

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

A-19

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

A-19

**Standing Committee on  
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
44<sup>th</sup> Parliament  
Thursday 4 June 2026

**Comité permanent des  
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1<sup>re</sup> session  
44<sup>e</sup> législature  
Jeudi 4 juin 2026

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Chair: Mary-Margaret McMahon  
Clerk: Vanessa Kattar

Présidente : Mary-Margaret McMahon  
Greffière : Vanessa Kattar

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Thursday 4 June 2026

Jeudi 4 juin 2026

*The committee met at 0900 in room 151.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Good morning, everyone. Welcome back to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. We'll now come to order.

As always, all comments by members and witnesses should go through the Chair.

Both of our intended appointees are virtual today.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Point of order.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Point of order already? Okay. MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** A purposive reading of the relevant standing orders does not support the interpretation that the subcommittee has decision-making authority that supersedes the authority of the committee itself, particularly when it comes to meetings of the committee during an adjournment of the House.

Standing order 110(f), paragraph 13, appears to serve two purposes. First, it provides a mechanism for the committee to be recalled during an adjournment of the House that exceeds one week so that it can conduct its regular business. Second, it limits the number of potential meetings during an adjournment to three per month.

The context of this recall provision is important. Before the introduction of standing order 120, the only other mechanism available for a committee to meet during an adjournment of the House was for the House to authorize that committee to meet before the House adjourned. That was limiting, and I think the reason a special recall mechanism existed for this committee specifically was because of the nature of its work.

Unlike most committees, which generally consider business specifically assigned to them by the House, the Standing Committee on Government Agencies has a regular role in reviewing intended appointments. Those appointments may arise during an adjournment of the House, and the committee's review is subject to a specific timeline. The recall mechanism in paragraph 13 makes sense in that context. It allows the committee to meet during an adjournment where appointments may need to be reviewed within the required period of time.

However, I do not think paragraph 13 can reasonably be read as giving the subcommittee an authority that is final, binding and non-amendable by the full committee. In my view, paragraph 13 is a technical recall provision. It facilitates a mechanism by which the committee can be recalled when it otherwise could not meet. It does not

expressly state that the subcommittee's decision supersedes the authority of the committee itself.

The role of the subcommittee on committee business, as reflected in the standing orders, is to report to the committee on the committee's business and to make recommendations. While the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies has specific administrative responsibilities under standing order 110(f), that does not change the fundamental relationship between the subcommittee and the committee. The subcommittee remains a subordinate body.

This is also supported by the structure of the standing order 110(f). Paragraphs 3 and 4 give the subcommittee certain responsibilities regarding the selection of intended appointees for reviewing and reporting those selections to the committee. Even there, the committee's practice of voting on the adoption of subcommittee reports supports the principle that the full committee retains authority over reports from its subcommittee. If the subcommittee's decisions were entirely binding and non-amendable, it is not clear what purpose would be served by the committee voting on adoption.

Paragraph 13 does not state that dates selected by the subcommittee for meetings during an adjournment are unamendable by the committee. I understand that the provisions must be structured so that the subcommittee can set meeting dates during an adjournment, because the committee may otherwise not be able to meet to make that decision. However, that practical structure should not be interpreted as a conscious decision by the House to remove the committee's normal authority over its own proceedings. In other words, the fact that the subcommittee is given a mechanism to recall the committee during an adjournment does not mean the subcommittee can bind the committee against the will of the committee once the committee has met.

An interpretation that the committee cannot cancel future meetings set by the subcommittee would effectively give the subcommittee the same type of authority that would normally only follow from a vote of the House on a routine motion setting the meeting dates and times of a committee. That would elevate a subordinate body, potentially composed of only a small number of voting members, to an authority otherwise retained by the full House or by the full committee. Such an interpretation can be reasonably reached without explicit and unambiguous lan-

guage in the standing order—the language that does not appear to exist. It would also be inconsistent with the democratic principles underpinning the standing orders and the operation of the Legislature, including the considerations of orderliness under standing order 1(b).

For those reasons, a member of the standing committee ought to be able to move a motion at a duly constituted meeting to rescind the subcommittee's decision to schedule future meetings during the current adjournment and to direct that the remaining notices of meetings be cancelled. This motion would not frustrate the purpose of paragraph 13. This committee has met pursuant to the standing orders. The full committee would then be determining as the principal body the future meetings scheduled by its subcommittee are not required. If new circumstances arise, the subcommittee would still have ability to exercise the recall mechanism again, subject to the same authority of the committee once convened.

Standing order 110(f)(13) provides a mechanism for the subcommittee to determine days on which the committee may be recalled during an adjournment of the House. It does not expressly provide that the subcommittee's decision is final, binding or non-amendable by the full committee. The subcommittee remains a subordinate body of the committee.

The committee has met today in accordance with the standing order. The question now before the committee is whether the committee itself as the principal body may rescind future meeting dates set by its own subcommittee. An interpretation that prevents the full committee from reviewing the decision of its subcommittee would elevate the subcommittee to an authority greater than the committee itself, without clear language in the standing orders. This motion should therefore be considered and voted on by the committee as a whole.

I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies rescind the decision of the subcommittee—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry, I need to interrupt. In a point of order, you cannot move a motion, and we do have our intended appointees scheduled.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'm going to the motion right now. I'm going to get this on record.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** You have to move it outside of the point of order, and we do have intended appointees scheduled. So if we can do the appointees first and then get back to the business—

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'm going to do the point of order now, before the scheduled individuals.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We do have them waiting, and I personally feel it's respectful to follow the procedure. They're giving up their time to meet with us and—

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'm respectfully submitting that the Clerk of this committee be directed to cancel all remaining notices of the meetings arising from this decision—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** As I mentioned, you cannot move a motion on a point of order. So let's go to our attended appointees and respect their

time. We will definitely come back after we meet with our attended appointees.

Our first one today is—

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Point of order. I'm calling for a recess.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Is the committee in agreement for a recess? No?

You can move the motion for a recess.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I request to move a motion for a recess.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** How long? You need to specify the time.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Ten minutes.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** A 10-minute recess: All those in favour? All those opposed?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Recorded vote, please.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** It's too late.

