



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 16 September 2015**

**Mercredi 16 septembre 2015**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

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*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR  
COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE  
INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 14, 2015, on the motion for second 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We are not prepared for questions and comments, so I'll now move to further debate.

Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to rise today and to add to the debate of Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. Just before I begin though, Speaker, I want to take a moment to say that it's great to see all my colleagues here in the Legislature and, once again, welcome to the member for Simcoe North.

Over the summer, MPPs are able to return home to meet with their constituents and to hear their concerns on a wide variety of provincial issues. One of the many things that many members heard at home that was echoed at the recent Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, conference was the need for provincial government to listen to stakeholders and municipalities. More than just listening, they need a government that is willing to be a real partner. Far too many groups have offered the government input only to see them change course with a snap decision unilaterally.

I hope the government is willing to listen when it comes to Bill 73. While I cannot speak for the government or third party, I can say that the PC caucus is here and ready to listen. We're ready to work for you, and we want to work alongside municipalities to ensure that they are set on the right track.

Last week I had the pleasure of addressing the Chatham-Kent Home Builders Association. More importantly,

I was able to hear their concerns regarding a number of issues, one of which was Bill 73. Their chief concern was red tape, which is hurting their industry and making it harder for them to expand operations and create more jobs, but they did have concerns with this bill. Their main concern with the bill was the potential for development costs to be raised with negative effects for Ontarians seeking housing.

In a press release, the Ontario Home Builders' Association made their concerns very clear. I'm going to quote from a portion of that press release: "The Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) is concerned that new transit taxes on development will disproportionately increase housing costs for residents and the cost of setting up new businesses."

Our critic the member for Oxford has been carefully considering the benefits and unintended consequences of this bill and has been actively engaging with municipalities and stakeholders. We, alongside the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, were surprised that the government moved ahead with this bill before conducting any consultations on some of the key areas that the bill deals with.

We understand why municipalities are looking to develop development charges to pay for additional infrastructure. They're looking for any additional funding they can get after years of cuts and a downloading of services by the Liberal government.

I would like to take a moment to highlight one key planning issue that is of massive concern in my riding.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'm glad to see we're feisty in the morning. That's good. A little bit of downtime would be nice here. Thank you. We're going to jump on you bright and early, okay? New deal around here now. Thanks.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Speaker. You know, the government is like a toothache: When you hit a nerve, they go, "Ouch."

The municipality of Chatham-Kent alone, in my riding, has over 4,000 municipal drains with a total length of 4,800 kilometres. The municipality performs approximately 550 drainage projects annually. Most of these projects are related to ongoing maintenance, and the rest are capital projects.

Chatham-Kent is incredibly concerned over new changes brought in by this government that will see further demands placed on municipalities across the province. In the words of the municipalities, with Chatham-Kent already completing in excess of 550 drainage

projects each year, it will be impossible for them to comply with the new self-monitoring and reporting process.

They estimate they would need to hire two full-time experts at a cost of roughly \$250,000 just to manage the new reporting and application requirements that were previously handled by the province. One of the things I don't want to see is members of the administration of the municipality of Chatham-Kent go to jail, and that's what is being implied through some of this legislation. Given that Chatham-Kent is trying to rein in its own deficit, it's unrealistic to expect the department to be able to afford to hire these experts while also keeping up with the sheer volume of annual drainage projects required to keep them operational.

Local officials were able to meet in my office here at Queen's Park with policy advisers from the government, who, to their credit, were receptive to the municipality's concerns with the unintended consequences of the upcoming changes. If this issue is not addressed, it will seriously jeopardize the future growth of Chatham-Kent.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I don't want to see as an unintended consequence of this legislation is an increase in the cost of housing in the province. There are currently 168,000 families on the wait-list for affordable housing. We must do all we can, as legislators, to ensure that this number falls. If balance in this bill is not achieved, then, unfortunately, the opposite just may happen. Increased development costs are inevitably passed along to homeowners, condo buyers and renters alike.

A couple of years ago, Ipsos Reid conducted a survey on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association. In that study, 94% of Ontarians said that owning a home provides a healthy and stable environment for raising a family. It's clear that many Ontarians dream of one day purchasing a home. In fact, nine out of 10 Ontarians say that owning a home is part of the Canadian dream. We don't want to see them have that dream crushed by rising costs extended to Ontarians.

As I conclude my remarks, I just want to stress the importance of balance when it comes to the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. It's about ensuring that individual communities and businesses have input into the future of their communities. It's about addressing concerns while ensuring that good projects can move forward. Currently, we're seeing the exact opposite under this Liberal government.

**0910**

Ontario has just under 2,550 acres of vegetable greenhouses, with more than 2,000 of those in the Leamington and Kingsville area. My riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, and the region as a whole, depends on the greenhouse industry and the good-paying jobs that it provides, with spill-over benefits to the entire community.

The industry is ready to grow, but the government is not ready to let it grow. They simply cannot expand without access to more electricity. They also need new transmission lines so that they can sell the power they generate to the grid, and additionally, better hydro service

would allow greenhouses to add light for the winter months so that they can grow a year-round crop.

Based on a 5% growth estimate, which is very conservative, the industry could expect another 660 acres of new greenhouses in the next five years, boosting greenhouse vegetable sales by \$205 million.

The government's delays on a crucial hydro transmission project are costing Leamington jobs and investment. Leamington mayor John Paterson was very clear when asked about the potential for growth and the danger of inaction by the provincial government. I'm going to state him verbatim: "We've said to the Minister of Energy, we've said to the Ontario Power Authority, we've said to everyone who will listen to us, if you don't do this, Leamington and Kingsville are stymied. We can't grow. We don't have the hydro capabilities here."

Our community has already paid heavily for this government's failure. The community and businesses are screaming for help from the government, but their pleas have gone unnoticed. Don't ask the government; ask them. Nature Fresh Farms announced earlier in the year that it would be bringing a \$200-million expansion and 300 jobs to Ohio instead of Ontario. The company cited massive hydro prices and the transmission project's delays as the reason Leamington did not receive those needed investments.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that there are other MPPs in the Legislature that would agree with me when I say that Leamington and the Essex county area desperately need jobs. We cannot afford to let good-paying jobs and expansion in Leamington slip away because of dithering by the government. This government is preaching smart growth, but when a golden opportunity to grow hits them square in the face, they don't know what to do. That's not smart at all.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to address you this morning in this hallowed place, the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the comments made by the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. Speaker, as you're well aware, there are many things that are missing in this piece of legislation that the NDP has noted as we've gone through it. We see that the government has been consulting on this for about a year and a half, but really, do we have a bill that addresses the questions of sprawl? Does it address the questions of the OMB essentially negating democratic decisions at the city council level? No, in fact, Speaker, we don't have that.

The OMB is something that this government has promised to reform for over 12 years. In fact, this bill doesn't provide the reform that people across Ontario have been expecting and people across Ontario need. It doesn't sufficiently protect municipalities from needless appeals to the OMB. In my own riding, Speaker, there are projects that have come forward where the developers have effectively ignored the city of Toronto, ignored the planners, ignored the local politicians and the local community, and gone straight to the OMB.

Speaker, that undermining of the ability of cities to plan rationally and have everything set up at the OMB is a huge failing of this government's approach to cities and city planning. We need to encourage sustainable, transit-friendly land use planning. The province needs to support regions like Waterloo that plan for smart growth. Instead, the province has allowed developers to use the OMB to overrule municipalities and the province's own Places to Grow Act in order to pave over farmland and build more sprawl. If the government is serious about cities that work and taking on climate change, this bill is inadequate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The first thing I would say is that I was absolutely astounded that the member talked about downloading as though it was something that has just happened. We all know that the golden era of downloading costs to municipalities—the platinum era—was when the Harris government was in power. They said, “We have a deficit problem, and we have a solution for it: We will simply download on the municipalities the costs that the provincial government used to have, and then we will say we have solved the problem.” I can well recall those days when municipalities had a legitimate beef with the provincial government. The Progressive Conservative, as it's called here—even though it's Conservative—government in Ontario downloaded. Even Conservative politicians at the local level were astounded by this.

This government, the Liberal government, did exactly the opposite. It has been uploading financial responsibility, taking that onerous responsibility from the municipalities and placing it where it belongs, at the provincial level, at the cost of some \$2 billion. Even when the provincial government was facing major economic challenges, we did not make a decision to say, “Well, we have a solution for that. We'll discontinue the uploading process.” No. Even through the most difficult times, we have continued to upload those responsibilities.

I know that the member didn't have an opportunity to clarify that the downloading took place under the Conservative government and the uploading of responsibility has happened under a Liberal government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to rise. I served as mayor of the city of North Bay for two terms under this government, and I recall very, very well the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund: the changes that were made in that, when my community was stuck with several million dollars in new uploads. I know that our new mayor, who has been there since I left—over the last four or five years, almost—complains in our local newspaper every year about the additional uploading that's coming from this government. So to hear that is a bit rich.

More specific is Bill 73, the smart growth act. Speaker, we really do have distinct problems, challenges and opportunities in Ontario, and I would only hope that

some accommodation is made. When you look at southern Ontario, the GTA and southwestern Ontario, there was the Golden Horseshoe plan. Really, that plan is all about containing growth. But when you cross north of Vaughan, as many people in this Legislature haven't done yet, you're in a whole different world, especially as you come to northern Ontario, where our northern growth plan is all about igniting growth.

There really are two diametrically different plans that should be in place. I can only hope that Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, really does adequately address the differences that are needed in Timmins and Kenora, and in my community of North Bay, that are so vastly different from the requirements in an urban setting like the GTA.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's always a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, on behalf of the great people of Algoma–Manitoulin, and it's great to be back at Queen's Park once again.

It was interesting: Yesterday my colleague Mr. Rosario Marchese was here, who worked extensively for some monumental steps and worked extremely hard for some reform under the OMB. Unfortunately, this is something that is not within this act, which could have essentially brought a lot more meat within the context of this act.

The thing this does not do is that it still doesn't provide sufficient protection for municipalities that are suffering through needless appeals to the OMB. What it doesn't do is provide housing and development growth. Ontario should be moving forward and removing needless barriers so that municipalities and others can move with their projects.

**0920**

I was here earlier during a previous debate where a colleague of mine brought up a very interesting point: If you don't have the proper power supply—and my previous colleague, my friend who talked about the barriers to northern Ontario—you will not have growth. That's one of the biggest challenges that we have in northern Ontario, having that proper power supply, proper hydro supply, in order to attract investment. This is one of the greatest challenges we see in the corridor going towards Thunder Bay. I was actually up there a couple of weeks ago, and they are very challenged in regard to attracting that investment.

I look forward to hearing more discussions in regard to this act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I would of course like to thank my colleague from Toronto–Danforth; the minister without portfolio, the member from St. Catharines; the member from Nipissing; as well as the member from Algoma–

Manitoulin. I appreciate what their comments were and what they had to say.

The member from St. Catharines, the minister without portfolio, talked about uploading, talked about downloading, upload, download—that's in the past. Right now, let's talk about the present, and let's project into the future.

Right now, in my riding, I mentioned earlier, we have about 4,800 kilometres of drainage and everything else within the municipality, 550 drains. We need help. We need finances to help us. Not just us, but AMO has talked about that as well.

Now, it's unfortunate, it really is unfortunate. This government could have helped out in a big way, and they know they could have helped out in a big way. Unfortunately, there were things such as gas plant scandals. There were other instances where money could have been perhaps better utilized, which would then allow for more money to help out municipalities who are in dire need right now. My concern was the fact that you have a situation in Leamington even, where you have Nature Fresh, of course, a big greenhouse operation and 300 jobs. But why are they leaving? It's the hydro costs, and he's told us—300 jobs. They're going to Ohio, where, by the way, I believe we pay Ohio to take some of our excess hydro.

We need help, and so we're appealing, I'm appealing to this government to in fact help our community grow and develop so that we can have those jobs, we can have affordable housing, and there will be no more of this downloading.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** A point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A point of order, the member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Point of order, Speaker: Earlier, in my two-minute hit—I want to correct my record—I used the word “uploading” when I was referring to the word “downloading.” Trust me, I do know the difference between uploading and downloading.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to welcome everyone back to the Legislature, from all the MPPs to all the staff who make this place run efficiently and smoothly.

Speaker, over the summer months, MPPs were busy in their ridings meeting with organizations, having town halls and meeting with constituents. Many people think we are not working, but this is not the reality for all of us. The work we do when we are back in our ridings is very important. When we are not here at Queen's Park—being back in the riding allows us to engage with our constituents, attend community meetings and events, and through discussions, we have the opportunity to develop legislation and ideas, and understand what people have to say about issues and about this government. Then, our responsibility is to bring back their voices to the Legislature and voice our constituents' concerns here with this government.

The first reading of Bill 73 was in March 2015, second reading started in April 2015, and then the House rose in

June 2015. Now we're here, the first week back—this is the actual first week back in the Legislature—and as the MPP for London–Fanshawe, I look forward to participating in the debate on Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act, also known as the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act.

What this bill does is it includes some long-overdue improvements to the Development Charges Act and the Planning Act, but in our humble opinion, here on this side of the House, there's still much missing from this bill.

I understand the government has conducted public consultations on land use and planning development charges for a year and a half. That's quite a long time to go out throughout Ontario and consult with people to hear what they have to say. And though the act is rather thick on paper, it's thin on OMB reform that the government has been repeatedly promising for over 12 years.

For the short time that I've been here—and I think 2011 and 2014, that's still a short time—I'm not surprised by the lacklustre legislation this government brings forward. You have to ask yourself, “Can't this government make a commitment to legislation that will really make a difference, and then actually follow through on what they say?”

The consultations probably gave people a lot of hope. They probably thought, “Finally we'll have a chance to be heard and there will be legislation and reform at the OMB.” Alas, Bill 73 does not sufficiently address municipalities and the needless appeals to the OMB. What does it say to municipalities that invest in planning reviews and developing new land use policies when a developer can turn around and immediately ask for the OMB to alter the new rules? So we ask: What reasons do municipalities have to invest in such initiatives? We need to give them incentive and we need to give them legislation that will work for them.

As many other MPPs before me in this House have pointed out, this bill ignores solutions to affordable housing, and one of the solutions we think will help affordable housing in many communities throughout Ontario is inclusionary zoning. That's an NDP proposal that this government claims to support, but it's not in the bill, which is very disappointing.

My fellow MPP from Windsor–Tecumseh gave statistics about the need to fix—which is very important, because a lot of affordable housing right now in all cities throughout Ontario needs to have maintenance—and the need to build more affordable housing that will also help people who have been on waiting lists for far too long.

I don't think this is anything new, so I really want to make sure that I articulate it. People have basic needs and one of the basic needs is a house, a place to live. Right now, what we're facing is there are many people who are struggling day to day, trying to make ends meet. They're actually struggling to get by. Their rent is expensive, tuition's expensive; they don't have retirement benefits. People's hydro rates are up. Some people call my office,

and their hydro rates are half the cost of the rent they're paying. So affordable housing is essential. It's essential to survival and to a healthy community. Having affordable housing is basically having a stable place to live.

In my riding, like many other ridings, I'm sure, through the Legislature, MPPs have co-op housing and geared-to-income housing. Those are wonderful builds in our community. They need to be incorporated throughout cities, and inclusionary zoning is a great way to accomplish that.

A couple of days ago, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence was ranting and raving about, “You've got to give us some ideas. What are your suggestions to make these bills better? You need to help us out and make government work.” That's a perfect suggestion: inclusionary zoning. Put it in the bill. It's going to make a huge difference to people, to communities and to thriving cities. We know in Toronto there's a real gap in affordable housing, so I hope the member from Eglinton–Lawrence is listening. Take it to the minister; act on that suggestion. There's one suggestion.

**0930**

London, I have to say, is a wonderful place to live in. The city has been promoting growth in London in many ways, and this bill allows me the opportunity to talk about what London's been doing. In 2012, city of London staff began a public consultation called ReThink London, which sought to gather as much public input as possible regarding how residents would like to see the city develop. It was the most extensive public consultation process for an official plan in Canadian municipal history. Consultation topics included: culture, prosperity, regional connection, green thinking, transit and neighbourhoods. It was a groundbreaking initiative to preemptively and actively engage the residents of London in owning the future of our city.

The results of ReThink London were incorporated into the London plan and our city's 20-year official plan that contains significant progress and changes into infrastructure, including improved standard transit as well as new rapid transit, development of the Thames River shoreline, and infill in the core and suburbs to prevent further sprawl. The plan focuses on transit overhauling and infill, two initiatives that are directly impacted by land use planning and development charges, which this act doesn't address. So there are some issues with the Development Charges Act amendments that directly affect our city's official plan and development progress.

Area rating policies currently allow municipal councils to determine if and where specific areas of the city should be subject to different development charges. We have some concerns that the rigid language in the revised act might inhibit councils from exercising discretion over area ratings.

One of the reasons the city of London waived development charges for the downtown core and Old East Village areas was to promote growth and development, a decision that has produced demonstrably positive results, attracting companies and small businesses to the city's

rapidly reviving core. An example of revitalization that was recently in the paper was the old Mark's Work Warehouse building located on Dundas Street in Old East Village, which is now going to be transformed into a grocery store with a training component.

Speaker, there are also concerns about appeals of the development charge bylaws to the OMB only resulting in maintenance of, or decreases to, the council approval rate. A suggestion London city staff has expressed is that the board members should also be able to increase the development charges rate if it is deemed appropriate. That's another suggestion the government can take into account.

As it stands, the development charges do not allow for municipalities to recover growth-related capital costs from the building of certain municipal services. These costs instead are absorbed by the taxpayers. If these ineligible services are removed from the Development Charges Act, it would provide municipal councils with the authority to determine what municipal services should be subject to cost recovery. There are similar concerns about city taxpayers bearing the load for development of soft services that are currently subject to a mandatory 10% deduction for capital needs recovery.

Homebuyers pay a lot of money in development charges and parkland dedication fees when they buy a home. They deserve to know how and where their money is collected and spent. We hope the promised transparency in the act will truly deliver.

While this bill is a step in the right direction, my party is certainly eager to see improvements. The legislation is not what the government promised Ontarians. These kinds of half measures only pay lip service to the real issues, or the affordable housing crisis the New Democrats will call to the government's attention. Our communities need assistance and we must do more. We have an obligation to help them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** It gives me great pleasure to speak on Bill 73. I want to start by saying it's time for this Legislature to move on and to get this past second reading so we can get out to the committee process and have people come in to talk and consult on this good piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, so far we've had over eight hours of debate here in this Legislature, and we've had over 40 people speak on this proposed piece of legislation. I'm starting to get the impression that the opposition is deliberately delaying this process. We want to get out there and talk to people. We want people to be able to—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** As the minister well knows, it is not in keeping with the standing orders of this House to question the motives of members of this assembly. I'm offended by the accusation that we are deliberately doing something to hold up the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** We will take your comments under consideration and we'll just ask the minister to temper his attack. Thank you.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, we've gone out there as a government and spoken to Ontarians. There have been over 1,200 submissions that have come in. We also know that there have been 20 public workshops that have taken place since October 2013. We've had mail-in and email submissions come in.

It's time for us to move forward on this piece of legislation because we've got other work to do in this House. We've got Bill 85, the good government act; we've got the bill that I proposed, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act; Bill 106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act. There's a lot of work we need to be doing in this Legislature, and again, I'm starting to get the idea that there may be some intention to delay this piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, I am astounded—astounded—that a minister of the crown would come in and make those comments here in this House.

Bill 73 is a very important piece of legislation to our members. We all interact with municipal leaders in our communities. In fact, I am the MPP to 18 municipalities. I have not had the opportunity to speak to this bill, and I don't count what we call two minutes of questions and responses an opportunity to speak to this bill. I am looking forward to that opportunity. Yet, at every turn it seems that the government is only interested in shutting down debate. This is the government that is now known as the government of stifling debate and calling closure motions, when they spoke against them in their previous iteration when they were in the opposition.

Now, I'm not questioning their motives. They've got an agenda; we understand that. But they need to respect that every member of this Legislature is sent here to represent their constituents. We need to have the opportunity to stand up in this chamber and reflect the views that have been passed on to us. The minister loves to talk about these workshops. Those are shams and he knows it. They are staged little episodes to try to make the government look like they're actually doing consultations. We know on every piece of legislation—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, it appears the decibel level has gone up a bit, and it's going to go down real quick.

Continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, you know me; I hate to raise the decibel level in this House. It's only because when the government does something, we have no option but to stand up and defend the constituency we represent and defend—I must defend—the members of our caucus over here who want an opportunity to speak to this vital piece of legislation. I hope we get it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from London—Fanshawe. In the

time allotted to her, she tried to touch on as much as she could about the weaknesses in this bill and the need for a bill that will actually make a difference.

I wanted to add that this bill has an opportunity to do work on the question of affordable housing. It could be bringing in an inclusionary zoning standard that would allow people across this province who are facing profound problems with housing affordability an opportunity to get stable, secure and affordable housing by allowing—by making part of a development agreement—to have the developer provide low-cost housing in large developments. It's a fair approach in a time when governments are constrained financially. Sometimes they constrain themselves; that's another discussion. But it is going to be part of a strategy that's needed in this province to deal with affordable housing.

I don't know about you, Speaker, but when I go around my riding, I consistently come across families and households that find themselves paying an incredible portion of their income for housing and can't afford it. I came across a person just a few weeks ago in a unit that had one bedroom, a couple with three children. They were desperate to move, to get into something that would provide them with housing that gave everyone the room they needed to live.

Ignoring, setting aside the opportunity that presentation of this bill presents to address inclusionary zoning and provide more affordable housing is a huge failing on the part of this government. If it does care about the people of Ontario, it should be taking these opportunities to actually address a huge issue.

0940

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 73. I'd like to use this as an opportunity to welcome all members back to the House after the summer, when we have been in our communities speaking to people. In fact, that whole aspect of public consultation and engagement is really critical to our work here in this Legislature. By moving this bill to committee, it actually gives us an opportunity to do further engagement and consultation with communities, which I'm certain that all members of this House would support.

There have been over 40 members who have spoken to this bill in this Legislature—over eight hours of debate—and, in listening to this debate, it's clear that all members support this piece of legislation. Getting it to committee will allow further refinement of this bill and an opportunity for more consultation.

If passed, Bill 73 will ensure that the development charges and land use planning and appeals system are more predictable, transparent and cost-effective, and better able to meet the needs of our stakeholders and of our communities. Amendments to the Planning Act will focus on enhancing citizen engagement, achieving more predictability, supporting municipal leadership and protecting long-term public interests.



It is in our best interests to move forward on this particular piece of legislation. It raises the focus that we have on growth-related infrastructure like transit. Transit is of particular importance to me in my community, in my riding, and I believe that we should move on with this legislation and send it to committee so we can get more consultation and more engagement on this very important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from London–Fanshawe has two minutes.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I was excited to come back to the Legislature this session, as I always am, but I'm certainly disappointed that this government feels that debate is not part of a democratic right that all MPPs have to stand up and talk to each bill. I was just saying to my colleagues, and it's completely coincidental, that 10 minutes is not enough to talk to a bill. I wrote down some points in my notes and I could barely get to all of them.

If this government is so dead set against giving us a voice to speak to every bill that comes before this House so they can hear our suggestions and our comments, perhaps they don't have to put up speakers; we could control the debate. That would be okay with me, and that would give us more time to speak, so by all means.

Every member in this House wants to talk about this bill. It's an important bill. One of the things I would like to ask the government, and this is something I wasn't able to mention in my notes here on Bill 73: The government had a press release back on March 5, 2015, and the press release indicates: "The government also announced"—this is a quote—"the launch of a Development Charges Working Group of key stakeholders, including municipalities and developers that would provide advice on complex issues needing further consideration." Now, we understand that that's not part of the bill. So my question to the government, or even to the minister, if anyone can help me out here: What's happening with that proposed working group with regard to this bill? I'd like an answer to that if that's possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, no, I'm leading—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay. Thank you. Thanks very much for that update. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke almost was put on the spot there. He has 18 municipalities in his riding that he wanted to speak on, but I have 17 municipalities in my riding, Mr. Speaker. It seemed like—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** And a First Nations territory, I might add, so there we go.

