hospital, versus all of the challenges of navigating Pearson—which, as I said earlier, for many people, some don't travel very often; some not at all.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I want to talk about the airports in the north, because sitting in the chamber and hearing my northerners debate on the challenges of the smaller airports that are operating across Ontario, don't you think that they are to be built up and in proper condition if we're talking about safety for the people that fly out of these smaller airports? We're not doing enough for those people.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: As I said earlier to a previous question, I believe that airports are a vital lifeline for people who live in smaller communities —

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time allocated to the third party.

Moving over to the government: MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to all our presenters this afternoon for taking time to come and offer your opinions and expertise on this important legislation. Sitting here—I think you are now our third panel—what we are hearing is what a critical piece of infrastructure airports are, on top of roads, highways, subway systems and rail. I think it was you, Mr. Bos, who said that one mile of runway opens up thousands of miles to travel, versus one mile of highway or rail is one mile." So what I've taken from your comments, really, is the importance of interconnectedness and that this is an organic chain.

By improving the Billy Bishop airport, what I've heard from both you, Mr. Rubinstein, and from the AMCO, is that this will improve accessibility for travel across the province. We've heard, certainly, about the incredible impacts for health, but then there are also very important impacts for other things.

When I worked in Ottawa, I often landed in Billy Bishop airport to come to Toronto for meetings. It's very much an organic system. I was a member of the Simcoe county council that owns the Simcoe regional airport, and so I know first-hand some of the financial pressures. It was owned 90% by the city of Barrie, but they couldn't afford

to lift it to where it needed to go, so it was bought by Simcoe county. And so, it's still in the southern Ontario network, which I think is 11 airports, and AMCO, you tell me you'll have 80 members across the province, so you are expanded beyond that.

I know you have spoken to this already, but I'm just wondering if you can talk generally, then, about how the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport is going to increase the network, grow the network, provide opportunities for the smaller airports across the province and how that's going to serve people across the province.

Mr. Terry Bos: Certainly. Thank you.

We need more opportunities for flights to get into more regional airports, and opening up Billy Bishop to allow for it to reach to more regional airports just allows more travel opportunities for those airlines to seek out. Now, obviously the airlines still have to deal with crew and flight and pilots and all that, but at the end of the day, the more opportunity there is, the more opportunity that there is to reach out to different airports that don't have service.

There are certainly airports in the north right now that don't have Porter service or Air Canada service, or either Porter or Air Canada service, and I'm sure they would love to have the opportunity to get that service back at their airports, because in reality, airports are sized "regional" or "greater."

The airline services are a lifeline. We make our money off the passengers, and so we need that opportunity to have those airlines to service us. And the more flights we can get, the better it is for the passengers. One flight a day makes it very difficult. Two flights a day, you can work with, and three flights or more a day is perfect for regional-sized markets. This is really going to open up the opportunity for expansion there, to allow for additional airports to get service, because Billy Bishop will have more space to reach different regional airports and allow us more opportunity to get in there.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you for that. On the discussion of this being critical infrastructure, like a roadway, there was commentary from my colleague opposite MPP McMahon about her time on city council when they were looking at RESA option 3. In fact, the province agrees with option 3. Under this bill, the province will replace the city of Toronto as a member of this tripartite agreement with the federal government and with the port authority. This shows the province's willingness to work to expand, increase and enhance safety and to make sure that we're feeding this critical infrastructure network. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Terry Bos: Yes, Mr. Chair, I would agree with that for sure. I think RESA 3, as I said earlier, would have allowed the opportunity to get a lot of those vehicles that don't belong on an airfield off that airfield. I would agree that RESA 3 is the greater option, is the more safe option, and it would have been the better option at the time to proceed with.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Turning to you, Mr. Rubinstein: We've heard how important this is for health care. You've talked very convincingly and brought some good facts to

the table about the differences between the Pearson airport and the Billy Bishop airport and how it's so much more accessible—it's downtown, it's linked to current infrastructure for travel—but also that it cuts out and makes more available and accessible flights for your patients, the people that you're serving, to deal with their health concerns, not only in Ontario but across the country.

I'm just wondering if you could highlight for us the critical nature of the Billy Bishop airport. It's the third-busiest airport in Ontario so I don't want to diminish it, but, certainly, when it's compared to the Pearson airport, which has been meeting capacity for quite a while, what benefits does access to Billy Bishop offer for your patients?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Thank you for the question. As I said earlier, I think an equitable health care system that every provincial government aspires to operate and deliver has to ensure that it can, to the best of its ability, provide efficient travel—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: —so it allows families, patients and their caregivers to get to the hospital that's going to save their life as quickly and as efficiently as that can be, whether that's delivered through a commercial airline service who we partner with or through our own volunteer pilot program.

What I would say is, as I said earlier, if it was your health care, your child's health care or your partner's health care, you want to get to a hospital as quickly as you can and you want to get home as quickly as you can. You don't want to have to take multiple connections; you don't want to have to stay overnight for another night if you can get back home and into bed as you recover from treatment. So I believe it's essential to ensure equity in our health care system and compassionate support for vulnerable Ontario residents.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time.

We're moving over to the official opposition. MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My first question is to Laura McNeice from the Airport Management Council of Ontario. Ms. McNeice, you mentioned that there are many airports that are in need of important repairs and upgrades. Can you give us bit of an understanding of how many airports you have in your council and how many of them are in need of important repairs and upgrades?

Ms. Laura McNeice: We have over 80 airport members, and about half are small airports and aerodromes. Many are municipally owned and do not have commercial airline service, so they would be requiring capital infrastructure funds, as it does put quite a strain on the municipalities that own them.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So your estimate is about 40 of your members need government investment just to maintain a basic state of good repair. Would that be fair?

Ms. Laura McNeice: It would be approximately there that we think would be eligible. Not all are in a current state of looking at closure. There are probably about five

to 10 of those who are imminently looking at divestments because they can't afford the infrastructure upgrades.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay, so five to 10 are maybe under threat of closure.

Then, you mentioned this Ontario capital assistance program, a \$10-million program, and said you asked the Ontario government. Has the Ontario government approved this request?

Ms. Laura McNeice: Currently, this is not a program that has been approved. We are actively working with the government to see a program like this come to fruition.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you.

In 2015, a study called the Wyman report did an assessment on the Billy Bishop runway expansion, and their estimate—it was funded by Air Canada—would be that it would cost up to \$1 billion just to expand the runway. They also found that “the economics of this infrastructure project are daunting and unprecedented.” No other airport of Billy Bishop's passenger volume has ever undertaken a \$1-billion infrastructure project. They said that their “basic financial math raises serious questions that need to be further explored. A detailed financial feasibility is required, as it appears the result will be record-high airport charges and airport improvement fund fees.”

1400

Why I mention this is that it seems pretty clear from this report that this expansion cannot happen without government investment. It just can't. It's either going to be the city, it's going to be the province or it's going to be the federal government. So do you think investment in remote airports should come before a \$1-billion investment in Billy Bishop?

Ms. Laura McNeice: I think that airports are a network and a system and that investment across the board is essential to ensure that everyone is able. You cannot have a plane take off and have nowhere to land. It is a network and a system, and all airports need to have access to government funding in order to ensure that they are running at their optimum capacity.

Ms. Jessica Bell: You know, from what I hear from MPP Mamakwa, when we've got a situation where remote airports—up to five—are at threat of closure, and we already have a functioning Billy Bishop that provides service, I question why we would want to spend so much money on an expansion that the vast majority of Torontonians don't want when there seems to be a very real need for investment in remote airports. But thank you for your response.

My next question is to Mark Rubinstein from Hope Air. Thank you so much for being here. My question is, how many requests do you get for support and how many do you have to turn down, approximately?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Thank you for the question. It's an excellent question.

In Ontario, we provided over 3,000 medical travel arrangements. That would include 2,000 flights. The balance would be hotel rooms, Uber vouchers, meal vouchers and other kinds of supports.

To date, we've not had to turn down any requests, but I would also note that that's purely on the basis of funding limitations. If you think about it, on a per-capita basis and the population of Ontario compared to other provinces, demand for Hope Air services could easily be 10 times the current level, but that requires funding and then awareness and then demand follows, so it's purely a function of that.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. And this is a numbers question I'm asking you here, but how frequently are non-urgent medical flights delayed coming into Toronto because of a shortage of landing and departure capacity?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: Thank you for the question. Is that at Billy Bishop airport that you're asking that question?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Or Pearson. How frequently does that happen, where a plane is delayed because of an issue with landing or departure capacity?

Mr. Mark Rubinstein: I can't speak to that question with authority. Yes, I cannot.

Ms. Jessica Bell: That's okay. I don't have a lot of time left. I wish I had more time. I have a great amount of respect for the work that you do.

When I'm thinking about the issues that people are facing up north when it comes to access to medical care, my first thought is they need a family doctor. They need access to specialists. They need support to get down to Toronto, if Toronto has the kind of hospital that can provide them with the service they need. I do not think that expanding an airport is the number one way that we can address some of the very critical issues that we have with access to care in the north.

Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate you coming, and I also appreciate your work.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Perfect. Thank you so much. That concludes this section.

TIMMINS AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL
NOJETSTO
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
(CAPE)

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): We will be moving over to the next section of presenters. Do we have the next set of presenters? Is it online, or they're here? Timmins and District Hospital, charitable and social service organization and Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

Good afternoon. Can we have the member from the Timmins and District Hospital, if she's online?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Good afternoon.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Oh, perfect. Good afternoon. Please start with your name. You have seven minutes, and I will be interrupting you about a minute before. Over to you.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: My name is Kate Fyfe, and I am the president of CEO of Timmins and District Hospital. Good

afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Timmins and District Hospital and, more broadly, on behalf of the patients and health care providers who call northern Ontario home.

I am here to emphasize a simple but critical point: Reliable, efficient connectivity between northern Ontario and major centres like Toronto is not just a convenience, it is essential to delivering affordable health care for the people in the north.

In Timmins, we care for people across a vast and dispersed region, with a catchment area of 110,000 people, serving those living in the Cochrane district as well as the adjoining areas of the James and Hudson Bay's coast, Timiskaming, Sudbury and the Algoma district. Many of the patients we serve are from rural, remote and Indigenous communities, where access to care is already fragile.

Reliable air access to Toronto is essential to how care is delivered in Timmins. Like many northern hospitals, attracting physicians remains one of our toughest challenges in the north. Our hospital model relies heavily on locums and specialists who travel in from southern Ontario and beyond to provide temporary coverage and specialist care for short periods. Reliable connectivity helps our locums and visiting specialists get here quickly and return back to their home practice, where they also have patients to care for.

Without dependable connectivity, it becomes even harder to secure temporary physician coverage and specialist expertise. Physicians come from the GTA, Ottawa, Quebec, other provinces and even internationally. For many of them, the ability to travel to Timmins and return home efficiently is the deciding factor of whether they're able to provide care in northern Ontario at all. When connectivity fails, the consequences are immediate and very real for our patients.

Our locum specialists are now experiencing connectivity challenges on a regular basis. This past month, we had interruptions and had to accommodate emergency coverage measures for radiology, obstetrics and our intensive care unit.

When a flight is cancelled, the next available flight is often three to four days later, which leaves critical risks to our patient care. In some instances, the hospital has had to charter taxis to drive physicians to their final destinations.

Connectivity in the north matters because consequences are measured in peoples' lives. In northern Ontario, life expectancy is currently an average of four years shorter than the rest of the province. That difference is not inevitable; it reflects real gaps in access, infrastructure and timely care.

One of the clearest ways to close that gap is to strengthen access to specialist care in Toronto and for physicians to be able to travel north. While we provide a broad range of services in Timmins, some patients still need advanced diagnostic surgery and highly specialized treatments that are only available in larger centres.

For these patients and families, timely and reliable travel can make all the difference. When travel is delayed

or disrupted, procedures are postponed, treatment plans are interrupted and patients and families carry even more stress at already a difficult time. When access is reliable and efficient, care is more continuous, complications are reduced, and lives are improved and saved.

For northern communities, Bill 110 is about protecting the connections that help our health system work for patients, families and care teams across Ontario. It is about making sure where someone lives does not decide how quickly they get care or how long they live. If we are serious about health equity in Ontario, we must treat infrastructure decisions, especially those affecting air connectivity, as health care decisions because they directly shape how access to care is a reality.

1410

On behalf of Timmins and District Hospital, I urge the committee to recognize that reliable access to Billy Bishop airport helps us attract physicians, support patients and strengthens our health system and, as well, narrows the unacceptable gap in health outcomes between northern and southern Ontario.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right. Thank you so much.

Now we'll be moving over to charitable and social services organization. Please start with your name for the Hansard.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: There was a bit of a glitch on the form. My organization is NoJetsTO, just to be clear. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): No problem. Go ahead, sir. You can start with your name.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Sure. Hello, members of the committee. My name is Norm Di Pasquale, chair of NoJetsTO.

NoJetsTO is a grassroots organization whose aim is to preserve our revitalized waterfront while maintaining a regional island airport without jets. It is confusing to us to be at Queen's Park at the Ontario Legislative Assembly, discussing land seizures that we were told are for an airport jet scheme that the Ontario government has no authority to initiate. That's not just because airports are federal jurisdiction but also because this specific airport is run by the Toronto Port Authority, whose directors are almost all federally appointed.

At every stage, the decision-maker at the island airport is now and always has been the federal government. That means that, at best, the Ontario government is demanding a blank cheque to seize as much of the Toronto Islands as it likes as well as some beloved mainland parks and public spaces as part of an effort to mislead the public about whose decision this is. We are urging this committee and the Legislative Assembly as a whole to say no to this bill.

First, as I mentioned, seven of the port authority's directors are representatives of the federal government. We all know that there isn't an actual concrete proposal to expand the runway to wreck our waterfront for jets, but this all means that there won't ever be a proposal for approval unless the federal government and its represent-

atives on the port authority agree to creating one. Nothing the province does to try and co-opt the municipality's landownership or even try to usurp this 43-year tripartite agreement can possibly give it the power it needs to make this jet runway happen.

Second, even with the province attempting to usurp the city of Toronto's role, two of the three parties to the tripartite agreement, which bans jets at the island airport, are controlled by the federal government. One is the port authority, which I've just discussed, and the other is the federal transport minister. It can and will only be amended if the federal government decides to make it happen.

Perhaps a little history lesson on how this tripartite agreement works is appropriate, given how this bill is trying to introduce a new partner in the mix. In 1983, after extensive consultations, the initial tripartite agreement was signed between the city, Toronto Port Authority and Transport Canada. This document stood the test of time as the original drafters understood that the island airport was meant to be a smaller regional airport and by not permitting jets it would remain this way.

In 2002, Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman voted to build the island airport bridge with the aim to facilitate jets there. In 2003, David Miller was elected mayor on a promise to kill that bridge in order to avoid "Pearson on the lake." After he was elected, the federal government introduced legislation needed to end the bridge, and that's what the local municipality clearly wanted, as expressed through an election.

