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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 23 February 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 février 2021

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PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

KEEPING POLYSTYRENE
OUT OF ONTARIO'S LAKES
AND RIVERS ACT, 2021
LOI DE 2021 SUR LA PRÉVENTION
DE LA POLLUTION DES LACS
ET DES RIVIÈRES DE L'ONTARIO
PAR LE POLYSTYRÈNE

Mr. Norman Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 228, An Act to prohibit unencapsulated expanded or extruded polystyrene in floating docks, floating platforms and buoys / Projet de loi 228, Loi interdisant le polystyrène expansé ou extrudé sans enveloppe de protection dans les quais flottants, les plateformes flottantes et les bouées.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Miller has moved second reading of Bill 228, An Act to prohibit unencapsulated expanded or extruded polystyrene in floating docks, floating platforms and buoys—or as we say in Newfoundland, “boys.” For Hansard, it is B-U-O-Y-S.

I turn to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka to lead us off in debate. He has up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Norman Miller: Before I begin speaking about my bill, I want to recognize the incredibly challenging times that businesses in my riding are facing, in particular those in Parry Sound district, which is still under a stay-at-home order. I know that, for those business owners, dock foam is far from their biggest priority right now. Debate times for private members' bills are determined by lottery and, in this case, the lottery took place in December 2019 and bills take time to research and write. The fact that I'm debating this bill today is not an indication that I believe it's more important than the struggle facing businesses right now.

All that being said, I rise in the House today to ask my fellow members to support my private member's bill, Bill 228, Keeping Polystyrene Out of Ontario's Lakes and Rivers Act. Polystyrene foam, also commonly known as Styrofoam, is used as floatation in docks and raft. However, when left unencapsulated, these blocks of foam break down due to exposure to the elements. Dock foam

has become one of the biggest pollutants in large bodies of water like Georgian Bay.

In an effort to reduce the waste and pollutants in Ontario's waterways, Bill 228 is proposing that all expanded or extruded polystyrene used as floatation in new docks, other floating platforms and buoys be fully encapsulated to prevent it breaking up and polluting the waters. While docks are not the only source of polystyrene foam in our waterways, requiring encapsulation will greatly reduce this problem. Pieces of dock foam are a common sight on the shorelines of Georgian Bay and across Ontario. In 2019, volunteers with Georgian Bay Forever conducting a clean-up of the Georgian Bay shoreline in Parry Sound collected an estimated 5,000 pieces of dock foam, far more than any other kind of litter.

Polystyrene foam was invented in the 1950s as a way to insulate iceboxes. As well as being good insulation, polystyrene foam is also very buoyant. The two most common types of polystyrene are expanded polystyrene, which is the ubiquitous white, pebbly Styrofoam, and extruded polystyrene, which is a denser foam usually coloured blue or pink. Dock foam can be made of either kind but now most is made of extruded polystyrene because it was believed to last longer. Unfortunately, extruded polystyrene also breaks down, a process which is accelerated by exposure to water, wind, sunlight and wildlife.

Once a piece of foam breaks away, it's a hazard to humans and animals alike. Larger pieces can be hazards to boaters, as well as an eyesore on Ontario's popular shorelines. Smaller pieces are often ingested by fish, water birds and other wildlife, introducing plastic into the food chain. Decomposing polystyrene can also leach chemicals into the water, including flame-retardants, dyes and benzene.

Polystyrene waste is a significant source of microplastic pollution in the Great Lakes, which supply drinking water to over 35 million people. “Microplastics” is a term used to describe plastic waste that is smaller than five millimetres long, roughly the size of a sesame seed or smaller. These particles are ingested by fish and other animals, and the smallest pieces often cannot be filtered out of the drinking water.

If passed, Bill 228 would require all polystyrene in new floating docks, platforms and buoys to be fully encapsulated to prevent the foam from breaking down in the water. This measure has been adopted in several other jurisdictions, including Oregon, Washington state and Arkansas. Additionally, the US Army Corps of Engineers has prohibited the use of unencapsulated polystyrene foam in dock billets for more than 10 years.

There are many alternatives to using unencapsulated polystyrene in docks, floats and buoys. In 2012, the Bee Islets Growers Corp. in British Columbia began an initiative of encasing polystyrene in floatation billets. They found that this measure improved local water quality and also reduced costs in maintaining and replacing the billets because they did not break down. There are also other forms of floatation for docks, such as floats made from hard plastic or steel, which have a lower environmental impact on the surrounding waters.

When my team and I were preparing this legislation, we sought input from environmental groups and cottage associations across Ontario. We were immediately met with support from local environmental protection groups, who shared their research with us to help us understand the widespread impact of the problem.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the hard work of Georgian Bay Forever, a charity dedicated to scientific research and public education to support the ecological conservation of Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes. They've done outstanding research on the pollutants in Georgian Bay and on the harmful effects of polystyrene litter specifically.