I have been looking forward to the opportunity to speak to Bill 73, as I know my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has, and I believe my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has many municipalities in his riding as well and he would probably like the opportunity to bring some thoughts and

comments on behalf of the municipalities that he represents in that vast, expansive rural riding in eastern Ontario. I think that's why we're all sent here: We have the opportunity to represent our constituents in the Legislature.

Many of the members that we have heard over on the other side represent a small segment of a much larger municipality, but this government isn't interested in hearing from all of the other municipalities in Ontario, and there are so many of them out there. There are 440, as a matter of fact. I think sometimes this government is only interested in listening to about eight. The large urban municipalities: They're the only ones that they're interested in hearing from because, let's be honest, that's where most of the votes are when it comes to trying to win a provincial election. That's who they're catering to, and a lot of rural Ontario has been left behind as a result of the actions of this government.

Bill 73 is another cute-named bill. It's the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. It makes it sound like there's actually something smart in this bill that's going to impress people in ridings right across Ontario and in communities across Ontario. I can tell you that, once again, this bill is about as flimsy as that piece of paper right there. There's not a whole lot of meat on this bone when it comes to this bill. This is something that this government does time and time again, though. They'll bring in legislation that doesn't have anything in it but it has a real snazzy-sounding title that everybody can get behind. Well, how can you vote against smart growth for our communities? You can't, really. But there's nothing in the bill, when you get to it. My wife is a high school teacher, and if she saw this bill, she would grade it as incomplete. It wouldn't even be worthy of a letter; it would be incomplete. I think that's the case, but I digress.

As we move on here, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario represents the municipalities in Ontario, and their reception, or their reaction or response to Bill 73 is lukewarm at best, I would say. Let me quote here: "Elements of the bill which are problematic: AMO objects to the requirement for an upper-tier planning advisory committee"—or a PAC—"with at least one member of the public. The mandatory PAC will create more issues than it resolves." We know that it wouldn't be the first time that this bill has actually brought forward legislation that's created more problems than it solved. They have a pretty good track record of bringing in legislation that makes it more difficult for smart growth and smart development in the province than it fixes.

The Ontario Home Builders' Association—let's hear what they have to say. They have a mixed reaction to this as well. They're saying: "The Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) is concerned that new transit taxes on development will disproportionately increase housing costs for residents and the cost of setting up new businesses." This highlights another remarkable trait of bills that this government introduces: Somehow, somewhere, they're going to find a way to make it more expensive to do business in Ontario, and that's what this legislation is poised to do.

Municipalities are constantly running into planning challenges, but this government has chosen only to address a few that seem to fit the narrow list of things that they want to talk about in some of their large urban municipalities. For at least the last two years, I've had meetings in my office in Belleville and up in North Hastings, and even here at Queen's Park during the ROMA conference that happens every February, regarding the use of private roads in small, rural municipalities. They call them condo roads in a lot of the small, rural municipalities. The government has done nothing to address this issue and the concerns of municipal councils in these small municipalities in regard to Bill 73. That's something that they could have tackled in Bill 73.

In fact, the government policy seems to be to disregard the concerns of a lot of small municipalities. I can even cite the example this past week of the mayor of Prince Edward county. Prince Edward county is a pretty significant municipality in the grand scheme of things in Ontario. It seems to be the number one most promoted tourism area in any of the Ontario advertising that you were seeing on TV during the Pan Am Games or during the Olympics when they were in Sochi, Russia. The Ontario ads, "Yours to Discover," promoted Prince Edward county in five different snapshots of the sandbanks or wineries in Prince Edward county or downtown Bloomfield or wherever it might be.

**0950**

There are specific concerns that are being expressed by the mayor and council in Prince Edward county that aren't being dealt with by this government. As a matter of fact, when they go to AMO and the mayor of Prince Edward county meets with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and a number of other ministers—the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Tourism—he is promised that things are going to progress down the road. But when he follows up with the office after having the meeting at AMO or whatever the conference might be—"Well, we can't meet with you." That's the response that he's getting: "We can't meet with you," for this reason or that reason or another reason, or, "We can't address your specific situation."

They're saying one thing when they're face to face, but when it comes time to actually put the rubber to the road and do something about it, they find an excuse not to. It's shameful what's happening. Relationships are deteriorating between municipalities and the provincial government because of the actions of this very arrogant Liberal government here at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Wow. Wow.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** You've heard the same thing, Lou.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Yes, definitely. I'm not even going to go there.

Naturally, what's happening is the Premier's office has brought in another Minister of Finance. They brought in Ed Clark. He's actually the new finance minister for the province of Ontario, or policy adviser, or whatever they want to call him.

At times, this bill seems designed to ensure certain outcomes, but at the same time it seems totally unsure of what it wants those outcomes to be. We've seen that when it comes to, for instance, the sale of Hydro One. I'm not going to go down that road now because I don't have the time, but we will hear more about the Hydro One fire sale, I'm sure—in question period today, perhaps.

There are elements of this bill that are actually worthy of supporting. In his address to this year's AMO conference, the president of the association said that the association wants policy that reflects a desire to have growth pay for growth. Not a bad motivation behind planning policy, but it has to acknowledge certain truths, one of which is that we have a housing affordability problem in this province. We have 168,000 people, Mr. Speaker, who are on a wait-list for affordable housing with thousands of them in my riding of Prince Edward-Hastings. We have people who are downsizing in our communities because they can't afford their property taxes. They can't afford their hydro bills. They can't afford their mortgage on the house that they currently live in, so they're having to downsize. In the case of many seniors, just the property tax and the hydro bill are enough to make it tough to make ends meet month after month.

I'm not sold on the idea that increasing the cost of doing business in order to build homes in the first place is the best way to solve an affordability problem. Municipalities are facing ever-increasing financial strains. Oftentimes, the property tax base is an insufficient source of revenue. Belleville council has regularly spoken about the tens of millions of dollars of infrastructure in the city that either needs to be replaced or will soon need to be replaced. It's not just Belleville that is saying these things; it's municipalities right across the province.

The provincial government has continually pushed problems to the municipal level. This has taken many forms, whether it was ending the OMPF funding, which is a huge problem for small municipalities in my riding, cuts to the special dam funding, or a lack of seriousness when dealing with the arbitration process in the province or arbitration reform. Municipalities are continuously being asked to do more with less.

How we ultimately help municipalities best meet the needs that come with growth and planning is going to be a matter that generates considerable debate. Once again, I'm brought back to the fact that this government has put forward a bill that has little meat on the bone. There are not a whole lot of issues that are being dealt with in this bill. They could have been dealt with.

In Prince Edward county, this very concern is raised as the government pushes to erect 400-foot-tall turbines that are being hauled down roads that can barely withstand regular traffic from a Mazda, let alone the giant vehicles that are being brought in to haul these industrial wind turbines down those roads to build these monstrosities in the community. All this, by the way, would be going through an incredibly sensitive wildlife habitat. One can

only imagine what any other developer would have to pay to bring those trucks and have that kind of development occur there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to wrapping this up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to listen to my colleague the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. It's good to see him in the House again. He referenced his home riding—a beautiful part of the province. Sandbanks Provincial Park is definitely somewhere you want to go—Picton, Deseronto; all those wonderful places—and the best walleye fishing in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, he also raised some really important, valid points about the nature of this bill, the fact that it really is not as substantive as we would have liked to see in this House when it comes to dealing with the very serious nature of the challenges that municipalities have when facing and trying to analyze sustainable growth in their communities.

Speaker, of the 444 municipalities in the province of Ontario, did you know that it would take a property tax hike of at least 1% for them to raise \$50,000? That's a massive hike for small municipalities—about half of the municipalities in the province—to deal with the impact of growth and the nature of their needs, infrastructure needs just in general. That's enormous, let alone the pressures that have been placed on municipalities due to successive governments, as we've heard today, downloading responsibilities onto municipal rolls. That's something that they still continue to struggle with.

My colleague mentioned some remarks from the president of AMO, Gary McNamara, who is from my area. He's the mayor of Tecumseh. He has expressed some real frustration at the nature of the consultation by the government. It seems as though they have walked away from their acknowledgement of the role that they need to play when it comes to supporting municipalities.

This bill is doing something—not enough. We certainly look forward to adding some reforms that we know can support those municipalities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It gives me pleasure to spend a couple of minutes to respond to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and also to make some comments about the bill.

The member says that we're ignoring municipalities. I'm going to talk about municipalities, not only the eight that I represent in my riding, but the ones surrounding my riding. For the members' knowledge, I do meet semi-regularly with the warden of Hastings; he's a great fellow. I meet with the mayor of Tweed, the mayor of Prince Edward, and I regularly meet and chat with eastern Ontario wardens. I've been doing this for the last 10 or 12 years. So that line of communication is there.

We talk about the lack of consultation with municipalities. We're the only government in this country of

ours that has an MOU that we meet virtually every month with AMO to share their concerns. We don't always agree, I will say that, but I'm—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Very seldom. Very seldom.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** The majority of the time we do agree and we accept their suggestions—contrary.

Speaker, for the record, I just want a couple of quotes, for example. This is from AMO:

“AMO appreciates the action being taken on review of the Development Charges Act and the Planning Act, and the province's commitment to providing citizens a greater say in how their communities can grow and municipalities' increased ability to cover costs of growth-related infrastructure.

“Congratulations on bringing forward Bill 73, which takes major steps forward in creating the stability the planning system has lacked in the past number of years”—

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Lacked.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Lacked—“and to help municipalities recover the costs of growth in their communities.”

I have a long list here of comments from AMO and member municipalities. I look forward Thursday to going to the eastern Ontario municipal convention. I'll be there to speak to those folks.

Speaker, reality is reality.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's my pleasure to address comments from the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. He mentioned about smart growth in this title. I think anybody who's been involved with municipalities and with development in this province will understand and know intuitively that we have a very complicated, onerous and costly planning regime in this province. What is smart about making it more costly, more complicated and more onerous, which is what Bill 73 does? There's nothing smart about this bill.

I also want to bring attention to the members in the House today that the member from the Scarborough–Guildwood, in her earlier comments, mentioned—and used it as a pretext to end debate on this bill. She said that all members are in agreement with this bill and that we should send it to committee; there's no need to hear from anybody else.

**1000**

She may want to correct the record. I've listened to debate this morning. There is not full support for this bill. I think you'd have to be in some other pixie-dust land to think that there was support in this House for this bill. So the member from Scarborough–Guildwood may want to use both ears while listening to debate and not come to these false conclusions.

Once again, I represent rural municipalities—a number of them. There are significant troubles. Most of the troubles that they experience with the Planning Act are not by other developers challenging but from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The member mentioned in his comments about private roads—that's a

big deal. We've had many, many objections to the OMB by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing with regard to development and official plans. That is what needs to be addressed and what is failing in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I welcome the comments from the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, who has, from what he indicated from his numbers, a huge amount of communities that are there. But I'd like to one-up him. Out of the 444 municipalities that are in Ontario, 37 municipalities are in Algoma–Manitoulin: 21 First Nations and 15 local service boards. I love each and every one of those communities, and I try to get to them each and every time.

One thing I do want to comment on: He made a comment in regard to the PACs, and he's right. The single- and upper-tier municipalities are required to create planning advisory committees which "shall include at least one resident of the municipality who is neither a member of a municipal council nor an employee of the municipality." Municipalities may join with others to create a single PAC; however, the PACs are not specified or given any information within the context of this.

Also, earlier the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport made a comment in regard to shutting down debate. It's funny how quickly you want to shut down debate on this, but when we have one of the biggest policy debates in regard to the sell-off of Hydro One, we're not having that opportunity to have a chat.

The member also talked about the OMPF funding that has been reduced, which the government now has claimed they have reintroduced, but at a lower amount. The dam funding: You're absolutely right. The special dam funding has been under threat of being eliminated, which affects 111 municipalities—which a community out of Algoma–Manitoulin has taken the lead on in the fight in order to maintain that.

I do want to correct the record. My two colleagues the member from Essex and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings talked about walleye fishing. There is good walleye fishing in Prince Edward–Hastings, but everybody knows that the best fishing for walleye and pickerel is in Algoma–Manitoulin.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you to the member. I've learned every fishing spot in Ontario this morning.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Perhaps the member from Algoma–Manitoulin and I can settle this outside after.

I thank the members from Algoma–Manitoulin, Essex, Northumberland–Quinte West and Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for their comments on my comments this morning as well. I think what we've heard from a number of those who have spoken today, including the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, is that there are other municipalities out there in the province that this government isn't listening to.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's what I said.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** You have eight municipalities in your riding. Mr. Mantha has 37 in his riding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The new procedure around here is: We talk through me, not to each other. Thank you.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'm always happy to speak through you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the thing is that, when you look at the municipalities that are represented by those who just spoke, I bet you, of the probably 60 municipalities that are represented by the members who just spoke, very, very few—single digits—are actually experiencing growth of any kind. Right? I think that that's a problem in rural Ontario. I know that it's a problem in my riding. In some communities, we're experiencing negative growth, and this bill does nothing to address the situation in small rural municipalities. It's all about big development.

As the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Mr. Hillier, said, this bill is actually making it more costly, complicated and onerous for planners, for developers, for growth in our province. That's a big problem. This bill doesn't do what it should be doing. There's nothing smart about this bill. It's just a sound-good sound bite for this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I agree with my friend from Prince Edward–Hastings that the various municipalities that are represented by rural members are not experiencing growth and have not experienced growth for quite some time. Yet they still have to plan for it, and they still have to build in those costs for projected growth, as an optimistic region would do: always looking forward, always projecting forward and always trying to incentivize and entice that growth.

I know that's what is happening in my area, in Windsor and Essex county, in Chatham–Kent–Essex. Those guys are always looking forward, trying to be innovative in their approach to development, working with developers, working with industries and trying to facilitate it. They just simply wish they had a partner at the provincial level that acknowledged that that is what they're doing, and moulded and tailored policy in that regard.

Somebody made mention that we shouldn't be debating this—I forget who it was; I think it was somebody on that other side—but it is quite interesting. It seems as though the government has touted that they have consulted widely on this bill. They've had some round tables, some discussions with municipalities. However, the largest policy initiative ever put forward by a government in the history of this province, the sell-off of Ontario Hydro, has yet to have one iota of discussion with the public at all. They are keeping that in the dark. It is unbelievable, it's unfortunate, and it really is telling in terms of what they prioritize and what they don't—what gets to be debated and what doesn't get debated. So when it is our time and it is our right to debate a bill in this House, rest assured that we will take it as duly elected members of the House, because that's what our job is.

This bill, as has been mentioned, doesn't really go as far as municipalities and those who are integral players within growth and development in municipalities would like. The bill includes some welcome improvements to the Development Charges Act and the Planning Act, but it is still missing many initiatives and much real, tangible policy, and it really behooves this government to put into place those types of initiatives that they know exist. They know they exist because there was a previous bill, Bill 39, which was put forward by a member of the Liberal Party, not a newly elected member—I think it was one of his first bills, and we supported that bill. It went a lot further in terms of addressing the challenges for municipalities, specifically dealing with the OMB.

We know that homebuyers pay a lot of money in development charges and parkland dedication fees when they buy a new home. They deserve to know where the money is collected and spent. That's what Bill 39 did: It dealt with the OMB. It dealt with some provisions of accountability and transparency for ratepayers, to know that their development charges are actually going to enhance the communities in which they live.

In my area of Windsor and Essex county, we really have some incredible dynamics between municipalities, one of which, LaSalle, is where my wife is from. It's really a wonderful community. It's on the banks of the Detroit River, a historic community that has experienced growth over the years. That's one of the areas that we could point to that has experienced some growth, due in large part to the prudent planning of the municipality, but also the prudent financial discipline and the fiscal discipline that that community has had. You feel it. The roads are nicely paved. They've got good planning. They've got a good amount of natural space that's built in. It really is a wonderful community that people are flocking to.

However, they are now on the boundary of the Herb Gray Parkway, a provincial roadway that is, again, one of the largest expenditures of this government, one of the largest they've ever endeavoured in terms of the cost. They spent a lot of money on that thing.

1010

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Yes. It's beautiful.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, it's beautiful. It has eased the traffic. It's wonderful. However, the four years of construction that that community has endured, and the arterial roads that the construction companies have had to use, have caused a lot of damage to the municipality and to the municipal services. In fact, some residents who are on the boundaries of the parkway are now experiencing massive flooding due to the water that's being accumulated because you've covered so much of that area with cement and asphalt.

The municipality is saying, "Wait a second here. We certainly would like some help. This is your project. You've created some chaos in terms of road usage, damage to roads and the need to repair them. Can we have some help? Can we have a partner in this, seeing as though it was a component of the project?" There's no

partner to be found. The answer was, "No. Sorry. Live with it. Get on with it." So there's another example of where the government has—not officially downloaded costs on them, but by their actions have caused more strife and grief for a community. A community that has, again, if you look at their books, been fiscally prudent and really, really well regarded in our community.

However, they still need support. If you look at the applications for support through various methods and various programs, the province is reticent to support them because their books look good. They're doing so well that the province can't support them in terms of grant money for infrastructure. Therefore, they have to look at other methods to supplement that cost, the cost for their infrastructure and the cost for their growth. That's just one example of the challenges that exist.

Speaker, a glaring omission in Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, is any attempt from the government to address the serious issue of affordable housing. It is at crisis level, definitely in the GTA. Interestingly, if you come down to my riding, we still have a definite need for affordable housing but, in general, the housing is some of the most affordable in the world—well, in the province. That's why I encourage anyone to come and look at some real estate prices in Windsor and Essex county. It certainly makes more sense than it does in the GTA. A similar-sized house in Essex would be a third of the cost, which for some people just doesn't make sense.

Speaker, the government could and should enact some provisions to include inclusionary zoning, which would give the municipality the tools to demand that developers build those types of projects into their development, therefore creating communities that are affordable and accessible for all residents. It's certainly something they could do that would go a very long way.

My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex again referenced the fact that growth isn't happening because of other metrics, mainly the high cost of energy, but also access to energy. In the area of Chatham–Kent–Essex and my riding of Kingsville, Essex, they have a lot of greenhouses that need access to power. Interestingly enough, we are surrounded by, I would say, hundreds of windmills, large industrial wind turbines that are generating power, no doubt, yet we can't feed them into our municipalities to incentivize and add to the growth and the capacity.

For years and years we've heard this government say that they were going to do something. When I was first elected, the Minister of Finance was Dwight Duncan from Windsor–Tecumseh. He stated at that time that he had this issue resolved: It was going to be changed; it was going to be fixed. Here we are four years later and still no inkling of resolution for the community of Leamington.

Certainly, this bill is something that gives a little bit of hope that the government is paying attention. However, we know that, through amendments that we will propose to the bill, we can certainly make it stronger, and we'll

hope that the government listens to those amendments. Many of them will be amendments that exist verbatim in Bill 39 that a member of your caucus put forward and that we believe actually could make this bill stronger. So we'll see how you vote at committee on those amendments, those very amendments that are derived from a member of the Liberal Party, because we actually think that a good idea in this place doesn't need too much—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I've got 11 seconds. If it's a good idea, Speaker, we certainly would want to see it implemented. We appreciate that. Oh, we've got time here.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 10:15, and with some assistance from the member from Essex, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise and welcome the Ontario Good Roads Association team in the gallery today, led by president Rick Champagne from the municipality of East Ferris, and executive director Joe Tiernay. I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon. Thank you very much for being here.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Yes, indeed, the Ontario Good Roads Association will be here. I'll be meeting with Tom Bateman, the county engineer from the county of Essex; Dave Burton, the reeve of the municipality of Highlands East; and Thomas Barakat, the policy adviser for the Good Roads Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I'm going to just take a moment to introduce Rick Harms. Rick is here with the Ontario Good Roads Association as well. Rick works for the city of Thunder Bay. He's a long-time employee. I had a good relationship with Rick when I was back on city council in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Welcome, Rick, to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I would like to also welcome Rick Champagne, councillor from my riding of East Ferris, who we'll be meeting later with Good Roads today.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to introduce Helen De Roia, the mother of page captain Jacob Raponi De Roia, from Ottawa South, who is here today. Jacob's grandmother Ann De Roia is here as well.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm honoured to welcome to Queen's Park today Chris Traini, who works for Middlesex county. He's here with Ontario Good Roads.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to welcome Drinks Ontario to Queen's Park. The provincial trade association will be hosting a luncheon reception today in rooms 228 and 230, and all members of the Legislature, their staff and media are invited. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to introduce, in the gallery today, Reeve Dave Burton from Highlands East, who is also here with the Ontario Good Roads Association. He's a member of that executive. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'd like to welcome guests from the Ontario Good Roads Association. Welcome to Queen's Park. I very much enjoyed our morning meeting. Thank you for that. Let's welcome them.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure today to introduce, on behalf of my constituents, my local school board trustee, Mark Fisher. He's joining us today in the gallery. It's really nice to see you today, Mark. Thank you for joining us.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'd just like to reinforce the introduction from my colleague from Ottawa South. I'd like to introduce Ann De Roia, who is the grandmother of page Jacob Raponi De Roia, from Ottawa South, but Ann is from my community of Etobicoke Centre. Welcome, Ann.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I wish to welcome to the chamber today Councillor Bryan Lewis from the town of Halton Hills. Welcome, Councillor Lewis. Good to see you here.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want members' attention for a very special guest who is visiting our Legislature today: the 46th governor of Indiana, from 1989 to 1997, and US senator from Indiana from 1999 to 2011. Please welcome Evan Bayh to our Legislature.

I also want to welcome the CEO and president of Bruce Power, Duncan Hawthorne; the president and CEO of the Council of the Great Lakes Region, Mark Fisher, who is also a school board trustee in the city of Ottawa; and James Scongack, who is VP corporate affairs at Bruce Power. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome the chief administrative officer of the fine city of Belleville, Rick Kester, to the Legislature today.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce someone who unfortunately cannot be here today but I know is watching from home: my fantastic former legislative assistant Michael Paolucci, who today embarks on a new journey, going off to the UK to pursue a master's degree at the London School of Economics. We're going to miss you, Michael; best of luck.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** From the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, we'd like to welcome Brian Anderson. He's here with Ontario Good Roads Association. Welcome.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I just noticed, looking at the members' gallery, that we have the deputy mayor of the great city of Tillsonburg, Dave Beres, with us today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have some guests with us today in the Speaker's gallery: Matthew Banninga, Alison Brown, Brittany Davis, Olivia Labonté, Sydney Oakes, Sara O'Sullivan, Justyna Zegarmistrz, Eric Zinn, Isa Topbas and Julia Redmond. These are the interns for the next 10 months working for various MPPs, and we're thrilled to have them here.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to point out two things: (1) You're the ones who are being

interviewed by them, so behave for them; (2) this is the program's 40th anniversary, and we are very proud of our intern program and we're glad to help you. Thank you very much for being here.

#### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order: the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that you will find we have unanimous consent for all members to be permitted to wear a gold ribbon pin in support of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is seeking unanimous consent to wear the gold pin. Do we agree? Agreed.

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. Across the province, when seniors open their hydro bill, they are shocked—shocked that they might not be able to afford to pay their hydro bill. The same people who built this province as Canada's economic engine have had their government turn their back on them as energy prices skyrocketed. Those seniors have watched Ontario sadly become a have-not province. They worry about keeping the lights on in the face of energy bills that have risen by \$1,000 on the watch of this government.

Mr. Speaker, why does the Premier care so little about Ontario's seniors?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have said before in this House, I hope that when the issue of electricity prices is raised with any member of the House, they point to the programs that have been put in place specifically to help folks who are perhaps struggling to pay their bills.

We've put in place the Ontario Electricity Support Program; that's a program that will help low-to-modest-income families save an average of \$360 a year. We have put in place, on the industrial side, the Industrial Electricity Incentive Program and the industrial conservation initiative. There is a property tax and seniors rate that seniors can apply for.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition points people who raise this issue with him to those programs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is once again for the Premier. When I think of the billing scandal of Hydro One, I'm often reminded of that citizen from Timmins, that senior who saw \$10,000 taken from his account incorrectly by Hydro One—seniors on fixed incomes who, in the words of the Ombudsman, were "mistreated," "abused" and were victims of deceit and deception.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier callously ignore the needs of Ontario's seniors because of her reckless energy policy?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So, Mr. Speaker, I take it the argument that the Leader of the Opposition is making is that Hydro One could be a better-run company. I hear in his question the assumption that it should be a better-run company.