In 2013, Porter Airlines CEO Robert Deluce called for jets at the island airport, and that is when NoJetsTO was born. The debate went through city hall until April 2014, when the city council voted unanimously for a three-stage airport growth plan that included studies, caps and consultation along the way. This was a very thorough and well-thought-out growth plan which would have been evidence-based, with expert reports and information to back it up.

In 2015, however, the Liberals were elected as government of Canada and ended the jet proposal with a tweet. That tweet was from the federal transport minister, Marc Garneau, signalling that the federal government would not reopen the tripartite agreement for jets. Again, it was the federal government that made the decision, respecting the voice of Torontonians who didn't want their waterfront wrecked with jets. The provincial government made it clear during that fight that they would not get involved in any fashion, as they correctly noted that that airport is not in provincial jurisdiction.

When a requirement came in 2025 to build a runway end safety area, the city worked collaboratively with the Toronto Port Authority to amend the tripartite agreement to allow for this RESA and to extend the tripartite agreement to allow for the financing of that RESA—that runway end safety area—demonstrating that the city of Toronto has been a good partner in this agreement. All this history shows there's no mechanism for Ontario to even get us to the point of creating a proposal and submitting it for approval. This land grab certainly isn't a way to do that.

That brings us to point number 3. Despite the Premier's attempts to pretend otherwise, all of the legal approvals and health and safety protections for pretty much every aspect of this fantasy jet runway—from filling in the best-loved parts of our harbourfront to landing the jets themselves—are federal and unaffected by this bill or anything else the province may choose to do.

Fast-forward to 2026, and we now have the UP Express that gets you from Union to Pearson in 28 minutes, connected to Bloor, Weston and the Eglinton LRT. We have a revitalized waterfront that all three levels of government have invested in, which has given us excellent ROI. The east waterfront represents the future of our city, with plans to house 75,000 people there, with thousands of much-needed affordable housing units in the context of our housing crisis. Pearson's expansion program just announced a funded plan to upgrade operations to handle 17 million more passengers. Torontonians see all of this and how jets do not fit in the picture at the island airport or our waterfront, but will their voice be respected?

All the bill before you today is basically a land grab. Looking at the Building Billy Bishop Act, it calls for the expropriation of Little Norway Park, a beloved community green space. Much of the activity in that park abuts the airport terminal—a well-used children's playground and wading pool and a baseball diamond. These parts would likely be the parts that would be paved over for a larger airport terminal, road widenings and who knows what else.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.
Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Thank you.

I take no comfort in the proclamations by this government that Little Norway Park will remain. It may remain, but likely the back part that really ties the community together will be paved over.

This bill also calls for the expropriation of the whole of the Toronto Islands. Horrified Torontonians can only guess at the government's intentions here, which we would like to see clarified. But we are concerned with how growth might threaten Hanlan's Point, which neighbours the airport. Hanlan's Point is an important 2SLGBTQ+ safe space and haven, and access to it must be protected.

There's no reason for the provincial government to threaten these beloved public spaces as the province is not the main decision-maker on island airport expansion. This falls to the federal government who can carry out whatever expropriations they like on city or provincial land. Why the province is unilaterally doing this aggressive bill and causing significant concern is beyond us. Our petition has received over 8,000 signatures since the announcement of the expropriations, which even caught the city by surprise. If the goal was to make enemies out of everyday Ontarians—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes your seven minutes.

We will be moving over to Ms. Roy. Over to you.

Dr. Mili Roy: I'm Dr. Mili Roy of U Toronto and Ontario co-chair for the Canadian Association of Phys-

icians for the Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

CAPE has concerns regarding the adverse public health impacts of the proposed expansion at Billy Bishop, particularly the pollutants that will be emitted by commercial jets, amplified by Billy Bishop being sited in a densely populated area and with goals to possibly quintuple passenger volumes through the airport.

What are the pollutants that we are worried about? In particular, top of the list, are ultrafine particles, or UFPs. Almost all particulate emissions from jets are UFPs, which are 0.1 microns or smaller—much smaller than the typical PM2.5s we talk about in regular air pollution, which are 2.5 microns. These UFPs lack monitoring. Data and regulation must be approached with caution. We'll also talk about the toxic gases, nitrogen and sulphur dioxides that jets emit, as well as noise pollution.

Now, how do the commercial jets stack up against the turboprop planes that currently fly out of Billy Bishop? The turboprops are much more fuel-efficient, with lower emissions, and therefore pose less health risks than commercial jets.

What are the health harms of each jet pollutant that I just mentioned and how does this occur? First off, when we breathe in the UFPs, they are so small they cross across the lungs, right into our bloodstream—sometimes across the gut wall as well—and then have access to the entire body. The smaller the particle, the more toxic it is. UFPs cause lung disease, things like asthma and bronchitis, but also severe heart diseases. There is a strong link to heart-related death by heart attack, heart failure, blood clots and so on.

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The UFPs actually travel literally up our nose using the olfactory nerve that we use for smell and wind up in the brain, where they cause direct damage and dementia, stroke, Alzheimer's and so on. UFPs also cause diabetes, lung cancer; they get in the placenta and cause low-birth-weight babies and have possible links to birth defects.

Now let's talk toxic gases: NO₂—nitrogen dioxide. At the meta-analysis level—the strongest scientific evidence we have—they are linked to premature death. They cause lung disease, heart disease, strokes; again, lung cancer, diabetes, pregnancy risks. And they cause neurodevelopmental delays—so intellectual disabilities, behavioural disorders. The take-home message is that there is no safe threshold for exposure to these gases.

And almost ditto for sulphur dioxide: a very similar list of risks, maybe minus the lung cancer and diabetes. Again, there are no safe thresholds for exposure to these gases.

Moving on to noise pollution: Aviation noise in particular is identified as the most bothersome of all environmental noise sources, and the WHO has flagged this as a significant health hazard. Again, we have meta-analysis-level evidence—the strongest we can make—linking aircraft noise specifically with heart diseases and also with mental health issues, including cognitive impairment.

Sadly, children are uniquely susceptible to noise pollution from aircraft by suffering hyperactivity and deficits in

reading comprehension as well as memory. This is all proven.

We need to learn from studies such as the first-ever study that was done looking at health impacts that are specifically due to aviation-derived UFPs. This was done in 2024 in Europe. It showed that 52 million Europeans are at risk from these UFPs, and it is linked in Europe to hundreds of thousands of cases of high blood pressure, diabetes and nearly 20,000 cases of dementia across that continent.

How far do we have to live from an airport to be at risk? Well, that fantastic study helps to answer that. If we look at the risk of things such as dementia, diabetes and high blood pressure, the dark blue bars show that in the five-kilometre range is our highest risk. But even at 20 kilometres, which are the pale blue bars, we are still at elevated risk for these health impacts.

So how do those numbers translate to populations here in the GTA with our two airports, Billy Bishop included? If we look at the five-kilometre radius, about 150,000 people live within five kilometres of Pearson, but that number is triple—about 450,000 people live within five kilometres of Billy Bishop, and that has to be considered. If we look at that 20-kilometre radius, we have maybe about seven million people living within 20 kilometres of those two airports.

Moving along, we are very lucky to have specific data from a fantastic study done looking at death rates specifically due to UFPs in Toronto and Montreal that documented 1,100 deaths just within the scope of that one study. Again, it cannot be ignored.

And as part of that study, there was excellent air quality monitoring going on of UFPs in the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood—you can see the photographs here—and it showed that Billy Bishop is the single-largest source of UFPs in Toronto. On days when the wind blows from the airport up into that neighbourhood, the levels of UFPs are doubling or tripling and easily exceed 100,000 particles per cubic centimetre. To give context, any level over 20,000 is considered unacceptably high.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Dr. Mili Roy: In conclusion, if we're talking about the modernization of Billy Bishop, we have to have evidence-based recommendations to create policy. UFP monitoring is critical.

We want to look at other options: reduce traffic and idling of vehicles and aircraft.

Consider 100% hydro-treated jet fuels. Actually, this cleaner fuel reduces UFPs and human health harms by 70% at a cost of under five cents per litre of jet fuel.

Look at what other jurisdictions are doing around the world. They're trying to reduce air traffic and pollutants. In France and Austria, short-haul flights have been terminated where high-speed rail options exist. We need to provide these other options.

Finally, incentivize Billy Bishop's own bid to be an early adopter of electric aircraft. They have already purchased Canada's first Beta charger. They have done test

flights of electric aircraft over our waterways. This is what modernization looks like.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. I'm afraid that concludes the time.

We will be moving over to the government side. I see MPP Gallagher Murphy.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you very much to all of the witnesses here today for your deputations. My first question will go to Timmins and District Hospital, to Kate Fyfe.

Thank you very much, Madam Fyfe, for being here with us today. I was listening intently to your remarks. Reliable, efficient connectivity to Toronto—that does mean a lot. And when it comes to an equitable health system, that is critical. For this government, having an equitable health system, having an equitable long-term-care system so that people know that they can reach and have access to health care is our top priority. I truly appreciate your comments. Being the former PA to the Minister of Health and currently the PA to the Minister of Long-Term Care, when I say “equitable,” I definitely hear what you're saying.

So my question to you is this: What opportunities do you see, Madam Fyfe, as potentially a result of expanding the airport, especially as it relates to patients from your community in accessing health care?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Thank you so much for your comments and for the question. Certainly, being able to provide access and improve options is critical for both physicians choosing to come and serve in the north and provide care in our community. Often, we hear from our physicians that the flight availability is a significant barrier for them to be able to get into Timmins and then return home to their home practice where they have patients awaiting care as well.

The same goes for patients. Often, patients are needing to travel to have follow-up care or specialized care. The ability to travel into Billy Bishop gives them the opportunity to be able to travel in, often on a same-day approach, or be able to be right downtown, be able to access their care in specialized hospitals and then be able to return home and really alleviate the burden that comes with that travel.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you very much. Thinking about your response there, I'm thinking about the locum program that you did mention in your deputation earlier. I do think about the specialists—ophthalmologists when it comes to eyecare, because that relates specifically to diabetes as well and how important it is to have that access on a timely basis.

I also think about other types. When I think about children and children's health and having SickKids in downtown Toronto, what they do for children across this province is phenomenal. Could you maybe comment on that, on children's health from the north?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Yes, absolutely. We are often needing to transfer children requiring a higher level of care to SickKids. We also have a program that transfers to CHEO,

so being able to access through Billy Bishop on to Ottawa is critical for their care journey.

Often, those children require multiple visits on an ongoing basis, and being able to get in and out enables them to receive the care that they need. We also have specialists coming up from both institutions to our community to ensure that follow-up care can be provided close to home.

The highest percentage of travel that we're seeing currently is related to ophthalmology. We've also developed a really strong relationship with U of T, where a specialist ophthalmologist is bringing a resident up to our community for training. That has enabled us to dramatically reduce the wait times. Without that reliable travel, we would be definitely impacting that direct access to care.

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M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you. That's important to hear. Thank you very much for your comments on the ophthalmology, because that's good to know that you're getting that specialized care as well.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: One more quick question for you, and it relates to the families: the families of the children, the families of the loved ones who are needing this care and this access. Maybe if you could talk quickly about what that means to them.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Yes, absolutely. Often, young children do require support with a caregiver being able to travel with their child and being able to ensure that they're easily accessible and providing that support to the families. Often, those travel decisions are difficult and complex.

If travel is interrupted, then care gets interrupted, and that journey and the outcomes are negatively impacted. It is a very difficult and stressful time for families when they're needing to seek care outside of their home community. Being able to ensure that it's stable, reliable and—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time allocated.

We're moving over to the official opposition. MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to everyone for coming.

My first question is to Kate Fyfe, the president and CEO of Timmins and District Hospital. Thanks so much for being here. As a CEO, what are the biggest issues you face as a hospital to meet the demand of health care in Timmins?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Currently, the biggest challenge that we're facing is having physician coverage. It is the most instability that we've seen, and often we are seeing significant gaps in care related to having coverage available.

In our hospital, we provide the obstetrics care for the entire region that we serve, a population of 110,000 individuals. We currently are seeing gaps in that care, and we've seen our locum pool shrink dramatically because of the instability related to travel and travel arrangements.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Is your hospital operating in deficit?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Our hospital ended last year in a balanced position. However, the demands on our hospital are significantly growing, so we have received pressure-

relief funding to be able to support that increased demand on our hospital.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Is your hospital operating at capacity, or operating at above capacity?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Our hospital is operating above capacity. In the last six years, we've seen a growth in demand of approximately 60%. Patients are coming into our hospital requiring a higher level of care, really related to the lack of access that we've seen for care as close to home as possible.

Ms. Jessica Bell: When I did pre-budget consultations, we heard from a lot of hospital administrators who talked about the issue around wage parity and wages in general, not just for doctors, but also for nurses and personal support workers. As a CEO, do you see wages as being an issue when it comes to recruiting and retaining workers?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: As I mentioned, we've seen a significant growth in demands for service. At the same time, we've been able to recruit the required nursing and personal support, as well as support staff to be able to stabilize that growth. We were relying heavily on agency nursing; however, we have been able to successfully recruit so that we have one of the lowest agency rates that we've seen in a long time.

I do think, though, from a physician perspective, we've seen investments into the physician contracts. However, providing care in the north is critical and we recognize that we're taking physicians. There is a shortage of physicians, including family physicians, and it is critical that we're able to be competitive in the north to make sure that we have that physician coverage to be able to support care delivery.

Ms. Jessica Bell: When I look at reports about how much it's going to potentially cost the government to invest in Billy Bishop airport to allow for the expansion, we're hearing numbers of \$1 billion. When I think about what we could do to improve health care with \$1 billion, I think it would be significant, especially if we put it in the north.

I've got a question around connectivity and Billy Bishop airport and Pearson. As you probably know, Pearson airport is undergoing an expansion to provide for air traffic of about 65 million people a year. We've also got a new development where we now have the Union-Pearson Express, which travels from downtown Toronto to Pearson airport. It runs very frequently. I just did a little check on how long it takes to get from Pearson and Porter to Princess Margaret, a major cancer hospital in Ontario, and the difference in an Uber is about 16 minutes, and the difference on public transit is about five minutes. So when it comes to connectivity, especially when you're going downtown, there's very little difference between the two.

Help me out here: Why is it so important for Billy Bishop to be expanded to meet the need for travel, when Pearson is already undergoing an expansion to meet this demand?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: I think we need additional capacity. It is critical that that capacity is provided, which will enable patients and physicians to be able to access on a reliable

basis—the ability to come and be downtown in a very short time period is attractive for physicians.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: It's where they're working, and being able to fly in and out on a same-day basis really will help us being able to attract and recruit physicians.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. I just want to emphasize to you that the difference between getting from Porter or Pearson to downtown on public transit is about five minutes.

My final question is to Mili Roy from CAPE. We've heard earlier today that some members from the Conservative government say that some of these health impacts and the noise and so on is fearmongering. As a doctor, do you think the health impact of the airport expansion is fearmongering?

