



No. 128A

N° 128A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Mardi 1^{er} décembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / *Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, long-term energy planning is essential to a clean, reliable and affordable energy future. Ontarians have been clear that they want to play a larger role in our government's long-term energy planning process. The government has listened and introduced the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015.

If passed, this legislation, as we've heard throughout debate, would ensure a consistent, transparent long-term planning process is followed. It would enshrine in law a requirement for extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and aboriginal groups in the development of energy plans, as is already standard practice, and amend the Green Energy Act, 2009, to introduce two new initiatives to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole conserve energy and water to manage costs. It would support increased competition and enhanced ratepayer value by empowering the IESO to undertake competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement when appropriate.

In 2010 and in 2013, our government developed long-term energy plans, also called LTEPs, to guide energy planning and advance energy policy initiatives. These LTEPs set out comprehensive direction for the energy sector and were developed through an extensive consultation process with consumers, stakeholders and aboriginal groups throughout the province.

The proposed legislation would enshrine this LTEP process to ensure that energy planning is done transparently and pragmatically and that LTEPs are developed consistent with the principles of cost-effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, community and aboriginal engagement, and an emphasis on conservation and demand management. This would replace the lengthy and cumbersome integrated power system planning process that is currently in place.

Just yesterday, during second reading debate, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane said, "I'm going to be the last speaker from our side, and hopefully this time the government will actually allow this bill to go through a real, true committee process...."

We allowed debate to continue when we reached 6.5 hours of debate on this bill so that more members would have an opportunity to present their views on the bill. The bill has now seen well over 10 hours of debate. According to my count, over half of the members of this Legislature have spoken to the bill. There has been considerable debate on this bill and we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. I agree with the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane that it's time that this bill be put to a vote for second reading and hopefully be referred to committee where the important work takes place.

In committee, members of all parties will hear from stakeholders that have an interest in this bill. Members of the public will be able to provide their important input on this bill. And in committee, members will have an opportunity to move amendments to strengthen the bill. At the same time, this House can move on to debate other substantive matters.

There are a number of pieces of important legislation that have already been introduced which the government would like to debate and move through the legislative process. I'll make some examples: Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act; Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act, a very important bill; and Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act.

We'd like to spend time debating some of the other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but we can't do that until Bill 135 is referred to committee for further debate. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I move that this question be put now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate hearing from the member and your justification. However, it's my opinion right now that this particular bill does require further debate, so I will not allow the closure motion at this point in time.

To the member: You still have the floor.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I will yield the floor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate the member's enthusiasm about closing off debate.

I want to quote the dean of the Legislature, the member for St. Catharines, Jim Bradley, who was elected in 1977. He'll soon be celebrating his 40th anniversary in the Legislature. On many occasions, I have quoted him when he has talked about the fact that closure motions choke off debate. I think one of the great things in our Westminster parliamentary systems is the fact that we have robust debate, that we have an opportunity to debate bills before this House. I happen to agree with the member for St. Catharines, the chair of caucus, Mr. Bradley, and I think more and more this government is governing by closure motion.

I really believe that in this environment—we saw yesterday a number of bills from all parties, private members' bills, go to committee and have some hearings. But on this bill, I think there are a number of members who, from our caucus at least, have not had the opportunity. In fact, the vast majority of our caucus members have yet to be on the record on Bill 135.

Given this government's misguided energy policies, given the fact that, for example, 80% of Ontarians don't support their misguided plan to sell Hydro One, I think it's appropriate, as an opposition party, that we're given—and I think I can speak on behalf of the other opposition party, the New Democrats, that we need to have this debate here today. We need to make sure that the concerns of our constituents get on the floor, especially when it comes to this government's energy policy.

I'm glad today that debate will continue, and I look forward to some of the other issues and matters being placed on the floor this morning.

0910

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's a pleasure to stand up and give my questions and comments. That's kind of an interesting twist today, Speaker. The member from York South–Weston has proposed that we close debate, and you've overruled that and allowed us to continue to debate. That is important, because I know there are many members in this House who still haven't had the opportunity to have their thoughts toward this bill put on the record. It's very important.

As we talk about this bill, it's about energy. That is a hot topic in Ontario. It is a hot topic in ridings all over Ontario. There was a town hall just recently that we had on Sunday, I believe it was, Sunday afternoon, and the number of people who attended was surprising; we're talking over 150 people. This government is selling off Hydro. We had the first tranche a little while ago, and people are still asking, "How can we stop the sale of Hydro?" They're not giving up. Debating Bill 135 is part

of that conversation on energy, and I think we need to continue that debate.

The member from York South–Weston also talked about transparency and being pragmatic. We believe in being transparent. Having full debate on bills is another avenue, another path to take to be transparent. It can happen on the government side: Their members could actually take their full time to debate this bill. That would be transparent. They would get their thoughts out to their community. Then on this side, us taking our time: When we have a 20-minute debate or a 10-minute debate, not sharing it, speed debating; we're taking that time to be transparent about what's happening in our ridings, what feedback we'd like to give this government and what we criticize about this bill so that we can all have that fulsome debate. Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair this morning, bright-eyed and—whatever the saying is.

I just wanted to add to the member from York South–Weston's comments this morning, or speech. I spoke yesterday, and I'm going to be around the same lines. We seem to be very repetitious. As we debate some legislation, we seem to sway, and I get that. We're all elected here, and we all have an opportunity to express what either our party or we ourselves want to put forward. That's great, but in some cases I think it's just for the sake of speaking and not adding anything to debate.

Speaker, you know and I know that it's important, once again, to express our opinion here. But it's also important to send pieces of legislation to committee, because that's when folks from outside of these four walls have an opportunity to come and talk to us as legislators about what's important to them and what's crucial, things that we need to address.

When we say we want to listen to our communities, we want to listen to Ontarians, that's a good place to be. I get calls from folks in my riding who express their opinions. But when it comes to the collective piece, I think it's also important that they talk to us across party lines on what's important. So I would hope that we send this stuff to committee and get that important work done so that we can move on instead of just being repetitious.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand and join the debate through questions and comments on Bill 135 because there's much to be said. I fear that this government is on a track. Trend after trend is showing that they're taking democracy away not only from us, as opposition, but the third party and all of Ontario. I hope people in this province realize the conundrum that's happening here, because this government has proven themselves to be incompetent. When they take democracy out of our hands, we see gaffes, if you will.

For instance, just last week, by regulation there was going to be a particular move with regard to a regulation

made through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. And then, within 24 hours, it was repealed. That's what happens when democracy is removed from debating an issue so that thoughtfulness can be added to this whole situation.

Bill 135 is taking the independence away, if you will, from IESO as well. We're losing the oversight that this government has proven time and again that they need. In terms of oversight, you know, it's interesting. We continuously say on this side of the House that the Liberal Party of today doesn't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. Because of that, they turn to the taxpayer time and again. The energy audit is just one example coming out of this bill we cannot agree with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from York South–Weston for final comments.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville, the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West and the member from Huron–Bruce for their comments.

I really hope that, at this point, we're going to hear new viewpoints, we're going to hear new opinions, we're going to hear new perspectives on this bill. I look forward to an interesting debate with new constructive criticism, new notions, new suggestions and new initiatives that can be added to this bill, because I don't look forward to, to put it as the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound often says, the same old. Democracy is about knowing when we have spoken enough and when we have nothing new to add. So I really look forward to all these new initiatives, these new notions, these new viewpoints and these opinions that will be coming from the continuation of this debate.

I think that it's important not only to hear ourselves; I think it's important to hear from the stakeholders who really have an interest in this bill. I think it's really important to hear from the public. We can only do that at committee. I think that's where the members have the opportunity to move amendments so we can really strengthen the legislation. So that, Mr. Speaker, is why I had suggested that after 10 hours, we could reflect on what is new to say, what is left to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I really appreciate the opportunity today to discuss Bill 135. Bill 135, however, I don't think can just be discussed in the context of what's before us in terms of this bill. I actually think we have to have a larger discussion in the province of Ontario with respect to our hydro system, grid capacity, the choices we make in order to supply that grid, and the choices that the government has made in terms of taking away and removing independence in the electricity sector and thereby, I believe, eroding the confidence that Ontarians have in our electricity system.

I'll give you one example before I start. It is the cancelled gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville. Those two cancelled gas plants were sited by the government.

When there was enough public outcry, they decided, in the middle of an election, to cancel those gas plants at the cost to the Ontario taxpayer and ratepayer of \$1.2 billion. As I used to say when I was the energy critic, Dalton McGuinty spent more money to win the 2011 election than Barack Obama did to become the leader of the free world.

I want to put that in context and I want to leave that out there for the time being because I think it's relevant in the sense that this has become a Liberal government that has used energy policy for its own electoral gain, and it has eroded, as I said earlier, the confidence of Ontarians. I look at, for example, Bill 135. It's doing something similar to what happened with the cancelled gas plants in that it will remove independence from the IESO, the independent electricity supply organization; I think I've got that right.

0920

The IESO has been—I think we've all known for quite some time—critical in the long-term planning of the province's energy supply. It has been critical in having an independent voice so that the decisions that are made are made in the best interests of Ontario ratepayers, not in the best interests of the Ontario Liberal government.

That is the crux of this bill and why we are so concerned with it, because the Liberal government views the energy sector in the province of Ontario as an extension of itself. That is not within the best interests of the province nor of the people that I represent from the city of Ottawa in Nepean–Carleton.

I would also like just to point out the fact that the long-term energy plan—or, as I'll refer to it, the LTEP—is something that the government has drafted from time to time and includes the IESO on, yet rarely ever follows through on any of its energy planning. I can talk about the mix, for one second, of energy in the province. When you look at, for example, the nuclear mix and also the gas mix—we've eliminated coal, and that's something that we're proud of on the Progressive Conservative side because that was done by our colleague, Elizabeth Witmer, when she was Minister of Energy, I believe. Of course, I have a seatmate who is a former Minister of Energy who also did a great deal of work and has a very proud legacy within this province of being in the best interests of the people.

I will say this to my dear friend and my wonderful colleague from Simcoe–Grey, who is also the House leader: He was in charge of our electricity supply on 9/11. When that was hitting North America and when there were dangers south of the border, he was the person who had the decision-making authority to keep our nuclear facilities in this province safe. For that, I think we owe him a debt of gratitude. I want to say thank you to him.

But let's get back to the long-term planning of the energy supply in this province. This bill, Bill 135, and the cancelled gas plants that the Liberals have brought in and the fact that they brought in wind power, which is very costly and driving up hydro rates across the province—I know, for example, the Speaker has a red-light district in

his constituency. Red light in his constituency is not the same as in Amsterdam; the red light district in Leamington is because there are so many wind turbines that at night, all you see are red flashing lights. That's what the Speaker has to contend with every day because of this Liberal government. Now I see that Justin Trudeau, boy wonder, is going to expand this disaster right across the country. God help the other provinces who have not had to be part of this.

In the moments I have left, I want to touch on something else before I expand a little bit more on the IESO. What I want to talk about are these mandatory energy audits for homes. In 2009, my colleague John Yakabuski, who was then our energy critic and who is now our energy critic today, fought on the floor of this assembly and demanded that these energy audits be removed from the Green Energy Act, and he was successful. He was successful because it was the will of the people of the province who spoke up and said, "We can't afford this. This isn't something that we think is necessary." The people of this province agreed with him. Therefore, he pressured the Liberals to eliminate these mandatory home audits.

Here we see the Liberal government, years later—that bill was in 2009; we're now in 2015. The government is now engaging in this again. That, to me, speaks to the lack of ability that this government has with respect to energy. I also note that with Bill 135, we are again eroding the independence in the electricity system to benefit this Liberal government.

What happens when the government of the day has more influence in the electricity sector than it should? When I say "than it should," I simply mean that there is not an energy expert over there. In fact, I believe that the only person in this entire assembly who has actually worked in one of Ontario's nuclear facilities is Bill Walker, who is the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and who sits on the opposition benches. He has probably more knowledge on the energy file than all of the other members put together over there because he has worked on the front lines.

But I digress, because again, it brings us back to Bill 135, and the fact that Bill 135 erodes that independence and expert advice from the IESO to give more power and more control to the ministry, and, as a result of it being in the ministry, more control for the minister, who is not a trained scientist, nor should he be. I just make that point because we in Ontario require independent experts to run our energy system.

Now, what I find interesting—and my colleagues, I think, will agree—is that we just ran a federal election campaign, and we watched as young Justin Trudeau criss-crossed the country talking about Stephen Harper muzzling scientists. Well, if you want to see the reality and who wants to muzzle people in this country, it is this Liberal government, which has consistently muzzled the public by refusing to take bills through committee and through travel. They have consistently shut down debate in this assembly. I dare say that if we decided to do a

comparison or an analysis, we would find this government shuts down legislation far more than any other government in the country.

Finally, if you want to talk about muzzling experts, you look no further than this bill, because this bill, Bill 135—the proper name of this bill is the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, which will revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term planning. This bill is not going to muzzle scientists; it's actually just going to erode any independence. It is going to erode any expert advice and independent planning in our energy sector in the province of Ontario.

By the way, we have the highest energy rates in all of North America, and I don't blame anyone but the Liberal Party of Ontario for that. That is their fault, and it is only going to get worse if Bill 135 passes without amendment.

I want to congratulate our critic John Yakabuski from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his long service here as our energy critic, now and in 2009, when he fought the home energy audits in the first place. I want to congratulate my seatmate, the former Minister of Energy, who worked so hard and tirelessly in order to keep our facilities secure during terrorist attacks just south of our border. And I want to thank all members for the opportunity to be part of this debate here, to engage in what I believe is a very fundamental issue for legislators here at Queen's Park, and one that we must continue to discuss.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm also pleased to join the debate. I think it's important to point out that what the government is doing with Bill 135 is they're removing the authority of the OEB in terms of their planning and approval for planning of electricity and electricity delivery in this province. They are removing their authority when it comes to planning and when it comes to approval.

However, the government will claim that when they sell off Hydro One and it becomes privatized, the OEB will be able to protect the consumer. In this bill, they're eroding the powers of the OEB. You can't have it both ways. On one hand, the government is saying, "Trust the OEB. We trust the OEB to ensure that the consumers are protected," but "We're going to continually remove the authority of the OEB. We're going to remove the powers of the OEB. We're going to weaken them." How, then, can the government say that the public will be protected by this organization, which ostensibly does have the hallmarks of accountability—it does provide some mechanisms for transparency, and it does provide some ability for oversight, but how can the government claim that the OEB will provide that oversight when they are actually eroding its power in this bill?

In addition, this bill is a continuing trend of the erosion of the OEB. This is not something that is beginning with Bill 135. With the sale of Hydro One, the government hasn't even submitted that privatization scheme to the OEB for independent review, for independent analysis. The government hasn't done that. This is just a con-

tinuation of a trend of the government continuing to remove powers from the OEB, to weaken the OEB, to take away an independent mechanism for planning electricity in a manner which is based on evidence and, instead, resulting in something that is going to put Ontario into a worse position.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm going to be brief. We want to continue debate, and in the last half hour that I've been here, Speaker, I haven't heard anything new, so I really, really recommend that we move this on and let's get it to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm confused, Speaker. He said we want to continue debate but then he said we want to get it to committee. Well, he's going to have to make up his mind.

I was glad to have the opportunity to be here this morning and listen to the member from Nepean–Carleton take part in this debate, this debate that is the epitome of practising democracy, giving us the opportunity to speak. I really appreciated her remarks, especially the ones about the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, of course, because I'm always waiting for those complimentary remarks from the members from the other side. I'm still waiting, but folks, we are in the Christmas season now. If you want to be charitable, I'm listening. I'm listening, because I always have good things to say about the folks on the other side.

But what I don't have good things to say about is how, when they stand in their place—I expect when the debate shifts over to the other side, we're going to hear the sound, the swoosh. We're going to hear the swoosh one more time—

Interjection: The guillotine.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —where the guillotine will drop and they will move closure on this bill.

This is an important piece of legislation. This fundamentally changes how we operate at the IESO and OEB, two supposedly independent agencies that are going to have so many of their powers taken away directly—directly—by the architects of the electricity and energy disaster we are currently suffering from in this province.

So, should I feel comfortable? No, I don't feel comfortable. Should the people of Ontario feel comfortable that this government is going to usurp the independence of the IESO and the OEB in this piece of legislation? I say nay, not so, sir. Nay, not so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm thinking of our young pages this morning. When they go back to school, they're going to tell their teachers and their classmates about how well-educated they were at the provincial Parliament, because all the bills were time-allocated. “What an education we had. All they talked about was time allocation.”

And here we are again, with the Liberals saying, “You don't trust us. You guys have said long enough about what you believe, and we believe differently.” Well, the fact of the matter is, Speaker, that 80% of the people in Ontario—by the Liberals' own polling numbers; they can't refute them—are opposed to the sell-off of Hydro One. Nearly 200 of Ontario's 444 municipal councils have debated and voted motions opposed to the government's selling Hydro One.

So when the opposition parties stand up and say, “You guys aren't listening. You don't get it. You're forcing something on the people of Ontario that they don't want,” they say, “Gosh, we better shut down debate, because what if more people hear what the opposition is saying? Those polling numbers will go higher. We can't go back to our ridings over the Christmas break and say, ‘Oh, no, I forgot to tell you I was going to sell Hydro One when I asked for your vote. Please forgive me.’”

They're not going to be forgiven, Speaker. The people in Ontario don't want this. The people in Ontario want to hear the opposition parties tell them what's wrong with the bills that the government is bringing forward. When we try to do that, they say, “Ah, time out. We're going to shut down debate.” That isn't right, Speaker. It isn't the democratic way and it shouldn't be tolerated in Ontario's provincial Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Nepean–Carleton for final comments.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to say thank you to my colleagues from Windsor West, from Bramalea–Gore–Malton—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor–Tecumseh.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Windsor–Tecumseh; I apologize—from Northumberland–Quinte West, and of course from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I think I've made my views on Bill 135 abundantly clear, so I'd like to actually respond to some of the comments that were made, if you'll indulge me, Speaker.

I want to first start with my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh. He talked about our pages, and he talked about the bills that we discuss and that they ought to be learning about, particularly this one here. I think it's important that they understand the energy mix and supply and how it's run in the province of Ontario.

But he made an even more valid point than just that. He said that we are shutting down debate quite a bit here. I think it's actually been unprecedented. I credit him with bringing this to the floor of the assembly, because I think it's important that we discuss all of the matters that are relevant to the people of the province.

My colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West: I do take umbrage with your suggestion that we should just move bills on because the Conservatives say the same thing and the NDP says the same thing. I want to say this to you, and I say this as somebody who has been on the opposition side for the past decade; this is very important and please do not forget it: The rules are in place to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority. In the sense of this assembly, the rules are in place to pro-

tect people on this side of the aisle, whether they are Progressive Conservatives or New Democrats, so that we can stand in our place and, despite the decisions you may make, we can go home each weekend and let our constituents know that we have had our say and we are defending them. The rules are in place to allow us that. You are continually breaking the rules by enforcing closure. That is not fair. That is not the spirit of this place.

We want to continue to debate this bill. We want to continue to debate other issues like the sale of Hydro One, and you have consistently shut us down.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: Just to point out that I think the member from Nepean–Carleton reaffirmed the fact that she has nothing to say about Bill 135. She talked about how sad she is that her great leader was defeated in the federal election and she's so upset. That's what she talked about. She didn't talk about Bill 135—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If the member opposite is going to quote me, perhaps he should actually read my speech and refer directly to it instead of making up false—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I would ask the member to withdraw the last comment.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Sure, I would withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I don't see that as a point of order.

Back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: As I was saying, if there were relevant points to be made about Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, it would be worthwhile to hear, but when you just rattle on about how upset you are about the fact the people of Canada spoke loudly and clearly that they wanted a new government, that's not what this bill is about.

I think she proved the point, the member for Nepean–Carleton. We have had over 11 hours of debate; they have nothing else to say. We should now do what is the right thing and hear from the people who will be before committee, where there will be more debate, more analysis, and hear from the public to have their say on this important piece of legislation. An important part of this Legislature is the committee work. This bill should go to committee, where we bring in the experts and the stakeholders to have their say, and we have a debate that will continue there.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, after 11 hours, I put the question.

0940

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for the valid points he has made. Again, earlier,

my ruling was that I wanted to allow debate to continue. I recognize the number of hours that we've had in terms of debate, but I also recognize and look at the number of members who have had an opportunity to debate. Therefore, I am not going to allow closure of debate on this particular bill at this point in time.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, you still have time left on the clock if you care to continue.

Mr. Mike Colle: No. I wish to move this to committee where we can hear from the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to once again talk about Bill 135. My concern, however, is that we have just listened to about two minutes from the government and they didn't discuss the bill whatsoever. All they talked about was shutting down debate on removing the independence from the IESO. That's what this government just did.

They didn't talk about any of the content of the bill. They only talked about shutting down debate. That, I think, speaks volumes about what they're doing here in terms of eroding the independence. If the former minister—and I remind him of the reason he left government—would like to talk about why we have such a big concern here, it is because every time this government has an energy bill before this assembly, it ends up being catastrophic to the people of Ontario.

When this government talks about long-term energy planning, which is, by the way, in the title of the bill, I think that we deserve to have an opportunity to discuss the long-term energy plan. But unfortunately, the government wants to continually shut that down. That's all he spoke about. If he has nothing to say, perhaps he should have given some extra time to other members of this assembly who are concerned about the energy supply, the energy mix, the energy planning in this province, and who are concerned that the independence of the IESO is being eroded. I think that's necessary and I think that's important for future speakers to this bill.

Now, Speaker, I want to congratulate you as somebody who has allowed this debate to continue. As I've said here, and I believe that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh had mentioned, it's getting very frustrating here. We in the opposition are being vilified by the government for wanting to take the views of our constituents to the floor of this assembly. If we can't discuss that here without the government and the minister, and the former minister in particular, talking about the need for closure, then I don't know why we're still here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again, it's always a pleasure to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin. It's a little frustrating listening to where this discussion is going this morning. I know I was looking forward to bringing the concerns and the views of the vast people across Algoma–Manitoulin

who are frustrated with some of the directions in which this government is taking our province.

