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Tuesday 25 February 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 25 février 2014

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Agency review: Metrolinx

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Examen des organismes
gouvernementaux : Metrolinx

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 25 February 2014

Mardi 25 février 2014

*The committee met at 0901 in committee room 1.*AGENCY REVIEW: METROLINX
COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. The first order of business on our agenda is the motion that's currently on the floor. When this committee adjourned last week, members were debating the motion, moved by Mr. Bartolucci, to amend a motion previously moved by Mr. Marchese. You all have the text of these two motions in front of you, the main motion and the amendment.

For the sake of those members and other individuals who were not here last time, and for Hansard, I would ask Mr. Marchese, before we resume our debate, to restate his motion for the record and Mr. Bartolucci to restate his amendment. Now—

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Point of order, Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Given that it looks to me like there are about six amendments that we're looking at and we've got two fairly benign appointments—and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense to the appointees—could we deal with that and have the people present and move on to the motions? Because we've got a number of questions about the motions; I have, anyway.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to say that we're not prepared to do that today. We gave the government an opportunity last week to spend 20 minutes to give us their view on the matter. We gave the government two months to deal with this, so Metrolinx and the ministry have had two months since we moved this motion on December 20. We have been respectful of the government in terms of their desire to avoid dealing with this matter, and I think we're ready to deal with the motion. If the government wants to continue debating this issue, God bless. With all due respect to the people that are here for the appointments, they will have to simply wait for another day.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): There are only two appointments, so we have at least half an hour to debate this. You're saying that you want to debate this now—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I understand.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): —and have the appointees wait? Because—Mr. Yurek.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Chair, I support Mr. Marchese's motion to continue debating. We've had this motion in front of the committee since December, and there has been ongoing debate upon it. Each time we do move to do the people coming in for their roles, we somehow never come to conclude this debate. I think if we take care of this now, I'm sure the government will be expedient in what they need to say so that we could get these motions out of the way, and then we'll look forward to the appointments as soon as possible.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Let me just clarify with the committee Clerk, because we have scheduled these two here. I just wanted to check with the committee Clerk.

Okay. So what we'll do, because we have half an hour, is that we'll deal with the motion for half an hour, and then we have to deal with the appointments that are here today.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, we don't, actually. I think the first item is resuming the debate on the amendment, and there is no rule that says that it's a half an hour or an hour or two hours. We understand that there are two appointments that have to be dealt with. But as far as I'm aware, there's nothing that simply says to the Chair, "We'll give you a half an hour to discuss this motion, and then we'll end it." I think we should deal with this motion that is before us, vote on it, or simply have the Liberal caucus speak for the whole time, until 10:25, if that's what they want to do.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Because they are here today. And I don't mean to be rude, but next committee meeting we can not put anybody on here and just spend the whole time. But—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. I mean, the next meeting, next week, we can just spend the whole time. But we've got—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's up to the Liberal caucus to decide that.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): So then I—

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to get this on the record. I'd like to move a motion that the order of proceedings be

reversed: that we deal with the appointments first, and we then proceed with the debate on the motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. The committee Clerk has advised me that the 9 o'clock item is on the agenda, and unless we get unanimous consent to put this discussion aside and deal with the two appointments and then come back—so do we have unanimous consent?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We don't. Okay, so then we're going to have to resume debate on the amendment that was moved by Mr. Bartolucci and that's in front of us today.

Mr. Mike Colle: Mr. Chair, can I call for a recess? I want to get up to date on the motions. I want to get some background information, being new to the committee. I'd like to call for a 20-minute recess.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Agreed? Okay. So we're recessed for 20 minutes.

The committee recessed from 0908 to 0928.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): This committee is now back in session.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Chairman, can you please speak up? Because I'm really having a difficult time.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Sorry.

I just wanted to ask two quick questions. There is the subcommittee report in front of us. I believe we had unanimous consent to adopt the subcommittee report dated February 20, 2014. I just need someone to move adoption of the motion.