Dr. Mili Roy: No, absolutely not. And by the way, I speak as a specialist, as an ophthalmologist who actually does service the north, and I can say that our biggest problem is actually the absence or the lack of human health resources; it is not a jet plane landing strip at Billy Bishop that is constraining the ability of physicians to go up north. It's certainly not fearmongering; we need to understand the connections between—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you. That concludes the six and a half minutes to the official opposition.

Now we are moving to the third party. MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you to all of our speakers for coming in today. Well, why don't we continue on with Mili? Did you want to finish that?

Dr. Mili Roy: I so appreciate that opportunity. I was saying that our policies need to recognize the larger connectivity between the problems we're trying to solve. We're trained to look at the cost-benefit ratio when we make decisions in health care. The cost-benefit ratio of increasing our carbon emissions and the pollution impacts that I just talked about in my deputation do not merit the minimal so-called benefits; as MPP Bell just pointed out, that the connectivity to specialist care in Toronto is very, very comparable with Pearson.

Look at the scenario. We heard Hope Air talking about bringing in patients with cancers, but we need to understand that if we are increasing our flights and our emissions, we are causing the very cancers that then require that care and need those patients being brought back down here.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right. Okay.

And now to a question from me. Thank you very much for your presentation. When you were listing all the pollutants, I was wondering—that was pollutants from air traffic—were you also including vehicular traffic in those numbers?

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Dr. Mili Roy: No. So here, I am just trying to isolate out the impacts of aviation-induced pollution alone, and on top of that, of course, traffic-induced pollution, industrial pollution. Those are all piled on top of the figures that I already gave you.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. So then, with the expansion proposal, with the current city of Toronto transportation data of over 400 cars an hour coming in—sometimes double that, actually—it would lead to an increase in congestion. A complete boondoggle of a bottleneck down there on one very narrow area—as we say, one of the busiest intersections in the busiest city in the world—would add to more pollutants. Obviously, that would have you more worried.

Dr. Mili Roy: Yes, absolutely. It is additive and cumulative.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, great.

And then we'll go to Kate from Timmins and District Hospital, thank you. What are your closest airports to Timmins? There is one in Timmins?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: That's correct. We have an airport in Timmins.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. And is that in any need of any infrastructure investment? We're hearing from my colleagues that a lot of northern airports are in bad need of investment.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Unfortunately, I don't have the details on the level of investment for our local airport.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Do you have any statistics on people, from your point of view—doctors, whomever, patients—flying into Billy Bishop versus flying into Lester B. Pearson?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: I don't have the details, but I do know that both are options that are used. Often, if a flight is delayed, we're looking at the available options across both of the airports. So I would say it's probably equitable at this point.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Great. And have you been to Toronto recently? Have you flown into Toronto recently, to Billy Bishop or Lester B.?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: I have flown into Billy Bishop. I haven't flown into Toronto Pearson recently.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, because I'm not sure the last time you did fly in, but we do have an amazing UP Express—huge investment in that transit. It's basically under 30 minutes to get downtown.

I personally come from the Beach. I take the TTC for a mere \$3 and change, and it gets me out there quickly. I just want to put that on the record: that it's actually quicker, in many ways, just to go out to Lester B. than to get into that bottleneck—and with the new proposal, even worse.

Over to NoJetsTO: Norm, welcome.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Thank you.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you for your presentation.

So you're familiar with city council because you follow it, I'm sure. There was the proposal back in 2024 for—because there definitely needs to be safety improvements done to the airport.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Absolutely agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And there was the RESA 1, 2 or 3. City council picked RESA 1, and we're hearing today that RESA 3 was the one that was required.

Do you think, if they had adopted that, we wouldn't be here today?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: So I don't believe that RESA 3 is required. That was the largest of the runway end safety areas, with costs shooting up of over \$100 million. The accessway that was offered on the side of the airport is actually opposed by Friends of Hanlan's Point.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Oh, okay. Good to know. But also, people were worried about 800 vehicles a year, including school buses, traversing the runway, which RESA 3 would prevent.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I think the airport hardly allows a school bus through. It might be one or two a year or something like that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: We're hearing 800 vehicles a year.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: There are plenty of service vehicles, but—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Still dangerous.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I think that PortsToronto could hardly pay for RESA 1. They needed an extension of the tripartite agreement to pay for that, and that was like \$70 million.

My recollection of RESA 3 was—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the six and a half minutes.

We will be moving over to the government side. MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to all of our presenters today. Definitely a lot of interesting conversation taking place here today.

I just wanted to especially thank the Timmins and District Hospital. Your present CEO, Kate Fyfe—thank you for all the great work that you do serving the people of Timmins and thank you for appearing today.

My questioning today is more so for NoJetsTO and Norman. We were just talking about RESA 3 with MPP McMahon. What kind of experience do you have to make the determination that RESA 3 is not required?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I followed the city council debate and discussion, and it was verified there during that city council debate that RESA 1 would be sufficient for a runway end safety area. So they are going to expand the runway 150 metres on both ends.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: What qualifications does your organization have or what kind of relationship do they have to say that RESA 3 is not the answer?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: All we do is rely on city staff and expert reports that say that RESA 1 was a sufficient solution for the runway end safety area. Transport Canada said so as well. We rely on experts.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you.

And I just want to hone back into the conversation that we were having on the tripartite agreement. What Ontario's position is, is that we're going to be taking over Toronto's position. Two thirds of the voting capacity is still with the port authority and the federal government. So whatever takes place in Toronto is going to be supported by all three.

What we're doing is we're replacing Toronto's position. The only money that we're spending on this airport is for any lands that need to be purchased or acquired from the city of Toronto for their land value, or today's market value—what have you. We've been making sure that we make Toronto whole, even with our new deal that we made with Mayor Olivia Chow and the money that was spent there.

With this tripartite agreement, now with Ontario coming into the loop, and your position being that there should be no jets at Billy Bishop at all, and you in your—sorry, through the Chair—position in your remarks earlier today really alluded to the fact that Ontario has no say in the matter, and Bill 110 isn't going to do anything for anything.

So if that's the case, why do you even oppose Bill 110 when two thirds of the voting power is with the other two parties?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I appreciate the question. I'm very happy to answer it.

Torontonians and Ontarians at large are kind of horrified by these expropriations that were done without reason. Little Norway Park is a beloved public place for the Bathurst Quay residents, and losing any part of that is going to really hurt—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I just want to pause there. Speaking on behalf of the government, Little Norway Park will remain a park, will always be a park—

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: In its entirety?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: —and we will support the park. So you can continue from that portion.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Yes. And that “remain a park” is not good enough for us, because we could lose quite a lot of that park and it still remains a park. That is unacceptable to the residents of Bathurst Quay and unacceptable to those who enjoy the waterfront.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: You said, “the residents of Bathurst Quay,” but this airport's going to serve more than just Bathurst Quay. This airport is about serving all of Ontario. We've had speakers that have talked about the benefits of this expansion from the morning all the way until now.

What do you have to say to the people that rely on that expansion, that's going to serve the northern communities that are going to fly in and then have better access to health care?

And now, we've talked about the timing: “Oh, it's a 15-minute Uber ride. It's a 10-minute Uber ride. It's a five-minute Uber ride.” The numbers keep fluctuating. Well, the fact of the matter is the amount of gridlock that we now see that's coming into the city—I travel every day from Brampton to Toronto. I drive in every day, and if necessary, I can take transportation, but depending on my meeting schedules it's easier for me to drive in. But my drive every day is assorted with a different time at any given hour of that day. Some days, it could take me an hour and 45 minutes; some days it can just take me 45 minutes. And I've had a flight cancellation from Pearson where I've had to take a flight from Billy Bishop, and just

the travel time at that moment from Pearson to Billy Bishop was about 45 minutes.

So when this airport is going to help expand that capacity to bring in people from the north and connect them to Toronto, what does NoJetsTO have to say about that?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I'm extremely glad you brought up traffic, because the environmental assessment done in 2017 highlights that traffic will get worse in some areas around the island airport by 450%. The average queue length at every intersection will be longer than the intersection itself. They said, "If this stuff can't be resolved, don't even consider the expansion, because you're going to make it impossible to get there." It is a cul-de-sac; it is not very easy to access.

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I would say also that Ontarians cherish their Toronto Islands. There is excess capacity right now at that island airport with the numbers dipping a little bit to 1.7 million, so there's capacity right now to add more flights to the north.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So, basically, what I'm taking from this conversation that we're having today, through you, Chair, is that you represent the people that live adjacent, nearby to that airport—

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: Not at all, incorrect.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: —you're not taking a look at the considerations when it comes to the provincial aspect of this approach, and when it comes to the agreement, it's not just a provincial agreement. It's going to be supported by PortsToronto. It's going to be supported by the federal government. Two thirds of the voting power is with them; a third of the voting power is with us. My major concern here in this particular situation—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: —was the fact that we weren't able to go to RESA 3 at that time because the city of Toronto didn't vote in favour of that. They didn't support that. So with the provincial government support, we're going to make sure we're able to increase those safety standards to what it should be and take a look at what this airport can do not only for the few kilometres around it but for the province as a whole.

Chair, where do we stand on—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Forty seconds.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Forty seconds? I'm just going to provide my closing remarks at this point. I don't think there's anything left to say.

But I want to thank all the presenters for coming today and giving their presentations. Thank you for your remarks.

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: You're shutting Torontonians out of this debate. It's unacceptable.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: There was no question back. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right—through the Chair. I would appreciate—through the Chair.

But that concludes the time allocated to the government side.

We're moving over to the official opposition. MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: Actually, I'll pick up on that line of questioning.

To Norm Di Pasquale, thank you for being here today. The Conservative member just said that you're only representing the people who live around the airport, but there are 28 million visitors to the Toronto waterfront every year. It's Canada's number one tourist destination. What impact do you think having jets fly, land or take off every two and a half minutes over the waterfront would have on the tourism industry?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I mean, the effect of a jet every two and a half minutes is essentially "Pearson on the lake." You are changing this revitalized waterfront that we've invested billions in and has returned billions more back. That is the crown jewel, our waterfront. Tourists from around the world visit it. Ontarians love to come down. Ontarians go to the Toronto Islands. It is a well-loved place. We have invested two decades and billions of dollars in revitalizing it. This jet expansion would dominate the waterfront and is absolutely in conflict with our revitalized waterfront.

Mr. Chris Glover: The Conservative member also said that it would be the federal government and the provincial government that would be in control of this. Does that not speak to your own argument that it's really the federal government behind the scenes that is pulling the strings but they don't want to come out front because they want to protect the downtown Liberal MPs from taking the flak for actually destroying our waterfront by expanding this airport?

Mr. Norm Di Pasquale: I would ask the federal government to stand up and be honest about where they stand on this because they are ultimately the decision-makers. It doesn't matter what the Ontario government does here at Queen's Park; the decision-maker is the federal government. So I would really like them to be a lot clearer with their stance.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you.

I'll ask a couple of questions to Dr. Fyfe. Thank you so much for your presentation today. Let's see. You talked about the health impacts of ultrafine particles, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide. There is an elementary school 200 metres from the runway, and they're going to be increasing the number of flights from a turboprop every 20 minutes to a jet every two and a half minutes landing right beside that elementary school. What would the health impacts be on the children that attend that school?

Dr. Mili Roy: Absolutely. Thanks for that question. As I mentioned, of course, there are all the impacts that I discussed, whether it's lung diseases—so, especially things like asthma are a big problem with children. But a lot of the developmental and functional issues, so things such as hyperactivity and inattention disorder, deficits in memory and reading comprehension, those have been clearly linked to UFP exposure. There is a clear example

with Munich Airport. Where the old airport was located, there was a high incidence of these issues in children. When that airport closed, the children's functioning improved, and in the new location where the Munich Airport opened, these problems cropped up in the children around. There's irrefutable evidence.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you very much. I will ask my next question to Mili Roy. I lived in Geraldton in the 1980s. I was working for MNR on a cutline for mining companies, did a bunch of different jobs. One of the big issues at that time was, there was a big fight to get a northern medical school because doctors who were born and trained in the south didn't want to work in the north. So they created the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in order to recruit local northern residents as doctors who would go back to their local communities.

It seems that we're still fighting this fight of people from the north having to come to the south to get hospital care, to get treatment for cancers and other illnesses. Would it not be better, with the estimate for this airport—and I've heard anywhere from \$1 billion to \$5 billion to expand this airport, when we're already expanding Pearson right up to the street. If they were to take that average, say, \$3 billion and invest that into fixing the airports in northern Ontario, keeping them open, and also into health care, training local physicians in the north and providing care in the north, would that not provide care closer to home for northern Ontario residents?

Dr. Mili Roy: Yes, I absolutely agree. And again, it gets to this problem of human health resources. We are in a crisis here, and therefore definitely training people who actually live in those communities or nearby is the best solution.

We should also look at the fact that, for example, being on a First Nations reserve area, that transportation—when services like Greyhound bus lines shut down, those were some of the largest hits for people who live in those communities. We're talking connectivity. It does not have to mean a jet plane landing at Billy Bishop. That really is not getting to the heart of the problem, or it's certainly not to the solution.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay.

I'll address the question to Kate Fyfe from Timmins. If the government was to invest the \$3 billion, instead of investing in expanding Billy Bishop, but into fixing the airports and providing health care in the north at the hospitals in Timmins, in North Bay, in Sudbury, in Thunder Bay, in Kenora, would that not provide care that's closer to home for those residents?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Oh, absolutely. Investment into the north is critical to increase access to care in the north.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: I think, though, we know that we will always need to connect to a higher level of care provided in a larger centre. That means that our patients will need to travel to the larger centres to receive that access to care. It isn't one or the other. We are establishing a health system which really is incumbent to build on each other. My hospital will not be able to meet the needs of all of the local

community; they need higher-level specialist care that only can be provided in the larger centres.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. But if there was more care and more types of treatment available in the north, then fewer people would have to travel to the south.

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Absolutely. Increasing care—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you. That concludes the time allocated. We will be moving over to the third party. I see MPP Hazell.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I just want to say thank you to all the three presenters.

My question is going to be to Kate from Timmins and District Hospital. We all know how the hospitals are stretched in the north, but I didn't really hear that from you. My question for you is: What are your operation's budget pressures for 2025 and 2026?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: We're entering the year with a \$15-million deficit, which is about 8% to our bottom line. We also, though, are experiencing pressures from a physician capacity perspective, needing to add incentives to attract physicians to come north, largely due to the travel barriers that are currently in place.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Okay. Thank you for sharing that. My follow-up question to you is: How are the roads around your hospital and what highways do ambulances access to get patients to your hospital?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: We have a number of different routes that patients travel. Each of them has challenges as well. We also, though, service—a large percentage of our region is fly-in, rural, remote communities, so there are a number of different ways to be able to access the hospital coming from east, west, north and south.

1500

MPP Andrea Hazell: Right. And thank you for sharing that.

My next question is, we've got the highways, the roads—driving is not safe. We hear it every day in the chamber from our northern colleagues. Also, I had added that to both of my bills, and we know that is a challenge. Then you have a deficit with your operational budget for 2025-26.

