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Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

Less Red Tape, Stronger
Ontario Act, 2023

Pre-budget consultations

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Tuesday 24 January 2023

Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Loi de 2023 visant à réduire
les formalités administratives
pour un Ontario plus fort

Consultations prébudgétaires

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Mardi 24 janvier 2023

Chair: Ernie Hardeman
Clerk: Vanessa Kattar

Président : Ernie Hardeman
Greffière : Vanessa Kattar

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Tuesday 24 January 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Mardi 24 janvier 2023

The committee met at 1000 in the Essex Centre Sports Complex, Essex.

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER
ONTARIO ACT, 2023LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to enact one Act and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi visant à édicter une loi et à modifier diverses autres lois.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Essex. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to order. We are meeting today to continue public hearings on Bill 46, An Act to enact one Act and amend various other Acts. Are there any questions before we begin? There are no questions.

As a reminder, I ask that everyone speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before you start to speak. Each presenter will have seven minutes to make an opening statement, and after we have heard from all the presenters, there will be 39 minutes of questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent member.

CHICKEN FARMERS OF ONTARIO
ENBRIDGE

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Now we will start the first panel. The first panel consists of two presenters, Chicken Farmers of Ontario and Ontario Pork. We just want—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Oh, Enbridge. I went down one too far. Ontario Pork is still doing the chores. Enbridge is the second presenter.

We ask the presenters, as you start your presentation, to make sure you mention the name first, to make sure Hansard has the name properly recorded for the record. With that, we'll turn the floor over for seven minutes. I'd just remind you also that at six minutes I will announce when there's

one minute left. It doesn't mean you have to stop talking; it's just that if you have a punch line you wanted to get to, get to it right away, because at seven minutes it's done.

With that, we turn it over to Chicken Farmers of Ontario.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Great. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. It's certainly nice to see everyone—some familiar faces, and familiar names as well. It's certainly great.

My name is Brian Lewis. I farm with my family in Denfield, which is just north of London. I'm also a board director for Chicken Farmers of Ontario, for district 3, and lucky enough that district 3 is in the south southwest of Ontario. This is certainly my area, so it's great to be here today.

Joining me here today as well is Kory Preston, our manager of public affairs for Chicken Farmers of Ontario. He's joining us virtually. We appreciate the opportunity to speak to the committee today and share some perspectives on behalf of Ontario's 1,300 family chicken farms.

The focus of our deputation will be on the proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act, which is schedule 1 of Bill 46. Chicken Farmers of Ontario strongly supports these proposed amendments as they are aligned with our risk-mitigation priorities, as well as promoting animal welfare, food safety and supply chain security.

As you may be aware, 2022 was a challenging year for Ontario's poultry farmers, with avian influenza present in the environment and posing a major threat to our farms. I want to begin by emphasizing that, as stated by Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, there is no evidence to suggest that eating cooked poultry or eggs could transmit avian influenza to humans, so this is not a food safety issue. Instead, it's a flock safety issue.

As a farmer, I always follow strict biosecurity and food safety protocols on my farm. In fact, all chicken farmers in Ontario and across Canada are required to follow the mandatory Raised by a Canadian Farmer food and farm safety program, as well as the animal care program.

When avian influenza is detected in the environment, chicken farmers implement even stricter biosecurity measures in an effort to prevent the disease from entering the barn and to prevent spread between farms, and we have been to this point very effective in containing the spread from the broilers' perspective. Avian influenza is known to exist in the wild bird population, and in 2022 cases of the disease were detected throughout the migratory flyways in the spring and fall.

I will now turn things over to Kory Preston.

Mr. Kory Preston: Good morning, everyone. Avian influenza is a federally reportable disease, and when it's detected the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or CFIA, leads the response with support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, as well as with the industry through the Feather Board Command Centre. Ontario's regulated feather boards and industry stakeholders, operating under supply management, work together through the Feather Board Command Centre, which is an industry-led initiative, in order to prepare, respond and mitigate poultry disease spread in Ontario.

Immediately following the first detection of avian influenza in March 2022, the feather boards coordinated a province-wide response and implemented heightened biosecurity requirements to protect flocks and the supply chain. A similar response was again activated in September when avian influenza was once again detected, following four months of no new cases on-farm in the province.

With avian influenza detected on-farm, CFIA's implemented response plans include establishing control zones around the infected premises. For farmers and industry stakeholders, heightened biosecurity measures and movement permits are required in order for certain activities within the CFIA established control zones to take place.

Throughout this time, Minister Thompson was very supportive and met with the industry many times on a regular basis at the outset of the outbreak, and OMAFRA officials played a leading role in communicating with the unregulated and small-flock poultry farmers.

One area that Chicken Farmers of Ontario and the supply-managed poultry sector identified as a risk was backyard flocks, show birds and auctions. To help address this vulnerability, Minister Thompson, on the recommendation of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario, implemented minister's orders in both spring and fall which restricted the commingling of birds by prohibiting their participation in shows, auctions and other exhibitions. These minister's orders were a critical step in mitigating the risk of the spread of avian influenza and we truly commend the minister, the CVO and OMAFRA for taking this important step.

The first of these orders came into effect in April 2022, a little less than two weeks following the first detection. In the fall, the minister's order was established more rapidly, but it was still about a five-day delay between detection and implementation.

These proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act would allow for a temporary response order, effective for up to 72 hours, and would permit a more immediate response from the Ontario Minister of Agriculture. Further, the opportunity to extend the temporary response order for an additional 72 hours upon the recommendation of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario can be utilized while a longer-term minister's order is developed and established, if necessary.

Chicken Farmers of Ontario also encourages OMAFRA and the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario to develop further policies and procedures that can establish criteria and help streamline that implementation in the event of an animal health emergency and where necessary.

Back to Brian.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Thank you, Kory.

Addressing the risk of the small-flock and unregulated sectors is crucial for Ontario's supply-managed poultry sector. As we've observed, the inability to regulate the poultry sector that does not operate under supply management as well as backyard flocks, show birds and auction birds during the disease outbreak poses a risk to Ontario chicken farmers. Effective and timely implementation of mitigation measures is necessary, as disease has the potential to create significant supply chain and trade disruptions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Brian Lewis: When avian influenza is detected on-farm, all poultry farmers and industry stakeholders in the surrounding control zone are impacted, and the risk of further disease spread increases. In these times, it's critical to prevent activities such as the commingling of birds, which is known to increase risk of spread. Prevention and preparation are certainly the best way to mitigate the risk of avian influenza spread.

Due to the time, as I conclude, I'd like to reiterate that there are no supply chain issues related to the 2022 avian influenza outbreak. We want consumers to know that chicken is readily available and, as always, is safe to eat, and we encourage the public to do so.

The proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act are a positive step forward in providing the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with the tools necessary to implement an effective and timely response in the event of an animal health emergency.

Ontario's chicken farmers strongly support the proposed amendments and we urge the committee and the legislature to pass schedule 1 of Bill 46, Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2023. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much, and that's with a second on time.

Just before we go to Enbridge, I want to remind the committee that I was supposed to remind you before the presentation from the chicken farmers started that Kory would be doing it virtually.

And now we will go to Enbridge.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Good morning, everyone. My name is Wayne Passmore. I'm a manager in the business development group at Enbridge Gas. I'm part of a team that is responsible for delivering emission reduction opportunities for the 3.8 million customers in Ontario that rely on Enbridge Gas every day.

My remarks focus on schedule 5, removing the prohibition on carbon capture and sequestration, or CCS, in Ontario. First, I'll provide background on Enbridge and what CCS is. Next, I'll discuss why CCS is important to Ontario. And finally, I will outline three actions on how to enable carbon capture and sequestration in Ontario.

1010

Enbridge Inc. is North America's premier energy infrastructure company. We transport 30% of oil produced in North America and move 20% of the natural gas consumed in the US. Our gas utilities serve approximately 3.9 million

customers in Ontario and Quebec. We own 2,100 megawatts of renewable power across North America and Europe. We've committed to net zero emissions by 2050, with an interim target to reduce our emissions of operations by 35% by 2030. Enbridge is a leader in underground storage with our Dawn hub, which injects and withdraws over a billion dollars of natural gas in Ontario every year. Enbridge is a North American leader on carbon capture and sequestration, with projects under development in Alberta, Saskatchewan, the US Gulf Coast and the US Midwest. Enbridge supports Ontario's intent to enable and support the safe and permanent sequestration of carbon dioxide.

First, what is CCS? Carbon capture and sequestration involves capturing CO₂ from large sources, purifying those emissions, then transporting and injecting it into deep geological formations, typically saline aquifers or depleted oil and gas reservoirs, for permanent storage using specially constructed wells. CCS is a safe, proven technology that offers an important pathway for greenhouse gas reductions, particularly for hard-to-abate sectors like steel, cement and fertilizer. Experts agree that widespread CCS deployment is needed to achieve net zero by 2050.

The International Energy Agency and the United Nations international panel on climate change each recognize that much of the world cannot meet emission target reductions without large-scale CCS efforts. In fact, three of the four United Nations climate scenarios that limit average temperature rises to 1.5 degrees include a significant role for carbon capture, utilization and sequestration. The government of Canada sees this opportunity and has allotted significant funding and indirect tax incentives to support CCUS opportunities.

In Alberta, Enbridge is working to develop an open-access carbon storage hub near Edmonton that will help avoid nearly four million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, the equivalent of taking 1.2 million cars off the road, making it one of the largest such projects globally. The projects involved with that hub are an opportunity to double the amount of CO₂ captured and stored in Canada today, and we're doing this in partnership with industry and Indigenous communities.

Why is CCS important to Ontario now? Ontario needs and will continue to need two things: more energy as the population increases and the demand for energy rises, and energy solutions that will help reduce emissions to meet our climate change commitments.

Enbridge commissioned a third-party independent report that evaluated two pathways for Ontario's energy sector to reach net zero emissions by 2050. First is a diversified path, with electrification used in balance with low- and zero-carbon gases and natural gas, paired with carbon capture and sequestration. Second is an electrification-only path, which is deep electrification in all sectors with low-carbon and renewable gases only where there are no reasonable alternative energy sources.

This report confirms that the path to net zero in Ontario is achievable by 2050, and the most cost-effective, reliable and resilient approach is the diversified path, where CCS

is expected to play a key role. It will be critical for industry, communities and governments to continue working together to create the right frameworks to support CCS opportunities in Ontario.

So what is needed to enable CCS in Ontario? We are pleased to see the government of Ontario take action in Bill 46 by removing legislative barriers prohibiting CCS today. This is an important first step, but further action is needed. I will outline three actions.