The motion is carried—a 10-minute recess.

*The committee recessed from 0909 to 0922.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Good morning again, everyone. We're bringing the Standing Committee on Government Agencies back to order. We will start with MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry. You want to move a motion? Historically, in this committee, we deal with the intended appointees first—I'm mindful of their time—and then we deal with business afterwards. So that is the way I intend to proceed today. We can take your motion after the intended appointees.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'm requesting an appeal of that decision that you just made.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** You're challenging the Chair?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Yes.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry. There's nothing to appeal. That's my ruling.

## INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

### MR. ADAM MELNICK

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Adam Melnick, intended appointee as chair, Office of the Employer Adviser.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Let's welcome our first intended appointee today. Adam Melnick is appointed as chair of the Office of the Employer Adviser. Adam will be coming to us virtually today.

Good morning, Adam. We welcome you to our committee. You have 10 minutes to share your story—sorry. You can share your story for as long as you want, and then your time will be deducted from the government. They have 10 minutes—we're all happy to hear your story—and then the official opposition and the third party will have 10 minutes to ask you questions. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Good morning to you, Chair, and to the members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today regarding my intended appointment as the chair of the Office of the Employer Adviser. I'm honoured to be considered for this position, and I appreciate the opportunity to share a bit about my background and interest in serving Ontario employers through this important work of the office.

Throughout my career, I have worked across the labour relations, workforce development, apprenticeship, skilled trades, and employer relations sectors. I've had the privilege of working with employers, workers, labour organizations, educators, government officials and community partners across Ontario and Canada.

Today, I serve as the executive director of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario. Prior to that, I held leadership positions with the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario and the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers. I've also had the opportunity to serve as a youth adviser to the Ontario's Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, where I worked alongside stakeholders from across the province on issues related to the skilled trades strategy, apprenticeship and workforce development.

Throughout my career, I've served on numerous boards, committees, advisory groups and governance bodies involving employers, labour organizations, government representatives, educators and community leaders. Those experiences have reinforced the importance of collaboration, transparency, accountability and respectful dialogue when addressing complex issues.

I've also developed a strong appreciation for the challenges faced by Ontario's small and medium-sized employers. Many employers operate without dedicated legal counsel, human resource departments or specialized workplace expertise yet are expected to navigate increasingly complex workplace obligations and regulatory systems.

This is why I believe the mandate of the Office of the Employer Adviser remains so important. The office provides employers with education, advice, representation regarding workplace safety and insurance matters and occupational health and safety reprisal proceedings. In doing so, it helps ensure employers have access to information, support and fair process within Ontario's workplace system.

If appointed, I would approach the role with professionalism, integrity and respect for the office's legislative mandate. I understand that the role of Chair is one of governance and stewardship. It is not to advance personal views or organizational priorities but to help ensure that the office remains effective, accountable and responsive to the employers it serves while fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

Throughout my career, I have worked with individuals and organizations representing many different perspectives. Those experiences have taught me the importance of listening carefully, focusing on facts, respecting process and finding common ground wherever possible. I believe

my background in labour relations, governance, workforce development, stakeholder engagement and employer relations has prepared me well for the responsibilities of this role.

I want to thank you all again today for your time, and I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much, Adam.

We will now move to the government side. You have six minutes and 54 seconds. MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you so much, Mr. Melnick, for being here today. You talked about a wide range of professional experiences, and I'm just wondering if you can advise on what interest brought you to want to serve as chair of the Office of the Employer Adviser.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Working now with the employers across Ontario, with the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario and in my previous capacity working with the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators, I have been and continue to be working closely with many construction employers who are small to medium-sized businesses. I understand the challenges they face in securing work, in growing their workforce and competing in a very competitive market. But I also know the critical backbone and role they play and the risk they take in navigating that space.

When I think of the complexities they operate in, in understanding the capacity the Office of the Employer Adviser plays, I would love to bring the opportunity of my experience forward and help ensure that the OEA is able to deliver on its legislative mandate and continue to do the great work that it does in servicing those small and medium-sized employers. The challenges they face are large, and this office and this agency plays a very integral role in their successful operation within Ontario's system of framework.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you.

We're passing on our time. Thanks.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** You're passing on your time. Okay, so, over to the official opposition with MPP Gates: 10 minutes.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I would like to call a recess, if that is possible.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Well, we're in the middle of an interview, but is there unanimous consent on that?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Okay.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** We'll do 10 minutes.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** No.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** You said no?

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Yes.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Oh.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Okay, MPP Gates, 10 minutes to interview Adam Melnick.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Thanks for being here, Adam. You are seeing how the committee doesn't work, so I'm glad that you're here.

I'm going to ask some questions that are kind of normal for us. Certainly, no disrespect to you as a person, but I think they're very important for this committee to know. Have you ever donated to any party?

0930

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Yes, I have donated to political parties.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Can you tell me which ones?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** All three in Ontario—I shouldn't say all three—three of the four in Ontario that I have donated to. I have donated to New Democrats, I have donated to Liberals and I have donated to Conservatives over my career.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** And what was your favourite one to donate to?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I don't have a favourite. I participated along the way. I have done everything from helping support the New Democrats of Durham try to rebuild their riding association. I have door-knocked and worked with representatives.

To be honest, having come from my background working around advocacy for both labour and employer associations, it's often connecting with candidates around the priorities of the constituents that I served and helping connect those dots from the representative that was running or looking to pursue running, and those that I represented.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** What riding are you from?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I am now from Leeds and the Thousand Islands, but that was only recent. Previously, I lived in Orono, so just outside of—I was actually in the minister's riding.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I know where Orono is only because I played slo-pitch there. They used to have a big slo-pitch tournament there.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** They did.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** One year when we went down there, we actually beat all the local community teams. We won the tournament. That's why I remember that; it was probably the only tournament my slo-pitch team ever won. It's a very nice little community there.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I was just going to say, I don't want to carry on about the community too much. It is lovely.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I wanted to start by recognizing that you have a serious background in unionized construction, apprenticeship, health and safety and government relations. I believe that experience matters, so I want to say that, on the surface, it looks like your credentials are extremely good in a wide base and probably reflective of why, over your career, you've supported all three parties—just a guess. It's probably how that game works a bit, right? You throw here. You throw here—keep everybody happy. That's kind of how it works.