You are supporting the expansion of the airport because you spoke about connectivity. What is your top concern right now for your hospital that you need to be focusing on?

Mr. Kate Fyfe: Physician coverage. I can't care for patients if I don't have physicians in my hospital who are willing to travel to our community to provide care.

MPP Andrea Hazell: And how many doctors travel right now from Toronto to Timmins to take care of your patients on a yearly basis?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Last year, we saw approximately 4,000 physician days of coverage by locum physicians travelling by air.

MPP Andrea Hazell: And how many doctors do you have locally?

Ms. Kate Fyfe: Many of our specialists are single physician specialists, so they are reliant on 75% or more of coverage provided by locum physicians—

MPP Andrea Hazell: Yes, in the essence of time, because I've got to go on to the other presentations: What I'm trying to understand is your reasoning for supporting the expansion and not supporting and creating capacity from your local area in Timmins, and also the detriment of the highways and the roads up in the north. So, thank you so much for your response to my question.

I want to move forward to CAPE, and I'm going to be very quick with my question. Thank you for sharing those data, because I've learned a lot today. We know there is no environmental assessment for this airport. There is no assessment on the congestion. There is no cost-benefit analysis.

But for the record, can you tell me your top three concerns that you have right now, including the UFPs? Because I learned a lot about that today.

Dr. Mili Roy: Yes, absolutely. Of course, concern number one is the mix of pollutants being emitted from these jets, including the UFPs as well as nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and the fact that we are struggling to understand the rationale.

Again, as I mentioned, we study cost-benefit ratios when we make decisions in medicine and in health care. We feel that another priority is simply that the reallocation of the funds it would take to expand Billy Bishop could be far better spent. The per-capita health allocation in Ontario is the lowest per capita in the country. A little cash infusion into our per-capita spending would go a long way and would result in better health outcomes across the board. We want to look at the big picture.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

MPP Andrea Hazell: So in summary, what is it you really want this government to understand from your presentation today? Sum it up, and sum it up very strong.

Dr. Mili Roy: Certainly not to go ahead with Bill 110 and this Billy Bishop expansion. Study the problem. Understand the health impacts of UFPs. Put a hold on any plans to expand until there is a full understanding of the problem and better ways to spend these funds in order to support the health of the population and modernization, which must be evidence based and forward looking, instead of making policy based in the rearview mirror.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Very good. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Perfect timing. That concludes the time for this set of presenters.

GREATER SUDBURY AIRPORT
BATHURST QUAY
NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION
CLEAN INDOOR AIR TORONTO

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): We are moving over to the next set of presenters: Sudbury Airport Community Development Corp. and Greater Sudbury Airport; Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association; and Clean Indoor Air Toronto.

We have all the presenters available, so we are going to start with the Sudbury Airport Community Development

Corp. Please state your name for Hansard. You have seven minutes.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Giovanna Verrilli from the Greater Sudbury Airport; a pleasure to be here today. I'll just get started.

Good afternoon and thank you to the committee for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to begin by acknowledging and thanking the provincial government and members of this committee for recognizing that air transportation is not simply a convenience for northern Ontario and communities like Sudbury; it's essential transportation infrastructure. I'm here today on behalf of the Greater Sudbury Airport with support from the Sudbury chamber of commerce.

For many northern communities, air travel functions as transit. It connects people to health care, education, employment, government services and economic opportunity. The province's willingness to engage in these conversations surrounding long-term regional connectivity is both important and appreciated.

Sudbury is the largest city in northern Ontario and a long-standing leader in mining innovation, critical minerals and mining supply, along with leading in key industries like health care, education and government services.

Prior to the pandemic, Greater Sudbury Airport welcomed close to 300,000 passengers a year and served as a critical transportation gateway for the north. Like many regional airports across Canada, we were experiencing stable passenger demand and improving connectivity. Communities like Sudbury benefited from multiple daily connections into larger urban centres, including Billy Bishop.

Historically, Billy Bishop played a critical role, connecting Sudbury directly into downtown Toronto and beyond. This connectivity supported business development, health care-related travel, tourism, government access and broader economic integration with southern Ontario.

Before the pandemic, Sudbury had approximately three daily flights into Billy Bishop. Today, we have none. That reduction matters.

It's important to understand that this is not simply a demand issue; in many respects, it's an aircraft infrequency issue. One of the broader challenges regional communities are beginning to experience is a gradual loss in confidence in the consistency and reliability of regional air service.

As scheduling options become more limited, travellers increasingly begin driving to larger southern airports in order to secure more reliable travel options. For northern Ontario residents, including in Sudbury, that often means spending several hours travelling on Highway 69 and other northern highway corridors, particularly during very challenging and scary winter conditions. From a provincial perspective, strong regional air service is not only an economic issue, but also a transportation resiliency and public safety issue.

A significant part of this challenge is also being driven by the broader structural changes occurring within the aviation industry itself. One of the most significant challenges currently facing regional aviation in Canada is the evolving future of the De Havilland Dash 8-Q400 fleet.

The Q400 has long been the backbone aircraft for regional markets like northern Ontario because it provides the right balance of passenger capacity, operating economics, runway performance and frequency flexibility. As fleets age, airlines are facing increasing maintenance pressures, parts availability concerns and declining fleet numbers.

Across Canada, airlines are increasingly consolidating around different fleet strategies and more concentrated hub operations. While this could work and will work for urban markets, it creates real challenges for smaller and mid-sized communities like Sudbury.

While larger airports have generally experienced a strong post-pandemic recovery, our airport as well as other regional airports in the north continue to recover at a much slower pace. In fact, in 2025, passenger volumes at Greater Sudbury Airport peaked at 50% of pre-pandemic levels, and that's not because there is lack of demand.

The slower recovery has been driven by reduced flight frequencies, limited aircraft availability, pilot shortages, higher operating costs and broader airline network optimization strategies. These are industry-wide pressures, but regional airports feel them more acutely because we have fewer airline options and fewer aircraft types capable of economically serving our markets.

Despite these challenges, reduced passenger volume and significant financial constraints, regional airports continued to operate throughout the pandemic and beyond. We maintained critical infrastructure, emergency response capabilities, winter operations, medevac access and all regulatory and safety compliance requirements to ensure our communities remained connected.

1510

Regional airports are not simply commercial assets; they are essential infrastructure that support economic resilience, labour mobility, health care access, supply chains, emergency response and northern connectivity across Canada. From the perspective of Greater Sudbury Airport, Bill 110 and the proposed modernization of Billy Bishop airport represents an important step towards strengthening long-term regional connectivity and transportation resiliency across Ontario. Most importantly, it helps position Billy Bishop airport to accommodate next-generation regional aircraft, as airlines continue to rely heavily on the Q400 fleet.

If regional aviation is going to remain viable over the next 10, 20 years and more, the system must evolve alongside changing aircraft technology and fleet realities. Without that evolution, communities risk continued frequency reductions and further erosion of connectivity.

By enabling additional aircraft flexibility at Billy Bishop, the modernization plans support the long-term sustainability of regional air service into downtown Toronto and

beyond and strengthens Billy Bishop's role as a regional connector and secondary GTA hub.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: For the Greater Sudbury community, that connectivity is incredibly valuable. Greater Sudbury is one of the most important mining communities in the north and plays a critical role in supporting Ontario's broader critical minerals economy. At a time when northern Ontario is positioned to play an increasingly strategic role in the province's economic future, regional connectivity cannot continue moving in the opposite direction.

At the end of the day, regional aviation is about more than just flights; it's about ensuring communities like Sudbury remain connected to opportunity, investment, health care and the rest of the province. As Greater Sudbury continues to play an increasingly important role in Ontario's economic future, Greater Sudbury Airport supports the Billy Bishop modernization plans as part of a stronger, more resilient and better-connected regional aviation network.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to the questions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Perfect timing. Thank you so much.

Moving over to the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association. Please start with your name.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: I'm Beverley Thorpe, chair of the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association, which represents the 2,400 households who live closest to Billy Bishop airport. I'm submitting comments regarding Bill 110 and its proposed changes to the tripartite agreement that governs this airport.

I'm grateful for having the opportunity to testify at this committee. I want to focus specifically on the impact to Little Norway Park on our community and why the city of Toronto should remain a part of the tripartite agreement in any future build out of Billy Bishop airport. I then conclude with three specific recommendations for the committee.

The tripartite agreement has shaped the relationship between the airport, the waterfront, the city of Toronto and surrounding communities for decades. Bill 110 fundamentally changes that structure by removing the city of Toronto as a party to the agreement and replacing it with the province. This is a major governance change that will have big repercussions for the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood because our community is intrinsically bound to the airport. The airport terminal is situated in our neighbourhood and planes land and take off only 120 metres across the western gap.

Our mixed-income neighbourhood contains a busy waterfront neighbourhood centre, two daycares, two schools with multiple playgrounds and a much-loved basketball court, as well as the iconic Ireland Park and the new Corleck cultural centre. Little Norway Park is the centre of our community and the much-needed green space for families and visitors.

The city worked hard to establish the Bathurst Quay Commons and recently restored the Canada Malting silos as a tourist destination.

Our community has a long history working with our city councillors and city planners. Residents are particularly concerned, therefore, by the province's intention to expropriate Little Norway Park and remove the city's voice from major decisions affecting it. If the park is to remain as a park, as the Premier recently stated, then why does the province need to take it over? To what end?

We have seen no plans for the park's future or guarantees that it will not be paved over to allow a projected five-fold increase in passengers into this heavily congested part of the city. Our lived experience predicts this will result in frustrated passengers caught in a downtown gridlock.

Transferring ownership of Little Norway Park to the province presents another concern for us: If the city has no oversight over our park, who will be responsible for park-related problems as they arise?

For example, when encampments started to appear during COVID and increased over the next three years, we held a large public meeting in November 2024 to seek solutions from the city. This resulted in the city designating Little Norway Park as a priority area for rapid response within 48 hours. Over four months, the city cleared 111 encampments, followed by ground remediation and waste clearance. Residents now understand that any new encampment which may pop up in the park will be quickly dealt with by the city. With transfer of ownership to the province, who will respond quickly to the community? What will be the new accountability mechanism?

A second concern is how any future emergencies at the airport will be dealt with in the absence of city involvement. When our community was evacuated due to a bomb scare at the airport on October 22, 2022, it created mayhem. We received no communication from the Toronto Port Authority, and we were eventually told by police to vacate the area, but many elderly and people with disabilities had nowhere to go. Transportation, washroom facilities or food were not made available, even though the all-clear was not made until after midnight.

This was a wake-up call for us about future emergencies at the airport, and we strongly believe the city needs to be at the table. Indeed, it was the Toronto office of emergency management who stepped up and worked with us to subsequently produce a community response handbook, which we are now distributing. If the city is removed from airport-related issues, who do we now work with, and how will the province deal with local emergency response?

A final concern I want to raise up before our three recommendations is the future oversight of air pollution. Four years of monitoring data by the University of Toronto confirmed that the airport is the most significant source of ultrafine pollutants into our community, sometimes exceeding the World Health Organization guidelines by two to three times.

The impacts of these results were covered extensively by CBC's *The National* on April 15, 2026. It was interesting to us that the airport was one of the partners in this

research, together with the BQNA and Toronto Public Health, but the airport prevented access to researchers to conduct on-site monitoring, and when results were published in peer-reviewed publications, they hired a consultant to deny the findings.

Recently, Dr. Hatzopoulou, the Canada Research Chair and head of the air quality research group at the University of Toronto, stated that any increase in aircraft will increase the levels of UFPs into this part of the waterfront.

We raised this because future air pollution outcomes under Bill 110 would depend heavily on the type of airport expansion and associated environmental assessments requirements, which the province may decide not to prioritize, yet the data does not lie, and exposure will affect residents and tourists alike.

To this end, we ask, before the passing of Bill 110, that this committee recommend:

(1) Transparent publication of the legal and policy rationale for removing the city from the tripartite agreement;

(2) Public consultation with affected residents and stakeholders about the implications of Bill 110 to Little Norway Park, airport emergency planning and future air pollution monitoring before this bill is passed into law; and—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: (3) Commitment to conduct a publicly transparent cost-benefit and environmental impact assessment before construction begins on any build-out of Billy Bishop city airport.

Thank you for considering this submission.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Appreciate it—thank you so much.

Now, we will be moving over to Clean Indoor Air Toronto. Please go ahead. Start with your name for Hansard.

Dr. Candace McNaughton: Wonderful. My name is Candace McNaughton. I'm here, as you say, as part of Clean Indoor Air Toronto. I just want to make sure—can you guys all see my slides?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes, we can see it.

Dr. Candace McNaughton: Beautiful. I am here, like I said, as a member of the Clean Indoor Air Toronto group, as a medical and public health adviser, and by way of background, just for context, my training includes a master's of public health, a PhD in epidemiology, bachelor's degree in microbiology and I'm an emergency medicine physician and clinician scientist.

My colleague Dr. Hidinger is going to speak more to the chemistry of air, but I'm going to talk a little bit more about the health impacts of breathing unclean air. I suspect you guys have already heard some of this, but I will just reiterate briefly.

Every time we take a deep breath in and we exhale over the course of 24 hours, that volume equals about 11,000 litres of air per day. In context, you drink about two litres of water per day.

It's reasonable to say that, in some regards, you and I are what we breathe. Breathing unclean air is the fifth leading cause of death overall globally. As you've already

heard, I think, today, UFPs are the ultrafine particles, in addition to the other components of air pollution. Because they spread to every part of the body, they have impacts on every part of the body, so it causes dementia, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, stroke, developmental delays—you name it, basically, and unclean air can cause that disease.

1520

I want to for a minute do a little bit of a visualization. Everybody who's there in Queen's Park is breathing what could arguably be described as the cleanest air in the room. I'm not there with you, but for the folks who are sitting in the room, just visualize what it's like to take a deep breath in and exhale it. Everybody is doing that throughout the room, and what you're not realizing—or maybe you are aware, but the vast majority of people are not aware of what happens in a room like Queen's Park, where the air is brought in from the outside, it's cleaned, it's filtered and the ventilation is monitored very carefully, so that if the CO₂ levels—we all exhale CO₂—go up too high, more ventilation kicks in.

You guys don't have to think about, "Do you need to open a door? Do you need to open a window? Do you need to change the air conditioning? Do you need to change the filters?" None of that is something that you have to worry about, because that is engineered into the environment that you're in. A lot of research has been dedicated to make sure that's the case, and that's appropriate. I want to be clear: We all deserve to have air that is as clean and as safe as the air in that room.

What you've heard from some folks, and what I'm going to talk about a little bit more and what Dr. Hidingier is going to talk about a little bit more, is that when it comes to ultrafine particles, the UFPs, one of the other benefits is that while you guys are in that room breathing and not worrying about exhaled air from other people or pollutants, you're really specifically not worrying about UFPs that may have snuck in. Nobody in that room, nobody in that building has to worry about ultrafine particles that are floating like gases through the air, being breathed in through your nose, going into the back of your mouth, down into your trachea, into the small air spaces in your lungs and slipping straight into your bloodstream, to then be delivered to every organ of your body.