First, the proposed legislative changes are a good first step, but more needs to be done. For instance, other legislation, like the Mining Act specifically, should be reviewed to enable the full spectrum of CCS opportunities, including crown lands. Government has a key role to play in optimizing the development of limited CCS reservoir resources in Ontario for the benefit of all Ontarians.

Second, Ontario must take a whole-of-government approach. Amendments to Ontario's emissions performance standards that recognize CCS as an eligible activity are a positive first step, but these can also go further. For instance, industry remains keen to create a carbon offset system to allow offset credits to be used for voluntary CCS projects beyond the sectors covered by the emissions performance standard.

Third, Ontario must continue working with industry to establish a streamlined regulatory framework for new CCS projects, ensuring that we optimize the CCS opportunity for applications and pilot stages through commercial-scale and ongoing operations. This will be key to giving investors the certainty needed for planning capital-intensive long-term investments. We encourage Ontario to leverage best practices where appropriate, including CSA standards, lessons from recent changes to compressed air energy storage regulations, as well as best practices from other jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere.

Enbridge remains committed to delivering the energy that Ontario relies on, safely, reliably and affordably. We see tremendous opportunity for Ontario to leverage unique advantages here and unlock CCS opportunities that can reduce emissions, attract investment and create jobs. We encourage Ontario to continue this important dialogue with industry to support next steps.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for that. We now will start the questions, and the first round will start with the official opposition. Mr. Kernaghan.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you, Brian and Wayne, for your presentations this morning. I'm going to begin my questions with you, Brian.

Thank you very much for letting us know about the potential of avian flu and that there's no risk to consumers—very much appreciated. I just wanted to put on the record for the committee that the Ontario chicken industry is one of the most successful supply-managed industries in Canada. I wanted to thank you as well for your \$10,000 donation to the Daily Bread Food Bank—I believe it was in December.

I did want to ask, in terms of the Grow Ontario Strategy, do you have any recommendations that you'd like to put forward for the committee?

Mr. Brian Lewis: In terms of grow Ontario, I think it's just business as usual, right? It's just, how do we—and of course, with our population growth and so forth, we have to feed our public. It's reducing red tape. It's providing the ability to invest in Ontario, just keep the economic activity going. It's anything that can help promote and foster that type of economic activity on many different fronts.

Mr. Kory Preston: If I can just quickly add, too, one aspect of the Grow Ontario Strategy that we're supportive of is the investments in research, particularly in barn research, as we look at practical ways to continue to innovate and find more efficiencies within the industry as well as make sure the industry remains sustainable and reacts to consumer trends and consumer needs.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely. It's a very important industry for the London area, agri-foods being one of the main economic drivers in my area.

I wanted to ask if you had any concerns about the loss of land. I know that the most recent estimate is that Ontario is losing 319 acres of prime farmland per day. I wonder if you could comment on that.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Yes. I'll start, Kory. It's a difficult one because there needs to be a balance. There truly does. We need some development. We need some housing and so forth. But we also need prime agricultural land to grow the food. We have to rely on ourselves. We certainly promote, through supply management, Ontario-grown chicken, for sure. It's one of those things—we know that development needs to take place, but it's where it takes place and how much—not just to develop for the sake of developing, but making sure that we're meeting the needs of all Ontarians.

Kory, do you have any comments on that as well?

Mr. Kory Preston: Just to say that once houses are built and once that development happens, those residents need food. We know that Canadians want Canadian-grown food, and that begins at the prime farmland. So where possible, we'd encourage protecting prime farmland.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely. As they say, farmers feed cities. We can't have cities without farmers. I think as well, if we take a look at some recent research, Ontario has lost overall at least one fifth of its prime farmland over the course of its history, which is very scary.

I wondered if you had any comments about Bill 23 in particular and the incursions on the greenbelt.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Kory, I'd like you to handle this please.

Mr. Kory Preston: Sure. I think from Chicken Farmers of Ontario's perspective, as Brian mentioned, it is that balance. So from our perspective, we recognize that there is a need for more housing, particularly in the GTA, feeling a lot of housing pressure, but we continue to urge government to, where possible, protect that prime farmland and protect it in the greenbelt as well, and to make planning decisions around protecting farmland a critical component of the planning process.

1020

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely. I think it would also be wise to respect municipal councils who already have growth plans for inward and upward development, rather than taking away prime farmland. We know that

once farmland is gone, it's very hard or next to impossible to turn development back into farmland.

How much time do I have left, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Three minutes.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Three minutes? At this time I'd like to pass it over to my colleague.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): MPP Gretzky.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I just have one question and it's for Enbridge. I acknowledge that maybe this is not your area and you may not be able to answer this question, but if someone could get back to us with the answer it would be great. I know, personally, looking at my bills from Enbridge—and I'm getting calls and emails from my constituents; people from across the province are putting it out on social media—that we've seen a drastic increase in monthly bills. When I compare and have the comparison from my bills in front of me, I know, as we go into the cooler weather, bills are naturally going to go up. But what I'm looking at is quite large, in my case—in some cases, 50% more than what I was paying last year for the same consumption. There are people that are contacting me and putting it out across the province that their bills have doubled. I'm just wondering what has happened between last year and this year, where we're seeing the cost of heating our homes and running appliances on natural gas—what has caused that cost to jump up significantly?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: It's a great question. It has certainly been in the media quite a bit. I'm really here today to talk about our efforts on carbon capture and sequestration. I would encourage you to reach out to our customer centre and find out what's going on, if there's a specific problem. But the cost of gas—it's a North American commodity; the price moves around. And, of course, the carbon charge is a new thing and it's going up constantly as well. I would suggest that that's—I'm not going to comment on anybody's particular bill or anything like that.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Okay. I know that in my case—and my constituents and others across the province are just having a hard time reconciling that carbon pricing is the cause for their bills doubling, especially those that believe we need to be looking at green alternatives to keeping our homes warm and running our vehicles and that kind of thing. But I appreciate the answer and I will ensure that—it's the same advice I have been giving them, frankly, but in case there are folks watching, to reach out to Enbridge—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: —or their supplier and ask specifically why it is that their bill has increased so dramatically, because, I'm sure you can understand, for many people a jump that high is very difficult for them to be able to afford and keep a roof over their head and groceries on the table.

I appreciate your answer. Again, I knew that possibly that was not going to be your area to be able to answer, but you never know unless you ask.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We'll now go to the independents. MPP Brady.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you, Brian, Kory and Wayne for your presentations this morning. I want to reiterate my support in protecting prime farmland, as well. I

come from Haldimand–Norfolk, where we grow a lot of different things. If there's one thing we can't make more of, it's farmland. The pandemic taught us that we want things made in Ontario, and if there's one thing I would choose to have made in Ontario, it's my food. So I reiterate my support for doing everything I can to protect our farmland.

My question is for, perhaps, Brian and Kory. Back in 2019 there was quite a controversy in my riding, specifically in Norfolk county, where a constituent approached council asking for the allowance of backyard or urban chickens. Despite a staff report recommending that backyard chickens not be allowed, politically it became a feel-good thing and council decided to move ahead with it. The rules surrounding it that were put in the bylaw had little to do with disease control, which worries me a bit when you can go on YouTube and figure out how to raise your chickens in your backyard. I know the work that our farmers do to raise chickens, and I'm not sure YouTube is the ideal place to get a firm understanding of how to do that.

So my question is, there is a patchwork of approaches to backyard urban chickens in Ontario from municipality to municipality, and I'm wondering if that poses a real threat to Ontario's chicken industry.

Mr. Brian Lewis: I'll start, Kory.

It does. Backyard flocks are a risk to commercial poultry, but it's more how they're actually handled. The issue you have—and I can speak from personal experience—is where you see some birds running around on somebody's front yard where you have commercial livestock facilities across the road. You could be talking a dozen birds or so forth running around where you have 20,000, 50,000 or 100,000 birds across the road. That does pose a threat. But again, it's not everyone. It depends on how they're handled, whether it's through YouTube or other channels on how to actually humanely look after the birds. If they're in coops, if they're contained, it helps, but it's still yet another threat.

There are certain things we cannot control. Migratory flyways: Ducks and geese and so forth are flying up and down, and that's what really causes avian influenza.

For us, I think we should do a better job of the things we can control, and we certainly do through supply managed. It's the part of the industry that's not supply managed which we just don't have the authority for, and it does increase the risk.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you. So would you support removing that patchwork of approaches and having something implemented from the provincial level that would give guidance on the proper implementation of backyard-chicken policy?

Mr. Brian Lewis: Just in general terms, my own thoughts would be that if there's something consistent and correct, it goes a long way, rather than having extremely stringent in one area and then, in a different municipality or so forth, something that isn't quite as stringent and would increase risk. I think there is—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Brian Lewis: —benefit to that, for sure. Kory, I don't know if you have any comments?

Mr. Kory Preston: I would just say that in the absence of that kind of provincial leadership or uniformity, we have created the Family Food Grower Program. It's something that the CFO and Egg Farmers of Ontario—we want all of the small flocks to register with our program. It gets their email addresses, contact information and location to us so that if there is an outbreak, we're able to contact them if they're within a zone or nearby an infection and make sure that they're battenning down the hatches as well in those areas.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, thank you very much.

We will now go to the government. MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to both of you for coming before the committee this morning and speaking to this legislation. I believe both of you have recognized the efforts that the legislation is attempting to move forward in terms of reducing red tape and making it easier for both of your industries but also many other sectors of our economy and people to be able to access government services and to be able to rely on the government to have their back when it comes to making the changes that are needed. Our government has committed to bringing forward two red tape reduction packages each year and ensuring that these packages are responding to the concerns of the people, and hearing from people such as yourselves about that is very important. I know it's important for the Legislature as well and for the committee to have the opportunity to have this back-and-forth and these conversations.

I'm going to get into some specific questions, but I just wanted to thank you, first of all, for speaking on behalf of those who you work with, and also encourage you to continue to provide feedback, because we know that there are opportunities both through, obviously, legislative amendments but also through future red tape reduction packages that the committee will be working on and the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction as well in our Ontario government. So I want to just encourage you to continue the discourse.

My first question is going to be to Brian. Brian, my family actually was born and raised in agriculture, started off in dairy. My brother is a chicken farmer, and my other brother is an egg farmer, so they argue a little bit about which is better. The rest of my family is in poultry, but actually in quail, which is a slightly different area.

Avian flu has been a big topic of conversation in our family. I also have some family in the US, and I'm sure you've seen some of the impacts in the United States of, ironically, not having a supply-managed system. I think they said a 69% or 67% increase year over year in the price of eggs as a result of some of the flock impacts.