My questions are about your background in chairing, which is a big responsibility—as our Chair is finding out today that her responsibilities are extremely big. The Office of the Employer Adviser advises and represents

employers in WSIB—I believe that is correct—WSIAT and OHSa reprisal matters.

So, is that the basis of what you're thinking as you become chair? Maybe elaborate on that a bit.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I understand the capacity—and to be honest, the OEA, I would say, for the majority of my career, flew under the radar. But in my recent years, working closer with employers across Canada and Ontario, I started to understand not only the specificity that the office plays here in Ontario but actually the uniqueness and almost the envy the office plays with other jurisdictions.

In that, I learned more and was able to engage a lot of my employers at the time regarding the service and recognizing it's often underutilized by many of them. I think about the peril they take, so the importance to ensure that this is an opportunity that they utilize is huge. Helping it deliver on its legislative mandate is key.

Chairing is certainly a challenge. I chair the Durham Workforce Authority not-for-profit; I am the chair and president of their board. I recognize the challenges in that capacity, and I tip my hat to today, recognizing that. But working in good governance matters. Even the work here today is good governance, and it matters.

That is something I hope to be able to bring through my background and skills, whether it be in an executive director capacity, chair or board member over the years in a variety of ways, both national and community-based organizations that I've served on in a board capacity. I hope to bring that experience to this role and hopefully serve it well.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** It was interesting you said that what we're doing today is good governance, yet here we are arguing whether people like yourself should actually come to this committee for five months while we shut down. It's interesting that you made that comment. I'm not putting you in a box here. I'm just saying I picked up on your comment, and I agree 100% with that comment.

It is important to have good governance. It is important to have meetings. It is important for people like you, that have the skill and the ability to get appointed to a chair, to show that talent so this committee can make a decision whether you're a good candidate or a bad candidate. I think that's a fair comment and I thought I would recognize that you even said that in your comments. I think that's good on you.

Your employment material lists you as director of government and community relations with heat and frost insulators and allied workers Local 95. But public material also congratulates you on becoming executive director of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario—and if I'm wrong on any of this, you can tell me.

So for the record, what is your current role today, and what was your role when you applied for this appointment?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I'm currently the executive director of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario. I have held this role since November of 2025, and I transitioned from the international association of heat and frost insulators to this role. And when I applied

for this role, I was in this capacity as the executive director with the construction employers coordinating council.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Were all your current paid and unpaid roles disclosed to public appointments and this committee? Was that done?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I have the most up-to-date résumé that, I think, went forward. I sent it to the office. I will admit the challenge, I would say, for folks on that, if you're keeping up with my career: The last year has had some interesting transitions that I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to have, but they happened quickly—

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Chair, how much time?

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Two minutes and 43 seconds.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** —that may have happened in missing that transition last fall formally on paperwork.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** As chair, will you commit that the OEA should not encourage employer strategies that rely on fictional and unrealistic earning assumptions that leave injured workers worse off?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** That is an interesting comment. I think that the role for a chair is not to really advocate for any particular policy outcomes. My role would be to help ensure the office is effectively fulfilling its legislative mandate. I think that starts to get into policy advocacy. In this role as the chair, I would see fit to serve the role as chair focusing on the policy mandate and the obligations of the Office of the Employer Adviser.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Okay. You might not know this; I don't know how much you follow my career. I know a lot of people do, but I don't know if you have yet. You can follow me on Facebook at Wayne Gates, if you like. But I wrote and sponsored over half a dozen bills to eliminate deeming in Ontario. It's a bill the government refuses to make into law. Do you think it is important, given your experience, to get rid of deeming in the province of Ontario?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I'll be honest with you: I haven't given context to that conversation in a very long time. It's kind of a fresh piece. To be honest, I would hold back comment until I can look a little deeper into that framing.

I'm being dead honest: When it comes to deeming and the conversation, I think that it warrants a heck of a lot more conversation, and I'm not up to speed in that conversation at this moment.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Well, maybe I'll help you because I'm a nice guy, and it is Thursday morning and it's a nice day out and the Jays lost five games in a row.

The deeming issue is clear as a worker, as somebody that has been involved with the labour movement for a number of years. I go to work, I get hurt at work, I am deemed and then I end up on a phantom job that I can't do because of my injuries, and then I have to live in poverty.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry, I forgot the one-minute warning. We're now at 21 seconds.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Anyway, my suggestion to you is to really advocate for injured workers. They are workers that you represent, that I've represented for years. I would suggest, in my humble thing, that every person that has

been a worker in their lives should never want any worker to live in poverty.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you, Wayne.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** My pleasure.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Or, sorry; thank you, MPP Gates.

All right. Next up is the official opposition: 10 minutes.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Thank you for elevating our party.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** I mean third party.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** That's okay.

Adam, thank you for being here today. We're really grateful that we are able to have a conversation with you and learn a little bit more about you and your appointment.

Like my colleagues, I'm just going to ask you some questions that we do typically in these interviews. It is donation records. I know that you said you've donated to all political parties, pretty much. Can you confirm, provincially, you donated over \$4,322 to the PCs over the last few years?

**0940**

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Yes. That sounds accurate.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Would you say that's more than you've donated to other parties?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** In the province of Ontario, yes. Actually, openly, yes, that is probably more than anybody. Yes.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Right. We have on here that, in 2019, you donated to the Liberal Party and, in 2025, to the Conservative Party of Canada, both federal, and some—yes, okay, they're provincial. Establishing that donation record—thank you for that.

I want to go into exactly what this board is, because I think if most people are listening, the Office of the Employer Adviser—and you said yourself, even people in your own field—yourself, you weren't aware of this board.

How did you become aware of the board so that you would apply for this position?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** It was brought to my attention by the Minister of Labour that this role was a potential opportunity that I might want to look into or explore.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Minister Piccini?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Yes.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Okay, thank you—the provincial Minister of Labour.