The motivation for broadening the ownership of Hydro One is to invest in infrastructure. That is our starting point, but the reality is that this is a company that can be better run. With a professional board and leadership, it can be a better-run company.

I would say to the Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I hope I do not have to employ yesterday's strategy, but I will.

Please finish.

1040

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, just to remind him of what he said on May 5 of this year: "I generally believe that the private sector can do a better job than the public sector. I generally think market conditions would be helpful for a lot of government agencies." I assume he means Hydro One in this case, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again for the Premier: In this very chamber, the minister responsible for seniors, the Premier's Liberal MPP for York West, said on the topic of the Hydro One privatization, "We should try to protect this wonderful facility which, if sold, will not come back into the hands of the people of Ontario anymore.... We will be at their mercy. Once it is gone, we will have no recourse, no control with respect to the rates, and they will go high."

It must be hard for the minister responsible for seniors to look seniors in the eye and tell them that this deal is good. Why won't the Premier listen to her own cabinet ministers? Why won't the Premier listen to seniors? Why does the Premier proceed with this Hydro fire sale, callously ignoring the wishes of Ontario's seniors?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** At points in the debate around issues in a caucus, there are obviously different opinions. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has that situation in his own caucus. We have very, very active debates within our caucus, and that's healthy. That is very, very healthy for democracy. I welcome those debates within my caucus. I think that's how we make good decisions. I think it's how we hear the perspectives from around the province.

We made a decision that we were going to review our assets. Ed Clark—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will now employ yesterday's strategy. Warnings are headed your way.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Ed Clark and his team of experts helped us to look at the assets of this province in order to leverage them. We've made a decision that investing in infrastructure in this province—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nipissing is warned.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —is critical for the future economic well-being of Ontario.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. Over the summer, the city of Windsor lost a bid for the new Jaguar Land Rover plant. The mayor of Windsor, when asked what Windsor could have done differently, said, "It wasn't Windsor, it wasn't Essex, it wasn't our region, but there were other factors ... beyond our control" that created "a competitive disadvantage."

The factors outside of Windsor that created the competitive disadvantage were the policies of this Liberal government.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Economic Development is warned.

Carry on, please.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, these conditions created by the Liberal government are killing jobs in Ontario. When will the Premier change her approach to make sure we create a competitive economy in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The 15,000 jobs that were—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Dufferin-Caledon is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —in the last seven months, 15,000 new manufacturing jobs in Ontario, and two years in a row, Ontario has been the number one jurisdiction for foreign direct investment.

The investments we are making, the conditions we are creating in Ontario, the supports that we are giving to industry, whether it is in electricity rates, to allow them to have a reduced rate so that they can be more competitive, or whether it's the direct supports that, quite frankly, the opposition has always objected to—they have never supported the notion that we need to partner with business and make sure that we allow them to thrive, allow them to expand and allow them to become advanced manufacturers, in the case of manufacturing. That's the kind of condition that we are creating.

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again for the Premier: No one is asking for a handout; they just want the sector to be competitive in Ontario. The reality is that we've lost 43,000 auto jobs on the watch of this government. Wind-

sor is a city that relies on manufacturing jobs. Instead of listening to municipalities, the Premier is making it harder and harder for municipalities to compete. Now the Premier wants to hammer municipalities with not only skyrocketing energy prices but the cap-and-trade tax and the payroll tax.

My question is why does the Premier continue to make it impossible for municipalities and cities like Windsor to succeed?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I very much value our good-working relationship with the municipalities of this province. There are 444 municipalities. Our ministers and our members travel the province. We meet with municipal leaders. I believe that it is extremely important for the provincial government to have a good, open working relationship with the municipalities, which is why we have put in place, for example, the Community Infrastructure Fund. It is a direct result of feedback that we got from municipalities on the need to invest in roads and bridges. It's why there's a new Connecting Links Program, to deal with the realities of roads that municipalities can't afford to keep up. We need that support.

The member opposite is part of a party that has not supported the relationship that we have with municipalities—

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** It's not about photo ops around the province. Whether it's in Windsor or Oshawa or any plant in between, it's the responsibility of government to create the conditions to be competitive, to create the conditions to create jobs.

You have heard me say again and again that the auto sector is as important to Ontario as oil is to Alberta or potash is to Saskatchewan. Yet for 12 years, the Liberal government has made it harder and harder for the auto sector to succeed in Ontario. Now it's been reported that Buicks won't be made at GM in Oshawa after 2017.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is has she entirely given up on the auto sector and manufacturing in Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, this party will never give up on the auto sector in this province. We'll continue to make the investments that we need to make. But the party that that member purports to lead gave up on the auto sector in 2009—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to remind all members again—you have on your desk a reminder—you're speaking to the Chair.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, through you to the party opposite—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is not appropriate. You're speaking to the Chair, just to me. You're not speaking to them.



**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure how to respond to that, except to say, Mr. Speaker, we have made \$1.6 billion in investments in manufacturing. That's brought \$15 billion of investment to this province and 60,000 manufacturing jobs. I beseech the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, look at the members around you. None of them—

*Interjections.*

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

The purpose of my interjection was to allow us to bring the temperature down. It's not helpful when others continue to make it rise.

New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's not a good omen for me, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. The people of Ontario own Hydro One, but the Premier is plowing ahead with the privatization scheme and keeping owners in the dark. She has held no public consultations and no public hearings. She's eliminated oversight by our watchdogs, like the Auditor General, and she's shed no light whatsoever on any evidence at all to back up her scheme.

Speaker, why is this Premier determined to sell off Hydro One with no transparency and no public scrutiny by the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let's just go over what we have done and understand that the reason that we are going through this process is that we must invest in infrastructure around the province. There are infrastructure needs in every part of this province, and the two go hand in hand. We're broadening the ownership of Hydro One in order to be able to leverage that asset, retain 40% ownership, keep the regulatory controls in place and keep the process whereby hydro rates are set now by the Ontario Energy Board, but at the same time to allow us to invest in the infrastructure that is needed.

1050

That is what we have talked about in our 2014 budget. It's what we talked about in our platform when we went to the people of Ontario. We held technical briefings for both opposition parties. We talked about it throughout the election campaign. We made it very clear that we were looking at assets to leverage them in order to be able to invest in infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Every day, the Liberals' powerful friends are working to seal the deal on this \$9-billion privatization. Every day, the Premier refuses to be open and accountable to the people of Ontario, and every day, she ignores the fact that this Liberal government still has no right to sell off our Hydro One. How can this Premier actually think she is entitled to privatize Hydro One with no public support, no public mandate and no public scrutiny?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I've said in this House, we have worked very hard to make sure that the protections that must be in place for the people of Ontario are in place and that the people of Ontario retain enough control of Hydro One that they can, for example, remove the board; the government can remove the board. Major decisions that will be made by the board have to have two-thirds support, and the government will have—the people of Ontario will have—40% control on that board. Those protections, we have put in place.

What I would say to the leader of the third party is this: Given that she purports to understand the needs of this province, how can she so underestimate the need to invest in infrastructure that she would say, "Stop building; stop investing," just at a time when we need that economic driver?

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Over generations, Ontarians have built our hydro system. Over generations, we've made sure that Ontarians are in charge—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry. The Minister of Agriculture is warned.

Carry on.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Over generations, we've made sure that Ontarians are in charge and in control, because that is important. That is important to the families and to the businesses of this province.

But now this Premier is responsible for the biggest rollback of accountability in the history of Ontario's power system. She is selling off Hydro One with no mandate, with no hearings, with no popular and public support, no public oversight. Will this Premier finally admit that she sees openness and transparency as the biggest threat to her privatization scheme?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The leader of the third party knows that we have put in place protections. We have brought in Denis Desautels, the former AG of Canada, to oversee the IPO. She knows that Hydro One will be regulated by the Ontario Business Corporations Act, the Ontario Securities Act and the Ontario Energy Board.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But what the leader of the third party, I think, would like people to believe is that Hydro One is the same company as it was 40 years ago. What she hasn't been saying is that we already have a mixed system, that there already are many, many people in this province who are not served by—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The system is already mixed, Mr. Speaker. There already are private companies, municipal utilities, who have the responsibility for distribution and transmission. I think that is a nuance

that she has chosen to ignore as she talks about what we are doing. She also is choosing to ignore the fact that we are investing in infrastructure.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** News flash to the Premier: It was public 40 years ago and it is public now. She's the one who is changing that.

My question to the Premier is quite direct. She likes to say that she had a choice to make, that somehow this is all about just a choice she had to make, but Ontarians know that a choice between public hydro and transit and infrastructure investment is a false choice. The truth is that the Premier could have made better choices to fund transit and infrastructure. She could have made the kinds of choices that New Democrats have been calling for; for example, restoring fair corporate taxes in the province of Ontario and closing new corporate tax loopholes that this Liberal government put in place for CEOs to write off the HST on their luxury box seats.

So here's the real question: Why is this Premier choosing to protect the interests of her powerful friends instead of the interests of the public?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. In case he didn't think I noticed, I finally figured it out: The member from Newmarket–Aurora is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think we just got an insight into the philosophy of the leader of the third party. She would like us to move back 140 years when nobody needed broadband and when there were no transit needs in many of our urban municipalities. We're not going to live 140 years ago. We've moved on and we need to make the investments that are needed in 2015 going forward.

The fact is 24% of the province's distribution is delivered by Hydro One. It is a mixed company. It is very different; it's a mixed system. It's very different than it was 100 years ago, 50 years ago or 140 years ago. We're in 2015. We need to make the investments that are needed in 2015 and that are needed for 2020 and 2030. If the leader of the third party doesn't want to come with us, that's her prerogative, but the people of Ontario need those investments.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it's only my second.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry. Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This Premier is making the wrong decisions for families, businesses and for the future of the province of Ontario. She is plowing ahead with the sale of Hydro One even though Ontarians overwhelmingly reject this scheme. She's removing public oversight. She's rolling back accountability in our electricity system. This is not the right direction.

She is using a false choice—a false choice—between public hydro and infrastructure investment to deliberately cater to her small group of powerful friends. How can this Premier put the best interests of her friends ahead of the best interests of Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I'm sorry, but by my "powerful friends," I don't know whether the leader of the third party means the mom who needs to get on LRT in order to be able to pick up her kids from daycare, or whether she means the young family in Barrie that have jobs in Toronto and want to be able to go back and forth, or whether she means the family in Hamilton who needs to get across the city in decent time.

If that's who she means by my "powerful friends," they are powerful; they're the people of Ontario. They need the investment in infrastructure, and we're going to provide it for them.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's easy for this Premier to make those kinds of comments. If they are so damn powerful, she should listen to them and not sell off Hydro One.

This Premier had a choice to make, and we know exactly what she decided to do. She could have kept her promise—because she made it—to keep Hydro One in public hands, but she chose to break that promise. She could have been open and transparent every single step of the way, but she chose to keep the people of Ontario in the dark. Even better, she could have found smart ways to fund transit and infrastructure like restoring fair corporate taxes and closing loopholes for corporations, but she chose to sell off a public asset—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is warned.

Please finish.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —that belongs to all Ontarians.

Why does this Premier keep choosing to put the interests of her small group of powerful friends ahead of the best interests of Ontario?

1100

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let's be clear that the leader of the third party has put forward one alternative, and that is only to increase corporate taxes. That is the only thing she has put forward. What she is saying is that she is proposing that she would raise corporate taxes enough so that we could pay for all of the infrastructure: the Barrie line, the Kitchener line, a billion dollars for the Hamilton LRT, the new alignment of Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph, Highway 11/17 four-laning between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, the second phase of the LRT in Ottawa and the EA for high-speed rail—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Hamilton Mountain, you are warned.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —from Toronto through London to Windsor. All of that, she would fund through

increases in corporate taxes. Well, I would put to her, Mr. Speaker, that if she were to do that, then the whole discussion about the economic competitiveness and viability of this province would change. We would not be drawing direct investment—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

New question.

## PESTICIDES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Agriculture: 28,000 members of the Grain Farmers of Ontario have been forced by your government to go to court, seeking an immediate stay of your regulation banning neonics. Peggy Brekveld, a Thunder Bay dairy and crop farmer, vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, charges that your regulations are unworkable: “We will be required to have a certified crop adviser inspect our fields ... there’s only about 100 CCAs that are qualified to do these inspections.”

Minister, your regs question the integrity of consulting agronomists, disqualifying those who work with the seed trade. Where are you going to find sufficient crop advisers who are not associated with Ontario’s seed trade sector?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for his question this morning. Clearly, over the last little while, we’ve identified four key areas that have put stresses on pollinators in the province of Ontario.

We’ve identified that the last two winters have been extremely cold, which has an impact on our pollinators in Ontario. We do know that there are mites that invade beehives in the province of Ontario, the varroa mite. Thirdly, there is the management of hives in the province of Ontario, those hives that are professionally managed and those hives that are managed by hobbyists in that area. Fourthly, we do know that the blanket use of neonic application in the province of Ontario is having an impact on the health of pollinators right across the province of Ontario.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, we’ve embarked, along with our agricultural partners, on a general pollinator strategy for the province of Ontario. It’s the way to go forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just want to remind, as I’ve reminded others, to make sure that it’s through the Chair.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Back to the regs: Farmers do want to know just who is standing up for farming at the cabinet table. Amended reg 63/09 indicates that all treated corn and soybean seed is now registered as a class 12 pesticide; it characterizes a treated seed as a pesticide and therefore regulates the seed, not the pesticide. It’s unacceptable. It’s unnecessary. It’s inappropriate. It will cause significant and irrevocable economic damage without any clear evidence of any off-setting benefits for

pollinators—yet another reason farmers realize that your regulatory process is simply unworkable.

Minister, why would you, as Ontario’s Minister of Agriculture, regulate a seed itself as a pesticide?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I certainly want to thank the member for his supplementary, but I want to know where the official opposition stands on defending supply management in the province of Ontario. I want to know where the official opposition stands on providing 60% by the government of Canada to make our Risk Management Program whole for all the farmers of the province of Ontario.

But, thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote some people who are agronomists in this area. Greg Stewart, the official agronomist for Maizex Seeds, has said about purchasing untreated seed when needed: “It’s not too difficult.”

DeKalb agronomist Bob Thirlwall said the process isn’t as onerous as some growers think. “We’ve talked about it with a few growers: Is it any more work than the paperwork for having insecticide applied by airplane? We decided it’s actually less work.”

Ken Currah, a Pride agronomist: “We are encouraging growers to have that discussion with their agronomists.” What acres need it? What acres don’t?

This is what I’m hearing from grassroots farmers in the province of Ontario.

## TEACHERS

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Premier. For more than a year, this Liberal government has failed to reach new collective agreements with all of our dedicated teachers and education workers. Last week the government failed again, and talks collapsed with elementary teachers.

The only way for this government to reach a deal is to be at the table, taking part in genuine and meaningful negotiations. When will this Premier send her minister back to the bargaining table?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I’m very pleased to report, Speaker, that after very long and prolonged talks, we have in fact reached agreements—as you know, tentative agreements—with the English Catholic teachers and with the Ontario secondary school teachers. We are bargaining, as we speak, with the francophone teachers, and I’m quite optimistic.

We understand that each of our sectors is a little bit different. The French sector is different from the English sector; the public sector is different from the Catholic sector; the secondary panel is different from the elementary panel. For that reason, the conversations that we’ve had with each of our four unions—and I would like you to know that we’ve actually spent a lot of time with ETFO. We—

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

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** The Minister of Education says that it takes thousands of hours of negotiating to reach tentative deals, but to make that happen, to reach those agreements, the government needs to show leadership and actually be at the bargaining table. Once it's at the table, the government needs to negotiate in a genuine and meaningful way rather than trying to impose deals just to help the federal Liberal Party.

Why is the Premier refusing to get back to the bargaining table and get back to real negotiations?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Speaker, I have no idea where the notion has come from, raised by the NDP and the union, that this has anything to do with the federal government. The reason that we have put a complete package before the elementary teachers is because they have been on strike since May 11, and that has caused disruption to our students. Our students have not had their EQAO test. They didn't get their report cards. Their parents aren't meeting their teachers. They're not having the field trips they would normally have.

We want the disruption to stop, and that's why we tried to speed up the process with the elementary teachers: because we want to get the elementary public system back to the way it should be. We are absolutely willing to talk about how to fine-tune the deal.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Over the summer, I've had the opportunity to speak to many people in the riding of Beaches–East York about the issues that concern them the most. What I've heard is that there is a growing anxiety about retirement security. Quite simply, the CPP does not work for seniors who do not have outside, independent third-party pension plans.

Many in my riding, particularly those in their 20s and 30s, do not have access to a workplace pension and are concerned about their futures. They worry that they will not be able to maintain the same standard of living in retirement, or they may outlive their savings. And they know seniors who are suffering from exactly that situation.

That is why so many Ontarians are very supportive of our government's plan to bring in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. My constituents are very eager to learn more about the plan and how it affects them.

Over the summer, I know that the Premier and the minister announced details about the ORPP, and I would like if the minister would please explain to us the new details of the plan.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for that very important question.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is leading on this important issue. We are creating the ORPP to help close the retirement savings gap. Our goal is that by 2020, every employee in Ontario would be part of the ORPP or a comparable workplace pension plan.

When we talk about a comparable plan, we mean registered workplace pension plans, like defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans. These plans will need to meet minimum contribution thresholds and provide locked-in benefits. With these thresholds, we can confidently say that workers will be able to achieve a similar benefit provided by the ORPP.

**1110**

We developed our approach by listening to people. We developed our approach by listening to business. This design ensures that all Ontarians can have access to the retirement security that they deserve.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you to the minister for that fine answer. She's doing an excellent job in giving us the security in retirement that we all need. I know that the constituents in my riding of Beaches–East York will be glad to hear about the specific steps our government is taking to ensure all Ontarians will have access to secure retirement.

In recent months, I've also spoken with many local business owners about the ORPP, and many of them are very pleased to see that the government is introducing this plan that will give an affordable way for them to provide their employees with a meaningful pension.

In these meetings, businesses have emphasized the importance of having time to plan for the introduction of the ORPP. I know the minister has engaged with business extensively and that they were active participants in that consultation process on the ORPP earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, again through you to the Associate Minister of Finance: Will the Minister please outline the steps our government is taking to help businesses plan for the introduction of the ORPP?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank the hard-working member for that important question.

The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, the ORPP, is an investment in a secure retirement future for all Ontarians. That's not just individuals; that's business as well. Over the past several months, I've met with representatives from across the business community throughout Ontario. We heard that businesses and employees need time to plan. That is why we announced that we will be enrolling employers in stages, beginning with the largest employers in 2017. This coincides with expected reductions in EI premiums. We also announced that we will be phasing in contributions over three years.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce said our approach is "a step in the right direction." Through the ORPP and its implementation, we are investing in our collective futures, which is good for all businesses in Ontario.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question today is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, in January, this Liberal government made significant changes to Ontario's estate administration tax. The \$143-million death tax on grieving families is nothing more than another cash grab.

Minister, one of the changes made is to force estate trustees, usually the children of the deceased or the grieving widow, to provide a detailed list of their loved one's assets and a description of their value to you within days of losing their loved one. Minister, where is this government's compassion?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, interesting question, but let me be very clear. To you, Mr. Speaker—directly to you, because I don't think they listen on the other side—it reads as follows: The government has not introduced a new tax on estates. It has not changed the amount of estate administration tax payable or the way that this tax is calculated. All we are doing is ensuring—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will withdraw.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Withdraw, Speaker.

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

Carry on.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, the regulation ensures that the government has the information needed to perform the audits and verify that the correct amounts of the tax have been paid. All we're doing is ensuring that the procedure takes place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Well, not very much compassion there.

Back to the Minister of Finance: Family farms or small businesses can give rise to a death tax amounting to many tens of thousands of dollars. This is a debt that, when coupled with the income tax levied on capital gains, may force the next generation to sell the family business.

Minister, you've already collected a lifetime of taxes on these assets. The Liberal view may be that small businesses and family farms are nothing more than money laundering operations for the rich, but we in the PC caucus recognize how vital Ontario's entrepreneurs and farmers are to Ontario's economy.

Minister, I ask you, is there no better way to balance the books in the province of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

I would offer this as advice: third person, which means you're not talking to the minister; you're talking to the Chair, just as a reminder. We're going to try to get that done right this time.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The member opposite and the PC caucus should well understand the process because it was they who introduced the EAT in 1998. They introduced this administrative tax. All we're saying is that the regulation does not change the court process. The EAT is collected by the court staff, and the new requirements will not change the court process or the amount of tax payable.

They're the ones who introduced it. We're just making certain that it gets implemented correctly, that's all.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we learned that a top Infrastructure Ontario executive had admitted to defrauding York University. Instead of being fired, he was put in charge of procuring a stadium for York University. We also learned that, as early as January 2012, Infrastructure Ontario's chief risk officer knew about the fraud, but the fraud remained a secret outside of Infrastructure Ontario.

Today, we learned that CEO David Livingston knew about the fraud: the same David Livingston who became Dalton McGuinty's chief of staff and is being investigated by the OPP for his role in a cover-up.

Yesterday, when I asked the minister if David Livingston knew about the fraud, he refused to answer. Did the minister really not know, or did Infrastructure Ontario keep that information away from him as well?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the member's recollection of his question and the answer yesterday isn't entirely accurate. The fact is, the member did ask me a question yesterday and I responded that, to the best of our knowledge, the board had not been informed of the particular circumstances. That remains the case.

We take this matter seriously, though. It is a serious matter and it's one that I think we need to take very seriously. Infrastructure Ontario has appointed an independent law firm to review this matter, to review the time that this individual was employed at Infrastructure Ontario, as well as the circumstances of his departure. There is also a forensic audit firm that's been hired to take a look at the transactions that have occurred. And I, as well, am in the process of retaining a third-party special adviser to be our eyes and ears over this process at the same time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We now have evidence that senior officials at Infrastructure Ontario covered up the fact that one of its top executives had admitted to fraud. David Livingston says that he knew about the fraud and that he told the Infrastructure Ontario board. Board members, however, deny this completely. Someone is not telling the truth; we just don't know who.

Last December, the minister asked us to trust Infrastructure Ontario when it claimed, without evidence, that \$8 billion spent on public-private partnerships wasn't a waste of money. Now the minister wants us to trust Infrastructure Ontario to investigate its own cover-up.

Will the minister call for a truly independent investigation of the culture of cover-ups that evidently exists within Infrastructure Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Rhetoric notwithstanding, this is a serious matter and we're doing, I think, what we need to do to get to the bottom of it. I said yesterday and I say today, there are unanswered questions surrounding the circumstances of this individual's departure and there are some unanswered questions that we want to ensure are

looked into, and that's surrounding his activities while he was with Infrastructure Ontario.

The actions in question—the alleged actions that this individual took with York University—were outside of his role with Infrastructure Ontario, but out of an abundance of caution and prudence, we want to make sure that during his time at Infrastructure Ontario there were no further anomalies that can be identified. That's why we're taking the third-party actions that we're taking.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last month, I was pleased to be with you in Campbellford for an announcement of almost \$400,000 over two years for a project that will offer additional in-home support for people with developmental disabilities in my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West. This community hub residential model is a collaboration between Community Living Campbellford/Brighton and Campbellford Memorial Hospital and will provide support to aging individuals with developmental disabilities in surrounding rural areas to allow for their continued independent living.

Minister, this project is part of a broader Developmental Services Housing Task Force initiative that you mentioned in the House earlier this year. Can the minister please provide us with an update on the recent work of the housing task force and the progress made for residential services in Ontario?

1120

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you to the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for the question. I was really delighted to be in Campbellford last month to announce the funding for the community hub residential model, and also to be introduced to so many of my ministry's local stakeholders in the member's riding, showing, really, how deeply rooted he is in his community.