Miss Monique Taylor: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated February 20, 2014.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you, Miss Taylor. Would someone please move the adoption of the report?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Oh, I'm sorry. All in favour? Opposed? That carries.

One other thing: extension of the deadline. There are two intended appointees selected for review by this committee whose deadlines for review expire on March 2, 2014, which is before our next meeting. They are Karen Kraft Sloan and Marcia Valiante, both nominated as members. They were selected from the January 31, 2014, certificate. Do I have a motion to extend their deadline?

Mr. Mike Colle: Can you please explain that to me? Who are these people?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, very quickly. The two people are Karen Kraft Sloan and Marcia Valiante, both nominated as members to the Environmental Review Tribunal (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario) and the Ontario Municipal Board, (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario). They were selected from the January 31, 2014 certificate. All I'm asking is if we can extend deadlines; otherwise, it will be adopted automatically.

Mr. Mike Colle: The deadline is for what? This is what I don't understand. I thought we had two other people before us.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. These are the ones that will come in—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. These are for the next meeting. The next meeting is April 2—I mean, extend it to April 2. We'll meet before then, and we don't want these two to expire. So I'm just asking that we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointments of these two individuals. All in favour? Opposed? That carries.

Now, we have two people here. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Anne Egan, nominated as member, Building Materials Evaluation Commission, to April 2, 2014; and also, do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Justin Duncan, nominated as member, Environmental Review Tribunal (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario) and the Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario) to April 2, 2014, just in case we don't get to them today? All in favour? Opposed? That carries.

Now we go back to the motion we were debating earlier and the amendment to the motion. Mr. Marchese has the motion, and the amendment was moved by Mr. Bartolucci. They have to be read into the record again. Ms. Taylor?

Miss Monique Taylor: Oh, sorry. Read into the record again? Didn't you just do that? Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's fine.

I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies request from Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation the production of all documents and correspondence related to any market studies conducted between January 1, 2010, and December 3, 2013, related to ridership projections for the air-rail link; and that these documents be produced within 30 days of this motion passing; and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable PDF.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you. And the amendment, as well.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Just very quickly, I'll read the one amendment that Mr. Bartolucci moved:

"I move that the following sentence be struck from the main motion:

"that these documents be produced within 30 days of this motion passing; and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable PDF."

"And replaced with:

"that these documents be produced within 60 days of this motion passing, and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable PDF."

Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to call the question, Chair.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I think the Clerk will explain to you—

Mr. Mike Colle: Could we have a public explanation of this?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, once she gets back.

Mr. Mike Colle: This sotto voce stuff, I don't agree with.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Let the Clerk explain it. She's better at it than I am.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): My apologies. My understanding is that if the member is moving a motion for closure, then the way that motion would be put is, "I move that the question be now put." Then, procedurally, it is up to the Chair to determine whether or not there has been sufficient debate on the motion, that everyone who has wanted to speak has been heard and that nothing new is being added to the debate. If the Chair believes that all of these conditions have been satisfied, then he will allow the motion for closure to be voted upon. If the motion is voted upon, then the next question put by the Chair is on the main motion, so any amendments are lost at that point and the next question is on the amendments. That would be the procedure for moving closure on an item of debate.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Ms. Damerla.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I was just going to say that I would like to debate this amendment further. Last time when we adjourned, I was still speaking to it when we ran out of time. I've been seeking your attention for a few minutes now just to say that. So I just wanted to make it clear that we have this amendment that we'd like to debate, and because I heard the Clerk say that, once this amendment is voted on, we go directly to the main motion—but we might have other amendments to the main motion, so I wanted to understand what the procedure is.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Miss Taylor, did you want to say something?

Miss Monique Taylor: Well, yes. I would like to request that the question now be put. We've been debating this for quite some time. This motion was brought forward in early December. I think it's time that we move forward, especially in respect to the candidates that we have coming before us, to hear their delegations.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay.

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Just to put it on the record: I have not spoken on this, and I would like to speak.