You talked about the mandate of the OEA. What exactly is the mandate, as you see it?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** As I see it, it is—

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Or what it is, just for anybody to understand.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I'll take it as the synopsis, because, I'll be honest with you, I've been digging into this a lot for the past couple of months and trying to get my head around all of it.

I see it—and I try to capture it as brief as I can, because I'm a long-winded person. My apologies.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** That's okay.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** The piece around the education, supporting education and training for employers, providing advice—the sound advice into handling and working through matters related to WSIB compensation claims and practices—and, of course, if there happens to be a reprisal under—they look to have a reprisal under Occupational Health and Safety Act. Supporting medium to small-sized employers through these processes, both through training, through education and through representation also, as well, which is a really unique piece that this agency offers.

To support those employers through this process—I think it's integrally important, because it ensures that this process is not only adhered to but navigated well. That way, it becomes a part of the fundamental system that we all practice and stay in.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Right.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** And it's true, in that employers are utilizing WSIB, that they are paying their premiums. And when they understand a system like this is in play, they support them. I think that's integral, particularly when small to medium-sized contractors—and from my world, in construction, the risk factor that these folks take to open a business, employ individuals and pursue work is very challenging. It's complex—more than they think it is when they start.

So having an agency that serves this purpose, related to a topic—when we think of workplace safety and insurance, it can be nerve-wracking for an owner and a contractor to understand that world. To know this is there to help support them—and not to help them get around the system, but to actually, effectively work within the system, I think, is integral.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** With WSIB or any of these things—let's talk. I want to backtrack to how difficult the conditions are right now for the construction industry—you mentioned for smaller employers. Can you comment on that, right now?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** It's just challenging. The changing of supply chains, the prices related to the industry—fuel prices are a current industry challenge right now that everyone is trying to figure out how to navigate. I've heard from employers that are trying to absorb the cost, as opposed to having to readjust pricing. They're looking at how do they forecast bids—into those pieces as well. There is a labour supply context as well.

There are challenges, and there always have been challenges in taking on construction. Right now, there are unique challenges. I would say, in my 20-plus years in the sector, I've seen a variety of unique challenges come forward. What's interesting is that there is a wonderful ecosystem that exists, particularly in the province of Ontario, that is there to support. The Office of the Employer Adviser is another great example of something.

But often, we all suffer from the challenges of not knowing what we don't know, and not knowing that this office exists and the role and capacity it plays to serve those—particularly those small to medium-sized employers who are participating well within the system, paying their WSI premiums, trying to do the best they can.

This is an agency that can support them, can train them ahead of time as well—prevention. The route to prevention is training, and that's a big, key piece that the office has.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** In your role as chair, you said, it's not to advocate but to fulfill your mandate and serve, focusing on policy. How do you see that reconciled, for instance, with a WSIB claim, or how does that even work with you in your role and smaller employers coming to you for advice about education? Do you adjudicate WSIB claims, or how does that work as the chair?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** As the chair?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Yes.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** My understanding is, it's a governance and stewardship role and capacity to support the director and the teams that are there and to be a connector, from my understanding, of oversight to help ensure that the mandate is delivered and that the director and the staff within the organization are delivering in line with that mandate.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Let's talk about your experience. You've had, as we've heard, a number of positions: government relations, stakeholder engagement, advisory work with provincial ministries. I guess that's how you met Minister Piccini.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I've met many officials along the way in these roles and capacities, yes.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Can you give us any examples from your career where you, say, publicly disagreed with a government decision or a policy position and explain how those experiences demonstrated your ability to act independently from the government that's appointing you right now?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I'm trying to think—there have been a few cases, to be honest with you.

My very first foray into advocacy work was actually post 2018 election, when the Ford government came into government. I was brought on board with the international association of heat and frost insulators. I moved over from business rep to do government relations, and my primary role was to build a relationship for our association because we were not known well, and most folks don't know what a heat and frost insulator does, let alone who we're advocating for.

So my role was to build that and to immediately target and let the government of the day understand that we were concerned around Bill 66, amongst other legislation. We were concerned the potential outcomes of that elected government. The priority was to build a relationship to help understand the people that are affected by policy and by regulation and to put voices, faces and names to the folks that are being represented by the Ontario government—

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Sorry to interrupt. Which was Bill 66?

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Bill 66 was that the fair wage policy. It was the biggest challenge for us—the opting out of fair wage policies for the municipalities.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Okay. Sorry to interrupt. Carry on.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** That's okay.

That was one piece. I could even move forward to having concern with—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** One minute, 31 seconds.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** Well, take your time. I'll let you ask another question.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** No, no. Go ahead.

**Mr. Adam Melnick:** I was a youth adviser for the Minister of Labour. In the labour shuffle, a couple of things happened. Eventually, it was under Minister McNaughton at the time when I actually served as the adviser.

Based on what we had heard from the stakeholders—400 interviews in three months, 5,000 surveys back—there were thoughts from the minister's office around outcomes they wanted to see achieved from the survey, and we held fast on what the public told us. We held fast on our recommendations. Those recommendations are part of public record, and they're there. I'm very proud of those because they were driven from the stakeholders; they were not driven from internal. That was important.

Then to advocate for those pieces—hopefully there is a record of me agreeing with decisions that came from our recommendations. I've been on plenty of stages where I didn't agree with some of the decisions that came forward.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Okay, I think my time is up. Thank you very much for being here and for answering our questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much. Thank you, Adam, for coming in today and your willingness to serve and help build a better Ontario with us. You can stay on the line to observe as we go through the next intended appointee to see about your concurrence, or you can find out later and enjoy the sunshine. Thank you.

#### MS. PAMELA SCHOTT

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Pamela Schott, intended appointee as member, Ontario Energy Board board of directors.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We're now moving along to our next appointee. Pamela Schott is nominated as member of the Ontario Energy Board board of directors. We will welcome Pamela in a moment.

Pamela, if you can hear me, welcome to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. We would love to hear from you as to why you want this appointment. Your time would be deducted from the government—that's fine—and then we have 10 minutes of each opposition party's round of questions. So the floor is yours. Welcome.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Perfect. Thank you. I just want to confirm you can hear me okay.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We can hear you, yes.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Wonderful. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, members of the Standing Committee—*Failure of sound system.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry, Pamela—

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Pause the time.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Pause the time.