Like I said, nobody should have to worry about that, but because it happens, because there are disparities in who has access to safe air, it does end up causing damage for a lot of people. In part, this disparity in access to clean air is what explains some of the 12-year gap in life expectancy across the greater Toronto area. For folks who live in other parts of Ontario, that gap is even larger in some cases. And so when we think about what's going to happen with the expansion of an airport, where we're going to have more pollution—there's no question about that—how likely is it that we're going to find that gap in life expectancy is going to increase even further?

In the interest of time, I'm just going to get ready to turn things over to Dr. Hidingier, but I just want to emphasize a few more things. A lot has been mentioned in terms of

access to medical care, which is a big thing for me as an emergency medicine physician, but I want to ask the question: If the goal is to improve health—which I think it is—how many flights into Billy Bishop airport does it take before those flights themselves cause enough harm to the people living and breathing the air around the airport to offset those benefits?

I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Hidingier to go from there, and I'm going to adjust the slides.

Dr. Louise Hidingier: Thank you, Candace.

My name is Louise Hidingier. I'm a chemist and I'm responsible for science communications for Clean Indoor Air Toronto.

We've been talking a lot about the air pollution from transportation. I'm actually going to skip to the next slide, because I think this has been covered in previous. I want to focus in on fine and ultrafine particulates. Fine particulates are particles that are 2.5 micrometres or less. They're small enough to be carried by wind, but they will eventually settle. Because these particles are small enough to pass from air into the bloodstream, Health Canada as well as WHO guidance is to keep your exposure to this as low as possible.

Ultrafine particulates are subset or fine particulates. These are 0.1 micrometres, or 100 nanometres, or less in size. These are too small to settle; they behave like gases and they travel with air currents. Due to that smaller size, they can penetrate much deeper into the body.

So what are they made of? Well, they are made up of things like jet fuel and jet engine oil. This diagram shows how jet engine oil, which is used to lubricate the inside of the jet engine—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Dr. Louise Hidingier: —at very, very high temperatures, it vaporizes and forms waste particles which are then carried deep into the body when you breathe them in.

The next slide I'm actually going to skip over, and I'm going to talk about how UFPs travel for very long distances.

We have been focusing in on the impact on waterfront, but this is actually a whole Toronto area. There have been a number of studies to show that UFPs travel over many, many kilometres. This is actually a diagram for modelling that shows it covers all of Toronto, including Scarborough.

We've got some key requests: One is a review by the Auditor General to assess and compare current and projected economic benefits of what the current city of Toronto's plan is and compare that to the projected economic benefit to the proposed expansion. We are also looking for a review by Public Health Ontario on the health impacts associated with proposed expansion of Billy Bishop airport—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes your time on presentations.

We will be moving over to official opposition. MPP—

Mr. Chris Glover: Glover. Thank you so much.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): I was looking at which one is going to go first.

Mr. Chris Glover: Oh, okay. I thought you had forgotten my name.

Anyway, thank you, everybody, for being here today. It has been a really informative conversation.

I will address my first question to Giovanna Verrilli. You talked about airports being essential infrastructure in Ontario. Earlier, we had Hope Air that provides emergency medical evacuations, often with volunteer pilots, and they were talking about the closure of airports across Ontario because there just isn't enough money.

This is something that—I lived in Geraldton in the 1980s. I worked in forestry, I did cutline for a mining company, so the two big industries in that part of Ontario. And even then, there was a lack of investment in Ontario. It was a 25-year fight to finally get the Northern Ontario School of Medicine open. That allowed local physicians to be trained and go back to their local communities.

But since then, we have seen the Northlander train cut, eliminated. Gray Coach Lines are down. The infrastructure on Highway 11/17 is not nearly adequate. Our member from Timiskaming was talking in the Legislature last week: that between January and September of 2025, Highway 11 was closed a total of 32 days because of accidents, because the highway is just too small and also because the training is inadequate. So there is a lack of investment in northern Ontario in all aspects of transportation, even though the primary industries up there fuel the economy that we enjoy down here in the south. I recognize that, having lived up there.

Should the government not be investing more in northern Ontario highways, airports, trains so that people can get around northern Ontario?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: The answer to that question is yes, we need that investment in northern Ontario; there's no question. Having said that, though, we still need to have airports to connect onto. So if we don't have airports that are modernizing and able to accept the increased number of routes and flights, that investment, at least from an airport perspective, will mean very little. Yes, it continues to support the emergency responses that the airports provide, but we need to have airports to fly into, and Billy Bishop has been a critical one for us.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. So, right now, the government just announced that they are going to be expanding Pearson to increase their capacity from 47 million passengers a year to 70 million passengers a year, so they will have excess capacity. The problem with Billy Bishop is that it is Canada's smallest airport in the most congested part of the busiest city, and one of my concerns is around traffic. There is an environmental assessment that says that traffic would increase by 450% if you increased the airport just to five million passengers a year. I am worried, if there's a Jays game, a Raptors game and a TFC game in the same night—which happens—that all these people trying to get into downtown Toronto to go to the airport to get a flight are going to miss their flights because they just won't be able to make it. You know, some of the other MPPs were talking already about how congested it is. Should we not be expanding other airports rather than

Billy Bishop, which is just already—it's in the wrong location.

1530

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: First and foremost, Pearson is always going to be an important airport for the north—and any regional airport, for that matter. We connect into Pearson, and we do so on a daily basis. But Billy Bishop does offer something different for our community, and that is that direct access into downtown Toronto, understanding there is that congestion concern.

But it does more than that. It also provides an option for people to connect beyond Toronto by the flights that they offer at their facility, at their airport. It's not simply just getting into Toronto; people want to connect onwards. As Billy Bishop grows and expands, we're giving the region more options to connect onwards and removing that pressure from Pearson. Yes, Pearson has got plans to expand, but so are the number of passengers flying through that airport.

Mr. Chris Glover: So an airport person, one of the experts said that it's actually better to have one airport with the connecting flights so that you don't fly into one airport, then have to transit to the other airport in order to reach your connecting flight.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Yes, that is true. Having said that, though, for us to attract new airlines or new routes, we need to have a diversified aviation system. The reliance on one hub can become very challenging, especially as their constraints continue to be a problem for the region.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. Thank you.

And Beverley, thank you so much for being here today. You were talking about the health impacts of the expansion. We would be going from a turboprop landing every 20 minutes to a jet taking off every two and a half minutes. It's not just the local residents, though; there are also 28 million visitors in 2025 to the waterfront whose health would be impacted.

What are the impacts from the University of Toronto study? What would those health impacts be?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: Well, the study was a monitoring study, which is why they kept talking about the excessive levels over the World Health Organization guidelines.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: But as we've heard from previous speakers—in fact, Dr. Weichenthal from McGill University, who was part of the epidemiological study in Toronto and Montreal, actually said we have more data now on the connection between health impacts and UFPs than we did for legislating PM2.5s. We've heard that it ranges from cardiovascular, brain, dementia etc., on to heart attacks etc.

My main concern is about the kids at those playgrounds and in the schools that were so near the sources of these measurements, which the U of T study showed were actually higher around that ferry terminal.

Mr. Chris Glover: How far is the airport from the school?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: It's walkable; you could throw a stone. I mean, it's right there.

As tourists come down—we're seeing a lot more tourists come down—Billy Bishop park was packed this weekend because it was a long weekend. There was volleyball—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time for the official opposition.

Moving over to the Liberal Party, I see MPP Hazell ready to rock.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you to everyone that made your presentations today. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park.

My first question is going to be to—I'm shortening it; this is an acronym—SACDC, Sudbury Airport Community Development Corp.—it's so long. My first question is, what are some of your major operational concerns for your airport?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: From our perspective, there are two major concerns that we face. That is the level of service that we can provide our community. We don't have enough frequency, we don't have enough routes, we don't have enough flights to service the community that we have in the catchment area.

The second one is the cost of running a regional airport. Our recovery has not been strong—as most regional airports will tell you—but our costs have not changed. Our costs, in fact, continue to grow, and we have to continue to invest into our facility to keep it safe for the public.

So I would say that connectivity, flexibility and cost are the big issues that we face.

MPP Andrea Hazell: So can you share with me your provincial funding from 2024-26? How has that been?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Yes. We have not received provincial funding. We have received some dollars from federal government from a capital perspective, but even that has been very minimal.

We are self-funded. We reinvest our revenues into our facility, and we make sure that we spend the dollars we need to keep the airport operational.

MPP Andrea Hazell: That brings me to a major concern: How are you still open?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Because we are very fiscally responsible, and the revenues that we do earn are dedicated to that capital infrastructure. That is always the priority, making sure that we have the infrastructure ready to welcome aircrafts moving forward.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you for putting that on the record.

My follow-up question is—and I need you to help me understand this, so I need to follow along with you: How would the expansion of Billy Bishop airport help to service your operations that are already underfunded?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: As we increase service—new routes, new airlines, etc., that could fly into Billy Bishop—that also increases our revenues. Those—

MPP Andrea Hazell: Can you explain to me how it increases your revenue? Bring me along with you; I need to understand that.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Yes, sure. Airlines will pay fees to operate our airports, and those fees that we charge and that we earn through these airlines and through the passengers are the revenues that we use to reinvest back into the facility.

MPP Andrea Hazell: My last question for you is, how long can you sustain the financial gap that you have? Because this is an airport that the people of Sudbury need.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: A hundred per cent; they need it.

While we have been incredibly strong in terms of ensuring we have the revenues to reinvest back into our facility, long term, the risk is always going to be there. It's just not enough funds.

When you get to that point for any regional airport, you risk the chance of closure. You risk the chance of minimized service to the community and blocking off the region to the rest of Canada.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Can you take my time and do a very short presentation to the government? I know you're supporting the Billy Bishop airport; my concern is for the Sudbury airport.

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: We work very closely with the federal government. We have airports that band together to lobby for additional support. That happens on a regular basis.

There's a small amount of federal dollars available to regional airports across Canada. There are over 170 regional airports across Canada. The dollars available are not sufficient, so we continue lobbying for that.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right, thank you so much.

Moving over to the government side, I see MPP Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to thank all of the presenters for their presentation.

I will direct my question to the Greater Sudbury Airport. You know that Billy Bishop airport is an important economic driver for Toronto and the broader region. The expansion of Billy Bishop airport is not only to create thousands of new jobs; it will facilitate business travel and it will contribute significantly to Ontario's and the local economy.

Regional airports like greater Sudbury are an essential part of Ontario's broader aviation network, and your organization and experience play an essential part in connecting northern communities to the major urban centres.

I'm just wondering, from your perspective, can you share with the committee how Billy Bishop's role as a hub has strengthened regional aviation across northern Ontario. What opportunities do you see for airports like yours as Billy Bishop modernizes and expands?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Billy Bishop has played a critical role for my region and other northern regions because it's given the community, from a leisure perspective but, more importantly, a business perspective, access into downtown Toronto and beyond. These business leaders, these organizations within our catchment area oftentimes

require efficient access to the city, efficient access to connected flights, and Billy Bishop has served us very well from that capacity.

Having lost the flight into Billy Bishop this year has been very detrimental for my community. The feedback has been quite negative. People are very eager for us to be able to offer that service back into Billy Bishop—still while offering direct service into Toronto Pearson, but that Billy Bishop access has been critical.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you.

Chair, how much time do I have?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Four and a half minutes.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to direct my question to Ms. Thorpe now from the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association.

Since your association claims to represent the unified voice of thousands of households, I'm just wondering, did you actually conduct proper polling and door-to-door surveys with qualitatively significant sample sizing to support the petition you're advocating here today?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: We circulate all our policy positions to a board, which is elected and representing all the different buildings that we have in our neighbourhood. I should point out that the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association is not advocating for the shutdown of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. That could be misinformation that has sometimes been spread around our community.

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But the issues that I'm raising today have been about Bill 110 and who is responsible in the absence of the city of Toronto, if you take the city of Toronto out of the tripartite agreement. All the issues I listed about our concerns over the park and who will be responsible and will communicate with us at a local level—that is what we are very, very concerned about.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Can you share with the committee the economic benefits of this airport?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: That's not what my testimony is about. It's about Bill 110.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: But do you think there are any economic benefits with the expansion?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: Well, I have been reading the economic benefits, but what I'm not seeing is a true cost-benefit analysis. I'm seeing the benefits, but I'm not seeing an analysis of the actual plans that are coming through and the costings that go into it.

I looked through the bill. It was about the intention, but there was no data, so we're still waiting for—what's the actual plan? I've heard today that RESA 3 is now going to be implemented instead of RESA 1, but has that been made public? We're still waiting for actual plans and data to respond to.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Over to MPP Kanapathi.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you for your presentations. We learned so many things today.

My question is to Clean Indoor Air Toronto. Thank you for your presentation. I feel like I am studying anatomy here; it's like medical school. Thank you for your research and everything.

It was mentioned in your presentation that UFP pollution travels many miles away. Could you explain further? Not only Billy Bishop airport but Toronto Pearson International Airport is also an issue to GTHA residents and constituents. Please explain to the committee.

Dr. Louise Hiding: Candace, I will take this question. Thank you very much for the question.

The thing with ultrafine particles, UFPs, is because they are so small, they behave like gases. Even if they are generated at ground level, they will be swept up by updrafts of warm air, just like any other gases. That's why they can travel for extremely long distances.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Dr. Louise Hiding: Obviously, the people who are right next to the airport are going to face the greatest impact, but there have been quite a few studies to show that it will travel far. Say for example Heathrow: They found UFPs from Heathrow in central London, which is 22 kilometres away. They found similar results for Boston, Los Angeles and Schiphol in the Netherlands.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Doctor, and thank you for your presentation. Thank you for your work and continuing to do the great work for the community.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right. Thank you so much. That concludes the government's time.

Moving over to the official opposition: MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to Giovanna Verrilli. Thank you so much for coming today.

I hear your request is that you believe that Sudbury would benefit from an expansion of Billy Bishop airport. My question to you is, why can't Pearson and its expansion meet Sudbury's air traffic needs?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Thank you for that question. Pearson will always meet the needs of a certain segment of our population. But we have a large contingent of travellers that are business-focused, that are related to our mining industry, health care, education etc. that do demand and want direct access into Billy Bishop and downtown Toronto.

And while, yes, there is ease of access to downtown Toronto from Toronto Pearson, that doesn't consider the fact that manoeuvring through Pearson is quite lengthy. By the time you get through Pearson, and you get onto that train and get downtown, you have added now at least an hour to your travel time one-way.

That's not convenient for the community trying to get into downtown Toronto or who want to connect beyond, and so that is an important factor for the community. But like I said, Pearson will always serve a certain demographic and a certain segment and will be the global connector. But Billy Bishop will serve the other segments I just talked about.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I've flown through Porter airport many times. I've flown through Pearson airport many times. Just

earlier, I did a little bit of a search into how long it takes to get from Pearson to downtown and Porter to downtown, and it's a few minutes more; it's 16 minutes more—look it up yourself—and on public transit, it's just five minutes more. So I'm having a hard time seeing the argument that Porter or Billy Bishop is providing something new that Pearson isn't already providing.