It's kind of rich for the NDP to say, "Let's move ahead." When we asked for a 10-minute time to let the candidates come forward and get on with this, they said no. Now they're saying, "Let's defer to the appointments

of the people who are here." You can't have it both ways. You can't suck and blow at the same time.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, I think you should rule on the motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Why don't we do this: limit their time, give them a chance to speak, because Mr. Colle has not been here—and limit her time too.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just so that you know, Ms. Dipika Damerla had 20 minutes the last time to speak to this, and she wants to continue—so that you're aware, because I'm not sure that you were here the last time.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I was not here last time. I apologize.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I'm happy to let my colleague speak to the motion. But I didn't get an answer to my question, which was: If we had another amendment—if we vote on this amendment at some point and we have another amendment—because I heard you say that we go to the main motion. So do we have to table it now, or what's the procedure? Just so we don't—

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): No. To clarify, if the vote is put on a motion for closure—that is, if the Chair determines that there's been enough debate, that we're now going to vote that the question be now put, and he permits that vote to be taken—then, if that vote carries, the next question put is on the main motion. So, yes, there is no further opportunity for amendment or debate.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes. So is this the time for us to introduce our other amendment, while this one is going on? That's my question, because how do I preempt to make sure that we are able to introduce our other amendment? Because if, say, one of the members of provincial Parliament seeks closure right after this and the Chair rules on that, but we have a valid amendment—I'm trying to understand. How do I make sure that my amendment gets to the floor? Because I don't know when they ask for closure, right?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): Right. So there would be no further opportunity to amend once closure has been—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: So can I introduce an amendment now, while this one's on the floor?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): You could introduce an amendment to the amendment. But no, only—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: But what about an amendment to the original motion?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): There's currently one being debated.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Sorry?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedzicki): Only one can be debated at a time. There's one on the floor—

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Ms. Dipika Damerla: I understand that. Do you hear my quandary, though? You do hear, and I want to know what the process is.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm going to allow Mr. Colle to speak, and then we'll just take the vote. Okay?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Sorry, but my question hasn't been answered.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. So we'll allow the debate to proceed and we'll let Mr. Colle take the floor.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We're dealing with one amendment only and then we vote on it?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We're dealing with one amendment.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I need a procedural answer to the situation that you have painted, which is—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): At this point, I'm not entertaining a motion for closure, so I'm going to let Mr. Colle speak, because he wasn't here last time.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Chair, a question as well: I just wanted to ask you if I would have the opportunity to speak to this amendment, as well, following Mr. Colle.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Have you spoken to it before?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have spoken to it for a very, very brief amount of time, but I didn't have an opportunity at the last meeting to speak to it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm going to allow Mr. Colle to speak, okay? Go ahead, Mr. Colle, on the amendment here.

Mr. Mike Colle: Okay, on the amendment.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: There's more sotto voce here, so I have to wait.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Go ahead. Sorry.

Mr. Mike Colle: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, the motion just calls for a very simple, I think reasonable change that says getting these documents, rather than in 30 days, in 60 days. I think that's very reasonable. Given the complexity of all the information that's been asked for, I think it's profoundly reasonable to do it. I know it's done in other committees all the time. Just going forward with 30 to 60 is reasonable, considering the complexity of the request.

Sometimes we think in committee that we can snap our fingers and ask for information. I know I've done that sometimes myself, not realizing how complex and how difficult it is for ministry staff and, in this case, Metrolinx, the Ministry of Transportation, to find it.

We sometimes forget that most of these people in the ministry, the people employed in Metrolinx especially, are extremely taxed in terms of their agendas. I think it's not only people here but people in the general public who don't realize that their day-to-day work is very crucial to the operation and the servicing of the public.

Right now, Metrolinx is operating GO Transit. Hundreds of thousands of people across southern Ontario depend on GO Transit to get them to work and home every day, whether you're on a bus coming from Barrie,

whether you're on the GO train coming from Oshawa—whether you're on the bus coming from Hamilton or the Niagara Peninsula where you get GO service. It is not an easy task to operate the system, considering—especially this year, the climate challenges have been incredible in terms of icing of the track, the switches. The switches have been a serious, serious problem, considering the icing that has been occurring. These are front-line workers, directed by supervisory staff, that have that responsibility; 24/7, they have to deliver that GO Transit service. And for us to all of a sudden say, “Hey, stop everything you're doing and give us all these reports”—they'll give you the reports, but just be reasonable. That's all I'm saying. Just take into account that these men and women are delivering an essential service—that is, public transportation—every day of the week, and it is not an easy task to do.