You're actually on twice, so if you can close one of your windows, because you're echoing. I think this has happened to all of us—I mean, we like seeing you twice.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I'm not sure if I—

*Failure of sound system.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Do we want to recess for two minutes? Okay, a recess until we figure this out. Thank you.

*The committee recessed from 0951 to 0953.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** This meeting comes back to order. Pamela, you have the floor.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Perfect. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, members of the standing committee. It's an honour to appear before you today, and I'm grateful for opportunity to present my background and my qualifications in support of my prospective appointment as director of the Ontario Energy Board.

Before anything else, I want to say I'm deeply committed to this country and, most notably, to this province. When my daughter was 10 years old, she was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. The care she received through our hospital system changed her life. My father is currently living with advanced Alzheimer's in a publicly funded long-term-care facility, and the dignity and compassion he receives there means everything to my family. It's not incidental in my interest in this role; it is the reason I am sitting before you today, to support the work being within this province.

Professionally, I've spent most of my career in banking operations at BMO Financial Group in Toronto. For 24 years, I had the privilege of building a career where I worked across a wide range of rules in supply chain. Over that time, I developed deep expertise in all areas of procurement, most notably sourcing strategies, pricing evaluation, supplier diversity and inclusive procurement thinking, the kind that keeps the needs of any every stakeholder paramount and at the centre of the work we do and the decisions we make.

I also spent eight years in risk management at BMO, overseeing third-party risk on a global scale, interfacing regularly with Canadian and US regulators in that role. Throughout it all, my measure of success was the same: We're serving the people who depend on this institution.

In 2023, I turned 50 and became an empty nester. Why that matters is that I was in a fortunate position to step back from corporate life and make a deliberate choice about what came next. The choice was service—structured, multi-layered and focused on the things I care most about. I'm going to be very quick here.

There were three things I focused on: first, the community I lived in and worked in for my entire life. In that capacity I currently serve as a director with Supply On-

tario, and I'm chairing a special committee formed earlier this year focused on PPE inventory management. The ability to contribute in a small part to the province's procurement strategy and to the Buy Ontario agenda has generally been rewarding for me.

The second act of service is focused on the education that shaped me and the professional network it produced. I serve on the executive committee of the Ivey alumni board at the University of Western Ontario, where I completed my master's of business administration degree. Staying connected to a community of professionals who share a commitment to principled and purpose-driven leadership and having access to a wealth of peer knowledge across many sectors has been extremely beneficial to me.

Thirdly, my focus is on direct service to those who need it most, and for the past four years, I've served as vice-chair of the Victim Services Toronto board and chair of the gala committee. This work has grounded me in many ways that I didn't entirely anticipate, to be honest, and I'm deeply grateful for it.

I share all of this not as a catalogue of credentials but to explain how I arrived here and why the Ontario Energy Board specifically matters to me.

I thoroughly enjoy the work I do with the team at Supply Ontario and the ability to contribute to building Ontario. I believe the experience I bring lends itself directly to the priorities of the OEB, and it would be my genuine honour to contribute in this mandate, as I am pleased to serve.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much.

We have six minutes and 40 seconds for the government.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** No questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** No questions? All right.

Over to the official opposition: 10 minutes. MPP Gilmour.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Thank you so much, Pamela, for being before us. I really appreciate having you here and enjoyed learning about you though the package that was presented.

We usually ask a few standard questions off the top. The first one is, are you a member of any political party?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I'm not officially a member of any political party at this time.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** "At this time"—have you been a member in the past?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I have not.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Okay. And have you ever donated to a political party and, if so, which parties?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I have made previous donations to the PC Party, and mostly directed towards policy that I felt was important, related to some of the Bill 41 work that's been happening on victim services, human trafficking.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Would it be correct to say that in 2021 you donated \$3,300 to the PC Party of Ontario; in 2022, you donated \$3,325 to the PC Party of Ontario; in

2025, you donated \$2,570 to the PC Party of Ontario, for a total of \$9,195 over the last five years?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** That's correct.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Great. Okay.

Your career, it's remarkable. It's spanning over a couple of decades, covering procurement, as you said. It's clear when you speak about the passion you have for it. You've done vendor governance, third-party risk, large-scale integration, including the overseeing of the Bank of the West acquisition, I believe, right?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** That's correct.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Very impressive institutional work—and I'm just wondering if you could walk the committee through what you see as the most directly transferrable skills from that background to the Ontario Energy Board's mandate of protecting the public interest in energy regulation.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** So I think—a couple of things. Thank you for recognizing and highlighting my background.

At the Ontario Energy Board, like the Supply Ontario board, the role I believe I would be stepping into is a governance and oversight role. So I have quite a bit of background from my years of service at Supply Ontario as well as with victim services, sitting on boards where we're overseeing. I do sit on the audit and finance committee as well as the HR and governance committee at Supply Ontario, so I believe I can bring that experience over, and then I would say probably my work with the regulators and understanding how the regulatory environment works and making sure that, as we're thinking about governance and oversight—applying that background and being able to leverage that where appropriate.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Thank you. I'd like to ask you about that relationship between Supply Ontario and the Ontario Energy Board, because you currently sit on the Supply Ontario board, but it's a provincial government procurement agency, as you described it. It's also an appointment that was made by this government, and I wonder how you understand the difference between serving on a board of a government agency whose job it is literally to execute government policy, which Supply Ontario does, versus serving on the Ontario Energy Board, whose job is to independently regulate, in the public interest, which sometimes will be against the preferences of that same government, and we have historical evidence of that with this government. I'm wondering how you see that and the conflict of interest that could come up there and what you would do about that.

**1000**

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I actually don't see a huge conflict of interest, to be honest. I think that I would treat both roles separately. When I'm working with Supply Ontario, I'm thinking about the mandate of that organization and making sure there's strong governance and oversight on that mandate and that they're executing that effectively. When I'm sitting on the Ontario Energy Board—I have only a periphery view of the work that they do to date, but I'm looking forward to getting educated more thoroughly on

it—again, I would be applying the logic of governance and oversight to the work that they’re executing on. Really, our goal as the board is to understand and make sure that they are executing effectively on that mandate and that we are assisting them or highlighting where there are concerns on that.