Another organization I'd like to recognize for researching the breadth of the problem is Pollution Probe. Their team has deployed trash collection vessels, known as "Seabins," in lakes and rivers around the province. Last November, I had the chance to visit one of their Seabins at Point Pleasant Marina in Georgian Bay. The shoreline had been cleaned up the day before by the marina owners, Drew and Sherry Lichtenheldt, but there were already many pieces of dock foam in the Seabin, some as large as cellphones, some no larger than a dime.

Pollution Probe also operates Seabins across the Great Lakes region, including several on the Toronto waterfront, that regularly collect polystyrene waste. Technologies like the Seabins are an important tool in monitoring and keeping the waters and shorelines clean, but it is much more effective to stop this pollution before it enters our ecosystems.

In January 2020, I was pleased to sit in on a meeting between the township of The Archipelago and Minister Yurek at AMO, where they raised concerns about the impacts of dock foam. Just a few weeks after my legislation was tabled, the council of the township of The Archipelago and the township of Georgian Bay each passed a resolution supporting the bill. At the recent conference of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, a councillor from the township of The Archipelago asked the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks during the minister's forum whether he supported the bill. The minister indicated that he supports this bill. I want to thank the township of The Archipelago for their environmental stewardship on this and several other issues in the region.

Terry Rees, president of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, wrote in support of this bill. They represent over 500 cottager associations from across the province. I'm going to quote from Terry's letter:

"As stewards of our precious fresh waters, waterfront property owners see first-hand the impact of microplastics and other contaminants on our biodiversity. Polystyrene foam is a major plastics pollution source in our lakes. In Ontario, the genesis of much of this material is from unencapsulated polystyrene foam used primarily in the construction of floating docks."

He goes on to say, "Instituting this ban will encourage the expansion and creation of manufacturing viable alternatives in Ontario. This could lead to more employment and business opportunities in both technical innovation and manufacturing and could establish Ontario as a leader in environmentally friendly dock construction.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we do have businesses in Parry Sound–Muskoka that manufacture pontoons for floating docks, including NyDock in Huntsville, Kropf Industrial in Parry Sound—they make both steel and plastic ones—Dock Kings in Parry Sound and many others.

I've also heard from one small dock builder who does use unencapsulated foam, but I am confident that entrepreneurs like him can adapt to more environmentally friendly building materials.

Environmental Defence, a leading Canadian environmental advocacy organization; Green Communities Canada; the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail; and, most recently, the Georgian Bay Land Trust have all expressed support for this bill.

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Dr. Michael McKay, the executive director of the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Windsor, called the bill "a common sense action to help ensure the integrity and health of our freshwater resources."

We received almost 200 letters of support in total from individual residents and community associations. Waterfront residents and cottagers from Ottawa to Kenora wrote in support. Many letters of support came in from my own riding, like this one from Peter Hopperton in Nobel, Ontario. He wrote:

"Polystyrene dock foam has become a common component of our waterfront. Even remote islands have crushed foam all over their shoreline. My kids play on the public beaches in Carling and small particles of polystyrene are mixed into the sand. I am so pleased that you are championing this important issue. We all know how serious an environmental threat this material is. It's time to address the problem."

Many expressed frustration at how difficult polystyrene waste is to clean up. We received dozens of pictures of lakes and shorelines littered with foam pieces, some large and others the size of a pebble or smaller.

Christopher Lewis of Toronto put it best:

"Having collected many pieces of this polystyrene each spring and throughout the course of the summer, I find the continued use of this material very troubling. It breaks down into tiny pieces that can't be recovered except by using a vacuum—an impossible prospect."

It is much easier to prevent microplastic pollution at the source than it is to clean it up.

Dock foam waste is not unique to the Georgian Bay region. A group near Kenora have been running a petition to ban unencapsulated dock foam after they noticed the problem in their area. As of today, the petition has more than 300 signatures. Between 2016 and 2018, more than 500,000 pieces of foam were picked up by Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup and International Coastal Cleanup volunteers across eight Great Lakes states and Ontario. They estimated that 66% of the total waste came from Ontario.

As I'm sure most of my colleagues are aware, microplastic pollution is an enormous problem in all Canada waterways, and especially the Great Lakes. Eliminating dock foam pollution would not fix the problem of microplastic in Ontario's waters, but given the research showing how much of this waste originates from dock foam, I hope that this legislation would put a significant dent in the amount of waste in our waters.

We all recognize more action is needed to address other sources of plastic in our water. The federal plan to eliminate single-use plastics will help, especially with things like takeout containers. However, that would not cover the issue of dock foam, so I believe it's important to address this problem head on, which this bill does.

I urge all members to support Bill 228 to protect Ontario's lakes and rivers from polystyrene pollution and keep our shores and waters beautiful for generations to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure to talk to my neighbour to the south. The south of my riding is where the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka starts, so I'm very happy to speak to this bill.