There are a lot of safety issues and, as I said, weather issues, timing issues. It is a job that many of us don't appreciate. It is not an easy job to deliver that kind of transportation service through these corridors, as GO operates the bus service plus the train service across the GTA 24/7.

While they're operating that, at the same time we've asked them to basically construct the largest transit project in Canadian history. The largest transit project in Canadian history is under way right now on Eglinton Avenue. It's essentially about a \$5-billion project that GO is managing, as we speak, through some of the most horrendous traffic situations, through the most difficult engineering situations. I know it very well because parts of it go through my riding. The Eglinton Crosstown line goes from Black Creek Drive, which is near Jane Street. It's intended to go all the way across to Scarborough, and 19 kilometres of it is being tunnelled as we speak. There are two tunnel-boring machines in the ground right now. They've almost made their way from Black Creek to Keele Street. No, they're beyond Keele; they're almost approaching Caledonia.

This is Metrolinx that's doing it. It's a new organization, basically. It has been there in a planning function, but now it's an operational entity that is essentially building up a capacity to build, again, the largest transit project in Canadian history.

You will see this tunnelling, which means that every time you come across utilities like sewers and electrical, you come across all kinds of variations in soil. It is extremely precarious work. It's very dangerous work, being underground 50 to 100 metres with these massive machines, which are twice the height of this room.

By the way, these machines are manufactured here in Ontario, near the airport, at a plant that used to actually belong to—it was a Canadian-owned plant built by the Lovat father and son but bought by Caterpillar. These two giant machines are underground.

They are moving utilities all across Eglinton. While they're moving utilities, they also have to put in shoring walls at all the projected stations, which is another very complex work which requires not only engineering

underground—the pre-planning, the co-operation with the city of Toronto, the co-operation with Toronto Hydro. This is work that’s going on. They’re working two 10-hour shifts to do this work.

Everybody here—not everybody here, but some people here think, “Oh, well, Metrolinx, you’re not busy enough. Here. Go get us all these documents in 30 days.” All I’m saying is, just give them a reasonable time, and they’ll deliver the documents in 60 days. But let’s take a minute to understand the very, very unprecedented amount of work that Metrolinx is doing.

As I said, they’re building this mammoth tunnel from Black Creek Drive all the way to Laird Drive in Leaside—totally underground. It’s got to go underneath Dufferin Street. It’s got to go underneath the Allen expressway. It’s got to go underneath the York University subway line. I know some of my colleagues here are from eastern Ontario. The subway is going north and south, so this new tunnel has to be dug underneath the existing subway that goes north-south. And then there are utilities under there. It’s a massive project, very complex, that has to be done.

0950

Then they have to get to Bathurst Street. They are now starting to work there. They have to get underneath the Yonge Street subway with this tunnel. That is going to be an extremely—and everybody here says—you’ve heard at the city of Toronto, and I know the former mayor of Etobicoke will tell you, that everybody just says, “Oh, well, just build them. It’s easy.” They don’t understand the amount of money, the preparatory work, the environmental assessment work that goes on and all the engineering difficulties, and then you’ve got to actually do the work.

Those are two projects that Metrolinx is totally engaged in right now. They’re doing GO Transit 24/7. They’re doing the Eglinton Crosstown line as we speak—a \$5-billion project of unprecedented scale and scope that’s under way right now.

Then, at the same time, they’ve been asked to build the air-rail link from Union Station all the way up to the airport and beyond to Georgetown. That, again, seems easy, because there’s already a rail line going there. But they had to make major upgrades to all the bridges going north and south. They’ve had to do a massive overhaul of the bridges, because the frequency of the new trains etc.—they couldn’t safely take the new trains. So the bridges have had to be rebuilt in the airport rail link.