So I don’t really see a conflict of interest. I think that you would keep them separate and draw parallels as required for experience only.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** I’m not sure I’m in agreement there, but I do want to stay in this conflict-of-interest zone a little bit, because the BMO Financial Group has significant financing, advisory relationships with major energy companies that are regulated by or regularly appear before the Ontario Energy Board, like Hydro One, Enbridge, others.

You’ve spent 26 years, you said, at BMO. So can you tell the committee then whether any of your former counterparties, institutional relationships or BMO clients create a conflict that would require you to recuse yourself from OEB proceedings and what process you would use to make those recusal determinations?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Sure. Of course. I spent 24 years at BMO, just so we have the right number on the record.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Oh, thank you.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** You’re welcome. And I did retire fully from them in 2024. So with that, I did not carry any of those relationships forward.

Through the process of applying for the role at Ontario Energy Board I was asked about any conflicts of interest. I do not see any at this time. However, if one was to come about, I would make sure that I would highlight that conflict of interest and then recuse myself from any work where that party would be involved.

I do have a conflict-of-interest file with Supply Ontario for one supplier that I worked with that is a tech supplier. I just filed that, and any time that vendor would come up in discussion, I would just excuse myself from the conversation or any decisions related to that. I would expect that I would do the same here.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Sure.

I’m not sure if you’re familiar that, in December—I think it was 2023—after a full evidentiary hearing, the OEB issued a landmark decision. They told Enbridge Gas to stop passing the cost of new gas infrastructure expansion on to new home buyers. Within weeks, the energy minister announced that he would overrule that. That was Bill 165, Keeping Energy Costs Down Act. It was passed, and it reversed the decision by legislation.

I don’t know if you were aware of that episode before you sought this appointment. What’s your view on the government using legislation to reverse a decision made by an independent regulator after a public process has occurred?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Thank you for highlighting that for me. I’m not familiar with it, so I don’t feel like it would be appropriate for me to speak about it at this time, but I look forward to educating myself on that and other matters.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Sure. That’s fine. That’s okay.

You have clearly stated that you have ties to the PC Party. You’ve donated over \$9,000 in the last five years. Again, the role of the Ontario Energy Board is independently regulated; it’s in the public interest. And sometimes it goes against the preferences of the same government. I’m wondering, how will you navigate this conflict of interest in moments like this, should it arise in the future?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I have made donations to the PC Party, but I am not a member of that party—

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Significant donations, yes.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** And I believe that in any board position, we have a duty of care to all Ontario residents, and so I think that when we are making decisions that we need to keep that in mind and ensure that we are focused on the needs of all Ontarians, regardless of what their political party preference is. That is how I would behave.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** So I want to give you another scenario just to have a sense of you a little bit. Bill 40, which received royal assent just this past year, December, added a new objective to the OEB Act “to regulate the electricity sector in a manner that supports economic growth, consistent with the policies of the government of Ontario.”

Now, the OEB’s existing mandate is to ensure that that sector is reliable and sustainable and, as I said, that the public interest is served. When those objectives conflict—and they will, from time to time—how will you as a board member weigh those?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Again, we’re asking very specific questions to the Ontario energy—

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Scenarios, yes.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Again, part of my onboarding would be to educate myself on all these things. So I don’t feel that I have enough expertise to respond to them directly.

But again, I would reassure that we are looking out for the best interests of all Ontario businesses and residents, and I believe that I would govern myself accordingly and ensure that we are making thoughtful decisions.

What I would say is that on other boards that I’ve served on, when I’m seeing a concern or—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** One-minute warning.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** —have a question, I’m not shy to raise my point of view and ensure that we are looking at decisions being made by all perspectives, and I would govern myself accordingly, again, in this role.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** The OEB’s work is heavily technical. It reviews complex cost-of-service rate applications, engineering evidence for leave-to-construct applications, economic analysis of utility spendings. Your MBA is, as you said, in the business administration, the governance—can you tell the committee about your current level of familiarity with electricity rate regulation, natural gas distribution economics, or your concrete plan to build those technical competencies?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Thank you for the question.

I would actually focus more on my experience at AMO, where I ran procurement for the organization and was heavily focused on contract negotiations, pricing schedules etc. I would leverage that experience to familiarize myself and ensure that the same—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much. Sorry to cut you off.

Over to the third party: 10 minutes. MPP Smyth.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Thank you, Pamela, for putting yourself forward for this position. Your résumé is really impressive.

The vein of questioning will kind of continue with what my colleagues were asking you.

You mentioned your career at BMO and your 24 years there.

I want to talk about the Ontario Energy Board. It regulates Ontario's electricity and natural gas sectors to ensure the energy sector is reliable, sustainable, and the public interest is served. That includes setting just and reasonable rates, approving leave-to-construct applications, licensing all participants in the electricity sector as well as natural gas marketers who sell to low-volume consumers etc.

Your career at BMO would have been about protecting the big bank's bottom line, ultimately. The Ontario Energy Board's job is to protect regular consumers from being overcharged. So how can struggling families trust you to fight for lower energy bills when your background is in, essentially, corporate cost-cutting?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I would phrase it a little bit differently. Obviously, at the bank, we're looking at the bottom line, but we're also focused on making the right decisions for all of our customers. We had a broad set of customers globally—in Canada and the US, we had quite a large volume of our customers set there—and the decisions that we made were not just about price. We went through an evaluation process where price was one metric that we were focused on, but we were also thinking about the services provided, the value of the services, and ensuring that the end-user would be able to leverage them effectively. So I think the same mindset should be applied when we're looking at the Ontario Energy Board.

Again, my role within the board, from what I understand, would be governance and oversight, so the day-to-day regulations, applications and decisions—the organization would be handling.

I hope that's helpful background.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** How would you describe, right now, the rates that Ontarians are paying in the energy sector?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** That would be a personal opinion. I don't know if that's relevant here.