I can assure you that everybody in Nickel Belt supports this small step toward cleaning our water. When we first heard about your bill, many of the stewardship committees that we have in Nickel Belt for Vermillion River, for Long Lake etc. were all interested in the bill that you had put forward. They reached out to see how they can help.

I could tell you, just from the first reading of your bill, things have changed for the better in Nickel Belt. I live in the west end of my riding. We have one lumber store called Pinehill Lumber. In my riding, 28% of the people live on water, either on a lake or on a river. So they sell a ton of docks every year, because they don't last forever and need to be replaced. But I'm really happy to say that they now sell what looks like plastic culverts, and they have kind of welded an N to bolt to the end of the plastic culverts. Now everybody who builds a new dock or repairs their dock uses the hard plastic that does not decompose. We are one of them.

We are all connected to rivers, so we cannot have fixed docks; we have floating docks. We used to have docks with those great big billets. We had this lovely family of muskrats that used to come around the dock; come winter, they all went into those big Styrofoam billets and found a really nice and warm place to spend the winter, except that they made a mess of the big Styrofoam billets and we had

Styrofoam everywhere. I can assure you that as much as I and everybody else wanted to clean this thing up, it is really hard to do. It is way better to prevent Styrofoam from going all over than to try to clean it up.

Other things that happened: Because we are on a river way, they go—whether you talk about Simon Lake, McCharles Lake, Kusk Lake, Panache, all the way to the Great Lakes, we're all connected through the Vermillion River. The water level varies greatly and docks float away. This weekend I went cross-country skiing with my kids. We went around and we counted the number of abandoned docks that have floated around just on our lake. It's not that small: 12 kilometres long, whatever. There were 12—there were 12—docks that have floated away that you're not able to bring back to their original owner, because they have gone down a bit of rapids and stuff, that are just there decaying. All of them had Styrofoam billets to support them.

So the change is welcome for people who live on lakes and care about our lakes and rivers. Your bill has great support. They know what you have brought forward and they support it. We all understand it's just a small step. We will still have a ton of microplastics, but it's a step in the right direction and a step that is worth supporting, so we will be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I'm happy to rise today in support of this bill and its objective of keeping Styrofoam out of Ontario lakes. I appreciate that the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is showing concern for waterways, and we actually had the opportunity of a pleasant conversation to get acquainted and to speak about his bill in more detail.

Ontario is fortunate enough to be home to the Great Lakes, which hold one fifth of the world's fresh surface water, and more than 80% of Ontarians get their drinking water from these lakes. Our system of waterways is crucial for our ecosystem, transportation, economy and so much more.

I know that in Ottawa we're very proud of the Ottawa River watershed, and lots of efforts go into protecting it from the various pressures that it faces. Microplastics are being found in waterways across the province, and they're extremely detrimental to our watersheds, to wildlife and to all Ontarians who depend on these natural resources.

I'm supportive of any initiative that can reduce the prevalence of microplastics and help protect our incredible waterways. While this is a small step to take, every little bit counts when it comes to protecting our environment. I hope that the government will do even more to protect the planet for our children, because the decisions we make today will affect their future, and we owe it to the future generation to act now and prevent any further neglect of our environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's an honour to rise and speak in support of my colleague's private member's bill today. This is actually an issue that is important in Carleton, and

I want to speak about the Mahogany Harbour project in Manotick. This was a community project that started almost 20 years ago, if not longer. Through the efforts of the community, they raised funds and got support to build a harbour in Manotick. Not just a harbour; there's also a park, there are benches. It's a community hub.

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Before COVID, you would more often than not see people gathering there, whether it was playing games, maybe playing a game of cards or backgammon. It was a place where people could gather and get together, and it all surrounded this dock.

Mr. Speaker, this is on the Rideau Canal. Again, this dock brings not just tourism into communities like Manotick in my riding of Carleton, but it also supports businesses. It also encourages people to learn more about the environment, to get in touch with the community and to explore new areas.

Before COVID, Mr. Speaker, there was a growing increase in tourism in Manotick, and it's because of these docks that people go out and explore new communities. There are so many places like this in Carleton, not just in Manotick. I think it's so important that while we do encourage tourism and we do support local communities like Manotick, we also consider the impact it can have on the environment. That is why I'm so proud to speak in support of this private member's bill, because not only is this supporting communities, and not only is this encouraging people to go out and explore, explore their communities—especially this year, Mr. Speaker. Because of COVID, our government has proposed the staycation. Our government is encouraging people to travel locally, to visit new places in their communities that they might not have visited. I encourage everyone to look into that because they do get tax credits for that; they do get tax credits for travelling locally.