Unfortunately, what we're seeing here again this morning is a closure. They're telling us, "Wait a second. Before we proceed with this, we don't agree with the views of Ontarians at this point in time." Mind you, as some of my colleagues indicated earlier, well over 85% of the province's individuals are against the direction this government is taking with the sell-off of Hydro One. Well over 180 municipalities have also done the same.

Having said all that, we're still going to listen to this government say, "Listen, we don't agree with what is going on. We're tired of hearing the opposition. We want to progress and move this into committee, so we're going to shut down debate." That's not right, because I have a lot of constituents who have a lot to offer in this debate. I have a lot of people who have approached me regularly, in the malls, at the Tim Hortons—we just had another event where a colleague of mine was up in Elliot Lake for "stop the sale of Hydro One," where we had a good portion of Elliot Lake people who were present.

I have received over 1,800 petitions where individuals were totally opposed to the direction this government is taking our province, and we're telling them, "Wait a second. We're going to shut down debate. Your views don't matter." That is absolutely wrong. That is undemocratic and that is not what this Legislature is all about. Debate should continue on and we should have a full, wholesome debate about what this particular bill is all about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm trying to earn my pay today, Speaker, as you can tell.

Yes, debate is important. Nobody would ever question that debate is important. But at the end of the debate, we should get some value from the debate, and I'm not so sure that's what I'm hearing today. We heard yesterday that we're prepared to move on. Well, today is a different story, Speaker. So I'm disappointed in that piece.

I respect views from the other side, Speaker; I want to make it very, very clear. But all that I'm saying is that I think we're spending this morning basically going around in circles. Personally, it's my opinion that time could be better used in committee to kind of smooth out the edges, if you may, Speaker, because frankly, yes, we could get upset about the federal election and the Newfoundland election of yesterday. We could talk about those things, Speaker, but the reality of the day is we want to be—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: What happened?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: What happened? Oh, I think it's all Liberal governments from Ontario east, Minister. That kind of explains it.

Speaker, I really feel that we need to move on. There's debate in third reading, if you feel very, very strongly to revisit some things after the committee hearings. I really would encourage my fellow members from all sides of the House: Let's move on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I certainly am pleased to stand because I feel, as an opposition member, that I need to react to some of the comments that were being made.

It's interesting. The government has put forward that there are no new ideas coming forward. To that I say, shame on them. Specifically around the Green Energy Act, we have put forward, time and again, ideas on how to make life a little bit easier for Ontarians, whether it's their energy bills that are skyrocketing because of the unaffordable subsidies that are being paid out primarily to proponents of wind who tend to—if you follow the dotted line—be friends with the Liberal Party, or it is the ridiculousness about the energy audits.

Seniors who may have to sell their homes so that they have enough money in their bank account to pay for their long-term care are going to be hit with another bill. Think of the farmhouses; think of the seniors who have been in their homes for 20 or 30 years. Are they going to be able to afford new windows, a new furnace—the list goes on and on—when all they really should be caring about, because they have paved the way for us, is a comfortable retirement and knowing that they have the funds to pay for the care that they deserve and need in their senior years? This government has totally lost touch with Ontarians.

The other thing is that they say, "Let's get this bill into committee so the public is heard." Speaker, I would suggest to you that the public needs to be heard before legislation is ever developed. Yesterday I was embarrassed to sit across from this government because, when we were addressing Bill 122 in the general government committee, time and again, stakeholders were saying, "We only heard about this a week and a half ago."

Speaker, this government has gone off the rails and they're taking the province with them. It's unacceptable and it needs to stop.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for final comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'll be brief again. The debate process continues. We should invite members of our constituency to come to committee. We should debate it at committee, and there's also third reading debate. By the way, Mr. Speaker, we had zero third reading debate time when the Harris government was in power—no third reading debate. We're offering third reading debate also.

So let's hear from the people and send it to committee where the work will be done with the experts and the members of the public. Let's move it to committee, and then on to third reading debate, hopefully.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Chiarelli has moved second reading of Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will repeat for clarification purposes: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

WEARING OF FOOTBALL JERSEY

Hon. Michael Gravelle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that the Premier be permitted to wear an Edmonton Eskimos jersey and provide a brief statement regarding the Grey Cup before question period today, Tuesday, December 1, 2015.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Agreed? Agreed.

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR
COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE
INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Mr. McMeekin moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for leadoff.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Lou Rinaldi—a very hard-working fellow; I'm very proud of Lou. He has been carrying a lot of the load over in municipal affairs and housing with some considerable distinction, and I want that said for the record.

I rise to begin third reading debate on the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015. I'm very proud of Bill 73. During second reading, I discussed how land use planning in Ontario is very much like a large jigsaw puzzle. When my daughters were younger, we used to spend hours together at the cottage working on jigsaw puzzles. They used to tease me by hiding pieces of the puzzle. They wouldn't admit that they had set them aside, and suddenly they would appear. As a family, our puzzle strategy was to start by establishing the outside frame, then filling in from there.

In many ways, it's a great analogy to describe what Bill 73 represents. If passed, Bill 73 would better ensure that Ontario's continued and ongoing growth is managed properly, and it would allow municipalities to recover more development charges for transit services. For

example, Waterloo, Ottawa, and York region combined could see increases in transit funding from development charges that are well over \$100 million per year. Needless to say, this would greatly help municipalities manage their growth more effectively.

Of course, you can't force a puzzle piece into a spot where it doesn't fit, so we have heard hours of debate by members of all parties so as to make some changes. At the committee, we heard from people and organizations from across Ontario on our proposed changes, and we listened. After hearing these views and perspectives, our government brought forward a number of amendments to the bill. These amendments make it stronger, more flexible and reflective of the diversity of our communities.

Our government introduced an amendment, for example, that would allow the public and stakeholders to have more time to review background studies on development charges. This would make the development charges system more transparent than it currently is.

We also heard that some municipalities, mostly smaller municipalities, are not supportive of the proposed two-year freeze on amendments to an official plan or zoning bylaw. So we brought forward a change that would authorize councils, and only councils, to permit by resolution applications to be made during their respective time-out periods.

The committee has also accepted amendments that would strengthen the proposed bill even further. I want to acknowledge some other things that we heard at committee. I've heard some say that we should have included inclusionary zoning. In particular, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and the member from Parkdale–High Park for their continued advocacy on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that planning and housing are linked and that we can't complete this puzzle without making sure that we have a healthy supply of affordable housing in Ontario. We believe that issues related to affordable housing, including inclusionary zoning, would be best considered through the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy that we are currently updating—and working very hard at updating, by the way. I think that when members of the House see it, they'll be pleased with the progress that we've made.

Ontario's growth is a complex puzzle with many, many pieces. Passing Bill 73 is a crucial part of making sure that this puzzle comes together. We've got to continue to fill in the inside pieces through the Honourable David Crombie's upcoming report on the coordinated review and greenbelt growth plans, through our Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and through the pending review of the Ontario Municipal Board, which is very, very important.

With that said, I'd like to turn it over to my esteemed friend, Mr. Rinaldi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to thank the minister for allowing me the opportunity to work with him to make

sure that we come up with a piece of legislation that is going to make a difference for Ontarians.

Preserving our lands and building on rural and agricultural success is vital as the province grows. The proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, if passed, would help our smaller communities and rural municipalities grow and thrive. This means that municipalities would be able to tailor their public engagement policies to meet their communities' needs. If Bill 73 is passed, there would be more opportunities for public input into the planning process.

Now, we have heard lots of feedback on the planning rules. This proposed legislation would provide for citizen representatives to be included in municipal planning advisory committees. Northern and lower-tier municipalities would continue to have these committees at their discretion.

Sustainable growth means considering the views of all Ontarians. Municipalities would need to set out in their official plans how and when the public would be consulted, and explain how the input received by councils affected their planning decisions.

We want to help ensure a more predictable planning system by helping all municipalities engage the public of Ontario. This means more control over official plans will remain at the local level.

1000

We know that official plan reviews take time and resources. This is especially true in smaller communities, which have lower growth pressures and therefore require less frequent changes to planning documents compared to large urban centres. That's why, if Bill 73 is passed, new official plans would only need to be reviewed every 10 years instead of the current five-year cycle. Being a former mayor of one of these small municipalities, this is welcome news.

The act will also allow for things to be worked out locally before being sent to the Ontario Municipal Board. We will do this by providing an option for additional time to resolve issues involving municipal planning documents. Municipalities will be allowed the time to engage in alternative dispute resolution, and the ability to appeal some items would be removed. This form of local control is particularly important to smaller communities. We are ensuring that the planning system is streamlined to enable efficient, stable growth in Ontario. The community will be better able to set out their vision for development, and it provides greater certainty about the form and shape of development.

Being smart about how we manage growth is the best way we can ensure that Ontario communities of all sizes and from all regions are sustainable. Mr. Speaker, I join Minister McMeekin in supporting Bill 73, and I urge all members to vote for the passage of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Nepean—

or from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You got it, Speaker. Thank you very much.

It's just a wonderful opportunity to speak to Bill 73 this morning, which the government—the minister and the PA—just spoke to very briefly. I didn't hear a whole lot about the bill through their address, but then again, they don't speak much about their legislation. They have a different philosophy: table it, ram it through, deal with the consequences. But, unfortunately, it's the people of Ontario who always have to deal with the consequences of legislation that is rammed through without being properly debated or thought through.

I know I've used this cliché in the House before, but I like to do it because my son is an apprentice carpenter. They have a rule: Measure twice, cut once. You understand it because, if you cut that two-by-four too short, it's not going to work. It's just not going to work. But if you measure it a couple of times to be sure of the exact size, and you make that cut, it's going to be a custom fit, and you're going to be able to continue on with your work. But if you take a piece of legislation, and you take shortcuts, and you mess up—which is the habit of this government. They are probably the leading government in history when it comes to messing up. They're leading; in fact, they would win an Olympic gold medal for messing up, if there was one to be given out.

I want to talk about the land transfer tax. We're going to have a chance to talk about that on Thursday afternoon when my colleague from Leeds–Grenville brings his motion. This is a municipal issue, and I say to the minister, don't—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I really enjoy and appreciate your enthusiasm, but I would ask that you direct your comments to the Chair as opposed to something that may be perceived as antagonistic towards the other side. So if you would direct your comments to me, I would appreciate it. Thank you. You had 15 seconds.

I will give him 15 seconds on the clock.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, I'll say to the minister, through you: Don't tax my dream and the dream of every young family in this province by instituting another tax on the sale of a home. That's wrong. Don't do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Oh, Speaker, why do I get the short straw? I've got to try and follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Sometimes life isn't fair, Speaker. How do you top anything that Mr. Yakabuski says, with the passion that he delivers his theatrical presentations in this Parliament? He is above and beyond. He is exceptional, I must say.

And Speaker, I must say, I thought you were the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek there for a minute this morning, bringing your own members to order in this House—doing a good job up there.

In reference to what we've heard so far this morning from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his parliamentary assistant, I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed being on the committee when this bill went through clause-by-clause hearing. It was a real eye-opener, I have to tell you that, because I thought that

when we listened to the delegations, we would actually listen to the delegations and put into the bill some of the great ideas that they brought forward. Well—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: And we did.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, you did, all right.

As I say, it was an eye-opener and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I heard the minister talk today about the fun he had putting puzzles together. Well, I was a bit puzzled at committee as to why we didn't do more and put more into it.

I am looking forward, very much, as we all are in the New Democratic caucus, to finally get something going on inclusionary zoning. The promise has been put out there. The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore is finally going to get his private member's bill passed, I hope, after we heard so many times—our member from Parkdale–High Park has tried five or six times. It hasn't happened yet. We can all work together. That's what this House is about.

Thank you for your time this morning, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am pleased to add a few comments to the speech by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his parliamentary assistant, the great member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

It's interesting; they both have a municipal background like myself. I would say to you that Bill 73, the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, proposes changes to the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, coming from the municipal world, the most important job that municipal councillors do is related to the Planning Act, and the most controversial item that municipal councils get themselves involved in is the Planning Act because it's probably one of the toughest pieces of legislation to write by the ministry—to encompass all the small towns, rural municipalities, upper-tier municipalities and the urban centres that we have across Ontario. You have to write a piece of legislation that is broad-based. Therefore, it's a forever-changing process, because municipalities see continuous growth. We see new technologies. We see all kinds of issues where municipalities don't want to grow and they want to protect their green spaces.

If you look at this act, it provides some more opportunities for those municipalities to make some good decisions. Is it perfect? Probably not, because it's very difficult to capture every little town and municipality that we have in this province. But I think the minister has done a fine job by consulting the community extensively over a long period of time and brought back a piece of legislation that updates the process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm happy to provide a couple of minutes of comment on Bill 73. It's nice that we've heard from so many members this morning who have had previous municipal government experience. I look forward to comments, when this bill gets called again, from our very experienced member for Oxford, who is our critic.

I think the member previous from Scarborough–Rouge River really made a good point, the fact that it is difficult. This bill will be supported by some in the municipal sector; it will be opposed by some. I know I still have a number of concerns from this particular ministry.

As was mentioned by my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I've got a motion here on Thursday in private members' business that would put a stop to an imposition of any new municipal land transfer taxes, which I believe would be devastating in our municipalities. I believe it would pit municipality against municipality. I hope that either the minister or the parliamentary assistant would affirm that the government will support my motion on Thursday so that we can give a clear message to our municipal partners that this isn't a part of any future Municipal Act changes.

I would also just like to put on the record my concern that was expressed in the budget about the eastern Ontario growth plan that this government is proposing. I have serious and grave concerns about this government trying to change the way that planning is dealt with in eastern Ontario.

Since 2006, my riding of Leeds–Grenville has had very slow growth except for municipalities like North Grenville, which borders on the city of Ottawa. I would be very concerned if the government would make moves that would restrict growth in Leeds–Grenville. My municipalities are open for business and I want to keep it that way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for final comments.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank all those honourable members who took a couple of minutes to reflect on the importance of this legislation—legislation that has been significantly forged in the fires of consultation. We've spoken to everybody about this and it has had extensive additional review in the committee. I realize not everybody got everything they may have wanted and there are still some things out there that need to happen. Excellence is always the enemy of the good, I suppose.

This is good legislation. This is going to make a difference in municipalities. AMO likes it. We even made several of the changes AMO wanted made to ensure that they liked it. It speaks to the interests of small municipalities and larger municipalities, and it does so in a way that empowers citizens—who are often justifiably cynical about any government, and sometimes particularly municipal government—to be transformed into an engaged citizenry that will give guidance to their municipalities. When they take that guidance, and that's reflected through official plans, the municipalities will be protected from those inappropriate interventions by other stakeholders, perhaps in the development industry. I think that's good. I'm told by them that development stakeholders like this because it provides some stability.

We'll move forward with some of the other issues that have been raised and we'll do those other issues—we'll do them right, okay? I promise you that.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members for a good debate this morning.

Since it is now close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

GREY CUP LA COUPE GREY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yesterday in Paris, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley told me that, really, to honour our wager, all I really needed to say is that Alberta is awesome, Edmonton is awesome and that they have an awesome football team. She might have said that they have an awesome Premier, but I thought that was a bit of a digression. I'm going to honour our wager in this way.

Of course, the hopes that we Ontarians held for a fairy tale ending to the second season of our beloved Ottawa Redblacks were dashed on Sunday night in Winnipeg. Both teams brought their A game but Edmonton prevailed. And so I wear this Edmonton jersey, happily, to salute the courageous efforts of our beloved Redblacks, who all season long inspired us and who took to the field for Sunday's big match with such promise, and to salute the perseverance of the Redblacks' Edmonton foes, who, with characteristic prairie grit, came from behind to grind out the big win.

In honour of Edmonton's 14th Grey Cup win and in the spirit of all that unites us as Canadians, I've made a personal donation to an Alberta charity assisting with the settlement of Syrian refugees, and I made this on behalf of Premier Notley.

Au nom de la première ministre Notley, je félicite Edmonton, qui a remporté la Coupe Grey, en faisant un don personnel à un organisme de bienfaisance de l'Alberta qui aide à l'établissement de réfugiés syriens.

Fourteen Grey Cup wins is impressive and something for Edmonton to be very proud of. We here in Ontario's capital city would know, because Toronto has hoisted the Grey Cup 16 times. My point is that there's always next year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is my understanding, for clarity purposes for all members, that there was unanimous consent for the Premier to wear the jersey and that I would not have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort her out for doing so.

For the purposes of carrying on, it's now time for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a guest from Scarborough—Agincourt: Don Perry, who is the parent of page captain Aislin Perry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Today we have with us a number of students representing the Ontario Undergraduate Student

Alliance, and I'd just like to acknowledge them. We have Chris Fernlund from Trent Durham Student Association; Jessica Guarini from the Trent Durham Student Association; Antonio Sergi from the Brock University Students' Union; Kyle Rose from the Brock University Students' Union; Lindsee Perkins from Western University Students' Council; Sophie Helpard from Western University Students' Council; Stéphane Hamade from the Waterloo Federation of Students; Olivia Matthews from the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union; Tyler Lively from Queen's Alma Mater Society; and Armin Escher from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce two groups visiting us today at question period. From my great riding of Oakville, we've got the grade 8 students from Maple Grove Public School.

We're also joined today by some of my team from the Ministry of Labour. I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park, from the ministry, Tressa Alan, Alison Silveira, Laura Davidson and Catherine Virgo. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent for all members to be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbons for World AIDS Day. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Since the Auditor General's report about the winter road maintenance contracts, the government has done nothing but brag about buying new equipment to prop up the failed agreements. The Minister of Transportation said that they have supplied over 100 new pieces of equipment to clear the roads. Yet, yesterday, his press secretary said that the province never purchased any equipment for road maintenance contractors. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier clarify: Did the government pay for the sanders and the plows, and how many did the government pay for?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I've had the opportunity on a number of occasions over the last few months to speak here in the Legislature about this important topic. Of course, I believe the leader of that party would know

that when the auditor produced her report a number of months ago, she had eight recommendations regarding how we can improve the winter maintenance program that the ministry runs.

In addition to that, what I pointed out repeatedly in this House is that, prior to the auditor being called in by the standing committee to conduct her investigation, there were, over the course of two winter seasons prior to that, 105 pieces of equipment that were added to both northern and southern Ontario area maintenance contracts—105 pieces of equipment. For example, in the north that equipment helped with truck climbing and passing lanes, and in the south that equipment—50 or 55 pieces—helped with clearing ramps and shoulders quicker.

I look forward to the follow-up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier, because I can't seem to get an answer from the Minister of Transportation. On April 29, the minister tweeted "50: the number of additional winter maintenance vehicles added to southern Ontario's roads since 2012." Another tweet: "55: the number of additional winter maintenance vehicles added to northern Ontario's roads since 2012." A third tweet summed it up: "MTO has added more than 100 pieces of snow-clearing equipment since 2012...."

Where are those 105 pieces of equipment the minister claims MTO added? If the Ministry of Transportation, and therefore the taxpayers, paid for those specific pieces, why do we not own them? Why were they given away?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, it's a very, very—
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm waiting for silence so that I can hear the answer.

Please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, again, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition on this important topic. I'm going to try to be as clear as I possibly can. In winter 2012-13, the Ministry of Transportation, working our area maintenance contractors, added 55 pieces of equipment. In winter season 2013-14, we added another 50 pieces of equipment across the province of Ontario. And in the year since the Auditor General's report, we've added—I think it's in the neighbourhood of 37 plus 16, so another 53 pieces of equipment that we've added. So, in total, from winter 2012-13 until today, we've added 158 pieces of equipment across the province of Ontario.

Like all of the equipment that's deployed, both that which we've added since 2012 and that which existed with all of our area maintenance contractors—of course, we work with our contractors to make sure that equipment is out on the roads and highways of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: Straight from the Auditor General's report, the total cost to the ministry of additional units of equipment negotiated with the contractors was \$15 million a year. And again, I repeat, yesterday the government said that they never purchased a new piece of equipment.

This Liberal government has a history of not asking for receipts when they give away millions of dollars. Did the minister here do the same thing the Minister of Education did? Did the contractors give them receipts, pictures? Has he even seen the vehicles or did the minister just hand over millions of dollars? What did you do?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.
Minister.

1040

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, it's a little bit difficult for me to understand exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to get at here. Again, I'll be very clear. Going back over the last couple of years, we have now added cumulatively—both prior to the auditor's report and since—158 pieces of equipment.

What happens with the way that our contracts are structured is that we effectively pay our contractors for service. They are required to fulfill their equipment complement to provide that service, which means that we pay a contract price to the contractor and they, in turn, purchase or lease the equipment itself to satisfy what's required. There is nothing that should be confusing about this, but fundamentally, we are delivering—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark, come to order.

Do you have a wrap-up, please?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, Speaker, 158 new pieces of equipment across all of Ontario since winter 2012-13, which, working with our contractors, means that we'll continue to provide the winter maintenance program.

I'm happy to have a conversation with the leader offline if he wants a better understanding of why he's confused about this topic.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier, since the Minister of Transportation won't answer a simple question: The Auditor General was able to show us that the government paid \$1.7 million to buy 13 pieces of equipment for the lowest bidder on a \$700,000 contract.

We've now learned that four similar road maintenance contracts have failed, so the government spins this by denying they bought any new equipment. But then they say they gave money to these companies to buy new plows. It wasn't a loan, grant or subsidy; it was simply trying to hide the government's failures.