I was also in Smiths Falls, Lanark county, to announce a project which will provide residential supports to developmentally disabled adults with complex medical needs so that they can also live independently.

These projects are recommended by the Developmental Services Housing Task Force and are part of the recent announcement of 12 community-based housing initiatives for adults with developmental disabilities. Our government has committed up to \$6 million over the next two years for demonstration or research projects, which includes \$3.47 million to support these 12 recently announced projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I would like to thank the minister for outlining the work that this government and your ministry have been doing. In my conversations with residents and leaders in my community, it's very clear the importance that access to residential services has on the lives of the individuals living with disabilities and

their families. There continues to be need for more creative residential options and day support for respite service. This is a struggle that individuals, families and the development services sector have known for a long time. However, the government's \$810-million investment is making a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

Can the minister please elaborate on how efforts like the Development Services Housing Task Force will work toward creating more opportunities for Ontarians who value inclusion, choice and independence for these vulnerable individuals in need?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We know that many individuals with developmental disabilities have very unique needs and that there is a demand for a broader range of housing solutions that address these individualized needs. Our challenge isn't just about finding more supports; it's about finding the right kinds of supports for each individual. The Developmental Services Housing Task Force was created to help find and encourage inclusive and creative housing solutions which would expand the options and choices available to adults with developmental disabilities.

I'd like to thank the hard work of the agencies, the families, the community partners and the housing task force members. We've had an opportunity to expand our knowledge and learn how creative partnerships can help us provide new housing support options. A second call for proposals for additional projects will be issued later this year, and I look forward to future creative partnerships that we can learn from, to see if we can replicate these across the province to help more people in the community.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, the Fraser Institute's annual survey of mining companies has again placed Ontario near the back of the pack for mining jurisdictions. On the investment attractiveness index, this year Ontario fell nine places to 23rd in the world. The high cost of electricity in Ontario is continually cited as a key contributing factor in this slide.

This spring, the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario revealed that the hydro customer was ignored in your government's plan to sell off a majority stake of Hydro One. Members of AMPCO employ thousands of people across northern Ontario.

Minister, can you guarantee that the sale of Hydro One will not lead to increased electricity costs for industrial consumers in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** As the member knows well, Ontario remains the top jurisdiction for mineral exploration in the country, if not across the continent. We are very, very proud of that despite the challenges that we do see related to commodity pricing. The fact is that indeed we are also very proud of the fact that, although we recognize the challenge of energy pricing, earlier this year we made the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Pro-

gram a permanent program, which has been a tremendous help for the resource-based sector in terms of reducing those energy costs.

May I say, with the time I have left, we are also still seeing, despite the challenges that are there, the number of mines in the province of Ontario that are continuing to open up being a real positive—we're seeing operations, certainly, in Red Lake in terms of Rubicon Minerals and in terms of the Cochenour expansion and the New Gold expansion, which I know the member knows well about. We are very, very proud of that and looking forward to—

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Minister. And you well know that the NEER program only applies to a handful of companies.

Again to the minister: We've seen this story before. When jurisdictions become uncompetitive, companies pull out and take local jobs with them. When Xstrata Copper pulled up stakes in Timmins only to move across the border to Quebec, they cited uncompetitive hydro rates as a key motivating factor in the move. Northern Ontario lost 700 good-paying jobs. Minister, will the sale of Hydro One lead to more stories like that of Xstrata Copper and more jobs lost in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It's actually rather unfortunate to hear the members who are talking down what is really obviously a very positive industry in terms of the economy in northern Ontario. When we see the fact that mineral production in the province reached over \$11 billion—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** To the Chair, please.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** —in 2014, up from \$5.3 billion about 10 years previously, that's obviously a very positive sign.

We don't deny that there are challenges. Certainly we all know about the challenge—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I ask the member, as I have asked others: You are addressing the Chair.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Excuse me, Speaker. I thought I was looking at you. I now will indeed look at you and point out the fact that we continue to be very, very enthused about the positive opportunities in the mining sector.

Certainly the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program is helping major resource sector producers in both the mining and forestry side reduce their energy costs, which is allowing them to continue to make mines open up in the province of Ontario, which we are continuing to see. We've very excited about the opportunities in the mining sector. Keep working—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Premier. This Premier's record on child care just keeps getting worse, and families across Ontario are paying the price.

Ontario has no comprehensive plan for child care: no targets, no timelines. Most recently, the Premier backtracked on her support for \$15-a-day child care.

The Premier has stood on the sidelines while public child care centres close their doors in communities like Sarnia, Sudbury, Windsor, London; Peel region closed their 12 regional centres as well. Now, five public child care centres are at risk of closure in Waterloo region. Each of these five child care centres has attained the triple gold standard of the Raising the Bar program for the last 12 years. They serve 250 children and their families. Every time we lose a public child care centre, we lose quality care for kids in this province and good jobs in our communities.

Why is this Premier doing nothing to stop the closure of quality child care centres and doing nothing to stand up for child care that Ontario families so desperately need?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Speaker, I'm very pleased to tell you that, in fact, I think the member opposite has misrepresented the data. In fact—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister will withdraw.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Withdraw.

**Interjection:** Misinterpreted.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Misinterpreted, perhaps. But let me tell you what the data are and then people can argue over how they feel about that.

Since 2003, our government has almost doubled the provincial spending on child care. We are now up to over \$1 billion in spending on child care. What that has allowed us to do is increase the number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario by 70%, so that we now have added 130,000 additional licensed child care spaces.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again to the Premier: On Monday, when our leader asked the Premier why she refuses to support making child care more affordable, the Premier said, "We have no understanding of what it would mean to the people of Ontario." Well, parents across Ontario know exactly what quality, affordable child care means. It means not being stuck on a wait-list for a spot you can afford—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Premier is warned.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It means knowing that your child has access to the safest care with qualified professionals.

There are approximately 3,800 families and children on Waterloo region's wait-list. Almost half of those families need immediate care right now, yet the province sits on its hands while centres have been closed or privatized across the province.

Will the Premier commit to a real plan for child care in Ontario that sets targets, that sets timetables to grow child care in this province, rather than overseeing the closure of yet more high-quality public centres across this province?

1130

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** What we have done since we were elected first in 2003 is that we introduced full-day kindergarten. We've created 130,000 new child care spaces—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** We doubled the amount of money that we're spending to over \$1 billion. We've spent \$120 million in building new licensed child care spaces. We have made a huge, unprecedented investment in child care.

What we have said since the beginning—not just the beginning of the election, but the beginning of this story—is that when Mr. Mulcair said he was going to introduce a new program, he didn't say how he would recognize that. He didn't say what he was going to expect Ontario to pay for, because we know that we've already made a huge investment. We want to know what he's going to do to invest.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Speaker, we know that children's social environment is an important factor in determining whether they'll succeed academically, socially and in the labour market. This is exactly one of the reasons why, for example, the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities is such an integral part of youth engagement and in bringing valued youth voices to the table. I was pleased to recommend the Premier's council to Kingston and the Islands this summer.

Across the province, some children and youth experience more hardship than others. This is something that we all know in this House. Mr. Speaker, would the minister please explain what supports her ministry provides to ensure that at-risk youth are able to succeed?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** First, I want to thank the MPP from Kingston and the Islands for her fantastic work to support youth in her riding. Having our Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities at Kingston and being part of it is just great.

We all know that when kids are at risk, we want to have the right support so that they can reach their full potential and make really positive choices for their future. That's why we've taken a whole-of-government approach to serving and meeting the diverse needs of youth.

We've seen very, very positive results since the launch of our 2012 youth action plan. We've fulfilled all 20 recommendations of that plan. So now what we have are 27,500 youth facing barriers, across Ontario, who are now accessing new supports and opportunities. The youth outreach program has been increased, and the Youth Opportunities Fund provides \$5 million per year to support community projects for at-risk youth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'm glad to hear that the minister is taking these issues seriously. It's encouraging that the youth action plan has been expanded, but I know that one of the main concerns for at-risk youth is that without proper support and guidance, they may become involved in criminal activity.

Programs like Youth Diversion in my riding of Kingston and the Islands focus on keeping promising youth out of the justice system where a criminal record can destroy the rest of their lives and erase the opportunity for a second chance. The staff and volunteers at the Youth Diversion Program understand full well the value in extrajudicial measures and alternative court proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, does the action plan address concerns about youth crimes specifically?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** With the expansion of the current youth action plan, we are providing \$55 million over the next three years to address the root causes of youth violence and to focus on closing the gaps in service for youth at risk. That's a very substantial and historical investment. We expect the plan will create an additional 37,500 opportunities per year for children at risk. To help young people into the labour force, we're partnering with training, colleges and universities to invest \$250 million over the next two years for the youth jobs strategy. That focuses on skills development for young people and making sure they're making the right connections to where the jobs are.

We're very committed to continuing this important work and providing wonderful opportunities for Ontario's youth at risk. We want to continue to get at the root cause of violence.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources this morning. Joe Crowley is the minister's species at risk expert. He testified less than two weeks ago at an Environmental Review Tribunal in Prince Edward county that he recommended against issuing a permit for wind turbines to kill, harm and harass endangered species on the south shore of Prince Edward county. What did the minister's office do? They granted the permit anyway.

But when the ministry experts recommended against a project in the minister's own riding, back in 2011—just before the election that year—the ministry couldn't kill that project fast enough. So the ministry's own experts have confirmed that politics, and not science, is guiding what wind turbine projects are allowed to kill endangered species in the province.

Speaker, will the minister overturn the anti-scientific decision that was made and revoke the permit it gave to Gilead in Prince Edward county and do—

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Be careful. You've been warned.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And so have you. Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member for the question. I think it's interesting what's going on here. We know very clearly that this particular party in opposition is not in favour of our renewable energy projects that are going on across the province of Ontario. We also know very clearly, I think we can state with some definition, that they're also not in favour of the Endangered Species Act legislation that we brought forward some time ago.

The beauty of this question, and I've had one like this before, is now we see the opposition party's position, where they want to try and use Endangered Species Act legislation to prevent a wind turbine project going forward that I think, perhaps, they don't on the ground support. So they have these two conflicting pieces of legislation, one which can stop or allow a project to go forward.

Both of these projects, this one and another one, are still before the Environmental Review Tribunal. There's not a lot I can say specifically on them, but I will speak more in the supplementary in terms of what detail I can—

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

Supplementary? The member from Huron–Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Back to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry: Minister, your government has a track record of hiding inconvenient truths. From cancelled gas plants to eHealth to Ornge, the Liberal name has become synonymous with scandal, and it doesn't stop at Ostrander Point, unfortunately.

We have learned just last week that your government is up to your same old tricks. It's just so you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** To the Chair, please.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, this old, tired government is up to the same old tricks because they want to cover Ontario's landscapes with costly, unwanted industrial wind turbines.

Back to the minister: Minister, Barbara Ashbee, Lorrie Gillis, Ted Whitworth, Bill Palmer, the list goes on—communities across Ontario want to know why this Liberal government continues to blatantly disregard scientific evidence in order to ensure industrial wind turbines continue—

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

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, all renewable energy projects in the province of Ontario receive their approval to move forward through the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change—all of them. They make an application, they get a FIT contract from the Ministry of Energy, they get their broader-based approval from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. The projects in question have received those approvals.

When it comes to our particular ministry, we get involved where necessary when it comes to endangered species. If an endangered species is found to be on the site, we then play a role. On the ground, district by district, they make the decisions on whether or not there

is an endangered species present, and if there is, on a district-by-district basis, they make a decision on whether or not we are able to mitigate on both the habitat and on the species. That's exactly what has happened in this case. That's why we provided an overall benefit in both cases, and that's what we did on a district basis here. Nothing secretive about anything that's going—

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

#### NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** “Pursuant to standing order 38(a), I wish to advise you of my dissatisfaction with the response of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to my question on neonics regulations. The reason for my dissatisfaction is that, in my view, there is not enough time for a fulsome answer to a detailed technical issue”—the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Prince Edward–Hastings has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Natural Resources concerning wind turbine processes.

The matter will be debated today at 6 p.m. The previous one will be debated today at 6 p.m. as well.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I take great pleasure in introducing, in our gallery today, Wendy and Mike Radan, from the wonderful riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, the parents of my wonderful legislative assistant, Mackenzie Radan. We welcome them here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I would like to introduce my good friend from the riding of Nipissing, Joe Bodley, who is here in the gallery.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce you to my new executive assistant here at Queen's Park. Her name is Angela Drennan.

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

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Bill Walker:** September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. I, along with my colleagues here in

the Legislature, am wearing the gold ribbon pin in support of every family and child affected by this life-threatening illness.

As the number one cause of disease-related death for children ages one to 14, we need to stand united to conquer childhood cancer. The fight against childhood cancer should never be fought alone. That is what the gold ribbon campaign is about.

I myself wear this gold ribbon today in honour of two people. First is Conah Higgins, the son of dear family friends. Conah was in the process of moving to Canada from the UK when he, sadly, passed away from cancer at the age of 17.

The other is in memory of Brendan Rourke, a young man from my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and to recognize the tireless advocacy work of his father, Neal Rourke, who, in collaboration with an international network of parent groups and survivor networks, is raising funds and awareness for young girls and boys whose childhoods have been regrettably cut short.

Three weeks ago, Neal, along with three young cancer survivors, rang the opening bell at the Toronto Stock Exchange to mark the beginning of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Neal, along with volunteers from the Childhood Cancer International and Big Book of Care campaigns, are reminding us to do more so we can build a future free from cancer; that is, to build on the progress achieved at all levels of society and to make new drug research possible so we can ensure a brighter and healthier future for all of our children. That means government, industry, hospitals, research institutes and individual and corporate donors.

As such, I respectfully ask all of us to commit to working tirelessly to ensure we give our children and youth every opportunity to grow and thrive and live in a world that is free from cancer in all its forms. It is my hope that we will soon, for the dream of my hero, Terry Fox, find a cure for all cancers. “Somewhere the hurting must stop.”

#### ADRIENNE NEWPORT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today, I proudly rise to speak of a 24-year-old young woman who is standing up in life to make a difference. Her name is Adrienne Newport.

As a child, Adrienne had to wear a bright blue helmet to go to school because she would bash her head on walls and doors, a way of dealing with her frustrations that was misunderstood by many. At a young age, she barricaded herself in her home and attempted to burn it down. Consequently, she was arrested and charged for her actions. She spent time in a psychiatric ward and other institutions where she was restrained and sedated on numerous occasions.

Adrienne wrote a book, co-authored by John A. McCurdy: *The Light That Guides My Way*. She outlines her challenges and sheds light on what it's like to live with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder—FASD for short. Adrienne was born with FASD along with cerebral palsy. Despite her unfair circumstances at birth, improper care

for her needs and mistreatment since a young age, Adrienne has accepted her challenges. She has persevered and she is succeeding.

Adrienne has been working part-time in the administration office at Rygiel Supports for Community Living. She is grateful for the staff and the support of people like Donna Marcaccio, the executive director. She has also earned a community integration certificate from Mohawk College. Her dream is to have a full-time job as a counsellor, a social worker or even a politician, so that she can continue to raise awareness about FASD.

I am grateful that I've had the opportunity to meet Adrienne. I enjoyed reading her book detailing her life journey, and I strongly suggest this read.

#### REFUGEES

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** This past weekend, the Waterloo chapter of the Muslim Association of Canada invited our community to take part in an event called Embrace Syria, part of a larger national campaign to bring Syrian refugees to our country. Last night, there was a very well-attended rally at Kitchener city hall to raise awareness of the Syrian refugee crisis. Our mayor, Berry Vrbanovic, spoke at the gathering, announcing that our council has committed \$10,000 to the Mennonite Central Committee as it responds to this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. I'm proud to add that our government recently committed \$10.5 million in aid to the resettlement of 10,000 refugees by the end of 2016.

Despite the impulse to see immigrants as a burden to society—this is a notion that is profoundly mistaken. As the daughter of immigrants, I can say with confidence that immigrants built this country. They contribute to the economic prosperity of Ontario and they make our communities more vibrant. We are taking action in Ontario to help Syrian refugees, but we need a federal partner to address our current refugee resettlement policy. We hope that they heed Ontario's call to bring more refugees to Canada by the end of the year. Ontarians care, and I'm heartened to know that the people of my community, Kitchener Centre, do too.

#### NORTH BAY REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Today is an incredibly distressing day in my riding, especially for those people who rely on health services provided at the North Bay Regional Health Centre. Today, a further 158 full-time staff at our hospital learned that their jobs are being cut by this government; more than half of those employees were nurses. This is in addition to the 197 front-line health care workers already cut at this hospital. Again, the majority of them were nurses. Speaker, that's 350 front-line health care workers that are gone.

The Liberal government is also closing 30 beds in North Bay Regional, in addition to the 30 beds they already closed at this five-year-old hospital. This is not only devastating to the front-line health care workers but

more so for their patients, who are now rightfully concerned about access to the quality health care they need and deserve. Just this week we heard that hospital cuts in Ottawa have led to rising readmission rates, negating any supposed savings and negatively impacting access to quality care.

The Liberal government has clearly put self-interest ahead of the health care of northerners. This much I want to make clear, Mr. Speaker: We, the people of Nipissing, will not stand for this. We're fed up with the scandals that leave us to pay the price.

#### BEAR CONTROL

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to take a few seconds to talk about an issue in my riding and throughout the north: bears.

I'd like to read one Facebook message I got from one of my constituents. I think it'll explain the problem: "Hi John, just a note to let you know I called Bear Wise about a bear that has been hanging around my house for about a month now. Let me tell [you] that it's a big joke, and that program should be scrapped and save the taxpayers a ton of money. I live at 72 First Street, Englehart, so there are a few reasons why it cannot be shot; one, because I live in town. I understand that one ... but Bear Wise says that it is because I have a veggie garden and raspberries growing in my yard so I have a food source for it. Does not make sense to me.... Are we not supposed to grow our own food anymore?"

That's the issue that this government is missing. We have people who can't use their backyards, who have to keep their kids inside and who are losing their livelihood. No, their lives aren't being threatened, and you can't call 911 every time you have a bear in your yard, but these bears are in town.

Twenty years ago, the MNR used to do something more than helpful hints. Actually, now people are forced to take matters into their own hands. Believe you me, that's not managing wildlife, because bears are shot every day because they're being treated like vermin instead of game animals, which they actually are.

1510

#### EVENTS IN OTTAWA-ORLÉANS

##### ÉVÉNEMENTS DIVERS À OTTAWA-ORLÉANS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It has been a most wonderful summer in Orléans, my first complete one since being elected. It was a special time to be able to travel all around my riding to meet with community members, attend events, and help individuals through meetings in my office. I was honoured to participate on a daily basis in the lives of the people of Ottawa-Orléans. Here are some highlights.

I had the pleasure to speak to students at a few schools about what we do as public representatives. I was also very proud to attend the graduation of the grade 12 students at Sir Wilfrid Laurier high school.

J'ai eu le plaisir aussi de tenir en juin, le Mois des personnes âgées, mon premier Festival annuel des fraises pour célébrer nos aînés et leur famille.

My annual corn roast and barbecue at Petrie Island on the Ottawa River took place in August. It was a most memorable event. More than 150 persons gathered to spend some time with friends and family to taste our local fresh corn.

Overall, un merveilleux été passé à rencontrer et à échanger avec ma communauté. Merci.

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup.

#### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to update the House on the progress being made towards the construction of the Highway 6 Morriston bypass. On many occasions in recent years, I have called attention to the need for a highway bypass around the community of Morriston, in the township of Puslinch. Anyone who drives this route regularly knows that there is a traffic bottleneck through Morriston which is often kilometres long.

Mayor Dennis Lever and the council of the township of Puslinch, the county of Wellington, and the Morriston Bypass Coalition have made a strong economic case for the Morriston bypass, and I want to thank them for their effective efforts.

On June 23, at a meeting that my office arranged, we spoke with the Minister of Transportation here at Queen's Park to further impress upon him the worsening congestion problem and the urgency of dealing with it. The minister committed to visiting Puslinch township. True to his words, exactly a month later, on July 23, the minister came to Wellington-Halton Hills. I was glad to welcome him to our area.

Today I call upon the minister to continue his best efforts, urging his colleagues on the government side to support this project as well. The Morriston bypass has been talked about for a generation. The time for talk is over. The very first item on the Legislature's order paper for private members' motions calls upon the minister to place the Highway 6 Morriston bypass on the ministry's five-year plan for new construction, the Southern Ontario Highways Program. Once again, I urge him to do so.

#### ROSH HASHANAH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Mr. Speaker, L'Shana Tova. I rise today to commemorate Rosh Hashanah. In my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence and across this great province, many members of the Jewish faith celebrated Rosh Hashanah over the past few days.

This past Sunday evening marked Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. Rosh Hashanah means "head of the year," and is observed on two days beginning on the first day of the Jewish year. There is a 10-day period of repentance following Rosh Hashanah which ends with Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and atonement. During Rosh Hashanah, Jewish people ask God for forgiveness for the things they've done wrong during the past year. It

also is a time to remind themselves not to repeat these mistakes in the coming year. In this way, Rosh Hashanah is a holiday that helps us to become better people and move forward.

Rosh Hashanah is marked in shul by the blowing of the shofar, a hollowed-out ram's horn. The blowing of the shofar is meant to wake up the soul and turn its attention to the important task of repentance. Sweet foods such as apples dipped in honey, challah, and pomegranates are eaten to symbolize the hope for a sweet new year.

Rosh Hashanah is a time to remember and reflect on the past year as we move into the next.

I want to wish the entire Jewish community in my riding and across Ontario a very happy and meaningful Rosh Hashanah. To all my friends and constituents, L'Shana Tova.

### TASTE OF THE KINGSWAY

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** Better late than never, as they say.

I'm very pleased to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to share with you about the Taste of the Kingsway festival in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Every September, over three memorable days of celebration along Bloor Street, we shut down the street and invite families, friends and neighbours from Etobicoke and beyond to gather at this popular event. True to form, this year the 18th annual festival took place on a weekend with a little bit of rain, but it didn't dampen anyone's spirits.

The show went on with something for everyone: great music, wonderful food, singing, dancing, shopping and three stages of continuous live entertainment. The street was alive with over 200 exhibitors and local vendors, and tens of thousands of people going through the children's midway and, of course, enjoying the Scotiabank dog show. An added bonus to these attendees was that they don't have to drive there; they can walk or take public transit, as many events in our city benefit from having the TTC nearby.

The Kingsway is a vital component of my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, a unique neighbourhood of over 250 businesses that has been rated one of the city's top destinations.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and all other members of the Legislature to come out to the Taste of the Kingsway next year and enjoy another great event.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### 1170517 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Norm Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc.

**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):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

**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 minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The Health Information Protection Act, which follows up on a commitment that I made this past June, aims to create stronger and more comprehensive protection of health information privacy. It introduces greater accountability and transparency in the health system about privacy breaches and critical incidents. It introduces a renewed provincial electronic health record privacy framework. Taken together, it's an important part of our plan to improve patient care and protect patient safety. It's one more way that our government is putting patients first.

Privacy breaches in Ontario have underscored the need to both ensure that individuals are better protected and that those who breach the privacy of individuals are held accountable. But an accountable health care system is more than that. A system that is accountable and that puts patients first must be transparent in the event of critical incidents, and affected patients and their families must know that steps are being taken to improve the quality of care.

1520

Wrapping up, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm actually not going to permit that wrap-up because it's not taken from the notes inside, the explanatory notes. It's more of a speech than that.

I'm going to remind all members: When you introduce a bill, it should come from the explanatory notes because you have been given time during statements by ministries to give a speech. I'm going to ask that we move on and accept the minister's comments.

I look to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex on introduction of bills.

ESTATE ADMINISTRATION TAX  
FAIRNESS ACT, 2015  
LOI DE 2015 CONCERNANT L'ÉQUITÉ  
DE L'IMPÔT SUR L'ADMINISTRATION  
DES SUCCESSIONS

Mr. McNaughton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 120, An Act to amend the Estate Administration Tax Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 120, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 de l'impôt sur l'administration des successions.