Then they’ve also been asked to tunnel in the old town of Weston because the people in the area didn’t want the train running at grade, so there’s a tunnel being added where the station in Weston is, that the people in Weston wanted.

Metrolinx, again, has been asked to do this air-rail link. They’ve never done one before, but they said, “Well, we need to do it because we’re the only city in the world outside of Dhaka in Bangladesh that doesn’t have mass transit to the airport.” We’re the only one, the only city. So they said, “Build us an air-rail link,” and the

decision was made, through the city of Toronto and everybody else: “Well, build us this air-rail link from Union Station.”

Then they found out Union Station couldn’t take the new train, so we’ve had to rebuild Union Station. If you’ve been down there, just take a look at the complexity of that project. It is beyond my comprehension how complex that engineering project is, where you’ve had to rebuild a 200-year-old station to handle not only the daily CN line, the daily GO trains—and the subway goes in there. Now they’ve been asked to handle the air-rail link. They said, “Oh, here. Redo Union Station, and do it tomorrow.”

I’m not trying to—they get well paid: they’ve got enough resources. I’m not crying poor for them. I’m just telling you the lay of the land on this thing. That’s all I’m trying to say to you, if you’re being objective about it.

The air-rail link: a lot of complex challenges they’ve had, rebuilding all those bridges, especially, and the at-grade crossings, the Eglinton Crosstown. Then, at the same time—and they’re not involved in this as directly, but they certainly do get involved because of their work on the Crosstown and other work—we’re building another subway up to York University and the city of Vaughan, another billion-dollar project that’s going on, a massive mass-transit subway system.

So you’ve got these three massive projects going on. In two of them, Metrolinx is leading; in the other one, Metrolinx is a partner, along with the TTC, in building the line up to York University and the city of Vaughan. Right now, that line stops at Sheppard, so now they’re going to extend it all the way up to—it looks easy on a map: “Oh, yes, just extend the subway line up to Steeles, and then extend it up to York University.” It looks easy on a map; meanwhile, all this construction and complexity is going on. If you go up Keele Street, Finch—any of those streets—there are massive traffic problems because they’re tearing up all those streets and, again, tunnelling up there at the York University extension.

This is what Metrolinx is doing. They’re doing these massive new projects that they’ve never done before, and then they’re also, as I said, running the GO system, which is one of the best systems of its kind anywhere, because it is a rail-based system—it operates. It is the bread-and-butter link for people in the morning. They have to have that GO. If the GO isn’t there, they ain’t going to get to work. Again, it’s got to be done properly, safely, on time and efficiently, and so they are daily doing that, handling hundreds of thousands of commuters who rely on GO.

These are the types of things that GO is busily working with. I just wanted to put that on the record, in context, because, just in terms of fairness, I’m saying that instead of 30 days, give them 60 days. Get all the information that you want—and they’ll get it to us. Within reason, I can’t see why you won’t support the 60 days, which is much more reasonable. It gives the Metrolinx people time to do it properly and not to have to go and divert all their attention—not all their attention,

but certainly too much attention—over to this file. They're doing the bread-and-butter work that we're demanding that they do.

That's all, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. I'm going to allow Dipika Damerla a few minutes to speak. I'm going through the Hansard, and she hasn't spoken. She was cut off last meeting. So go ahead and speak.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Chair. How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Up to how long? Twenty minutes, at the most, and then we'll take the vote.

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order. Excuse me, sir.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Go ahead, Monique.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. Has Dipika not spoken to this already? Were you referring to Ms. Hunter?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I think she started a little bit.

Miss Monique Taylor: You're allowed—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'll ask a question: How long did you speak to this before?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: So, Chair, I have two questions for you, actually. When I sub in for somebody else, do I count, in the sense—

Interjection.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: This is just a procedural question, because I might sub in for Mr. Colle one day and for, say, Laura Albanese another day. I'm just trying to ask the question. I know that I spoke last time, but I don't believe I spoke the entire 20 minutes. Those were my two questions, but I'm happy to have Mitzie speak, if that works for everybody as well.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Monique.