Mr. Speaker, will the government ask to be repaid for the equipment or will the equipment be returned? You

can't simply give the money away and see no proof for it. What will the government do?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Transportation will want to, once more, answer the detailed question that the Leader of the Opposition is asking. But at the base of this question should be a concern about keeping our roads in Ontario the safest in North America, which is what they are. Year after year—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, Mr. Speaker, year after year, our roads are among the safest in North America, at the top or first or second. The standards that we have in place are the highest possible. We work—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We work with the contractors, and I would think the Leader of the Opposition would want to see new equipment where it's necessary, would want to see that equipment deployed, in order to keep those high standards in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: In 2009 the Liberal government decided to switch the procurement process. Regardless of whether they had the equipment to do the job, the lowest bidder got the deal. Then the government would bail them out if they didn't have equipment. As a direct result of this switch, Ontarians' lives were put at risk. That's what this is about. In an effort to cover their tracks, the Liberals handed out millions of dollars' worth of vehicles.

Will the Liberals switch back to the PC model of contracting winter road maintenance before they have to bail out another company with taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The Premier, in her answer just a second ago, cited a statistic that's very important for everybody to remember. Over the last 13 years, Ontario's roads and highways have ranked first or second across all North American jurisdictions for safety.

Prior to the Auditor General coming in to do her investigation, the Ministry of Transportation had already embarked on adding equipment and improving the winter maintenance program. Since the auditor released her recommendations, all eight of them have been accepted by the ministry.

We continue to work with our contractors. We're adding equipment, we're improving service and we're giving people the service that they expect and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: We don't need a snow job from the Minister of Transportation. Under Progressive Conservative standards, road-clearing times were down to a little over two hours. When the

Liberals switched to "the lowest bidder wins the contracts," road-clearing times more than doubled. In fact, six of the 20 contract areas didn't even meet the generous and lenient provincial standards.

In typical fashion, this government tried to throw money at their problem, without a real solution. Well, I have a solution. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, why won't the government return to the PC procurement model that kept roads clear and Ontarians safe?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It is regrettable but I guess not surprising that the Leader of the Opposition would decide to spout off corny slogans and play a little bit of politics with an important issue.

What I've said consistently over the last number of months is that this Premier and this government, accepting all eight recommendations that were released by the auditor, are moving forward. We are deploying, in conjunction with our contractors, more equipment. We have more liquid and materials out there on our highways, and everybody is ready to take on the winter season that we find ourselves in right now.

Again, I would stress that over the last 13 years here in the province of Ontario, our roads and highways, through all seasons, have ranked first and second across North America for safety. It doesn't mean that our work ends; it means that we keep working hard with our contractors, with our municipal partners, with all communities to make sure we deliver highway maintenance—winter, fall, summer and spring—that the people of Ontario deserve.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier needs to come clean with Ontarians and tell them where the money from the sell-off of Hydro One is actually going. First, she said she's using that money for infrastructure; now, her fall economic statement says the government is using that money for a one-time improvement in the deficit numbers. Will the Premier and her government be breaking the promise that they made to Ontarians to build transit, just so they can balance the budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party knows full well that the money that we will realize by broadening the ownership of Hydro One is being invested in transportation infrastructure. She knows that.

She knows that the projects that are being built around the province are critical to the communities in this province and she knows that there is more that needs to be done, whether it's roads, whether it's bridges in our northern and rural communities, whether it's waste water systems or whether it is transit projects.

I will say to the leader of the third party that I would have thought, given that the Paris conference is going on right now and there's a global conversation about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that she would have been supportive of the investment in transit infrastructure that will help us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions

and will help us to develop innovative technology that we can export to the world so that we can work to save this planet.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, selling Hydro One is short-sighted. It doesn't build transit; it leaves people paying more and it puts the brakes on job creation in this province.

The fall economic statement says, "The province's total revenue projection ... is \$1.2 billion higher than the 2015 budget forecast. This increase largely reflects ... the recent Hydro One initial public offering." But then the minister stood up in this Legislature and said, "We are not relying on assets in order to manage our deficit." Well, which is it?

My question is simple. When this government continues to say one thing and do the other, how can Ontarians trust what they're saying about the sell-off of Hydro One?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have been very clear that we were broadening the ownership of Hydro One as part of a plan to have the revenue to be able to invest in infrastructure. We've been very clear about that. We ran on it and it was part of our budget.

We are now implementing that plan and we have been very, very clear that we understand the need for investment in infrastructure across this province—quite frankly, the need for investment in infrastructure across the country, but Ontario has put forward a plan that will allow us to do our part.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the leader of the third party wants to encourage people to make assumptions about hydro rates, about electricity rates, that simply are not the case. The fact is that the Ontario Energy Board, which sets rates now, will set rates after the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One. She knows that, Mr. Speaker, and she knows we need those investments in infrastructure.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Whether it's the more than half a billion dollars in debt retirement charges that didn't retire debt but instead just disappeared, or Hydro One dollars that the Liberals are counting once for infrastructure and a second time against the debt, I can't blame Ontarians for losing trust that this government has their best interests at heart.

Will the Premier and her government take a step towards rebuilding the trust of Ontarians and commit to not sell any more of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I think the fact that the Trillium Trust exists, that the funds from the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One will go into the Trillium Trust and that that money will be invested in

infrastructure is exactly the kind of transparency that we promised to the people of Ontario, and that we are delivering.

But there are people in every community in this province, not just the municipal leaders, not just the elected officials, but the people living in communities, who know that they need investment in the infrastructure in their communities. They know that the roads, the bridges and the transit in their communities are inadequate. They know that in their municipalities they do not necessarily have the resources to make those investments.

So they look to the provincial government and they look to the federal government to work with their municipal leaders to make those investments. That's what we're doing. That kind of infrastructure investment has the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, when we talk about transit, and providing economic development in communities.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Liberals insist that selling off Hydro One will painlessly pay for transit, but the independent FAO says it won't raise the money that the Liberals insist it will. The FAO says that it will leave this province in worse shape than it is today, losing money that could be invested in health care, education and all kinds of other important programs. Can this Premier explain why this government thinks that the FAO is wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Finance is going to want to comment on that report. But the leader of the third party knows full well that the FAO said we were on track to reduce our deficit, to eliminate our deficit, and in fact, didn't take into account the revenues from the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One.

We are on track to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. We are investing in infrastructure; there's building going on around the province. There will be more building because the needs are great. We are still catching up, and we know that if we don't make those investments, we will not be competitive and our communities will not be competitive in an economy that is global. So we're going to make those investments in order to make sure that Ontario is as competitive as it can be on the global stage.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier knows or ought to know that the FAO in fact said the opposite and this province will be in worse financial shape in the long run. That's what the FAO said. He said that selling off a revenue-generating asset in order to pay for transit is the worst way to fund infrastructure in the province of Ontario. But yesterday, the Minister of Finance insisted that selling Hydro One would "make more value for the province of Ontario." The FAO says, "the province's budget balance would be worse than it would have been without the sale." Can the Premier explain why people

should believe the Liberals instead of the independent Financial Accountability Officer for this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The FAO says the following: He acknowledged that our plan to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 is achievable. He goes on to say that in both 2013 and 2014, program spending was \$1.2 billion lower each year than the original budget projection. He further states, "As a result, it is reasonable to expect the government will continue ... to manage program spending for 2015-16 below the original budget plan projection."

He recognizes that the work that's being done, as well as optimizing our assets for reinvestment into our economy, will produce other revenues, and he recognizes that what we are doing now is achievable. He also states, by the way, that asset repurposing is not what's being depended upon in terms of balancing the budget. He says that as well.

The member of the third party is wrong in her assessment. We are doing what's necessary to reinvest in our economy and produce new assets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this is not simply a game of cut-and-thrust in question period. It is about the people of Ontario, people who are worried about whether or not they're going to be able to have their jobs going forward, worried about whether they're going to be able to pay their bills this year, and what they're going to do each and every year that private shareholders push those bills up and up. They're worried about whether they can trust anything they actually hear from this government across the way.

Will the Premier show good faith to the people of this province, the people of Ontario, the 185 municipalities that have told them to stop the sell-off, the 80% of Ontarians who have said, "Stop the sell-off"? The chamber of commerce is worried about the impact of the sell-off on business in this province. Will she do the right thing and stop any further sell-off of shares of Hydro One?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear: Ontario's unemployment rate is down to 6.8%, below the national average. It was this party that provided indexing to the minimum wage, which that member opposite voted against. We have produced real jobs—560,000 real jobs, net new jobs, since the recession.

Furthermore, we are investing. We have investments concurrently under way. The member opposite—I'm not sure what she would cancel. Is it the Hamilton LRT where she lives? Is it the GO expansion in Kitchener where her opposition—

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to see that one day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo, second time.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Is it the expansion of the Sudbury region? Is it the high-speed rail from London to Windsor that's being proposed right now? Is it the realignment of Highway 7 in Kitchener and Guelph?

We need to understand what it is the member opposite would cancel if we don't do what we're doing to re-purpose our assets and reinvest in the very projects that are necessary for our economy.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. Gerry Lougheed Jr. is supposed to have another court date today in his role in the Sudbury by-election bribery scandal. I'm not going to ask about that because I don't need the government House leader to tell me that he can't answer because it's before the courts. But there is so much more at play.

According to the Globe and Mail's Adrian Morrow, prosecutors agonized for months over whether to advise police to go ahead with charges against Pat Sorbara. It's not as clear as the government likes to make it out to be. Whether what Ms. Sorbara did was illegal we may never know, but we certainly know it was unethical and immoral.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. Steve Clark: Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering how hard it was for the Premier to disregard her integrity by supporting Sorbara in the alleged bribery?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite understands that I have answered many, many questions on this subject in the House and outside of the House. He also knows that there is a case before the courts, and I have no further comment to make.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again to the Premier: Gerry Lougheed Jr. is still on trial. I know it's before the courts. Pat Sorbara is still under investigation for violations of the Election Act. I know it's an ongoing investigation. We've talked about those things endlessly, but something we don't talk often enough about is what happened on February 20. That's the day the Premier marched into this building and threatened the opposition. She tried to silence us by accusing both parties of quid pro quo arrangements and trading seats for jobs, but we didn't waver, because someone in this building—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order. The members will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You won't know when I'm going to hit.

Please finish.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, that didn't waver us, because someone in this building has to have some integrity.

That being said, what is the Premier more embarrassed about: trying to intimidate the opposition to drop the issue, her deputy chief of staff still being under investigation, or the fact that a senior Liberal operative is in court today on corruption charges?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I've noticed a trend. When the opposition decides to talk about things that should not be discussed in this Legislature, it's always when they have nothing to talk about. Instead of talking about climate change and how we're going to fight climate change, instead of talking about building public infrastructure, especially public transit across the province, they choose to speak about issues—

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Clearly, when they have nothing substantive to talk about, issues that are important to the people of the province, they choose to talk about issues that are before the courts, which they know—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing and the member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order. The member from Nepean–Carleton, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: They continue to talk about issues that really do not advance the progress—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —in our province by ensuring that we tackle the issues around climate change, by ensuring that we're building Ontario up by investing in our communities, because they have no concrete, no positive ideas whatsoever.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: So therefore—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, you're warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's unfortunate that the official opposition continues to focus on issues that are within the purview of the courts and that should not be discussed in this Legislature, instead of focusing on things that matter to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. First we learned that Ontario families were subsidizing the Hydro One IPO to the tune of three million bucks. The fall economic statement showed that the public subsidy for the sell-off has ballooned to \$63 million. How much more will Ontario families have to pay be-

cause of this government's short-sighted decision? How much more?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, I didn't expect that the official opposition—the PCs—would ask a question about climate change, because even though the Leader of the Opposition says that he got into politics because he has a social conscience, I didn't expect that. But I did expect that somewhere in the leadoff question, or in the first three questions, the NDP might ask a question about climate change.

There's a very important conference going on in Paris right now. Leaders from around the world are there to try to forge an agreement that is going to allow the jurisdictions on this planet to work together to make sure that we don't increase the temperatures on this planet above two degrees. But there is no question coming from the NDP—shockingly, Mr. Speaker, given that they purport to have a conscience about things environmental.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

One sentence.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, the assumption underlying the questions that the NDP are asking—that we shouldn't be investing in infrastructure—actually works against the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have to say that the use of the issue of climate change as a shield for this disgusting action on the government's part is reprehensible.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, second time.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier's powerful friends are getting all the benefits from the Hydro One sell-off, but we are paying the bills. There's a question of fairness about who gets the benefits and who pays the costs, because on top of the \$63 million that we're paying to subsidize the IPO, Ontario is going to lose \$500 million a year from that sell-off—\$500 million a year. Last year alone, Ontario received about \$750 million from Hydro One. Now we're giving it up.

On top of losing steady revenues, how much more will Ontarians be paying to subsidize the sell-off if the government sells the rest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member of the third party knows that the costs are being recovered through the IPO. He knows that the way that rates are set now is the way that rates will be set at the conclusion of this.

But I would suggest to the people of Ontario that in fact this member, who is a self-proclaimed environmentalist, is actually using the discussion about Hydro One as

a shield—as a shield—against the fact that the NDP has no interest in talking about climate change, has no interest in talking about the future of this planet and has no plan to deal with those realities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're risking a warning.

New question.

TAXATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our government has a strong record of supporting Ontario's 444 municipalities. We believe it's important to have a strong working relationship with our municipal partners. That's why, when we came into power, we reversed the costly—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Where's the climate change question? Where's your climate change question? Come on, Speaker, I was waiting for a climate change question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay, come to order.

Finish, please.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: That's why, when we came into power, we reversed the costly downloads to municipalities by the former PC government. As a result of the combination of provincial uploads and other supports, Ontario municipalities are receiving a combined benefit of more than \$3.7 billion in 2015 alone.

Recently, there's been speculation about whether our government will be giving municipalities the option to put forward a municipal land transfer tax which is currently only active in Toronto. Speaker, there has been lots of confusion and misinformation on this matter. It's one that Ontarians feel strongly about.

Through you, would the minister please provide some clarity on the province's position on expanding land transfer tax powers to other municipalities?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, I sure will, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank you and thank the honourable member from Cambridge, a great MPP.

The province has a strong record, as the member noted, of supporting and working with municipalities to ensure that they're able to provide the services that their communities need.

We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders during our Municipal Act review period that ended October 31. We are currently reviewing that feedback and can tell you there has been no call at all for a municipal land transfer tax, nor is there any legislation before the House that would allow this, nor has it been our intent, based on our extensive consultation, to introduce legislation to put in place a municipal land transfer tax. Let me be clear: There will be no extension of the ability to have a land transfer tax to any municipality—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

While I have your attention, I find that this place could use a little reminder that the debates tend to escalate when we do not do the rules or follow the protocols that we have got in place that are very useful. The one I will remind you of—and I will probably start ramping up my expectations of all the members—is that you do not call members by anything else other than their title or their riding. I don't need editorials. We can elevate this together, or if you want me to do it, it will not be joyous.

Supplementary?

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Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the minister for this answer and his thoughtful consideration of this issue. I know my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries and constituents across Ontario will be pleased to hear that we will not be expanding the land transfer tax powers to other municipalities, to reflect what we heard during the review of the Municipal Act.

With that being said, I know that local governments have the closest relationship to the people in their communities. They provide front-line services like public transportation, garbage collection and recycling, and recreational facilities. All Ontarians want strong, vibrant communities where they can live, work and raise families.

I know that during the review of the Municipal Act, you travelled across Ontario and met with municipalities to discuss a variety of issues. Speaker, through you, will the minister please share with this House what issues were discussed as part of the review of the Municipal Act?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, now that I've been absolutely clear about the land transfer tax, I'm delighted to answer the second part of the question.

When we consulted with municipalities, we asked specifically whether there was sufficient accountability and transparency in their actions, whether municipalities have the powers and tools to deliver services effectively, like transit and waste diversion, and what barriers municipalities face to achieving financial stability. These are all important issues that our government takes very seriously, as do our municipal partners.

Our government is already taking action to help municipalities to receive more money to pay for transit services and waste diversion with the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, known as Bill 73. If passed, this important piece of legislation will help communities grow and pay for the important public services that they deliver to their people every single day.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jack MacLaren: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. We are all shocked by the bad news from Hornepayne, where the Haavaldsrud sawmill has announced they will be shutting down and laying off all 200 employees because they have not been able to secure a contract from the Ontario government for

their cogeneration plants. These layoffs will have a devastating effect on the town of Hornepayne because they represent 50% of the total employment in the community and they come just before Christmas.

Forestry is the second-largest industry in Ontario. The industry suffered a massive downturn in 2008, resulting in a loss of 50% of the forestry jobs in Ontario. Recently, there has been an increase in demand for wood products, which represents hope for a turnaround in the industry. This bad news could be the straw that breaks the camel's back in Hornepayne. Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. I know that the Minister of Energy will want to weigh in on this, and I will refer the supplementary to him.

The member is right that forestry suffered a significant downturn in 2005-06. In fact, the downturn suffered by this particular industry was a precursor to the greater recession that came in 2008.

I would remind this member and all members in the House that it was because of that downturn in 2005-06 that this government put in place an incredibly broad base of support programs for this particular industry. In fact, the broad base of supports and programs that we put in place totalled somewhere in the order of magnitude of \$1.3 billion.

Speaker, I can tell you that even with this particular partner in the industry, we've provided specific supports of a very significant nature to this particular industrial player. We continue to work with them on this, we're aware of the issue and, as I've said earlier, I know that the Minister of Energy will add some more information on this particular situation in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?
The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It is the energy policies of this government that have precipitated the problems in Hornepayne, as they have in other communities all across northern Ontario and all across Ontario. Until you make the changes—and I ask the Minister of Natural Resources to stand with your cabinet colleague and fight for jobs in the north by getting your cabinet to reverse the disastrous energy policies that have sent prices through the roof. That is why this company hoped to mitigate some of the damage by selling some electricity back to the province. Now you've shut them off on that.

Will you stand today and say, "I'm in favour of keeping jobs in the north," and talk to your energy minister to reverse these disastrous policies?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.
Minister of Natural Resources? Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I want to compliment the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, who has made representations in a professional way. We've had an ongoing dialogue and he has shown tremendous concern for this issue. We are working towards a solution, but the bottom

line is that the power purchase contract which the operator has in hand right now is not economically viable. They're asking for a higher purchase price, which will put pressure on prices. Notwithstanding that, we're asking all of the participants who are engaged and impacted by this to try to come up with a solution. We are mildly optimistic that we can come up with a solution.

In terms of advocacy from the opposition, rather than yelling and screaming, as we've just heard, I want to compliment the member from Manitoulin for the effort that he has made in working with us towards a solution.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are people who have been warned in this House.

New question.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question today is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, in the Attorney General's scathing report on your privatized winter maintenance contracts, we learned that your government spent millions of dollars to buy equipment for companies you had awarded contracts to, like DeAngelo Brothers in Sudbury. Now those contracts are failing.

My question for you is a simple one: What will happen to the equipment your government spent millions of dollars to purchase now that those contracts have been cancelled?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would remind the member that props are not allowed to be used in the House. If it happens again, it will be taken.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Niagara Falls for the question. I tried to explain this earlier to the official opposition. In the case of, for example, the Kenora contract, which both the government of Ontario and Transfield, the former contractor that had responsibility for the Kenora contract, as an example—when both parties mutually agreed a number of months ago to end the contract in question, we then went out to procurement and awarded that contract area for this winter season to another company that is in the Kenora area and that actually has more pieces of equipment out being deployed over the course of this winter season versus what took place last winter season.

The way that our area maintenance contracts work with regard to the pieces of equipment is that the government of Ontario is actually purchasing a service from the contractors, not individual pieces of equipment. We don't buy the equipment; the contractor purchases or leases the equipment and we pay for the service that that equipment will provide to the people, in this case, of Kenora, or in the case of Sudbury.

The contractor is required to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The concern was that last year you awarded the contracts to companies that didn't have the equipment to provide the safety that the residents of

Ontario should have had. People were injured and died on our roads in the province of Ontario.

Minister, you can talk all you want about following the recommendations of the Auditor General's report, but the fact of the matter is this: Your government awarded winter maintenance contracts to companies that didn't have the proper equipment and knowingly had the residents of Ontario drive on unsafe—unsafe—roads last winter, and Ontario continues to pay that price.

Minister, I will ask you again: Who will own the equipment that the people of Ontario spent millions of our hard-earned dollars to purchase now that these contracts have been cancelled?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank the member from Niagara Falls for his question. There seems to be a little bit of confusion with respect to how the contracts work.

Whether we're talking about the existing, ongoing contracts or we're talking about additional equipment that's brought to bear—just to be clear on that, since 2012-13, 158 pieces of additional equipment have been deployed across the province of Ontario. Whether we're talking about the existing contracts or the additives, the additions on top of those contracts for equipment, the contractors purchase or lease the equipment. We pay them for the service that that equipment will deliver.

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In each of the cases, again, we followed all eight of the auditor's recommendations. We have, since 2012-13, deployed, with our contractors, 158 additional pieces of equipment.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, millions of people around the world continue to suffer from an inadequate supply of clean and safe water. According to the World Health Organization, "Almost one billion people around the world lack access to an improved supply of clean water," and more than 50 countries continue to report cases of cholera and other diseases as the result of dangerous contaminants and pollutants in their drinking water. That is why it is imperative that our government continues to make investments in water technology that will ensure people have access to clean and safe water.

Minister, can you inform the members of the House on how our government is supporting Ontario companies to commercialize technologies that will have a meaningful impact for people all around the world?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Barrie for that very good question. Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of investing in clean water technologies that will benefit both the people of Ontario and people around the globe. That's why investing in water technologies is a core pillar of Ontario's innovation agenda, and a key area of its strategic focus and investments. With 22,000 people working in 900 companies across the province of Ontario, I'm proud to

say that Ontario has emerged as a global leader of water technologies.

Since 2003, our government has committed nearly \$50 million in funding to more than 100 water-related projects that will benefit people around the world. My ministry will continue to support the development and commercialization of new and innovative water technologies through research and commercialization funding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It is reassuring to know that our government recognizes the social and economic benefits of investing in water technologies. I understand that the global market for water technologies is estimated to be \$557 billion, doubling to \$1 trillion in 2020.