**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. Monte McNaughton:** Currently, the Estate Administration Tax Act, 1998, provides that the value of the estate of a deceased person does not include the value of any encumbrance on real property owned by the deceased person. The bill amends the act so that the value of any encumbrance on any property is excluded from the value of the estate. In addition, the value of a bequest or devise made for a charitable purpose is not included in the value of the estate.

The act also changes the amount of estate administration tax payable, starting on the day the bill receives royal assent. For an estate worth \$50,000 or less, the amount of tax payable would be nil. The amount of tax for an estate worth more than \$50,000 is \$5 for every \$1,000 by which the value of the estate is greater than \$50,000 but less than \$100,000, and \$20 for every \$1,000 by which the value of the estate is greater than \$100,000. The maximum amount of tax payable under the new provisions is \$3,250, with the result that no estate bears a greater estate administration tax liability under the new rate structure than it does under the current rate structure.

The bill also repeals amendments made to the act by the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011. Major features of that act are provisions requiring information about estates to be given to the Minister of Finance and provisions relating to the assessment of estates in respect of their estate administration tax payable under the act.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES  
AMENDMENT ACT (REHABILITATIVE  
OR THERAPEUTIC PURPOSES  
EXEMPTION), 2015  
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION  
À USAGE D'HABITATION (EXCLUSION  
POUR SERVICES DE RÉADAPTATION  
OU SERVICES THÉRAPEUTIQUES)

Ms. Hoggarth moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to the exemption for living

accommodation occupied for the purpose of receiving rehabilitative or therapeutic services / Projet de loi 121, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de l'exclusion applicable aux logements occupés pour y recevoir des services de réadaptation ou des services thérapeutiques.

**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.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** This bill would amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. The current subclause 5(k)(ii) provides that the act does not apply to certain living accommodations occupied for the purpose of receiving rehabilitative or therapeutic services if the accommodation is intended to be provided for no more than a one-year period. This bill extends this to a three-year period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further introduction of bills?

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let me make a quick comment on the ruling I just did. It is the practice that we read from the explanatory notes when we're introducing a bill, or a brief statement, because all bills have an opportunity to be spoken to in debate. Particularly in the ministers' cases, they have an opportunity set in routine proceedings which allows them to make a full statement about the bill. The explanatory notes, if they're long, can be condensed. That's part of the practice as well, so it's to be as brief as possible. I ask that all members remember that.

I appreciate your co-operation in that, because it is cause for some debate as to whether or not people are taking advantage of that. I would appreciate your co-operation.

#### PETITIONS

##### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Todd Smith:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario farmers were prevented from meaningfully participating in government consultations around changes to allowable crop protection tools during the spring of 2015 due to the government scheduling consultations during prime planting season;

"Whereas the regulations the government of Ontario passed on Canada Day severely restrict the use of treated seeds that are of critical importance for grain farmers in preserving their crop yields and these changes are expected to cost Ontario's economy over \$600 million a year;

"Whereas it will be virtually impossible for farmers to access these necessary treated seeds for the 2016 planting

season due to the bureaucratic hurdles being put in place by the province;

“We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the government of Ontario to suspend the class 12 regulations that were passed on July 1, 2015, to allow for farmers to plant in 2016, as they did in 2015; to allow for meaningful dialogue on the regulations, their intent and other approaches to achieving the same end, that won’t devastate farmers in the province.”

I agree with this, will sign it and send it to the table with page Siena.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that was sent to me by Diane MacDonald from Hanmer in my riding, and I have thousands and thousands of names. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

#### LUNG HEALTH

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

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and

Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and will affix my signature.

1530

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas new requirements for estate administration tax filing require estate executors to file a significant amount of documentation within 90 days of the estate owner’s death; and

“Whereas the information demanded by the Ministry of Finance requires the collection of significant supporting evidence; and

“Whereas the time required to obtain and verify such documentation may be longer than 90 days; and

“Whereas the new regulations do not allow executors to make a preliminary filing in good faith, despite the significant penalties for any errors or omissions; and

“Whereas these new regulations will negatively impact all estates in Ontario and act as a significant deterrent to serving as an estate executor;

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

“To significantly extend the filing deadline for estate administration tax purposes and allow for preliminary filings in cases where the executor is unable to obtain the required supporting documents prior to the deadline.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Matthew.

#### MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

“We ask that the Attorney General’s office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give this to page Kelly.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing patients with access to information about their medical doctor’s treatment history is fundamental to regulating the medical profession and ensuring Ontario’s health-care system is accountable and transparent;

“Whereas currently, Ontario patients do not have access to this information, which is also an important measure to improve patient safety and empower them when making decisions about medical treatment;

“Whereas making public all information about complaints, cautions and remedial action taken against a physician does not diminish the College of Physicians and Surgeons’ ability to self-regulate, but rather brings balance to the relationship between doctors and patients;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care act immediately to implement the transparency and accountability measures contained in Bill 29, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991.”

Speaker, I approve of this petition and I will affix my signature and give it to page Siena.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures; and

“Whereas one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them; and

“Whereas mental illness is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death in Canada; and

“Whereas the cost of mental health and addictions to the Ontario economy is \$34 billion; and

“Whereas the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions made 22 recommendations in their final report; and

“Whereas the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to implement all 22 of these recommendations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, which:

(1) Brings all mental health services in the province under one ministry, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

(2) Establishes a single body to design, manage and coordinate all mental health and addictions systems throughout the province;

(3) Ensures that programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario;

(4) Grants the Ombudsman full powers to audit or investigate providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Krishaj.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I support this petition and affix my signature to it and hand it to page Duha.

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I support this petition and give it to page David to take to the table.

### CONCUSSION

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the rate of concussions among children and youth has increased significantly from 2003 to 2011, from 466 to 754 per 100,000 for boys, and from 208 to 440 per 100,000 for girls; and

“Whereas hard falls and the use of force, often found in full-contact sports, have been found to be the cause of over half of all hospital visits for pediatric concussions; and

“Whereas the signs and symptoms of concussions can be difficult to identify unless coaches, mentors, youth and parents have been educated to recognize them; and

“Whereas preventative measures, such as rules around return-to-play for young athletes who have suspected concussions, as well as preventative education and awareness have been found to significantly decrease the danger of serious or fatal injuries; and

“Whereas Bill 39, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to concussions, was introduced in 2012 but never passed; and

“Whereas 49 recommendations to increase awareness, training and education around concussions were made by a jury after the coroner’s inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

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

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Rowan’s Law to ensure the safety and health of children and young athletes across the province.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** 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

### 1540

“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.”

Speaker, I support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it down with Krishaj.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I rise today to read the following petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, will affix my name and send to the table with page Anna.



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### PROTECTING CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 15, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 106, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** When we last discussed this, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton had the floor. He now has the floor.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to continue my remarks.

Where we left off: We were talking about some of the beneficial steps, some of the improvements that Bill 106 will provide. It addresses a number of concerns, particularly where it comes to some of the major issues that arise for condominium owners. One of the issues that I talked about that I think is very important is that there is a tribunal mechanism. If there are disputes, if there are concerns between the condominium owner and the board, there is a remedy, which is a positive sign.

But I want to reiterate one of my concerns. Although there are disputes between the condominium owner and the board, and it is important to provide a tribunal that allows for those issues to be remedied, one of the major sources of complaints is between the condominium owner and the developer, and the condominium owner and the condominium manager. However, those two categories were left out of this tribunal process. That's very concerning.

It seems to me that if you have already struck the tribunal, it would only make sense to make sure that all the players involved are incorporated into the tribunal mechanism. It only makes sense that if a condominium owner wants to raise a complaint, they should be able to raise all of their complaints in that tribunal. Now, the way the system works is that you can raise some complaints to this tribunal when it comes to your condominium board, but if it's a developer issue or if it's a condominium manager issue, you have to go to court.

We all know how difficult it is to go to court, to navigate the court system, how costly it could be and how difficult it could be for someone who doesn't understand the court system or is not familiar with it. Often it's so cost-prohibitive that people are loath to go to the courts, and they are left without any remedy or any solution to their problem. So that's a big concern.

The other area I touched on—and I want to go into more detail on this area; I have some other sources and other folks, and I would like to add their voices to this issue. With condominiums being newly built homes, one of the major concerns that has arisen when it comes to condominiums in general is that we all know that a home, whether it's a condo, a townhouse or a freehold house—these are some of the most valuable assets in a person's life. In a consumer's life, this is probably the most expensive single purchase they will make, and it is very important that they have peace of mind when they make this purchase.

The government has created a home warranty system, and this home warranty system, although it's private and not-for-profit and although it's not owned by the government, essentially the government mandated that Tarion is the only source of a warranty. It's the only place you can go to for a warranty, and in fact you have to have a warranty if you purchase a new home. It seems to make sense for such a valuable asset to have a warranty, but when you require that there's only one place to go—you have to go to it—and that entity is not providing good service, the government has a responsibility to have oversight over this entity.

Though it may be private, essentially it is operating solely because of the mandate the government provided. If the government hadn't said that, by law, you must purchase your home warranty through Tarion—if they didn't mandate that by law—then Tarion would essentially have no source of revenue or very little source of revenue or a questionable source of revenue. It's solely operating based on that mandate and, in effect, it is being operated on public dollars. Because it is operating on public dollars, it should be open to the same scrutiny we apply to other arm's-length agencies that work because of the taxpayer dollar. However, in this case, Tarion is not under any scrutiny. It's not under Ombudsman oversight, nor is it something that is accessible by the Auditor General.

Alan Shanoff, who was previously counsel to Sun Media Corp., a freelance writer who also teaches media law at Humber College, wrote for the Law Times and got into this issue regarding Tarion. I'd like to quote Mr. Shanoff's article. He very clearly summarizes the situation: "The government doesn't fund Tarion, which instead relies on mandatory fees passed on to and paid by new home purchasers as well as builder registration and renewal fees and investment income. In other words, it's really the public that funds Tarion's operations. Although it receives no government funding, all of Tarion's revenue comes from its legislated mandate."

In that type of circumstance, when its entire source of revenue essentially comes from the public and it has no scrutiny, no oversight, that is a recipe for serious problems.

Condominium owners, like all homeowners, purchase this very valuable asset and want to ensure that the asset they've purchased has some protection. They're given this supposed peace of mind that there's a warranty, that

if there's any issue with building code compliance, if there's any issue with the unit's manufacturer or the manufacture of the various components of it—if there's an issue with the way the kitchen is set up, the kitchen cabinets, the flooring—if there are issues with this unit, there is a remedy. You can go to the home warranty and make a claim.

But the problem—back to Mr. Shanoff's article—the concern is that when we look at Tarion's operations, in 2013 it collected \$33.9 million in new home enrolment fees. It also earned \$3.2 million in builders' registration and renewal fees. In addition, when you include investment income, "its total revenue for the year was \$71 million." However, Tarion, in light of earning or bringing in \$71 million, only paid out \$7.3 million to homeowners for warrantable claims made where the builders were unable to resolve the issue. As it stands, the total equity at December 31, 2013, was \$216 million. The community has essentially paid 216 million taxpayer dollars into this—consumers have paid into this—yet there's absolutely no scrutiny. There's no Ombudsman oversight, and there's no access to the Auditor General.

**1550**

Now, this is an issue that has been raised a number of times. The previous Ombudsman raised this issue, received almost 300 complaints about Tarion, ranging from 2007 to 2013, and stated that he "long believed that Tarion lacks proper oversight." In addition to the previous Ombudsman, former Ombudsman Daniel Hill also recommended that Tarion fall under the Ombudsman office's oversight. This was in 1986. MPP Rosario Marchese specifically tabled bills on this issue to reform Tarion in 2010, in 2011 and most recently in 2012.

There have been a number of people who have raised concerns around this issue, from ombudsmen to sitting members of provincial Parliament, and there has been nothing done to reform Tarion. At a minimum, Tarion needs to receive some serious oversight. All of these concerns were raised from the ombudsmen, were raised by the MPPs. All of these concerns for reform were around oversight and accountability, but the fact is that there is no oversight with respect to the Auditor General and there is no oversight with respect to the Ombudsman's office. These are two specific requests that have been made time and time again, and there has been nothing to reform these two requests. It's a fact. At this point in time, there is nothing that has been done with respect to those issues.

I would implore the government to take a step. This is a serious issue, this is an important issue, and the government is very well within its mandate to be able to address this issue, to look at the books. We've asked time and time again to look at where our dollars are going. Is there appropriate value for money; are consumers receiving the best protection possible; are there inappropriate activities going on or not; and, given the evidence in terms of the revenues coming in and the claims going out, is this fair, is it appropriate and are consumers getting the best service? These are questions that people

are asking and there are no answers provided, and there hasn't been sufficient oversight.

The Canadians for Properly Built Homes also raised this concern, and they've raised concerns with respect to Tarion a number of times. Most recently, they raised an issue—they had a news release on June 1, 2015. They're urging the government to pass Bill 60. Bill 60, again, builds on the great work of MPP Rosario Marchese but looks toward improving Tarion oversight and accountability. The Canadians for Properly Built Homes specifically indicate that, using Tarion's own client survey data, approximately 60,000 Ontario families are dissatisfied with the service they received from Tarion. That's a significant number.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And it keeps growing.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** And, as my colleague states, it keeps growing, Mr. Speaker; it keeps growing. There are more and more people who are upset about what is going on.

The Canadians for Properly Built Homes also raised concerns around the accumulated wealth that Tarion has, where the oversight is, the accountability of where that wealth is going and where it's being used. Essentially, there is no consumer protection with respect to this issue. People are upset, and they're not seeing any real action.

So it's one thing to raise the concern; now I'm going to provide some clear suggestions. I proposed a bill—and again I built on the great work of other members. One of the first steps we need to do is look at the overall framework of Tarion. One of the first steps is that if we know that essentially all of the revenue that comes into Tarion comes from the public, then one of the requirements, that I've asked for in Bill 60, is that Tarion be included on the sunshine list—there would be public salary disclosure and that it would apply to Tarion. It would be the start of uncovering whether or not things are going on in an appropriate manner or not.

I'll just remind the government that in one of the most recent scandals, the Ornge scandal, the key to unlocking this scandal—and this question was posed a number of times and specifically answered by the Minister of Health at the time. One of the keys to unlocking the scandal in Ornge was the salary of Dr. Mazza. Once that salary got disclosed, that it had risen to over \$1 million, there were some serious red flags. That question about salary was posed by the NDP numerous times in committee, years before the scandal broke. This question about salary continued on to requests through the disclosure-of-information requests that were made, freedom-of-information applications that were made to obtain the salary.

These requests, again, landed on deaf ears. No one responded and we did not have that answer. It was only after the great investigative work from various media agencies that we were able to uncover this salary, and then we realize that there were some serious problems with Ornge and the way it was conducting its business: that it was mixing for-profit and not-for-profit agencies in a way that was inappropriate, and that the service quality was seriously at risk.

We have another potential Ornge on our hands. We have an agency that provides an important service but has no accountability, in effect, and has no real oversight. The government is not taking any actions to provide that oversight and that accountability. Without that, perhaps this will turn into another Ornge. Instead of it being an issue that lands on the front page of a newspaper, perhaps the government can take this opportunity, now that this issue has been raised again and again, and perhaps they can take the step now to proactively address the situation and find out if there is a serious concern; address it now, instead of waiting years from now when someone else will come back and quote the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for having raised this issue in Parliament.

In addition to the issues around accountability, the other concern about Tarion is that its purpose is to provide protection for homeowners. If that's its purpose, then it should be clearly listed in terms of its mandate; it should be clearly listed in terms of its mission. Most importantly, its membership, the board of Tarion, should be made up of people who actually will advance that initiative.

Tarion doesn't only act as a home warranty; in effect, it acts as a form of regulator over the builders. However, the membership of the board is comprised of primarily the very same industry which it seeks to regulate. That, inherently, is a problem. If Tarion is supposed to regulate an industry and if it's supposed to provide protection to the consumer, to the homeowner, then its board should reflect that membership. The membership of the board should reflect that. The membership of the board should reflect people who are homeowners, who are members of homeowner associations, people who are affiliated with protecting consumer rights.

As it stands, Mr. Speaker, the membership of the board is actually comprised of agencies and individuals that are related to the construction industry. While we respect the construction industry as an important, vital sector in our economy, and it provides a vital service towards building homes, it doesn't make sense that the regulator of this industry be comprised of people from that industry itself. It just doesn't make sense. That's something that we also question. We want the government to address that as well, and Bill 60 looks to address that issue.

We have an opportunity now; the government has taken an appropriate step and a good step to addressing the issues around condominium owners. We've seen a serious lack of oversight in terms of the condominium industry, resulting in some serious issues. Many of the members are familiar with the glass-falling circumstances that occurred with condominiums, which resulted in a lot of the pressure placed on this government now to take the steps that we see with Bill 106. But we've only just scratched the surface with this bill, and there's a lot more that can be done.

With respect to the condominium authority, though the condominium authority is a good idea—and I applaud the government for ensuring, right off the bat, that the

condominium authority is something that is open to Auditor General scrutiny; that is an appropriate decision that makes sense. But if you can do it with the condominium authority that the government is creating through this bill, why can't you then also have that same accountability and oversight with Tarion?

I just cited some of the dollars and figures. If you look at Tarion in terms of its resources, how much money is involved in Tarion, and you compare that with the potential condominium authority, it's light-years apart. You have one agency, which is just going to start—which will not have nearly the same revenue, won't have nearly the same amount in terms of asset—receiving the highest level, the gold standard, of oversight and accountability, and you have another agency, which has 100 times more assets in terms of revenue, and it's receiving essentially zero oversight from this government.

**1600**

In fact, when it comes to the oversight and the relationship between the government and Tarion, though the previous Ombudsman did not have the mandate to actually investigate Tarion directly, the Ombudsman did have the authority to investigate the relationship between the government of Ontario and Tarion, and did so, did evaluate this relationship. In 2008, the then Ombudsman released a report which criticized the ministry for its failures concerning Tarion. So it's important that that be noted as well. It has not only been raised by members of provincial Parliament, but the Ombudsman also raised this issue, issued a report on this issue and, in fact, criticized the government's handling of this file. It's important that this issue be highlighted again.

So while the tribunal is a good step and while it is an important measure, in terms of a remedy for those condominium owners who are concerned, it shows us that the government is capable of providing oversight in that area. It should be able to provide the same accountability with respect to Tarion.

Now, I raise this issue, and I want to go into some more depth on this, with respect to the way that the tribunal will be set up. This is a question about the manner in which the government is bringing bills forward. Much of the details around the tribunal—the way the tribunal is going to work in terms of its mechanism, the way it is going to unfold—are left to regulation. Any time you leave details, and a great deal of details, to regulation, it limits the ability of the opposition to be able to provide insight into this bill. If everything is going to be left to the minister to provide in regulation, then the bill becomes less wholesome in terms of what we can say and provide input to. So while the tribunal looks good, I don't have any of the real details around the mechanism, the way it's going to operate and the way it's going to unfold. Those details are only going to be—

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A point of order, the Minister of Children and Youth Services?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I've been listening very closely to these very in-depth comments about Tarion,

and I appreciate hearing the member's point of view, but this is about the condominium act before us, not specifically about Tarion. So I would ask, through the Speaker, that we get back to the bill at hand. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, with all due respect to the minister, I think he's trying to do a comparative analysis between the two. If I think he strays too far, I will certainly bring him back to where he should belong.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, Minister, right now, through Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about the tribunal. The tribunal is something that's actually in this legislation. I implore the minister to take a look at it.

Just to repeat, the way the tribunal is set up is that the actual mechanism of the tribunal is going to be laid out in regulation. When we don't have it all in the legislation, and instead it's in the regulation, it limits our ability to provide insight into it. That's what I just said. So through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask that those listening should pay attention to the details of the comments.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I agree.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you.

With respect to the other areas of this bill—where this bill provides some strong protection and where we need to strengthen some further protection—one of the areas that I touched on earlier in the speech, and I think it is something we really need to highlight, is that there is a great need for consumer protection, in terms of what the buyer is provided with at the time of sale and what they receive once the sale is completed. That's something that this act looks to address, but we need to address it in more detail.

For example—and I touched on this and I think it's something we need to touch on a bit more. When you purchase a condominium, the way the current legislation protection works is that the unit itself—if you're promised a certain type of flooring and pay for that flooring, you're promised a certain type of wall, a certain type of amenities and a certain upgrade in the kitchen or the appliances, those items in your actual unit are very specifically protected in the agreement. So if there is a significant variation, if you purchase something and the square footage is 700 or 800 square feet and you receive something that's 500 square feet, you will be protected. That's something that's very closely scrutinized, and that's important.

But the areas that don't receive the same level of protection are the common elements, and I think that's important to note. In a condominium, often the selling point or the point that really pulls someone in is the fact that when you're purchasing a condominium, you're receiving a whole host of other amenities, and that's something that condominium homeowners look towards. They look at and they assess, "Okay, maybe I'm getting a smaller room, maybe the square footage of my actual unit will be smaller, but this condominium will have a large party room the residents will have access to. If I know that I have access to this party room, a common area, a

common room where I can come to, then I can make do with a smaller condominium. I can make do with that because I know I'll have a larger space to entertain my guests."

Now, that's something important to somebody and if the developers say up front that you're going to get a 10,000-square-foot common area, recreation space, as well as a patio where you can be outdoors and barbecue, and that's something important to you, and then when you purchase the unit, you get the unit you were looking for, the unit that you were told, but the party room, which was supposed to be 10,000 square feet, turns out to be a closet and has maybe room for 10 people, that's no longer what you were promised. That has a serious impact. These are things that have happened to people.

People often look at condominiums and they look at some of the resources that are available and they say, "Perhaps I don't need a gym membership because the condominium will have a gym in it." That's something that the developer will sell: "Listen. We'll have a state-of-the-art gym. We'll have all the weights you need, we'll have all the equipment you need. You don't even need a gym membership; you'll save on that." So perhaps you look at your condominium fees, which seem a bit high, and say, "Well, I can knock off the cost of a gym membership and I can incorporate that into my costs and say that it makes some sense. I'll purchase this unit." Then when you go and get the unit, instead of this world-class gym facility, you see a treadmill and an exercise ball and you're thinking, "I could have put that in my own unit," that's a problem. So it's important that those common elements that you may not, at the top of mind, think are as relevant, in a condominium purchase they are absolutely relevant and they need to be protected.

If a consumer is provided with a certain detail around what the common element will be, then that should actually be what they get. That's an important area of protection that is lacking in this bill at this point in time, but it's something I'm sure we can include and I implore the government to address that concern.

Just with my time remaining I want to look at, again, the manner in which the government approached this situation or this reform. Two issues: One is the lack of speed with addressing this concern. Condominiums experienced a great boom. A lot of condominiums were built and during that time when many condominiums were built, many condominium owners didn't receive adequate protection. Issues were raised by the government very slowly to provide adequate protection. That's an issue or area of concern.

The government has a responsibility to address and be flexible to the changing demographics and the changing realities, and when condominiums started increasing in terms of an option for people—right now, there are 1.3 million people living in condominiums. That's the same size as an entire province; Saskatchewan and Manitoba are about the same size in population. So this is a serious demographic and it needs to receive some serious protection.

The other last area I want to touch, just in closing, is that when the government consulted on this, the government failed to consult with actual condominium owners and instead consulted with a host of other experts in the field. But if you're seeking to create a bill that protects the condominium owner and there's only one member of that panel—and this is the fact—that could be considered to be associated with any condominium-owning association and the rest of the board was comprised of construction-side and developer side individuals, that doesn't seem to me the appropriate way to set up a bill which is seeking to reform condominiums and protect condominium owners. It's not the way to do it.

So I ask the government that—you have a great opportunity now to provide real protection to condominium owners, to consumers. And it doesn't have to be just condominium owners. If you reform Tarion, you could provide real protection to all homeowners.

1610

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** It is a great pleasure to speak about this bill, which I introduced in the last session. It's a very important bill, because we know that about one in 10 Ontarians lives in a condominium, and we know that over half of new builds in Ontario are condominiums. This legislation is in need of an overhaul, for sure.