The action that's being taken in this legislation is really about early intervention and ensuring that we're addressing the challenge of something like avian flu, which can come out of—really out of nowhere in a sense, right, because there are so many different ways that it can transmit. Once

it begins to spread, we need to act quickly and make sure that we're addressing that.

1030

I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about the system here in Ontario and why we've been able to avoid, perhaps, some of the devastation that we've seen in places like the United States, and what the supply-managed system has to offer in terms of price stability, especially for consumers, and then why it's important that our government is taking actions like this to have your back and ensure that we're able to protect consumers.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Sure. Thank you for the question. I'll start off and then Kory can come in as well.

A part of this bill is really saying it's the timely, quick interaction from the minister, and that's certainly good. You're against the clock in this, with any type of disease. The quicker you can act, the easier it is to prevent and so forth.

Part of our success through supply management is we are regulated. We do have the Feather Board Command Centre that all the four feather boards are a part of. It's early detection. We have a set of protocols and rules where we do try to limit the spread, and we've been very successful in that.

Again, you're dealing with some things you can't control, with migratory fly paths and so forth, but what we can control, or attempt to control, is our barns and access to our barns, just coming in and out. It's the supply management system that does it. We know where our producers are. We have a set of rules and so forth that we must follow, and so far it's worked really well. That's in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in conjunction with CFIA and in conjunction with the Feather Board Command Centre. It certainly works.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Perhaps, to put a finer point on it, could you walk through the difference as to why in the United States right now they're seeing 70% increases in prices for some of these products as a result of avian flu and why here we're not?

Mr. Brian Lewis: Sure, sorry. With the supply-managed sectors, our pricing is based on cost of production. It's less based on the supply and demand in the market because we try to supply the proper amount of demand within it. You don't have the highs and the lows, which protects our consumers.

Right now, our live price is \$2.12 a kilo. Anything that happens beyond that—we don't set the retail price. We don't set the prices in the grocery stores, restaurants and so forth. We set the minimum live price at the farm gate, so there is a bit of control there. Like I said, it does take some of the larger swings out.

Our feed costs have gone up. As a broiler producer, we buy chicks from hatcheries. Of course, their costs of production have gone up. So we have had limited increases, certainly nothing to the swing that you're speaking of, and that's all part of supply management.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Right. My last question to you, before we go to Enbridge, very quickly—and it's one that I think people have been dealing with for a very long time.

I'm sure that there are differences of opinion on this question, but it's one that obviously I think we've all heard of since we were very young. So I'm just wondering, what came first, the chicken or the egg?

Laughter.

Mr. Brian Lewis: I'm not sure. That one we can debate forever.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much. I appreciate you coming today and speaking to the legislation.

I appreciate Wayne as well, coming and speaking about carbon capture. I'm just wondering, before I turn it over to my colleagues, are there other jurisdictions that you think have—I know Alberta has moved in this model and you spoke about that. I think there are opportunities here that we have, even in terms of geographical strengths, some of the deposits that we have in terms of geology. But what have they been doing in those areas that we're moving forward on now in this legislation? It's sort of a first step towards ensuring that we're opening up the space for more carbon capture and sequestration technology. Perhaps you could walk through what they've done, where they're at, and what we should be perhaps looking at picking up and moving with from some of those other jurisdictions as well.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Thank you for the question, because there are things for us to learn from other jurisdictions, particularly Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, where they've been doing this literally for decades. We just haven't done it in Ontario yet. The geology here is potentially suitable. We need to assess that, but we can't even start to do that if it's illegal to move the CO₂ and store it underground.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Of these models in these other jurisdictions, the Alberta model has stimulated the largest and most significant carbon capture and sequestration developments, largely because of the government's forward-thinking approach to pore space, where the actual CO₂ is stored, and the strategic vesting decisions that they made many years ago. In order to manage Ontario's saline or saltwater resources most efficiently for a carbon capture sequestration opportunity, we definitely encourage you to look at Alberta in particular.

One of the things they did there was to declare crown ownership of the pore space within the saline aquifers for the purposes of CO₂ storage. More specifically, the crown-owned model in Alberta is preferred here for a few key reasons. It's going to help manage, prudently, a scarce resource for the public good. It will ensure public safety and environmental protection. It will provide some certainty for carbon dioxide storage project developers and it's going to stimulate investment, unlocking—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the time for this.

We'll start the second round. MPP Kernaghan.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Wayne, I'd like to continue my questions to you in this round. I just wanted to begin by thanking you for the program that delivered carbon monoxide detectors to Londoners. It was a partnership

with Enbridge, with the London Fire Department and the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council. It was called Safe Community Project Zero, where I believe it was almost a quarter-million dollars. Thank you very much for that. Also, it did go across Ontario as well, as I understand.

My first question, though, is in terms of the genesis of this legislative change. Did Enbridge approach the government to make this modification to the oil and gas recovery act?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Because Enbridge is involved in other jurisdictions, we were looking at the opportunity here, and that's when we noticed that there's a prohibition in place. So we've definitely tried to reach out to understand it and suggest that Ontario may be missing an opportunity here if we don't look at this.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Okay. It was something that the government was approaching—

Mr. Wayne Passmore: I think others have reached out as well.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Okay. I wanted to also ask, is this legislative change meant to facilitate enhanced oil and gas recovery?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: I'm not sure if it's intended for that. It's not, in our mind. It's not a significant component of this.

This is really about trying to help Ontario manage greenhouse gas emissions. When you look at all the pathways that you can get there and what pathways can contribute significant reductions, carbon capture and sequestration is absolutely going to be key here. We've got saline aquifers, which is the resource that many are looking at. In other parts of the world where there are lots of depleted oil and gas reservoirs, they sometimes are using that to store the sequestration. And sometimes, as a result, more oil or gas comes out of it. But our focus here is to try to get the CO₂ underground so it's not going up into the atmosphere.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I see. Are there also other forms of carbon sequestration that you're familiar with?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: There are a number of new technologies that are looking to capture carbon in novel and new, innovative ways. The proven technique for most of this—the biggest, largest-scale projects—are carbon sequestration, injecting the carbon and dissolving it in the saline or saltwater aquifers that are underground.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Okay. I did also want to ask, what are the benefits with the proposed changes to the oil and gas act? What are the benefits that would be for Enbridge?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: It's an opportunity for us to help our customers lower their greenhouse gas emissions. We deliver the energy that Ontarians and businesses need and want. We are hearing from many of them that they want help managing greenhouse gas emissions. When we look around the spectrum of what's out there as potential tools, we're helping with renewable natural gas. We're advancing some efforts in the hydrogen space as well. But some of the large hard-to-abate heavy industry—think chemicals, steel, lime, cement—they have no other choice. They need sequestration in order to stay in business. If we

don't get this right, we're going to risk decarbonization by deindustrialization. So our goal is to really try to help the businesses that keep Ontario firing on all cylinders achieve their greenhouse gas reduction goals in the most economic and efficient manner we can.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: You also mentioned consumers. I just wonder, will there be an economic impact, either positive or negative, on consumers as a result of this?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: That's a really good question. Carbon capture and sequestration is a bit of a double-edged sword here. We have a tremendous opportunity here in Ontario to get this right and drive significant investment and, really, lots of jobs. There are some great resources that I would encourage folks to look at. This is a multi-billion-dollar opportunity for Ontario in terms of the capital that needs to get deployed and the jobs that are going to be created. So a great opportunity to help Ontario meet its greenhouse gas reduction efforts there, but if we don't get this right, there's a very significant negative potential opportunity where businesses just aren't competitive and end up leaving because they can't get down to the greenhouse gas reduction targets that are going to be set.

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Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My last question: What will be Enbridge's plan if these changes do occur?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Our goal is to try to move forward and see if we can get some sequestration activities going here in Ontario; do the geological assessments, stakeholder outreach—all the things that we would normally do with any project—and then try to get this going in Ontario.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: How is this proposed legislative change related to fracking?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: It's not in any way related to fracturing.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: With that, I am going to pass it over to my colleague.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: How much time is left?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One and three quarter minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I just want to take an opportunity to thank the farmers, whether it's the chicken farmers, the egg farmers, pork farmers, beef—whether it is produce. We in this area have some amazing farmers that I know were deeply impacted by the bridge blockade and how long that took. I want to commend the local community and some of the agencies locally that worked so hard to get the bridge cleared.

My husband in his younger years would go help a friend whose family had a turkey farm, and I remember the stories. He would come home after trying to—around the big holidays, especially—kind of wrangle the turkeys and get them in the back of the truck to get them prepared for market. And that was just a very small piece of the entire story. Everybody goes through a lot of ups and downs; my husband works in the auto sector and it's a roller-coaster ride. But I think it's really important for people to understand that for farmers, that is a wild ride, and it can be

incredibly difficult and there's a lot at risk just for you to be able to feed and nourish the people in our province and across the country and even into the States.

Thank you all for the very, very important work that you do and the education. I think there's an opportunity for government and local politicians to help educate people on how difficult that work is. Thank you to the egg farmers for teaching me the difference between chicken farming and egg farming. I think it's really important that we ensure that especially younger generations understand the work involved in farming, and how those things don't just magically show up in our grocery stores and on our tables and the incredible risk that you all take by choosing to farm.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We now go to the independent. MPP Collard.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for your time and presentation this morning.

My question is for Enbridge, and it's about the prohibition that the government is seeking to remove with Bill 46. The prohibition was put in place, I believe, back in 2017, unless I'm mistaken.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: In 2010, maybe.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Earlier than that?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Yes.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: There may have been some other changes to the legislation. But the issue, really, is, do you know or can you explain why that prohibition was brought forward in the first place?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: You never know why something is done after the fact. I wasn't involved at the time. I don't know for sure. I would be speculating.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Okay. So you weren't part of the consultation or the debates when this legislation was brought forward?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: No.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Can you tell us, then, what impact that prohibition has had on Enbridge?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Well, the impact that the prohibition has had on the industry and in Ontario is that no companies—no one is looking to offer or propose carbon capture and sequestration in Ontario if there's a ban on injecting CO₂ into the ground. And carbon capture and sequestration is a very significant opportunity for Ontario. It's being used in other provinces in Canada and many other jurisdictions around the world. It's just not available in Ontario because we have a ban on CO₂ dating back over a decade, is my understanding.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I can't help but wonder why the government at the time must have thought there was some good reason to bring that prohibition, not just to piss off the industry.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: I don't know for sure what the reason is. I've heard rumours that it had something to do, at the time, with trying to close the coal plants down. They were trying to stop the option for the coal plants to put the CO₂ underground as a way to keep operating.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Right.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: But if that was the case, and I don't know if it was, that's no longer relevant now, because the coal plants have been gone for a long time.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Okay. You seem to be quite knowledgeable about CCS. Can you tell us about the risk associated with carbon storage and sequestration?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: Sure. Carbon capture and sequestration is something that has been going on in western Canada, in Alberta and Saskatchewan, since the late 1990s. They've been doing it safely and very successfully, and it has proven quite significant in its ability to capture and store carbon dioxide underground permanently so it doesn't get released into the atmosphere.