But I think it's also important for all of us to make sure that the decisions we make are sustainable and environmentally friendly. I think that's why, Mr. Speaker, this bill is so critical, and I'm so pleased and so proud to speak to it. Again, I'd like to thank the member. I know that everyone in Carleton will be pleased to hear that we are moving forward with this, because I think it is our responsibility, not just as the government but as a community, to protect what we have for the next generation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: In Ontario, we have 250,000 freshwater lakes. One fifth of the world's fresh water supply is in Ontario. Last week, I was speaking with two First Nations elders, Dr. Robert Phillips and Duke Redbird, and they said that one of the primary First Nations teachings is that we never own the land. We're only stewards of the land for the next generation. By the same token, we are only stewards of the fresh water that we have in Ontario for the next generation. So I'm happy to support this bill that will reduce the amount of polystyrene and microplastics leaching into our beautiful lakes and rivers in Ontario.

But this small step does not make up for the horrific record of this government that is accelerating the pollution of our land and water, and accelerating climate change. Last November, the Conservative government passed a bill that gave it greater powers to override environmental protections through ministry zoning orders. They then issued a ministry zoning order for the foundry site in downtown Toronto. This week, the government was caught red-handed making a secret deal with a developer to sell the foundry sites.

The only reason the heritage buildings on the foundry site are still standing is that our community group, Friends of the Foundry, supported by my colleagues MPP Suze Morrison and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, was able to get an injunction to halt the demolition of these valuable heritage sites. In granting the injunction, the judge ruled that the government had breached its own laws. So now that they've been caught red-handed breaking the laws of the province, the government is now saying that they are demolishing the heritage buildings on the foundry site because they need to do it in order to do an environmental remediation of the site. But they have not released any environmental assessment, and it's really hard to believe that this government is taking this action—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm sorry to interrupt the member. I'll ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Chris Glover: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Continue.

Mr. Chris Glover: But it's hard to believe this government is taking this action to protect the environment, when they gave themselves the power to override environmental protections through ministry zoning orders, like the one they issued for the foundry site. It's also hard to believe that the government is abolishing the heritage buildings on the foundry site, based on this government's horrific environmental record.

I'll just give a few examples. They started their term by cancelling the cap-and-trade system, a market-based solution to reduce carbon emissions. They sued the federal government for its carbon tax. They wasted taxpayer dollars on partisan gas station stickers. In November 2018, they passed Bill 57, which stripped the Environmental Commissioner of the power to report on emissions and conservation. After the Environmental Commissioner reported on the financial costs of global warming for Ontarians, the Ford government fired the Environmental Commissioner. In June 2020, they stripped the endangered species protections from the Golden Horseshoe, and in November 2020—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Sorry to interrupt. Stop the clock, please. We have a point of order from the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member from Spadina-Fort York, I challenge the fact that he is not speaking to this particular private member's bill. He's going off on a rant talking about anything and everything else, so please bring him in order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize your point of order. I'd ask the member from Spadina–Fort York to speak to the bill that's on the table, please. Back to the member from Spadina–Fork York.

Mr. Chris Glover: This is a bill that is supposed to be protecting the environment, and I am speaking about this government's environmental record in the context of the current bill.

We have seen record-setting floods and forest fires in recent years, and the TD Bank reports that environmental catastrophes will cost Canadians \$40 billion a year by 2050. This government is externalizing the costs of environmental damage onto future generations—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm sorry to interrupt again. This is a private member's bill. I would ask the member from Spadina–Fort York to make comments relevant to the private member's bill in question. Thank you.

Mr. Chris Glover: Protecting lakes from polystyrene is a small step, but it does not make up for the environmental devastation that this government is wreaking on future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to pass this bill, but then reverse the environmentally damaging actions that they've taken over the last three years, and then begin to act as if you understand your responsibility to be stewards of this land for future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to speak to private member's Bill 228, a bill that would require all polystyrene and new floating docks, platforms and buoys to be encapsulated to prevent them from breaking down in the water and causing more pollution in our lakes and waters.

I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for bringing this bill forward and taking a small step to prevent pollution in our lakes and our waterways, especially in our Great Lakes. Speaker, 22 million pounds of plastic debris from Canada and the United States ends up in the Great Lakes every year. Plastic is responsible for 80% of the shoreline litter in the Great Lakes. I want to remind everyone that the Great Lakes provide drinking water for 35 million people, so we absolutely need to do everything possible to protect our Great Lakes, to prevent the pollution of those Great Lakes. I'm hoping that, as we debate a number of issues today and throughout the week, we think about the conversation we're having today about protecting the Great Lakes from polystyrene plastic pollution and micro-pollution, which is a growing concern in our waterways, especially the Great Lakes.

I want to thank the member opposite for reminding us that it's easier and, I would argue, less expensive to prevent pollution in the first place than it is to clean it up afterwards. I also want to thank the member opposite for reminding us and actually, frankly, admitting that this bill will not fix all the plastic pollution issues in the Great Lakes, that more action is needed and that there are

shortcomings in the federal government's ban on plastic pollution.