I often hear about the positive impact that Ontario's water tech companies are having around the world, thanks to the investments that have been made by our government. Minister, I know that Ontario has led a number of successful international missions that have helped create new partnerships with other jurisdictions who are leaders in the water sector. Minister, can you inform the members of the House on how our government is growing Ontario's water sector through these investments and international missions?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member for that very good question. Through Ontario's Water Sector Strategy, our government is taking the necessary steps to ensure that Ontario remains a globally recognized leader for water technologies. That's why my ministry invested \$6.5 million in WaterTAP, an organization that is helping grow globally competitive companies and has emerged as Ontario's water champion.

Just recently, the Premier was in California to promote the innovative solutions that Ontario companies can offer to tackle the ongoing water issues in California. Our government has also signed an MOU with Jiangsu province in China on clean water technologies.

Mr. Speaker, my ministry will continue investing in innovative technologies that will give Ontario companies a competitive edge in the global water sector.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Over the last few months, we've seen a rash of tragic fatal accidents involving trucks that continue to raise concerns over this minister's commitment to public safety on Ontario roads.

Today's Toronto Star report indicating that would-be truckers are headed out of the GTA traffic to "easy pass" testing facilities for their licences only heightens those concerns. Given the tragic toll that trucking accidents have had on our roads, it's the minister's responsibility to ensure truckers are tested to standards that meet Ontario highway traffic demands.

Can the minister tell us why so many GTA truck drivers, who will be driving in the GTA, are getting their licences in Bancroft and Clinton?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his question. Of course, he knows, everyone here knows—I say this repeatedly—that ensuring roads and highways here in the province of Ontario remain safe for all road users is perhaps my top priority, certainly one of my most important priorities. Again, I said this earlier today, for the last 13 years, ranked first or second in North America is the province of Ontario.

Having said that, the work at the Ministry of Transportation in terms of making sure we deliver that outcome for the people of Ontario doesn't stop at any point in time. It's why a number of months ago I made a commitment on behalf of the government that we would introduce mandatory entry-level training for AZ drivers. That's a project we continue to work on with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I anticipate that we'll begin to roll out that program in summer 2016. We will also take a look at the issue that's been raised in the Toronto Star today.

I look forward to working with that member and members on all sides of this House to make sure we continue to enhance our road and highway safety.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the minister: Over a year ago, this minister promised us he would do something about unprepared truckers being licensed to drive on our roads. That was after it was revealed that provincial truck testing facilities weren't even taking potential truckers onto the 400 series of highways, as they were mandated to do. Today we learned that not only are truckers not learning on the 400 series, they're earning licences on traffic-light rural roads. It's been over a year and this minister fails to get the urgency of the need to have properly tested truckers on our major provincial highways. Will the minister tell us when he will finally begin to take these very real issues of public safety on Ontario roads seriously?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up question. He knows, as well as everyone else in this House, that everyone on this side of the Legislature takes these issues very seriously. I mentioned just a moment ago in my initial answer that we will roll out, working closely with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, mandatory entry-level training for potential AZ licensees, truck drivers, by summer of next year. We'll continue to work with everybody who provides in this particular realm.

Speaker, I should point out, in addition to the fact that over the last 13 years Ontario has ranked first or second across North America for highway safety generally speaking, on the issue of truck drivers specifically, since 1993, there has been a 79% increase in the number of large trucks used in Ontario. In that same period of time, there has been a reduction of 50% of the number of large truck fatalities that have taken place in the province of Ontario. It doesn't mean that our work ends, but it means that the track record we have is strong and we will continue to build on that going forward.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. One month ago, we learned there are almost 16,000 kids waiting for essential ABA/IBI therapies in Ontario. The Premier and her government have had a month to take action to help families and kids who are languishing on the wait-list. In fact, when the Premier was running for the Liberal leadership, she said, "Every Ontarian with autism deserves our support, and has mine."

Families and kids with autism are reaching out to me and telling me that they feel hopeless and certainly don't have this government's support. Families are being forced to remortgage their homes; they are moving to other provinces just to get the support that their children need.

Will the Premier commit today to immediately ending the chronic wait-list for ABA/IBI therapies in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for this very important question. We know that the prevalence of autism is increasing in Ontario. It's gone from one in 100 children to one in 68 today, and that's why we've been increasing our investments in autism services to \$190 million annually.

We know that more has to be done. I, as Minister of Children and Youth Services, am equally concerned about wait-lists. However, it is important to note that while kids are on wait-lists, there are supports available. There's a range of services, whether it's speech and language, rehab services, respite services, mental health services. We continue to support families and we know there's more to be done; and I'll be pleased to speak further about it in the supplementary.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to go back to the Premier again. On my desk today, I have letters from the DiMambro family in my community of Hamilton and from the Onofrio family in Whitby that are directed at the Premier. These letters are heart-wrenching. In the words of one parent with a non-verbal child with autism, "By denying my son therapy, you are taking away from his voice—his only way to communicate with the world that is different from him."

The Premier must acknowledge her failure on this file. This government should not be balancing the books on the backs of families and children with ASD. Will the Premier commit to responding personally to each of these letters that I'm going to deliver to her from parents and kids with ASD?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I think it's important to acknowledge that probably many of us in this Legislature have received letters from families who have children who are experiencing autism. We all do our best to respond to that and support these kids as we go forward. I want to assure the member opposite and actually correct something she said earlier: I want to assure this House that the number of children receiving IBI and ABA has increased in the last two years; it has not decreased.

The total number of children receiving IBI has increased by 4.5%—I know we need to do more, Speaker—and the number of children receiving ABA has increased. These are the correct numbers, and it's very important that we frame these numbers properly, not using the point-in-time data that the third party has used.

We will continue to improve our services for children with autism. That's my priority. I'm looking forward to bringing more to this House on the autism strategy.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Too many critics have been talking down our manufacturing sector, yet the reality is that manufacturing has been growing steadily since the recession in Ontario, and with good reason, as manufacturing firms count on our skilled workforce, our climate of innovation and our streamlined business environment to encourage global trade.

Now Ontario is one of the global leaders in advanced manufacturing. Perhaps this, and the advanced manufacturing program at Sheridan College in my riding, which is a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing program, is helping.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What else is our government doing to support Ontario manufacturers in this precarious global situation?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What a timely question, considering that the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters are here in the Legislature today. Jayson Myers, president, and Ian Howcroft, VP Ontario, are in the building and will be meeting with members and will be having a reception later on. I think what they would tell us today in this Legislature is that manufacturing has continued to grow since the global recession and that we have to stop talking down manufacturing and start talking it up because it's growing in Ontario and making exciting strides.

This government is working in partnership with our manufacturing sector. Our accelerated capital cost allowance is incenting them to reinvest in their plants and reinvest in their equipment, saving them to the tune of \$290 million, which is providing them with the incentive they need to do that. We're also participating in partnerships when it comes to business support programs.

My time is running out. I'll respond to that more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is absolutely right. Ontario is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the future of manufacturing due to our ICT strengths. But our strengths lie beyond what the minister has already mentioned. For example, Ontario is among the top jurisdictions for vehicle production in North America. In 2014, Ontario produced more vehicles than any other subnational jurisdiction in

North America, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs across the province. Also, our manufacturers have benefited from a very successful recent trip to China by the minister, the Premier and other members of this Legislature.

Minister, can you tell us: What are the other ways by which we are ensuring that our manufacturers remain globally competitive?

Hon. Brad Duguid: There are so many areas that I could dive into to respond to that question, but let me start with the Premier's recent trip to China. That trip alone generated \$2.5 billion in trade deals, and we're expecting that about 1,700 jobs are going to emerge from that, many of those in manufacturing.

Prior to that, I was in Japan with Ray Tanguay, our special adviser on auto. We met with many auto and aerospace companies—over 25 of them—talking to them about the competitiveness in growth, ingenuity and innovation happening here in Ontario.

We are becoming a global leader in advanced manufacturing. We're becoming the place where manufacturers come to test their products, to develop their first-generation products. This province is growing. We have a proud manufacturing base. It's back in growth mode. It's something all Ontarians can take pride in, and we're proud of the government working in partnership with that very important sector.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We learned yesterday in committee that the Ministry of Health had failed to consult with many stakeholders regarding Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act. The ministry failed to consult with the Ontario Medical Association, the Coalition of Ontario Psychiatrists, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Legal Aid Ontario, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health during the creation of this bill. Each and every one of these groups represents individuals who will be affected by the change in this bill. In fact, the ministry didn't even open up discussions with these groups until after second reading.

Mr. Speaker, has the government been in power so long that they feel they no longer have to consult with Ontarians?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I think the member appreciates that, due to the narrow scope of the amendments being proposed in the legislation that is currently before committee—in fact, the amendments are the result of a court decision here in Ontario that asked for some changes to be made to the legislation. I would hope that the member opposite would agree that large, significant consultations that we normally undertake are not required.

However, with that being said, we did consult with many, many groups in the process of developing these proposed amendments, which are still before committee. I'd be happy to speak to some of those entities that we

did consult with appropriately despite the narrow focus and the court order that resulted in these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Actually, the ministry spoke to maybe four or five groups and spoke to nobody between April and September.

However, this flawed policy process that this government has created is due to the fact that they're not following any process whatsoever. For instance, this is not the first instance of not consulting with key stakeholders. Just last week, the ministry announced that medical marijuana users were allowed to smoke or vape anywhere in Ontario, yet 24 hours later, they pulled a 180 and pulled back the exemption because they listened to the media, they listened to the public, and even the Premier was against their regulation. This government made the exemption without any consultation whatsoever. It seems that the government isn't interested in hearing what Ontarians have to say anymore. Has the government forgotten who they represent?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Not at all, Mr. Speaker. Again, given the decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal and the narrow scope of that decision with reference to the act itself, my ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of the Attorney General, has reviewed the act and consulted with stakeholders. Among the groups that we have consulted with who would be directly affected—because we're just talking about involuntarily detained inpatients in psychiatric facilities. We've consulted with the Consent and Capacity Board, the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, the psychiatrists and chief from CAMH, Waypoint, Royal Ottawa and Ontario Shores facilities, with the Ontario Hospital Association and a number of others. We have done the appropriate thing here. We've consulted widely, despite the narrow framework, the narrow context of the amendments in question.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London West on a point of order.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome three guests who have joined us this morning: Dr. Katreena Scott, Canada research chair in family violence prevention and intervention at the University of Toronto; Thom Rolfe, executive director at Hiatus House in Windsor; and Harny Mendoza, executive director of Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, also known as WomanACT. Welcome.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to correct the record in answer to a question this morning. I referred to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. I would like to correct the record to read “the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the member from Sudbury and the Minister of Northern Development.”

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do have a point of order with regards to question period today. As you know, during question period, we're not allowed to raise points of order. We have to wait until after, so I'm doing it now.

Earlier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs made what was essentially a government announcement in the middle of question period. We do know that there is a convention in this place that that in fact doesn't happen, that ministerial statements are used to make those types of announcements, because otherwise, what ends up happening is the opposition doesn't get an opportunity to be able to respond. I would ask you to rule on this because, in fact, that was a ministerial statement; it was not a question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As the Speaker, I'm not in a position to make a judgment on whether or not it is an announcement of policy or not, but it has happened in the past where there have been obvious announcements that were made in answer to a question, and it is a more appropriate place for them to be given during ministerial statements or in any other forum in the House that's more appropriate, other than a simple question. So I would leave it at that: to advise all members that when making any policy statement there's another place for it other than question period.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR

LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 23, 2015, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 144. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq

Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzi
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Mauro, Bill
McDonell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Oraziotti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick

Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

POLICE RECORD CHECKS REFORM ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LA RÉFORME DES VÉRIFICATIONS DE DOSSIERS DE POLICE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act respecting police record checks / Projet de loi 113, Loi concernant les vérifications de dossiers de police.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1151.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 30, 2015, Mr. Balkissoon moved third reading of Bill 113.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted

Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Nicholls, Rick

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PROTECTION AND ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OVERSIGHT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR RENFORCER LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS ET LA SURVEILLANCE DU RÉSEAU D'ÉLECTRICITÉ

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 26, 2015, Mr. Delaney moved third reading of Bill 112. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael

Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Mauro, Bill
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Orazietti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Mauro, Bill
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Orazietti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Singh, Jagmeet
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Horwath, Andrea	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Natyshak, Taras	
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 77; the nays are 16.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1200.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 30, 2015, Mr. Bradley moved third reading of Bill 85. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ENERGY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1203.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 3, 2015, Mr. Chiarelli moved second reading of Bill 135. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Orazietti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou

Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: A nice girl, yes—five pounds, nine ounces, and her name is Adèle. She's the most beautiful baby in the world. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Adèle? Does she sing? Sorry.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick

Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, I refer Bill 135 to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So ordered.

Just before we dismiss, I want to give all members—when the process of voting is taking place, you are to remain in your place. You are not supposed to get out of your place at all, for any reason.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good afternoon. It's time for introduction of guests. Introduction of guests? Last call for introduction of guests.

Therefore it's time for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to hold on for a second, because I think, if I'm not mistaken, I missed someone who wanted to introduce a guest.

Oh, yes, right: the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I have someone to introduce, because yesterday at noon, I became a grandma for the first time.

Applause.

MUNICIPAL LAND TRANSFER TAX

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Congratulations to the minister.

Today I'd like to stand in the House and say thank you. Thank you to everyone from Huron–Bruce, and constituents across the province, who took time to raise their voice with regard to the municipal land transfer tax, to tell the Liberals they were wrong.

We have heard a lot about the municipal land transfer tax in the Legislature over the last few weeks. During question period today, it was announced that the government has decided to backtrack on yet another one of their directives.

You know what? They make ill-conceived decisions, and then they react to public outcries by retracting.

I have to congratulate my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. He has done an outstanding job championing the opportunity for people to raise their voice, to say no to this government.

While I am happy that the Liberals actually listened to us, in the sense that they do not intend to expand the municipal land transfer tax, I hope they will listen to some of the other concerns Ontarians have voiced regarding the cost of home ownership as well. Ontarians continue to pay some of the highest rates in North America for hydro as a result, yet again, of the Liberal government's failed green energy initiatives, especially the green energy plan. I have to say that I need to encourage more people to stand up and say no to this Liberal government.

Again, I applaud my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. Steve Clark is right.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would be pleased to stand in this Legislature today, to talk about what happened in our community this past Sunday.

When you think about a Sunday afternoon, it's often a time to spend with family or friends, perhaps doing laundry, getting ready for the week that's coming. Sunday is often a day for rest and relaxation.

However, this past Sunday, 150 members of my community chose to spend their afternoon at a town hall in Whitby, to voice their opposition to this Liberal government's short-sighted sell-off of Hydro One. The reason they were compelled to do this is because it was the only opportunity that they have had to make their voices heard.

Earlier this year, this government decided to end a century of public hydro in our province. They did this without giving Ontarians the opportunity to have their say. It seems that this government isn't interested, but we wanted to give them that chance, so on Sunday we heard from neighbours, activists, local businesses and community leaders from Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington, Port Perry, Ajax, Pickering and from across Durham region, all of whom stood up to share why they believe this sell-off must be stopped. They talked about rising hydro rates, debt repayment, lost revenues and the fear that this is just the first of many assets on the government's chopping block. They joined eight provincial watchdogs, 82% of Ontarians, and 185 municipalities that have all called on this government to stop this sale.

That's what we saw in Durham on Sunday: the desire to be heard. We ask that this government listen to what the public has to say.

LUSH FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: On October 31, I was delighted to attend Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics' open house in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, for some family-friendly fun and a tour of their factory. Manager Tim Main was on hand to welcome Lush's neighbours to the facility and showcase some of their products and manufacturing processes.

This global company has its main North American manufacturing facility in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. They export their products all over North America and beyond, and they have created many jobs, making innovative and sustainable products.

Environmental and social stewardship are critical elements in the business decisions that are made by this company on a daily basis. They remain committed to becoming more sustainable even as the company grows. They use as little packaging as possible in their shops and offer many products that can be purchased without any packaging at all. They monitor their use of water in factories and are working to reduce consumption of freshwater resources.

The Etobicoke–Lakeshore plant uses fresh products, many sourced in Ontario, such as fruit, honey, mint. They source products from other local companies, like Fair Grounds coffee, for example.

This is another example of an Ontario-based manufacturer creating world-leading products, succeeding in international markets, and creating good jobs in Ontario. They're also a great community partner, supporting a number of local initiatives.

CANADA'S BEST RESTROOM

Mr. Steve Clark: There are so many reasons Ontarians should visit my riding of Leeds–Grenville and the world-famous Thousand Islands. Well, you can add one more to the list. Recently, the 1000 Islands Duty Free shop near Ivy Lea was voted as having Canada's best restroom, in a competition organized by Cintas Canada.

That's right—when it comes to answering nature's call, from coast to coast, they're number one. Obviously, Speaker, we're all flush with pride back home. It's a real honour for owners Heather Howard and her son Jeff Butler, whose incredible commitment to customer service never misses the mark.

They redesigned their facilities last year, and customers have been raving ever since. The men's room treats visitors to a rustic setting reminiscent of an upscale hunting or fishing camp. For the ladies, it's all about luxury and glamour, with brilliant red sinks and plenty of polished granite.

Of course, without a focus on keeping things clean, all the efforts of redesigning the facilities would have gone down the drain. But Heather and Jeff's staff is always Johnny-on-the-spot, and their hard work keeping the facilities tidy has earned praise on both sides of the border. That's no easy feat considering that 1,500 people can flow through those washrooms on a busy summer day.

So if you're travelling to eastern Ontario over the holidays and need some relief, be sure to visit Ivy Lea and the 1000 Islands Duty Free. Whether you need to powder your nose or just pick up some great deals, you won't go away disappointed.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always like to rise in my place and talk positively about my riding. However, there's a community in my riding that has a huge black cloud over it, and that's the community of Hornepayne. They're going through so much turmoil and emotion right now, where 146 people are really concerned with the future and with the upcoming Christmas season. They are terrified of the impacts of a potential job loss, and that their local mill, Haavaldsrud, along with the Becker cogen plant, might be closed down for a very long and extended period of time.

A lot of discussions have happened with me, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the mayor, along with the proponents of the plant. These need to continue, but we really need some action.

My phone has been inundated with calls from concerned people out of Hornepayne—and I read this one on behalf of a community member, Mrs. Stephanie Berube-Luke: "The ball is in the hands of the provincial government, Hydro One, and the OPA. I am relying on you and your counterparts to help us. We have already lost so much, we cannot lose any more and remain" in Hornepayne. "We are relying on you as our MPP to help gather these parties, open the lines of communication, and assist with holding OPA and Hydro One accountable for what they've promised, and what we need!!!! Hornepayne will be a ghost town and many families will be left in the cold. Can you sleep with that on your conscience?? I couldn't, especially when there's a solution right in front of' us.

I want to help this community. I will scratch, I will fight, I will bite to make sure that we get a deal for Haavaldsrud.

GIVING TUESDAY

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's very fitting that I rise in the House to tell you about a campaign that is spreading kindness and goodwill in my riding of Burlington. Today is Giving Tuesday, and a group of 10 charitable organizations are helping to raise awareness about the power of giving and the impact it has in our community.

Collective Hearts Burlington is made up of the Burlington Performing Arts Centre, the Burlington Community Foundation, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Carpenter Hospice, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford, Joseph Brant Hospital Foundation, the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, the Halton Women's Place, Community Living Burlington and the Art Gallery of Burlington.

1510

From supporting our most vulnerable, caring for the sick, showcasing local arts and culture, and educating residents about our natural environment, the organizations that make up Collective Hearts each contribute in their own way to making Burlington the special community it is.

In addition to these remarkable organizations, Burlington is also made up of some pretty amazing people, and I have witnessed their generosity first-hand. After the August 2014 flood, neighbours and strangers alike opened their hearts to those whose homes were destroyed, offering a hand with cleanup, delivering homemade food and even offering door-to-door laundry service.

Most recently, Burlingtonians have come together to support the settlement of Syrian refugees. Mobilizing resources and services, our community is working to ensure these newcomers have all they need to start their new lives in Canada.

With the holidays just around the corner, it's important to remember those who are less fortunate in our communities and across our province. Starting today, Collective Hearts and Burlington residents will participate in Giving Tuesday, a social media campaign, and I ask all members of this House to do the same.

SANDRA HOLDSWORTH

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to recognize a very deserving constituent from my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Recently, Sandra Holdsworth of Gravenhurst was recognized with the Trillium Gift of Life Champion Award.

Among the many criteria for consideration on being recognized with this award—includes someone who exhibits leadership qualities that result in notable contributions to the cause of organ and tissue donation and transplantation; takes action to help raise awareness of organ tissue donation and transplantation; provides

community leadership in building a culture of donation; and is a visible champion in the community. I can't think of a better way to describe Sandra.

Since being the recipient of a liver transplant in 1997, she has been a volunteer and tremendous advocate for the Be A Donor initiative.

Along with her work in her community, Sandra has competed at the Canadian, American and World Transplant Games.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sandra, on this tremendous award.

I know that we are a few months away from the annual donor month, April, but as we spend time with our families during the season of giving, I would ask people to take the time to go online to beadonor.ca to verify their organ donor card and sign up to give the gift of life.

CANADIAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: With three top-notch post-secondary institutions in my riding, we are fortunate to have a large student population, and their ingenuity, passion and dedication never cease to amaze me.

Today, it is my pleasure to congratulate St. Lawrence College school of business marketing students from Kingston's campus on winning the top awards at the 2015 Canadian Marketing Association Awards on November 27. Silver winners, all in third-year marketing, Caleb Huard, Shaunis Sakell, Nicolas Coulter and Kara Reynolds; and bronze winners, all graduates, Nathan Jenkins, Paula Gosselin, Anneliese Behrmann and Maria Bautista, competed against both colleges and universities nationwide in the largest and most prestigious marketing event in Canada.