We see geology in Ontario that looks promising to be able to do this, and we think it's an opportunity for Ontarians to take advantage of this technology, this capability. It's not new; it's just that we've got this little bit of a paragraph in a piece of legislation—not entirely sure why it was there, but we suspect it was there for something that had nothing to do with trying to look at carbon capture and sequestration.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Wayne Passmore: We see it as a big opportunity, and it's safe and been proven in other provinces in Canada and around the world. We think it's got an opportunity here. We'd like to get the prohibition lifted so we can start moving forward to explore it.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: So on the model that's been in place already in the other jurisdictions, can you speak of the quantifiable benefits from the use of that practice?

Mr. Wayne Passmore: The big benefit is to be able to capture and sequester CO₂ so it's not emitted into the atmosphere, do it in a cost-competitive way and do it on the scale that industry needs to stay competitive and continue moving forward.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Okay. And are you technology-ready to explore the implementation of this practice? You talked about how it's important to do it right and to understand if the soil in Ontario is suitable for that practice. Where are you at on that?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for that. Time's up.

To the government, MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: My questions are for the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. I'd like to start with some basics. Could you please give the committee an idea of the approximate size of the Ontario flock, either in numbers or in kilograms or whatever measurement that you can best estimate the size?

Mr. Brian Lewis: At any given time—we're allocated from the Chicken Farmers of Canada to the Ontario industry. It's right around the 90-million-kilogram mark per production period, which is approximately two months.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: You said 90 million kilograms every two months? Okay. Can you translate that into chickens?

Mr. Brian Lewis: How many chickens? If you do the math, I believe the average bird size in Ontario—and we do have differing weights: 2.3 kilograms is usually what

the live weight of a chicken is. So it's a little better than half of that in terms of numbers. You're looking at approximately 40 million.

Mr. Kory Preston: Yes, we placed about 250,000 chicks last year. So that's what we started with.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So [*inaudible*].

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): MPP Leardi, the controls are over here.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Oh, sorry. All right.

So we're talking about millions and millions; that's what we're talking about. This proposed legislation proposes to authorize the minister to be able to issue something called a "temporary response order," and this is something that the industry wants. Could you please tell the committee why you want this?

Mr. Brian Lewis: It's the timely, rapid response, and that's critical. It's something that you don't want to be bogged down—with all due respect. But it's bogged down in processes where this disease can spread—any type of disease. If this allows the minister to put in temporary 72-hour restraints or orders, and then I believe there's another 72 hours potentially, it gives everyone time to actually put in the proper processes. But again, the moment that this is detected, we have to start acting, because if not, we can't contain it.

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I was actually, quickly, just part of—what happens is, once it is actually accepted that a farm has it, CFIA establishes a three-kilometre band around that farm where it's very, very restricted as to who can come in and out, and so forth. It's a very trying thing for farmers; it truly is. Then there's another secondary ring at 10 kilometres, and one of my farms was just inside it. It's tough because you're afraid. You're watching over your shoulder every step of the way, trying not to have this come in. It's very, very important that we act quickly and we test and so forth, just to keep the security of the food industry and keep our chickens growing and so forth. The timing is the most important part.

Kory, I don't know if you have any other comments?

Mr. Kory Preston: No, you covered it.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Thank you.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So we're talking about millions of animals. We're talking about a rapid response. Let us imagine or assume a scenario where we don't have a rapid response. What is it that the industry would be concerned about if we don't have a rapid response?

Mr. Brian Lewis: I think the concern would be, you would have a positive flock barn, not knowing it. It transmits, it transmits, it transmits. And then all of a sudden you find out you've got a problem. But it just multiplies daily; that's the problem. Its potential is incredible, how quickly this can actually impact—and in any type of feather, truly. At that point, you have bird loss. You have a lack of good protein that could potentially have gone into the market, to our consumers, certainly wasted, and by no fault of anyone. But the sooner you can contain it, or be aware of it so that you can contain it—it's very, very important.

Sam had mentioned before about the US. Is that why it spread so quickly in the US? I'm not sure. They aren't regulated like we are. They certainly have a business case to know what's going on, but they don't have the Feather Board Command Centre and they don't have supply management to know exactly who to contact within those ranks.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Now, you mentioned the Feather Board Command Centre.

Mr. Brian Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Could you please tell the members of this committee who makes up the Feather Board Command Centre? What does it do?

Mr. Brian Lewis: The Feather Board Command Centre is a liaison between the four feather boards. So you've got your broiler chickens, which I'm a part of, the Chicken Farmers of Ontario; you have the layer board; you have the turkey board; and you also have the broiler breeders. The broiler breeders are the folks that actually produce the eggs for us. They go into a hatchery, come into our barn and then end up on the grocery store shelf. Those are the four feathers that actually make up the board, and the board is actually a liaison between the respective board itself of producers, and the liaison between CFIA.

So it's identifying who's in that area, who we need to contact as producers, how we set this up. CFIA has to do testing. We had to test our birds every day to see if it had transmitted, and so forth. It's a coordination centre. It's been very, very successful for us.

Mr. Kory Preston: It's industry-led. It was created by industry. It's one of a kind out there. One of the things that it does is it allows us to implement an incident-management system and bring in an incident command structure that will oversee the coordination of all of the feather boards. We have data that needs to flow, as Brian was mentioning; that's coordinated. Getting advisories out to farmers in areas—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Kory Preston: —that's coordinated. So it's a way for the industry to work together, all collaborating, and then add that one kind of point for CFIA and OMAFRA affiliates as well when an emergency like an animal health emergency is taking place.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Now, let's talk about the average consumer out there. Why should the average consumer even care about any of this?

Mr. Brian Lewis: They should care because it's part of the food supply. We've been very successful in this country. Supply management certainly is a major, major part of that. But very seldom have we had food shortages. Very seldom have we walked into the grocery stores and had empty shelves, particularly with the supply-managed industries, even through COVID. That was more of a supply chain issue, but we've been able to keep the supply of protein. And it's a locally farm-grown protein, right? It's not like we're importing this chicken—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the time for the question. It also concludes the time for the panel. We want to thank the

presenters for all the time you took to prepare to be here and to help us with deliberations on the bill and to get public input. We really appreciate that going forward, so thank you very much.

ONTARIO PORK

EGG FARMERS OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next panel is Ontario Pork and Egg Farmers of Ontario. I believe that they're present.

Good morning and thank you very much for being here this morning. As with other presenters, there will be seven minutes for each presenter to make their presentation. I will speak out and say, "One minute left." When we get to the end of that minute, there are no more warnings; it will be over.

With that, we again thank you for being here and we turn it over to you. We ask that you introduce yourself for Hansard, to make sure that all the comments you make will be attributed to you.

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Is this on?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I think we'll announce this for everybody: The mikes are controlled by the control centre. All you have to do is start speaking.

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Thank you. Good morning. My name is Eric Schwindt. I am a pork producer from Waterloo region and a board member at Ontario Pork. I am pleased to voice our strong support for Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, specifically talking about the proposed changes to the Animal Health Act, and to present some of our perspectives from the pork sector.

Just a quick industry overview: Ontario pork is a big part of the Canadian food industry. The farm-to-fork economic impact in 2021 was \$1.35 billion, with \$3.78 billion in economic output. That translates into almost 20,000 full-time jobs in the province. Our pork is sought for its high quality and exported all over the world. Ontario pork producers are among world leaders in animal care, food safety, quality and traceability. We are grateful for the government's strong, ongoing support of the pork industry and continued commitment to red tape reduction. We believe a competitive pork industry requires continued government support and partnerships within the entire sector.

About the Animal Health Act: We welcome changes to the health act that allow for quick, measured and thorough action if a hazard to animals or food is identified. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, under the federal Health of Animals Act legislation, has the authority to implement legislated movement controls with the goal to stop the spread of federally reportable diseases. However, it takes time to implement. Provincial controls would allow us to have temporary movement controls for up to 72 hours and also extend them for another 72 hours. In the event of an adverse disease, stopping movements quickly and identifying the source is critical to mitigating the impact to our sector.

I think everybody here has probably heard of African swine fever. It's a significant threat to our industry. If it came to Canada or North America, that means stopping exports around the world. We export two thirds of our pork outside of Canada. Massive losses of pigs, as well as our income and livelihood, impact the mental health of all farmers, their families and the wider agri-food industry. That's feed companies, veterinarians etc.

Continued co-operation with the province to improve emergency preparedness is of great importance to all Ontario producers. We appreciate the funding so far to help us work on that preparedness and look forward to continuing it. The proposed changes to the Animal Health Act support our sector's preplanning for ASF, both as a disease spread control measure as well as to potentially prevent the loss of markets around the world.

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We care about our pigs, as producers. Ontario Pork and our stakeholders are founding members of Swine Health Ontario, an industry collaboration, coming together to improve swine health. The Animal Health Act is one step where we can improve and do better to be prepared for that eventuality or what may happen in the future, and we appreciate your support for that.

I'd be happy to answer any questions after.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for that. We'll then go to our next presenter, the Egg Farmers of Ontario. Again, the floor is yours.

Mr. Scott Helps: Thank you for having this today. Thanks for the opportunity to speak. My name is Scott Helps. I'm chair of Egg Farmers of Ontario. I was really appreciating Brian's comments because he sort of answered a few questions for you before I got here on the differences and things of that nature. My family and I—my wife and kids—farm in the Wyoming area, Lambton county, just a little bit north of here. I'd just like to present a few points that we had here.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present before the standing committee on behalf of over 500 egg and pullet family farms in Ontario in support of proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act included in Bill 46. Egg Farmers of Ontario supports these proposed amendments as they are aligned with our objectives to promote animal welfare, food safety and supply chain security while minimizing risks associated with foreign animal diseases.

When avian influenza was first detected here in March 2022, Ontario's regulated feather boards quickly coordinated—that's the Feather Board Command Centre that someone was asking about—a province-wide response and implemented heightened biosecurity requirements to protect the health of our flocks and the supply chain. These requirements were over and above the biosecurity requirements our egg and pullet farmers follow as part of our on-farm food safety program.

While the regulated supply-managed feather boards work in a coordinated manner, we had little ability to influence or regulate those areas of the sector that do not operate under supply management. Examples would be backyard flocks, exhibition birds, auction swaps etc.—

kind of the description that we have. This would have resulted in a significant risk of spread.