I think there are always opportunities to make sure that we're leveraging the cost of the products and services that are being put forward. We're in an interesting time right now, with—

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Interesting time, meaning—

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** The cost of everything right now is challenging, for sure.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Do you think that electricity rates are just and reasonable right now?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I don't feel like I can make an informed comment on that yet because I haven't had the time to really understand everything and do my onboarding with the board.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I don't know what the rates are right now. Do you?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I don't know.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** You don't know what the rates are right now. Okay.

We know that the donations to the party—and I know it's difficult to talk about this. I know you're not a party member; I acknowledge that. Donations have been made to the PC Party—\$2,570 just last year. You were appointed to Supply Ontario. Now you're being appointed to the energy board. Can you honestly say, with your nearly \$10,000 in donations to the governing party, it had absolutely nothing to do with you getting two major government board seats?

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**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I can honestly say that, yes.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** So how did you find out about this position at the OEB?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Sure. I was actually approached by someone in Minister Lecce's office, and I believe that's because I was registered on—I can't remember the name of it right now, but—the database that you have of individuals that are interested in supporting. I registered on that for Supply Ontario, and I believe I was approached through that.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I know you've talked about your procurement skills and stuff, but what other specific skills from your corporate banking background do you think are going to help you to look out for the financial interests of everyday consumers?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I think there's a couple of things. I have, obviously, a depth of experience in procurement and supply chain, but I also have a lot of experience with developing strategies, communication, employee engagement—all of those types of things.

If we look, again, at the role of a director of governance and oversight for the OEB and we're thinking about all of the consumer-focused activities, we also need to remember that the organization itself needs to be performing effectively. Where and when that is required, I'm happy to kind of lean in to that skill set as well to support the organization.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** You talked about the things that you're doing post leaving BMO. You're doing community work. You're doing work with Ivey—go, Western! I'm alum, too. But you're also working with Victim Services Toronto, and thank you for that work, because I know there's amazing work being done for Toronto victim services.

You're so active. You're involved. You're obviously very capable. How do you feel about being able to juggle everything that you have with—this is a high-stakes appointment to OEB. Remember, it's regulating energy rates

for millions of struggling Ontario consumers. How are you going to be able to spend the appropriate amount of time with all the other good work that you're doing?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Thank you for the question. First of all, in banking, we were doing 60, 70, 80-hour weeks, so my retirement, really, was just focusing on a life of service. And I did make sure before I considered this appointment that we looked at the calendar and made sure that there were no conflicts. And so, I am very confident that I have the time and the energy to support all of the different boards that I will be sitting on, and I'm excited if I get the opportunity.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** And with this appointment, what do you see is going to be your most challenging part of this position, going into an area where you have zero energy sector background? What do you see as the challenge ahead?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I wouldn't say it's a challenge; I would say that I am committed but recognize that the first couple of months there will be an uptick on educating myself on all things, because I want to ensure that I'm highly educated on the subject matter and I am committed to doing that quickly. So, really, it'll just be a lot of time at the beginning, but I'm ready to go.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Are there any people who have offered to help—for you to lean on, to get advice from—in this role?

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** I met with the CEO of the Ontario Energy Board and recognize that they have a pretty detailed onboarding process, and so I'm going to focus on that. And then, I can focus on my MBA network or other networks, as appropriate, to get up to speed.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Okay. Thank you so much, Pamela.

Chair, how much time is left?

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Two minutes and 26 seconds.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Okay. I think I'm good. Thank you very much, and thanks for the work that you do.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** You're welcome.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much, Pamela, for, as I said, your willingness to serve and to help build a better Ontario, and for coming to our committee. Another time, we'll see you in person.

That ends your participation portion. We will now go to other business and concurrence, so you can stay on the line to observe, or you can enjoy the sunshine and find out your results later.

**Ms. Pamela Schott:** Thank you for having me.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Adam Melnick. Can I have a motion?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'm actually moving that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies rescind the decision of the subcommittee on committee business to schedule future meetings during the current adjournment of the House.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We're in concurrence. Can we just deal with the concurrence?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** You want to do concurrence after? I'm fine with it. Okay.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** As the Chair, I have the authority to allow us to continue to meet. So, should we just do the concurrence, get it over with and move on to the other business?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** With assurance that the other motion will be heard.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Yes.

Okay, we will now consider the intended appointment of Adam Melnick. Can I have a motion, please? Thank you. MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Adam Melnick, nominated as chair of the Office of the Employer Adviser.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Concurrence of the appointment has been moved by MPP Smith. Any discussion? Are the members ready to vote? All those in favour?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Too late, sorry—next time.

Opposed? That carries.

All right, and we will now consider the intended appointment of Pamela Schott. Can I have a motion, please? MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Pamela Schott, nominated as member of the Ontario Energy Board board of directors.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Concurrence has been moved by MPP Smith. Any discussion? Are the members ready to vote? Recorded vote has been requested.

#### Ayes

Coe, Dowie, Firin, Sabawy, Laurie Scott, Laura Smith.

#### Nays

Gates, Gilmour, Smyth.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** That carries. Congratulations to those two.

#### COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Now we are going to go straight to MPP Smith, who has been very patient with her motion.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies rescind the decision of the subcommittee on committee business to schedule further meetings during the current adjournment of the House; and

That the Clerk of the Committee be directed to cancel all remaining notices of meetings arising from that decision.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We will be putting the motion on the screen. There it is.

All right. I will allow brief comments on the orderliness of this motion. Anyone wish to speak to the motion?

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Sorry, just a point of privilege: I'm unclear of what the difference is between speaking to the orderliness of the motion as to speaking to the motion itself. What would be the difference?

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** We haven't ruled if this motion is in order, so it's not debate; it's just orderliness—brief remarks.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** For further clarification, then we would move to debate the motion itself, if it was in order?