In our increasingly global competitive marketplace, with numerous communication outlets to get the message to a target audience, effective marketing practices hold incredible value for our business community. Marketing strategies can drive sales, build brand recognition and consumer loyalty, and this business success translates into jobs and economic growth for our communities and our province.

Congratulations once again to both St. Lawrence College teams on this well-deserved achievement.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very honoured to rise today and be able to speak on this day, World AIDS Day. We've come a long way since AIDS was first diagnosed back in the 1980s. If you look at last year's statistic, we had over 2,000 HIV cases reported in Canada, which represents a decrease of about 1.5% from 2013. That's the lowest number of cases reported to the Public Health Agency of Canada since 1985. So we're doing great things.

But still, there are 71,000 people who are living with HIV in this country. Aboriginal people make up about

12% of those individuals, and it's estimated that 25% of people living with HIV don't know it.

I'd like to acknowledge the Access AIDS centre in Sudbury, which has been doing great work on awareness for individuals not only in my community but around the province.

I know many of us here are wearing our red ribbons today, and I think that's so important. For me, it means a little bit more. On September 6, 1991, I lost my oldest brother to complications of AIDS. He was a very strong man, someone I'm very proud to have loved and called my brother and who instilled a lot of values in me about making sure that we continue to advocate to make sure that someday we can find a cure for this disease.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated December 1, 2015, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

VISITORS

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce two very talented public servants who are in the lobby today. They have worked very hard on the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015, which I expect will be introduced shortly. They are Candice Telfer, who is counsel at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and Adela Wan, who is a policy adviser at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Welcome to our guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR LES COMMERÇANTS DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 152, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015, amends the Highway Traffic Act to enable certain motor vehicle dealers to apply for permits, number plates and other things by electronic means or in an electronic format.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO SECRETARIAT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE SECRÉTARIAT DE LA NATION MÉTISSE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Orazietti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 153, Loi visant à reconnaître la structure juridique de la nation métisse de l'Ontario par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 sur le Secrétariat de la nation métisse de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce this new legislation, the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015.

This legislation fulfills a commitment made by the Premier in 2014 to develop Métis Nation of Ontario-specific corporate legislation. We have worked in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario during the development of the legislation. If passed, the legislation would recognize the unique democratic nature of Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat structure and allow it to operate more effectively under the Corporations Act and the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, when it comes into force.

I want to commend the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for his leadership on this, and I want to thank staff in my office.

1520

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Mr. Gates moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d'avoir

causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d'une contravention.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Wayne Gates: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. If a person causes or contributes to causing an accident which causes death or serious bodily harm at a time the person was contravening the Highway Traffic Act or its regulations, then the person is guilty of an offence. The court may sentence a person to a fine of up to \$5,000 or to imprisonment for up to 12 months, or both. The court may also suspend the person's licence or permit.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to share this petition just to remind the government how important this is.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing plans to give all Ontario municipalities the ability to charge their own municipal land transfer tax (MLTT) in addition to the provincial land transfer tax homebuyers already pay;

"Whereas an MLTT would increase the amount of land transfer taxes due at closing on the average-priced home in Ontario to more than \$10,000;

"Whereas this regressive tax would kill the dream of home ownership for many young families already struggling to make ends meet after being hit by new taxes and rising hydro costs by the Wynne government;

"Whereas an MLTT would make Ontario the most uncompetitive tax jurisdiction in North America when it comes to buying a new home, costing our province's economy \$2.3 billion and some 15,000 full-time jobs; and

"Whereas a recent Ipsos Reid poll showed 89% of Ontarians outside of Toronto oppose this tax grab;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that members of the Legislature vote to support MPP Steve Clark"—because Steve Clark is always right. His private member's bill would have said that "the government should not impose or help municipalities facilitate the imposition of any new municipal land transfer taxes."

I totally agree with these folks, and clearly, the government did as well.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I am proud to stand in my place and read this on behalf of a campaign and volunteers in Elliot Lake who spent three days collecting these. It's a petition.

"Hydro One Not for Sale! Say No to Privatization.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I sign with the 700 petition signatures, and present it to page Dayo to bring down to the Clerks' table.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Jim Wilson: This comes from the residents of Country Meadows in Wasaga Beach.

"Whereas our present land leases with Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc. are covered by the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA); however, they are exempted from the protection of rent controls under the act. Being part 1, section 6, subsection 2, and,

"Whereas the landlord has the option to increase the monthly land rental by \$50 above the existing rent, to a new purchaser, when a home is sold.

"Whereas 'Country Meadows' is a community of permanent homes located on leased lands whose residents are retired and living on fixed incomes. Continued rental increases beyond the guidelines of the RTA, is unsustainable to retired residents on fixed incomes.

"Therefore, we the undersigned residents of 'Country Meadows,' petition the Legislature to change the RTA to include rent controls for retirement-type communities located on leased lands and, to delete the option given to landlords to increase land rental rates upon sale of a home in such communities. The foregoing would enable retirees to remain in their homes and enjoy their hard-earned retirement years."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and thank the residents of Country Meadows.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

“Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

“Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation.”

I wholeheartedly agree and hand it down with page Ajay.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was signed by Madame Ginette Durocher from Azilda, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

“Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa; and

“Whereas there have been serious reductions at Ontario Northland, including the elimination of Northland’s train services;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario.”

I fully agree, will affix my name to it, and give it to Aaran to bring to the Clerk.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

“(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

“(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Prasanna to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with this petition and I will sign it.

1530

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Wayne Gates: I rise on a petition of over 100 signatures.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% ... cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ ... quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve” and need.

NEWBORN HEALTH

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I have a petition to table.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Health Protection and Promotion Act ... calls for the mandatory administration of erythromycin ointment as a prophylactic agent into the eyes of all newborns and specifies that the Health Care Consent Act ... does not apply to the prevention or treatment of communicable diseases of the eyes of the newborn;

“Whereas research evidence shows that the administration of erythromycin is ineffective at preventing infection;

“Whereas the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Association of Ontario Midwives call for the rescinding of the mandatory ocular prophylaxis laws;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Health Protection and Promotion Act be amended to remove the forced administration of ophthalmic ointment.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Ajay to bring to the assembly.

HYPERBARIC THERAPY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven to prevent unnecessary limb amputations, improving the quality of life of thousands of Ontarians;

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven effective to treat 14 medical conditions, including: chronic non-healing diabetic wounds, decompression sickness, air embolisms, carbon monoxide poisoning, gas gangrene, flesh-eating disease, compromised skin grafts, bone infections, radiation injuries and burns;

“Whereas diabetic non-healing wounds are the number one cause of limb amputation in Ontario;

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has prevented hundreds of amputations, which in the short term cost \$65,000 per patient, and long-term cost” the system “\$350,000 per patient and have added up to hundreds of millions of dollars over the years;

“Whereas amputation of a limb greatly diminishes the quality and length of life of patients, something we cannot put a price on;

“Whereas there are only limited facilities in Ontario that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy necessary to treat diabetic wounds that prevent unnecessary amputations;

“Whereas the government of Quebec funds hyperbaric medicine for the treatment of chronic non-healing wounds in that province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

“(1) To recognize the existing and scientifically sound studies in the US, Europe, Japan, the UK, Australia and Asia which clearly show that hyperbaric oxygen therapy is effective especially in treating of diabetic wounds and ulcers;

“(2) To provide stable funding for the technical and professional costs of providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy, for doctors, medical staff and technicians, for existing and future facilities;

“(3) To increase the number of hyperbaric oxygen therapy centres across Ontario to prevent unnecessary suffering, economic loss and loss of quality and length of life.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I appreciate that from the member from Huron–Bruce for that short petition.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to present this petition that I know is near and dear to your heart. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in ... Essex.”

I could not agree more with this petition. Speaker, I will affix my signature and send it to the Clerks' desk with page Aislin.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Granville Anderson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate that brevity is a sign of wisdom to the member from Durham.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

“Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults” living with this disease;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this petition.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have three short petitions that were collected by Dr. Anh Thi Tran, who practises at T&T Medical Clinic in Concord, Ont. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

“(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

“(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario.”

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Mme Meilleur moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi édictant

la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to you, Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Electoral Boundaries Act. I will be dividing my time to speak about this bill with the Attorney General's parliamentary assistant, the Honourable Lorenzo Berardinetti.

Il s'agit d'un projet de loi qui renforcera notre système électoral. Ce projet de loi veille à ce que les Ontariens et Ontariennes soient représentés de façon équitable et efficace à l'Assemblée législative.

We've proposed this legislation so that Ontario's provincial ridings better reflect population movement and growth and to ensure citizens are fairly represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Some areas of the province have experienced significant growth in recent years. Because of this growth, Ontario's current provincial boundaries no longer adequately reflect our population.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, le nombre de circonscriptions dans le sud-est de l'Ontario passera de 96 à 111, et les circonscriptions refléteront celles qui existent actuellement au niveau fédéral. Ce sont, bien entendu, les circonscriptions qui ont été utilisées pour la première fois pendant l'élection fédérale du 19 octobre.

1540

The new ridings would mostly be in areas that have had significant population shifts and increases, places like Toronto, Peel, York, Durham and Ottawa, because it's no secret that the population in southern Ontario is booming. This is especially true for cities like Brampton, which has a population of more than half a million but currently has just three provincial electoral districts.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, deux nouvelles circonscriptions provinciales seront formées pour Brampton, ce qui donnera aux résidents une voix plus puissante à l'Assemblée législative et établira une représentation qui reflète plus fidèlement la population en pleine croissance de la ville.

This is a bill that is about representation by population, a core democratic principle and one of the cornerstones of a fair, just and democratic society.

Mr. Speaker, you may also be interested to know that while the population in southern Ontario has continued to rise, the province has not redistributed its southern electoral districts since 2007. Clearly, these changes are due.

Même si nous allons ajouter 15 nouvelles circonscriptions dans le sud-est de l'Ontario pour refléter les changements apportés lors du récent redécoupage fédéral, il est important de souligner que nous proposons de maintenir les 11 circonscriptions provinciales existantes dans le nord de l'Ontario.

We will not reduce the number of northern seats, as has been done federally. As some of the members may

recall, in 2004 federal redistribution reduced the number of federal seats in northern Ontario from 11 to 10. We disagreed with that action because we believed that taking away from the voice in the north is a step in the wrong direction.

C'est la raison pour laquelle, l'année suivante, notre gouvernement a adopté la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale, qui a préservé ce 11^e siège du Nord pour les élections ontariennes. Il n'y a aucun doute que, économiquement et socialement, le Nord est une partie indispensable et unique de la province.

This bill reaffirms our government's commitment to protecting representation for northern Ontario and providing a strong voice for the north, now and in the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, la création de circonscriptions supplémentaires assurera une représentation qui reflète fidèlement notre population croissante et confèrera aux Ontariens et Ontariennes une voix plus puissante.

Quite simply, passing the Electoral Boundaries Act will help our province build an inclusive and democratic society. I urge all members to stand in support of this bill to provide fair and effective representation for all Ontarians at Queen's Park.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Yes, Mr. Speaker. When the minister began speaking, she mentioned that she'd be sharing her time with the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, which is me. My riding is Scarborough Southwest.

Before I speak and make my few comments, I want to congratulate the Attorney General on becoming a grandmother for the first time yesterday. She mentioned it earlier, but not so many members were in the House at that time.

Mr. Chris Ballard: You're a good PA.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you very much.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of the Electoral Boundaries Act. As the Attorney General noted earlier, this is a bill that really speaks to the values of our government and how much our government values and upholds the principles of democracy.

As members are aware, earlier this year the Chief Electoral Officer made a number of recommendations to government on ways to improve and strengthen our election system. Adjusting our electoral boundaries, which we are proposing to do in this bill, was just one of the recommendations he made. In fact, he advised the government to undertake a number of steps, including to enhance voter engagement among youth and strengthen third-party election advertising rules.

As such, Mr. Speaker, in addition to changing Ontario's provincial boundaries in this bill, we're also looking at pursuing a number of additional measures in the future to strengthen our election system. I would like to take a moment to highlight these measures.

In his report, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended to allow provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds to make it easier for young people to vote when they become 18. We all know that citizens are more likely to vote if they get a notice of registration card telling them when, where and how to vote. In fact, an Ipsos Reid survey conducted following the 2014 general election indicated that young people may not be as informed about the election process as those who are older. Since youth are not included on the permanent register of electors for Ontario, they may not receive a notice of registration card for an election once they reach the age of 18. This provides an obstacle for many first-time voters.

To address this issue, in future legislation we plan to introduce rules that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to be provisionally registered to vote. This will help more young people participate in the democratic process. If these measures are implemented, Elections Ontario would work with schools to help inform youth about the importance of voter registration. In my view, this is a step in the right direction as it will help empower our youth to be involved and informed citizens of our province and of our country.

In addition to pursuing measures to increase voter turnout, we also hope to tackle the issue of third-party advertising with future legislation. Third-party advertising rules were introduced in Ontario for the first time in 2007. Currently, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They must also report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, these reports must be audited.

As members may recall, in the last budget our government committed to strengthening the province's rules around election-related third-party advertising. We remain steadfast in keeping this commitment as we consider options moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Act is a step in the right direction towards improving our election process, but it's just the beginning. As I've outlined today, our government has plans to build on the momentum of this bill and introduce future rules that would strengthen third-party advertising rules and enhance voter engagement among youth.

I hope the members will join me here today to help pass this bill and continue the process of strengthening the democratic processes of our province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 115 today. I listened intently to both the Attorney General and her parliamentary assistant, and I would like to offer a few comments during this debate.

First off, I want to thank the Liberal Party for continuing the tradition that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party started in 1999 with the first redistribution that ensured Ontario constituencies mirrored federal ridings. That was back in 1999. Premier Mike Harris, at the time,

reduced the number of seats in this House from 130 to 101, which was the number of federal ridings in Ontario at the time. It certainly was very helpful and it helped diminish confusion between federal and provincial constituencies. It was a marvellous undertaking, and I'm glad to see that the Liberal government today is continuing with that tradition.

1550

I would like to just say, from a personal point of view—and I think many members in this House would also see this—that I share my office with my federal counterpart. I've done so I was first elected in 2007. This gives a streamlined effect for constituents, whatever their concern may be. Whether it be provincial or federal, whether it be birth certificates or passports or anywhere in between, they can go into either one of our offices, because we share our offices and we share the same constituency.

That's the good part about this bill. It's going to mirror those federal ridings, except for that one difference in the north where, federally, we have 10 ridings and, provincially, we have 11. However, there's the good parts about this bill.

What disappoints me: I think the parliamentary assistant, especially, spoke about the government commitment to continue to further their steps towards democracy. But there's nothing in this bill that he was mentioning. Of course, we've all seen the Chief Electoral Officer's reports and his recommendations; they're very clear. However, not one of his recommendations made it into this bill—not one.

The parliamentary assistant spoke of third-party advertising, what the Chief Electoral Officer has recommended, but there is no change to third-party advertising. Also, very clearly, the Chief Electoral Officer has identified election financing as a need for reform as well, but there is zero—zero—interest or efforts by this government to include any reforms to election financing in this bill.

I just want to read a couple of parts of some of the recent editorials and columns in Ontario. This first one is from Martin Regg Cohn of the Toronto Star and it says, "Campaign Financing Rules a Growing Threat to Ontario's Democracy...."

"Our Premier could learn a thing or two from our Prime Minister about democracy." Of course, this is from a couple of months ago, and that was Stephen Harper that Martin Regg Cohn was referring to.

It goes on: "Thanks to Stephen Harper, this fall's federal election will be free from corporate or union donations, and any outside advertising will also be sharply limited.

"The national ban on big-money politics showcases the best of democracy for all Canadians—except Ontarians." That's from one of the columns.

Of course, the Chief Electoral Officer has also spoken to this. But the Ontario Liberal Party—Ontario's Liberal government—has chosen to turn their back on the widely regarded and respected Chief Electoral Officer and his recommendations.

Martin Regg Cohn goes on further. He had a number of columns this year on suspect or suspicious sorts of activities between the Liberal government and election financing and third-party advertisers.

Here he writes, in October of this year, "A nagging suspicion remains in some quarters that the Liberal government quietly made these payments to support the labour movement's anti-Conservative third-party election ads and political donations by teachers' unions. Both the Wynne administration and the unions have adamantly denied that there was any such intent." Of course.

That is referring to the exchange of millions of dollars, without invoices or receipts, between the Liberal government and the teachers' unions for, ostensibly, bargaining costs. And it goes on. A look at campaign finance disclosure for 2014 indicates—I think it was my microphone that was causing that feedback—that unions representing high school teachers and teachers in the Catholic system spent well over \$3 million on various election-related activities, including to fund a blatantly anti-Conservative coalition group called Working Families.

There's a quid pro quo that is happening between this government and big corporate money and big unions. Of course, we also see that with Bill 144, which was just introduced a week ago. Bill 144 has a clause in it. It's an omnibus bill—again, one of those bills that this government has often spoken adamantly against at the federal level but engages in that activity at every opportunity provincially. In Bill 144 there's a little clause that does away with a collective bargaining agreement between EllisDon and the IBEW and the building trades. Coincidentally, EllisDon contributed \$400,000 to the Liberal Party. I don't think that it's just a coincidence that this Liberal government has offered themselves and offered government for sale to union and corporate interests in Ontario.

Those are just a few of the things that the Chief Electoral Officer has talked about and others have talked about, but this Liberal government has turned a blind eye to those interests. We could go on about other elements that we've seen. Of course, the Sudbury bribery—there are no changes in the legislation that would limit the government's ability to offer up positions to certain individuals for political favours, as we saw what happened with the member from Sudbury and the member of the Police Services Board in Sudbury. These are things that, if the Attorney General had a true belief in restoring and improving justice and democracy, would have been included in Bill 115. It would have been a significant benefit to the people of Ontario. However, it would affect the Ontario Liberal Party's finances.

Once again, I'm glad to see that they're continuing that tradition started by the Ontario PC Party to mirror ridings—constituencies—between both federal and provincial levels of government.

There's one other thing that has come up. Actually, there are a number of things in the Chief Electoral Officer's report—recommendations that were not dealt

with. But I think one of the ones we can all see here is having a permanent voter ID. That could have been included. That would have saved a lot of trouble and problems, as we see in every election campaign, whether it be federal or provincial, of people being sent to the wrong polling stations, not being able to get their voting cards—a host of problems that happen in each campaign. We've seen it time and time again, but the Liberal government chooses not to address the faults and the failings that we know are inherent in our system.

I would like to see somebody from the Liberal side stand up and defend this change in Bill 144 for EllisDon and explain how the \$400,000 in party donations really didn't have any bearing on the government deciding to abrogate a collective bargaining agreement, and that the \$400,000 just—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I recognize the member on a point of order. Stop the clock, please.

1600

Mr. Granville Anderson: Sorry about that. I have to leave for committee. I just wanted to acknowledge some students from Uxbridge Secondary School who are here with us in the Legislature today. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That's not a point of order. However, when we have guests, we do like to recognize our guests. So welcome.

Back to the member from—the call letters.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Lanark–Frontenac–Addington and—

Interjection: –Lennox and Addington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Whatever. It's all yours.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm glad that the students from Uxbridge are here today, listening about what happens in your democracy. You're here today hearing and seeing what happens here in this chamber, and—

Mr. Chris Ballard: Your version, your version.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, the member from Newmarket would like to speak, but he doesn't have the floor. He likes to interject.

However, while you're here, after I leave, after I finish, hopefully the member from Newmarket will stand up and will explain to you why accepting \$400,000 and changing the law and breaking a union agreement is a good Liberal initiative to defend justice and democracy.

Maybe they can get up and defend taking advertising from Working Families and shuffling your money and your parents' money out to teachers' unions to fund those advertising campaigns. I'd be happy to hear what he has to say. If he does have a good response, feel free to email me what you think of his response later on.

Anyway, there are a couple of good things in this bill and a lot of things that clearly speak to the lethargic, lazy attitude of this government to actually fixing what's wrong in this province and making Ontario a much,

much better place for the students of Uxbridge, the students of all schools and all people in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is, I would say, with mixed emotion that I participate in the third reading of this bill. This bill basically focuses on electoral districts. You've all heard, if you've been here for a while, that we will be adding a number of electoral districts in the south, the west and the east of the province. But I represent a riding in northern Ontario. There are 11 provincial ridings in northern Ontario; Nickel Belt, the one that I represent. is one of them.

The problem with the bill is that they are rushing this through when, really, there is absolutely no reason to rush this, Speaker. We already know that the next election is not for another two and a half years, if not three years, and yet we have to rush through this, for reasons unknown.

When this bill was in committee, we tried to bring some amendments to the electoral districts in northern Ontario. I will go into more detail as to one particular change that needs to happen. I realize this is third reading, but it needs to happen. Had the Liberal government agreed to give this a little more time, they would have had the opportunity to travel this bill, to come to northern Ontario and to listen to the people of Nickel Belt, who would have told them clearly that the boundaries of the districts of Nickel Belt need to change.

For some of the people in the North, the boundaries make no sense whatsoever. I'm talking about the residents of Wahnapiatae First Nation. Wahnapiatae First Nation is a tiny First Nation. It is one square mile—that's all. That's on the side of beautiful Lake Wanapitei. It has been there for a very long time. It is quite a thriving First Nation. They have a lot of highly educated people who live there, who have started some small businesses, who do some consulting in environment, in energy, in mining. It's a First Nation that is very, very progressive and doing very well. Believe me, Speaker, I'm the aboriginal critic for my party, and there are not too many First Nations that I can stand up and say are doing well, but Wahnapiatae is one of them—a tiny First Nation on the side of Lake Wanapitei.

When you look at a map of Ontario, you see this vast land in the northeast corner of my riding where there is nothing. There is beautiful bush, there is old-growth forest, there is beautiful Lake Wanapitei—basically, nobody lives there. There is some mining happening. There is certainly a lot of forestry happening. There are some beautiful ATV and snowmobile trails. But if you go from the northeast part of Lake Wanapitei all the way to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please.