The second concern I have, and this is my question, is around the cost of expanding Billy Bishop airport. There was a study done—it was funded by Air Canada—to look at how much it would actually cost to expand it, and they estimated just for the runway alone, it would be about \$1 billion.

I took a look and their argument is—they're pretty critical. They say that this project is essentially not viable and that it would lead to—I'm going to quote: "Basic financial math raises serious questions that need to be further explored. A detailed financial feasibility is required, as it appears the result will be record-high airport charges and airport improvement fund fees"—because someone is going to have to pay for it.

And so, when we're talking about Billy Bishop expansion being viable, how can it be viable if it could lead to a massive increase in how much passengers are going to pay to get on these flights to pay for this expansion?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: So I can't speak to that study, but I'm confident that as this motion is brought forward and this need or idea to expand Billy Bishop or modernize Billy Bishop is brought to the table, the officials at the table, those parties who are bringing this forward, have done the cost-benefit analysis to ensure that this makes financial sense for them. This would not be brought forward, nor would this be moved forward, if they couldn't financially afford to do that.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Help me out here. Have you seen their business case for Billy Bishop airport?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: I have not, no.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Do you think it's important to do a business case for Billy Bishop airport?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: I'm sure it is, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: The Minister of Transportation was here earlier today, and he did not say that a business case had been conducted. He refused to commit to doing a business case and making it public. Do you think that's reasonable?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: So, I can't speak on behalf of the minister, but like I said, I'm confident that those individuals who are running the airport, operating the facility and who have brought this motion forward to modernize the airport have done the necessary work to ensure it's feasible.

Ms. Jessica Bell: They haven't done the necessary work, but I share your concern and interest that that work is done before the project is approved.

My next question is to Beverley Thorpe. Thanks so much for coming here. You represent a residents' association. How many people live in the area close to Billy Bishop airport? Just a guess or approximation.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: Well, our neighbourhood association represents 2,400 households, but we're the second-densest part of the population density in the city. We're growing all the time. So as the waterfront development happens—just, the Corleck was built, and we're going to see a lot more people coming down to that. Yes, and just behind us, there are proposals for more development.

We're just really, really busy. It's a vibrant place that—many of the housing associations and buildings are celebrating 40 years of being in that neighbourhood.

Ms. Jessica Bell: By my estimate, there are about 240,000 people living in the waterfront area near Billy Bishop airport. How would the impact of a major industrial airport impact your neighbourhood?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: Well, the airport has grown over time. People who have moved there—there are multi-generations in our neighbourhood; they've seen the airport expand.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: How has the airport—I mean, I would say the thing I'm noticing physically—

Ms. Jessica Bell: The expansion.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe:—regardless of the expansion: traffic. I don't know how that's going to work with the Eireann Quay going down that one small street. We're already seeing gridlock on Queen's Quay, Eireann Quay, Lake Shore.

Yes, we do have TTC that brings people back and forth, but if you increase that fivefold, I don't know how that's going to happen. That's why we really fear about the future of Little Norway Park. That's what my testimony was about: What is actually going to happen to that whole area?

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's a question that I ask myself. Thanks so much for coming in today.

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The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All right, that concludes the time for the official opposition.

Moving over to the third party: MPP Hazell.

MPP Andrea Hazell: My question is going to be to Clean Indoor Air Toronto. My first question is: I saw in your presentation on one of the topics, "a healthy city equals a healthy economy," and I totally, totally agree with that, because we want to live a really, really long time. Can you expand on that for the record?

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Thank you very much for that question. I want to refer back to the Toronto Public Health report that was posted in 2013. It stated, "The current vision in the city's official plan for the central waterfront as a densely populated, vibrant area that celebrates and provides connections to the lakefront aligns with the characteristics of a healthy city." That is one where you do have a densely populated neighbourhood, but it's vibrant. It's mixed-use. There are businesses, parks, playgrounds, tourist attractions—all of it. That's what creates a healthy city, and we would argue that the city's vision has been very successful over the past 13 years. What we are concerned about is that putting a larger airport in the midst

of this upsets that balance and would create an unhealthy city.

A healthy city means a strong economy. It would certainly impact—we believe it would impact—our residents' quality of life: (1) their health, and then (2) also the tourism and the businesses that we are trying to support in this area. It is a holistic view of the health of the whole neighbourhood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you for putting that on the record.

What I have not seen—I don't know if it's out there to the public and I have not seen it, but I have not seen a business case. I have not seen any environmental assessment. I have not seen a cost-benefit analysis. Have you seen any of this, especially on the environmental assessment for this massive project? Have you seen that? And what are your thoughts around that?

Dr. Louise Hidinger: We have not seen any cost-benefit analysis, and so that was why one of our key requests was for the Auditor General to review what is the economic benefit of our healthy city as it stands now, and then taking into account the Port Lands development—which is due for completion in 2031, approximately that time-date—what that would bring in terms of economic benefits. And then, compare that to the predicted economic benefit of putting the airport in, but at the same time, subtracting what it would mean for residents' quality of life; loss of residents probably leaving the area, because they can no longer live comfortably there; and the loss to tourism revenue and businesses etc. We would like to see that review being done.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I listened a lot to your presentation, and you have touched on a lot of health issues. What is one of the most impactful health issues that would happen to the people around the Billy Bishop airport expansion?

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Well, as the speaker from the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association touched on, the number one concern for us is the air pollution, especially with UFP pollution. This is composed of highly carcinogenic compounds such as benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, nitrogen dioxide and reactive oxygen species. These are things which you should not breathe in, speaking as a chemist.

I can foresee no lower safety limit for this type of pollution, because I view it as akin to asbestos. It's very, very toxic. It's definitely an issue for the people in the waterfront, but I would say it's a whole-of-Toronto issue; because these things are so light, they will be carried for long distances. It will affect all residents of Toronto, especially—I showed the modelling diagram of UFP concentrations during summer months. It's concentrated over the downtown area—most of the city—but especially in Scarborough. I think that is probably because we have the train junction in northern Scarborough.

MPP Andrea Hazell: So tell me more about the impact on Scarborough, because we're always left behind.

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Right. So, obviously, flight path from the airport is coming up over the eastern end of the

city, and then during the summer months, what we'll see is we're not only adding in this UFP air pollution, but we're also adding in all of the UFP pollution that's coming—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Dr. Louise Hidinger:—from the diesel engines of the trains and then there's also still—there is heavy industry in Scarborough. Plus add in climate change, and that can bring stagnant air pockets which are concentrating fine particulates and UFP pollution from all these other sources. So yes, this will definitely impact Scarborough residents.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Scarborough is always on the map. We need to hear more positive things about Scarborough—ouch.

So, Clean Indoor Air Toronto: Can you wrap it up for this government? What's your next step to get this government to listen to you?

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Everyone deserves clean indoor air, and the thing is, some people have it, and other people don't. As Candace was saying, in Queen's Park, you have the benefit of excellent indoor air quality, but there are many, many other buildings across this city which aren't equipped to handle this type of air pollution, and this is a now problem. It's been neglected for decades. This is something we need to face now. We shouldn't be adding to the pollution burden.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I'm going to stop you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I need my next generation to live.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time allocated.

Moving over to the government: MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Again, thank you to all of our presenters—a lot of interesting conversations flowing around the table today.

My first question is going to be towards the Sudbury Airport Community Development Corp. Thank you for being here today. I just wanted to talk a little bit about the self-funding aspect of the airport because there's been a lot of conversation here today that the government is investing or the government is spending money on this particular airport. However, that's not the case. There's no funding allocation or commitment from the government of Ontario to support this particular expansion other than the funds that are being provided to the city of Toronto for taking over their role as a partner in the tripartite agreement.

So my question, really, to the Sudbury Airport Community Development Corp. is that Billy Bishop and the port authority have stated that they would self-fund all upgrades to the airport, and despite the inaccuracies of the opposition are citing in this committee session, the province has stated that it isn't paying for infrastructure upgrades at Billy Bishop and they're not supporting this \$1-billion figure they've pulled from an outdated study done by Air Canada. Given your long career in airport management, can you tell me that, if Sudbury is self-funded, despite one-off grants from the federal government, is

being self-funded the standard practice across all airports, and how does that work?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: There are a variety of different kinds of airports, but many airports are self-funded. Yes, you have municipal airports; yes, you have NAS airports, but many regional airports are self-funded. Again, what that means is the revenues we earn are being reinvested back into our facility to ensure that we offer that level of service to our communities. That's incredibly important. The provincial government does not provide any funding to regional airports in Ontario and has never provided those dollars for us. So being able to earn those dollars to expand our service to our community is critical to keep our airport infrastructure operational.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much. As a follow-up, would you argue that the city's current position that seeks to limit the amount of aircraft that are being flown out of Billy Bishop kind of creates a problem when it comes to competition and the availability of spaces for aircraft to land? And let's say Billy Bishop creates a position whereby there's a lack of competition in the marketplace, where Pearson is the only area where carriers can land and fly out of. Would you say that modernizing Billy Bishop would create more competition, allowing air carriers to operate more routes, and especially to the north, and maybe provide that extra space for aircrafts that aren't currently being taken care of at Pearson?

Ms. Giovanna Verrilli: Absolutely. There's no question that being able to provide more choice in airports that people can fly into is critical for competition but also from a level of service perspective for those individuals who are using the airports. Being able to fly into Billy Bishop adds that level of service that we don't currently have today, and that's critical—it is very critical.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much. I really appreciate your comments on that.

And then I just want to move my questioning forward to the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association. My colleague, a while ago, was asking about the way you conduct your polling amongst residents. I just wanted to get a little bit more information around that. Do you go door-knocking? How do you interact with your residents?

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Ms. Beverley Thorpe: We have a lot of public meetings. We have monthly meetings—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: What kind of sample size are we looking at?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: I'm trying to understand the intent of your question.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'm just trying to see how you go about reaching out to your residents and what kind of numbers are we looking at. Let's say, if I was to do a political poll today, it would have been, "I have reached out to 500 people that live in this geographic area. This is the percentage that I have gotten back."

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: The structure of the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood has bylaws which were established 35, 40 years ago. It's a very democratic representation, and you can have a look at our bylaws—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: What kind of numbers are we—what I'm alluding to is just trying to see the size of the organization and what kind of numbers we are looking at in terms of participation—

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: We represent the 15 major buildings. The Bathurst Quay neighbourhood is geographically very distinct. We deal with the major buildings in our neighbourhood and then we have building representatives from that.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So I assume you consult with those buildings and whoever shows up kind of carries that—

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: No, they have to elect a board member and then we have to represent the—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: But would you have any numbers for me, in the sense of—I'm not trying to say anything negative about the organization; it's great work that you do—

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: It sounds like you're questioning my submission.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'm just trying to understand how many people are involved, like the number of people that are involved.

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: Well, various neighbourhood associations have their own structure. We have probably one of the most democratic set-ups. Others like York Quay Neighbourhood Association have a different structure. There's many, many neighbourhood associations throughout the city—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you. I mean, I was just trying to see the number of people involved, but thank you for the great work that you do—

Ms. Beverley Thorpe: By the way, everything is on our—we're very transparent. All our meeting minutes are on our website—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I appreciate that, thank you very much.

Chair, how much time do I have?

Ms. Beverley Thorpe:—so I look forward to any more questions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): You have about one minute.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: One minute left. This is going to be very quick.

Modern aircraft production is less polluting than the aircrafts built in the 1980s. My question would be to Clean Indoor Air Toronto. What does modern aircraft entail when we talk about the new guidelines that Health Canada and Transport Canada set up, and how do those aircrafts measure to those built in the 1980s?

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Candace, do you want me to take that question?

Dr. Candace McNaughton: Sure.

Dr. Louise Hidinger: Okay. As I was explaining before, although maybe UFP pollution might be somewhat less in modern aircraft, the fact is that they still produce it. That's the issue, because there's no lower limit for what would be considered safe. Each of these tiny little particles

contains highly toxic chemicals, which are carried deep into the body. So we can't see a lowered limit for it—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Okay, I just want to thank you for your presentation and the work that you do to keep air clean across the province.

I believe everybody here agrees that air needs to be clean for all of us to live and survive—I don't think that's a question around the table—but our government also believes that getting from A to B is very important as well. I think that concludes my time.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Absolutely bang on, zero-zero. That concludes this set of presenters.

TORONTO PORT AUTHORITY

DR. SIU MEE CHENG

FRIENDS OF KENSINGTON MARKET

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Now we will be moving over to Toronto Port Authority, Siu Mee Cheng and Friends of Kensington Market.

As the presenters are coming to present themselves, I just want to take a moment—you can see the room is glowing because I have Atul Sharma from Mississauga–Malton here. Every time people from Mississauga–Malton come here, the room glows, so if you wonder why it is that way—

Interjection.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes, thank you for that.

All right. As our presenters settle in, we will be starting with the Toronto Port Authority. Please share your name for Hansard.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Hi, my name is RJ Steenstra and I'm the president and CEO of the Toronto Port Authority.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members. I am joined today by my Toronto Port Authority colleague Warren Askew, vice president of airport; he's online. I just want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Bill 110, the Building Billy Bishop Airport Act, 2026.

The Toronto Port Authority owns and operates Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, another vital transportation infrastructure along Toronto's waterfront, including the Port of Toronto, the Outer Harbour Marina and the cruise ship terminal.

As an organization under the Canada Marine Act, the Toronto Port Authority is financially self-sufficient and responsible for managing our transportation assets in support of Canada's economic growth and transportation objectives.

We are also unique amongst Canadian port authorities in that we are the only one that owns and operates an airport. This is a strength that allows us to take a holistic, multi-modal approach to transportation planning and infrastructure development.

We are profound believers in the transformative potential of the waterfront in stimulating regional economic growth through air, travel, shipping, marine transportation

and tourism. Toronto's waterfront isn't just a local attraction; it's a dynamic gateway connecting the entire greater Toronto and Hamilton area and all of Ontario to the rest of Canada and the world.

Since 1939, Billy Bishop airport has been a staple of Toronto's waterfront, supporting the movement of people and goods into and out of the city. Billy Bishop airport is a key Ontario employer, a vital gateway for business and leisure travel and responsible for \$1.8 billion in economic output while also generating \$115 million per year in tax revenues for all levels of government. In 2024, the airport supported over 9,000 jobs.

Looking ahead, Ontario's population is expected to rise from 16 million to over 20 million by 2051. Billy Bishop airport needs to prepare for the future growth in the province's population and our growing economy. If we don't plan ahead, a lack of airport capacity could result in higher fares for passengers; declining regional connectivity, including access to remote and northern communities; and a reduction in tourism and business activity.

The Toronto Port Authority has a vision to strengthen this critical transport asset for the future. Our objective is to provide optimal connectivity for Toronto, adopt innovation and modern technologies and deliver meaningful economic benefits to Toronto and Ontario while upholding our commitment to being a good neighbour and supporting the enjoyment of a mixed-use waterfront.