Miss Monique Taylor: Ms. Damerla—sorry, I don't want to butcher your last name; that's why I usually call you Dipika—has spoken extensively to this amendment, extensively, Chair. You weren't here at that time; there was someone else in your position. There cannot be anything further that she would have to say that would be relevant to this amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Anyone else want to speak to—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Yurek.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm just wondering if the government is going to filter through all 49 members to speak on this amendment or not. It's been over 60 days. The work should already be completed. They knew this amendment was going to pass one way or the other. It should be sitting at the MTO's office ready to be shipped over this way. They've had over 60 days. They know this amendment is going to pass, either the 30-day or 60-day. I know that they're bright people over there and would have been working ahead of time to have this ready, so let's just vote on this motion, get it passed and get the information to us as soon as possible.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. I'm trying to be fair, not as a Liberal, but as a Chair. There have been times in the House where all members of the Conservative party have spoken to a bill that the government has introduced.

Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to appeal to the Chair to play a very reasonable role. You can allow them to speak for 20 minutes each, if that's what you want, given that they've spoken in December and they've spoken again in this session. So you can allot the 20-minute time, or you can simply say, "I'm listening to their speeches," as we did with Mr. Colle, who said nothing about the amendment that speaks to my main motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): No, I think he did.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I mean, I appreciate the fact that he speaks about what Metrolinx does, which has nothing to do with the relevancy of the motion. There are certain staff that deal with these things. They have a statutory obligation to respond to committees; that's their duty. We have a job to do as well, and we're making a request that has nothing to do with how well the workers are working, how complex the issues are or how complex the relief line will be in terms of digging from Broadview all the way down below the water table—that's something that will come. This has nothing to do with the motion. The motion simply makes a request that, in my view, is utterly simple. They've had two months to deal with this, because committee members speak to their whip and their whip speaks to the minister. They let them know what these motions are, so they're already familiar with what the motion is. They probably have the request all ready to go.

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It is clear that the government doesn't want this to be dealt with, and so they are deliberately stalling. So my appeal to you is to listen to whatever remarks they're making to see how reasonable they are and how connected they are to the motion. We leave that to you.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. I think Mr. Colle was on point because he did state the reasons why he wanted to extend it from 30 days to 60 days, and that's attached in the amendment. So I'm going to allow Ms. Hunter to speak, but there will be a 20-minute time limit.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Chair. I believe that it is important that all members have the opportunity to speak to the bill. That is why we are here. We represent our constituents as it relates to the bills that are on the floor. Proper time for debate is important. Despite being at the last two meetings, I really have not had an opportunity to speak to the amendment on the floor—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Ms. Hunter, I'm just going to interrupt you for one second. As you speak, I think you should stick to the amendment.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Certainly, Chair. That's what my point is. It's that I have not had an opportunity, in any significant way, to speak to the amendment on the floor. I

think it's very important that we give all members the privilege of doing that.

Specific to the request—and it is a very simple request that has been made, moving the requirements from 30 days to 60 days so that the ministry and the team at Metrolinx have an opportunity to put the information together. But I also think that the proper definition of what this request is in terms of the documents—it is also important that we give that clarity in our direction and in our request so that the information that comes back to us is useful information and that it is applicable to the work of this committee.

We also know that we're asking them for searchability and for a format that perhaps will require some acquisition of software or in some way some further analysis, even seeking legal counsel in terms of the information that is assembled and disclosed to this committee. We have to ensure that we protect the integrity of the relationships that the organization or agency has all the way through. We are asking for information as it relates to market studies and to the work that is being done.

So I think that careful assessment of the legal requirements—seeking counsel is also important to be done. It is something where we want to ensure that there is due diligence. And as it relates to the length of time to be able to do that, Chair, 60 days is reasonable.

And you're right: We did put forward this amendment and it was a simple request. So why not move forward with that so that we can ensure that the information that comes back to us has usability, that it has the ability to be presented in a format that is helpful to the committee and to the work that we are doing here.