I would challenge the members opposite and all members of this House that we as Ontarians fill in those gaps that the member has rightly identified. By all means, we should pass this bill, and I'm hoping the government will push this bill through committee so we can have it pass third reading and these changes can come into effect. But I also hope the government takes action to ban plastic beverage containers, which are a huge source of plastic pollution in our waterways; to ban plastic takeout coffee cups, which are a huge source of pollution and a contribution to plastic pollution in our waterways; and to bring in regulations that require filters in washing machines to filter out the microplastics from our clothing that are going in to our waterways.

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In closing, and in my last few minutes here, I just want to be clear that I'll be voting for this bill, and in our House leaders' meetings I'll be advocating that it be pushed forward to third reading. But I also want to ask the members opposite that if you truly support the spirit of this bill, let's take it further and bring in more plastic pollution bans.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm happy to speak to this bill today, Bill 228. I have to say that when I first took a look at it, when I saw "expanded or extruded polystyrene," the first thing that came to my mind was something from Gene Roddenberry. All I could think of is Scotty saying, "I cannot do it, Captain. The engine won't go. We've got expanded or extruded polystyrene blocking the dilithium crystals." It actually does sound like something from science fiction. It's Styrofoam that we're talking about, though, for those at home. It's Styrofoam. That's what most people think of it as.

When I was a kid, my parents had a cottage and we used it on our dock. Every summer, we would have to go to the beach at the cottage and clean up the little white balls that had come off from that Styrofoam. You didn't think anything of it at the time. When I was in my early teens, I worked for a company that's now out of business, so I can say their name—I'm not advertising them. I lived in Bowmanville at the time and I worked at a place called Henry Buildall. We sold dock kits like this so that you could do it yourself. It was just big chunks of Styrofoam that we would put out with it. What we're seeing now is the negative effects of that in all the lakes in Ontario, in all the river systems that are in Ontario, as a result of it.

I applaud the member for coming forward with this bill, because it's something that we probably should have done a long time ago. We recognized, we saw for years that it was breaking down. It would break down because of sunlight, it would break down because of water flow, and we would end up this waste on the side of the beach. You'd end up with this waste caught in reeds in different places on the river or on the waterways.

What we have since learned is that animals would actually think that it was food and they would eat it, and

you're finding it in the bellies of fish, because it's small enough that they can eat it but it's big enough that they can't pass it. What we have found—you see this with a number of different marine life—is plastic in their stomachs that they can't digest and can't pass. It makes so much sense for us to put forward something, and I'm actually surprised that it's not something that has come up before.

Encapsulate it; wrap it with something. When you look at any small water craft, boats under 30 feet have to be able to float after they have been swamped, so there's Styrofoam blown up all inside underneath it to keep it so that it will float once it has been swamped. It's used predominantly in everything that we have right now on waterways because it's cheap, it's easy to get, it's easy to work with, it's light and it floats. Wrapping it—that's all we're really talking about. It's not a hard concept. Wrap it up, and then it's safe. Then you can use it.

Change what we're using: You can get plastic buoys. You can get plastic floating devices that go on those docks. They last longer and they work just as well. When you look at the total cost of ownership, then, on that dock that you may have, it makes more sense not to use Styrofoam but to use other products that work better, that are less invasive, that don't have as much of a negative impact on the environment.

I want to once again thank the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, because this, I think, is a bill that we can all get behind. It's not changing the world, but it's making that one little step that will make it better for all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Styrofoam is widely used in the construction of floating docks, and it is often directly exposed to the water. When Styrofoam breaks down, it releases harmful plastics and microplastics directly into our lakes and rivers, threatening fish and other wildlife.

Pollution of our lakes and rivers can have serious consequences for all forms of life, including humans, and it also contributes to climate change. This bill would help address this pollution by banning the construction of floating docks where the Styrofoam isn't encapsulated.

Many of my constituents have written to me expressing their support for this bill. It is a good bill, and I will certainly be supporting it. I'd like to acknowledge the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. He has a long history of introducing bills that propose solutions to environmental problems. I'd like to thank him for bringing forward this bill.

This member is also part of a government that has caused untold damage to the environment; a government that has refused to address the climate crisis and has actively made it worse; a government that has used ministerial zoning orders to allow development in 14 sites with environmental concerns in just the last two years; a government that continues to scrap conservation efforts.

Just a few months ago, the Ford government dealt a massive blow to conservation authorities across the province with schedule 6 of Bill 229. They impaired the

ability of conservation authorities to protect Ontarians from flooding and other dangers that result from development within the conservation areas. They introduced new ways for developers to fast-track development approval and stack decisions in their favour. These changes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Sorry to interrupt the member. The member for Barrie—Innisfil has a point of order, I assume?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Yes, it came up with the last speaker. This a private member's bill, and it's about docks. I just want to keep it on topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member has raised the question of the private member's bill being about floating docks, and I would ask the member to make her comments interrelated with that concept. Thank you.

Back to the member from Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: These changes undermine the integrated watershed approach and go against the very purpose of conservation authorities.