Let's talk about what this bill will do. What will this bill actually do? It will increase protections for condo owners who are purchasing a condo. It will require condo managers to be licensed. It will create new governance requirements for condo boards. It will strengthen the financial stability of condo buildings. It will establish a modern, cost-effective dispute resolution system.

I really want to emphasize in this debate that this legislation is based on over 2,200 recommendations made by, yes, condo owners, condo managers, developers and experts. Yes, the ministry does receive a number of complaints and inquiries a year about condo issues, and that's why we're bringing this forward again.

Some of the concerns from consumers relate to an increase in condo fees, major financial decisions being made without an owner's consent and courts being required to appoint an administrator to look after buildings in financial crisis. These are real, big issues that will be and can be addressed by this legislation. Some of these things, quite frankly, lead to declines in property values, and that's not good. If we pass this legislation, we'll have stronger consumer protection, a condo authority that would have oversight of the sector with quicker, lower-cost dispute resolutions than are currently available today, and instead of spending a lot of time in legal battles, there will be earlier opportunities for resolution.

This is strong legislation that will protect consumers in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's a pleasure to add some more remarks to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. There's not much that I would disagree with the member on. He laid out a good framework of what the problems are with delegated administrative authorities. He used the example of Tarion, which is a delegated administrative authority that has little or no oversight, no scrutiny by any independent officer of the House or ourselves. He also mentioned, very importantly, that many of the operations that will result from this bill will be done through regulations, which, again, nobody in this House will have any scrutiny over.

Where I take a bit of an exception here is this: This bill will create a new delegated administrative authority. This delegated authority will also have tribunal functions, which not all of them have, so this will be a licensing body as well as an adjudicative body. To have those functions wrapped up in a subordinate body of the Legislature that has no scrutiny over it, no oversight of it—I think we're living in a bit of a dream world if we believe that we are going to achieve the results that we want to achieve of having expeditious, efficient, low-cost remedies to disputes. We won't be able to actually look into what they're doing. We won't be able to see what the due process, what the rules of that tribunal will be. We won't even be able to see what the statistics and the data are for complaints registered, complaints remedied or the cost.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to rise and comment on the one-hour lead that the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton gave to Bill 106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015. I think the theme of where he was going with the criticism of this piece of legislation is that yes, there was consultation and that is good. Condo owners have wanted for a long time to be listened to by this government. You must remember that former member Rosario Marchese first made the introduction of these changes back in March 2007. This is a long-standing issue.

It would appear that, as with a lot of pieces of legislation that come before this House, there's a missed opportunity to make this legislation even stronger. It's almost as if the legislation was crafted, and then they let the developers have a little go at it and cut out some of the more important pieces that would actually protect consumers who are condo owners.

I think the other point that the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton made which actually resonates with us on this side of the House, because we've seen this time and time again, is that too much of this legislation is left to regulation. You can't blame us for having some trust issues with this government when legislation passes through this House and then the minister has carte blanche to change it. It actually negates this kind of debate. This should be an exercise in strengthening a piece of legislation. That has been the tradition of this Parliament. That has been a long-

standing tradition of a democracy. When you leave too much to a minister just to take a red pen and cut out major components of a piece of legislation, then it is our responsibility, as representatives of our communities, to bring that to the floor of this Legislature. I think the member, being a lawyer, fully understands what that means.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Davenport.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** It gives me great honour to rise here in the House this afternoon to speak on this bill, Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, especially when we think about Ontarians and where they're living these days. About one in 10 Ontarians now live in condominiums. That's 1.3 million people across the province of Ontario living in condos, and more than 50% of new homes that are being built in Ontario are condos. Currently, there are 700,000 condo units in Ontario, and 51,000 more are under construction, with many of these condos being built in my own riding of Davenport.

Condos also represent about half of the new homes being built in this province, in a housing sector worth almost \$45 billion and employing more than 300,000 Ontarians. The government received about 2,200 submissions through its consultation on the Condominium Act, so it was an extensively consulted piece of legislation. The existing Condominium Act was passed more than 16 years ago. Since then, we can agree that the condominium landscape in Ontario has changed drastically.

That's why it is important that we, as a government, are putting this act forward to protect the owners of condominiums; and it will improve and provide protection for Ontario's 1.3 million condo owners. If passed, this legislation would increase protection for the condo owners and Ontarians purchasing a condo. It would require condominium managers to be licensed; create new governance requirements for condo boards, strengthening the financial sustainability of condo buildings; and establish a modern, cost-effective dispute resolution system.

Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the passage of this act. I think it is exactly what we're needing for all of the condos owners across this province and in my riding of Davenport.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has two minutes.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I want to thank all the members who responded in the questions and answers. I want to thank the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Thank you for your comments.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** And Women's Issues.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** And Women's Issues as well. Thank you to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, especially for the long riding name. Thank you to my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, and thank you to the member from Davenport.

One of the comments that came up—and I think it is important to note that the member from Lanark–

Frontenac–Lennox and Addington brought up issues around the way the tribunal would be set up. I echo those same concerns, because many of the actual details around the mechanism of the tribunal are left to regulation. That's concerning.

I am encouraged, though, by the fact that the tribunal will have, in law, Auditor General oversight. But I'm also cognizant of the concern that was raised by my honourable colleague that perhaps we should also include—maybe I'll take out the "perhaps"; we should also include oversight by the Ombudsman to provide real accountable and transparency. That's one additional oversight piece that I think is important.

**1620**

I think in general, though, it is a step forward. It's a great opportunity to provide real reform and real protections to consumers. Like we've said—and many people have all echoed this—condominiums are moving, more and more, to be a primary choice for many homeowners. If not the ultimate choice, it's still the first choice, because it's more affordable. Many people decide to move into a condominium first.

Whether it's a condominium or a townhouse or a home, one of the areas of reform that's badly needed and this bill does not touch on is the reform of Tarion. We need stronger oversight and accountability into Tarion. It provides a warranty, but at this point in time people are questioning whether it's really putting the consumers' needs and their concerns as a priority, and that's something we need to address.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate. I enjoyed the comments that I heard from all three parties earlier.

As I was sitting here, I was thinking that I bought my first condominium when I was 22. That goes back to the mid-1970s. When you were buying a condominium in the mid-1970s, you were taking a little bit of a risk back then. It was a little bit like the Wild West out there. I was fortunate; I got into a very good deal and everything worked out really well for me. But at the time, in the media—this would be the mid-1970s—the idea of a condominium was a fairly new concept and there were some horror stories out there. There were units that weren't finished; there were builders that just took money and took off—all sorts of stories that we didn't want to hear. But it was one of the best investments we ever made.

It's interesting to see now that even though it was a new way of living back then and one that a lot of people didn't understand, over half of the homes that are built now in the province of Ontario are indeed condominiums. It's interesting to also note that one in 10 people in Ontario lives in a condominium.

I'm sharing my time today with a few people: the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and the Associate Minister of Finance. Speaker, I thought I should mention that to you.

The point I'm trying to make is that the Protecting Condominium Owners Act continues on in the way that this government and, I think, all three parties have determined over the years: We need to provide better protections. As we find out different things about how condominiums work and we know a lot more about them, we're introducing more and more protection measures. This falls, I think, right in line with that, because if you look at some of the major points that are covered in here, it allows for improved and better dispute resolution. That's something that I think we'd all like to see. Obviously, there are disputes that arise from time to time, and the establishment of a condominium authority in this regard is going to help an awful lot.

It also provides increased customer protection for owners and for buyers of condominiums. Over the years, we found out that certain increased protections are needed, and sometimes you only find those things out as a result of experience, of going through them. When you introduce improvements like this, it's a sign that this government and this House are indeed listening to the people who are coming forward with some of the problems that they're facing.

We've decided, also, as a part of this act, should it pass, that it would strengthen financial management rules for condominium corporations. That would help them prevent fraud within their own organizations. It would also help prevent mismanagement by the management companies themselves or by the boards themselves. The example that is used here is that it would prevent the condo corporation from finalizing major contracts unless they fulfilled certain procurement process requirements that are probably the sort of thing we'd all like to see. It's a good example of good management, and it simply applies those concepts to the financial rules that condominium corporations must operate under.

It's going to make it easier for condo owners and boards to participate in and to vote at the meetings that are held from time to time. It's going to make it much more user-friendly. I believe that if you're just an individual owner who owns one unit in a building, it allows you to have your share of the power, your share of the influence, and make sure that your opinions are heard when decisions are made at the condominium.

The thing I really like about this, too, is that we're going to license condominium managers. This is something that I think has been lacking in the past. The proposed act would establish a separate piece of legislation that would allow us to put some discipline in the form of a delegated administrative authority to regulate condominium management and those firms that they work for. We would have a compulsory licensing system.

If you're a citizen member or you're a volunteer member of a board, when you go out and hire somebody that is going to run probably one of the biggest investments in your life, you know that you can go to a licensing system and you know that that person has the credentials, has the authority, has the background, that they are going to do a very, very good job in protecting

your investment and making sure that the place where you live is well run.

Overall what this is going to do is improve protections for almost 1.5 million condo owners in the province of Ontario. It is a huge investment for a lot of people. Often it is the first investment they make, or sometimes it is the last investment they make. People buy condominiums when they're young, and when they downsize they often go back to condominiums.

It is the sort of thing that I think is going to protect a wide range of people in Ontario. I'd urge all members of the House to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris):** Further debate? I recognize the member from Northumberland-Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Speaker; you look great in the Speaker's chair. I must say, my compliments to you. I know that you're not going to be partisan. You'll treat us all the same. Just give me some slack, though. That's all I could ask for.

It is a pleasure to take a few minutes to speak about Bill 106. Let me just say off the top that I represent a rural riding with small urban pockets. We don't have a lot of condominiums. As a matter of fact, I was looking at some of the notes that we have here. The last time that the Condominium Act was passed in 1998, some 17 years ago, I'm not sure we even had any condominiums then. If we did, things have certainly changed.

Madame Speaker, just to put it in perspective, because we're not like downtown Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton or some of the other places, when this piece of legislation was introduced just days ago, I took the opportunity to speak to some folks that are known in the condominium business, both tenants and condominium corporations, just to get some sense, and, although at face value they want it to have more detail, and rightfully so, I think they expect that, in general they all welcome the idea that we're looking at this with somewhat of a fresh face, somehow strengthening the protection of both condominium owners and the tenants.

Some would argue that we are putting in more of a regulatory process that, frankly, with small condo corporations is some additional work, but on the flip side of that, there's a real understanding that you cannot regulate something that frankly needs regulation. We've heard that over and over again. Our friend Rosario from the NDP had been preaching this for the eight years I was here prior. I think they recognize that with change and regulations there's got to be some rules in place.

Madame Speaker, I would say in general that we are moving in the right direction. This is something that, frankly, condo owners and condo tenants have been waiting for. I know we heard from the opposition that this government has been here 12 years, so let's get it done. I'm hopeful that at the end of the day we will have that support from the opposition to make sure that we get this done.

I just want to highlight a couple of the things during the process that got us here today and what the intent of

the bill can be. There was some extensive—and I think we have heard this before but it is worth repeating—consultation and review for the Condominium Act; some 2,200 submissions, and it was varied, from owners to developers, managers and some industry experts. The review concluded that some things needed to be addressed: new laws and tools to increase consumer protection for condo owners and buyers, to improve on how condominiums are run and managed, because we heard over and over again, through that particular piece, that not all condominiums were managed in a standard way.

**1630**

It also means strengthening the financial sustainability of condominium buildings, because we want to make sure that when somebody buys a condominium, from a consumer protection piece, that roof that they buy to have over their head has some substantial credibility so that the roof will not leak, or when the roof needs to be replaced, there is enough money put aside to make sure that the roof gets replaced or the sidewalk gets paved so that we don't slip and fall, and the grass gets cut.

So Mr. Speaker—this has been difficult because I was saying “Madam Speaker” because there was a Madam Speaker, and now I'm saying “Mr. Speaker.” I think you're trying to confuse us. But anyways, we're here. So I just urge the opposition to support this. Let's protect condominium owners, but also managers and corporations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. I hope you're not confused.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay, thank you. The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It is a distinct pleasure to rise in the House to speak to Bill 106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act. This, to me, is one of the most important pieces of legislation that has been before the House during my time here. There are nearly one in 10 Ontarians who now live in a condominium. That percentage will continue to rise.

In my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, as we speak, there are some 3,000 condominiums under construction or about to start construction, and many thousands more that will be built in the decade ahead. So in my community, this piece of legislation is something that has been awaited and is very important to many people. I, myself, am a condominium owner and resident, so I'm very grateful about the additional protections that this act will provide.

There is nothing more important than the government being able to put in place protections that give people reassurance that their home, their enjoyment of their home, their way of life will be secure. This legislation goes a very long way to providing more protections for condominium residents. It was the result of very extensive consultation over 18 months, and I believe we've gotten it right.

The ability to put in place a good dispute resolution mechanism for people is extraordinarily important. During my time as a city councillor, I was often brought into the fray when there were disputes between individuals and a condominium board. I, of course, wasn't really in a position to assist them, but I was very sympathetic to what sometimes were lengthy, multi-year battles in court. That was not fair to individuals with legitimate concerns.

This dispute resolution system will give quick, easy and affordable access to individuals to challenge a condominium board when they feel something is not being done properly or their rights aren't being protected.

There is also going to be important additional consumer protection for owners and buyers of a condominium, ensuring that there must be better disclosure by developers to condominium buyers when they purchase their unit as to what it is that they're buying; better protections about hidden costs that might arise between the process of when you sign an agreement to buy a condo and when you actually take possession and close on it. Those are important provisions. The ability to ensure that there will be better fiscal management by a condominium board, better governance for condominium boards and better education for those volunteers who are elected to serve on condominium boards are all very important provisions of this act and the regulations that will flow from it.

The ability to ensure that condo managers are licensed and that they're held to some kind of standard—there are many great professional condominium management companies and individual property managers, but in the past, there have often been cases where there was quick turnover of condominium managers because it wasn't really that professional of an organization or viewed as that professional of a profession. This will give it greater status and, I think, will attract people who are very committed to doing this job well. They will have the tools in place to do it well, but condominium residents and owners will also have a better ability to hold them to account when something isn't done properly.

This piece of legislation will provide significant help to condominium owners and residents that they did not have before. It will give you much greater peace of mind, if you're a condominium owner or resident, that if there is a problem, there will be an easier mechanism to try to resolve it: more professional governance, more professional management and better fiscal management. It means that one in 10 Ontarians will be able to sleep more soundly in their homes every night, knowing this legislation is in place, if it is passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Associate Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to join my colleagues to speak today about Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. As our cities continue to grow, we know that more and more people are choosing to live in condos. Over half of new homes being built in this province are condos. In fact, one in 10 Ontarians live in condos, and that number is surely to continue to rise in coming years.



The existing Condominium Act was passed more than 16 years ago. Since then, the condominium landscape in Ontario has changed dramatically. Our government is committed to modernizing the existing rules to ensure that they are reflective of the realities that we see in the marketplace today. This act is an important step that our government is taking to ensure that Ontario's 1.3 million condo dwellers have the protection they need.

We know that buying a condo is a major milestone in many Ontarians' lives and a major financial investment, and we know it's important that the government take steps to protect condo owners' investments. This is something we have heard from our consultations that we've done with many Ontarians. This legislation is based on over 2,200 submissions to the condo act consultation process. We developed this legislation in consultation with condo owners, condo managers, developers and experts.

Our government knows there are a number of concerns and issues that condo owners face. Currently, the ministry averages over 1,000 complaints and inquiries a year on condo issues, ranging from owners surprised by increases in condo fees, major financial decisions being made without owners' consent, and courts being required to appoint an administrator to look after buildings in financial crisis. All of these issues lead to a decline in property value.

If passed, as my colleagues have said, the proposed legislation would increase protection for condo owners and Ontarians purchasing a condo; require condo managers to be licensed; create new governance requirements for condo boards; and strengthen the financial sustainability of condo buildings, as well as establish a modern, cost-effective dispute resolution system.

The act would also create a new organization, a condominium authority that would have oversight of the sector. This new organization would provide quicker, lower-cost dispute resolution than what is available today.

We want people to feel comfortable and protected in their homes. We don't want them to have to worry about spending tens of thousands of dollars to resolve disputes. If this legislation is passed, all condo owners would have access to a dispute resolution process which will solve disputes in a fraction of the time and cost that currently exists.

We also know that Ontarians have concerns about surprise costs in the buying process. The proposed legislation contains strong provisions to protect Ontarians at all stages of condominium ownership.

The act has measures to prevent developers from charging surprise cost increases for condo owners. It also improves disclosure during the purchase of a condo.

We are empowering condo owners, who can now feel confident their condo board will have clear governance guidelines and the proper training to deal with residents' concerns in an open and accountable way.

1640

Mr. Speaker, reforming Ontario's condominium laws was a key commitment in our 2015 budget. The 18-

month consultation process and review of the Condominium Act is an excellent example of open government in action, a key platform of the Wynne government. I know this is a priority for Ontarians and I would definitely be encouraged if all members of this House, the opposition in particular, would support this very important bill, this very important piece of legislation and move this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm pleased to rise to comment on Bill 106, the condo bill. I know the people of Ontario have been waiting a long time. I think the Liberals have really outdone themselves; it's 10 years too late, but we're glad to finally see some changes. The last time there were amendments, there was a fraction of the condos that we have today. So it's a chance to make some much-needed changes.

Through my term here, I've been approached by many different groups looking for changes, asking for changes from this government—people who were tired of waiting. So right now, we certainly are supporting. We're looking for a few amendments to the bill, but we would like to see it go through as well.

The last time, in 2002 or 2003, there were 270,000 condos; there's almost 10 times that today. For people purchasing a first home or condo unit, it's probably their largest investment, so we want to make sure it's protected. We want to make sure that costs are kept as low as possible so people can enjoy their home, but also be able to enjoy some of the other features that are in this great province.

Right now, there are some issues. The condos are getting a little older now. They're finding the funds aren't there for the repairs because maybe not enough money was put aside or it wasn't treated properly. This legislation is looking after some of those things. We look forward to moving on to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I take great pleasure in standing up on Bill 106, but I'd like to talk about what really got us here, or at least one of the things. It was called the falling-glass crisis, and shoddy condo construction. In 2012, Toronto Life wrote an excellent article on the falling-glass crisis and shoddy condo construction. Our member talked about that a number of times. Since then, there has been more falling glass. You can imagine that, walking down one of the streets here where all the condos are, and the glass is falling down because of shoddy construction. It's incredible.

It led to class-action lawsuits. Since then, again: more falling glass. It's really amazing. Even though the falling-glass crisis was arguably what finally pressured this government into taking action on condo act reform, Bill 106—I want to be clear on this—will do nothing about falling glass. So don't look up.

There are currently very few limits on what developers can bury in a purchase agreement or in a condo declara-

tion; for example, statements outlining what an individual owner is responsible for within their condo and what common elements the condo corporation is responsible for. This is something that I think should disturb all of us. The hidden costs, the weasel clauses can expose buyers to serious risks. Developers often promise one thing in a condo showroom and deliver something completely different. While developers are limited about what major changes they can make to individual units after purchase, they can grant themselves shocking freedom in what they can do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'm very happy to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 106. There are many pieces in this bill that are extremely important and very positive. I need to echo, as well, the words of the Minister of Labour and the Associate Minister of Finance with respect to how much the condo legislation has been needing to be developed for a very long time.

I can't help but think back to the time when I purchased my first real estate. It was a condominium. There were some issues. This goes back to the 1980s. We had some issues with some failing concrete, and we were levied with a fee. We were young, we didn't have a lot of money back then, and we were levied with a fee of astronomical proportions, which it was very challenging to pay.

This is why this piece of legislation is so incredibly important. Finding that financial sustainability for homeowners is absolutely critical, and it's time that it happens. Buying a condo is a huge investment, and often people who purchase condominiums cannot withstand that financial cost when it's unexpected.

Just to reiterate some of what my colleagues have said a little bit earlier today: This piece of legislation is going to increase protections for condo owners. It's going to require that condominium managers need to be licensed, and that is going to be key. There will be new governance requirements for condo boards, as well, and this will enable homeowners to bring forward their complaints and their issues to somebody who knows how to respond to them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Which one? Have we got it figured out? I guess we're going with you, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to have a short moment to address this bill. Unfortunately, I'm concerned that I may not get the opportunity to speak to it at any greater length.

The condos have been going up in this city at an unbelievable rate for the last several years. It's about time they considered some kind of legislation to deal with the growth in the condominium market. They've taken a long time to bring out the legislation, but I fear

we're going to have a very short time to debate the bill, because already I see what's happening over here. We just had four government members speak in one 20-minute rotation, which traditionally has been reserved for one member of this House to speak in. After a certain length of debate, for those of you out there listening to this debate on television, we then go to 10-minute rotations. But the Liberals are getting four members up during a 20-minute rotation.

Do you know why? Because shortly we're going to have a minister of the crown stand up and say—it's not going to happen today, because the debate will run out at 6 o'clock today. But it's going to happen soon where a minister of the crown will stand up and say, "Speaker, I think enough people have spoken to this. Over 50 members of this House have spoken to this bill." Yet the members of the opposition will have been denied the opportunity to speak to the bill, because the Liberals are doing it in just little fits and starts. They barely clear their throat, and they move on to another speaker.

This is a comprehensive piece of legislation. I applaud the minister for finally doing something about it. It's 36 pages; some of the bills the Liberals bring out are three or four pages. We need to make sure we have adequate time to debate this bill, and then get it to committee so that we can amend it and make it the best possible piece of legislation that we can out of this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Associate Minister of Finance has two minutes.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank all of the members who spoke in support of Bill 106. I want to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member from Niagara Falls, the member from Kingston and the Islands, and even the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his two minutes.

**1650**

Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation. I'm delighted that the minister responsible is here, listening to the debate and hearing all ranges of support for this good piece of legislation that was put together with the input of over 2,200 submissions from the consultation process.

This is about ensuring that we protect people's investments in the long term as well. I know that my colleagues talked about how oftentimes a condo is purchased as one of the first purchases that someone is able to make in home ownership, but I also recognize that oftentimes condominiums are the last purchase that people are making in home ownership as they transition into retirement and seek to live in a smaller home. So that's also an important aspect of ensuring that we protect these types of investments for people for the long term.

Bill 106 is doing just that. It's ensuring that we have new laws and tools to increase consumer protection for condominium owners and buyers. There are improvements to how condominiums are run and managed, protecting that investment for the long term. It's also a means of strengthening the financial sustainability of condominium buildings. We know that over half of all

new home constructions are condominiums. They are part of the communities in which people live throughout this province, and it's important that we protect that investment for the long term, Speaker. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A point of order from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, I would like to correct my record. Because I only had a little bit of time, I inadvertently said that the bill was 36 pages; it is 159 pages, which gives us even more reason why we need more time to debate it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That's not a point of order.

Further debate? The member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You're going to use all 20 minutes, right?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I am going to use all 20 minutes.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Good for you.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, John. It's my privilege to take my 20 minutes to speak for this first opportunity on Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. It will be very insightful, very refreshing, especially when I get to the parts in here about some examples from my hometown in North Bay. We'll get to that in a moment, though, Speaker.

This bill, all approximately 160 pages or so, if enacted, will affect a number of existing pieces of legislation, including the Condominium Act of 1998, the Land Titles Act, the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act of 1999. The Condominium Management Services Act of 2015 is also being enacted.

We know that the goal of home ownership is one of the best investments a family can have. We need to ensure that legislation protects people once they have made this substantial financial commitment. It's unfortunate that it has taken so long to introduce this legislation, but it is our hope that the government has used this time effectively and is putting forward legislation that will actually fix the current problems.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** If you stop campaigning for Trudeau, you might have some time to actually spend on this, to your point.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I believe there was a memo put on all your tables this morning—that green one, yes—which said we will talk to me; we won't exchange across. That applies to both sides, of course. It seems the memo didn't last too long. Already we're at it again. There, in your desk: There you go. You

might want to reread it—and that goes for the whip of the NDP—and let's play the game properly. Thank you.

Continue.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. I was only responding to the minister's comment about an election that she introduced.