Two weeks into the first outbreak, through the leadership of OMAFRA, a minister's order was implemented preventing the commingling of birds at exhibitions and auctions. This happened in April and then again in October as well. These were very important steps to aid in the response and minimize the potential for disease spread.

It doesn't matter if the disease is detected on a supply-managed farm or in a backyard flock; everyone within 10 kilometres—as Brian pointed out there earlier—is impacted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, as it imposes movement restrictions and controls on all poultry and poultry products in that zone.

As outlined in Bill 46, the proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act would provide the ability for the minister to issue a temporary response order under recommendations from the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario. This temporary order would be effective for up to 72 hours and would permit a more immediate response while the full ministerial order follows due process. We just feel that that makes sense. It's just common sense there. We really like that part.

This is an important step in our collective response as we collaborate to develop and implement rapid actions to minimize risk and supply chain disruptions—which, by the way, Brian alluded a little bit there in the questions, that we have a very—I believe we have the best food system in the world, in Canada and in Ontario. We have an extremely efficient and smooth flow, and to disrupt that can cause chaos. So we should be proud of that. I'm proud of that and I think we should all be proud of that, and to try and minimize some of that would be the important issue.

We need to continue to work together, government and industry—and when I say industry, it's not just ours and other farm communities; it's feed companies, different things that are associated with us—to ensure we are using every tool at our disposal to respond to disease outbreaks as quickly as possible. The quicker we can respond, the faster we can work to eradicate disease on the farm and minimize the stress and additional impacts placed on our family farmers.

The proposed amendments to the Animal Health Act are a positive step forward in providing the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with the tools necessary to implement an effective and timely response in the event of a foreign animal disease emergency. Again, on behalf of the Ontario egg and pullet farmers, we reiterate our support for proposed amendments in Bill 46, Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. I just want to thank you at this time for being able to make those comments, and I look forward to any questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Well, thank you very much for that presentation. I do want to say, before we start the questions, that one question that came up earlier was, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” I want to say that this morning we have decided that the chicken came before the egg.

So we have it ready now. We are going to start the questions with the independent. MPP Brady.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: To both Eric and Scott, I want to thank you, both for the work that you do on farm, and your advocacy on behalf of your respective industries.

As the MPP for the very rural and agriculturally based riding of Haldimand–Norfolk, I've been doing the winter farm meeting circuit, and at these meetings, I'm told over and over again that farmers spend far too much time pushing paperwork around their desk. And every government, they tell me, promises to reduce red tape; it just never happens. So while I'm heartened agriculture is included in Bill 46, I feel there's a long way to go in allowing farmers just to farm and getting rid of a lot of that paperwork. It's good to hear that you guys are pleased with these changes in Bill 46 as well, but I'm wondering, down the road, if you had a wish list or a laundry list of things that you would like to see included in a red tape reduction bill, what would they be?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: A laundry list? Give me some time to develop that. But number one on our priorities right now would be labour. Finding suitable employees on our farms is a huge issue for all producers and across the sector, so anything we can do to make it easier to attract workers to our farms. Also, more importantly, temporary foreign workers are a great asset to our industry and making it easier to attract and bring those temporary foreign workers to our farms would make a huge difference for our entire industry.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Following up on that, there were greater measures put in place during the pandemic to ensure the safety of temporary foreign workers. Are those items still in place on the farm, and are they creating problems for the farmer?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: I'd have to talk to our HR committee about what exactly those requirements are because things keep on changing and evolving through this pandemic—but anything to bring workers in more effectively and quickly. Our biggest problem right now is probably passport controls, requirements to advertise for jobs that change over time; that slows down the process more so than the COVID requirements, I believe.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Right. Thank you.

Mr. Scott Helps: Yes, so I believe the veterinarian example that I used in my words that I said earlier—that's kind of the idea of what I believe is really important. As commodity groups, we try to solve our own problems and deal with our own issues. We have the ability to do that in a lot of ways, and we're not looking to government to solve those issues. We would like to solve those that are internal issues, whether it's with our industries, as I described earlier, or whether it's just internal issues. Where government—and I realize that government needs to be involved in some areas and respect that totally. Just, in those areas, to use that common-sense factor that you have with that veterinarian, because you're going to the experts, basically, and you're saying, “You help with this. You should be making that decision.” I would say that's an area that could be really helpful, because at the end of the day, sometimes it gets

bogged down with too many people that may not know or understand what's going on involved in that conversation.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Great. And I'll ask you, Scott, as well, the same question I asked Brian earlier. Backyard urban chickens: Are they posing a viral threat to your industry?

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Mr. Scott Helps: For sure. I just heard a number today—now this is US numbers—they said they had 320 million backyard flocks.

I can tell you, on my drive from where I come from to here, the egg sale signs on the road—they're not hidden; they're all over the place. It's a major, major issue. And to think about that: We have food regulations and food safety and quality standards. They meet none of them. So at the end of the day, that's what they're getting, and they're selling it on the feature that these are "farm fresh" eggs.

Our eggs are streamlined and in the stores—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the time for that question.

We now go to the government side. MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: First, to Ontario Pork: Let's start with the basics again. Could you give the committee an idea of the size of the Ontario herd, either in numbers or in kilograms?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Sure. Ontario would produce 5.5 million or 5.8 million hogs per year, about 110,000 or 120,000 pigs per week. Sow base is probably a little over 300,000 sows currently.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So we're talking, again, in the millions. You had talked about export markets and that two thirds of pork produced in Ontario is exported. Could you please tell the committee what are your destination markets?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Sure. The US obviously is a huge market, because of its proximity and large population base. Japan has a very high-value market; they appreciate quality pork, and Ontario's done a great job of supplying that need. And other Asian countries are definitely a growing market as they earn more money.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: With regard to the temporary response order, why is it that the industry wants this?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: If ASF was to come to Canada, the quicker we can identify where it is and stop the spread is key. We saw that with avian influenza; the feather boards have been talking about that. Number one, stop that spread, so stopping movement until you identify where the problem is will go a long way to minimize the impact.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Let's go back to your export markets for a moment. I would imagine that your export markets appreciate the quality and safety of Canadian pork. Can they find that quality and safety from one of your competitors somewhere?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Everybody around the world is trying to fill those high-value markets and saying what great product they produce. The US does a great job. The European Union is definitely in those markets. We're trying to sell our pork based on that quality and food safety, so

we've got the CPE program—Canadian Pork Excellence—where we've got traceability. We've got animal welfare requirements. We've got food safety requirements. All of those things help us brand that Ontario pork and create value for our producers.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: One last question for Ontario Pork: With regard to an interruption of Ontario pork production, if that were to ever occur, what would be the long-term consequences on the industry?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: They'd be massive. If you lose two thirds of your markets and have to decrease production by, say, 50%—which is a working number we use—how do you ever rebuild that infrastructure? It's not just the sow farms. It's all the infrastructure that supplies our industry: the packing plants, the chucks, the feed mills—that type of thing. It would be decades to recoup those losses if we're out of the markets for a significant period of time.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you very much.

For the Egg Farmers of Ontario: You had talked about exhibition birds. Could you explain to the committee what the difference is between an exhibition bird and other birds?

Mr. Scott Helps: Exhibition birds would be birds that you take to a show; they compete in competitions or they sell, like at an auction.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So exhibition birds are merely for show? They don't produce?

Mr. Scott Helps: No.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Okay. And let's talk about this idea of commingling. You had used the word "commingling." It's been used before. Could you explain to the committee what is meant by commingling?

Mr. Scott Helps: So, just quickly, in a situation that happened in the Stratford area, they had a duck farm. The duck farm had no ability to stop wild birds from infiltrating into the ducks or commingling with those ducks because it's outside and there's no way to stop that or put a barrier up. So once that interaction happens between the wild and the supposed domestic, that's where we feel that there's—and that's why it links back to the backyard flock as well.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Among your industry, what is the typical method or methods used to prevent commingling?

Mr. Scott Helps: In the layer industry, we have barns that house the birds. The only option that has outside access is organic. When you have heightened biosecurity situations like we have here, you would keep the birds inside; you wouldn't let them go outside.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Now, with regard to the quality of egg production in Ontario, in other jurisdictions around the world they do not use the refrigeration process. Could you explain to the committee why refrigeration is used and why it is necessary?

Mr. Scott Helps: In North America, primarily, we wash and then grade the eggs. Cooling is important because once you wash the egg, you're washing the film off the eggshell that would protect that from being penetrated, so you want to keep them in cold storage at that point.

Typically in Europe, they just set them on the counter, but they're not washed or anything. I don't know; I think I would prefer them being washed. I like our system a lot better than there. Anyway, that's the idea.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: That was actually my next question, with regard to washed versus unwashed eggs and what the difference was; you've already explained that. What would be the preferable production method? Because I'm sure you'll agree with me that refrigeration is more expensive.

Mr. Scott Helps: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So why does that make it the preferred production method when there's a production method that's cheaper?

Mr. Scott Helps: We feel, from a safety side—that's the primary reason why we do it. I was just at a grading station recently and did a tour last week, actually.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Mr. Scott Helps: If you could see inside there, just the cleanliness, the handling—everything is all about food safety and quality.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Okay. With regard to your production being transported across Ontario, I assume it's transported in refrigerated trucks. How do you find the transportation network with regard to your industry? Is it working? Is it failing? Give me an idea.

Mr. Scott Helps: It's working. We have places around Ontario in very strategic locations so we're able to access, for example, the Toronto market very easily, and then southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario. We have grading stations all around the province, basically, that can accommodate that, so it's very short-tripped.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So you have more than one station?

Mr. Scott Helps: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So you have built-in redundancy.

Mr. Scott Helps: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Those are all my questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We'll now go to the official opposition. MPP Kernaghan.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you, Eric and Scott, for your presentations. Also, thank you for your support of your members throughout the pandemic. I know that it's been an incredibly difficult time in your industry.

I'd like to begin with Eric. I just want to commend Ontario Pork for your focus not only on environmental sustainability but healthy animals and also strengthening communities. Your pork gratitude project was quite something, and I wanted to get on the record to thank you for that.

My first question: I want to know if you're hearing from your members concerns about energy costs, particularly in regard to ventilation systems, which are necessary in your industry?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Definitely energy costs are a growing part of our budgets. The carbon tax definitely is

part of that. We understand the need for a cleaner environment and the need to become more efficient and cleaner in what we're doing, but we compete on a world market. Our hope is that we can be on a level playing field and work to improve our environmental footprint so that our barns are more efficient, but definitely the cost of heat and hydro for drying grains etc. is a bigger and bigger factor.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely. I know that recently Ontario Pork had participated in a building code consultation in which there were certain recommendations that were made and also some concerns, whether it was the 750-millimetre minimum access to exits, or perimeter doors swinging inwards, or the feed rooms and horizontal silos and natural ventilation.