Our vision is to build on five pillars:

First, we want to enable modern aircraft to allow for newer, quieter and cleaner—including the potential for electric and hydrogen-powered—airplanes. We want to also limit commercial aircraft to only those that comply with the highest international standards for noise.

Second, we want to optimize the runway design to accommodate modern aircrafts and support additional housing density in key areas of the city, including Ookwemin Minising. An optimized runway would allow us to connect downtown Toronto directly to the rest of Canada and North America.

Third, we want to provide better community benefits and integration. This includes new mitigation measures for noise as well as the potential for better connection of parks and public spaces. For example, we will work with the city to ensure that any land needed on the city's side for modernization will be offset by turning an equal or greater portion of airport use land, such as parking, into accessible waterfront parkland. We will also not reduce overall island space. Working with the city, we hope to make special places like Little Norway Park even better and more connected to Toronto's waterfront.

Fourth, we want to enhance marine uses to ensure the waterfront can be enjoyed by all users. We would continue to maintain marine areas in both the inner and outer harbour, and we are exploring additional ways to enhance water transportation. This includes multi-modal opportunities that could better connect to the airport and provide local water transit service.

Finally, we want to improve connectivity and boost prosperity. Through modernization, we will create an esti-

mated 23,000 construction jobs, followed by thousands of additional permanent jobs associated with increased airport activity.

On the growth in airport operations impact, we expect the airport to generate \$8.5 billion annually in economic output by 2050, up from the \$1.8 billion in 2024.

Taken together, this vision will help ensure that Toronto and Ontario remain a globally competitive economic powerhouse of finance, innovation, culture and tourism, drawing millions of visitors and billions of dollars in economic activity. Bill 110 is the key to enable this vision. It lays the groundwork for the airport's modernization and helps unlock the airport's full economic potential for all of Ontario while ensuring we can continue to be a good neighbour locally and a responsible steward of our waterfront.

Let me be clear: Any changes agreed to under the governance model will be designed to enable housing and density, specifically at Ookwemin Minising. Any changes under the governance model will be providing equal or greater community benefits to the public. Any changes agreed to under the governance model will continue to support a balanced waterfront.

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Finally, our plan will be informed by broad public consultation and a robust environmental assessment. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much.

Moving over to the resident, Siu Mee Cheng. Please start with your name for the Hansard.

Dr. Siu Mee Cheng: Greetings, committee. My name is Siu Mee Cheng. Thank you for the opportunity to speak regarding Bill 110. As a resident of the University–Rosedale riding and housing advocate, I'm deeply concerned about the proposed expansion of Billy Bishop airport and its impact on transportation, congestion and Toronto's affordable housing supply.

As a resident living in the financial district, the anticipated significant increase in traffic towards the Billy Bishop airport is concerning. Current traffic conditions in this area are challenging. Congestion is routine and, when major sports events, festivals or entertainment events occur and even co-occur, the area becomes gridlocked. The resulting increase in traffic arising from the potential 25% to 40% increases in flights to and from the Billy Bishop airport under this proposed bill's expansion through inner Toronto will dramatically worsen the situation if there is no accompanying transit plan that will introduce new transportation opportunities, including new roadways.

Travel times to Billy Bishop, which can already reach 20 minutes from downtown, risk becoming unmanageable. This will have serious consequences for road users, local businesses, pedestrians and residents living in the surrounding areas who rely on safe, predictable mobility in the city's core. Rather than making Toronto a world-class city, it may have the reverse effect of not putting Toronto "on par with other global cities."

As a housing advocate, the expansion has serious negative consequences when it comes to enabling more affordable housing within Toronto. I have led efforts to introduce more affordable housing for vulnerable individuals, including women who are living in deep poverty, who have survived gender-based violence and who are experiencing mental health and addictions care needs, including those who are refugees and claimants and those who have been chronically homeless.

My work supporting those most in need has shown that housing security is a critical foundation for vulnerable individuals to move towards success and community integration. Stable and reliable sources of housing free these individuals from the pressure of having to worry about where they will sleep and can be safe and, therefore, they can focus on employment, seeking mental health and addictions treatment supports, and training and education, to name a few.

My work with homeless refugees and claimants has shown that affordable rental housing is one of the most pressing needs they have when they arrive here in Toronto. When individuals are too focused on having to worry about where they are going to be sleeping and living daily, they do not have time to focus on achieving their other life goals.

The complexity of care supports for those in need makes access to affordable housing stock a critical issue in Toronto. Unfortunately, affordable housing development continues to remain a challenge for many not-for-profit organizations who are experiencing unrelenting client demand. Those registered to use shelters continues to increase annually, and it's estimated that shelter registrants in Toronto increased by 20% in the last five years.

During my time running two shelters in the inner city, a worrying trend noted in the data was that, as affordability worsened, the number of first-time shelter users, including older adults, dramatically increased. Equally as concerning, individuals registered on the social housing wait-list in Toronto have increased by more than 30% in the last five years to nearly 105,000 Torontonians waiting for affordable rental housing in Toronto.

Moreover, the Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Supportive Housing Network has identified that there is a need for an additional 21,000 supportive-care housing units to meet the demand in Toronto today. Currently, supportive-care housing development and other forms of affordable housing development are growing at a slow pace when compared to the rapid increased rates of demand.

As a board director of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, we are concerned with this pace when one considers the rapidly aging existing supportive-care housing stock. We're not only seeing deeply impoverished Torontonians experiencing housing insecurity, but we're also seeing more low-income individuals joining those ranks.

Several housing development projects that include affordable and deeply affordable housing are at risk of being sacrificed for this proposed initiative, including what was previously known as the Villiers Island that will support over 10,000 residents. The project has the poten-

tial to introduce one of the largest affordable and deeply affordable rental housing stock in the city of Toronto. It's estimated that this could be between 1,000 to 1,800 units, which is about 20% to 30% of that stock.

However, the proposed bill will impact housing development in terms of height, noise and pollution, and this in turn will increase the risk of affordable housing stock being sacrificed. It has been proposed that other future housing development near the expansion and eastern waterfront may also be lost. This will continue to put the city of Toronto decades behind when it comes to building adequate levels of affordable housing supply, to keep pace with demand as a result of the impact of affordability on at-risk individuals and their continued marginalization.

I know that this government understands the challenges faced by people experiencing housing insecurity. It is hoped that the well-being of the thousands of Torontonians in urgent need of affordable housing and supportive care housing will be weighted equally, if not more, than any perceived benefits of the proposed Billy Bishop airport expansion under the bill. Let's hope that in this government's vision for a world-class city, that also means Toronto is a compassionate and caring city for everyone, including those who are seeking help in affordable housing.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these concerns as a proud Torontonian as well as a deeply committed housing and mental health advocate.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much.

Moving over to the Friends of Kensington Market: Please go ahead, starting with your name for the Hansard.

Ms. Serena Purdy: Thank you. I'm Serena Purdy, and I'm here as a member of Friends of Kensington Market. It's an organization that works to protect our ability to not just survive, but thrive in this city. I'm also a comparative policy analyst at the University of Toronto. Thank you to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, and thank you to my fellow deputants.

I also want to speak in this moment to the voters, residents and taxpayers across Ontario, including those in the areas represented by the members of the standing committee. Those include Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Mushkegowuk-James Bay, Nepean, Mississauga-Malton, Scarborough-Agincourt, Ottawa Centre, Brampton West and Simcoe-Grey.

I grew up in a small town, and I know that sometimes the worries and cares of people living in a city can feel very distant from the day-to-day things that affect you. I also know that this proposal is being presented as a valuable economic asset that has many benefits to bring to the table. But I also know, as somebody who worked in community in small towns and big towns, like Kensington Market, that when you fail to plan and when you don't do it carefully, the people who have to adapt and absorb the costs are the community members. They are the people on the ground. They are the people who live where it is. I also know as somebody who studies policy that when we make

these decisions, they have lasting intended and unintended consequences.

Part of this bill includes claiming larger land areas than what the proposal for the airport includes. I understand that that is the convention, but I also understand that given the way that things were done with the science centre and with Ontario Place, many people in our ridings do not trust this government with the idea of, "Just trust us. We can take a larger area, and we'll only really use a small part."

I also know that the way that we allocate slots, regardless of the vehicle you're using at the airport—it can be a helicopter or a prop plane or a jet—is governed by noise. It's not necessarily governed by the hours, and it's not necessarily governed by the amount of time. Jets actually, from my understanding, may be quieter even if they require a longer runway, but if the tripartite agreement is based on restricting the number of slots by restricting noise footprint, then we may end up with more planes coming in and out. Those slots are not where you dock; they're the number of times you can take off and land at the airport.

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There are a lot of things that I still have many questions about. I did a lot of work to try to bring in information, and I have so much more that I'll be sharing in the coming days.

I learned from a naval reservist that when the proposal—the smaller version of this—first came out, HMCS NCSM York, the naval base on the waterfront, raised concerns about how they would be able to respond if there was an attack on the CN Tower.

I know, as a public health scholar, that we don't have a clear plan about how this airport is going to be integrated into a long-term pandemic policy given what we know about the role the airports play and how pandemics play out.

I have spoken to staff at Billy Bishop, and they have said that it is unlikely that the Porter upsize would mean that they would send larger planes or more service to rural and remote communities.

From a policy and legacy perspective, there are still so many questions about how this affects this and other tripartite agreements across the province.

If you cannot hear the voices of care or technical expertise in the room because the promise of money booms louder, then there is one thing that we can still make you hear: Passing this bill will make you unpopular. From a federal perspective, I would hope they can see that it would be unpopular to be that publicly co-operative with the province in attacks on the city. From a provincial perspective, I sincerely hope that the people you serve in your ridings can see that even if you can't hear because of the billions of dollars at stake, the one thing that we can make you hear from us is that we won't absorb the cost of decisions like this.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Serena Purdy: You are making this decision on the public record. If you make a decision that doesn't include the voices of Torontonians and rules us out, it will

make you unpopular, it will lose you votes and it will lose you seats.

From my perspective from my home here in the city, and as a member of Friends of Kensington Market, if this bill passes, local governance becomes fiction. To all of my fellow villagers across Ontario, to the people who live in small towns that know sometimes people don't care about the costs you absorb, that concerns all of us. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the deputation.

We will be moving over to the government side. MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Again, thank you to all of our presenters for joining us here today. My questions are going to be more around the Toronto Port Authority and the role that it plays and to you, sir, RJ. Today, from, I would say, this morning's conversation all the way down to now, a lot of conversation has taken place about the role of the Toronto Port Authority, the tripartite agreement, what it means that Ontario is now taking Toronto's seat on that particular agreement and the role of the airport authority.

A little while ago, we had someone here from the city of Toronto who talked about the communication between Waterfront Toronto and the port authority. The port authority has been on this agreement from day one. What's the port authority's general plan to ensure there's an equilibrium between all of the different assets that are under control by the port authority?

A lot of conversation has also taken place here today based on the costs involved in this particular upgrade. I have mentioned a few times that the government of Ontario is not providing any dollars for this. A question of how airports are self-funded and how airports are able to fund all of that expansion has also been questioned today as well. So maybe let's just start there, and you can give us some updates on how that really works and comes into place.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes. Let me start with your last question. So, airports across the country—most commercial airports—are self-funded. They are required to be under the Aeronautics Act, as are we. So we operate without government funding and/or operational funding from all levels of government.

In terms of the tripartite agreement, we are focused very much on readying the airport for the future. The city continues to grow. It will continue to grow, and our focus is on how we enable the airport to continue to be a connector for the city of Toronto and an economic engine for the region and, in fact, for the rest of Ontario.

The tripartite agreement is an agreement that was written in 1983 that was highly prescriptive for how the airport operates. We have aircraft that are currently operating right now that are 40-year-old technology. We are not enabling the airport to grow and change for the future. We can land a World War II bomber at the airport, but we can't land new aircraft which are more efficient, less noisy and enable more transportation connectivity. Those are important premises that move the airport forward and

ensure that Toronto can remain a viable and competitive city.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you very much.

Just prior to you—through you, Chair—we had the Sudbury airport authority here, and they were talking about improving connectivity across the north from Toronto. How does this expansion allow that increase in connectivity?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We're in an important regional hub for Ontario. When you look at how we are focused on the airport in terms of its growth and what's needed, we're going to see changes in aircraft technology. I know we're heavily focused on jet traffic, but we aren't focused enough on electric aircraft technology, hydrogen aircraft technology. There is nothing that enables them and those aircraft types to come into the airport today.

When you look at regional traffic requirements, it's going to be critically important that we look at the most modern technology for aircraft and how that will facilitate connection and transportation in the future for Toronto. So, yes, it's about today, but we cannot dismiss that, in 30 years, in 40 years, what is that going to look like? We have an obligation to plan for that today.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Another conversation we were having today—and also my colleague MPP McMahon brought up this point—was RESA 1 versus RESA 3, the safety levels. A little while ago, we were asking the city of Toronto to get involved and support the level 3, but the city supported level 1. What's the difference there? I know the port authority was looking to do level 3 instead of level 1. What were the benefits attached to that?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: You're talking about RESA option 3. What we determined as we were moving through the RESA process, which is a compliance requirement—it's regulatory, and required for all airports across the country to have a RESA.

We knew that what's important to our community is noise and air quality mitigation. RESA 3 gave the maximum number of community benefits; RESA 1 gave almost nothing for community benefits. So we were disappointed that in the end, we ended up with RESA 1 when, in fact, the maximum benefit to the community would have been RESA 3. We're ending up building RESA 1 and moving forward with that process as we speak.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Chair, how are we doing for time?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): You have one minute, three seconds.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you.

I guess I'm going to end off with the port authority's role in shaping the waterfront. How is the port authority working together with the different modes of transportation that are available—whether it be through marine, whether it be through commercial or leisurely transportation—in ensuring that Toronto's waterfront not only evolves but works together?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We've been on the waterfront for over 100 years. It is where we work, it's where we live and it's where we play. So we engage with stakeholders at

various levels, whether it's through an alliance, the waterfront coalition, the waterfront secretariat. We have numerous conversations on a regular basis.

Our focus on top of the airport itself is multimodal transportation to ensure that there's continued connectivity across the harbour, within the harbour, within Toronto and to other cities along Lake Ontario. That is our mandate, and that's where we're focused, to ensure that those things are enabled as we continue to move forward.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the government's time.

We're moving over to MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My questions are to RJ Steenstra from the Toronto Port Authority. Thanks so much for being here.

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Mr. RJ Steenstra: You're welcome.

Ms. Jessica Bell: The port authority, I'm assuming, has a proposed plan to upgrade and modernize Billy Bishop airport.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: So we're just working through a plan, and that will come forward in the next six to 12 months.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So at this point, you do not have a clear plan on how you're looking at upgrading and modernizing the airport?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We have a vision, and we have parameters of that plan. There is feasibility that's continuing to be analyzed, and once that's there, we will be ready to come forward into the public.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So you don't have a final plan.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We don't have a final plan, no. That's correct.