Nonetheless, it's imperative that condo management boards are transparent and accountable to their residents—oh, thank you. I appreciate that. I'll make sure that Brad Duguid gets that later.

What will this bill do? This bill will allow for the establishment of a condominium authority that would be responsible for administering condo owner education, dispute resolution and a condo corporation registry.

The condo authority would be a not-for-profit corporation under the oversight of the Auditor General. After initial start-up funding from the government, it would be financed solely by a fee charged to condo corporations. We understand that the estimated fee passed down to the owners is about \$1 a month—this is what we're led to believe. Now, when I hear that \$1-a-month estimate, Speaker, it brings to mind past government estimates. I recall in 2009, when I was in the mayor's chair in the city of North Bay, that the Green Energy Act was introduced and we were told it would only increase hydro fees 1% a year. We now know, of course, that they have turned into 10% a year. So when we hear that this is only going to raise your fee \$1 a month, we're a bit concerned. Of course, we also recall the government's insistence that the gas plant cancellation would cost \$40 million when it actually cost \$1.1 billion. So we're a little leery of estimates.

Nonetheless, the condo authority will have the responsibility to administer the condominium authority tribunal, which would resolve disputes through case management, mediation and adjudication.

The bill will create a separate licensing authority to administer licensing of condo managers. This will be done through a proposed new Condominium Management Services Act, which will create a compulsory licensing system for managers and management firms, creating a training and education program for managers, and establish a code of ethics for condo managers. The act would also set qualifications to be a licensed manager.

The bill would amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, so that most of the warranty protections available to buyers of new condos would also apply to certain condo conversion projects.

This bill, in its aim, is to strengthen financial management by providing condo owners with more information about financial matters affecting their investment and more control over the changes. That's the intent of this. Now, this bill also intends to improve how condos are run by requiring boards to provide regular information, updates to owners, and updating requirements for board meetings.

The most recent condo legislation is, as you've heard several times today, from 1998. Today 1.3 million

Ontarians live in condos. More than 50% of the new homes being built in Ontario are condos. We heard that from the member from Davenport; thank you for bringing that to this floor. There are currently 700,000 condo units in Ontario, with another 51,000 units under construction. That's up from 270,000 in 2001. And as the minister said earlier, one in 10 Ontarians lives in a condo.

I live in the riding of Nipissing—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Your own member looked around twice on the distraction over there. You might want to listen to your own guy. You probably don't want to listen to the others, but it would be nice if you listened to your own guy.

Go ahead, member from Nipissing.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** You looked at him twice. Don't tell me you didn't.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, thank you for bringing attention to this important chapter that I'm about to reveal. We're talking about condominiums, and I live in the riding of Nipissing. My hometown is North Bay. As I said, the minister talked about one in 10 Ontarians living in a condo. Primarily we're talking about the GTA, perhaps Ottawa, London and some other communities, but I will say that we have condos in North Bay. So my point here, the very point that I make, is that there is a vast difference. When you've got such an intense concentration of condos in the GTA or in some of the other large urban centres, this need for these managers with accreditations and training is extremely important and valuable, but the point I want to make is that we have issues in northern and rural Ontario, where there are some condos, that are very unique to owners outside of the GTA.

**1700**

I'm going to just give an example of some previous legislation that I think brings home this very point. Again, back in the day, when I was mayor of the city of North Bay, the strong communities act came across our desk. By the very title, you would think that this was going to be good for all communities, but again, it was a Toronto-centric problem that the government created a large solution for that ended up hurting others. This is what I want to bring to this condo change here: that we need to make certain that the rules that are put in place don't adversely affect the small communities that have one or two condo buildings in their entire community.

That strong communities act, for instance, acknowledged a very important issue about wetlands in Toronto. There really aren't a lot of wetlands down around Bay Street and University Avenue. We understand that; we get that. So the solution was that any wetlands that are found in Ontario must not be sold and used for development, and we get that. That's so important. That's how we filter our water, through the wetlands, and we understand that it's important. Except in the old days, in northern Ontario, you were allowed to build on a wetland if you created an equal-sized wetland elsewhere—very

practical. It was a common practice and, in fact, it was our law. But this Toronto-centric solution that came across wiped out all that.

As you've heard me say in this Legislature before, we now have a 112-acre, \$40-million industrial park in North Bay that can no longer be built on. Sewer, water, roads, fire hydrants, high-speed Internet: It's all there, but we can't build on it, because a law was changed to solve an important problem in Toronto, but it was pan-Ontario, so the north got sucked into that vortex and it was one set of cookie cutter rules. My point is, let's make sure that the legislation reflects the unique issues that affect condo owners in northern and rural Ontario. That's the point I make with that.

In 2012, the government began its Condominium Act review, which was a three-stage public engagement process aimed at modernizing the legislation. This was in response to growing concerns from condo owners and managers, again, primarily in the urban centres. The key issues identified in this review include governance, dispute resolution, financial management, consumer protection and condominium manager qualifications.

A little bit of other background worth noting: The bill has the support of the Canadian Condominium Institute. Here's an excerpt from their release—I like to look at a balanced approach to the discussion. The CCI is speaking about Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. They look at the changes in Bill 106, including “establishing mandatory licensing of condo managers and strengthening financial management rules for condo corporations to help prevent fraud and mismanagement.

“The Ontario caucus of CCI, a national, independent, non-profit body dealing exclusively with condominium issues, has been among those pushing for legislative reform in Ontario for more than a decade. CCI members played an active role in the” consultations and the working panels over the last two and a half years.

So, it truly was a red-letter day, especially for those in the urban centres, when the Minister of Government and Consumer Services did introduce the bill and it was given first reading and passed. The proposed legislation includes mandatory education for condominium directors.

The current chair of the CCI stated, “The Canadian Condominium Institute has been front and centre in providing director education since 1982 and we anticipate that despite mandatory education being offered through a newly formed condo authority, CCI will continue to be a long-term source of ongoing training for directors.”

“The CCI ... caucus appreciates” the fact that “the government did not introduce a new Condominium Act” but amended the present one. These are comments I'm sharing from them. They look forward to the changes, among them, “off-budget spending whereby a condominium board would have to notify owners if it had proposed an expense exceeding the budgeted amount by more than a set margin.” Interesting.

They believe that “transparent financial management is the foundation of a successful condominium corporation and community.” Of course, I would agree with a

statement like that, thinking, of course, that that is also what you would look for from a government.

Their legal firm, Gowlings, provided the analysis regarding the planned establishment of a new condominium authority and a new tribunal. They noted that the new condominium authority and tribunal “are required to be self-financed. Some of the financing is expected to be generated by the users who would be required to pay certain fees. The details of how these new entities would be financed have yet to be hashed out through” this legislation.

I think that’s kind of one of the important aspects of being able to have a discussion in this Legislature and not truncate any discussion. It’s also important to be able to have these in committee to be able to discuss that at that point as well. We’re looking forward to a thoughtful and fulsome debate in the Legislature about the various aspects.

“The condominium authority is also expected to be able to levy fees from all condominium owners. A number that seems to be floating around is the suggestion that condominium owners would pay \$1 per unit, per month to finance this authority. Assuming ... there are 700,000 condominium units in Ontario,” we’re talking about “\$8.4 million dollars” a year. “Just as a point of comparison, the budget for the Landlord and Tenant Board exceeds \$30 million.... We may have a far way to go.”

This is why I questioned earlier that estimate of a dollar. It’s fine to have a starting point, but I wouldn’t want anybody to take that figure literally to the bank.

“It appears that the proposed Condominium Authority Tribunal has not been granted jurisdiction to rule over dispute between corporations and property managers. If the province is planning on creating such a specialized tribunal, it may have made sense to also grant it authority to rule over these kinds of disputes.”

That’s why we have these debates. That’s why we don’t want to see these debates truncated. These are ideas that I’m truly hoping the government is noting and can comment on.

Gowlings also had this to say regarding new requirements for condo directors: “Bill 106 proposes to impose mandatory training on all directors. It is not clear at this stage what training would be required, who would provide such training and how frequently such training would have to take place. It is not clear either whether individuals who have already attended” CCI’s director’s courses “would be exempt from this ... requirement.”

“Directors would” also “be required to proceed with a certain level of disclosure. We will have to wait for the adoption of regulations to know exactly what directors will be required to disclose.”

Now, Gowlings also speaks about changes to repair and maintenance obligations: “One of the most important proposed changes to the legislation, in my view, is that the responsibility to repair a unit after damage will no longer fall to the corporation (unless the declaration provides otherwise). The responsibility and the cost of

repairing units after damage would be shifted back on to each owner.

“In my view, this is a welcomed change, which will simplify greatly many matters including issues surrounding insurance.”

Others may not see it that way.

**1710**

This is why we need these 20-minute opportunities to bring this out, so we can have an intelligent discourse back and forth to talk about these various points. I’m hoping in the two- minute hits that we’ll hear some thoughts about these.

The proposed act does not appear to make this change retroactive—another point that needs to be debated. It may be a problem as many corporations have had their declaration drafted under the current or prior legislation. So for this reason, many of the existing declarations imposed on corporations the obligation to repair a unit after damage. At the time of incorporation, this language was simply reflecting the legislation in place. By not making the proposed change retroactive, many existing corporations may still be responsible to repair old units after the damage simply because their old declaration says so.

I’ve also seen concerns expressed by some about whether all of this legislation will ever be proclaimed into force or whether some of the regulations necessary to give teeth will ever be enacted. It’s always a concern. We’ve seen other bills come, get debated, get through and get passed but never be enacted. There are still many on the books, and that’s a concern. As I said, there’s precedent for that. It’s worth noting that it’s a concern that has been expressed amongst stakeholders, and the government should be aware of it.

In conclusion, it has taken a long time to introduce this legislation, but I’m hoping the government has indeed used their time effectively, put forward legislation that will fix the problems and, hopefully, they’ll listen to all of us as we take our time to bring new ideas, question some of it and use that effectively, Speaker. I thank you very much for the opportunity to rise.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It’s always a pleasure and privilege to be able to stand in this House and give some remarks on any legislation on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane, and today on Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. It’s also a pleasure to follow one of my fellow MPPs from northern Ontario, the member from Nipissing. We often disagree on certain views, but we always stand up for the people we represent, and often people in northern Ontario have a different view of things.

I will have to admit, there’s not a lot of condominiums in my riding.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes. A few bears; no condominiums.

One thing that has been touched on: Often a condominium is a first home purchase. My daughter has a

condo in Etobicoke. It was her first home purchase and my first experience in the world of condominiums, because coming from a place where we always live in individual setups and we're responsible for our own roof, it's a whole different concept. Reading through some of the documents that you have to sign—coming from a father's perspective, it's a pretty scary concept. So anything that can be done to make it safer—because there are troubles with the condo sector. There are good condo corporations and not-so-good condo corporations. So anything that can be done is a step in the right direction.

I'd like to commend my former colleague Rosario Marchese, who has been pushing for condo changes for years. We're hoping that this is a step in the right direction. We can always do bigger steps, but we're hoping that this is a step in the right direction to help people with their first home.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'm very pleased to comment on my colleague from Nipissing's view on this bill. But before I do that, I want to thank the third party caucus. They've been promoting the great riding of Trinity–Spadina quite a bit when they speak about this bill in citing my predecessor's work on this.

Just to comment on my colleague from Nipissing's comment with regard to the \$1-a-month contribution to the DAA, the condo authority, I think overall what we are proposing in this bill is giving a practical solution to an idea put forward by a former member of this House. We've laid out the details—and I thank the minister for doing that, and his whole entire team. We lay out the details and tell people that, if passed, they will have a very affordable alternative to what we have right now. That's very important to point out.

I also want to comment on his point on the fact that 10% of Ontarians who are currently living in condos—and many more in the near future—live around the GTA. I want to caution this House that we've got to be very careful not to see this is as an urban issue. It's not pitting the rural Ontarians against the urban Ontarians. What I find in my riding is that many condo residents are renters. They previously lived in a suburb or rural area. Now that they find a tremendous job opportunity in Toronto, that's where they're moving, and that's why they are making their first large investment—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to stand and just do a two-minute oration—and I just made that up, by the way—on this particular act.

Chatham is inundated with high-rise condominiums. It's like a mini-Toronto—not, not. We really don't have condominiums down there. We're just rural Ontario. But you know, one of the things that I appreciate about this particular bill is the fact that it actually affects five other acts. I'm not surprised at the fact that this government

takes one bill and then has it combined to affect so many others. I've spoken with builders, as well, on some of the issues and challenges that they're faced with.

But again, here it is, allowing for a condominium authority responsible for administering condo owner education, dispute resolution and, of course, a condo corporation registry. Again, are we creating more red tape? I'm not so sure about that.

Then we talk about a new home warranties plan. Again, I like the fact that it protects buyers of new condos, because again, people are putting substantial money into these condos. You look at it and you say, "Who's protecting my investment?" or, in this case, their investments. So I like that aspect of this particular bill. But again, when we look at baby boomers, people in large urban centres like Toronto—condominiums are on the rise. Condos have risen, golly, from 2001, about 270,000 units, to now up over 700,000 units. It's huge. There needs to be protection there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on the 20 minutes from the member from Nipissing. I appreciate the fact that there aren't a lot of condos in the far north, but there is actually a growing demand for alternative housing options, and I think condos are on the rise. They certainly are in Kitchener–Waterloo.

He did reference some of the weaknesses, though, in construction. Consumers are looking for a vehicle to actually raise their concerns in a very fair and democratic way. There are parts of this piece of legislation, Bill 106, which actually will help facilitate that. There are big pieces missing, which is unfortunate.

I was living in the building on Bay Street when the glass was exploding. It's unsettling to live in a glass building where glass is falling off the building; I will tell you that first-hand. Also, my balcony was inaccessible for almost two years because they were slowly moving up and down the building and replacing the glass panels.

**1720**

The people who lived in that residence, certainly at the time, felt they had no recourse. I know that Rosario Marchese, the former member from Trinity–Spadina was a long-standing advocate on this issue because he was reflecting the concerns that he heard in the community. He started way back in 2007 when condominiums were sort of on the rise.

We have new issues that are coming up, though, in condos. My sister lives in a condo very close to the Junction, and I know that during the Pan Am Games condo owners were sort of subletting their units out by the night, by the week, and they were trying to make money; and, of course, this was in violation of the contract. So governance is a huge issue in these condos.

The clarity is needed. I think the member from Nipissing raises a very valid point around the money that will be needed around governance; \$8.4 million seems quite low, given the Landlord and Tenant Board. We should keep an eye on that as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I want to thank the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Trinity–Spadina, Chatham–Kent–Essex, and Kitchener–Waterloo for their commentary; much appreciated.

I spoke about northern and rural earlier, so I want to expand on the discussion a little bit from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, who came out with their background information for MPPs. I'll read directly from this, Speaker. It says, "The OHBA supports any changes that assist consumers in making more informed decisions through increased disclosure and clarity in contracts." Again, who wouldn't? Here's the line I thought was important. It says, "The condo act must be written to ensure that it works for all parts of Ontario, not just high-rise towers in Toronto. There needs to be consideration for small condo corporations and self-governing condos so that they are not negatively impacted by potential new regulatory requirements. Any changes that affect condominiums require a phase-in period that will not negatively affect completion of projects currently under construction." So they talk about that, Speaker.

They also mention the condo manager licensing. They support this change, which would increase the level of professionalism, but they say there should be consideration for small condo corporations with small budgets and minor responsibilities over common elements.

They bring home the point that I make, which is that there really should be varying rules and guidelines depending on whether it's the size and/or the location or geography of these condos.

Thanks again, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Once again, it's a pleasure to participate in the debate for Bill 106 this afternoon. It is quite an extensive bill and really a bill that has been long overdue.

The champion of this bill, in my eyes—the government may not agree, and that's fine, Speaker—is a previous member, MPP Rosario Marchese. He was a true champion, and I really miss him as a member here because—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** God bless.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Yes, exactly. His voice would have added so much context and history to this debate.

Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about condos in general, because they are an up-and-coming way of optional real estate. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane talked about his daughter and that her first purchase was a condo. A lot of the younger generation are opting to purchase condos, and the reasons include that they probably don't have to do maintenance outside, landscaping and snow shovelling, because they probably have a busy career, a busy life, and doing those things takes time out of a lifestyle. So it's a lifestyle choice, perhaps, as well as an affordability option. A condo

apartment or a condo townhome may not be as expensive as a single-family dwelling, especially in certain communities and cities in Ontario where it can certainly add up for a single-family dwelling. We know Toronto is one of those communities.

The other sector of society that purchases condos, I find, that is up and coming is seniors. Being the seniors critic, that's one thing that they're in the market for, for different reasons perhaps. They want to downsize from a larger home. They're empty-nesters now; the kids have left home, thank goodness, if you're lucky enough for that to happen. So you're looking at downsizing, and as a senior, you may not be physically able to maintain the snow shovelling. As a mature person, it's hard enough to be shovelling that heavy snow off your driveway. So they could be doing it for that reason. They also maybe want to have one-level condos so that they don't have to climb up and down stairs.

I'm always in the market for real estate; we're always looking, seeing what options are out there. This summer we actually looked at a couple of condominium units, and I have to say, it's certainly a difference from being a homeowner, where you have that freedom of a yard and you're not side by side with someone or in an apartment building.

A little background on condos that we've done some work on—and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton mentioned it earlier: About 1.3 million Ontarians live in condos, and half of all new homes being built are condos. That's huge, Speaker. Half of all new developments are condominiums, so that is saying something in the real estate market.

I will give the government some credit for finally bringing this bill forward, because we have to recognize that there needs to be some regulation around this property purchase. We can't just let that have free rein when people end up being the victims of bad developments, of bad board management and condo managers. So good for the government to do that.

Similar to a municipal government, condo residents pay taxes—they translate them into condo fees—and they abide by condo bylaws. Condo governance is basically a fourth level of government for these people, and the condo act is like a constitution and a charter of rights for that level of a quasi-government. So really, they're already governing themselves, and I think this bill gives those parameters and a recourse for condo owners to go to tribunals and the condo authority in order to hear their concerns.

A little bit of history that happened as to why we're here today: The NDP pushed for condo act reform against the government's reluctance, and this government was reluctant. They were very reluctant and resistant to put this in; yes, they were. I know some may shake their heads, and that's okay. Everybody has a difference of opinion. But really, there was reluctance. Rosario Marchese was an advocate for this bill and reform for a long time. It would have been better if the government had acted quicker, but here we are today, so we'll give them credit for doing that today.

As the condo boom exploded in Rosario's Trinity–Spadina riding, he noticed that despite the condo act, many condo owners basically lived in the Wild West. We had the condo act but it wasn't up to date. It wasn't meeting the current needs of the market. Basically, this was a world of corrupt condo managers, rigged repair contracts, unexplained maintenance fee increases, abusive and unresponsive boards that refused to be open and accountable to the owners whose money they spent, unmaintained common areas that were falling apart, shoddy condo construction and unethical developers who ripped off consumers by burying nasty surprises in contracts' fine print. This is not an over-exaggeration. This was actually happening, so truly, the description of this being the Wild West is accurate. It's absolutely accurate, and I think people would agree.

For condo owners, the condo act wasn't helping them. It wasn't anything that could assist them in what they were going through in today's reality. Their only remedy was the courts, for which people, of course—not everybody can afford that. It is very expensive. First of all, you should actually talk to the person who you may want to take to court and try to resolve it within the condo corporation. But if that's not to your satisfaction and you still feel that you're not getting justice, you're not getting that remedy, you have to seriously think about whether, financially, you can afford to take the condo board or the condo corporation to court. Probably a lot of condo owners opted out of that because they couldn't afford that expense. We know the condo act today will at least help those two areas. They can take the condo board to a tribunal and at least try to resolve, hopefully, smaller issues that they would have normally had to go to court about and take that money out of their own pocket.

**1730**

This kind of whole mantra of what was happening around the condo scene led Rosario to table four bills. He started doing this back in March 2007 to try to reform the condo act. His fourth bill was Bill 72. It was tabled in 2012, and each time—again, a difference of opinion. We believe the government kind of stalled the progress on reform, saying that the existing system was adequate, that it was working ok.

Sometimes things kind of evolve in a bad way, and this is an example. In 2012, as the member from Niagara and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo talked about earlier, there was glass falling from high-rise buildings without any kind of warning, just out of the blue. You could be walking to work, or at 3 o'clock in the morning, or rush-hour traffic—rush-hour traffic in Toronto can be sidewalk rush-hour traffic; it doesn't have to be roadside. There were injuries. Thank goodness there were no serious, major injuries, but my goodness, imagine the outcome if there were more escalation of injuries happening. Headlines were being made, and then I think the government finally woke up and decided that, “You know what? This is a breaking point for us, and we're going to have to look at condo reform.”

So what they did was they started out by starting a three-stage process. The government did an independent

review, a public policy forum, and the review was divided into three stages. In the first stage, they collected and summarized stakeholder input into findings—a report outlining the issues and problems facing condo stakeholders. That's fair enough—a good first step. The second stage was by far probably one of the most important stages. In this stage, the stakeholders' input was filtered through a hand-picked expert panel which made recommendations to the government. The recommendations are, of course, the basis for Bill 106. Finally, the third stage of the review—the barely noticed third stage—summarized reactions to the stage 2 report from various stakeholders who were lucky enough to receive an invitation to comment or who managed to spot the meeting and announcements that were quietly posted in late 2013 and early 2014. The reports offered no additional recommendations to the government as a result of these reactions.

So that's a little bit of the history of how we got here today. It's really important to know that because it kind of gives us the context of the importance and the validity of why we need this act.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was some of the messages that we believe should be given out to the public. I hope there are condo owners watching today. It would have been exciting, too, to let condo owners know that this act was coming to fruition in the House for debate, because I know that if I were a condo owner and had heard all these awful reports about condo fees rising, shabby workmanship, mismanagement of condo boards, mismanaged condo managers, as a condo owner, I would be in tune to listening to what's going to be in this bill, and most importantly, sometimes, what's not going to be in this bill.

We've been pushing hard for needed reforms, obviously, with regard to this. It's been about eight years. Eight years, eight consumer ministers and two Premiers later, we finally have the bill.

The bill includes important and much-needed reforms to condo board governance and finance. Condo owners will benefit from greater training and assistance for condo board directors. Owners will have more power to see important corporation documents, to requisition meetings and to ensure that large expenditures do not go without consultation and notification of owners. That's really important.

Maybe this is part of the government's plan with regard to the condo authority: educating real estate agents and educating condo owners and purchasers. As the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, his daughter bought her first condo, and reading that real estate contract and understanding what they're getting into is very complicated.

We need to inform real estate agents and condo owners and educate them, because this appears to be an up-and-coming market, and it's going to be alive and well for many, many years. If we're going to do it, we might as well start with this at ground level. We're talking about regulating and changing this bill and



reforming the Condominium Act. Let's talk about education and get it right. Start the education with the new reform act. This is a great opportunity to do that.

The NDP has long supported reforms, and it is good that the government is finally acknowledging that we need them. What is in this bill is reasonably good, but there are some things in this bill—and two particular areas that we're concerned about that are not in the bill. The bill excludes disputes involving condo managers and developers, and that leaves many condo owners and buyers without adequate protections. There is a gap in this condo reform bill. It's a good first start. There are going to be some protections that condo owners have never had before, so again, we give credit to the government for that.

The other piece of this is the condo authority. Their effectiveness in this body of—not regulation, but being in charge of condo owners—the condo authority: We don't really know what their powers will be, what their mandate is or what their duties entail, because it's all going to be up to regulatory procedures and it won't come back to this House. We won't have any say in what's going on.

Sometimes I think modelling the condo authority with boards that were already in existence for many, many years—my background is in insurance, so I think about RIBO, the Registered Insurance Brokers of Ontario. Previously I was a broker; I no longer am. You can't hold a licence in the Legislature, by the way, and be an MPP. It's kind of a conflict, apparently.

Anyway, that's a great organization. When I was a broker, we were supposed to have testing once a year. We had courses so that we were up to date when things changed. If we're going to do that condo authority and have a system or some kind of protocol, let's look at some organizations that actually have huge memberships and have those rules already in place, so that members continue to be educated as to how they report things.