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I just wanted to ask, has there been any response or movement on the concerns brought forward during that consultation by Ontario Pork?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: I'm going to have to admit that I haven't heard or been up to date on that file and where we're at. I know we were pleased to be able to contribute our concerns. We had a committee come in at Ontario Pork. We had four or five different meetings trying to brainstorm ideas on how to improve safety and effectiveness for barn designs. I thought that was a really good outcome from the issue. It was farmers thinking about how to make things better. We appreciated the process.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Good. Yesterday, Eric, the committee met with the Grain Farmers of Ontario and discussed the Risk Management Program. Recently, I think the Risk Management Program was increased by \$50 million per year, and the grain farmers are currently requesting an additional \$100 million. Is Ontario Pork also looking for an update to the Risk Management Program?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: The Risk Management Program has been the one program that works for Ontario pork farmers when it comes to risk management. We really appreciate the government's support of that program for the last 10 years, or I guess it is 12 years, that type of thing. We know it's underfunded in its current format, so any increases are supported by Ontario Pork.

We also, as an association, believe in making it needs-based, so we want to have access to funds when they're required in those market conditions. We're not expecting that money every year when we're having good years. We'd rather make our money at the farm gate, but it's a great insurance program to keep our farmers viable.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Understood. It is good as an insurance program.

The grain farmers had indicated that for every dollar that the government invests in risk management, it yields a net economic return of \$2.24. Is there a metric that Ontario Pork has in terms of risk management investment?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: I believe the grain farmers, Ontario Pork and Ontario beef are all part of OASC. I'm assuming the grain farmers were referring to a study commissioned by OASC that we were a part of.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: So it would be the same metric, understood.

I wanted to know if you could explain this for the committee: There has been an Ontario Pork request for an increase in the AgriStability payment trigger from 70% of reference margins to 85% of reference margins. I wonder if you could explain that for the committee, just for clarity.

Mr. Eric Schwindt: That's one that really hit home for me a few years ago. The 70% trigger for AgriStability isn't effective for Ontario hog farms. Once you lose that much money and go down to that 70% level, that's bank protection. That's not farm protection. Whereas the 85% trigger will create payouts more frequently and allow farmers to weather those tough times more efficiently than a 70% trigger—which is a disaster program; it's not a business risk management program.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Understood.

How much time is left, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Two minutes.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Oh, two minutes. Perfect. I thought you said one minute earlier. I'm hearing things now. Your voice is in my head.

I believe that there's a shortfall in processing capacity for Ontario Pork. You had mentioned that that has to do with the labour shortage. Would it be your recommendation or would you like to see from this provincial government more investments to enhance transit connections between cities, urban centres and smaller municipalities and rural farms?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Definitely, you hit the nail on the head. Processing capacity is an issue. Anything we can do to increase access to labour for processing plants would be effective. I'm going to use Conestoga Meats in my home area as an example. They're just on the outskirts of K-W. Improved public transit to the plant or to Breslau, where they can shuttle workers in at shift change, would be very helpful in helping them access that labour pool.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Yes, I think this is something that has been advocated for, for quite some time. There are good-paying jobs, and it's a matter of getting people out—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Now it's one minute.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Now it's one minute.

It's a matter of getting people out to those locations so that they are able to work. Oftentimes, these are folks, whether they're newcomers or—these are entry-level positions. They don't necessarily have their own transit. So the burden and the onus should not be upon you to go and collect them, where it's something that the provincial government, I believe, could step in and provide more assistance.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thirty-one.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I think I'm going to cede the rest of my time because I don't want to give you a big question—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We'll now go to the independent. MPP Collard.

Mme Lucille Collard: I want to direct my question to Mr. Helps. Quite a few years ago, and I guess in another lifetime, I was a part-time farmer raising emus. That was quite the interesting experience. We got our first inventory

of birds from Ontario. The farm was located in Quebec, and we did get the birds at a really good price because the industry was not taking off here. I guess there were a number of issues, but being from that industry—and I know that the hatching rate for emu eggs is quite low. Can you tell me a little bit about that? Was that part of the reason why the industry didn't succeed in actually implementing itself? Or do you know of other factors?

Mr. Scott Helps: I don't have any idea about the emu sector at all. I have no knowledge.

Mme Lucille Collard: Okay. That's fair enough. I was thinking—just to pry there.

For Mr. Schwindt: The health of swine, you said, is very important because disease can actually decimate the industry. So I'm just wondering, in terms of health control, what do you do to ensure the health of animals? Is it through inspections? What are the ways that you're dealing with that?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: There's a huge variety of methods. On-farm biosecurity would include showers in the barns, so before entering a barn, minimum Danish entry, which would be change of boots, coveralls, clothes, wash your hands, that type of thing. Many barns are moving to complete shower-in, shower-out facilities to prevent movement back and forth—that's by people.

For pig movements, transportation is probably our biggest weak link right now, so there's more and more emphasis being put on the washing of trucks and trailers when moving pigs from premise to premise or to the slaughter facility.

Mme Lucille Collard: So a lot of prevention?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: A lot of prevention.

Mme Lucille Collard: Not necessarily inspection, per se.

Mr. Eric Schwindt: As far as inspection, most producers have a very good working relationship with their veterinarians, who come in on a regular basis and talk about biosecurity practices on the farm but also observe the animals and are more and more reliant on blood work to test for diseases and see what's happening at the farm level.

Mme Lucille Collard: Can you talk a little bit about the castration of piglets? Is that still a really wide practice—and why the reason for doing that?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: The reason for that is to prevent boar taint. When male pigs hit puberty, they'll put an odour into the meat, so when you process the pork, there will be an odour that—you just can't eat that pork.

Under the new code of practice, we use pain relief with the piglets as we process the animals. If you—

Mme Lucille Collard: Is this automatically done on every farm that—

Mr. Eric Schwindt: It's part of our CPE program. It's a requirement that we use pain relief at processing.

Mme Lucille Collard: Thank you. I don't have any other questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Scott, I liked your passionate answer with respect to backyard chickens. The second part of that was whether or not you would like to see the

patchwork of approaches eliminated from municipality to municipality.

Mr. Scott Helps: On the backyard—

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Chickens, yes.

Mr. Scott Helps: I can just give you an example. In Plympton-Wyoming, which is the township, small town, that I'm by, they just had that, and actually I spoke against it, and just not because—I get the intrigue about having chickens and that type of thing. I get it. But as I really want to emphasize, we have a very good food system, and compromising that food system with things of that nature so people can have what they want, or whatever you want to describe that like—you've got to remember that if you're going to allow that to happen, it could compromise the food chain. And it was alluded earlier about, are the shelves full or are they not full?

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Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for that. We'll now go to the government. MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate it. And my thanks to both of you for appearing before the committee. I'm going to start off with Eric.

Eric, obviously pork is an incredibly important product here in Ontario for export. My father was actually a pork producer for 25 years, farrow to finish, out in Niagara, so I spent many hours—4 a.m., getting ready, sorting hogs when I was a young teen. We had a lot of different ups and downs, I would say, compared to the supply-managed system, and there were definitely some difficult times. He got out in 2009, right during one of those troughs, if you will. But it's good to see that there's a strong market.

I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about the global expectations and perception of Ontario pork and how the Grow Ontario Strategy, which is also part of this legislation, will help ensure that people understand the high quality of care that's provided (a) to animals and, as a result of that, (b) to the food supply chain; and why that's crucial also, with the changes that are made in this legislation, for those international markets that you're exporting to—we'll get into the domestic side with eggs in a little bit—why that's important. When places like China or other countries across the world are looking for food products, they want to, obviously, buy food products that are safe, that are meeting a high standard of care, and I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about what that looks like in the pork sector. I know you're very, very careful when it comes to ensuring the safety of your animals and also the food product at the end of the day, and I'm wondering if you could walk the committee through a bit of that process.

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Sure. Yes, you hit the nail on the head: Exports are the way our industry is going to grow. Canada and Ontario are not going to eat more food. Some of us eat too much; I'll be one of those people eating too much sometimes. So we need to grow our business by looking outside.

Japan is a classic example of a country that really appreciates high-quality food. They've gone through food shortages; they want to make sure their food arrives on time every time and that it's of high quality.

The way Ontario and Canada have gone about branding ourselves is through the Canadian Pork Excellence program. We combine traceability with on-farm food safety and on-farm animal welfare measures. That brand is recognized around the world for those quality attributes it brings, and that's how we market it when we're competing with—I'm going to call it “commodity pork” from the US. Definitely, they've got scale on their side, but they can't compete on the quality side of things and the tailoring to that specific customer. So we need that reputation, that quality, that excellence reputation when we're competing in those growing markets.

China is another great example. They don't trust domestic supply; they don't know what's happening in their food supply, whereas with a Canadian maple leaf on it—that's got value, and it's a sign of security. We want to capitalize on that. But with that is the responsibility to make sure we're following our rules, our on-farm programs, and that's why we're investing so much time and money into them.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. I'm going to go down a little bit of a different angle, just because I've heard a couple of comments from some of my colleagues across the way.

Scott, do you have egg farmers in northern Ontario?

Mr. Scott Helps: Not whatever you classify as northern Ontario. If I was classifying, say, Sault Ste. Marie and up, no. There was one that was up in that area, and they sold out probably 10 years ago.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. Are there any pork farmers in northern Ontario, Eric?

Mr. Eric Schwindt: Definitely, there's pigs across the province, but when it comes to scale, they're concentrated in southwestern Ontario. But definitely there are pigs up in the New Liskeard area, for example.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Great. So the Northern Policy Institute recently came out in November with a really amazing analysis of some of the impacts of climate change on the north. Obviously there are negative impacts of climate change, but one of the consequences that we're going to be seeing in northern Ontario is, throughout the Clay Belt, an increase in heat units—which has already happened—of about 25% over the past 10 years, according to OMAFRA's numbers. We're seeing longer growing seasons, and we're seeing that there's about a million acres of farmland which are going to be arable. Right now, there's about 31,000 acres that are being used in that area, down from around 300,000 at the peak in, actually, 1951, which was when the peak of agriculture in the north was. But we're seeing a return because of the impacts of climate change in the north in terms of heat units and the growing seasons and some other changes.

In terms of adding more farmland than Ontario has ever seen in the past as a result of this million acres being added into our agricultural arable land areas, I'm wondering what

you think that means for our food security in terms of knowing that Ontario has more farmland today than it's ever had and that over the next 30 years we're going to see a massive increase in the amount of those farmlands due to climate change.