Ms. Jessica Bell: You've got a draft plan?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We're continuing to work through our plan, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. You're not ready to commit if you've got a draft plan or not?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We're working through our feasibility on these plans.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So you're working through a feasibility on a draft plan?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Sorry?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Are you working through a feasibility on a proposed plan?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, there are multiple elements of this plan, right? So we're doing the work to ensure that when it's ready to come public, there will be robust public consultation, there will be engagement with all our stakeholders, there will be engagement with the city, because they are a key part of what we need to deliver going forward.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Help me out here. So has the city seen any of these plans?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: The city has not seen, but meetings have been scheduled.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. How about the waterfront secretariat? Have they seen any of these plans?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Meetings have been scheduled.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So they haven't seen these plans?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Not in its entirety, no.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. How about the provincial government? Has the provincial government seen any of these plans?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: They've seen preliminary work on these plans.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So the provincial government has these plans, but the waterfront secretariat of the city hasn't. Okay.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes. It's just a scheduling issue.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Sure. How about the federal government? Has the federal government seen any of these plans?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: They have seen some of these plans, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So they've seen some of these plans. Has a business case been done for this airport expansion?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, as I mentioned earlier, there is no provincial or federal funding that goes into this airport, right?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm asking if there's a business case that's being done for the plan.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: So, again, part of our analysis and our feasibility is to look at all of those elements. But it behooves us to ensure that the economics are there for this airport.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Have you done an economic study on whether this airport expansion is going to be financially viable?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We have done economic work on this, which will come forward in due time.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Could you please share that with the committee?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We will share that when we're ready to go public with that. Work is still being finalized on that.

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's good to hear that you've done an economic analysis on this plan.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: How much is the plan going to cost the port authority?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: There are investments that are tiered over periods of time. This is not an overnight investment; this will take time to ensure that we're meeting the needs. It's a phased-in approach—

Ms. Jessica Bell: So what's the range of the cost?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Between \$4 billion and \$5 billion.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Over what period of time?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Twenty-five years.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. And what impact will that—and you're assuming—so the provincial government is not putting in any money?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: No.

Ms. Jessica Bell: The city of Toronto, I'm assuming, is not putting in any money.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: No.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Is the federal government looking at putting in any money?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We don't know that at this point, but certainly at this stage, no.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Have you put in a request to the federal government for money?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We have not.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So you've got this figure; it's fairly large. What kind of impact is that going to have on the cost of flights and airport fees? Have you done that assessment?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, when you bring competition into a market, enhanced competition into the market, air fares actually drop. And so we're looking at it from that lens, and we have to look at it from that lens. It's about enabling competition and ensuring that airlines have opportunities to choose different airports for transportation.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So your assessment is that air flights are going to drop in cost on Billy Airport. Is that—

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, typically what you would see when you have competition in any market—

Ms. Jessica Bell: But I'm asking you about Billy Bishop. So your estimate is that flight costs are actually going to drop as a result of this expansion, which passengers are probably going to have to pay for. Is that right?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, they should—well, the fees for the airport itself will drop, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. Then that's interesting math. Help me out here, okay? So you've done an economic assessment on the expansion.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Did this economic assessment include the impact of this expansion on local business?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Well, when you look at what an airport contributes to an economy in a local area, in a local region, it will enhance tourism, it will enhance visitation, it will enhance travel.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Have you conducted that economic assessment on local business?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: That's part of the work that we're doing, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. Have you done an assessment on the impact of the expansion on tourism? We've heard on numerous occasions that the waterfront is one of the most heavily visited places in Canada—

Mr. RJ Steenstra: It sure is, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: —and there is genuine concern that putting a major concern that putting a major industrial facility right next to a waterfront might result in some people saying, "I don't want to go down there anymore." Have you done that assessment on how it's going to impact local tourism?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: I appreciate your question and I certainly understand your question, but I would look at it in the other way, which is that it enables further tourism. So when folks are coming into Toronto, they choose different opportunities while they're here—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So you've done that assessment to determine that it will increase tourism?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: It's part of our ongoing work and we're going to ensure that that's public.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So you're looking into that.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Have you done an assessment on the impact of the airport expansion on housing construction? We've had stakeholders come in, including the waterfront secretariat, to talk about how housing construction in south Etobicoke as well as the docklands could be impacted, because it will likely have an impact on property values.

If you're a first-time homebuyer, you don't necessarily want to buy a home where there's going to be elevated air pollution levels, and it could also impact condo height because you've got a flight path situation. You've got these very tall condos and you can see how that's going to work.

Have you done that assessment on how it's going to impact housing?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes, we have. Maybe what I'll do is I'll allow my colleague to answer that question or address that question.

Mr. Warren Askew: Thank you, RJ.

Through the Chair: Warren Askew, vice-president, airport, for the Toronto Port Authority.

We have conducted an assessment and we're actually working actively with the city on the existing airport configuration for building heights—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That completes your time on this side. You do have one more round though.

Moving over to the government side's second round, please: MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank all our presenters this afternoon for taking time to come and share your opinions and your expertise.

Mr. Askew, I'll go back to you and let you finish your answer.

Mr. Warren Askew: Thank you very much.

Through you, Chair: We've been working very actively with the city of Toronto to ensure that the building heights in Oookwemin Minising and all of the Port Lands developments are maximized under the current airport configuration. Future planning approaches for the airport are looking at ways that we can then augment that, those building heights and the density, to actually enable more housing to go into Oookwemin Minising and the Port Lands area. That's steady work that we're undergoing right now to quantify what that difference looks like, but we certainly anticipate in our planning approaches that we are here to enable housing and not to limit that.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you for that.

I'm going to continue with you from the port authority, Mr. Steenstra. There have been a lot of discussions over the day on how this contractual relationship is going to end up at the end of the day. Is it fair to say the tripartite agreement between the federal government, yourselves, the port authority and the city of Toronto—what is anticipated to

happen under Bill 110 is that the province will step in and assume the city of Toronto's role in this three-way rearrangement?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: That's correct.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: There has been a lot of talk, too, about expropriation today. To your knowledge, if you're aware of this, is there any plan for expropriation or are all the lands at issue publicly owned lands?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We're not aware of any expropriation broadly. What we are focused on is readying the airport for the future. We know what we will need for the airport itself and that's how we're moving forward. We engage with different levels of government on a regular basis about challenges and opportunities, and we certainly are focused on ensuring that the tripartite agreement enables and readies the airport for the future.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: We heard from Minister Sarkaria early this morning, and he indicated that the only compensation that the province is paying is to the city of Toronto, and that's to pay for the lands that we will be assuming that will be necessary for the expansion.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Correct.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: And all of those lands are currently owned by the municipality.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: There's 20% of the airport that is owned by the municipality—the airport lands, sorry; let me just be clear.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: And so if we can just drill down a little more, then, on the relationship—because we've heard that this may be a unilateral action, but the way that the governance model works for the tripartite agreement is that all decisions have to be shared by all three members, pursuant to the agreement. Is that right?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: And that you, as the port authority, work with the feds, really, for the design on what is necessary for the modernization of the airport.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: That is correct, yes.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: We heard during your comments about the five pillars that you're looking at and, certainly, the sustainability and respecting the current importance of the airport, in terms of the uses both on land, the recreational uses on land, and the water uses around the airport on the island—they're all part of the five priorities, or "pillars" as you referred to them, for the agreement moving forward.

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Mr. RJ Steenstra: Correct, yes.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I know that my colleague referred to this previously. I don't know if it's R-E-S-E or RESA 3, options 1 and 3—

Mr. RJ Steenstra: RESA, yes.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: RESA? Those options—

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Yes, RESA: runway end safety areas.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Yes. At the point in time, the city of Toronto wasn't prepared to move forward with the

most advanced or extensive option to check airport safety. Was that because of cost consequences?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We went forward with the premise that we were trying to ensure and enhance the best possible outcomes when we make significant infrastructure investments. We, ultimately, were disappointed that the city chose to go with the most basic RESA expansion that did not provide any further community benefits to the airport, or for the airport or from the airport. What I mean by that is, we were not enabled to straighten our taxiways. We were not enabled to build sound barrier berms, which we had in our plans. We were not enabled to build a pathway that would have been restricted to airport use only that would take people around the runway.

Right now, we have 3,800 crossings of our runway every year that are done by the city and on behalf of the city, on behalf of the residents of the Toronto Islands. That includes schools, school bus traffic. That includes chlorine transportation. That includes multiple levels of effort, and that's all done and enabled through the airport in the safest way possible. Ultimately, RESA 3 would have given an option that would have enabled that to be done in a safer and more efficient manner.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Given the new arrangement, then, I presume that all that will be part of the modernization project moving forward.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Absolutely, it will.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Yes, and that would be at the cost of the port authority?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Absolutely.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Just very quickly to our other two presenters today, we've heard considerable testimony from a lot of rural Ontario about the importance of the Billy Bishop airport, primarily as a health care vehicle. We heard from Hope Air, which is a charitable organization that brings patients from across Ontario to the nerve centre of special care. We heard from the Timmins hospital CEO. We heard from the CEO of the Sudbury Airport Community Development Corp., as well as from AMCO, which is the association of regional airports.

They all spoke to the very critical importance of making sure that health equity across the province—I think it was CEO Fyfe from the Timmins hospital who said life expectancies in the north can be as much as four years shorter—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the time. At this time, I apologize, there is not enough time to answer that.

We will be moving over to the official opposition with MPP Glover.

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

I'll address my first questions to RJ Steenstra from the Toronto Port Authority. It's my understanding that seven of the nine board members of the Toronto Port Authority are appointed by the federal Liberal government. Is that correct?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: That is correct.

Mr. Chris Glover: So you are an agency of the federal government?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We are an arm's-length agency or enterprise of the federal government, correct.

Mr. Chris Glover: Has the port authority had any discussions with officials from the federal government or the Prime Minister's office regarding the proposed expansion at Billy Bishop?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We've had discussions with officials, yes.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. The Toronto Port Authority supports the airport expansion and so you are speaking—does the federal government also support the airport expansion?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: I can't say where the federal government sits in this conversation. They have indicated that there is an interesting vision for the airport, but certainly, as we move forward, once our plan is finalized, we will be putting that in front of the federal government for a final decision and/or consultation.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay, thank you. You said that there's no business case that has been made yet; there is no complete business case. But this provincial government is rushing ahead and they're seizing control of the city's portion of the airport, of Little Norway Park and of the Toronto Islands, with no business case.

Do you think that this is the way to conduct business, that you rush ahead and then see if it's feasible or if it makes sense to do this expansion?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Let me just clarify a couple of things. The first step in these processes is our tripartite agreement, right? That needs to be enabled so that we can ready the airport for the future. That's the first step. Then the second step—

Mr. Chris Glover: Let me pick up on that. The tripartite agreement right now has the city, the Toronto Port Authority and the federal government.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: That's correct.

Mr. Chris Glover: But you're saying the only way that this can move ahead is if the city is removed from the tripartite agreement.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We regularly engage with all levels of government around the future opportunities and/or challenges around the airport. The city plays a critical role as a stakeholder of the airport and will continue to play a critical role because we need important infrastructure to be invested in to facilitate movement into and out of the airport. So they're a critical component of that.

Mr. Chris Glover: If the city is removed from the tripartite agreement, they will have no legal leverage to actually take part in any of the decisions. They will have to deal with the traffic. They will have to deal with the air pollution. They will have to deal with the loss of parkland. But they won't actually have a legal leverage on making decisions about the future of the airport.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: I appreciate your question and I understand your question, but the reality is, when we look at the historical decisions that this airport has and continues to make, we have made responsible decisions. When traffic increased at the airport, we ensured that—how do we mitigate that traffic? We built a tunnel. That tunnel has now created an environment where 90% of our traffic is actually moving through that tunnel, so there is no longer a traffic congestion problem on Eireann Quay.

We obviously have difficulties and challenges that have to be looked at on an ongoing basis, but those are decisions that the port authority has made, and it shows the responsibility as a good neighbour.

Mr. Chris Glover: Right, but the port authority didn't make the traffic plan without the city. The city was part of the tripartite agreement; now it will now be removed.

I want to ask a couple of questions. You said there is no business plan, but you said that expanding the airport passengers from 1.7 million to 10 million passengers a year would generate \$8.5 billion in economic activity. But Pearson has five times the number of passengers and generates only \$19.6 billion. So how is it that with five times fewer passengers you'll generate half the economic activity at Pearson?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: I don't know how Pearson's numbers were derived, but we certainly looked at it holistically. When you take into account airline traffic, passenger movement, tourism traffic; the spinoffs that are related within an airport—supplier uses and food services, for example—all of those elements derive an economic equation. I would have to look at Pearson's numbers to make an apples-to-apples comparison.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. The numbers that you said, it would cost between \$4 billion and \$5 billion to expand the airport to allow for another eight million passengers. Pearson is spending \$3 billion to add 23 million passengers. Is it not a much better investment to invest our \$3 billion into Pearson rather than spending \$4 billion to \$5 billion at Billy Bishop? And, especially, that Billy Bishop number doesn't take into account the loss of tourism, the loss of enjoyment, the loss of housing—all of the costs that are going to come with this expansion. So why would we not just invest our money into Pearson? Why would we spend twice as much for a third of the passengers at Billy Bishop?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: I certainly appreciate your question. If you look at and read the details on Pearson's announcement, the \$3 billion is actually focused on very specific infrastructure enhancements like baggage systems and lighting on the runway. There will be a further investment that's going to be required to actually enable the \$15 billion that they're proposing.

And I just want to make one other point on this: We are complementary to Pearson.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): One minute.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: We're not a competitor to Pearson. We're complementary in our services offering to Pearson.

Mr. Chris Glover: Let me just say that Billy Bishop is the worst-situated, smallest airport in Canada, between the high-rises on the one side and the water on the other side. Pearson is Canada's largest airport with 7,000 acres. Billy Bishop has 210 acres. Why would we invest our money at Billy Bishop? Why wouldn't we just invest it at Pearson and not—as David Crombie said today, “This expansion would destroy the waterfront.” Why would we destroy the waterfront just to expand this airport?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Let me just correct you on one thing: Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is the 10th largest airport in the country, so it's a critical—

Mr. Chris Glover: Not by size. Not by geographic size.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Geographic size, no, but certainly by passenger volume, it's the 10th in the country—

Mr. Chris Glover: Right, but 210 acres.

Mr. RJ Steenstra: Pardon?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's 210 acres. Is that correct?

Mr. RJ Steenstra: It is 210 acres, yes.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. And there's no other airport anywhere near that size—

The Acting Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you so much. That concludes the allocated time for this delegation. I would like to take a moment to thank all the presenters for coming.

Team members, a reminder: As a reminder for anyone who would like to submit any written comments to the committee on Bill 110, the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. today, May 19, 2026.

Another reminder: For members who wish to file amendments to Bill 110, the deadline to file amendments with the Clerk is 7 p.m. today, May 19, 2026.

All right. I see you guys are moving off.

There being no further business, this committee is adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2026, when the committee will meet to conduct clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 110.

The committee adjourned at 1651.

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