Before I forget, I do want to give kudos to the government for setting this up right from the get-go. It says here that what happens is that the Lieutenant Governor in Council is to “designate a not-for-profit corporation as the condominium authority,” and the condo authority will be delegated administrative authority bound by the governance and accountability provisions in an administrative agreement with the crown and subject to oversight of the Auditor General. That is great. Right from the beginning we're involving the Auditor General because we don't want to get into financial issues and arguments about the condo authority, condo owners and the board. I was really impressed to see that.

Some of the stakeholders' responses—I just want to mention one. Condo owners' advocate Anne-Marie Ambert manages the Condo Information Centre, so there are resources that the condo authority can obviously draw upon in order to get some expertise. People have been doing this for a while.

What this Condo Information Centre does is, it collects reports of condo mismanagement and other

owner complaints. That's an important resource, because you can actually learn a lot from the reports that have been kept with regard to mismanagement and owner complaints in order to formulate the condo authority and what kind of education they should dispense to the board and condo owners.

**1740**

She also served on the review's expert panel. She is largely very supportive of the changes to Bill 106, but says many protections are still missing from the bill, and includes a few of them. Again, this is a stakeholder that was involved in the process, so I hope the government will take her suggestions under consideration.

Inadequate checks on unexplained large surpluses and inadequate owner control over large expenditures: When we talk about any kind of real estate, everyone has a financial interest in that. When you are a condo owner, the condo board is in charge of that money. They need to be held accountable, and condo owners need to know that there's adequate checks and balances of how they're going to be trusted with their money. Because, in the end, the negative result comes back on them with condo fees skyrocketing if they have to actually have repairs done.

More transparency needed for contract procurement, including knowing the names of bidders in order to discourage bid-rigging: That's common sense. We want to make sure that anybody who puts in their bid is the most competitive bid, is the best-qualified for the work, so that you as a condo owner know there's not going to be any kind of hanky-panky going on.

Poor protections against shoddy construction: We already mentioned that.

There's no framework outlining the proper role of condo lawyers paid by condo owners but hired by condo boards often to fight against condo owners. That's a little bit of a conflict.

Those are some of her suggestions. I think, in general, though, there was good work done on this bill. We've talked about some of the gaps that are in there that we are concerned about—not having developers and condo managers in that tribunal dispute process. Maybe we'll get there one day as this evolves into another phase of condo ownership.

Thank you for allowing me to have the time to debate. I know many members in our caucus here are very excited to debate this bill, because it is a big bill. I hope this government will see fit not to have comments about “We've debated this eight hours.” That's not the point. We should be able to debate this bill as long as people have a voice in this House and want to contribute to that debate. Everyone's opinion is valid. Everyone's opinion is important. When you start shutting down voices—maybe you've heard the message over and over again, but guess what? Mr. Marchese gave that message over and over and over again and now we're finally listening to it. That's really what I want to also put out there, Speaker.

I encourage every member to debate this bill. Get your voice out there. It doesn't matter if the member before

spoke on the same thing. We need to make sure we effect change, and that's with our voices and bringing them from our ridings through this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order from the member from Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 38(b), the late show standing in the name of the member for Prince Edward–Hastings addressed to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry be taken up on Wednesday, September 23, 2015.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay. Is there unanimous consent for that? Carried.

We will now go with questions and comments from the member from Etobicoke Centre.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm going to keep talking. I'm very productive this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to stand and speak to this important bill on this important issue and to respond to the comments from the member opposite. I have to say that one of the things that makes me so proud to rise in this House is that we're here to serve the people of our respective communities. I have the opportunity to serve the people of Etobicoke Centre, and I see it as my responsibility to make sure that I'm working every day to improve the quality of life for the people in my community.

There are few things that touch a person's quality of life more than their home and the investment they make in their home. That's why I think this issue is so important, and that's why I applaud the minister for bringing forward this bill. I think it will significantly enhance the quality of life of the people in my community and others who live in condominiums or who buy condominiums.

I think back to my grandfather. He didn't live in a condo; he lived in a house. But I remember how much attention he paid to every element of his house. He took pride in it, and of course he was conscious of the investment that he was making in that house. Condo owners deserve to have that same opportunity, and that's what this bill is designed to provide.

I regularly hear from members of my community who talk about concerns around increasing maintenance fees, who talk about concerns they have about the financial decisions being made by some of their condo boards, about the fact that they don't have a mechanism to appeal some of those decisions. I think that this is a bill that will allow us to move further along in making sure that those concerns get addressed.

I hear the opposition talking a lot about how we need to move this debate along and how we have to get this to committee quickly because they support the bill. On the other hand, I hear them saying that we need to hold this up; we need to debate it longer. We're hearing mixed

messages from the opposition. I say we move this process along and we get the bill to committee and get it passed because, like I said, it will impact members of my community and it will enhance the quality of life of the people who live in condos in Etobicoke Centre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to see you back in the chair today. I thought, with my change in House duty to Wednesdays, I would be rid of you, but apparently that's not the case.

I would like to bring some remarks on the 20-minute presentation by the member from London–Fanshawe. In the third party, they have a lot of love for this bill. Every one of them has referenced Rosario Marchese, so perhaps when we get it to committee, we can amend it to call it the Rosario Marchese act; God bless.

This is an important piece of legislation in the province of Ontario. I've heard a number of speakers here this afternoon who have said, "I don't have a lot of condos in my riding." But as you walk along the streets of Toronto, condominium buildings are popping up faster than goldenrod is in rural Ontario. These condominiums are popping up everywhere, and it's amazing to me—considering how many members that the government has in the GTA and specifically here in downtown Toronto, where all of these condo buildings are popping up—that it has taken this long to get to this point, where we actually have a condo act, or perhaps the Rosario Marchese act.

You know what? We need this legislation in the GTA in particular because all of the other different acts that are in place—and I think a previous speaker mentioned five different acts in place—don't really touch on condo owners. This is an important segment of the population here in the GTA that now lives in condominiums. They need to have some protection when it comes to their new living arrangement in a condo. I think it's only appropriate that the government has finally acted and brought forward a piece of legislation to deal with these very, very popular places to live.

There are going to be some amendments that we propose when we get this to committee, but it's my pleasure to bring some remarks on the member of the NDP's comments from earlier.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It's my pleasure to rise again on Bill 106.

I want to talk about Tarion reform. Ontario homebuyers are supposedly protected against shoddy construction by Tarion Warranty Corp., a private corporation established under the Ontario New Homes Warranty Plan Act. The act requires Tarion to maintain a builders' registration, enforce building warranties, and make sure new homes are built to building code and to a decent standard of workmanship. If the builder doesn't honour that warranty, then Tarion is required to pay for those repairs.

Here's some of the stuff that's not happening. Tarion is controlled by the same development industry it is supposed to regulate. So when things go wrong and Tarion receives complaints about shoddy construction from homebuyers, Tarion has a powerful interest in taking the side of the developer over the consumer. It seems that Tarion is far more interested in collecting money from the homebuyers than in honouring their claims.

Accordingly, in a report in 2014, Tarion has built up a huge surplus that is now—listen to this, because I know that you Liberals are interested in this—nearly half a billion dollars. That is more than twice its anticipated claimed liabilities and nearly 100 times greater than the amount in claims it actually paid out last year.

**1750**

While Tarion does not like spending money paying out consumers' claims, it does spend a lot of money hiring lawyers to fight the consumers when they have appeals or denials of those claims to the Licence Appeal Tribunal. According to Canadians for Properly Built Homes, consumers are outgunned by Tarion, the builders and the lawyers.

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

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It's a pleasure to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Cambridge to add my voice to this very important bill. We've heard around the House this afternoon how important it is and how many condo owners or potential owners are affected by what we're bringing forward.

I know that some of the constituents in Cambridge have put forward some complaints in the past few years regarding surprise increases in condo fees, or major financial decisions that were being made without the owners' consent, or courts being required to appoint administrators to look after buildings in financial crisis.

So I'm really proud that this legislation has come forward, that there have been some consultations around it, and that there have been very thoughtful comments that I've heard here in the House this afternoon that address why this important piece of legislation is really timely and should come forward.

One of the things that I'm concerned about in my riding is consumer protection for owners and buyers. I think we here around the House this afternoon all agree that home owning is a very big investment for many, and those that are getting into the market really need to do their homework before they buy a home. Condos are just, I think, a little bit more tricky when it comes to looking at the legislation.

I'm glad that our government is taking firm action to protect the home and condo owners' investments. The proposed act would set extra safeguards to protect condo owners and buyers and help them to make those informed decisions. It will require developers to give condo buyers a copy of an easy-to-read guide to condominium living at the time of the sale: very, very important for first-time

buyers. It will also provide clearer, more comprehensive rules to prevent buyers from being surprised by unexpected costs after purchasing a newly built condo.

I could say an awful lot more on that, but those are my main comments today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. Back to the member from London–Fanshawe for final comments.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to thank the members from Etobicoke Centre, Prince Edward–Hastings, Niagara Falls and Cambridge for their comments on the debate.

As we have all said, this is a hugely important act and there are things that could have been put in there that could improve the act. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is our lead today and really did a great job in comparing the need to have protection from developers—you know, shoddy workmanship or even promises made that aren't kept. He gave a good example about the common room size or even just your lobby area size—you go in and you thought it was something that you're not buying.

It shouldn't be buyer beware, and that is a situation that we should be looking at a little closer, about having that protection from developers. The Tarion example, the model, is really not an ideal model. They're like an insurance company: deny, deny, deny, right? It's set up to protect consumers.

There are areas in this bill that we feel could be strengthened. I know it's going to be a lot of regulation that is going to build this bill, and I do hope the government will listen to condo owners. Even though they may not be experts, the information that you gather from condo owners will help you develop those regulations that will make an impact and a difference to their daily lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? I recognize the member from Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** There you go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My riding, again, has been mentioned many times today, so I definitely want to thank the caucus across for doing that. In doing that, they also stress my point to the minister: how important it is, this bill, to the great riding of Trinity–Spadina. Hopefully, that will make my point more convincing.

I want to go back to what I couldn't finish in the two-minute response to the member from Nipissing. Let's not pit the suburbs or rural Ontarians against urban Ontarians. We are all Ontarians. We are all taxpayers. The fact of the matter is that many residents in the downtown core come from a rural background. If it is true that rural residents right now will be little impacted by this bill, if passed, their kids, many of them, seek post-secondary education and move into urban settings, whether it's Toronto, whether it's Windsor, London—

**Interjection:** Aurora.

**Mr. Han Dong:** —Aurora, of course. They will be renting or they may look at the condo market as a good

piece of investment. So they are affected by this bill, if passed.

Another point I want to make is that we all know that Ontario is a top destination for newcomers when they settle in Canada. We receive somewhere around 100,000 newcomers from around the world. Recently I attended a citizenship ceremony at the CNE, where we welcomed 56 newcomers, new citizens, from 18 different countries. They happen to choose Ontario because it's a good place to live. Many of them will need a place to live and many of them are making that contribution, buying up a property here in Ontario, and a condominium is definitely a good option for their investment. That's what I've been seeing quite often in the downtown core.

I have to applaud our plan. If you remember, years back, when we introduced the greenbelt plan, the reason for it was that we've got to stop urban sprawl. We've got to figure out how we can encourage people to build up as opposed to build out, because it puts tremendous stress on our infrastructure and makes the congestion even worse. So I'm very happy that we took that direction, not only to protect the land to grow for many generations to come—to grow, to play—as well as providing housing to these newcomers, to the growing population. Condominiums do play a huge part in that.

I want to draw the House's attention to a few points. I think there are five points. I'll start off with the dispute resolution. Now, this is one of the focal points to this bill. My predecessor actually talked about an idea—my predecessor, the former member for Trinity-Spadina—where you have a body to deal with disputes—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You can name him.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I will name him—create a body that will deal with those disputes, whether it's among the condo owners and the board, or the board and management. But it didn't go into detail. I think it didn't go into the detail of addressing how that is going to work. I think what this bill does is provide that practical solution to that idea in detail. I say “in detail” because in comparison, we're proposing a bill that will create a condo authority that will offer free online self-help, screening and consultation. Beyond that, it costs only \$25 to submit an application in case management. If still not resolved, it costs about \$500, \$550 for mediation and adjudication, compared to what we have right now, which costs thousands and thousands of dollars to get to court.

In my days dealing with constituents, I've dealt with cases where—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Han Dong:** No, in my days dealing with constituent cases, I remember there were cases where the owners were very upset because they couldn't get the information that they were entitled to.

**1800**

They're giving me the indication that it is time, so I'll wrap up and I'll continue in the next session.

I think this bill does bring forward solutions to some of the problems, and I'll go into detail in my next session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member, and you will have additional time when this is brought back up again in this Legislature.

Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### PESTICIDES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Haldimand-Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs concerning neonic regulation. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and, in this case, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs may have up to five minutes for a reply. So I will now turn it over to the member from Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** During today's question period, I had an opportunity to raise two questions with respect to the July 1 regulation put in place as part of an effort by this government to ban the use of neonics, neonicotinoid insecticides, on 80% of Ontario's corn and soybean acreage. It's an action that continues to dominate farm discussions and barbecues over the summer.

Briefly, my two questions were: Firstly, to the Minister of Agriculture, your regs question the integrity of consulting agronomists, disqualifying those who work with the seed trade. Where are you going to find sufficient crop advisers who are not associated with Ontario's seed trade sector?

Secondly, Minister, why would you, as Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, regulate a seed itself as a pesticide?

The reason for my dissatisfaction is that, in my view, this wasn't enough time for a fulsome answer to what I consider a detailed technical issue.

Question number one derives from published criteria for professional advisers under the auspices of both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture. So, beginning on August 31, 2017, the regs require what's called a professional pest adviser to be independent. To qualify at that time, they cannot derive a financial benefit from a person, including a business corporation, manufacturing or selling a class 12 pesticide. As well, to be contracted as an adviser, one must be recognized as a certified crop adviser certified by the American Society of Agronomy and be a member in good standing of the Ontario Certified Crop Advisor Association, and must be registered as a member—for example, a professional agrologist—under the Ontario Institute of Professional Agrologists Act, 2013, with a field of practice relating to pest control and the

production, processing and protection of agricultural, horticultural and related products and supplies.

I mentioned, in my question, a statement from Peggy Brekveld, a Thunder Bay farmer and vice-president of the OFA, who charged that the regulations are unworkable, saying, "We will be required to have a certified crop adviser inspect our field ... there's only about 100 CCAs that are qualified to do these inspections." She indicated that farmers in northwestern Ontario might have trouble finding an inspector.

The 28,000-member Grain Farmers of Ontario have been forced by this government to go to court to seek an immediate stay on the implementation of these regulations.

In its May 2015 posted amendments to this regulation, 63/09, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture stated that with regard to subsection 8.2(4), they questioned the basis on which the Ministry of the Environment questions the integrity of consulting agronomists. Many engineers, accountants, dentists, lawyers and other certified professionals provide advice to clients despite being employed by or affiliated with a larger firm. Again, they indicated that the numbers would be severely limited, certainly not sufficient to conduct pest assessments required by these regulations.

Now, my second question, Speaker: Just to reiterate, the term "seed" is defined within the amendments as "a seed that, as a result of being treated, is coated with or contains one or more pesticides." However, subsection 8.1 of the regulation indicates that all treated corn and soybean seeds are a class 12 pesticide.

Again, Canada's Seeds Act defines a seed as "any plant part of any species belonging to the plant kingdom, represented, sold or used to grow a plant." Neonic pesticides are not species belonging to the plant kingdom. So there is some confusion here and it's puzzling.

I ask the question again: Why do these regulations take a seed and characterize a seed and define it as a pesticide? It's not a pesticide. It's a seed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now over to the parliamentary assistant. You may have up to five minutes.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I do appreciate this opportunity provided by the member from Haldimand-Norfolk to be here today and highlight what our government is doing to help producers adapt to and understand the recently introduced regulation on neonicotinoids and our pollinator strategy.

Certainly, improving the health of bees and other pollinators is a necessity. Without pollinators, much of the food we eat and the natural habitats we enjoy would not exist. So to that end and with the support of Premier Kathleen Wynne, as outlined in her mandate letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Jeff Leal, we are working with our partners in the agricultural sector to reduce the use of neonicotinoid-treated seeds.

Our government released the regulatory amendments to the use of neonic-treated seeds based on a precautionary approach. It has been over a year since we announced our intention to move to regulate neonics, and many months of consultations that began in December 2014. Throughout the process, the minister made it very clear that any changes would be based on four key principles and with input from the agricultural community. Now, these principles are that all producers be allowed to access treated seeds where there is a demonstrated need, that the draft regulation will be implemented over time, that testing for pests will be workable for producers, and that stakeholders in the agricultural community will be engaged in helping develop the appropriate audit procedures.

Starting on July 1, 2015, Ontario did move to restrict the sale and use of neonic-treated corn and soybean seed to improve the health of bees, other pollinators and the environment in general. The new requirements support the government of Ontario's target to reduce the number of acres that are planted with neonic-treated corn and soybean seeds by 80% by the year 2017. Throughout the implementation process, OMAFRA and MOECC staff have been travelling across the province to deliver information and seek input on the regulation. OMAFRA has hosted a number of information sessions, including events for the agricultural industry and farm leaders. The ministries are committed to continuing this outreach and working with the farming community to address any challenges or questions they may have during this implementation period.

The regulation is but one piece in our very broad Pollinator Health Strategy. We all have a responsibility to move forward with an approach that protects pollinators but supports the continued growth of Ontario's agricultural sector. We've taken an important first step toward that goal by developing a regulation to reduce the number of acres that are planted with neonic-treated corn and soybean seed.

As we all know, the declining health and population of bees and wild pollinators is very concerning not only in our province, but globally. Many other provinces, states and countries are also concerned about the decreasing health in population of bees and pollinators and are seeking appropriate strategies to address that. While Ontario has been a world leader, this concern has resulted in many other jurisdictions taking action to protect pollinators.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's good.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It's very good.

Pollinator health is a complex topic. There's never a single quick and easy fix to a complex problem such as this, and that's why it is so important that we approach this strategy holistically, to understand all of the contributing factors and develop a plan which addresses them.

Our broader pollinator health action plan will identify steps to address other key stressors: climate change and weather, diseases, pests, pathogens, habitat care and

nutrition. It will take collaboration and innovative thought from all Ontarians to help us reach this goal, a goal that benefits everyone across the province. We will continue to work on the comprehensive pollinator health strategy to strengthen pollinator health and to ensure healthy ecosystems, a productive agricultural sector and a very strong economy.

In closing, Speaker, I'd like to say that the agricultural community in Ontario has a history of modernizing and adapting to changes, and we will continue to do so

together. In short, we will understand that all ag producers will have access to treated corn, treated seeds, where they're needed, and that these regulations will be phased in in a responsible manner.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1811.*

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Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler  
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch.







Continued from back cover

**Youth services**

Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....5112  
Hon. Tracy MacCharles.....5112

**Wind turbines**

Mr. Todd Smith.....5112  
Hon. Bill Mauro.....5113  
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....5113

**Notices of dissatisfaction**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....5113

**Visitors**

Hon. Jeff Leal.....5113

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /  
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....5113  
Ms. Daiene Vernile.....5113

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /  
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Childhood Cancer Awareness Month**

Mr. Bill Walker.....5113

**Adrienne Newport**

Miss Monique Taylor.....5114

**Refugees**

Ms. Daiene Vernile.....5114

**North Bay Regional Health Centre**

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....5114

**Bear control**

Mr. John Vanthof.....5115

**Events in Ottawa–Orléans / Événements divers à  
Ottawa–Orléans**

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde.....5115

**Highway improvement**

Mr. Ted Arnott.....5115

**Rosh Hashanah**

Mr. Mike Colle.....5115

**Taste of the Kingsway**

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn.....5116

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**1170517 Ontario Inc. Act, 2015, Bill Pr26, Mr. Norm  
Miller**

First reading agreed to.....5116

**Health Information Protection Act, 2015, Bill 119,  
Mr. Hoskins / Loi de 2015 sur la protection des  
renseignements sur la santé, projet de loi 119,  
M. Hoskins**

First reading agreed to.....5116  
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....5116

**Estate Administration Tax Fairness Act, 2015, Bill  
120, Mr. McNaughton / Loi de 2015 concernant  
l'équité de l'impôt sur l'administration des  
successions, projet de loi 120, M. McNaughton**

First reading agreed to.....5117  
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....5117

**Residential Tenancies Amendment Act  
(Rehabilitative or Therapeutic Purposes  
Exemption), 2015, Bill 121, Ms. Hoggarth / Loi de  
2015 modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage  
d'habitation (exclusion pour services de  
réadaptation ou services thérapeutiques), projet de  
loi 121, Mme Hoggarth**

First reading agreed to.....5117  
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....5117

**Introduction of bills**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....5117

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

**Ontario farmers**

Mr. Todd Smith.....5117

**Gasoline prices**

Mme France Gélinas.....5118

**Lung health**

Mr. Granville Anderson.....5118

**Taxation**

Mr. Jim McDonell.....5118

**Missing persons**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....5118

**Health care**

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....5119

**Mental health and addiction services**

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....5119

**Lung health**

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn.....5119

**Dog ownership**

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....5119

**Concussion**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....5120

**Hydro rates**

Mr. John Yakabuski.....5120

**Lung health**

Mrs. Cristina Martins.....5120

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### **Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015, Bill 106, Mr. Orazietti / Loi de 2015 sur la protection des propriétaires de condominiums, projet de loi 106, M. Orazietti**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	5121
Hon. Tracy MacCharles.....	5125
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	5125
Ms. Catherine Fife .....	5125
Mrs. Cristina Martins.....	5126
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	5126
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5126
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	5127
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn .....	5128
Hon. Mitzie Hunter.....	5128
Mr. Jim McDonell .....	5129
Mr. Wayne Gates .....	5129
Ms. Sophie Kiwala .....	5130
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5130
Hon. Mitzie Hunter.....	5130
Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	5131
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5133
Mr. Han Dong.....	5134
Mr. Rick Nicholls .....	5134
Ms. Catherine Fife .....	5134
Mr. Victor Fedeli .....	5135
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	5135
Mr. Yvan Baker .....	5138
Mr. Todd Smith .....	5138
Mr. Wayne Gates .....	5138
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry .....	5139
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	5139
Mr. Han Dong.....	5139
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5140

### **ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT**

#### **Pesticides**

Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5140
Mr. Arthur Potts.....	5141

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 16 September 2015 / Mercredi 16 septembre 2015

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015, Bill 73, Mr. McMeekin / Loi de 2015 pour une croissance intelligente de nos collectivités, projet de loi 73, M. McMeekin

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	5091
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5092
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	5093
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5093
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	5093
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	5093
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	5094
Hon. Michael Coteau.....	5095
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5096
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5096
Hon. Mitzie Hunter.....	5096
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	5097
Mr. Todd Smith.....	5097
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	5099
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5099
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	5099
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	5100
Mr. Todd Smith.....	5100
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	5100
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5102

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5102
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5102
Hon. Bill Mauro.....	5102
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5102
Mr. John Fraser.....	5102
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	5102
Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	5102
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	5102
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	5102
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5102
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	5102
Mr. Ted Arnott.....	5102
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5102
Mr. Todd Smith.....	5102
Mrs. Cristina Martins.....	5102
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	5102

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5102
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5102
<b>Wearing of pins</b>	
Mr. Bill Walker.....	5103

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Privatization of public assets

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5103
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5103

#### Automotive industry

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5104
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5104
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	5104

#### Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5105
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5105

#### Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5106
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5106

#### Pesticides

Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5107
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5107

#### Teachers

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	5107
Hon. Liz Sandals.....	5107

#### Ontario Retirement Pension Plan

Mr. Arthur Potts.....	5108
Hon. Mitzie Hunter.....	5108

#### Taxation

Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	5108
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	5109

#### Government accountability

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	5109
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	5109

#### Services for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5110
Hon. Helena Jaczek.....	5110

#### Mining industry

Mr. Norm Miller.....	5110
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	5110

#### Child care

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5111
Hon. Liz Sandals.....	5111

*Continued on inside back cover*