Mr. Scott Helps: It's a really good point. I do grow crops as well; I'm sure Eric does as well. So it's a little dear to our hearts. We believe that there's people and there's a balance. The people need to have houses and the people need to eat, so there's a balancing act in that.

What you were speaking of—I was just in St. Isidore, which is over along the Quebec-Ontario border in the east, and they're creating land. The last time I was there, they were creating farmland and they're growing corn. Things have changed. To the point that you're making, there was no corn there back, probably, when I was young like you, but now there is corn being grown there very easily, and good corn. So things change, and I agree with what you're saying. There's no doubt this environment is changing and we're managing it, and it's working.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate that, because I think there's a misconception that Ontario is losing farmland in the aggregate, and actually, as a whole, we're increasing the amount of farmland. I have a lot of family in northern Alberta as well, and they're clearing whole sections—640 acres at a time—of scrubland. Now, because of the heat unit increases, they're able to actually grow product, which is, I think, important for our food supply chain as well. It's a little bit of an aside, but I think it's important to perhaps deal with some of the questions that I know my colleagues in the opposition ask about.

I was born and raised on a farm. I think it's important that we have good farmland, and it's exciting to see more farmland coming on board—as much as, of course, there are very negative consequences to climate change as well, but some positive ones, at least, in that respect.

I very much also appreciate the emphasis that you place on rapid action. This government understands that we need to move quickly when there are challenges that are being faced in your sector. Could you speak to what that means in terms of avian flu—Scott, and then, very quickly, Eric—and, of course, ensuring that we never have the dreaded African swine flu as well?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): There won't be time to answer that question.

We will now go to the official opposition. MPP Kernaghan.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to direct the next series of my questions to Scott. I just want to thank the egg farmers for your donation program to Feed Ontario. I know that you, throughout COVID-19, added 18,000 eggs per month to food banks. I believe 1.7 million eggs were delivered to food banks, so I just want to thank you for that, supporting people throughout this difficult time.

I wonder if you would also recommend that this provincial government invest in greater transit connections between urban centres and smaller municipalities and rural farms.

Mr. Scott Helps: Yes, I would agree to some extent that there is an issue. I think everyone would probably agree that there is, and anything that can help in that direction

would certainly be a positive thing. But at the same time it is tricky in some of these situations to make that work. I think it would be one of those situations where—I'm not sure how far they're into it, but investigating and coming up with the best solution, obviously, is the way to go with that.

There's always help. I've travelled across the province because of my job that I do now, and you can still get around fairly reasonably. I wouldn't necessarily say I would want to be a trucker, at times. But at the same time, it's working. I think that if we do those things, making the right decisions is what I would say is the most important.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Understood. Also, I was thinking to some of the numbers that we're seeing within our province with recent research. We know that in Ontario we've lost one fifth of our overall agricultural land in the last number of years. The number, I believe, is Ontario is losing 319 acres of prime farmland per day. I wonder if you had any comments about that, or any concerns.

Mr. Scott Helps: The good part about our industry—pork and us are a little bit different, obviously. It's been pointed out around the table here. But in saying that, ours is similar to theirs, and it's family-farm organizations. Somebody asked the question, "How many birds?" Our average flock in Ontario is 23,000 birds, which is very helpful in the sense that that close vicinity situation that has caused BC to have all the trouble doesn't happen here.

When it comes to land, I guess—yes, as a farmer, none of us want to see really good land be taken away and all that stuff. But at the same time, as you drive through the communities, there's a balance, and that's what I said earlier. I still think that's the approach that we have to take. We have to consider it. Maybe there's lands we don't want to build on, but we have to have a balanced approach to that.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely, because we do need to create the housing. It is a matter of respecting local decision-makers and locally, democratically elected governments that already have growth plans in place for inward and upward development and minimizing incursions onto prime farmland.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture indicates that agriculture land makes up less than 5% of our province, and that it is indeed a finite resource. They have also their Home Grown campaign, and they have also been quite active speaking about their concerns against Bill 23. I did want to ask for your opinion about Bill 23. With this removal of greenbelt lands, do you expect that there will be affordable housing created on this land?

Mr. Scott Helps: I don't know. I know we have farmers inside and outside of that area, and from an egg farmer's perspective, it's not going to really affect us in that area.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Okay. Well, I just want to thank you both for appearing at the committee today. I really appreciate your insights, and thank you for your work and to all your members because farmers feed cities. Thank you, gentlemen.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the presentation. We very much appreciate the time you took to prepare and the time you

came here this morning to spend with us and talk about Bill 46. Again, good luck in your future. Have a great day.

Now, I want to thank, as I just did, all the presenters.

As a reminder, the deadline for written submissions for Bill 46 is 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. The deadline for requests to appear for Bill 46 hearings held in Timmins is noon on Thursday, January 26, 2023. The deadline for requests to appear for Bill 46 hearings held in Peterborough is noon on Wednesday, February 1, 2023.

The committee will now recess until 1 p.m. when it will resume considerations of pre-budget consultations, 2023.

The committee recessed from 1144 to 1301.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome back. We will resume public hearings for pre-budget consultations, 2023. As a reminder, each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all the presenters, there will be 39 minutes for questions from the members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent members as a group.

DEVELOPING YOUNG LEADERS OF TOMORROW, TODAY

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I will now call on the next presenter. The next presenter is Developing Young Leaders of Tomorrow, Today. Speaking directly to the delegate: We want to remind you that you will have seven minutes to make your presentation. At the end of six minutes, I will say, "One minute." You don't have to stop. You'll just have one more minute to go, so if you have a point that's very important to make, make sure you make it during the minute, because at the end of seven minutes, all opportunities to say more have finished.

So with that, we want to thank you for being here, and we await your presentation.

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Thank you so much. Thank you to the members of the standing committee for providing the opportunity to consult on the future engagement and development of Windsor-Essex county and its residents.

Today I'm pleased to submit this proposal as executive director of Developing Young Leaders of Tomorrow, Today. We are a registered B3—which is Black-led, Black-serving and Black-focused—organization supporting children, youth and young professionals between the ages of eight to 35 since 2018.

As a community and structural social worker, I've worked in social services for over 13 years, and post-graduation from the master of social work program at York University, I've worked for the last six years on community development, addressing the impacts of precarious work and the cycle of poverty in Black communities.

I founded DYLOTT, Developing Young Leaders of Tomorrow, Today, as a community-based response to the systemic anti-Black racism that Black young people face in accessing sustainable employment.

DYLOTT is a leadership incubator that delivers a variety of youth programs intentionally designed to ensure young Black leaders have the tools to excel in the current and emerging Canadian and international job market. Our programs are designed to address barriers to social inclusion in employment, education and the broader social context. Our culturally responsive supports and services provide mentoring and mentorship opportunities, intensive training and skill development, and innovative sector-specific knowledge.

DYLOTT's board of directors is 98% Black-community-led, and our operations team is 100% Black-led, and all our programs, services and advocacy activities are informed by the Black Canadian experience, to challenge anti-Blackness.

In 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the field of cyber security was identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as the most rapidly advancing economic driver. Their research also indicated that racialized communities, specifically Black communities, would be most adversely impacted by the onset of automation in the labour market.

With this understanding that the hospitality, health care and education sectors—where Black people are predominantly employed—will be the most affected, we conducted a 10-month research into the education-to-careers outlook for five predominantly Black-population high schools across the Toronto region. We found that these schools did not have a co-op program with any STEM-based component, and this resulted in no line of sight to a sustainable career in technology, generally, and cyber security specifically.

Our B3 pathways to careers in cyber security and technology program aims to rewrite the historical disadvantage through sustainable development goals, especially goal 17: partnerships to achieve the goal. Our value proposition through this project for Windsor is that we are using already existing methods to bring together key partners from the public and private sector for the benefit of Black communities in Windsor and in Canada. Our project components will make an economically sustainable career in cyber security a realistic possibility. Young Black folks will be able to access opportunities that existing education and employment systems do not believe they are worthy to have access to.

With multi-year funding, we also want to change the dependence of Black organizations on grants and donations. These conditions perpetuate imbalances and reinforce a deficit model in our communities. Our project aims to invite investors to the table as equal partners with shared interests and mutual benefits to stakeholders.

I want to bring your attention to some of the statistics that exist for Windsor region. For Black communities in Windsor, this social-purpose project will leverage the manufacturing history of Windsor by promoting assembly

and programming of cyber security hardware and software and technology, such as drones and smart devices, just for an example. But if we look at the data that exists in the labour market for employment of—the labour market numbers in Windsor, rather. In 2020, the average unemployment rate in Ontario was 9.6%. For African, Caribbean and Black men in Windsor and Essex county, it was 23.7%, about two and half times the province's average.

Also, according to the University of Windsor, if you're looking to do better—this is the solution to a problem. If you're looking to do better in terms of getting unemployment even lower, you're looking at training, you're looking at supporting new hires, giving people their first jobs, just going that extra mile to get new talent into the workforce. You have to invest in community to help as solution-makers.

What we are looking for today is \$2.5 million over three years to create an innovation and stimulation hub that strengthens and stimulates the local economy here in Windsor by training or upskilling Black youth and young professionals who come with pre-existing talent but are not able to find employment in the local economy. We want to train these young people. We want to teach them the skills that are required, the technical knowledge to be able to participate in the digital revolution that we are currently experiencing. We want to be able to allow young people to find employment that is sustainable, to have the requisite skills and knowledge to actively participate in their own community-building. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We will now start the questioning, and we'll start with the government side. MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you for being here today. I want to start with some basics. Could you please tell us about your organization? How many people have subscribed to your organization? How many members are there?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Absolutely. Our organization has been founded since—it became a registered non-profit in 2019, but has been serving youth since 2018. Currently, we have two programs that we offer. We have a program called #LeadLikeAGirl, which supports 20 young girls each year between the ages of eight and 15, and we have another program called the Black Diplomats Academy, which supports 40 aspiring diplomats per year between the ages of 18 and 35. In both programs, we've served over 100 students so far.

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Mr. Anthony Leardi: Let's talk about your aspiring diplomats. When you say you support them, explain to us how you support your aspiring diplomats.

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Absolutely. Within the program itself, it's a 10-month program. We do components that relate to achieving the sustainable development goals within Black communities through the UN International Decade for People of African Descent and now the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. For the 10 months, youth go through a learning-intensive, complementary program to their academic studies. They come to

us with academic backgrounds ranging from journalism to social work, of course, national-security-focused studies. We guide them through a learning lab, which is four months long. Once the four months are completed, they are expected to pass 75% attendance and participation.

They receive mentorship from senior representatives in the diplomatic space, so Canadians serving abroad as well as global diplomats. They receive one-to-one mentorship for 12 weeks within that period. They also have access to internships, whether it's through the Canadian embassies abroad or other local offices.