I'd just like to remind members, first of all, that I would appreciate that we keep the talk down—and there's a second reason why: not only to show respect for

the speaker, but also the fact that we do have guests in the House this afternoon and we do always want to be putting our best foot forward and giving a good example.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I would encourage that.

I'd like to resume debate. Back to the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll recap a little bit. You have this vast land mass in the northeast of my riding where there's nothing but bush, and that goes all the way to Timiskaming. It looks like there's nothing. For most of it, there are no people who live there, so where the boundaries fell did not matter too much because there were no voters in that part. They decided to put all of that vast area of land in with the Timiskaming district. For most of it, it didn't matter too much because, as I say, all there is—certainly there are lodges out there, there are Ski-Doo and ATV trails, and there's logging and mining, but there are no permanent residents except for Wahnapiatae First Nation. Wahnapiatae First Nation lives on the side of that lake and has been there for—before anybody ever came, there have been First Nations people living there. Whoever the genius was in Toronto who looked at that and decided to put the boundaries there never came to Nickel Belt, never came on the ground to have a look to see how things were working. But there was a First Nation there.

I agree that for some time the First Nation was very small. About 30 years ago, there were only two people who lived there: Mr. and Mrs. Ricolette. But for years and years and years, there had been people living at the Wahnapiatae First Nation site. They've always maintained occupancy; they've always maintained the First Nation reserve there. But when somebody drew the line, they drew the line and put it as if Wahnapiatae First Nation was part of the vast area of bush where nobody lived. But there are people living there. There are now many, many families who live at Wahnapiatae First Nation. So why is it an issue? Because, like lots of other areas in my riding, there is only one road in and out. If you come to Nickel Belt, there's only one road to Westree; there's only one road to Shining Tree; there's only one road to Bisco; there's only one road to Wahnapiatae First Nation. You drive in, and you drive out.

1610

That road happens to be in the city of Sudbury. That road brings you to Capreol, which is one of the municipalities in my riding, and then my constituency office is about 20 kilometres away from that one road. Because somebody way back in Toronto looked at all this bush and figured nobody lived there and drew the line on a piece of paper, they said that they were going to be in Timiskaming. Well, for those people to go to the riding of Timiskaming means coming out on this one road in and out of Wahnapiatae First Nation, driving through most of Nickel Belt, driving through the riding of Sudbury, and then driving through the riding of Timiskaming to finally make it to a constituency office in the Timisk-

aming riding. If there's no bad weather that day, there and back will probably take you about seven hours.

If you need to go to the main office, we're probably talking about a 10-hour drive there and back. They could be in my office in about a nine-minute drive, or they could go to the riding that somebody decided to put them in, with a day's drive. That makes no sense. Since the beginning, when the boundaries were first drawn, every chief of Wahnapiatae First Nation wrote to this government. Every chief and band council passed motions that asked this government.

We went to the person responsible for elections at Elections Ontario—I forgot the title of the person in charge, but they wrote to Elections Ontario. Elections Ontario wrote back and said that it is only when the boundaries are changed in the bill by the government that you will be able to do this.

My predecessor, Shelley Martel, took all of this. We tried to get it through a private member's bill. We tried to get the government to do these changes. Every time we get the same response: "Oh my God. That makes no sense. Why is it that way?" We don't know, because somebody who knew nothing about Nickel Belt and knew nothing about what it is to live in a rural area of northern Ontario drew a line on the map that made no sense. We've been stuck with this ever since.

When finally a bill comes forward that looks at electoral boundaries—yay! After decades of waiting, we have a bill that looks at electoral boundaries. Finally, it's going to be solved, Speaker. So the chief and the band council pass a resolution. The chief sends a letter. The band council sends a letter to the Attorney General. I go and meet with the Attorney General, explain it to her, draw some maps and show her the distance. She understood and thanked me for this information, and finally we have a bill. We are about to fix this.

Now the third reading is in front of me, Speaker, and they have changed a whole bunch of ridings in the south. But in the north? It doesn't matter that it made no sense. It doesn't matter that we have waited for at least 15 years for that bill to be brought into the House. There is no change. Wahnapiatae's voice will continue to be ignored. The people of Wahnapiatae will continue to be part of a riding that is hours' and hours' drive away. They'll drive through two different ridings to get to the one that they belong to.

I can't help but think, if that was happening anywhere down in southern Ontario, not only would the minister have driven to them, listened to them and brought the change herself, but it would be done.

But those people live in northern Ontario; they were here. Chief Ted Roque was here last week. He went and talked with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The minister was quite pleased to have a meeting with them. Chief Ted Roque is a gentleman in every sense of the word. He is well spoken. He is very cheerful in his approach. He's always happy to work with anybody who will work with them. He established a very good working relationship with the Liberals and with the Minister of

Aboriginal Affairs, who offered to work with them and extended a warm welcome: “We will listen to you. We will work with you. We are here to respect you.”

While all of this was going on in the minister’s office—all of those good promises of a healthy, positive working relationship between the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and its leadership representation, Chief Ted Roque of Wahnapiatae First Nation—the bill was in committee making its way through. Our amendment to make sure that Wahnapiatae First Nation gets put back into Nickel Belt and not into Timiskaming was being voted down by the same Liberal government. So, in the minister’s office, they were making promises of being listened to, of wanting to have a healthy dialogue with them, of wanting to put a good, strong working relationship together, but what they had been asking for for the last 15 years was being turned down.

When we pressed—and my colleague who was there championing the bill will tell you—to say, “Well, why aren’t you doing this amendment to the bill? Why aren’t you listening to the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation who have been wanting to have this error corrected for 15 years?”, there was dead silence on the other side. They gave the impression that they couldn’t care less. This is really disappointing.

We have a Premier, we have a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and we have an entire Liberal caucus who, last week, went out of their way, while the Chiefs of Ontario were at Queen’s Park and in Toronto, to say that they had a good working relationship, that they were going to listen to them, that they were going to address their concerns, that they wanted there to be strong ties between the Liberal government and the First Nations chiefs, including the chief of Wahnapiatae First Nation, who was here. And when they ask for something that doesn’t cost the government anything, is not going to change anything for anybody else except for this First Nation, who will then be part of the riding that is an eight-minute drive away from them, rather than 10 hours there and back, they get completely ignored. We get nothing.

How could that be? How can I make a change now, Speaker? I know this is third reading, but I hope the Liberals are listening. Just say that this one little First Nation—actually, it’s a kilometre-squared First Nation on the side of Lake Wanapitei—will now be part of Nickel Belt. Thirty families or so will now vote in Nickel Belt rather than in Timiskaming. It’s not too late to do the right thing. Let’s make that change because those people have waited a long time.

Mr. John Vanthof: And they’ve lobbied a long time.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And they have lobbied a long time. Here’s an opportunity to say, “Yes, when First Nations leadership speaks, when First Nations come to Queen’s Park and ask to be heard, somebody actually listens. Somebody actually listens and acts.” The ask is not of you, Speaker; the bill is right there in front of us. We can do that change.

1620

Electorally, 30 people voting one way or another is not going to change anything in the grand scheme of things,

but for those 30 people, it means that their government has listened to them. It means that their government has realized that although to the people in southern Ontario it may look like just a big swath of bush in the northeast, there are people who live there and the people who live there have a voice and deserve to be heard; that when they bring valuable concerns to the Legislative Assembly, that their government will listen to them, that they will act and they will fix the wrong.

But here I am, at third reading, having done everything that I thought would be possible: I spoke to the minister; the band council wrote, the band chief wrote; the chief came to Queen’s Park, he talked to the minister—and it’s not done. What else can we do so that First Nations get a voice with this government? What else can be done so that something so small that comes from the First Nation can actually be listened to, acted upon and respected?

I don’t know what else can be done, but I hope that the members of the Liberal government who are listening right now will come to their senses and say, “We need to accept this amendment,” where Wahnapiatae First Nation, which is part of the city of Greater Sudbury—the city knows that there are people there, and they service them. They pay their taxes, and they service Wahnapiatae First Nation as anybody else who lives within the city of Greater Sudbury—but not the provincial government.

The provincial government thinks that nobody lives in the bush. They draw a line on a map; they don’t even care to see if anybody lives there. And when we tell them that there are families who live there, they got it wrong—they refuse to listen to them. Those people will continue to be in the electoral district of Timiskaming, which makes absolutely no sense. The speaker before me said that there is value in having an alignment between the federal boundaries and the provincial boundaries. I can assure you, Speaker, that at the federal level, Wahnapiatae is in Nickel Belt, because as I told you, they are a few kilometres away from Capreol, and they are about 20 kilometres from my constituency office, and it’s the same thing with the constituency office of the federal NDP representative.

I don’t get it. Everywhere else in Ontario, we want to align federal boundaries with provincial boundaries, and we go through a lot of trouble to make sure that all of the alignment is done and all of that, but when it comes to northern Ontario, I feel like we don’t matter. I feel like they don’t count. I feel like we don’t count.

Well, they matter to me, Speaker. Those are people who should have been listened to by their government. Those are First Nation people who stood up, and came, and talked to their governments and were completely ignored; that’s wrong. That’s wrong at many, many levels.

If at least one of them would stand up and say, “We did this because”—is there a reason that nobody knows about that would make sense? I’m a reasonable person. If you talk to me, I guarantee you, I will listen. If there is a valid reason, well, tell me, and we’ll all take it in and accept it and move on.

But they did not even have the decency to give us a reason why. They did not even have the decency to put in the effort to say, “We’re not going to listen to those First Nations people; we’re not going to listen to band council after band council, chief after chief who has come to this government to ask for this error to be corrected; we’re just going to pretend that nothing has ever happened, and we’re going to leave things as is.” Well, leaving things as is means that you’re leaving an error to continue to be there, and those people will remember.

So I would say, please look at the third reading. The amendments are still there. It’s very easy. Add the boundaries of Wahnapiatae First Nation, which are really clear: One square kilometre will be in the riding of Nickel Belt and the rest of it stays as is. And if you’re not going to do that, well, tell us why not. Don’t just ignore us and leave us to make up why this happened—because frankly, Speaker, I can’t figure it out. The chief of Elections Ontario tells us that this is how it has to be. I talked to—not the Auditor General; what is she called?—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The Attorney General.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —the Attorney General, and she listened and she understood. She saw the map and she saw that it made sense, and she’s driving this bill forward. What are we missing here? Why is it that when First Nations speak, they cannot be heard? Why is it that when people of the north bring concerns forward, they can be so easily ignored? That’s wrong, Speaker. That’s wrong, and it needs to change. It’s not a big ask. It doesn’t cost anything. It is a historical mistake that needs to be fixed. You have an opportunity to fix a historical mistake that affects a First Nation. Why would you say no to that? I don’t get it. I don’t get it.

But I get that I’ve used my time on the clock, so I will have to sit down. I will say to my colleagues on the Liberal side: You have an opportunity. This bill has not received third reading yet. Make that little change. Bring Wahnapiatae First Nation into Nickel Belt. We have an amendment. You can easily bring it forward. I will give you a chance. I can bring the amendment forward; you can bring the amendment forward—right or wrong.

We know that there have been lots of wrongs against our First Nations. When we have an opportunity to right one of those wrongs, why don’t we take it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I’m happy to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015.

Basically, this bill was brought in because the federal boundaries—every 10 years or so they look at the population of the provinces, in this case Ontario, and see that there has to be some realignment so that we can keep the population within our ridings around, I think, 125,000, plus or minus 25% accuracy. So 15 new ridings were added, increasing the size of the Ontario Legislature to 122 members.

Now, this is mostly going to affect southern Ontario, and I want to say to the member from Nickel Belt that I

hear the concerns she has voiced. In northern Ontario, we keep one extra riding, compared to the federal boundaries; I just wanted to say that. In fact, when this bill was in committee, I think there was a presentation that said the northern ridings should actually have an ability to have their own separate appeal process.

What was just mentioned about a First Nation community that would like to come into her riding of Nickel Belt makes sense. With the boundary changes that are happening, I think the riding of Kenora–Rainy River might be bigger provincially than it is federally. Following up, because she has just spoken on the topic, I think she has some valid points for northern Ontario that we have to look at a little separately, because we have one extra riding—but also which communities are contained in which ridings up there. I give her full credit for bringing that up on behalf of the constituents and wannabe constituents in her riding.

I think it’s easier if you follow federal boundaries in Ontario; I fully agree. It’s less confusion for the people at home, as we say, if you have the same boundaries federally and provincially.

1630

I remember, in the days when my dad was a federal MP, there were, I think, at that time 30 more provincial ridings than federal ridings, so he crossed about three different provincial ridings in the one riding he represented federally. That was good for me, because I knew a lot of extra areas, but this happened in 1999, so by the time I was fortunate enough to be elected in the Legislature in 2003, we were mimicking the federal boundaries. Although it is a lot more area for us to represent, I do think it makes a lot of sense.

And, of course, who wants to see more politicians? Like the Fewer Politicians Act that we had—I think that’s what it was called in 1999, when it first came in.

Other than that one mention I make of northern Ontario, we’re not really disagreeing with the whole mimicking of the federal boundaries that we have here. I know that when the commission first came out, my riding was going to be cut in half, and it was like, “Wait a minute here. That doesn’t make sense.” My riding was literally going to be Lindsay to Lake Ontario, and then just north of Lindsay up to the boundary of Algonquin Park, over to Apsley and then over to the township of Uxbridge, which just made no sense at all.

I say that in this discussion because Haliburton and the city of Kawartha Lakes can fight among themselves a lot, but on this issue—that galvanized them. They loved each other again. They said, “No, no, we want to stay.” Thankfully, the election boundaries commission listened to us, and they did the north-south riding instead of an east-west split. So I was thankful for that.

Unfortunately, I am losing parts of my riding, and my population is actually decreasing. I was saying, “Keep all my riding together as it exists now,” because my population was decreasing. I mentioned earlier about that magic number, that they like to keep it at around 125,000 or so, roughly. Anyway, unfortunately, I’m losing two

parts of my riding, North Kawartha and the Trent Lakes part. I'm sad to see them change when the next election comes, but it's just the way that the boundaries ended up being. I will have less territory to travel, but I will definitely be missing them.

What's missing from this bill, I think, is the bigger part of this, and that's some Election Finances Act amendments. I know that our colleague on this side the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound introduced Bill 96, which was called the Special Interest Groups Election Advertising Transparency Act. Unfortunately, it was defeated back in October 2015. It's basically third-party advertising. I can get into a lot of details, but I won't get into too much. Basically, there's a lot of third-party advertising that occurs provincially. They have a law federally that that doesn't happen during a writ period.

Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer for Elections Ontario, brought this up when he was doing a report. He said it's an affront to democracy, and it is, because third-party advertising—especially being a member of the Progressive Conservative Party—has been pretty penalizing in campaigns. I think 21 groups advertised against us in the last provincial election, so we've seen that it has grown.

In the 2007 election, \$1.8 million was spent on third-party advertising. Then, in the 2011 election, it had grown to \$6 million, and it has just increased. I think it was \$21 million in the last election that had gone to—I'm sorry; it was \$8.6 million in the 2014 election. That's a lot of partisan messaging that we cannot, as a party—every party has spending caps, so we can't spend that type of money.

A proposed spending cap of \$150,000 was mentioned by Greg Essensa for third-party groups' advertising. That's the most they could spend in advertising. Certainly we all, as political parties, have caps that we have to either advertise within or have election spending within, but third-party advertising is outside that. When it has grown that much, that influences democracy and influences people's opinions and how they vote.

That was a very big piece of what we would have liked to have seen come in with this bill, and we would have liked to have seen all-party support for my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound when he introduced that bill.

I know that throughout the elections—I've had four now—I consistently get problems with the lists. I'm sure all members, to a certain extent, have that. I know in one election—I think it was in 2007—I had the third-highest incorrect list in the province of Ontario. It's pretty frustrating for voters. You want to encourage voter turnout, but when you're not on the list and, election after election, you give them the correct information and then you're still not on the list, it does discourage people.

Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer, has certainly made some recommendations also on that, of creating a permanent voter ID list and oversight of that. Right now, I think the names on the provincial electors list come from a lot of different sources, but having a

permanent ID list for the provincial elections, for the province of Ontario, would be much more helpful.

The feds get a different list. As I said, when I have people on the federal election list who are not on the provincial election list, it drives people a little crazy and creates a lot of phone calls to all of our offices. That was brought up by Greg Essensa. The other thing, of course, was the third-party advertising. Those were the two biggest asks that he had of this government.

I'm hoping that the present government does, at some point, look at oversight with third-party advertising rules. Getting better data for permanent voters lists would also be more than helpful, and I then won't have to write any more letters to the Chief Electoral Officer to share all the complaints that I have in the riding.

We're certainly supporting this bill as it is. It makes sense that we mimic the federal boundaries in Bill 115. So I will say thank you for the time allotted today, and I think my colleague from Huron–Bruce wants to have a few comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in this House and today on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act. What this bill is basically about is adjusting the boundaries for most of the ridings in the province to match the federal ridings. We don't disagree with that because, as population increases, people need to be represented, and so the number of ridings in southern Ontario is increasing because there are more people to represent. We have no problem with that at all.

This bill also keeps northern Ontario at 11 ridings. Again, we agree because in northern Ontario, the distances are vast. We don't have a problem with that. But we do have a problem—we put an amendment forward and I'm going to echo my colleague from Nickel Belt. I have a portion of my riding in Timiskaming–Cochrane—Timiskaming–Cochrane is a great riding, but there's one part of Timiskaming–Cochrane that doesn't fit. Why it doesn't fit: The Wahnapiatae First Nation is a kilometre square and Lake Wanapitei is a big body of water. The Wahnapiatae First Nation is on the opposite side of the Lake Wanapitei than the rest of Timiskaming–Cochrane. So, for the people from the Wahnapiatae First Nation to get service from a constituency office—from my constituency office—they've got about a day's travel ahead of them. But to get to the constituency office of my colleague in Nickel Belt, they've got 20 minutes of travel.

So it would make sense to move the Wahnapiatae First Nation to the riding of Nickel Belt, where they are actually served. The Wahnapiatae First Nation has been lobbying for this for years and years, as stated by the member from Nickel Belt. I remember the first time I met Chief Ted Roque, in 2007, the first time I ran. I asked him, "What is the number one issue in the Wahnapiatae

First Nation?" He said, "We're in the wrong riding. That's the number one issue."

So we took it upon ourselves, over the years, to try to fix this, and when this bill came forward, this was our opportunity. As the member from Nickel Belt stated, there are only a few opportunities and this is an opportunity to actually change this, this fault. The chief wants it, the people want it and both the members want it. It's not going to change anything in the big picture except that the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation are going to be much better served in the province of Ontario.

1640

So we let the government know when this bill was introduced. We let the government know at first reading. We let the government know at second reading. In the committee process, we put forward two amendments: basically, one amendment to move the Wahnapiatae First Nation out of the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, which at this point happens to be my riding, and into the riding of Nickel Belt, where they actually would be much better served. Pretty simple.

We all thought that this was actually a time when we could not spend a lot of money—actually, spend no money—and fix this. And the answer was no. The government members voted against these amendments. The answers: "Well, perhaps something might change in a few years." One of the members said, "Well, maybe we'll be able to vote electronically in a few years." This isn't about voting; this is about serving the people. That's the problem. Also, voting electronically in northern Ontario—first we'd like to have Internet before we decide to vote electronically. I brought that up, too—or public transportation.

But one of the things: "Well, maybe we could change this in three years." You know what, Speaker? There are a few things that aren't going to change. One of them—not in three days, three months, three years or 300 years—is that Lake Wanapitei is still going to be in the same place, and the people in the Wahnapiatae First Nation are going to be on the opposite side of Lake Wanapitei than the rest of the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane. That makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

The government seems to think that, yes, adjustments are good in southern Ontario, but in northern Ontario, we have one more riding but everything else should remain static; we shouldn't bother to fix small problems. And to the overall province, this is a small problem. But to the people of the Wahnapiatae First Nation, this is a huge problem that could be fixed.

To add insult to injury, as the government members were voting against this motion, in another part of the same building, the chief of the Wahnapiatae First Nation was here talking to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Interjection: Good meeting.

Mr. John Vanthof: Great meeting—could be. But what frustrates people in northern Ontario and what sure frustrates the First Nations—and this is a perfect example—the government talks about consulting. To the First Nations, consulting means you talk and then you do

something. In this case, it's all talk, because even when it's something as small as moving this First Nation—a kilometre square, I believe—into the riding where they actually are serviced and actually belong? Oh, no, that's too much trouble. We were told in the committee here that perhaps we should collect some more information. For what? This government is obviously not interested in creating any kind of vehicle for this to actually be done, and that is what's so frustrating.

When the federal commission looked at the changes in the ridings, the changes that were discussed in northern Ontario don't apply because the northern ridings, federally and provincially, don't match. We're not arguing that. There are a lot of issues that are dealt with provincially. Some of my federal colleagues might disagree, but I'm pretty sure my provincial colleagues on all sides of the House—we deal with a lot more issues one-on-one with constituents than our federal colleagues do.

Hon. James J. Bradley: And get paid much less.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I don't really care about that. But we deal with a lot more issues and that's why we need to be closer to the people. That's why there's one more riding in northern Ontario provincially than federally. But that doesn't preclude us even looking to see how we can perhaps better serve people within northern Ontario.

One of the comments from the government members was, "Well, if we do this, we might open the floodgates." Okay. You know what, Speaker? Let's open the floodgates. Every pocket of northern Ontario that has to drive through two other ridings to actually get to the constituency office, that happens to be on the wrong side of the lake, that happens to be a homogenous First Nation—let's open those floodgates, because I don't think you're going to see too many.

What this government could have done, what they should have done and the way that it was supposed to work—the government says, "Opposition always criticizes and they never give suggestions on how to move forward." Instead of time-allocating this bill, this government should have put the bill in the Legislature, done second reading. This bill isn't time-sensitive because the next election is two and a half years away.