But I do want to speak about water protection, because this bill is about protecting water in our lakes and rivers, and so that's important. Ontario's drinking and ground-water resources also need to be protected. I have received hundreds of emails from constituents demanding that this government strengthen regulations for issuing permits to take water for water bottling. Water is a public good and a human right, and as the climate crisis worsens, we need to plan for our water needs now and into the future to ensure that all Ontarians have sustainable public access to water. However, this government is planning to continue a system that allows corporations like Nestlé to extract our groundwater and sell it for profit, a system in which corporations—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm sorry for the interruption. The member for Peterborough—Northumberland South on a point of order.

Mr. David Piccini: Yes, Speaker, under standing order 6, the member has both taken this debate off topic from the private member's bill at hand and is also impugning motive on the government's intentions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize your point of order. I also recognize that the member from Parkdale—High Park has been talking about water quality in her most recent comments, which is in relation to what is on the table: polystyrene affecting the quality of the water.

I turn back now to the member from Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Thank you, Speaker—a system in which corporations can extract water from treaty lands while so many First Nation communities in Ontario still don't have access to clean drinking water. Nestlé recently sold their bottled water brands for billions of dollars to two private equity firms on Wall Street. One of these brands is Pure Life, which is bottled near Guelph—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Stop the clock, please. Point of order from the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Mr. Speaker, this has nothing, absolutely nothing to do with the private member's bill.

Hon. Todd Smith: Let's keep it on the rails, folks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ladies and gentlemen, this is a bill about the environment. The member from Parkdale–High Park has been raising valid environmental concerns. I don't want her to be badgered for the final 20 seconds. I would appreciate it if we allow the member to conclude her remarks and we could move on with the debate.

Back to the member from Parkdale–High Park.

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Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: The Conservatives may not like it, but they have to understand that water is life, not for profit. That's why we continue to advocate for the creation of an Ontario water strategy with clear restrictions for water extraction.

To conclude, Speaker, I do want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka again for bringing this bill forward. I will be supporting it, as I said, but I also urge him to work with his colleagues, with his government, to stop—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I am pleased to support this hard-working private member who has introduced private member's Bill 228, the Keeping Polystyrene Out of Ontario's Lakes and Rivers Act, of course introduced by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. The problem of dock foam waste in Ontario's waters has been raised by property owners across Ontario. From Parry Sound–Muskoka to Kenora, to Barrie, to Innisfil, this bill will have an impact on all those communities, and of course my community and beautiful Lake Simcoe, where this member not only introduced this bill that will help the lake, but he also introduced Bill 118, the Occupiers' Liability Amendment Act, which will help waterways across Ontario, like Lake Simcoe, because of the impact of salt and the impact of the usage of it in our communities. Less salt means reduced chloride levels in Lake Simcoe and lakes all across Ontario, which will allow Ontarians to swim and fish in clean water and allow the fish habitat to thrive.

But Bill 228 also aims to help reduce microplastic pollution in Ontario's waterways by reducing all dock foam floats and buoys made from expanded or extruded polystyrene. The problem, of course, with dock waste in Ontario's waterways has been raised by many property owners all across Ontario. I recall attending the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Forum, and I know that they will definitely benefit from this bill. I understand that they have gathered over 300 signatures since 2019. Their MPP, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, has championed Lake of the Woods for many years and will be very happy about this bill.

This bill is also consistent with our government's made-in-Ontario environment commitment to address plastic pollution in our Great Lakes and our inland waterways. The Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan describes Ontario's plan to continue to work to restore and protect our Great

Lakes and inland waters, and commits to several actions for reducing plastic waste pollution, including through the drafting of the ninth Canada-Ontario agreement and Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy.

Just this past year, during Waste Reduction Week, our government announced that Pollution Probe was receiving over \$3,000 from Ontario's government to collect plastic waste from marinas around the province using innovative plastic capture technology. This will be the largest initiative of its kind in the world to tackle plastic pollution in the province's lakes and waterways. It includes things like Seabins and LittaTraps, which will capture litter and plastic pollution. Up to 12 marinas are going to be participating in this initiative.

What's more, Speaker, Ontario's investment in plastic capture technology is in addition to the investment we've already made of \$4.47 million that the province announced for 65 different projects across a variety of lakes in our province. Again, this goes back to our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, where we commit to protecting our waterways and our lakes.

I want to thank the member who has worked diligently with so many stakeholders to bring this to fruition, because we've heard it from, for example, the federation of cottagers. I remember speaking at their annual general meeting. I was joined by the member from Markham–Thornhill, who is also very interested in keeping our waterways clean, because, of course, in our government many people care about the environment, not just the Minister of the Environment. At the annual general meeting with the federation of Ontario cottagers, they also had raised the issue of plastics in the waterways, specifically the Styrofoam coming from docks. They mentioned that they had been speaking to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka about the initiatives that he talked about.

This didn't just come up with the federation of cottagers, of course. As the member who introduced the bill mentioned, it comes up at ROMA and at our municipal conferences. In fact, it came up with Minister Yurek and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka when they met with the township of The Archipelago, who are very supportive of this and who will benefit as well. So it shows you, Speaker, that not only are we listening to Ontarians when it comes to the environment, but of course, we've got a lot of complementary measures in the made-in-Ontario plan.