My colleague talked about the scope, the scale and the complexity of the work that this agency is doing on behalf of the ministry. That is very relevant. It is very complex, detailed and technical work. It is work that is important to all citizens in the region. So when we are asking the staff to take time away to put together and to assemble these documents, it has to be with purpose and with an intent to make improvements to the system, and I think that that is a very relevant part of the debate, of the consideration. It's also directly related to how much time we are seeking; 60 days is a reasonable amount of time—and also specific to the volume of information that we're asking for, for the agency to put together as well.

If we were to look back on recent weeks, I would not presume that staff have begun to put these files together. We haven't provided clarity in terms of the direction, in terms of the scope of the request. Also, there have been some incidents that they have had to deal with that are extraordinary; you know, the ice storm just happened. That directly affected the work of this agency. So I think that it's not reasonable for us to assume, "Well, you know, they've already started this work," particularly when the motion specifically asked for "once it is passed." So I would certainly not presume that that is being undertaken—and that we do adjust to allow for the 60 days, as was put on the floor. It's a reasonable amount of time. It allows for proper due diligence in the assembling of these documents; procurement of the software, if

necessary, so that it is searchable and useful to the committee; as well as ensuring that these documents are indeed able to provide the necessary information.

You know what? I think that we have to certainly learn from the lessons of the past and from our experiences on other committees. It's not just about providing volumes of information. It's about providing specific information that satisfies the request of the committee.

So, Chair, giving the proper amount of time, the proper definition, is also important in terms of the type of information that we want. This motion is absolutely reasonable, considering that we have had extraordinary incidents that have occurred. We cannot assume that staff have already started this, and we want to ensure that they have the ability.

And the ministry—there is business that is constantly under way. It's a large portfolio; there are a number of projects, multiple projects, happening in multiple regions. That's not something that has been defined here. So I think that that definition is also important as well, so that we get the information that we need.

This is the first substantial request that is coming out of our committee for this particular ministry area, and I think that, given that, it should be a reasonable one, and we should give the correct amount of time. And I think this amendment is quite clear that these documents can be produced within 60 days. It's very reasonable, assuming that the motion passes, ensuring that this is responsive, that it is provided in an electronic and searchable PDF format. We don't know if that software is available. We don't know how these records are currently kept. So I think that giving just a reasonable amount of time is something that we can do as a committee, and I think it would reflect well.

At the end of the day, we want the work of this committee to improve the processes, improve the outcomes of the investments that we're making in our communities. That's something that, certainly, everyone would expect of us. We're not just asking for information for information's sake. We're asking for information that will be utilized, that will give insights into the work of the agency, and that also helps, at the end of the day, with our recommendations for improvement to the processes.

I think it's also safe to say that we want to be able to review these materials, and we should be making our own commitments to doing so once we've asked the agency to put all of the time and all of the effort into compiling this information so that it is something that we're able to provide in terms of feedback on any report that, at the end of the day, we make.

The amendment—I would support that amendment, as my colleagues have said. I think it is very reasonable to ask for the 60 days and to be able to provide the proper scope of the requests and give clarity to the agency. Thirty days is an irresponsible timeline, and we need to make those reasonable adjustments.

So, Chair, that's certainly what I want to add to the record. I appreciate you giving me the time to speak to this. I don't know if my colleague has anything further to add, but that's what I wanted to say in the record.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I think there's been enough debate now on this amendment, so I'll call the vote right now.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I'd like a 20-minute recess before the vote.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. If you call a 10-minute recess, we're going to be at 10:25.

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, go ahead, Ms. Taylor.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: Okay, go ahead.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): The Clerk has actually advised me. If she moves a recess that's 20

minutes long, the vote will take place first thing next meeting—I'm getting information from the Clerk, okay?

Miss Monique Taylor: Can I dispute the 20-minute request and allow it to—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): It's automatic.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: Just asking for clarification.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): You can talk to her later, but she's moved it. So—

Miss Monique Taylor: But I can dispute 20 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): —this committee is adjourned until next meeting.

The committee adjourned at 1013.

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