They could have said, "You know what? In northern Ontario, because we haven't really looked at the riding boundaries, perhaps we will send a committee out to places where they have suggestions, like the Wahnapiatae First Nation." Isn't that a novel idea? Go talk to people where they actually live. Perhaps if the government members of that committee could start out at the constituency office in Sturgeon Falls, West Nipissing—which happens, at this point, to be my constituency office—we could take a tour down to the Wahnapiatae First Nation, drive through the riding of Sudbury, and drive through the town of Capreol in the riding of Nickel Belt, and perhaps then they would understand. That's how government would work. Then the committee could come back: "This one makes sense." We could actually serve the people.

But no, that's not what this government does. This government is so intent on—we often say this in the House—ramming things through and getting their own way. It's a majority government; they can get their own way. But just because you can do something, it doesn't mean it's a good idea. That's what this government is forgetting. This is a prime example.

On one hand, “Oh, we like to consult with the First Nations. We're going to work with the First Nations. We're going to do all these things with the First Nations.” And then on another floor of the building, they're saying, “You know what? It sucks to be you.” That's what they told Chief Ted Roque and his people that day: “It sucks to be you. We don't care.” They don't care if the members of the Wahnapiatae First Nation have to drive 10 hours to go to a constituency office. They don't care, because if they cared, they would have changed it, because it was within their power to change it. That's the beauty of a majority government: If you want to do things right, you can do great things. But if you don't want to, or if you don't care, you don't bother. This is a prime example.

They still have a chance to change it because this is not a new issue. I wasn't even aware until I listened to my colleague from Nickel Belt about how long this issue has actually been in the works. This has been in the works for a long, long time. And we did everything in our power. We did everything right; talked to the minister. I stood in this place, stood right here, and in second reading basically made almost the same speech, but at that time I thought there was a bit more hope because I thought somebody was actually going to move on the other side on something so simple.

People become disenchanted with government and disenchanting with a lot of things, and this is the reason why. I believe in the committee I got a bit upset and I said, “This example is what drives northerners nuts,” because we talk about the government—and various governments talk about, “Oh, we care about northern Ontario. We do all these things about northern Ontario.”

Really, on a lot of these issues, like this one—one square kilometre; Chief Ted Roque and his people—they basically say, “Oh, no, we don't want to open the floodgates. We're happy if these people have to drive 10 hours for whatever.”

1650

Something else, Speaker—and I'm sure most of my colleagues will agree, but especially those in northern Ontario and rural Ontario—constituency offices play a big role in northern Ontario. For a lot of issues—mental health issues, family violence issues—for a lot of those issues, the first place where they can actually find some help is in your constituency office. Unlike the city, we don't have—I'm from the country, and when I walk through the streets of Toronto, I'm surprised—pleasantly surprised—by how many services actually exist here; and that's a great thing. I'm proud to be from Ontario. But a lot of those services don't exist in the country, especially in northern Ontario, so we have to make do, and our northern colleagues of all stripes do; we do those things.

When we identify an issue, like Chief Ted Roque and the Wahnapiatae First Nation, who are in the wrong riding, we try and fix it. We weren't trying to make this a political issue—not at all. If the government had done what's right and actually accepted those two amendments, we would have said, “Thank you very much, government, for listening.” We've been working on this issue for years and years and years. The people of the Wahnapiatae First Nation would have been much, much better served, and everybody would have been happy. It would have been a win for the government and certainly a win for the Wahnapiatae First Nation, because they've been working for this for a long, long time. But instead, the government just decides, because they're in a hurry—for some reason, they're in a hurry—let's get this done before Christmas. They ignored, actually, the needs of the people.

I implore the Premier and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, instead of using the empty words of “a good meeting” and “we want to consult,” to actually show that they truly do want to work with First Nations and take this issue—which, in the grand scheme of things, is a very small one, but it would be a beacon to show that this government is actually going to follow through—to, instead of just hollow talk, actually move on this issue and take the Wahnapiatae First Nation and put it in the riding of Nickel Belt, where it should be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm actually pleased to be able to speak on Bill 115 today, the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015.

As I kick off my remarks, I just want to comment on the member from Timiskaming. I appreciate your comments very much, and I might come back to them in a moment, in terms of the size of electoral ridings as well as connectivity, because you made very valid points.

You made the comment, “I like being from the country” or “I'm from the country.” I just wanted to say, “And I like it that way,” because I agree with you 100%. Do you know where that comes from? It's a good Alabama song.

Anyway, with that, Speaker—

Ms. Laurie Scott: We'll be singing it soon.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, we'll be singing soon.

We want to talk about this particular bill, Bill 115, because it impacts the very foundations of our ridings. I can't be standing here today without commenting on how proud I am of having the honour of representing the riding of Huron—Bruce, on Ontario's west coast. It is one of the best ridings in this province.

But I'd be remiss if I didn't reflect on what today is. Today, we have our federal counterparts being sworn in for their next experience.

Ms. Soo Wong: Aw.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I thank you over there, from Scarborough—

Ms. Soo Wong: Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, thank you—Scarborough–Agincourt.

I want to congratulate my federal colleague the PC representative Ben Lobb for his re-election. I believe this will be his fourth or fifth term. He has done a great job representing our riding of Huron–Bruce as well.

With regard to Bill 115, this act would see the Representation Act, 2005, which defines our current 107 electoral districts, repealed.

Again, for the people watching or just tuning in, if they can't sleep tonight and they're passing the time, Bill 115 is all about repealing former regulations and legislation that define our current 107 electoral districts. We want to make sure we're aligned with the federal boundaries that were created back in 2013 by the federal government.

Bill 115 will also amend the Election Finances Act to ensure that our riding associations and constituency organizations reflect the shift that would take place in the Legislative Assembly Act to allow for these extra seats, as well as the Election Act.

Mirroring our provincial ridings with those of the federal electoral districts has been an initiative that we in the PC Party have advocated for, and we first did this back in the 1990s, under the premiership of Mike Harris. But the changes that we reflect upon now in 2015, according to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission, occur, when warranted, every 10 years after the census is conducted and the number of electoral districts and their boundaries are revised to reflect population shifts and growth.

For Ontario, this change would mean 15 new ridings to mirror those—such as Markham–Stouffville, Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, Markham–Thornhill, Don Valley North, Scarborough–Rouge Park, University–Rosedale, Mississauga Centre, Brampton North, Brampton South, Milton, Oakville North–Burlington, Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, Kitchener South–Hespeler, Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte, Bay of Quinte and Nepean—at the federal level.

Speaker, you didn't hear many rural ridings in that list of 15 new electoral ridings. With that, I just want to share that these shifts are important because we need to make sure Ontarians have representatives in terms of equity, and those electoral ridings are based on approximately 100,000 people per riding. We have to recognize where Ontario's growing, but I do echo the importance that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was sharing earlier, in that even though we need to recognize where the growth in Ontario is happening, we need to make sure that all ridings and all areas of this province move forward. Just because we're creating 15 new ridings doesn't mean that priorities should shift. We need to make sure that both urban and rural issues and priorities are moving forward.

I'm not necessarily suggesting there needs to be equity, but rural Ontario, northern Ontario and urban Ontario need to be moving forward. That's the importance behind my statement there. Again, it will never happen in

tandem, but every riding deserves proper representation and we have to make sure we've got that.

Another issue that I would like to touch on is the size of ridings. I recognize that electoral ridings are developed around the approximate size of 1,000 people, but—

Ms. Laurie Scott: A hundred thousand people.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: A hundred thousand people; thank you. But it's the size of the ridings that also needs to be appreciated.

Again, we heard from the representatives in the north. They were very passionate and eloquent in raising their voices about the concerns in their particular ridings. But I have to tell you, to do justice to the riding of Huron–Bruce—to circle the entire riding from Chesley in the northeast through to Saugeen in the northwest, down to Grand Bend, over to Whalen Corners in the southeast and back up through Hanover and crossing over to Chesley again—it takes me over eight hours to circle that riding. I have a huge riding. Every community matters in that riding. Again, I can't express what an honour it is to represent the riding of Huron–Bruce, but the size of it unto itself causes a little bit of frustration on my part because I can't be in all places at all times. But we have to embrace the technology and the evolutions that are happening, and that is through the world of technology.

1700

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane touched on connectivity. In my riding of Huron–Bruce, we have areas that are on dial-up. We do not have the high-speed connection that so many other Ontarians just take for granted at their fingertips. But I'm pleased to say that the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus is addressing this. We're working with them to make sure that we can proceed and get that high-speed connectivity, because if everyone is connected in an equitable way, guess what? Here in Ontario, when it comes to elections, perhaps we can take that step forward and enable people to, no matter where they are in this province, no matter what riding they live in, perhaps someday embrace a recommendation, which my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock talked about, from Greg Essensa, in the sense that technology needs to be embraced to enable people to vote from home.

We're seeing different methods tested at the municipal level. Some municipalities have allowed mail-in votes to be cast, while other ones have, indeed, embraced electronic voting. I think we do need to move forward in that regard, because—for goodness' sake—it is 2015 and we need to taking into serious consideration the recommendations that have come forward.

One of the recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer made in his 2013-14 annual report was around the need to improve access to voting as well. Currently, right now, a vast number of elementary and high schools are used as voting stations. In his report, he recognized that, while the access is good, the reality is that it disrupts the school day. It was just another proof point that we need to really be thinking about how to advance voting in 2015 in this province of Ontario.

Another issue that I think is prudent to address at this stage of the game, with the by-election coming up in Whitby–Oshawa, is the need to make sure that third-party advertising is addressed. We've seen too many times where third parties come in and they skew the issues. People get confused. I remember back actually in 2014 that there were ads hitting the airwaves well ahead of the writ being dropped, and they were from particular unions that were bashing the leader of the PC Party at the time. It's not acceptable.

You know what? We need to make sure that democracy is not skewed, is not upset by third-party advertising with their hidden agendas. We have to make sure—for goodness' sake—that some of these organizations that do go forward with third-party advertising—

Hon. James J. Bradley: We need to have something to counteract the Toronto Sun.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister without portfolio, come to order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: —do not receive funding from the government, like we heard with the \$1-million gold-plated pepperoni issue. That has to stop as well, because we all know what that money really is going towards.

When we talk about the need for Bill 115 and streamlining acts and putting them into plain English as they are read and used, we'll be doing our part to educate and mould a more informed and engaged Ontario. Speaker, that's what we really want. We want to make sure that the communication highways are not cluttered with third-party advertising, we want to make sure that access is available throughout all of Ontario, and we want to make sure that people are engaged so that we can vote.

I would just like to go back and make note of the fact that in 2011, Huron–Bruce actually had the highest electoral turnout. I'm very proud of that. In 2014, we had the second-highest turnout. I hope that with some of these improvements through Bill 115, all of the ridings across Ontario will have better voter turnout as well.

While the PC Party supports amending electoral boundaries to ensure consistency with our federal counterparts and a more engaged Ontario, we caution that there are other steps that were noted by the electoral officer to make the whole system better. So let's all work together to make sure that at the end of the day, in 2018, as many Ontarians as possible are engaged, want a difference and can get out and vote with easy access.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 3, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

But don't you dare change that dial. We have a vote deferral:

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 115 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 2, 2015."

Third reading vote deferred.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, if I may: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the order for resuming the debate adjourned on the motion for third reading of Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act, may be called during orders of the day this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and speak in third reading debate on Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. I want to thank all the people and organizations who took time to share their comments and concerns on this bill; organizations who sent written submissions with the committee, who shared with them and with me over the last eight months since this bill was introduced; and those people who took time to meet with me and my colleagues to talk about the impact of this bill on their organizations, industries or municipalities.

I want to recognize all of the organizations who came forward at committee to express their concerns about Bill 73 and to outline amendments that would make it better. After a long discussion at committee, we were able to get three days of committee hearings, which meant that there was enough time for 40 people or organizations to present.

We know that there was limited time to apply. I heard from a stakeholder who checked the legislative website on Friday, October 23 at 4 p.m., and there was no notice of the hearings. I know that the advertising didn't take place until after the committee met, on Monday, October

26. But by the deadline, less than three days later, we had 40 applicants to speak, enough to fill every single spot.

We received written submissions from more organizations that weren't able to come. In fact, in their written submission, the Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa-Carleton said, "We question why, as Ontario's second-largest city, Ottawa should have to be omitted from a round of consultation meetings or a video hookup."

Bill 73 had more hearings than many other bills that have gone through this Legislature recently, and there still was more interest for more hearings.

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We've said that we will acknowledge when the government does something right, so I want to recognize that everyone who came to make a presentation appreciated the fact that the government agreed to more hearings on this bill and gave people a little more time to present.

The presenters raised some valid concerns about the bill, some challenges it would create and some of the unintended consequences. The written statement from Ken Seiling, regional chair from Waterloo and chair of MARCO, said, "Bill 73, as tabled, is an improvement; however, it does not go far enough and too much is left to enactment through future regulations." We heard their concerns. We raised those concerns during clause-by-clause and brought forward amendments to make this bill better.

Before I get into the detail and the concerns and the amendments, I want to take a minute to talk generally about municipal legislation. I've been lucky to see this legislation from a number of different sides: as a municipal politician, as chair of ROMA, as a cabinet minister and, now, as opposition critic. Whenever a government amends legislation that impacts municipalities, I think there are a few guiding principles that need to be followed.

The first principle is that we need to respect the municipalities as a mature level of government. Members of council are duly elected by their constituents. They have been entrusted with the responsibility of delivering the services that their constituents need, managing the finances and planning for the future. We need to respect the faith that their constituents have shown in their municipal government and respect that government's knowledge of their own local needs.

This brings me to the second principle: There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to municipal legislation. We need to recognize that each municipality is unique and that challenges faced by Toronto are vastly different than those faced by remote northern municipalities; that the challenges faced by the town of Whitby are vastly different than those faced by Pelee Island. We need to ensure that there is enough flexibility within the legislation that it will work for those communities and everyone in between.

The third principle is balance. I want to acknowledge that there are a number of places in Bill 73 where the government got that balance right—and I say "a number

of places." Balance is particularly important for this bill. It's about balance between protecting public consultation and not delaying the projects, balance between laying out the process to ensure fairness to all and not creating red tape, and balance between making housing affordable and funding infrastructure.

We all understand that municipalities are struggling to make ends meet. The Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund cuts, the power dam special payment program cuts, emergency funding that takes years to deliver, new demands for forms and reports to be completed—Mr. Speaker, it all adds up.

As AMO president Gary McNamara said, during his speech at the AMO conference this year, "Financially, there is a little bite here and a little bite there." He's speaking about provincial downloading.

He also said:

"What's \$50,000 here? What's another \$50,000 there?"

"Well, it's far more than they seem to appreciate."

"Almost half of Ontario's municipalities have to hike property taxes by at least one full per cent to raise \$50,000."

Just recently, the government announced the 2016 Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund grants allocation and confirmed that they are cutting another \$10 million out of the program. That brings the cuts, over the last four years, to over \$70 million.

A number of communities in my riding—the town of Ingersoll, the township of Blandford-Blenheim, the township of East Zorra-Tavistock, the township of South-West Oxford and the township of Zorra—have all seen their municipal partnership fund grants cut by half over the past four years. All of this makes it difficult to balance the budget and deliver the services that people depend on, but making up for provincial cuts by putting all those costs onto housing just isn't the solution.

In their submission on Bill 73, the region of Halton laid out the funding challenges that they are having and why they needed additional funding from development. As they said, "Alternatively, the province needs to once again become a funding partner to help fund significant upfront growth-related infrastructure."

We support the concept of growth paying for growth, Mr. Speaker, but the provincial government cannot continue to look at development charges as a way to make up for underfunding Ontario's municipalities. If they do, it will make our housing problems worse.

We already have a serious housing affordability problem in Ontario, and we acknowledge that it's not an easy problem to fix.

As Social Planning Toronto said during their presentation:

"Over the past 10 years, the average cost of housing ownership has increased by 87%, with the average cost of a single detached home at over \$1 million and the average cost of a resale home at about \$635,000. At these prices, only households with incomes in the top 20% can afford to own."

“People who work in Toronto often commute long distances to get to work simply because they cannot afford the high cost of housing.”

Social Planning Toronto was here primarily to support inclusionary zoning, but I think their point is important in the broader discussion, too.

The Royal Bank of Canada’s annual housing affordability study found that the cost of both bungalows and two-storey homes in Ontario are at a record high. In the report, they stated, “Clearly, owning a single detached home in Ontario at market prices has become a stretch for a typical household in key parts of the province such as Toronto.”

We cannot solve the affordability crisis without looking at the whole spectrum of housing, from home ownership to social housing. There are many people who support building more affordable housing who, at the same time, are pushing to increase the costs that builders face—costs that are passed on to the new homeowner or the renter. That just doesn’t make sense. Development charges are not an endless source of infrastructure money; every dollar comes from a new homeowner or a renter. Increasing development charges forces those prices out of reach for some families.

As I pointed out during my speech on second reading, development charges are already a significant amount. The Greater Toronto Home Builders’ Association reported that for a \$440,000 family home, over \$25,000 goes to development charges. The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario commissioned a report called Alternatives to Development Charges for Growth-Related Capital Costs. It found that development charges are now \$30,000 to \$50,000 per single-family home in high-growth municipalities surrounding Toronto. By comparison, it found that development fees in Calgary and Edmonton are less than \$8,000 per unit.

The Ontario Home Builders’ Association said during their presentation: “Transit development charges are an important financing tool, but it is important to recognize that they are built into the cost of new homes along with an extensive series of other taxes, fees and charges that governments place on new housing.... These charges are ultimately absorbed and paid for by the new neighbour and ... paid off through their individual long-term mortgages.”

As buying a home becomes out of reach, more people rely on rental properties, which puts up the demand and cost, forcing people to rely on social housing. Even the federal Liberals recognize this. In his mandate letter, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development was asked not just to look at social housing, but also tasked with “undertaking a review of escalating home prices in high-priced housing markets and considering all policy tools that could keep home ownership within reach for more Canadians.”

This bill has the potential to force up the cost of new homes and new rentals by allowing the development charge increases. To solve this problem over the long term, we need to look at addressing the factors and

policies that impact the cost of housing. However, it appears this government is taking the opposite approach. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has stated that he is looking for new revenue tools for municipalities. This includes another tax that would dramatically increase the cost of housing: the municipal land transfer tax. There was so much noise about that in the last few weeks, and my colleague Mr. Clark introduced a motion to stop that from happening. It seems, finally, the minister saw the light and cancelled that today during question period. I know many of us have heard from constituents who do not want this additional tax on their home ownership.

The government is also forcing up the cost of living every day. Housing costs aren’t just the price of renting an apartment or purchasing a house. Factors such as the spiralling cost of hydro are contributing to the problem too. In fact, in some our communities, hydro bills alone are forcing seniors out of their homes.

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All of these costs are causing more and more families to need social housing. There are now 168,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing, a record high. In fact, in the last five years alone, the waiting lists have increased by more than 27,000 families. The changes in this legislation have the potential to put the cost of housing out of reach for more and more families.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 73 proposes to move the list of which services are ineligible for development charges into regulations, which would open the door to huge increases in the cost of home ownership or renting. All of these costs get factored into the price that builders or landlords charge, and force up the cost of housing. That’s why we couldn’t support the NDP amendment that would have taken all restrictions off eligible services. It is also why we put forward an amendment that would have, once again, legislated that the provision of culture or entertainment facilities, including museums, theatres, and art galleries, tourism facilities and the provision of hospitals, will not be eligible for development charges.

When Bill 37 was announced, the government’s news release said it would “allow municipalities to recover capital costs for waste diversion” through development charges. Our amendment would have allowed that change that the government publicly announced, but would ensure that a young family, a senior on a fixed income or a single parent isn’t priced out of home ownership because they are forced to pay for tourism facilities or an art gallery that really isn’t part of the growth at all—or a hospital: Health care is a provincial responsibility, Mr. Speaker. Homeowners and renters have already paid for hospitals through their income taxes. They shouldn’t be paying again through their mortgages.

During the parliamentary committee hearings, the parliamentary assistant said, “Bill 73 proposes to identify ineligible services exclusively through regulations to provide greater flexibility to make changes to the list of ineligible services as we progress.” That means the

government is giving themselves the ability to increase development charges by adding more eligible services. It also means that they will be making those decisions which impact the cost of housing behind closed doors.

I would say to them, when you make those decisions, remember that those costs don't come out of the pockets of developers. They come from the people who are struggling to buy their first home. They are paid by the renters who are struggling every month to make ends meet. These decisions end up impacting the affordability of housing across the whole spectrum.

Mr. Speaker, we need to address the factors such as development charges that are driving up the cost of housing, but we also need to ensure that money intended for social housing actually goes to help families in need. I've spoken over and over in this House about the money intended for social housing that is still being misused. Money that was intended to go to affordable housing instead is going to European trips, luxury South African vacations, \$8 water and \$300 flannel shirts.

Everyone who has read the government's independent review, as I did, knows that none of these expenses were investigated in the review that the minister speaks about and that that review failed to look at where those funds were coming from. All of that money, Mr. Speaker, is coming from the Housing Services Corp. overcharging social housing providers for natural gas and insurance.

Toronto Community Housing estimated that they could save \$6.3 million in a single year if the minister allowed them to opt out of buying gas from the Housing Services Corp. Imagine how many people that could have helped. The spending problem at Housing Services Corp. isn't solved, and it's costing social housing providers and municipalities.

Last week we asked why the region of Waterloo was forced to pay Housing Services Corp. \$10,000 this fall just to be allowed to opt out of buying through the HSC and to purchase the same insurance from a less expensive source. As Waterloo regional councillor Ken Seiling said last week, "We've always said that we didn't see the need for a social housing corporation and if the province wants to support the other municipalities they should do that directly and not through us." Allowing social housing providers to opt out of Housing Services Corp. will help them and it will help municipalities.