This member has made a step further to complement many of those measures to help our clean water be clean for many, many years to come, so I commend him and I fully support this bill. I'm thrilled that all members of this House, no matter which political party they're with, will also support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Norman Miller: I'd, first of all, like to thank my OLIP intern, who is no longer with me but did a lot of the work recently on this private member's bill, Elizabeth Haig, and also my OLIP intern from last year, who started

the research on this, Kieran Lawlor. Thanks for that. And the speech I did, Elizabeth wrote that speech, so she deserves the credit for it. It's great to have the support of the interns.

I want to thank all the members, the members from Nickel Belt, Ottawa–Vanier, Carleton, Spadina–Fort York, Guelph, Peterborough–Kawartha, Parkdale–High Park and Barrie–Innisfil, for lending their comments today.

I must admit, I did enjoy the speech from the member from Nickel Belt, talking about muskrats getting into the Styrofoam. That is absolutely what does happen, and they add to the breakup of the Styrofoam. She named off some lakes that I recognized: Long Lake, which I visited in the wintertime before, Panache Lake—there's a song about that written by Sudbury songwriter JoPo—and many other lakes. So thanks for that very good description.

The other good information that came from members, like the member from Peterborough–Kawartha, talking about the fact that you find the fish with the plastic right in their stomach because they're not able to pass that. The member from Barrie–Innisfil talking about the Seabins that are being placed around the province at marinas to help identify and collect this Styrofoam and measure it too. They have an app that goes along with it so they can record and weigh the Styrofoam and other debris that comes out of the lake.

And I'd just like to thank all the other members.

There are other ways of building docks: the plastic pontoons, or in big commercial docks, steel docks, which are totally recyclable, are very popular with the big marinas with heavy boats. I know for Drew Lichtenheldt at Point Pleasant Marina, that's what his most environmentally responsible alternative is.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Miller has moved second reading of Bill 228, An Act to prohibit unencapsulated expanded or extruded polystyrene in floating docks, floating platforms and buoys. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I assume—unless you have another comment, Mr. Miller?

Mr. Norman Miller: Sorry, yes. I'd like to send it to the committee of regs and private bills, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We will send it to the committee for regulations and private bills. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

LONG-TERM CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. However, there is a

late show this evening. The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question put earlier to the Minister of Long-Term Care. The member for Ottawa South will have up to five minutes to debate the matter, and someone from the government side will have up to five minutes to reply.

We turn now to the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I do want to say, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, whenever he's debating private members' bills, is so gracious with his staff and everybody who contributed. I want to point that out. He's an example for all of us.

I'm really pleased tonight that the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South is here. Normally, we are having this debate around lunchtime on Friday and we're always fighting over who is going to get the last word. He's going to get the last word tonight, so we won't have to fight over that.

Speaker, of any of the late shows I've ever called, this is the one I have been most dissatisfied with the answer. The simple question that I put to the minister was, "Why did you spend three times as much money to put security guards in long-term care as you did in recruiting and training PSWs?" A simple question, a question that's bothering a lot of people, and I didn't even get a semblance of an answer. All I got was talking about 15 years—and I'm sure I'm going to hear that tonight—talking about what other people didn't do.

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What I was asking the minister was, why are security guards more of a priority than PSWs when it's been very clear, from this time last year, that we had a real concern? And it only grew over the spring. So \$42 million on security guards, \$14 million on recruiting and training PSWs: That's a fact. The minister did not refute that.

I backed that up in the question by saying that Quebec had the same problem as us, and what they said was, "You know what? We need PSWs. Let's go and get 10,000 PSWs." So they went out and they tried, and they only got 7,000. So they got 7,000 PSWs.

On Monday this week, the government announced they had more PSWs being trained, about 377, which brought to a total of—wait for it, Speaker—700 new PSWs that will be trained by sometime this summer. That's not actually protecting vulnerable residents in long-term care.

I know the commission is going to be interviewing the Minister of Health tomorrow and the Minister of Long-Term Care on Friday. It's very disappointing that the minister has refused to grant the commission's reasonable request for an extension and, on top of that, has not provided all the information that the commission has requested. It's kind of like the answer to my question but far more serious.

There seems to be a lack of a sense of urgency for those things that we need for long-term care. Take a look at the vaccine. We were told, "We'll be ready when the vaccines get here." That was in December. While Quebec and BC were vaccinating residents in long-term care, Ontario took a Christmas holiday and then failed to take the advice of Pfizer to move their vaccine into long-term-care homes,

while BC and Quebec were doing that. That caused a delay and that put us weeks behind other provinces.