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** If it's in order, correct.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** MPP Gilmour.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** As our subcommittee met yesterday, and while I understand what was read to us in subsection 110, it does clearly state that the subcommittee can recall the committee if the subcommittee has a reason to. Now, I would think, when we saw today two candidates, invited by Minister Lecce's office, invited by Minister Piccini's office, donating \$4,000, donating \$9,000 to the PC Party, not clearly having direct relevant experience for these positions, coming to committee and getting at least asked questions about that qualification so that we can understand, is this really a qualified individual or is this another one of the Premier's and the ministers' friends-and-family reward system—I think that the subcommittee was correct in calling us back because we do need to understand the fitness of these appointees who are going to come.

We've got five months ahead of us. There will be more individuals very similar to the ones we saw today, and that subcommittee was in line with what the legal text there said: If they felt there was a need—and clearly, the majority felt that there was a need to recall this committee—then they can call that committee.

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So, I would vote that this is out of order.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Okay. Thank you very much, MPP Gilmour.

Any further comments? MPP Collard.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Speaking directly to the motion that is before us, I would argue that this motion is actually out of order. It is out of order because the standing orders are pretty clear. The language is clear. In standing order 110(f)(13), it says that “during any adjournment of the House that exceeds one week, the committee shall meet on such day or days as may be determined by the subcommittee.”

Now, that “shall” is very important. The ordinary reading is that the House delegated scheduling authority to the subcommittee. The subcommittee exercised that authority

by a majority vote or unanimously; I'm not aware of that. But the committee is therefore expected to meet on those dates.

The full committee majority does not appear to have a separate role in approving or rejecting the schedule after the fact. Otherwise, the phrase “as may be determined by the subcommittee” becomes largely meaningless because any majority on the full committee could simply overturn the subcommittee whenever it disagreed. That's definitely not the purpose of the standing orders.

Committees are generally masters of their own proceedings; I will admit that. I've participated in other committees before. However, that principle usually applies unless the House has prescribed a different process, and here the House appears to have prescribed a different process for government agencies during adjournment.

The practical reality is that there are three separate questions.

Who schedules the meeting? The standing order says the subcommittee.

Must the meeting be called? I would say it should be called once the subcommittee has determined the dates. In fact, if we're making the procedural case publicly, I would focus that the purpose of the standing orders is to ensure the government agencies committee can continue scrutinizing intended appointments during long adjournments. And we're definitely in a long adjournment period. We're adjourned for at least five months, and so it's very important that the work of the committee continue.

If a majority of the full committee could simply disregard a valid subcommittee schedule decision, then the special rule serves little purpose because the government majority could always prevent hearings from occurring. Therefore, that interpretation would defeat the reason for the standing orders as they were drafted, and they were drafted differently for a specific purpose.

I rest my case.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much, MPP Collard.

MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I wish to bring up that the subcommittee is more than welcome to utilize that standing order to meet again, but it still does not change the fact that the committee should be able to make changes.

I'm going to repeat what I said earlier: The context of this recall provision is important. Before the introduction of standing order 120, the only other mechanism available for a committee to meet during an adjournment of the House was for the House to authorize that committee to meet before the House adjourned. That was limiting, and I think the reason a special recall mechanism existed for this committee specifically was because of the nature of its work.

Unlike most committees, which generally consider business specifically assigned to them by the House, the Standing Committee on Government Agencies has a regular role in reviewing intended appointments. Those appointments may arise during an adjournment of the House, and the committee's review is subject to a specific time-

line. The recall mechanism in paragraph 13 makes sense in that context. It allows the committee to meet during an adjournment where appointments may need to be reviewed within the required time period—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you, MPP Smith.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** However, I do not think—

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Sorry, MPP Smith. It's not debate; it's brief remarks. Are you finished?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Yes.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** Thank you very much.

Any further comments? MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I also am concerned that this motion is completely out of order. As MPP Collard so eloquently explained, why would we have standing orders that speak to the role of a subcommittee, and why in fact do we have a subcommittee, if at any time a committee can overrule that decision?

I will just say, I have seen, since my eight years here, this government completely decimate the democratic features of our standing orders and change them to the point where the notion that this is a parliamentary democracy is almost laughable, but I would say this goes even beyond the pale. When it comes to committee work, when it comes to subcommittees that meet under standing orders—when they are meeting in full compliance with the standing orders and a committee can then overrule those decisions, what are we left with? We are left with a subcommittee that is basically completely toothless. My question is, why do we even need that?

Again, the very fact that this government saw fit to meet over the summer, over this five-month-long adjournment made sense; made sense to everyone on the subcommittee obviously, because that's what they moved and it certainly made sense clearly to us here. I would say that using a motion that is clearly out of order to undermine and subvert the will of the committee and essentially a key tenet of parliamentary democracy—I can't think of anything that could be more out of order than that.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** MPP Smyth.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Right, just speaking fully out of order here, being on that subcommittee and understanding the ability to make a schedule, it seems to me so mind-boggling that there would be so much effort to make sure that the subcommittee that clearly can determine schedule is being faced with a motion to make that absolutely not happen: to not meet, to see intended appointees just sail right through this process. To me, the motion is out of order and absolutely critical that we continue with the subcommittee and the work and the impact it has.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** MPP Gates.

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Thanks very much, Chair, for allowing me to say just a few words. I can't believe that we—I don't want it to be because I'm sure I'll debate on the motion. But I can't believe that the PCs are fighting hard enough for us not to do our jobs.

We were elected. We have been appointed to a committee. We have a responsibility to do our jobs and our job is what we saw today. We had two different candidates come—two different opinions from the Conservatives and this side—but at least they came to the committee. We were able to question them. We could ask them questions on how qualified they are for their jobs.

For you to bring forward a motion this morning—which I believe is obviously out of order—but to even bring it when your government decided to shut us down for five months, which means we wouldn't have a chance to do our job for five months in this committee—we'll do our jobs outside, whatever we do, but in this committee, we wouldn't do our job.

I'm very, very surprised that that is what you guys chose to do today after the subcommittee debated long and hard yesterday to come up with a decision that I think is in the best interest of the residents of the province of Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon):** All right. I think that's probably it for brief comments. I want to thank all the honourable members for their advice on this motion. I'm going to take this matter under advisement and peruse the Hansard and consult with procedural authorities.

At this time, I will reserve my ruling and I will report back at the next meeting. We're adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1029.*





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M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard (Ottawa–Vanier L)  
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