At the beginning, I mentioned the financial burden that municipalities are facing. Part of that burden is the additional cost and requirements the province continues to force onto municipalities. Bill 73 will once again increase those requirements. While we support the increased transparency and accountability, we need to recognize that each new statement or report adds to the burden on municipalities. As the town of Whitby said in their submission, "This legislation, as proposed, will increase the amount of staff time and overall costs associated with the implementation and reporting."

During my second reading speech, I asked the minister to review the requirements on municipalities and to eliminate an unneeded burden for every new burden that

this act adds. I have seen no evidence that the government has taken any steps to do that. In fact, when we put forward amendments that municipalities asked for, to help reduce some of the burdens on municipalities, the government rejected each and every one of them.

One of the concerns that municipalities raised was that they were being asked to conduct official plan reviews so frequently that they barely finished a review before they would be asked to start the next one. Bill 73 takes a good first step in recognizing this and changes the review period following a new official plan from five to 10 years. But any subsequent reviews are still required to be completed every five years.

As the county of Renfrew said in their submission, "The five-year review cycle comes around very quickly and places a strain on the resources of municipalities, and puts them in a constant state of review, at the expense of other planning initiatives."

The chief planner for the city of Toronto said, "The situation we're in right now is that we're in a constant process of official plan review. We're never done because we get it reviewed and, because of the legislative requirement, we have to begin again. A 10-year period would give us somewhat of a breathing room in order to get on with the work of implementing the official plan."

We put forward an amendment that recognized the time and resources required for an official plan review and would have changed the requirement for all reviews to not less than 10 years. This would make the timing consistent with the requirements for the new official plans and the provincial policy statements under Bill 73. All of it would be reviewed every 10 years. We were disappointed that the government voted down this amendment.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the government cannot continue to place new burdens on municipalities without reviewing and eliminating some of the existing burdens, and we will continue to raise this concern.

For instance, Bill 73 adds a requirement for upper-tier municipalities to have an advisory panel which includes one member from the public. Mr. Speaker, one member of the public on an advisory panel doesn't result in public consultation. So this committee would just end up being a burden on municipalities without providing a real benefit to either the planning process or the public.

AMO strongly objects to the mandatory requirement for the planning advisory committee. In their presentation, they said, "This idea of mandatory planning advisory committees was tried in the past and was abandoned. It created confusion as to the legislative role of councils and what the accountability framework of public advisers is, and again involves another administrative practice."

The county of Renfrew said, "Most, if not all, of" our "county colleagues have standing committees of county council which have served their communities well as reporting vehicles on planning matters. It is difficult to see how requiring the creation of another committee at the upper tier streamlines the planning process or enhances local autonomy."

In Oxford, the planning discussions happen with full council in open meetings, where the public and the media can attend. I'm concerned that creating a planning advisory committee would take these discussions out of the open meeting and put them into a backroom.

As the county of Oxford said in their submission, "They also insert an additional step into the decision-making process, which may not be necessary or advisable in a particular municipal context and can impact the timeliness and the cost of local planning processes."

We put forward an amendment to make these planning advisory committees optional, as they are for the lower-tier municipalities. It would give the municipalities the flexibility to consult the public and make planning decisions in a way that works for their local municipality. But again, the government chose not to listen to us or the municipalities and voted down the amendment.

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Bill 73 also adds new requirements for asset management plans. We believe that asset management plans are a useful tool and we agree that they are necessary for effective planning. However, we need to ensure that the requirements for new asset management plans are all consistent so municipalities can build on research and planning that they have already done effectively.

As Ken Seiling, the regional chair of Waterloo, said during his presentation, "I'm not arguing against asset management plans. We believe in them and we're doing them, but the fact that some of these are required in different forms by different government agencies for funding a specific requirement—and that doesn't take into account all those broad things—is problematic."

The Municipal Finance Officers' Association said, "Municipalities should be permitted to augment existing asset management plans using existing approaches and methodologies. Development of these plans requires considerable staff time and financial resources, and requiring asset management plans to be redone to a new methodology would place a burden on a number of municipalities."

We raised this concern during the clause-by-clause, and want to raise it again to ask the government to ensure that the regulations around asset management plans allow municipalities to build on existing plans, rather than starting from scratch.

One of the most disappointing parts of the clause-by-clause was that on many issues, the government simply refused to listen to municipalities. One of the strong examples was the concern raised by the fact that Bill 73 would void co-operative agreements that have been signed between municipalities and developers. We heard from municipalities that they have already done their research and planning and, based on that, have negotiated agreements with builders—agreements that will be voided under Bill 73.

One of the municipalities that presented to the committee was the city of Pickering. During his presentation, the director of corporate services and city solicitor said, "As required by the provincial plan for Seaton, the city

has conducted a detailed fiscal impact study surveying the infrastructure demands. Based on the results of that study, the city has negotiated an agreement with the province and with the private landowners in Seaton to provide for the equitable sharing of infrastructure costs among all the parties. This agreement provides, in part, that the private landowners shall make payments to the city over and above the development charges which are payable under the act. This agreement is crucial because without it, Seaton is not fiscally viable. I need to be completely clear about this: Seaton can't proceed without this financial agreement in place, and development charges alone are manifestly insufficient for the financing of the necessary infrastructure."

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear: This is a provincial development plan. The provincial government told the city of Pickering to negotiate with the builders to share the infrastructure costs, and now they are passing legislation that would prohibit those exact agreements. This is creating a real challenge for the city of Pickering, because the government members on the committee didn't sound like they heard it. When the city solicitor finished his presentation, they asked him a single question and they didn't put forward any amendments to try and solve this issue.

Another municipality which came to speak to the issue was the city of Barrie. As you know, they are forecast to have significant growth between 2011 and 2041; they are forecast to have an almost 90% increase in their population. The city of Barrie did their research and planning to ensure that growth is done correctly. As the mayor said during his presentation to the committee, "The city and the development community worked collaboratively, sharing data and collectively analyzing the costs of building, maintaining, operating and replacing infrastructure. The result was a trio of important documents: a comprehensive asset management plan, a fiscal impact assessment and an infrastructure implementation plan."

Based on that work, the developers and the city of Barrie together came up with an agreement that will ensure that Barrie will build the necessary infrastructure. Then the city planned their public works and their budget based on that agreement and the additional revenue. But now, Bill 73 would void that agreement.

When he was asked about the impact of having that agreement prohibited by this legislation, Mayor Lehman said, "I hesitate to speculate about the legal impact. The practical impact for our municipality would be an inability to implement a capital plan that is entirely in conformity with the growth policies of the province, and an inability to move forward with careful, well-thought-out planning that's been agreed with by the development community."

Again, it didn't seem as if the government members on the committee really listened. When they had the opportunity to ask the mayor questions, they asked what he thought of the community development permit system—nothing to do with his presentation.

We understand the difficulty that voiding these agreements causes for those municipalities that have planned, worked out agreements and budgeted based on this money in good faith. That's why we put forward an amendment that would have grandfathered existing voluntary agreements. Our amendment would have ensured that there was no double-charging on services.

Under Bill 73, a number of new services are eligible for development charges. If a municipality passes a development charge bylaw for a new service that was in the co-operative agreement, it would void that. When I asked the mayor of Barrie about these new services, he said, "Sure, and we would certainly agree to maintain our side of the agreement. There would be no notion of renegotiating charges already established within the agreement."

This concern wasn't just raised by municipalities. In their written submission, the Ontario Home Builders' Association supported this section of the bill, but said, "It is important that existing agreements are protected under the newly amended legislation."

When it came time for the amendments, the government didn't put forward a single amendment to the section, which voids existing voluntary agreements, and they voted down our amendments, which would have solved this problem for municipalities like Barrie and Pickering. I will be interested to hear from the member from Barrie, the member from Oakville, the member from Ajax-Pickering and the member from Pickering-Scarborough East on this issue and whether they agree with their municipalities or whether they agree with the government.

Mr. Speaker, these municipalities are not the only ones impacted by the changes to voluntary agreements. According to the Municipal Finance Officers' Association, in 2013 only 204 municipalities collected development charges. In some of these communities, there is limited development. It may be so infrequent or of such a size that it isn't practical to spend the time or money necessary for studies to create a development charges bylaw.

Many of these municipalities deal with these infrequent developments or unusual circumstances through co-operative agreements between the municipality and the developer, but Bill 73 prohibits creating these voluntary agreements. As Watson and Associates said during their presentation, "If a small municipality that doesn't have a" development charge "bylaw has maybe a shopping mall, maybe has an industry, maybe has a big box store that's being built, there are a lot of localized services they would ask for. 'Put in a taper lane. Put in signalization. Put in sidewalks.' The way it's written right now, I would deem that they're not able to recover those costs. So they're either forced into a development charge process or they're not allowed to recover these costs."

We understand that the government's goal is to ensure that builders are not blackmailed into paying additional costs that wouldn't be allowed as a development charge, but as we heard from municipalities and developers, these agreements are needed.

The Building Industry and Land Development Association said during their presentation, "However, what Bill 73 fails to acknowledge is that there are instances involving co-operative agreements where a developer agrees to make payment, to advance required infrastructure that is found in the approved municipal development background studies of the municipality and is in the best interests of the municipality and community."

I'm disappointed that the government didn't listen to these organizations that took the time to come and present to the committee to explain how this would create a challenge for many of our smaller communities. In some cases, they didn't even explain why they voted against the amendments. That's ironic, considering that one of the changes in Bill 73 is that it adds a number of requirements for councils to provide "a brief explanation of the effect, if any, that the written and oral submissions mentioned in subsection ... had on the decision." It sounds like a great theory, but in reality, it's just not practical.

Think of the city of Toronto, which deals with thousands and thousands of applications every year. There may be multiple reasons that councillors made the decision to vote as they did. Interviewing each of the 44 councillors to determine the impact of written or oral submissions simply isn't feasible.

We also heard concerns from a number of municipalities and on their behalf from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. AMO president Gary McNamara said during his presentation, "We ask that how oral submissions are to be accomplished should be the prudent choice of a municipality based on local circumstances and not arbitrarily regulated by the province."

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While we are supportive of sharing oral arguments, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute said, "The province should, however, consider providing some guidance that will help implementation and allow for some flexibility for the general summary of comments because it does get a little bit challenging to make sure that you're dealing with things comprehensively."

It's interesting that the government chose to vote against some of these amendments without providing comments. In fact, if the government members were asked to explain what part of the written or oral presentation influenced their decision to vote, I think the government members would have been hard pressed to do so, Mr. Speaker. They would have had trouble explaining how they could vote against these amendments when they heard from so many organizations that these changes would be a challenge.

I want to again commend the people and organizations who took time to share their concerns on this bill, whether it was in meetings, written submissions or presenting at committee.

When the government moved closure on second reading of this bill, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence said, "I think we need to hear from the people out there. It's critically important to hear from ordinary citizens.

The people need to be heard on this bill because it affects all of our communities.”

The presenters gave some positive comments, but they also came with well-thought-out and researched comments and requested amendments. Some of them were small changes that would have simply made the act work better, but when it came down to it, the government didn't listen. They passed one amendment for us and two amendments for the NDP and refused, in reality, to consider anything else.

I want to commend the NDP critic for municipal affairs and housing. We may not always agree on policy, but the amendments he put forward showed he was listening. The government members even voted down an NDP amendment that would have added the definition of “affordable” to the act. It wasn't that they disagreed with the definition, because the amendment would have made the definition the same as it is in the provincial policy statement. It's difficult to believe that the government members are really listening and open to working with stakeholders and other parties when they vote down a definition and do nothing to help municipalities like Barrie and Pickering that will have challenges because of this bill.

There was one exception, and I want to acknowledge it. One of the concerns that we heard from numerous organizations and municipalities was regarding sections of Bill 73 that would have put a two-year freeze on official plan amendments after the introduction of a new plan, on bylaw amendments following a comprehensive or global zoning bylaw, and on minor variances.

In fact, we heard concerns about the freeze from AMO; the county of Renfrew; Ontario Home Builders' Association; the town of Whitby; the Ontario Professional Planners Institute; the town of Bracebridge; Owen Sound; the township of Admaston/Bromley; the city of Vaughan; Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association; Timmins Chamber of Commerce; Sudbury chamber of commerce; Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce; the city of Hamilton; the county of Haliburton and more.

The city of Hamilton said during their presentation, “To provide no avenue through which these sorts of amendments can be made, even when they're supported by planning staff and council, could put a bit of a chill on development, and obviously none of us wants to do that.”

The township of McKellar passed a resolution that said that “the specific changes related to the restriction of official plan, zoning bylaw amendments and minor variance applications after new official plans and zoning bylaws may be problematic and result in obstructions and delays for development in the northern communities of the province.”

The township of Admaston/Bromley said in a written submission, “If the variance is minor, it is already an expensive and lengthy process for residents, and it may discourage them from being forthcoming on something minor.”

In their submission, AMO supported the need for exceptions to the two-year freeze and pointed out,

“Rural-based municipal governments are largely dependent on single-activity or lot-based-activity applications brought forward by an individual who sees an economic opportunity.”

We understand that the freeze on minor variance was in response to some decisions that allowed extra stories to be added to buildings as a minor variance. We do not believe that minor variances should be a way to get around the zoning process, but the solution is to do a better job of defining and enforcing that these minor variances are truly minor, not to put major roadblocks in the way of all buildings.

We heard from one builder that has successfully applied for a minor variance for less than a metre in extra height to raise the level of the ground floor to accommodate the city's 100-year-storm overland flow route. They said that if they had not been able to apply for a minor variance, it would have delayed the project and resulted in extra costs. They also said that if a minor variance were not an option, they likely would not have accepted such a restrictive zoning bylaw and would have gone to the Ontario Municipal Board instead.

We put forward amendments to solve this issue, and I want to give the government credit: They did, as well. Of course, the government voted down our amendments, but we were happy to support their amendments that achieved the same goal because it made the bill better for municipalities and local economies.

Mr. Speaker, municipal affairs is a busy portfolio. Over the next few years, they will be dealing with a number of reviews and pieces of legislation: the Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and the Municipal Elections Act. Although the coordinated land use review is ongoing and the Ontario Municipal Board review hasn't started, this bill contains some changes that impact both of those areas.

When I spoke to this bill last spring, I pointed out that the changes that impacted appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board were premature. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has been tasked with the review of the Ontario Municipal Board through his mandate letter, so to make a few changes in isolation doesn't make sense. That was reinforced during the clause-by-clause, when government members repeatedly opposed amendments and said, “We should wait for the OMB review.” It's interesting that the Liberals think it's fine to make changes without conducting the review, but don't think that anyone else should be allowed to do so.

As you know, we are expecting the report of the coordinated land use review panel shortly, but Bill 73 already contains a section that would prohibit appeals of these boundaries on municipal official plans. Mr. Speaker, that makes sense. Municipalities should not be put in a position of spending resources and defining a boundary that the province imposes upon them. What does not make sense is that there is no method of appealing these boundaries and correcting errors. The example that I've used before for is the property that was included in the greenbelt because municipal affairs staff

thought that there was a waterway on the property; when it turned out that the waterway was actually on a neighbour's property, there was no way to correct the error. I hope that the advisory panel that's doing the study now will propose a solution to that problem and that the government will be willing to accept it.

We can and should do better at listening to people who are impacted by provincial policies, whether it's a boundary or Bill 73. In many places, Bill 73 is a step in the right direction, but it could have been much better. We could have avoided the financial and legal challenges that Pickering and Barrie will face. We could have made sure that municipalities without development charge bylaws could co-operate with builders to put infrastructure in place for their communities and their development. We could have done much more to make housing affordable. We could have listened to the people who were going to be impacted and taken more steps to make sure that this legislation works for them.

Again, I want to thank all the people who took the time to share their concerns and point out where this legislation missed the mark. I hope, as we work through the upcoming reviews and the pieces of legislation that the government is talking about updating, that we will be able to get it right, that we will ensure that we hear from all the people and organizations who are impacted, and that everyone will be willing to take steps to address those concerns.

Thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to speak to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France G  linas: It was very interesting listening to the member from Oxford go into quite a bit of detail as to what Bill 73 is doing, but also what Bill 73 could have done. There's always an opportunity cost when a piece of legislation does not get opened very often, and when a piece of legislation is open, I think it is important for us to make sure that we get it right.

He has identified a number of steps that are going in the right direction, but he's also identified a number of steps that could have been taken to make things better. One that he talked about is, really, the need to wait for the OMB review so that we can see how we can put in place a method to appeal. If you get the boundaries wrong, then there should be a way to appeal, like any other decision. We try to get them right, but sometimes when they are complex, when a lot of information needs to be taken into account when we make those decisions, there are bits and pieces that we get wrong.

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I had a case in point this afternoon when I showed that the Wahnapiatae First Nation should be in the riding of Nickel Belt, not in the riding of Timiskaming. But there is no way to appeal this, no matter how well intended everybody wants to be. Coming back to this bill, it's the same thing. There is no way to appeal some of those boundary decisions that are made.

One glaring omission in Bill 73 has to do with housing. It has to do with affordable housing and the need to do more. Certainly, my caucus supports that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. You have so many of us helping you tonight, just trying to make your job easier.

It does give me pleasure to speak for a couple of minutes on the comments from the member from Oxford. Yes, we sat on the committee together. We had a very interesting clause-by-clause. We talk about some of the stuff that could have been done but we also need to talk about the things that the bill, if passed, will achieve.

I'm going to focus a little bit on the 10-year review of official plans. Being on a municipal council, especially in small-town and rural Ontario, I don't remember, in my 12 years in that position, both on council and as mayor, that we ever really finished a five-year review and signed off before we had to start all over again. It was continuous, onerous and, frankly, expensive, especially for a small community. So the 10-year review period, I think it's—I know that some of the municipal politicians in my riding, and others, really appreciate that change, Speaker.

We talked about other things that should have been in here. I just heard about housing, inclusionary zoning and some of the other things. I think it's very, very important that we focus on what we were trying to do. There is going to be a review of affordable housing. It's ongoing. I think those are the things that we're going to talk about during that piece of legislation in the coming days in this Legislature.

I hope that the members from all sides will endorse Bill 73. Let's get it done and out of the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to respond to the member for Oxford's speech. I think he made some exceptional points and, really, it's because of his background as a former municipal politician and also a former chair of ROMA. He knows the municipal file extremely well, and I think he did a great job talking about some of the frustrations that we have in opposition when there are good amendments that get put forward and the government squashes them.

They did learn their lesson today, though, with the municipal land transfer tax. They did listen to the chorus of opposition from a number of mayors. I know we joke on this side about Mayor Steve Clarke in Orillia being one of those voices and having the same name as the member for Leeds—Grenville, but I do express some concern. I read a story in Cambridge that Mayor Craig had mentioned that the government had promised them this, so it's a bit inconsistent with some of the comments that the minister made in this House and also in the scrums.

I guess there's hope. One of the things I want to leave with the members today is the fact that the member for Oxford talked about how you can't have one size that fits all municipalities; you have to be able to be flexible.

I mentioned this morning my concern about the budget last year and the reference in the budget to an eastern Ontario growth plan. I did express my concern to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and also the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. He might be commenting on my comments right now; I hear him talking over there. But there is some concern in eastern Ontario about this growth plan and how it will restrict growth in ridings like mine, that have had very little growth over the last number of years. We need opportunity for growth. We certainly don't need a tax on new home ownership, and I'm glad that the government today abandoned that.

The member for Oxford had some great ideas. Again, I hope that the government listens to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this debate on Bill 73.

This morning was a touch-and-go kind of procedure, because it was scheduled for us to talk about this bill this morning, so it's good that we're able to give some feedback on it this afternoon.

There's definitely something that we have concerns about with the bill. There are no inclusionary zoning provisions, despite the government's professing to want to have affordable housing.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore's Bill 39—he has brought a bill forward that is a very good bill, so we're looking forward to that debate.

The member from Oxford did talk about a small amendment that was asked for in committee. That's really when the real nitty-gritty details get put in the bill, and there's a lot of good discussion during committee. He talked about wanting to have a definition of “affordable” clarified. Apparently, that was rejected.

I'm not sure what the motive would be for that, because we all talk about affordable housing. The need to have more affordable housing for seniors is one passion I have. They certainly are going to be a growing population. In my riding of London–Fanshawe, there are a lot of seniors who are ready to move out of their homes and downsize, and they're looking for affordable housing. Perhaps if we had the inclusionary zoning when there are apartment buildings being developed, we could have a

percentage of those units for affordable housing. Seniors are on a fixed income, and that would be something that would be good for seniors.

I have to say I'm glad that this bill has come up to the House, because the Ontario Municipal Board needed a review. But there is a lot more that could have been done that wasn't done in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Oxford for final comments.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Nickel Belt, Northumberland–Quinte West, Leeds–Grenville and London–Fanshawe for their kind comments.

The parliamentary assistant from Quinte West suggested that the 10-year review was a good idea for the original one, but it wasn't—our amendment would put in the 10-year review for the review of the plan rather than just a new plan. I hope the member understands that most of the municipalities that have a lot of development already have a plan, so they're all going to be reviewed. So we do nothing for them; they're going to have to do it every five years. It takes three years to do it, so it means that we're going to have two years, and then they're going to have to start for the next one, to get it done for the next five years. Having accepted that amendment would have meant that we would have done everything the same. The province says it takes 10 years before we need to do our policy statements. Why would we need to do the official plan more often than reviewing the policy statements?

The other thing is, I just wanted to say that earlier, when I was listening to the member from Nickel Belt debating Bill 115 and coming up with a problem that could have been solved so easily at committee—I was at the committee for Bill 115 when we had that same debate, and it was exactly the same during Bill 73, where we put the cases forward. No one could come up with a good reason why they wouldn't support it. They just wouldn't support it because it wasn't their idea. I think the time will come when they will think that it was a good idea, but it will be too late to change.

But we do want to thank them all for their kind comments. I appreciate the opportunity for us to be able to spend some time with them in the committee.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is almost 6 o'clock, and since we also have night sittings, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

The House recessed from 1759 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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