Once they get through that portion, they also do working papers. We actually create research on topics of priority for our organization, such as decent work and economic growth, reducing inequalities, quality education. Their working papers contribute to our Black Diplomacy Global Summit, which we've run for three years now. In that summit, they get the opportunity to discuss topics such as sport diplomacy, such as the SDGs and how they are being applied and achieved in Black communities, also, through government action: What are the steps that the government is taking to advance the SDGs, and how can Black communities help to advance that mission?

And then once the summit is finished, we have international experience or learn-abroad opportunities. Just in December of last year, myself and three of our fellows from our program were in Geneva for the very first sitting of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, where we called on the UN to have a specific arm of the permanent forum that is youth-led. In Canada, we are calling for the same thing, that there is a youth-focused arm on policy engagement that utilizes the experience and expertise of youth.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: With regard to the participants in your program, where would they come from primarily, Windsor and Essex county?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: The Black Diplomats Academy itself—we host most of our programming virtually. First, it was due to COVID, why we had to do it virtually. But we realized that we were able to reach far more amounts of youth by hosting the major part of our program online.

In last year's cohort, we had one person from Windsor. This year, we are actively focused on getting more Windsor residents to be a part of this program. Part of it for us was that there was not a whole lot of connection between the usual channels that we communicate with youth and some of the university and college students here, which is our demographic that we support. So this year, we've already connected with the University of Windsor, we are making strides to connect with St. Clair College and community organizations where we know that young people are looking for the opportunities to engage.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: With regard to your board of directors, how many people are on your board of directors?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: We have a very small board at this moment. We have three board members and four advisers.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The board members, where are they from?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: All across Ontario.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'm getting the impression that your program is—I'll call it mainly academic. Is there any skilled trades component of your program at all?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: At this moment, we don't have a focus on skilled trades.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to talk about what you mentioned about this summit. You said it took place in a virtual platform. Has it ever taken place in an in-person platform?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Yes.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Was that before the pandemic?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: This was last year. Last year was the first time that we did it in person, still during the pandemic. But we kept our numbers very small because we were still observing public health guidelines, so we had 50 participants per day. It was a four-day summit.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Where did that physically take place?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: It took place in Toronto. This year, we will host it here.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Was it in kind of a convention format? Explain it to me: What did it look like when you walked in?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: The venue was at the Hilton hotel in Etobicoke. There, we just had a conference room. It was panel-style for the most part. Each day ran from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We brought in speakers from all over Canada. Predominantly, it was a diplomatic conversation, so we had Canadian representatives who were stationed abroad. For example, we had Ambassador Bob Rae, who is Canada's permanent representative to the UN in New York, who spoke. He joined virtually but spoke on one of our panels. We had Canada's representative to Costa Rica, who is a Black woman, who spoke on women in diplomacy and what that career looks like. And we had a youth-specific focus on climate change. So, physically, we had young people who are engaged in—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That concludes the time for that question.

We will go to the official opposition. MPP Gretzky.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I really appreciate your presentation and many of the systemic barriers that you have highlighted. We've heard from many people across the province from the Black community about systemic barriers.

I just want to draw your attention to—and you likely heard this at the time and maybe remember, but it was, I believe, December 2021. There was a news story that came out, and the headline was “Underemployed, Underestimated: Windsor's Black Men Find Allies to Fight Joblessness.” There was a local professor who had done a study and found that Black men and youth are disproportionately—their skills are dismissed, and they are pushed into jobs that they are much too qualified to be doing. So we had a gentleman who is a social worker, another one who has his master's in kinesiology who practises in the States because he couldn't get a job here. They talked

about how Black men and youth often are pushed into doing jobs like at call centres, farms, food delivery—all important jobs that need to be done but not within their skill set nor their interest. They went to post-secondary for specific skill sets—which is what we are often telling people you need to do: Choose a career path through post-secondary, whether that's university, college, trades.

At the time, the Minister of Labour said that he's not buying that; he's not buying the lived experience of these two gentlemen and all the gentlemen in the study, and those in our community. So I'm wondering if you could talk a bit about that. I know there was a question, again, specifically about the trades, but talk about what kind of message does that send to the Black community when they come forward talking about systemic barriers, when they are talking about discrimination, anti-Black racism and saying, “We go to school to learn the things we want to, whether that is in the medical field or social work or whether that is a skilled trade, but oftentimes we are told this is not a job for us: ‘You should go do this instead.’”

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Absolutely. The information that I shared in my presentation, that Black communities in particular are exposed to precarious work—part of that precarity is deskilling, so it means that you actually have to strip your résumé to be able to get available jobs.

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You might have a degree in kinesiology or you might have a degree in engineering, but to fit the local economy—you are over-skilled for the jobs that are available, and those are minimum wage jobs typically. What ends up happening is you strip your résumé to apply for these jobs and you get the job to make sure that you're not unhoused, that you don't lose your housing or you don't become a victim to food insecurity or anything like that, but you're never able, then, to re-lift yourself out of these precarious opportunities.

If I speak personally, for myself, as you spoke about the social worker, when I finished my master's degree it took me three years before I could get a job. The jobs that I could get, all of it was contract work—three months here, three months there. That is actually what caused me to form the non-profit organization, because regardless of your educational background, the labour market for racialized people, specifically Black people, tells us that if you are too highly educated, then you're overqualified for the jobs that you went to school for. That means that you are always at the bottom of the ladder, trying to climb out. The system never allows you to start at par. You always have to be digging yourself out of a hole.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you. I just want to reiterate what was just said; it's very important. You started that sentence with “if you are Black,” and I think that's something we need to put an exclamation mark on because there's many people in our community who are not Black and do not face those same barriers.

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Absolutely. If I can also add to that: In conversation with the University of Windsor, the University of Windsor has just launched a Black studies initiative. One of the many reasons why that initiative was

started was because Black scholars have a very difficult time accessing long-term employment within faculties, within different departments at colleges and universities. This is statistically documented. It is not a story; it is not just an enigma within—it's a phenomenon. We have to be able to recognize that these challenges are systemic, and how we solve these problems depends on the collaboration between community, government and other representatives. Thank you for your question.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you. My colleague has questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Kernaghan.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I want to thank you very much for an excellent presentation. I think your ask is quite modest, \$2.5 million. I'm very proud of the work of the NDP calling for anti-Black racism to be determined as the public health crisis that it is, and also fully funding the Anti-Racism Directorate. However, your programming is very positive and very productive and very long-lasting in scope. I wanted to ask, why is it important to engage BIPOC youth in particular?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: First of all, thank you for highlighting the need for investment and recognition in the challenges that are systemic. I'm also going to be very definitive by not using the term "BIPOC." I'm only going to speak about Black communities because I can only speak from my perspective, from our community's. Again, I won't say I speak for all Black communities because we are very diverse in our experiences and backgrounds.

What I will say is, our program is specifically designed to deliver the services and supports because we've assessed the systemic gaps. We recognize where the challenges are in the system and we actively work to create solutions to those challenges. Essentially what we bring to the table is a plug-in, a fit-and-play system where we recognize where the government's work ends and where community work begins, and where they can marry the two.

Our work is very much focused on the areas that are historically challenging areas. Education and employment are historically challenging for our communities. We know that streaming, all of those things, have impacted our communities—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That does conclude the time.

We'll go to the independent. MPP Collard.

Mme Lucille Collard: Thank you for your presentation—very well articulated and very clear. I just had a couple of questions of precision. I'm sure you said it in your presentation at the outset, but how long ago did you form this organization?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: It became an official registered non-profit organization in 2019. We have, though, supported youth since 2018.

Mme Lucille Collard: And in which part of Ontario is the organization active?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: When we began in 2019, we were situated in Toronto. Predominantly we were supporting—the city of Toronto has, I believe, 21 neighbourhood improvement areas. We were active in the north Etobicoke

region. However, when COVID hit, we went 100% virtual, like a lot of organizations did, and we stayed virtual for quite some time.

I physically moved to Windsor in 2020, and that's when I started to look at Windsor's labour market and youth engagement here, and that's when I started to, first and foremost, build relationships—learning about the community organizations that are here; learning about, of course, the historic Black communities that exist in Windsor and where the gaps are here. That's why I'm presenting today.

Mme Lucille Collard: Okay. I'm from Ottawa, and I know there are other organizations that provide training for the Black community. They are created by Black people and serve those people. Are you part of an association of training organizations in Ontario, maybe working together to try to achieve bigger goals?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Yes, I don't know if we are officially a collective or a coalition yet, but I do work with Imagine Canada on their economic justice file, specifically for B3 organizations. I've also contributed to Community Foundations of Canada's report on the SDGs and how to advance SDGs within Black communities. That's work that I've been doing now for two years. I sit on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO's inclusive municipalities coalition, and I do a lot of local engagement connecting organizations with government and corporate representatives.

Mme Lucille Collard: Okay. Does your organization fill a void in training for Black people, training that is not available or is not covered in the public system?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: Absolutely. I think your colleague spoke about the program sounding very academic. We are very, very clear and intentional about our program not being academic. We complement the academic achievement of Black young people with experiential learning. So what that means is, for example, with the Black Diplomats Academy, we don't review the diplomatic curriculum that they could get at a university.

But what we do know is that even with a master's degree or a PhD in international relations, Black young people in Canada do not get the jobs in foreign affairs or anything like that. There are systemic barriers to that.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): One minute.

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: We provide mentorship, internship opportunities and additional training that they may need to help them overcome that. They can add those experiences to their CVs that help them overcome those barriers.

Mme Lucille Collard: What kind of work are you doing to ensure that the training that you're providing that maybe complements the academic training that they have is recognized among the organizations that people would be applying to?

Ms. Candies Kotchapaw: I think that's one of the reasons why I'm happy to be presenting today, because over the three years that we've run this program, we've seen where, especially in the private sector, we're being approached—asking for interns to come into their program,

to join first as interns and then they could take them on as full-on employees.

What we also recognize is our own capacity, and this is why we're asking for long-term funding. With B3 organizations, a 2020 report by Foundation for Black Communities indicated that, with the funding that was allocated of \$10 billion, 0.03% of that \$10 billion went to Black organizations.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That does conclude the time.

Are there any further questions from the government side? Any from the official opposition?

With that—you're very fortunate you form a small panel. So thank you very much for your presentation and the time you took to come here and be helpful in our preparation for the budget coming out, hopefully, in a matter of a month or two. Thank you again for your participation. I thank all the presenters.

That concludes our public hearings for pre-budget consultations in Essex. As a reminder, the deadline for written submissions is 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2023.

The committee is now adjourned until Monday, January 30, 2023, in Sudbury.

The committee adjourned at 1331.

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