The same thing has happened in PSWs. The same thing has happened. We know we need those people and we know that we needed to have an aggressive program to do that. Literally, homes were begging for a program in the summer—begging. In Quebec, they made their decision. They went out: “I’ve got to get 10,000.” They got 7,000. We announced a program in September; we’re still talking about what it’s doing in February. We’re almost through the second wave and waiting for a third wave.

I know that I’m going to hear in the response a lot of criticism about the past. I’ve got thick skin. We can debate that later. But what I do want to hear after that’s heaped on is why the government spent \$42 million on security guards and only \$14 million on recruiting and training PSWs here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We turn to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South to reply for up to five minutes.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He’s right: I do enjoy getting the last word and I so enjoy debating the member opposite. He’s right: Everyone has a role to play in long-term care; everybody has a role to play in containing that virus. Where he’s wrong is in the \$1.9-billion investment and the herculean effort that this government has made to hire, attract and retain over 27,000 health care professionals. In fact, that member opposite showed a lot of enthusiasm—a lot of enthusiasm to cherry-pick things. I wish that member opposite had shown the same enthusiasm to reform and implement the systemic changes in long-term care that we so desperately needed in this province over the decade-plus that he was in government.

Mr. Speaker, what that member opposite has done instead is he has voted against measures this government has put in place to protect long-term-care residents. He’s voted against the \$18 million that’s gone to Ottawa. He’s voted against the \$3.3 million he opposed at the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre. They received \$1.9 million, Mr. Speaker. That’s a home he’s brought up in this House no fewer than 20 times. He should back up the talk with some semblance of credibility in acknowledging—at least acknowledging—that that home in his own riding has received significant funding. Mr. Speaker, it’s protecting the residents. It’s investing in the health care professionals we need.

I’ve spoken at length about the structural and staffing investments that this government has made. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, this minister launched a staffing strategy. This minister has addressed some of the systemic inequities in staffing in this ministry. The long-term-care commitment to hire, attract and retain over 27,000 health care professionals is an important piece. The nursing piece: We’ve launched stand-alone nursing, allowing nurses in rural communities to get to those homes faster and the people that so desperately need their support. We’ve implemented voluntary management agreement with hospitals, enabling the health care professionals to work closely with long-term-care facilities. We’ve

launched a \$56-million micro-credentialing strategy. Mr. Speaker, you didn’t hear any of that from the member opposite because he had 10 years to do it and he didn’t.

Finally, we’ve committed to four hours of direct daily care. That was something so pivotal, and I will give certain members of the NDP opposite credit for working with our government, for talking about this important initiative—again, something the previous Liberal government had a decade to do, and they failed to do it for the people of Ontario.

And what was his reaction? We heard it again today: complaining about Quebec, talking about the vaccine program. Let’s look at it. Let’s look at the vaccine, and let’s look at the Quebec program—two things. Their orderly program: On November 28, the Globe and Mail reported that the program had received 80,000 applicants. Of that, one third have dropped out and 5,000 were actually employed, and we’ve seen attrition rates. I’ll quote the same article: Staff “are overwhelmed, unhappy and eager to get out.” Mr. Speaker, does that sound familiar? That sounds deeply familiar, because that’s how staff felt under the decade his government was in power.

In stark contrast, it is this government that’s worked with players like the Canadian Career Academy of business and technology, bringing in 60 new PSWs in his region alone, part of the 370 the minister announced. Again, that private career college was the same private career college that that previous government dismissed, treated as second-class citizens, never worked in close collaboration with. But this government recognizes the important role that they play.

Mr. Speaker, we launched a micro-credentialing strategy that’s enabled health care professionals to ladder, to digital badge, to stack their credentials to quickly get into the health care workforce. If that member is so eager to look elsewhere, I’ll save the work for him. In Ontario, we lead the nation in our micro-credentialing strategy, with over 50% of our publicly assisted colleges and universities working with us on that approach. That’s the Team Ontario approach that this government is taking to support residents in long-term care and to bring new staff members online.

Mr. Speaker, on the vaccine, he asks and quotes a province where quite literally these residents have launched legal action against the government, where they’re waiting 90 days for the second dose. On this side of the House, we’ve been prudent. All long-term-care residents are getting the dose and are receiving it on time, according to the label use.

On this side of the House, we’re always going to work collaboratively to address the systemic failures of the previous government and to effect the meaningful change in long-term care that we so desperately need in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you, all. There being no further matter to debate, I deem the earlier motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1859.

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Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna Skelly
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Randy Hillier, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Catherine Fife, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Jeremy Roberts
Amarjot Sandhu, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Guy Bourgouin, Stephen Crawford
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Gilles Bisson
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Will Bouma, Lucille Collard
Parm Gill, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Guratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Michael Mantha, Jim McDonell
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Kaleed Rasheed, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
France Gélinas, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Taras Natyshak
Michael Parsa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Will Bouma, John Fraser
Logan Kanapathi, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Mike Harris, Christine Hogarth
Belinda C. Karahalios, Bhutilla Karpoche
Natalia Kusendova
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight / Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell