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Mercredi
23 novembre 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 November 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 novembre 2022

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We will now have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT,
2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT
À ACCÉLÉRER LA CONSTRUCTION
DE PLUS DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. Clark moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant diverses lois, abrogeant divers règlements et édictant la Loi de 2022 visant à soutenir la croissance et la construction de logements dans les régions de York et de Durham.

Hon. David Piccini: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: Sorry, Speaker; I've not done this in six years, but Canada has not been in the World Cup in 36 years, so I seek unanimous consent to wear my Team Canada scarf.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to wear his Team Canada scarf in recognition of the World Cup game today. Agreed? Agreed.

I'll look to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to lead off the third reading debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to lead off third reading debate for the proposed More Homes Built Faster Act. But I wanted to make sure that the Minister of the Environment had a chance to do his unanimous consent—and I see that the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, the Associate Minister of Housing and I all have our red ties on today. I think we can all agree in this House, no matter what political stripe you hold, that we're so immensely proud of Canada's men's soccer team and we all wish them all the best. We wish them much success at this World Cup—something that many Ontarians, especially

of my vintage, have been waiting for for decades. It's a great day to be a Canadian.

The bill that we're debating in third reading today supports our government's third housing supply action plan—you heard that correctly, Speaker—in three years. Our government made housing such a priority because we know that too many Ontarians are finding it hard to find the right home and things are getting more challenging for them. This isn't specific to any generation or age group. It's difficult for young people who are eager to raise a family in the community of their choice. It's also difficult for newcomers who are coming to Canada and ready to put down roots and start a new life. We're also seeing seniors who are looking to downsize and find a home where they can stay near their family and near their loved ones. It's not just limited to one part of our province. It's not just a big-city problem. The housing shortage affects all Ontarians, whether they live in rural or urban areas, or suburban areas, and whether they live in the north or the south of our province.

Speaker, the problem we're dealing with in Ontario is clear: There simply isn't enough housing to meet the demands of our growing province.

We knew, as a government, that we needed to get a plan in place to build more homes faster. And I'm so pleased that this plan, which has been tabled and has finished second reading and has gone to committee and now is here today for third reading, has already received high praise from so many housing partners and beyond. A news release issued by the Ontario Real Estate Association—many people in this House met with OREA members; some even were at the conference to hear President Clinton speak—said it's “just what the doctor ordered when it comes to getting more homes for families built faster right across the province.”

I'm going to quote another individual I've come to meet and to work with over the last four years, who I respect immensely, and that's Justin Marchand, the CEO of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services. Here's what Mr. Marchand said: “The Ford government is taking a balanced approach to ensure the needs of existing residents are respected ... while also ensuring there are new opportunities for new residents and a growing Ontario.” He went on to say that the proposed legislation “strongly supports economic growth, while simultaneously supporting municipalities to build stronger, more vibrant and resilient communities.”

David Wilkes, president and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association, said, “The plan introduced ... by the government is the clear, powerful

transformation we need to solve our housing supply and affordability crisis.”

Joseph Mancinelli of the Labourers’ International Union of North America said that our bill is “a positive step forward in building a transformational action plan that will cut red tape and invest in critical housing infrastructure while spurring economic development and creating thousands of jobs for our members and men and women across the skilled trades.”

I want to thank Mr. Mancinelli and LIUNA for their strong support and their strong partnership in moving forward with getting our skilled trades and housing connected.

I could go on, Speaker, but it is clear that many people and many organizations across this province support the initiatives we’re proposing. The many stakeholders who have praised the plan all agree that it’s balanced, transformative and much needed—and “much needed” is a key phrase, because Ontario is in a housing supply crisis. There are far too many hard-working Ontarians looking for homes that meet their needs and their budget.

Our government’s proposed More Homes Built Faster Act would support our goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next decade. It proposes bold action to meet that goal. This bill also builds on the dozens of pieces of legislation, regulations and overall policies that our government has introduced over the last four years, under the leadership of Premier Ford, to help build more housing.

The actions we’ve taken are working well, but more needs to be done to address this evolving housing supply crisis.

Speaker, there are many Ontarians who work hard day in and day out but who cannot find a home of their own that they can afford.

Statistics Canada reports that houses are about 300% more expensive in Toronto than in the 1990s. It’s not your parents’ or your grandparents’ housing market anymore. The impact is very severe.

For example, the Generation Squeeze Lab at the University of British Columbia, in a report funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., calculated that it would take the typical young person in the greater Toronto area 27 years of full-time employment to save for a 20% down payment on the average-priced house.

0910

It’s no exaggeration to say that we need an all-hands-on-deck approach to get homes built as quickly as we can to meet this enormous demand and desperate need that is in Ontario today.

On top of the housing crisis we’re currently experiencing, we expect that Ontario’s population is going to grow by over two million people by 2031, and we expect that approximately 1.5 million of that will be right here in the greater Golden Horseshoe. That’s why—and this is very important—we need both near- and long-term plans and solutions to deal with the current housing shortage and to deal with the growth-fuelled demand for housing that we know is coming. We know that the demand for housing in the greater Golden Horseshoe and

in Ontario is going to get even more fuelled because of population growth.

The other thing I want to say is that this is not some abstract point that I’m trying to make here today. The dream of home ownership is being dashed, and so many well-intentioned, talented people are struggling to find attainable housing for themselves and for their families. This is the reality that many Ontarians are facing. This is the reality that our government must continue to work on to help change.

The task before us is enormous, but like any task, it’s accomplished one step at a time. So let’s look at the steps that this government has put forward to help deal with that problem.

In 2019, our first housing supply action plan, More Homes, More Choice, made very important strides to speed up planning timelines, it made development costs more predictable, Madam Speaker—it’s great to see you in the chair this morning—it made it easier to build laneway homes and basement suites, and it further harmonized provincial and national building codes. We know that those changes were effective—and Madam Speaker, now that you’re in the chair, I want to make sure you realize that I’m going to be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. And I want to again welcome you to the chair this morning. It’s great to see you there.

We know that the changes in our first housing supply action plan, More Homes, More Choice, were effective, because last year, 2021, we had 100,000 housing starts, which was the most that this province has seen since 1987, in over 30 years. We also know that the 30-year average for housing starts was about 67,500. So we look at last year—significant growth in housing starts that made it effective. A lot of those extra starts were due to our first housing supply action plan. But we knew we had to do more.

So we released our second housing supply action plan, More Homes for Everyone, earlier this year. The second action plan built upon our first and helped to speed up approvals even further. It set out steps to gradually refund fees if municipal planning decisions weren’t made within legislative time frames. It also created new tools, like the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator. This tool will give municipalities the opportunity to work in partnership with the province to unlock lands for priority housing and lands for key infrastructure needed to support more homes.

I want to stress that we built our second housing supply action plan on feedback from the public and feedback from stakeholders, while also heeding the recommendations from our Housing Affordability Task Force. We appointed industry leaders and experts to our task force, and they recommended strong measures that could increase the supply of market housing in Ontario. The task force completed its report to the government this past February. In their report, they recommended measures the government could take to increase the supply of housing. They noted that the roots of the housing supply problem were decades in the

making. They also noted that past efforts to cool the housing market gave only temporary relief to homebuyers. The task force said we have to start thinking long-term, and they echoed the government's alarm on the housing supply front.

The reason we needed to move forward was clear to us. We had to move quickly.

The task force identified bottlenecks that occur because of delays in approvals for development and zoning applications. They noted that this has to be addressed if we're going to get shovels in the ground faster to create new construction. They also pointed out that these approvals are often delayed or hindered because of opposition from members of local municipal councils. Too often, we hear excuses similar to, "I'm not against increased density; it's just not in the right neighbourhood." We hear that all the time. These sorts of objections have to stop being a barrier to creating homes for people to move into.

That's why we passed the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act in September. The legislation and its accompanying regulations give the mayors of our two biggest cities, Toronto and Ottawa, more authority to move forward provincial-municipal priorities like building more homes in their communities.

We followed up on that introduction with our Better Municipal Governance Act last week. The act, if passed, would take decisive action to address the housing supply crisis by assessing how best to extend strong-mayor powers and reduce municipal duplication to deliver on our shared provincial-municipal priorities—primarily the building of 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

Madam Speaker, all of the work that we've done on the housing front leads us here today.

The task force's work has been invaluable to our government and is our long-term housing road map; it's the long-term view of how we can deal with housing supply. Their recommendations are guiding the work that we're speaking about today in the More Homes Built Faster Act—the policies and the tools that will help us build more multi-unit housing, get that gentle density that will enable Ontario to accommodate those in need of attainable housing.

Our proposed act and the new housing supply action plan contain numerous measures that will help address the housing crisis. The measures range from reducing government fees to fixing development-approval delays that slow down construction and increase costs.

The government is going to create a new attainable housing program to drive the development of housing across the province. I look forward to working with the Minister of Infrastructure, the Honourable Kinga Surma, on creating this program that would really leverage these unused government assets.

Other measures in the bill include increasing the Non-Resident Speculation Tax to defer non-resident investors from speculating on the province's housing market, and freezing, reducing and exempting government charges to

spur more new construction and further reduce the cost of housing.

Our proposed act would require building more density near transit. It would unlock innovative approaches to design and construction, and it would remove red tape to get shovels in the ground faster.

It would also make it easier to build small housing projects, speeding up all of those housing proposals while ensuring that building permits and our very robust building and fire code requirements would continue to protect public safety.

We're also proposing to help speed up proceedings at the Ontario Land Tribunal. This would help us to resolve cases more efficiently and streamline processes by allowing for regulations to prioritize cases that would meet certain conditions, as well as establishing service standards—something that I think everyone in this House can agree with.

Other measures would double maximum fines for unethical builders and vendors of new homes who unfairly cancel projects or terminate purchase agreements—very important.

We're also proposing to update Ontario's heritage policies by introducing legislative and regulatory amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. These changes will increase the threshold for heritage designation, and it would update guidelines for the conservation of provincial heritage projects. These changes continue to support the conservation of heritage resources that are so important in Ontario, while providing both clarity and flexibility to ensure that critical housing and other priority projects can move forward in a timely manner.

0920

We have also been in the process of consulting with the public, with stakeholders, with municipalities, and engaging with Indigenous communities to review provincial housing and land use policies to find ways that we can remove barriers to get housing built faster.

Madam Speaker, these are just a few of the many proposed changes that we're speaking to here today with this bill

I'm going to leave the finer details of the proposed act to be elaborated on by my colleagues the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Before I turn the floor over to the associate minister, I want to speak to the committee hearings on the bill. Our government values expert, stakeholder and public input. That's why four separate public hearings were held to gather feedback on the bill. I want to thank the government House leader for his work in that regard, and the committee. We have acted on the suggestions, recommendations and questions that we heard through committee.

In particular, we've introduced amendments that will ensure municipalities can continue to promote green standards that will lead to more energy-efficient buildings.

We will always support common-sense measures that balance the need to build more homes with concern for

efficiency and the environment. That balance is precisely what our bill achieves, and it's what Ontarians expect.

Achieving the goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years is not easy. A housing crisis that's many decades in the making can't be fixed overnight. But the proposed More Homes Built Faster Act and its corresponding plan are part of a very strong foundation that our government is laying so that we can start construction as soon as possible.

We need to ensure that housing keeps up with growth. In partnership with municipalities, the private sector, non-profits and the federal government, we believe as a government that we can get this done.

Our government is following through on the commitment that we made to Ontarians, and we are counting on the support of others to help us with this important priority. We are going to get it done. We made that promise in June to the people of Ontario. We are going to deliver on it, and we are going to deliver on changes to our policies, as the housing supply issue evolves.

I'm now very pleased to pass the torch over to my great friend Associate Minister Michael Parsa to continue the conversation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for sharing his time with me today. I can tell you, Speaker, that I speak on behalf of my constituents of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, and I thank him for his leadership and his relentless pursuit to make sure that the housing crisis we are facing in this province is dealt with.

Thank you very much, Minister Clark, for all that you're doing.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, his advocacy for Bill 23 and his presentation—that was very clear that there is a desperate need for these measures in this proposed legislation.

It is my privilege to expand on some of the details of our government's proposed More Homes Built Faster Act.

Before I begin, I do want to reiterate the minister's point that our government has been seeking feedback on several points of our proposed legislation. We've been listening to stakeholders and consulting with the public.

As the minister also said—it's very important for me to repeat, Madam Speaker—this bill is based on recommendations from the industry and stakeholder experts of the Housing Affordability Task Force. The task force was created in December of last year and chaired by Jake Lawrence, the CEO and group head of global banking and markets at Scotiabank. In his role, he worked alongside a diverse range of experts in non-profit housing, Indigenous housing, real estate, home builders, financial markets, and economics. They all brought their extensive knowledge and expertise together to provide recommendations that we are using as a road map to help solve the housing crisis. We used their recommendations as the basis for the proposed More Homes Built Faster Act.

This proposed legislation is a very important part of our long-term strategy to increase the housing supply in our province and to provide attainable housing options for hard-working Ontarians and their families.

Speaker, a major objective of this bill is to address the missing-middle housing in our communities by increasing gentle density. First, we plan to do this by building on a suite of as-of-right residential tools which Ontario has provided to municipalities since 2019.

We are also proposing changes to the Planning Act to create a new province-wide standard threshold for what's allowed to be built, and we intend to do this by strengthening the additional-residential-unit framework.

If passed, our proposed legislation would allow, as of right, up to three residential units on most land that is currently zoned for one home in residential areas. This would be allowed without the need for a municipal bylaw amendment. Depending on the property in question, these three units could all be within the existing residential structure, or, for example, they could take the form of a main home with an in-law or basement suite, or a laneway or garden home. Of course, these new units would need to be compliant with the building code and with the relevant municipal bylaws. I'm proud to say that these units would be exempt from development charges and parkland dedication fees.

We're also proposing changes to the Planning Act to ensure that complete and sustainable communities are built near and centred around transit hubs. This complements the historic investment our government has made in transit expansion in communities across the province. The changes we propose to the Planning Act would help move us forward towards as-of-right zoning, to meet minimum density targets for projects that are planned to be near major transit stations. If passed, this would reduce approval timelines and get shovels in the ground faster. Our goal is that once the key development policies for major transit stations are approved, municipalities would then have one year to update their zoning bylaws to meet those minimum density targets.

Speaker, our proposed More Homes Built Faster Act would, if passed, help to create the conditions for building more affordable and purpose-built rental housing right across the province. We're proud to be proposing regulatory changes that would give certainty around inclusionary zoning rules. To build more affordable housing, we've proposed a maximum 25-year affordability period, a 5% cap on the number of inclusionary zoning units, and a standardized approach to determining the price for rent of an affordable unit under an inclusionary zoning program.

We also propose to support the creation of very specific, very needed types of housing, such as attainable housing, affordable housing, rental housing and non-profit housing, all by reducing government fees. We know that government charges and fees significantly impact the cost of housing, including certain attainable housing units and non-profit housing developments. As such, we propose to

exempt these types of housing from municipal development fees, parkland dedication levies and community benefit charges.

We also propose to reduce development charges for building new rental units. And to help incentivize the development of family-sized rental units, we will ensure deeper development charge discounts would be provided.

My colleague the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be going into more detail about our proposed changes to these fees.

Speaker, our proposed More Homes Built Faster Act includes many changes to streamline the bureaucratic processes that can delay the construction of much-needed housing. In it, we propose changes to the Planning Act that would reduce the number of requirements for small projects and speed up the approval process for other housing projects. We also propose to change the role of upper-tier municipalities in the greater Golden Horseshoe, to further speed up the planning approval process.

0930

An exciting inclusion in our action plan is the creation of a new program to be delivered by Infrastructure Ontario with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Infrastructure to support the dream of home ownership for all Ontarians across the province. Our proposed new program would make good use of surplus or underutilized land and take advantage of commercial innovation and partnerships to rapidly build attainable homes in mixed-income communities.

Let's be clear: A home is the biggest purchase that an average person ever makes. It's the culmination of hard work, perseverance and, for many, it means they have truly achieved the Canadian dream.

Buying a home and arranging financing is stressful enough as it is without having to worry about falling victim to unethical practices from a builder or a vendor of a home when you're purchasing one. Our government, therefore, proposes to further strengthen the consumer protections that are in place for new home buyers. And we propose to double the maximum fines for builders and vendors of new homes who unfairly cancel projects or terminate purchase agreements. These proposed changes would be under the New Home Construction Licensing Act. If passed, they would increase the existing maximum financial penalties from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per infraction. And let's make clear that there would be no limit to additional monetary benefit penalties that could be imposed, as our proposed legislation would retroactively impose fines for contraventions that occurred on or after April 14, 2022. These changes, if passed, would also enable the Home Construction Regulatory Authority to use funds from these penalties to provide money back to affected consumers. This would make Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide these types of funds to consumers. If our proposed legislation is passed, the amendments to the New Home Construction Licensing Act would come into force in early 2023.

This past January, our government hosted the Ontario-municipal housing summit. At that summit, Ontario's

mayors expressed concerns that lands planned for residential development in their communities are sitting empty. They said no development is occurring because homebuilders are taking too long to complete their planning applications. So we looked into it and consulted on the issue of land speculation. We wanted to determine just how detrimental this is to the housing supply goals of our government. We will continue to gather input in the coming months to assess the impact on housing supply, and we won't be shy about taking action to continue to speed up the planning approvals process.

Another piece of legislation that our proposed bill would amend, if passed, is the Ontario Heritage Act. These changes would increase the threshold for heritage designation and update guidelines for the conservation of provincial heritage properties. Make no mistake, Speaker, these changes would continue to support the conservation of heritage resources that are important to Ontarians, but they will provide the clarity and flexibility needed to ensure that critical housing and other priority projects can move forward in a timely manner. On top of this, until the end of December, our government will continue consulting on how it manages Ontario's natural heritage so we can improve the way we manage the province's wetlands while supporting sustainable growth and development.

Speaker, we're also consulting with stakeholders and the public on how to integrate A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the provincial policy statement. Our goal is a single, province-wide planning policy document. This consultation is seeking input on how to address the overlapping planning policies that are currently in place right across our province. And we'll continue to work towards developing a more streamlined provincial policy document that is easier to implement and that gives municipalities more flexibility so that they can address their housing needs faster.

Speaker, it's all hands on deck to get housing built, and it will require the partnership of all levels of government. As a result, we're calling on the federal government to come to the table and work with us on potential GST/HST incentives for housing. This could take the form of rebates, exemptions or deferrals of GST and HST to support new home ownership right across the province and new rental housing developments. As I and Minister Clark have stated on many, many occasions, no one level of government can solve today's housing crisis alone. Indeed, all levels of government—federal, provincial, municipal—need to work together if we are to get more homes built and to address the housing crisis of our province.

Speaking of taxes, let me talk for a moment about property tax assessments, which are currently established using the same methodology as regular market rental properties. We intend to explore possible refinements to the methodology that is used to assess affordable rental housing to better reflect the reduced rents collected by these housing providers. In addition, we would consult with our municipal partners on potential approaches to reducing the current property tax burden on multi-residential apartment buildings in the province.

Similarly, while we're on the topic of taxes: This winter, if our proposed legislation is passed, we intend to consult on a policy framework that would set out the key elements of a municipal vacant home tax. As it is right now, only a handful of municipalities in Ontario have the authority to charge a vacant home tax on unoccupied residential units. We want to establish a provincial-municipal working group that would consult on a framework that could be used by interested municipalities across Ontario. This group could also be a vehicle for the province and municipalities to share information and best practices on dealing with vacant homes.

Speaker, I'm also pleased to confirm that, effective October 25, 2022, Ontario has the highest and most comprehensive Non-Resident Speculation Tax in Canada. At 25% and province-wide, this initiative is meant to further discourage foreign speculation in Ontario's housing market.

I'm very proud of the work our government has done to get more homes built in Ontario. We understand that owning a home is the pillar of the Canadian dream—a sign of hard work, accomplishment and pride. Just as my family had the opportunity when they first came to Canada, we will not stop until the dream of home ownership is back within reach for all Ontarians. As I said before, and as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has stated—and the parliamentary assistants and all our colleagues—everyone deserves a place to call home.

The More Homes Built Faster Act is another step forward in our work to solve the housing crisis. And it won't be our last step. We will introduce a new housing supply action plan in each year of our mandate. We will use these plans to continue to implement the Housing Affordability Task Force's recommendations. This will help our government deliver real and long-term solutions for the people of Ontario.

We made a promise to the people of this province that we will build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. And I just want to make sure that it is crystal clear—make no mistake—that we are going to keep that promise.

I want to thank you very much for the opportunity, Madam Speaker.

I would now like to give the floor to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Kevin Holland, to take it from here.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I want to thank both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Associate Minister of Housing for sharing their time with me today, as well as to thank them for their commitment and dedication to addressing the housing supply crisis in Ontario.

I am proud to be part of a government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, that takes the necessary action to ensure the growth of Ontario, and, in the case of this bill, make housing easier and within reach for all Ontarians.

That's why it's my pleasure to rise for the third reading of our government's proposed More Homes Built Faster Act.

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We can all agree that Ontario is the best place in the world to call home, yet finding the right home is all too challenging. We are dedicated to working with all levels of government to get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years. Today I'm honoured to speak to some of the details of how we plan to reach that goal. The proposed changes we are speaking to today advance our new, bold housing supply action plan. It includes numerous initiatives that would help to build more homes in Ontario.

The More Homes Built Faster Act expands on our track record of addressing the housing supply crisis. This is a cross-government initiative, and we're counting on our partnerships with municipalities, the federal government and those in the housing industry to help us to achieve our goals.

An important element of our newest plan is our commitment to reducing delays and reducing the costs associated with building new housing of all kinds. Delays are contributing to the housing supply shortage, and delays in building housing drive up costs.

A recently released study by the Building Industry and Land Development Association, or BILD, reports that each month a permit is stuck in approvals, costs can increase significantly. They found that over the past two years, development application timelines in the greater Toronto area have gotten 40% longer. They found that, in a typical high-density project, each month of delays amounts to \$2,600 to \$3,300 in additional construction costs per residential unit. And those costs inevitably trickle down to consumers.

If we can both reduce delays and get the cost of building homes down, we can lower the price for the average homebuyer.

There are a variety of ways that these delays can occur. Opposition from some members of local municipal councils can create delays. It's an important step in the process to consider all angles and vocalize opposition, as we know. But sadly, even appropriate zoning and development approvals can be hindered because of these disagreements; at times, projects can be abandoned altogether. Even if a project finally gets the go-ahead, significant delays have already occurred.

Other barriers include complex land use policies inhibiting land access in urban areas, coupled with lengthy planning approvals for new housing, on top of high development charges.

The same study by BILD that I mentioned earlier found that approval timelines for major municipalities in the GTA are among the worst in the country. The collective requirements for approvals can add, on average, from 27% to 51% more time on a new build. We need to do better, and this proposed legislation will help us do better.

We must significantly increase the speed at which new homes and units are built so that we can meet existing and future demands. This will also help to lower housing costs for Ontarians, because these barriers and delays, and the resulting high costs, are burdens that builders, renters and homeowners bear.

So we're proposing to look at ways to improve and streamline how and when things like development charges are required for new builds. Our proposed changes would extend the deadline for replacing a development charge bylaw from every five years to every 10 years, and in doing so would reduce the administrative burden on municipalities. We would also phase in development charges over five years, which would make the increases more manageable for home builders by spreading it out.

On average, 25% of the cost of a new single-family home in the GTA is composed of government fees, taxes and charges. This can add as much as \$250,000 to the cost. Municipal charges can account for more than half of that.

In five of our province's most populous municipalities, BILD has found that development charge rates for a two-bedroom apartment unit exceed \$70,000—that's \$70,000 for one unit. As I've mentioned, this cost can trickle down to the buyer or renter.

Development charges are just one of the three main charges that municipalities levy when new residential buildings are developed. The other charges are parkland dedication fees, which can be either money or land and are used to create parks, and the second is community benefit charges, which help build infrastructure for services that are needed for higher-density residential developments. If passed, our proposed changes would help spur much-needed residential development by revising the way these charges are levied for a range of housing types.

We know that over the last two years municipal fees and charges have increased as much as 36%. We're proposing that specific housing options—namely, affordable housing units and inclusionary zoning units—will not be required to pay development charges, parkland dedication fees and community benefit charges. We are also proposing to relieve certain attainable housing projects and non-profit housing developments from all three charges.

Rental construction would have discounted development charges, with deeper discounts for family-sized units. This will help get shovels in the ground for much-needed rental units.

Changes like this would also make it easier for builders to predict the cost of construction.

With our new legislation, we're proposing ways to freeze these development-related fees. I'll give you another example of just how we plan to do this. We are proposing changes to freeze parkland dedication bylaw rates earlier in the development process, at the time of the site plan or zoning application, instead of at the time the building permit is issued, which is later in the development process. For higher-density developments, we're proposing to reduce maximum parkland dedication requirements. For sites that are larger than five hectares, the parkland rate would be no more than 15% of the land or its value. The maximum parkland rate for sites that are five hectares or less would be no more than 10%. This aims to reduce the amount of money it takes to build new condos and apartment buildings and would help make new housing options available to everyone.

Speaker, there is one more type of charge I'd like to address—and that's our proposed changes to community benefit charges. I mentioned that affordable housing units would not be subject to community benefit charges. We are also adjusting the way maximum community benefit charges are determined, to encourage infill development. We believe that this change would also make it easier to build new housing.

Municipal fees and charges should be collected to build infrastructure, not earn interest. In 2021, the municipal sector self-reported development charge reserve balances province-wide of over \$8 billion. With this legislation, we would require that municipalities use or allocate at least 60% of their development charge reserves for services like water, waste water and roads each year. We have put the same requirement in place for parkland dedication reserves as well.

Of course, we know that these fees are big revenue tools for municipalities. That is why we would supplement any shortfall municipalities may see through Ontario's \$1.6-billion portion of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, because we understand that growing communities need housing today but they also need supporting infrastructure.

With this in mind, our plan would also help to create more consistency around land use planning and would help to decrease the number of disputes that often arise in municipal council meetings due to a lack of clarity. We're proposing to reduce the number of approvals in the pipeline. We would do this by removing site plan control requirements for residential projects with fewer than 10 units.

Let me elaborate. Site plan control is a municipal planning tool used to evaluate things like landscaping or exterior design, as well as walkways and parking areas in new developments. It's a tool that works in tandem with the provincial policy statement, official plan, zoning bylaws, community planning permit systems and building permits. By streamlining site plan reviews we can focus on health and safety issues, such as safe access to and from the site, rather than on unnecessary regulation of architectural or aesthetic landscaping design details.

I'd like to underline that we would still ensure that essential building permits, as well as building code and fire code requirements, continue to protect public safety.

Our plan requires bold changes, and it requires well-considered and sound policies. Our housing stock has already fallen behind, and it's currently not on track to keep pace with population growth.

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A recent study by Re/Max Canada found that our housing inventory is depleted, in part, thanks to our rapidly growing population.

As mentioned by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing earlier, Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, with approximately 1.5 million of those new residents in the greater Golden Horseshoe region.

In addition to working with our partner ministries, increasing housing supply across the province needs

everyone together on the same side—all levels of government, working alongside industry and non-profits.

When we say we need the support of all of our partners, that includes the federal government as well. CMHC's own data shows that Ontario is due \$480 million in additional funding under the National Housing Strategy. We are counting on Ottawa to come to the table and to fix this shortfall. In the meantime, we're taking bold action now to keep up with the demand.

As the Associate Minister of Housing mentioned, we are seeking input on how to integrate A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the provincial policy statement to create a new outcome-based, province-wide policy document for our municipalities.

Overall, there are six main themes that are shaping our proposed policy review through a housing supply lens. Number one is reviewing policies related to growth management and ensuring enough housing is built in the right places, including through increasing density in strategic areas. This review will also look at specific policies for large and fast-growing municipalities to leverage our government's investment in infrastructure.

Second is developing a strong mix of housing in areas where urban growth is occurring, building up our attainable building supply.

Third is reviewing policies that relate to rural housing, boundary expansions, and considering changes that would allow for the faster conversion of appropriate employment areas into areas suitable for housing. This will be done through the review of land use planning policies.

Fourth is maintaining our province's natural heritage, protecting environmental and natural resources and looking at agricultural policies.

Number five includes integrating schools into our urban communities as well as looking at the capacity and the current supply of our community infrastructure.

Last is ensuring our policies have a positive impact, are focused and are flexible enough to keep up with quickly changing demands as we grow as a province.

We know we must be nimble in our approach and create a stable foundation that will allow for growth as it happens. These proposed approaches to breaking down barriers, streamlining processes and cutting costs would further our goal of making housing more attainable for all Ontarians.

As I wrap up, let me take the chance to put this debate into perspective. Our province has a serious housing supply shortage. It is making life unaffordable and unsustainable for too many Ontarians. This is not disputed. It's often spoken about as a big-city problem, and, indeed, it is a serious crisis here in the greater Toronto area and other major urbanized parts of the province. But the housing supply crisis is also an issue in rural and northern parts of the province. In my community of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, for instance, the demand for attainable and safe housing is serious and growing and needs to be addressed now.

I'm proud that our government is keeping its word to Ontarians and putting the housing supply crisis front and centre. I am proud that we have had the opportunity in recent weeks to introduce several pieces of legislation that will directly address that crisis, and I'm particularly proud of the bill that we are debating today. It is a sweeping, transformative and bold set of proposals that are evidence-based and that will have a direct impact on the housing supply crisis. We are leading innovations that would help to create more housing in Ontario and make it easier for our municipal partners to keep up with ever-growing and changing demands.

Supply and demand are key to reducing costs for housing for all Ontarians. Our proposed changes would help renters cross over and become homeowners by helping to increase the number of homes available to all people.

Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I was in committee, and we had hundreds of written submissions, and many people speaking at the hearings in Markham and Brampton and the two in Toronto, and many people who weren't able to. The overwhelming theme—there were many, but an overwhelming theme that I heard was the concern that this government is opening up the greenbelt and doubling down on sprawl when there are alternatives.

What is especially concerning is that the government is choosing to open up the greenbelt in areas where there are nine developers who own land there, who gave over \$520,000 to the PC Party since 2014. It really smells fishy; an investigation is needed. What is so frustrating is that the Housing Affordability Task Force that this government began made it clear that access to land is not stopping us from achieving our 1.5-million-homes target goal, which is something that we support, that all parties support.

Why are you giving this greenbelt land away to developers who are big PC Party donors, Minister Clark?

Hon. Steve Clark: The member opposite knows that there's nothing in Bill 23, which we're debating today, that deals with that issue.

There are a number of issues, a number of proposals that I highlighted in my speech today that the government is working on, and one of them is consultation. We've been encouraging Ontarians to weigh in on our proposals.

At the end of the day, the member acknowledges that 1.5 million homes that we need to build in the next 10 years. She said it, right here on the record. She has said it before. She said it in committee.

Everybody can do the math. Last year was the best year we've had in 30 years—100,000 starts. With 100,000 over the next 10 years, we're going to be far short—500,000 homes short. If you then look at the amount of new Canadians who are going to be moving into our province, we're going to be even further behind.

So the status quo isn't working. We need to have bills like Bill 23 move forward so that we can get shovels in the ground faster and we can accelerate the amount of new housing construction. We can't wait another minute.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair.

Thank you to the minister, the associate minister and the parliamentary assistant for the great things—I don't think they feel like they're working; it's their passion, commitment and devotion not only for this bill, but bringing more housing.

I think this bill will revolutionize—from day one, in 2019, until now, these three bills will actually revolutionize the process. We've heard about a lot of radical talk—here, actually, we are radicalizing the process. I think that this is going to be a paradigm shift, when it comes to the housing supply action plan in Ontario, after 15 years of stagnation from the other side.

There are a lot of DC exemptions. I learned today—I came and asked you this morning. It is so exciting for the residents, for the average resident who is going to benefit. Could you elaborate on that, please?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member from Markham–Thornhill for his advocacy. Like myself, he served for many years at the municipal level, and I know his experiences in York region are the same as in all corners of the province.

We need to have more housing built. We need it to get into the ground faster. The costs of delay in the greater Golden Horseshoe put an additional up to \$116,900 on the price of a home.

The development charge exemption—the discussion to either freeze, reduce or exempt the type of housing was a conversation the Premier and I had with big-city mayors and regional chairs in January. We said, “There's a lot of housing that you need—affordable housing, transitional housing, supportive housing, attainable housing—and you need to incent that type of construction.” Our regime does exactly that with those discounts, with those exemptions and with those reductions.

Great question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: My understanding is that your government never consulted with AMO on the bill.

Mr. Rice, a developer, bought land on the greenbelt in the middle of September for \$80 million that is now probably going to be worth a billion dollars. I don't know who gave them a heads-up on this particular bill.

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What I want to ask you is, how will this bill help the Niagara region, where I'm from, take on the financial hardship it will likely face from Bill 23 and the reduction in development fees? The region is responsible for policing, corrections officers—we have a jail in our area—ambulance services, where we have backloads at our hospital, our long-term care—and we know about the

5,000 people who died in long-term care—retirement, water and waste water. How are they going to provide those types of incredible services with less development fees?

Hon. Steve Clark: I guess it goes back—Speaker, through you to the member—to whether you support keeping the status quo.

If you're like the member opposite, you might very well think that housing prices are fine in Niagara region. I suggest that there are many, many people who live in Niagara who feel that housing costs are too high—finding out that there's not enough supply, there's not enough opportunity to have a house that meets their needs and their budget.

If you agree with that last premise, which I happen to agree with, you need to lower those baseline costs. You need to deal with those fees and charges.

The status quo is not working. I just talked about our best year in 30 years. It's still not enough to meet the growing demand of Ontario. We're going to have two million people who are going to come to our province by 2031. We need to act today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm sure the member from Brantford–Brant will get an opportunity to ask a question to the minister here shortly, but I wanted to pick up where the minister left off, talking about development charges.

One of the things we've heard, that we've seen in the news is, “Oh, my gosh, the sky is falling. Municipalities aren't going to have the revenue they used to have if they're out there building affordable housing and/or purpose-built rentals.” I've had some conversations with municipalities, and I'd like to remind them that they're sitting on about \$8 billion of reserves when it comes to development charges—I know in my region of Waterloo alone, if you take all the municipalities, it's hundreds of millions.

So I'm wondering if the minister could touch on what some of the discounts look like for building affordable housing and how municipalities are going to be able to leverage some of the reserves they already have.

Hon. Steve Clark: The member from Kitchener–Conestoga really has hit the nail on the head. Based on our financial information returns that municipalities send to us, he's right; there's about \$8 billion in DC reserves across the province. Many municipalities have significant dollars that they've put aside on growth-related pressures.

Again, you have to look at whether you're going to favour the status quo or whether you're going to put a system in place that incents the type of building you need.

If the member opposite's municipality needs purpose-built rental, family-sized rental, there's an opportunity to discount development charges to incent that type of development.

Municipalities were pretty clear—it wasn't just things that they needed to do; it was things that the province needed to put in place. We needed to make sure they had the tools to get shovels in the ground faster.

This development charge piece is geared exactly for the question that the member has asked.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Guy Bourguin: The province is a signatory to Treaty 9, as the minister and associate minister know. I represent seven First Nations on the James Bay coast—six to be exact; the one in Constance Lake is the seventh. There's such a shortage in housing on the James Bay coast. There are families who live in small homes—three, four generations who live in a small home. There are stacks of mattresses in the living room.

I've heard how many homes were built. How many homes did the province help, being signatory to Treaty 9, so we have a—how many homes were built on the James Bay coast to help these communities that are in dire situations in family homes?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Sorry, Minister; we're out of time.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: A point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Point of order.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Speaker. Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening sitting is cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm proud to be here speaking to Bill 23. Bill 23—I have it right here—is An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022. It is a massive bill. You must have spent months writing it. It is a sweeping bill. It affects the City of Toronto Act, the Conservation Authorities Act, the Development Charges Act, the Municipal Act, the New Home Construction Licensing Act, the Ontario Heritage Act, the Ontario Land Tribunal Act and the Planning Act, and then it has a new act, the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act. It is huge.

My overall assessment of this bill is that it is a pro-sprawl bill that threatens affordability, public services, democracy and farmland.

When I read this bill—and I've gone through committee now; I've read the written submissions that people submitted. The overall impression I get from the experts who spoke is that this bill will not solve our housing affordability crisis. There is nothing in Bill 23 that will lower the price of buying a home. There is nothing in Bill 23 that will lower the cost of finding a place to rent. In fact, it will make renting more expensive. There is no evidence in this bill that it will be easier for people to find a home and pay off their own mortgage instead of paying off an investor's mortgage. None of that is in there.

It is also clear that this government does not need to harm democracy, pave over farmland, cut public services, put municipalities in a very difficult financial situation and make life worse for renters in order to meet our housing supply targets. There are other avenues and other ways to go.

I want to talk a little bit about what I learned in committee. I'm going to provide some overall comments, and then I'm going to get into some of the specifics, some written statements, and some presentations that experts gave.

The overall impression I got from the huge amount of information that we received is that—I was struck by the enormity of this bill and its consequences, as well as the consequences that we don't know yet. We had municipalities, including AMO, the big city mayors, the city of Toronto and the Town of the Blue Mountains, who came and spoke—those who were allowed; AMO wasn't—who were absolutely alarmed at the impact of cutting developer fees. Ambulance services, roads, transit and daycare subsidies are all impacted.

Regional municipalities, upper-tier municipalities were alarmed that they are losing their power to decide where new homes and new workplaces go, and the densities at which they are built. Regional municipalities are alarmed that this government is cutting down all the planning responsibility that is needed to make sure that we don't build absolutely unsustainable and expensive suburban sprawl, and we build right, which is to build in the huge amount of land in the GTHA and beyond that is already zoned for development. It's already ready to go. They were very alarmed about that.

We had renters and housing advocates, including ACORN; the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights; Leilani Farha, a former UN special rapporteur; ACTO, who were alarmed at Bill 23's threat to housing affordability. They spoke about this bill's impact on inclusionary zoning laws in the city of Toronto, which would require developers to build their fair share of affordable housing units. And they were alarmed at this bill's impact on renters who live in purpose-built rentals, very concerned that the likelihood of them being evicted because their building is going to be turned into a luxury condo—they will be evicted, and they will have to pay higher rent. It's devastating.

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We had environmentalists and conservation authorities—from Conservation Ontario, which represents all the conservation authorities across Ontario, to Environmental Defence, to CELA—and they were also alarmed at how Bill 23 bans conservation authorities from doing their job and working with municipalities to protect our natural environment, and to ensure our natural environment protects us from extreme weather events, from flooding. They were astonished.

Then we had the Toronto Atmospheric Fund come in and wave the red flag and say, "Hey, government, do you know that you're gutting our ability to implement green building standards in the city of Toronto, which is a growing and thriving building sector? Hold on a minute here." They actually couldn't believe that you are sabotaging a municipal industry, an environmental movement, to green our building stock—the leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. Bill 23 eviscerates it.

Citizens were also alarmed. Many citizen groups reached out, and they were absolutely alarmed that Bill 23 is curbing our democratic rights. This is a trend this government has had since 2018. I remember the shock I felt when I saw this government decide, in the middle of the city of Toronto's election—and London's and Kingston's, because they affected them too. They made the decision to slash the number of city councillors who represent us at the city of Toronto in half, in the middle of an election—unbelievable. And then we see, this year, there are more efforts to curtail the right of citizens to have a say over their planning processes. There are many people in Toronto and across Ontario who subscribe to the “yes in my backyard” mentality; poll after poll after poll shows that. They want more housing in their backyard. This is really not about that. They were dismayed about that as well.

What I was also struck by, in the committee process, was the genuine reluctance from the government to hear people express concerns that were different from their own—which is the whole point of being in government. The government is meant to be a leader, to listen, to consult and to make decisions that benefit Ontarians—not just to talk to your donors and do their bidding.

We had an overwhelming number of people subscribe, in the very short window you gave people to subscribe—because the government always does that. You get about three days to sign up. We had so many people apply to speak.

I introduced motions and the Liberals introduced motions saying, “Hold on, government. Why are we ramming this through so quickly? Let's travel this bill. Let's take it around Ontario to fix the entirety of Ontario. Let's make sure we come up with a bill that addresses our housing crisis and our housing affordability crisis. Let's make it work, because there are some good things in this bill.” No, you weren't interested in that. “No thanks. Not interested in hearing.” It's a shame.

On one of the days of hearings, John Sewell, a former mayor of Toronto—I believe he was a mayor of the city of Toronto for 12 years, at a time when the number of homes being built were at record heights, very high. So this argument that Toronto is anti-development is—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Sorry to the member from University–Rosedale.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): It's now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY

Mrs. Robin Martin: Over two millennia ago, the Greek philosopher Socrates was quoted as saying, “The really wise man is the man who realizes how little he knows” and “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Even though he said these things millennia ago, this is wisdom that can guide all of us.

November 17 was World Philosophy Day. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, created an international day in 2005 to highlight the importance of philosophy, stating that “philosophy is a discipline that encourages critical and independent thought and is capable of working towards a better understanding of the world and promoting tolerance and peace.” The day is celebrated on the third Thursday of every November and provides a unique occasion to mark the enduring value of philosophy and human thought, our institutions and our own lives.

Within Ontario, world-class post-secondary institutions continue to advance our understanding of logic, epistemology, culture, the human condition, ethics and reality. And the spirit of philosophy is alive and well all across the province.

We're better equipped to make decisions that affect our lives and help others when we think critically and meaningfully about what we seek to do.

Another quote: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” This quote is commonly attributed to Aristotle but actually is from the American writer Will Durant. And what did they both have in common? Both were philosophers.

I hope everyone takes this opportunity to mark World Philosophy Day by cracking open a new book about challenges and thinking.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Amir didn't want to die, yet he had no choice but to begin the process of getting approved for medically assisted suicide because he's living in poverty on ODSP and was about to lose the rooming house he lived in. He is a disabled man, living with excruciating, untreatable back pain, but the stress of becoming homeless was too much to bear.

Tracy found herself in a similar situation, with disability support being too low to survive on. Once an able-bodied chef, she faced the debilitating impact of long COVID that made it impossible for her to continue to work. Seeking MAID was an exclusive financial consideration for her.

There are many others like Amir and Tracy. A disability may be present at birth, could be caused by an accident, or developed over time—the point is, it could be anyone. And if you find yourself in that situation, the system you face is one where you are provided so little. The rates are so low that it becomes impossible to survive. You're constantly worried about where your next meal will come from, how much longer you can keep a roof over your head. You become so desperate that you begin to consider medically assisted suicide. That's how it is right now.

What does this say about ODSP, when death is the preferred choice?

We have to fix this. The NDP keeps proposing solutions, but you keep voting them down. Please, I ask you:

Work with us so people don't have to die and instead can live with dignity.

BURLINGTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I rise this morning to recognize the amazing Burlington Symphony Orchestra. On November 12, I was honoured to attend the 50th anniversary of the Burlington Symphony Orchestra at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The performance was an incredible replica of the orchestra's inaugural concert that took place on November 29, 1973. The orchestra performed Beethoven's Overture to Prometheus—the first piece ever performed by the BSO—and included a stunning violin concerto beautifully executed by Ian Ye, along with Bruckner's Symphony No. 4.

The Burlington Symphony Orchestra is a community-based volunteer orchestra that gives musicians a place to share their passion for orchestral music and strengthens community engagement through outreach programs such as the youth artist competition.

The Burlington orchestra started off as the McMaster Symphony Orchestra, a campus community orchestra.

The orchestra maintains its original objectives from 1973, which are: to perform symphonic music of high quality; to stimulate excellence in instrumental performance; and to support, improve and expand musical opportunities for the Hamilton and Burlington regions.

The Burlington Symphony Orchestra fills an important cultural role within our city, and I am happy to have been able to experience the talent of the incredible youth our community produces.

Congratulations to the Burlington Symphony Orchestra on 50 years.

1020

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I want to welcome the OPSEU/SEFPO members joining us today at Queen's Park for their mental health and addictions lobby day.

There is a mental health and addiction epidemic across Ontario. OPSEU/SEFPO members and Ontarians in general are concerned about the lack of access to mental health and addiction services. Many Ontarians can't access mental health or addictions care until they reach a crisis point. All roads continue to lead to the emergency room or death.

While emergency rooms consistently face crisis levels and aren't equipped to provide appropriate mental health or addictions care, people have no option but to go to the ER when they need urgent mental health care. Many people are discharged without access to care because it either doesn't exist or it isn't covered by OHIP.

Hospitals are facing understaffing, unprecedented high volumes and wait times, and some have had to close their ERs temporarily.

The Conservative government chips away at our mental health system, purposely weakening it to push their privatization agenda.

Many Ontarians can't afford to pay for therapy. Waitlists for publicly funded mental health or addiction care are months to years long, and services are limited. Community service agencies are worn thin due to persistent underfunding.

Mental health care is health care. Ontarians need and deserve access to publicly funded psychotherapy and counselling. People with substance-misuse struggles should be able to access treatment as soon as they ask for support.

The government must make major investments into the publicly funded, publicly delivered health care Ontarians need. It's time to fix the broken mental health and addictions system to have true universal health care in Ontario, because lives depend on it.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: At a time when inflation has reached the highest levels in four decades, we know families are feeling the pressure from rising prices on everything from gas to groceries.

During these challenging economic times, it is the government's responsibility to continue to bring forth legislation that will support the people of Ontario by putting more money back into their pockets.

Speaker, that is why the government of Ontario is set to extend the provincial gas tax cut for another year.

The provincial gas tax was reduced by 5.7 cents per litre in the summer and was set to expire on December 31. Extending the gas tax cut for another year provides businesses and drivers with some relief. The gas tax cut reduces the cost of fuel by 5.3 cents per litre, which means the average household will save an estimated total of \$195 between July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023.

In times like these, we continue to do everything in our power to support the hard-working people and families of Ontario. This is yet another example of the provincial government's ongoing commitment to keeping costs down for families and businesses, such as permanently removing tolls on Highways 412 and 418 and eliminating the licence plate sticker renewal fees.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MPP Jill Andrew: Conservative Bills 23 and 39 have nothing to do with creating more deep, real affordable housing. They will strip our democracy, silence conservation authorities as well as progressive city councillors, and they attack natural resources, effectively ripping up the greenbelt during a climate crisis.

The greenbelt is more than a piece of land; it is an ecosystem of wetlands, wildlife habitats and essential biodiversity that are vital in our fight against climate change. Tearing up this ecosystem only paves us further

down the path to climate catastrophe. This cannot be undone.

Our children will be hit the hardest. In fact, it is already weighing on their mental health. I have met with education workers and teachers with OSSTF District 12 in my riding who told me how their students are riddled with climate anxiety. I've heard it straight from the mouths of our kids in St. Paul's. They are worried about their futures, about water injustice, flooding, noise pollution, air quality. They're presenting with more allergies, respiratory infections and chemical sensitivities.

I urge this Conservative government to take real action on climate change. Keep your hands off the greenbelt. That's a start. No amount of profit is worth costing a child their future.

GOUVERNEMENT MUNICIPAL

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: J'aimerais profiter de l'occasion pour souhaiter bonne chance à tous les élus municipaux de ma circonscription. Certains d'entre eux ont été assermentés la semaine dernière. Ce soir aura lieu une soirée d'inauguration des maires qui formeront le nouveau conseil des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell.

Les élections maintenant derrière eux, c'est à ce moment-ci que le travail commence. Le rôle d' élu municipal en est un très important. Je dis toujours que c'est la voix des citoyens et je dis aussi que nous sommes embauchés par quelques milliers de personnes et nous sommes redevables à ces électeurs.

Donc, pour les nouveaux élus, vous allez vite réaliser que c'est très difficile de plaire à tout le monde. Si à chaque fin de journée, vous vous dites que vous avez fait de votre mieux, ça sera mission accomplie. Donc, je vous félicite pour votre implication envers vos communautés. Je suis confiant que vous saurez bien représenter vos contribuables et je suis à votre disposition en tant que votre représentant du gouvernement provincial.

PETERBOROUGH LAKERS LACROSSE TEAM

Mr. Dave Smith: Way back in the fall of 2019, the Ontario Legislature hosted a special day for my Peterborough Lakers senior lacrosse team as a tribute for their third straight Canadian national lacrosse championship.

All of Peterborough was anxiously waiting for the 2020 season to begin. The Lakers were once again the odds-on favourite to repeat as the MSL champions and represent the east at the Mann Cup.

Of course, all of us know what happened in 2020 when the season was cancelled.

Then, in 2021, with COVID rearing its ugly head once again, the season was cancelled.

But this past summer, we were able to have a lacrosse season here in Ontario and out west. After a two-year hiatus because of COVID, Peterborough was in a position for an unprecedented four-peat. All that stood in the way of my Lakers was the Langley Thunder. It was a hard-

fought seven-game series at the Peterborough Memorial Centre, with my Lakers once again capturing a fourth consecutive Mann Cup, an unprecedented second four-peat. No other city in Canada has ever won the Mann Cup four times in a row, and we have done it twice, ensuring that the Peterborough Century 21 Lakers are the centre of the lacrosse universe.

I'd like to give a special shout-out to Megan Dykeman, the MLA from Langley, BC, for being a good sport and wearing one of our Lakers jerseys in the BC Legislature after losing the bet with me.

I look forward to hosting another Lakers day here at Queen's Park, where all of you will be welcome to come get your picture taken with the Mann Cup and meet some of the players on the world's greatest lacrosse team.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is an honour to rise on behalf of my constituents of Scarborough–Guildwood. It is with concern that I rise today to acknowledge an issue which has been deepening all across the province. For months now, alarming stories and scenes from hospitals and emergency rooms have caused Ontarians to turn their attention to our health care system. Even just last week, we had mothers with babies on the grounds of Queen's Park. With increasing urgency, questions are being asked about how it is being funded and staffed.

With winter setting in and hospitals facing a perfect storm of COVID-19, flu and other respiratory illnesses, stories like that of Jasmine—a mother whose four-year-old child with Down syndrome spent close to 40 hours waiting in an ER for a bed, waiting in the hallway, where she lay on two chairs pushed together to form a makeshift bed—show how our health care system is worsening.

In my own community of Scarborough–Guildwood, residents have reported packed hallways, difficulties being seen by a doctor, and a number of cases being turned away at triage, with a few urgent cases being transferred.

This is unacceptable. Responsibility for what is happening lies squarely with the Premier and his government.

Whether it is Jasmine's family or my residents in Scarborough–Guildwood, these vulnerable Ontarians need the help and support of their government. What their stories tell us is that the government has a duty to do what it should have done at the start of the pandemic: increase supports to meet these unprecedented needs; fast-track provincial supports for hospitals and health networks, like a new hospital for Scarborough–Guildwood; and repeal Bill 124 to address the urgent staffing shortages.

The people of Ontario must not be made to wait any longer, especially if they are four years old and having pneumonia and are sitting in a hallway for 40 hours.

1030

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize the incredible work of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

Like many other cities in Ontario, the Richmond Hill seniors' population is growing rapidly. Many seniors are struggling with dementia and other forms of this life-changing illness.

I can still recall the dilemma Florence faced when her grandfather disappeared on her. He cannot speak much English, and he is totally lost when he's on the street alone. Florence's family is very grateful for the Finding Your Way program. It is supported by the Ontario government and delivered all across Ontario by the Alzheimer Society. This program is very important because it recognizes that it takes all of us working together to help keep our seniors safe.

I want to end by sharing an amazing statistic with you. More than one million people have benefited from the Finding Your Way program through the tools and seminars it offers. That's a truly marvellous thing.

With so many people coming together to help care for and nurture our seniors, we are helping to make a difference for the people in Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to introduce realtors from Waterloo: Bill Duce, Nicole Pohl, Christal Moura, Val Brooks, Tania Benninger and Ellie Davila. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to welcome Sasha and Jamie Larocque and the entire team representing Cystic Fibrosis Canada to the Legislature this morning.

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Yes, please give them a round of applause.

Speaker, I'd also like to welcome a few members from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Allison Chase is Canada's regional director for Ontario and is also a member of the Ramers Wood Co-op, which is located in my riding. We also have manager Simone Swail, director Patricia Tessier, and Tina Stevens here with us this morning.

Colleagues, they're hosting a reception this evening in rooms 228 and 230, so I encourage all of you to stop by if you can.

I'd like to thank each and every one of them for the incredible work that they do behind the scenes for all Ontarians across the province.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank Cystic Fibrosis Canada for a wonderful breakfast this morning—particularly Mr. Ron Anderson, who provided me with a very detailed conversation, and also from the great riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, in beautiful downtown Manitowaning, Chantal Filion. I look forward to our discussions this afternoon.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce some individuals from the Financial Advisors Association of Canada: Linda Gratton from my riding, Karen Low, and Grace Lindsay.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the London St. Thomas Association of Realtors—Chad Lovell, Randy Pawlowski, Jack Lane.

I'd also like to send a special hello to my friend Tina Stevens from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'd like to introduce, from the great riding of Carleton, Rob Stewart of Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to give a warm welcome to the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, to Cystic Fibrosis Canada, and to OPSEU/SEFPO. Thank you for your advocacy.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, I'd like to introduce Cystic Fibrosis Canada to the Legislature today.

Cystic fibrosis is a progressive, degenerative, multi-system disease that affects mainly the lungs and digestive system, and it's the most common fatal genetic disease, affecting 4,332 Canadian children and young adults.

Thank you for your work and your advocacy, Sasha, Jamie—and to all of you here today on behalf of CF. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier Chantal Filion et Macrina Perron, qui sont ici avec Cystic Fibrosis. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'd like to welcome three proud Windsor-Essex realtors to the House today: Mark Lalovich, Elica Berry and Damon Winney.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to welcome OPSEU/SEFPO members. I notice that nobody on the government side—they claim to be for the unions, but nobody is introducing them, so I'll take an opportunity. I'd like to welcome Rizza Millares, Angel Martinez—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. We can't have political commentary during introductions.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'd like to welcome Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada, who are here to discuss financial literacy at Queen's Park today as part of Financial Literacy Month.

MPP Jill Andrew: I would like to welcome, from Cystic Fibrosis Canada, located in my riding, Kelly Grover, president and CEO; Kim Steele, the director of government and community relations; Macrina Perron, an amazing parent; and the many other team members, including Ron, who I spoke with today passionately about their needs and advocacy on cystic fibrosis.

I'd also like to welcome the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada—the one and only Gini Dickie, member of the Fred Dowling co-op; Olive Hersey, member of the Heath Street co-op; Jennifer Irving, member of the Lotus co-op; Simone Swail, manager, government relations, CHF Canada; and Nicole Waldron, member of the board of directors, CHF Canada.

I'd also like to welcome all of the wonderful members I will be meeting with later this afternoon from OPSEU/SEFPO.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome today representatives of the Ontario Real Estate Association from my

riding: Donna Mathewson, Rob Longo, Dave Burke and Steve Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce Liv Mendelsohn and Benjamin Bozиковic, University-Rosedale constituents. They are here to proudly watch Joel Bozиковic's first stint as page captain.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce a good friend of mine from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Mark Halabecki. Mark and I worked together extensively with the Rural Cupboard Food Bank.

I'm looking forward to meeting with you and other OPSEU members later on this afternoon. Welcome.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce Dawn Richardson, Caroline Chapman and Nicole Waldron from the Co-op Housing Federation of Canada. Thank you for coming today.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I'd like to welcome Kelly Grover and her team from Cystic Fibrosis Canada, who are here doing advocacy work on a very important cause.

I also want to recognize and welcome four of my constituents who are courageous advocates for CF: Jamie and Sasha Larocque, and Beth and Madi Vanstone.

Madi is living proof of the efficacy of Trikafta and how important that is and the work that we have to do to make that accessible.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Others have already acknowledged the presence of the Co-op Housing Federation of Canada. I want to acknowledge Simone Swail and Allison Chase, who I met with this morning, but also, especially, Alicia Mingua from the Primrose co-op in my community. Thank you for being here.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I want to welcome Scott Broad, who is here from the Lakelands Association of Realtors today and who is a fine member of the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka.

MPP Jamie West: I have a long list of members from OPSEU/SEFPO to introduce to the Legislature: Rizza Millares, Angel Martinez, Julie Chambo, Mary Bloomfield, Amy Linn, Ryan Najbor, Cindy Ladoucer, Lori Graham, Tischa Forster, Kimberley McBride, Dalia Campbell, Kurt Hehl, Justin Legros, Kathy Moreau, Mark Halabecki, Brandon Dumoulin, Ed Arvelin, Shane Wakeford, Dustin Bayley, Nils Andersson, Scott Sarginson, Jim Reilly, Bartek Czinari, and Jacqueline Francois. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Later today, Life Sciences Ontario will be here to meet with some of our members and host a reception in the dining room this evening. I hope everyone can join.

In my past capacity as a financial adviser, I'd like to welcome all the financial advisers here today.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to join with our friends here in thanking the people from Cystic Fibrosis Canada for that fantastic breakfast, for your amazing advocacy—and particularly to Ena Gaudet from Ottawa, thank you for all the great work you do with folks with CF in Ottawa. Thank you so much for being here.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to acknowledge my friend Macrina Perron from Cystic Fibrosis Canada and congratulate her on her philanthropy award from Nipissing University.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for introduction of guests.

WEARING OF TEAM MEMORABILIA

Hon. Stan Cho: While I have a few horses in the World Cup race, my number one steed is, of course, Team Canada.

I'd like to ask unanimous consent for all members in the House, if they so choose, to wear any Team Canada swag to support our team. Go, Canada, go.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation is seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear Team Canada swag today. Agreed? Agreed.

QUESTION PERIOD

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier.

CTV News reported yesterday that a four-year-old with Down syndrome spent 40 hours in the ER of Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital before she was finally transferred to a bed. The child's mother, Jasmine, was forced to create a makeshift bed out of chairs for her exhausted and sick daughter, who was suffering with a fever, vomiting and had low oxygen levels.

Our youngest children are sick and suffering because this government didn't do enough to prepare for this crisis.

I ask the Premier, how many more kids will have to wait long hours for care before this government takes action to relieve the burden on hospitals and ensure our kids get the care that they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is obviously deeply disturbing for all of us to hear stories about parents who have to wait with their children as they get admitted, as they are waiting for that bed to open up in the hospitals, but I also think it's important for us to understand and appreciate that these are not new issues and not new problems. We were left, frankly, with a health system that was in dire need of investments. Our government has made those investments, and we continue to make those investments.

We are the first government since the last previous Conservative government to open up two new medical schools in the province of Ontario.

We will continue to do what is right and what is needed.

But, yes, I do find it disturbing when we hear stories about how parents have to wait for that bed to become available and the child to ultimately be in a hospital room.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: We also heard yesterday that Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre announced the heartbreaking decision to cancel surgeries for sick children. In-patient bed occupancy is higher than any other time during the pandemic, despite the hospital's efforts to expand capacity and to move children to the adult ICU. The director of pediatric critical care says the crisis is getting worse every day and they don't know how long the cancellations will last.

We've been hearing that this government has a plan for the crisis in our pediatric hospitals.

How can the Premier possibly defend a plan that causes sick children and their families to suffer?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I've said it before, and I will say it again: The status quo isn't working.

We have put in place with our partners, including Ontario Health, constant contact with pediatric hospitals, Ontario Health, primary care practitioners, community health centres to make sure that everyone is working at full capacity so that we have access to the care we need.

I understand this is very challenging—when we see these surges, when we see increases in viruses such as RSV, when we see increases in influenza. What I would ask, respectfully, is that all of us make sure we are part of the solution by encouraging our constituents to get that flu vaccine. If you haven't yet received your booster shot for COVID-19, do it. That will make a difference in our hospitals, in our primary care facilities, and it will ultimately protect our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, one of the sick children who is suffering is a two-year-old girl diagnosed with tuberous sclerosis complex 2 at the age of six months. She experiences up to five seizures a day, which could delay her development. Her parents have been waiting since April for a five-day, four-night EEG at London's Children's Hospital to determine the best treatment options. The procedure was finally scheduled for last week, but her parents have now been told that it will be postponed indefinitely.

This government's so-called plan is devastating for families like my constituents.

Why did the Premier fail to provide the supports and resources needed by Children's Hospital and other pediatric hospitals to prevent surgeries and procedures from being cancelled?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, we did, and we are—we prepared for this surge. We understood. We worked with Ontario Health to make sure that all hospitals had plans in place for a surge that could have come in the fall session. We are now seeing that.

As I said, our best defence is to make sure that people get that flu vaccine, that we have sufficient investments in place at pediatric hospitals and, frankly, in community hospitals.

I want to highlight some of the partnerships that have happened. We often talk about the highly skilled, exceptional workers who are in our pediatric hospitals, but we also have highly skilled, caring, compassionate health care

workers in our community hospitals. Now we have partnerships where SickKids nurses are training community hospital nurses on what to expect and how to deal with patients with, for example, RSV. It's working. We will continue to do that work.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, to the Premier: In high school civics, students learn that majority rule is essential to democracy—majority rule. But with Bill 39, the Premier is handing Mayor Tory even stronger strong-mayor powers, giving him the ability to pass votes with only one third of council support. This is an undemocratic backroom deal that this government has been hiding from Ontarians.

Why didn't the Premier tell people during the recent election campaign that he'd be undermining democracy as part of his program?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the Premier has been on record—in fact, it was in his book—about his interest in the strong-mayor system.

When we tabled this bill, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, almost immediately upon election, we made it very clear that we were going to put a plan in place not just to give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa strong-mayor powers, but the Premier was extremely transparent in communicating that we were going to continue that opportunity to other regions. Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act, is on the floor for debate in the Legislative Assembly. It provides exactly what the Premier promised, and that is to extend these powers to other regions in the province. As well, in the spirit of collaboration, we're acting on the suggestion that Mayor Tory put forward and putting it in this bill so that he has tools to get shovels in the ground faster.

We're in the middle of a housing crisis. I hate to keep reminding—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for Parkdale–High Park for the supplementary.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, the Premier is using Bill 39 to allow the mayor of Toronto to pass laws at city hall with the support of only one third of council. The mayor could pass laws with the support of just eight members out of 25. We operate in a democracy—50% plus one, majority rule. But this bill silences two thirds of council. It silences the voice of the majority of Torontonians in how our city is run.

Will the Premier abide by the democratic process and withdraw this absurd bill?

1050

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to remind the House that we're in the middle of a housing crisis. Our best year in 30 years was last year, when we had over 100,000 starts. New Democrats, this morning, in debate on Bill 23, acknowledged the 1.5 million homes that are needed in Ontario over the next decade. The status quo does not work.

The fact that our government is advancing the strong-mayor powers over and above Toronto and Ottawa is not something that the Premier has hidden in any way, in any shape, or in any form.

We need to ensure that mayors across the province have all the tools that they need to get shovels in the ground faster. We need to ensure that we have a plan in place to build those 1.5 million homes.

We're going to continue with our agenda as we work with our municipal partners.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, we learned that the mayor of Toronto and the Premier were having these back-room conversations as far back as this summer. This is how the government operates—secret conversations behind closed doors. We saw that with the cuts to the greenbelt. Backdoor meetings led to results for wealthy donor developers at the expense of the interests of the people of Ontario.

Will the Premier stop his backroom deals with donors and serve in the interests of the public?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, we had a meeting with Ontario's big city mayors and regional chairs in January. The Premier and I were crystal clear that the status quo is not working and that we need to put more plans in place, whether they be legislative or regulatory, to get shovels in the ground faster. What did mayors say back to us? They said very clearly that we needed to put a plan in place in the Legislature, that we needed to change laws, that we needed to provide regulatory opportunities to get shovels in the ground faster. It takes way too long to get housing built in Ontario. The costs and the fees are adding significant dollars. We're pricing a generation of Ontarians out of the market. And I'm not going to stand here and not make those changes. I'm going to continue to make—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.
Restart the clock.

The next question.

PREMIER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again, to the Premier: The Public Order Emergency Commission published an email yesterday detailing a conversation between the Premier and Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino on Wednesday, February 9. During the call, the Premier said that Dr. Moore would announce the end of vaccine passports on Thursday, and on Friday the Premier himself would announce the end of mandates. Coincidentally, it was at this exact same time that the Premier was alleged to have been speaking with convoy leaders, vowing to "pull these passports" and telling convoy leaders he would be making an announcement on Friday.

Will the Premier finally admit today that he was speaking to both federal government officials and convoy leaders during the occupation of Ottawa?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think what the member is referring to is the federal commission into the federal government's use of the Emergencies Act. We have been working, of course, with the commission, as I've said on a number of occasions.

I'm certainly glad that the member opposite highlights the very good work of health care professionals across the province of Ontario throughout the last year to get us in a position in the province of Ontario where we were able to remove some of the mandates. That helped us so much in getting us to the position where we're at today—and part of that, of course, goes to the Minister of Health and the good people who work in that area, who undertook one of the largest vaccine rollouts in the history of this country. I think over 90% of Ontarians have gotten their first and second dose.

The member is quite correct; we were working to remove mandates as quickly as we possibly could, always putting the people of the province first, putting the health and safety of Ontarians first. Because of the investments that we made, we were able to remove those mandates. And I'm very, very happy that the member opposite recognizes that good, hard work.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again, to the Premier: The email released yesterday by the commission showed that the Premier was willing to exert pressure on the Prime Minister to end federal government mandates. In February, the Premier had no issue putting pressure on the federal government, but when he's trying to avoid testifying and being accountable to the public, he has no issue with hiding behind jurisdiction.

Will the Premier tell the people of this province who and what he is hiding from?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a curious question, given the fact that we actually had a select committee here that met on a monthly basis to talk about Ontario's imposition of a state of emergency here. That committee was made up of the members opposite, who were able to question representatives of the government, the health minister—I know the Solicitor General was there on many occasions.

We actually had two debates in this House when those states of emergency in the province of Ontario ended, and on both occasions, although we had set aside four hours, assuming the opposition wanted to talk about it, debate collapsed after I think only about an hour on one, an hour and a half on the other, because the opposition had had enough.

The reality is that we worked very hard to keep the people of the province of Ontario safe. The people of the province of Ontario deserve all of the credit for that, as do our front-line health care workers who brought—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question?

ANTI-SEMITISM

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Anti-Semitism has no place anywhere here in Ontario. This chamber must be united in condemning anti-Semitism. Those words must not be

hollow. When anti-Semitism is left unchallenged, it has a direct consequence for the safety of the Jewish community, not only here in Ontario but across Canada.

According to recent Statistics Canada data, Jewish Canadians continue to be the most targeted religious group of hate crimes in this country. We must not allow that hatred to be fuelled, especially by individuals in power and responsibility. There must be consequences for anti-Semitic behaviour.

I understand that words matter, but actions matter more.

So I'd like to know what our government is doing to stand up and combat anti-Semitism.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Hate in all forms has no place in Ontario, and to be clear, this includes anti-Semitism. We will not let anti-Semitism disrupt our way of life, especially here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is very personal to me. I'm proud to serve a Premier and a government who have used our diversity as our greatest strength. The proof of our diversity is right here—all those who sit around me, in our party, working together.

So what can we do? We can call it out. Anti-Semitism is toxic to our democracy, and when we combat anti-Semitism, we protect our human rights and our human dignity for all, and we protect our common values in our communities. It doesn't matter where we come from or how we got here; it's about doing the right thing and calling out hatred for what it is. It has no place in Ontario, and we will not tolerate it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Restart the clock.

Supplementary question.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: All members of this House must show leadership by directly addressing anti-Semitism, no matter where it is found or who is making the statements. While some in this House, like the member for Ottawa Centre, may not believe actions must be taken, we disagree.

On this side of the House, the government has a strong record of combatting anti-Semitism by introducing things like Holocaust education in our school system as young as the age of grade 6.

But let's be clear: More needs to be done. As we continue to invest resources to combat all forms of hate, we cannot allow the normalization of anti-Semitism to take place in Ontario. We cannot take a casual approach. And we all have a responsibility to act.

I'd like to ask the minister, the Solicitor General, how we are freeing Ontario of anti-Semitism.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear: The hate that begins with anti-Semitism never ends with anti-Semitism, and we make a great mistake if we think anti-Semitism is only about the Jewish community. It's about anti-Semites. It's about people who cannot accept a community of tolerance and, instead, have to blame someone else for their own problems. This is

categorically wrong and not part of the values of who we are in Ontario.

We've invested over \$25 million to protect against hate-motivated violence, racism and hate.

Just two weeks ago, I was proud to be with our Minister of Education and our caucus members at an important announcement of mandatory Holocaust education in the grade 6 curriculum, commencing for the first time next year.

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Some things have to matter: the rule of law; our ability to live safely in our own communities one to another, free of hate and discrimination. Mr. Speaker, this must matter.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier.

Ontario's child welfare system takes children and youth into their care who have experienced abuse, who have complex mental health needs, or who are orphaned. Cassidy Franck was one of those kids. She was sent to a for-profit group home in Hamilton run by Hatts Off, the second-largest operator of youth group homes in Ontario. It was there that Cassidy witnessed harsh physical abuse, awful food and horrific conditions.

When the opportunity to live with a Hatts Off staff member arose, Cassidy jumped at the opportunity, hoping for an escape. But weeks later, she was removed by Hamilton Police Service's human trafficking division.

Tragically, Cassidy was not alone in her experience. A months-long investigation into Hatts Off homes found that allegations of human trafficking went ignored, staff were extremely unqualified, children were being overmedicated and physically restrained at disproportionately high rates.

Why is this government sending children and youth like Cassidy to live in abusive conditions?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

This scenario is horrific, and our government is absolutely committed to making sure that we leave no room—no room—in our system for providers who are not operating in compliance with the requirements set out.

Our aim is for families and communities to be strengthened and supported through preventive services and early intervention.

That's why we are implementing a redesign of the child welfare system in Ontario. We acknowledge that there are issues and there have been long-standing issues. And we are the government that is taking action to address this issue in so many ways.

To improve the oversight of licensees, we have added 20 new staff to support enhanced inspections of the children's residential services system. Since January 2022, we've boosted the number of inspections at licensed group homes. We're improving data collection and measurement tools to improve service, and we're backing that up with investments.

Our priority is to make sure that every individual child and youth has a safe and loving home. We'll continue to make these important changes, continue to back it up with investments. This is important to our government, and we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The supplementary question.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: To the minister: You have been in government for four and a half years, while these kids have lived in conditions where there were bedbugs and rodents, where they were being abused and starved and trafficked and overmedicated. It's your responsibility. Stop trying to abdicate.

Speaker, every day this government doesn't implement and enforce stronger child welfare rules is another day a child is subject to abuse within a system that is supposed to protect them.

Global News obtained a secret government draft report flagging the issues at Hatts Off years ago. Some of the devastating allegations include a staff member holding a girl on the floor over pieces of broken glass and another spitting in a child's face as he was restrained.

Will this government finally take responsibility for the kids in their care, investigate Hatts Off. and take action so that no child spends another minute in these horrific conditions?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I outright reject the premise of the question from the opposition insinuating that action has not been taken. Action is being taken. Unfortunately, after years of neglect by the previous opposition, supported by the NDP, we have a situation that we are dealing with, and we will continue to deal with it.

Let me be clear and state again that there is no room in our system for providers who refuse to provide the quality care that's necessary. This is horrific.

In the history of the child welfare system, we know that there are very hard-working people trying to make this better, but the issues that you mention exist. That's why we're addressing the inspections. It's why we're improving inspections. It's why we're improving oversight. It's why we're improving the data collection. It's why we're improving public transparency. It's why we're making sure that the measures that are needed to address this issue are being implemented.

We'll continue this very, very important work.

I thank the member for her question.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

My riding of Brantford—Brant is home to some of our province's most notable manufacturing operations, many of which are multinational companies. These companies positively impact my local community, where they operate

and contribute to our province's diverse and growing manufacturing sector. But to remain competitive, businesses must be assured that our government will continue fostering the right environment for their continued growth.

Will the minister please explain how our government supports manufacturers and businesses that are helping to deliver good-paying jobs for the people of Brantford?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Brantford is a manufacturing powerhouse and one of the most competitive places to do business. That is why global companies continue to invest and grow there.

Ferrero Canada is investing \$44 million in Brantford. This sweet project will increase production capacity to help meet the growing demand for one of the world's most favourite products. It will create 124 well-paying jobs, which is why we invested \$1.5 million through our Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. In total, this program has created over 1,300 jobs and attracted over \$736 million in investments, with much more in the pipeline.

This is our commitment to the people of Brantford and to families in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thanks to the minister for his answer.

There is no doubt that initiatives like the Regional Development Program help support businesses that continue to power our province's economy.

I am proud that a distinguished company like Ferrero continues to make large-scale investments and is expanding its operation right here in my community of Brantford.

While it is positive that our Open for Business strategy continues to attract global manufacturers, we must also ensure that conditions are right for entrepreneurs to continue to succeed right here at home. Our entrepreneurs and small business leaders employ thousands in Brantford and help to keep Ontario's economy competitive.

Will the minister please share how our government supports entrepreneurs as they start and grow their local businesses?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: For 15 long years, Liberal and NDP policies sent business and investments fleeing from Ontario, but our government has reversed all of that. We lowered the cost of doing business by \$7 billion every year, and we now support a network of regional innovation centres and small business centres.

In fact, we provide Brantford's small business centre with close to \$500,000 every year, and we support their Summer Company and their Starter Company Plus programs with over \$85,000 annually to help young entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground. A further \$35,000 was invested this year in Digital Transformation Grants, and that helped local Brantford businesses put their businesses online.

The dream of entrepreneurship is once again within reach of thousands of families in Brantford and all across Ontario.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. Bill 23 does not create the safe, affordable homes that people need. Bill 23 will cost the city of London's taxpayers \$97 million while wealthy developers laugh all the way to the bank. AMO showed this bill will let private developers run away from a billion-dollar tab—a tab paid for by everyone else.

Will this government listen to the chorus of Ontarians and municipalities opposed to Bill 23 and stop squeezing the little guy?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: The NDP would like to add \$116,000 to the cost of a home by defending the status quo. My question back to them is, have they learned nothing from the last election? They're actually supporting adding costs to the system, making it harder for young families to realize the dream of home ownership.

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That's the contrast—the NDP are always going to stand up for increased costs; on this side of the House, we want to give Ontarians a break and we want to ensure that we reduce the cost of housing so that Ontarians can realize the dream of home ownership.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Back to the Premier: A news flash for the minister—after four years, this government is the status quo. They need to actually build affordable housing, not leave it up to the private industry.

My constituent Sandra wrote, "Bill 23 will strip democratically elected municipal governments ... the ability and tools to ensure that growth and development will indeed pay for itself ... It" does not "pay for maintenance. This financial black hole will grow exponentially if Bill 23 becomes law."

Bill 23 destroys development charges which the city uses to create more affordable housing. Bill 23 stops city council from creating affordable housing. How will this government make up the difference?

Hon. Steve Clark: The most significant proposed changes to development charges are for affordable and non-profit housing and exclusionary zoning, everything that our government wants to incent. But the member doesn't have to take my word for it—take the word of Simone Swail, the manager of government relations for the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, who is here at Queen's Park today: "The commitment to waive development charges for all affordable housing developments will have a tangible and positive impact on the ability to develop new affordable co-ops in Ontario. We also look forward to engaging with the province in order to reduce the property tax burden on affordable housing providers, including co-ops." Don't take my word for it—take it from the CHF.

LAND USE PLANNING

PLANIFICATION TERRITORIALE

Mr. Ted Hsu: The number one cost of climate change to ordinary people is the cost of flooding—flooded basements, flooded businesses.

The Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program—a federal program which operates through the province—closed applications on September 16. Applications were evaluated based on planned development. But with Bill 23, plans have suddenly changed.

The Conservatives now want to develop the greenbelt. A new section in the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System means wetlands and wetland complexes can be re-evaluated and developed. Le changement climatique redéfinit continuellement ce que sont les phénomènes météo extrêmes. So obviously, if the Conservatives care to look ahead, there are new areas which will be a high priority for flood plain and flood hazard mapping.

What plans has the government made, and what funds have been set aside for new flood plain and flood hazard mapping?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I am proud to say that this government is keeping Ontarians safe, making sure that people and property are protected, working with conservation authorities to make sure that they are focused on that key mandate, making sure that we are building new homes in Ontario as we do all this—1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years—homes for seniors, homes for students, homes for people who are coming to this province for the very first time.

If building all of these homes and keeping people safe and keeping property safe is wrong, I don't want to be right.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to flooding, the Conservatives are saying, "Build now; worry about water later."

Suppose your wetland evaluation is missing information about hydrological functions? Well, the Conservatives deleted that section of the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System which tells you what to do. Now it's, "Advance to go; collect \$200."

If wetlands are re-evaluated and developed, and trees are cut, fields are paved over, then flood hazard maps will change. This has a real impact on family budgets.

Is this government prepared for families who have to pay more for flood insurance or lose insurance altogether?

Le nouveau Système d'évaluation des terres humides de l'Ontario de ce gouvernement conservateur élimine le rôle des scientifiques du ministère des Richesses naturelles.

Can they be trusted to ensure that flood hazards are evaluated with the best science and that the people of Ontario will have access to the results?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: The Minister of Natural Resources answered the first part of that question perfectly.

Again, I want to put into perspective what the Liberal Party is proposing by defending the status quo. I want to go back to that \$116,900 of cost that is going to be added on a home in the greater Golden Horseshoe. At current interest rates of 5.69%, it's going to add an additional \$812 on a homebuyer's monthly mortgage over 20 years. That's the cost of a down payment.

So you either stand with us to be able to put a plan in place on a number that none of you have argued about—all of you have acknowledged your inaction over the last 15 years.

They acknowledge their inaction because they acknowledge that we need to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. So they acknowledge that they did nothing on this file. And now they stand in the way of young families and want to add an additional \$812 per month—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The next question.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Ross Romano: Our government believes that the mining industry is essential to our province's economic strength and helps ensure our northern communities' prosperity. This industry serves a critical role in helping our province deliver on our vision of creating a supply chain for electric vehicles. Because our government has created the right conditions for ongoing investments, mining operations continue to expand while ensuring both sustainability and respect for environmental interests. The communities in the north, local First Nations, and our economy all reap the benefits when mining companies continue to invest and to grow.

Could the Minister of Mines please provide an example of how our government's leadership and support for the mining industry contributes to positive outcomes for northern communities?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you for the question from the member from Sault Ste. Marie.

The mining industry in Ontario is the best in the world, but that hasn't stopped us from improving.

Last week, the Premier was back in Timmins to join me at Newmont's announcement of a \$160-million investment in a new, state-of-the-art effluent treatment plant. This new, industry-leading plant will return treated clean water to the watershed, benefiting the ecosystem for generations. The treatment plant will secure the future of Newmont's operations in my hometown of Porcupine. A mining operation like this is part of the fabric of our community and creates prosperity for the people of Timmins and for the entire province.

Ontario will continue to lead the world in environmentally responsible mining.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you very much to the minister for your response.

Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government did not value the mining industry and the importance of critical minerals, which delayed economic growth in the north for many years.

Our government continues demonstrating much-needed leadership in our strategies and actions to build relationships with the north and strengthen its economic potential. Our government's Critical Minerals Strategy creates the right conditions for investment and successes currently being realized in this vital sector.

Could the minister please provide further information about how recent investments by the mining industry benefit all Ontarians, especially those residing in the north?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you again for your question.

The mining industry in Ontario is thriving, and we are just getting started.

Last month, the Premier and I were at the official opening of Vale's \$945-million complex at Copper Cliff. This will create 270 jobs in the Sudbury region and lead to 14 years of production. The company is also preparing to invest another billion dollars in phase 2 of the project.

We have mines under construction right now, including Argonaut Gold's Magino project, the Greenstone Gold mine, and Iamgold's Côté Gold project.

These new mines are creating thousands of construction jobs, but more importantly, they will build stronger communities throughout the north.

We have more work to do, but we are building the foundation for the future of mining, and that will bring unprecedented prosperity to this province.

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MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Premier: During the recent Toronto election, the Premier and Mayor Tory made a secret deal so that Mayor Tory would be able to govern the city with only one third of city councillors; that's eight out of the 25 who were elected. I've been wondering, if you're going to override democratic majority rule, why one third—why not one quarter or one sixth or one tenth?

I did some research, and of the recently elected 25 councillors in Toronto, Mayor Tory endorsed seven and Premier Ford endorsed two. That makes nine—one third plus one.

My question is, did the Premier look at the results of the Toronto election and then decide that a one-third minority would allow Mayor Tory to govern the city with the votes of only their endorsed candidates?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Humber River–Black Creek for the question. I'm glad he brought up elections—because I'm glad that he, Niagara

Falls and Kiiwetinoong are still in the race for NDP leader. In fact, the member opposite mentioned that he's still kicking the tires.

Well, I've got news for you, man: You keep with these policies, and the wheels are falling off during the election; there are no more tires to kick.

You need to stand up for realizing the dream of home ownership. You need to support municipalities—like Mayor Tory—who have asked for new tools. And you need to understand that this kind of status quoism is adding over \$100,000 to the price of a new home in Toronto. You're literally putting a generation of Ontarians out of home ownership because of your failed policies.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I remind the members to make their comments through the Chair, not directly across the floor of the House.

Supplementary question. The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

MPP Jill Andrew: Back to the Premier: Toronto elected 25 city councillors, but under Bill 39 only eight plus the mayor will make decisions, effectively silencing 17 councillors and the communities they represent.

Toronto's council is the most diverse in its history, with 27% of councillors being racialized. This is a step in the right direction but still a far cry from Toronto's full diversity, where 55% of folks here are visibly racialized. But now, because of the Premier's secret deal with Mayor Tory, their voices would be silenced through this bill's minority rule. When progressive women and BIPOC city councillors achieve historic elections in city council, the government changes the rules and strips them and the voters who elected them of their power.

Will this government withdraw their dangerous, undemocratic and inequitable Bill 39 and actually allow racialized Torontonians—all Torontonians—to have power on city council with the councillors they elected?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to apologize to the member for Spadina—Fort York for mischaracterizing his riding. But I am excited that there is finally some interest in the New Democratic leadership in Ontario.

The member opposite from St. Paul's, who just asked that question, actually said in this House that building more housing won't solve our problems, which I can't believe she would actually put in Hansard—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Do you know who I'm standing up for? We're going to have over half a million new Canadians come to Ontario. You can go like this to me all you want—but the fact of the matter is that we've got an immigration increase that's going to happen, and 60% of them are going to come to Ontario. On this side of the House, we want to welcome them, but we also want to have—

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: On this side, too.

Hon. Steve Clark: On this side of the House, too—I see the group right here, this side of the House too. On both sides of the House, we agree that we want to welcome new Canadians to our province. We've got the best province in the country to live and to work and to raise a family. We want to have enough housing—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The next question.

FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

First of all, I want to thank the minister for coming to Etobicoke—Lakeshore and touring the William F. White movie production and business centre in the great riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore. This company equips Ontario and Canada's film and television industry with the most extensive and technologically advanced retail and rental inventory in the country.

William F. White is a tremendous success story that contributes to our economy and provides great-paying jobs to thousands of people across the province and right in my riding of Etobicoke.

But with other jurisdictions battling Ontario to bring film and TV to their respective areas, Ontario needs to do more to keep such a vital industry and the many jobs created right here.

Can the minister please share with us what the government is doing to encourage and to cultivate the expansion of on-screen-based industries in Ontario?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Go Canada!

I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for the question as well as for joining me in that very important meeting, and for all the work that you do in your community in helping the rest of Ontario.

From meetings and conversations I've had with stakeholders in areas among diverse regions, it's evident that the sector has a footprint across our province. Whether it's in Toronto, London, Hamilton or the north—North Bay—film and television is thriving across Ontario. Last year, we had our highest economic activity to date, with almost 400 productions bringing in close to \$3 billion in spending and almost 50,000 jobs. We're going to expand on that. This province and our Premier want to build on this industry.

Ontario is a great place to do business and a great place to showcase—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The supplementary question.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

Seeing local landmarks in a film or sitcom can undoubtedly spark a strong sense of pride from the community being showcased. I know when we watch our movies sometimes we see little snippets from our community. I know the northern communities have of a lot of film business there as well—but we still want them to come to Etobicoke.

Ontario's film and television industry faces increased competition from outside production companies and national and global markets. Our government must step up and provide leadership in supporting our film and cultural television industries as they compete with other jurisdictions that have taken significant and strong measures to enhance their landmark attractions. We want to keep those jobs right here in Ontario.

Can the minister explain what our government is doing to give Ontario's domestic industry a leading edge over the competition?

And I must say: Go, Team Canada!

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I agree with the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. That's why we'll never stop working for the people in Ontario. We will continue to build on our success, and that's key.

We have just expanded the Ontario Production Services Tax Credit to include location fees to help attract domestic and foreign film and television and encourage more on-location filming in communities across our great province. This means you'll be able to see more of Ontario on TV—never a bad thing. Further, as more and more productions are geared toward platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+, we're keeping up with the changing times and viewing habits by modernizing our tax credit to include productions that are distributed exclusively online.

We want the world to know what a great place Ontario is to do business in. Our Premier stands behind that statement—as we do behind him.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier.

I want to read two recent headlines within the last 24 hours. Headline number one: "Doug Ford is Looking to Cut Costs in Healthcare Staffing, Documents Show." Second headline: "Child with Pneumonia Waits ... 40 Hours in Ontario ER."

Speaker, our health care system is on the verge of collapse. There are no available beds for children—not even for children.

Why is the government cutting even more funding when every Ontarian is crying out and asking you to do what it takes to solve the health care crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to remind the member that we refer to other members by their ministerial title or their riding, as applicable, not by their names.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: When we talk about investments in the health care system, we are talking about true dollars. In terms of our most recent budget, in August, which this member opposite chose not to support, we invested an additional \$5 billion in our health care system. We have already added 3,500 new hospital beds in the province of Ontario.

We will continue to work with all of our partners in hospitals, in primary care, in public health units.

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Let me assure the member opposite and the people of Ontario that our government is making the investments that, bluntly, the Liberal government and the NDP government before did not do.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is again to the Premier.

I recently heard from my constituent Derek, who told me:

"I work as a pediatric emergency nurse at SickKids hospital.

"I love my job and have said even before the pandemic, that if I could be paid a reasonable wage to live in this city, I would work until my body tells me not to.

"The HR and nursing shortage cannot be solved quickly. Short-term action is of the utmost importance. Improving nurses' compensation is the best thing that we can do to improve retention."

This government has been in power for almost five years, enough time to solve just about any problem.

Will this government admit that Bill 124 is driving the remaining number of nurses out of the province?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I respectfully have to disagree. There are some things that we have done and can do quickly. One of those things is through the College of Nurses of Ontario—directing them to, say, when people have applied who are internationally trained, get those assessments done and get them into the system quickly. We've seen that historic numbers are already practising in our province.

The member opposite talked about SickKids and a pediatric nurse—absolutely incredible work that SickKids are doing. Do you know what they're doing right now? Those SickKids nurses are training other community health nurses. SickKids doctors are training and explaining how to deal with RSV so that community hospitals will have that same depth of experience, care and compassion that we see every single day in our hospitals across Ontario.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Affaires francophones.

La promotion de la francophonie ontarienne au-delà de nos frontières est essentielle pour créer et renforcer les liens d'affaires avec les autres régions francophones. Notre province est membre de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie depuis 2016, et tout récemment, la ministre est revenue du 18^e Sommet de la Francophonie, qui s'est tenu en Tunisie.

Monsieur le Président, la ministre peut-elle expliquer comment l'adhésion de l'Ontario à l'OIF profite considérablement au rayonnement international et au développement économique de l'Ontario?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie ma collègue pour cette excellente question.

L'adhésion de l'Ontario à l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie comme membre observateur soutient certaines des priorités clés de notre gouvernement, soit la stratégie pour les services en français et la Stratégie de développement économique francophone. Notre présence au sein de l'OIF nous permet de mettre en valeur la francophonie ontarienne sur la scène internationale, de faire connaître l'excellence de nos institutions postsecondaires et aussi le savoir-faire de nos gens d'affaires.

L'Ontario s'est engagé à promouvoir et à valoriser le rôle de la francophonie dans notre province, notre pays et dans le monde entier. Je suis ravie d'avoir pu représenter l'Ontario à l'OIF et d'avoir créé de nouvelles connexions avec des francophones du monde entier au profit de la francophonie en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Merci à la ministre des Affaires francophones pour cette réponse.

Les Franco-Ontariens ont une riche histoire dans notre province, et notre gouvernement a fait de nombreux investissements pour stimuler l'économie francophone et le système d'éducation. C'est pourquoi je suis ravie d'entendre parler d'initiatives qui aident à promouvoir la francophonie ontarienne à l'échelle mondiale.

Monsieur le Président, la ministre peut-elle nous en dire plus sur la participation de l'Ontario au Forum économique de la Francophonie qui a suivi le 18^e sommet?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Le thème du forum économique de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie était : « pour une croissance partagée de l'espace francophone ». C'est pendant ce forum économique avec, entre autres, la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario, le Collège Boréal et le Centre francophone du Grand Toronto que l'Ontario a pu profiter des échanges bilatéraux, dans le but de faire rayonner les entreprises francophones de la province.

La participation de l'Ontario à ce forum économique donne à notre province l'occasion d'explorer des liens de collaboration internationale et de promouvoir les atouts économiques de la province auprès des états et des gouvernements membres de l'OIF.

D'ailleurs, c'est lors de ce voyage que l'Ontario a aussi pu signer un protocole d'entente avec la Wallonie-Bruxelles. Ceci, monsieur le Président, est une première entente internationale de l'Ontario en matière de francophonie.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

Minister, today we will be debating my bill, Health Care is Not for Sale Act, which, if passed, would ensure that none of our province's private, for-profit health clinics charge patients unfair or illegal fees.

Canadian Doctors for Medicare, the Canadian Medical Association, the Auditor General of Ontario, and the

Ontario Health Coalition all have documented proof that shows that Ontario has ineffective oversight of private, for-profit clinics.

Minister, will your government support my bill to ensure that no patient in this province is charged unfair fees?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I look forward to this afternoon's debate. I certainly wouldn't want to presuppose the outcome, but I will say to the member opposite that we have a process in place when, for any number of reasons, an inappropriate billing takes place. There is a process where we regularly review and refund when appropriate, if those fees have happened. Frankly, it is a very small percentage of practitioners who, as I say, for any number of reasons, may have put in a billing that was inappropriate for the time. We assess those within the ministry and, ultimately, we do refund the patients when that happens on those very rare occasions.

As I said, I'm not going to presuppose this afternoon's debate. I look forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Many reports on private, for-profit delivery of health care services in our province show what happens with the inadequate oversight that we have right here, right now, in Ontario. Patients are forced to pay for unnecessary tests, for add-ons. They are forced to pay hundreds of dollars just to be able to gain access to OHIP-covered services. Many reliable sources tell us that the oversight we have in place is not effective.

Will the minister support my bill to protect patients against unfair fees charged by private, for-profit clinics?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Respectfully, I believe that the member is attempting to find a problem where there isn't one.

What I hear from the people of Ontario is, "How do we make sure that we have a publicly funded health care system that continues to provide exceptional care to the people of Ontario? How do we make sure that those individuals who, perhaps, do not have to have that operation in a hospital—for example, cataract surgery—can do that seamlessly in their own community?"

We'll continue to do that work. We'll continue to find those innovative solutions that will make sure that surgery backlogs, when they occur, are able to ultimately be dealt with in an appropriate manner, using your OHIP card.

SENIORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

With the cost of many essential items remaining too high, the issue of affordability is a significant concern for many of my constituents, especially seniors on fixed incomes. They're worried about rising costs due to global inflation.

For our most vulnerable, food cost inflation can have a detrimental impact on what they are able to buy. The impact of high prices on essential food items is felt first

and hardest by the most vulnerable, including low-income seniors.

Could the minister please explain how our government plans to ensure financial support for our seniors who are most in need?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the member for asking such an important question and for all the marvellous work you're doing for your riding of Oxford.

We are helping seniors by proposing to double the Guaranteed Annual Income System in 2023. This will now provide \$166 per month, \$1,992 per year, directly into the pockets of our seniors most in need.

Our government stands with our seniors.

On behalf of all seniors, I want to thank the Premier and the Minister of Finance for their leadership in providing the kind of financial support our seniors need.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the minister for his response.

Aside from financial challenges, research shows that approximately 30% of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated. Social isolation can lead to serious adverse health effects and reduced quality of life for our seniors. We must protect our seniors and support them in continuing and expanding their participation in our society.

Can the minister please tell us how our government is helping our seniors in Ontario to stay active, healthy and socially connected in their communities?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: That's another good question.

As I mentioned, our government is proposing to give close to an extra \$1,000 per year to support seniors in need. We have also invested almost \$22 million in over 1,200 seniors community grants since 2018. We also fund 299 seniors active living centres all across the province. Many of the programs we fund offer both in-person and virtual options.

Our government will continue to work with local partners all across Ontario. When we work together, we can ensure that seniors can access the quality programs and services they need and deserve.

DEFERRED VOTES

BETTER MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 39, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de

Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et à édicter la Loi de 2022 abrogeant la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on a motion for closure on the motion for second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

On November 17, 2022, Mr. Clark moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

On November 22, 2022, Mr. Coe moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. Coe's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Breese, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to Mr. Coe's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Hunter, Mitzie	Stiles, Marit
Collard, Lucille	Karpoche, Bhutika	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 75; the nays are 33.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is another five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1153 to 1154.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On November 17, 2022, Mr. Clark moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Hunter, Mitzie	Stiles, Marit
Collard, Lucille	Karpoche, Bhutila	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise

French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

McMahon, Mary-Margaret
Pasma, Chandra

West, Jamie
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 75; the nays are 33.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: We’ve heard from both sides of the House. I want to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

There being no further business this morning, the House stands in recess until after the soccer game.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Parm Gill: I just want to take a quick moment to recognize a number of members of my team from the ministry. We have Evan here with us. We have Kosta. We have Corey, Harjot, Brittany and Kamel. I just want to welcome them to the Legislature.

MPP Jill Andrew: I’d like to take an opportunity to introduce you all to one of my bestest friends. She’s visiting me here today at Queen’s Park. Her name is Keisha. We’ve known each other since 1991. We met on the first day of high school, and I’ve loved her forever. I’m so, so glad that she is here.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I neglected to include a Windsor–Essex real estate agent visiting us today, Rose Laflamme. She joined the delegation this morning and I wanted to recognize her in the House.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER ONTARIO ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT

Mr. Gill moved first reading of the following bill:

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

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’d like to invite the Minister of Red Tape Reduction to briefly explain his bill.

Hon. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2022. One of our government's top priorities since 2018 has been to remove unnecessary, redundant and outdated regulations holding people and businesses back in Ontario.

The 28 across-government initiatives in this fall 2022 red tape reduction package build on our government's progress to date. The initiatives in this legislation, if passed, will increase Ontario's competitiveness, build a stronger supply chain and make it easier to interact with government by cutting red tape. These initiatives will continue to lead the province of Ontario to a path of greater economic certainty, confidence and stability.

Simply put, this bill will help build a stronger Ontario, where people and businesses can thrive, now and into the future.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN AN EMERGENCY ACT (EMERGENCY POWER GENERATORS), 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PROTECTION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE EN CAS D'URGENCE (GÉNÉRATRICES DE SECOURS)

Ms. Pasma moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and the Condominium Act, 1998 to require emergency power generators / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums pour exiger la présence de génératrices de secours.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to briefly explain her bill?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Earlier this year, the derecho knocked out power in parts of Ottawa for up to 12 days, leaving residents with mobility issues trapped in apartments because elevators couldn't run and leaving many residents without clean drinking water, as water pumps failed. This bill requires landlords and condo corporations to install backup power generators that are capable of running at least one elevator, lights in common areas and water pumps for up to two weeks in cases of emergency power failures.

PETITIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

MPP Jill Andrew: This is entitled "Protect the Greenbelt.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 23 is the" Conservative "government's latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing developers to bulldoze and pave over 7,000 acres of farmland in the greenbelt;

"Whereas Ontario is already losing 319.6 acres of farmland and green space daily to development;

"Whereas the government's Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt;

"Whereas" the Conservative Premier's "repeated moves to tear up farmland and bulldoze wetlands have never been about housing, but are about making the rich richer;

"Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats and prevent flooding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately amend Bill 23, stop all plans to further remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland in the province by passing the NDP's Protecting Agricultural Land Act."

Thank you very much, Speaker. I support the petition, have affixed my signature and I'll hand it over to Scarlett for tabling.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I have a petition that reads, "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and soon \$1,227 for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

"Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

"Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a basic income of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my signature and give it to page Camilla to bring to the table.

HEALTH CARE

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je voudrais remercier Keith Girard de Kapuskasing pour avoir signé cette pétition.

"Health Care: Not for Sale

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

1510

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones say they’re planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to further privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

—legislating 10 employer-paid sick days;

—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition and I’ll send with page Kalila to the Clerks’ table.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in the First and Second World Wars, over 7,000 First Nation members, as well as an unknown number of Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous recruits, voluntarily served in the Canadian Armed Forces; and

“Whereas countless Indigenous peoples bravely and selflessly served Canada at a time of great challenges for Canada; and

“Whereas this spirit of volunteerism and community marked the life of the late Murray Whetung, who volunteered to serve in the Second World War; and

“Whereas many First Nations individuals lost their status after serving in the wars off-reserve for a period of time; and

“Whereas despite this injustice, many continued to recognize the value in continuously giving back to their community; and

“Whereas the values of volunteerism and community are instilled in the army, air, and sea cadets across Ontario; and

“Whereas the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act establishes an award for the cadets and tells the story of Indigenous peoples’ sacrifice and mistreatment;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the passage of the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, 2022.”

I fully endorse this petition, will sign it and give it to page Mabel to take to the table.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Chris Glover: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Support Gender-Affirming Health Care

“Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse, and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent, and affirming in Ontario;

“Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn’t have to fight for it, shouldn’t have to wait for it, and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

“Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the reintroduction of a private member’s bill to create an inclusive and representative committee to advise the Ministry of Health on how to realize accessible and equitable access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and pass it to page Isabelle to take to the table.

HOUSING

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: This petition is entitled Building More Homes:

“Whereas the Ontario government introduced the More Homes Built Faster Act, which takes bold action to advance the province’s plan to address the housing crisis by building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years and the proposals in the More Homes Built Faster Act would, if passed, ensure that cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing types that meet the needs of Ontarians from single family homes to townhomes and mid-rise apartments; and

“Whereas the plan puts in place actions to support the development of gentle density housing like triplexes or garden suites that bridge the gap between single-family homes and high-rise apartments; for example, it would remove exclusionary zoning, which allows for only one single detached home per lot, and instead it would allow property owners to build three units without lengthy approvals and development charges; and

“Whereas the plan, which contains around 50 actions, addresses the housing crisis by reducing government fees and fixing developmental approval delays that slow down housing construction and increase costs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the More Homes Built Faster Act in order to increase housing supply in Ontario.”

I will proudly affix my signature and give it to page Yusuf.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: “Petition to Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and ... \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a basic income of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition, will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Aiden.

HOUSING

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to read the petition I received. It says, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas everyone in Ontario deserves to find housing that is right for them and our government is taking action to increase housing supply and make sure that everyone in Ontario can find a home that meets their needs and their budget; and

“Whereas throughout our consultations with the public, municipalities and the Housing Affordability Task Force, the message is clear: Red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving up the cost of homes;”

Mr. Speaker, it looks like I’ve heard this before also.

“Whereas our government has committed to implementing the task force’s report with a housing supply action plan every year over four years, starting in 2022-23; and

“Whereas delivering bold change that can last requires a strong partnership between all levels of government, to ensure the policies the province introduces will actually be implemented on the ground; and

“Whereas since our government introduced the More Homes, More Choice Act in 2019, we have seen significant progress: 2020 saw the highest level of housing starts

in a decade with the highest level of rental starts since 1992”—amazing—“2021 broke even more records, with the highest level of housing starts since 1987 and the highest level of rental starts in 30 years; and

“Whereas our plan is working, but we are just getting started. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we will continue to get it done for the people of Ontario by building 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the ... government’s housing supply action plan and efforts to build 1.5 million homes across Ontario.”

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly accept and agree to this petition and sign it and give it to page Nicholas. Thank you, Nicholas.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank the registered nurses who have gathered over 1,008 signatures on this petition. This is the fourth batch of a thousand names that we’re presenting.

1520

“Petition to Protect Patient Care in Operating Rooms at Hamilton Health Sciences ...

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas patients requiring surgery have complex care needs, some of which are urgent or life-threatening diseases and under anesthetic can become unstable, unpredictable, quickly change or deteriorate; and

“Whereas a scrub nurse is a member of the surgical team who provides a surgeon with instruments while maintaining a sterile environment, acts on and anticipates their requests, prepares medications, assists with retraction of tissue, communicates to circulating registered nurses (RNs) patient care needs, and responds in emergencies; and

“Whereas more health care providers are needed to address the surgical backlog, but surgical patients need a regulated nurse in a scrub nurse role ...

“Whereas Hamilton Health Sciences’s new surgical model of care is to replace nurses who perform the scrub nurse role in operating rooms, with unregulated operating room assistants (ORAs); and

“Whereas Hamilton Health Sciences’s actions to replace nurses with unregulated health care providers erodes the standard of care that patients will receive ...

“Whereas the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) recommends that the scrub nurse role be performed only by nurses; and

“Whereas cutting nursing care in operating rooms means patients can suffer from unnecessary complications or death because of unrecognized care needs, delayed care, miscommunication, or errors;

“Therefore” they “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately stop operating room assistants from performing the scrub nurse role at Hamilton Health Sciences;

“Stop any ... plans to cut and replace registered nurses within the operation rooms at Hamilton Health Sciences;

“Cease the new surgical model of care that replaces scrub nurses with operating room assistants because it does not adhere to Hamilton Health Sciences’s mission to provide excellent health care to the community it serves.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker, will affix my name to it and give it to Scarlett to bring to the table.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition. I gathered these signatures at a rally in Pickering the other day and this has been signed by councillor Joanne Dies of Ajax. It’s entitled “Protect the Greenbelt.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government’s latest attempt to remove protected lands from the greenbelt, allowing developers to bulldoze and pave over 7,000 acres of farmland in the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ontario is already losing 319.6 acres of farmland and green space daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ford’s repeated moves to tear up farmland and bulldoze wetlands have never been about housing, but are about rewarding PC donors and making the rich richer;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats and prevent flooding;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to remove what has long been protected land from the greenbelt, pass the NDP’s Protecting Agricultural Land Act, and protect irreplaceable farmland in the province of Ontario.”

Of course, I support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Kennedy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À ACCÉLÉRER LA CONSTRUCTION DE PLUS DE LOGEMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2022, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 /
Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant diverses lois, abrogeant divers règlements et édictant la Loi de 2022 visant à

soutenir la croissance et la construction de logements dans les régions de York et de Durham.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated Bill 23, the member for University–Rosedale, I believe, had the floor and still has time.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I rise again to speak to Bill 23. I want to summarize my take on the bill, and then we’re going to go into what I heard in committee, and then, in the final section, we are going to go into the amendments that we introduced, that the independents introduced, that the Liberals introduced and that the government introduced, and then I’m going to conclude.

So, in short, the government’s bill, Bill 23, claims that it’s all about fixing the housing affordability crisis. That is categorically false. There is no evidence that Bill 23 will lower home prices. There is no evidence that Bill 23 will lower rent prices. What we do know for sure is that Bill 23 will harm democracy. It will pave over the farmland. It will impact the greenbelt. It will impact public services and the quality of services that we have in our municipalities, and it will make life more expensive for renters in cities. I’m very concerned about it.

This government likes to say that they’re solving the housing affordability crisis. When I look at this government’s track record over the last four and a half years, the government’s record at helping people find a home that meets their needs, that they can afford, is abysmal. I give it an F. During the government’s reign, the cost of buying or renting a home has reached record heights. The Conservatives have betrayed the Canadian dream that a good home can be found if you work hard. In fact, the Conservatives have betrayed the basic human right that if you work very hard, you will find a home that you can afford to rent, and if you did, the government has now made it easier for a developer to kick you out and convert your rental into a luxury condo. That’s what Bill 23 will allow to happen.

In committee, we heard from such a broad spectrum of society, such a broad spectrum of Ontario. We heard from municipalities. We heard from regional municipalities. We heard from renters and housing advocates. We heard from environmentalists and conservation authorities. We heard from citizens who were very concerned about their democratic rights being threatened. And the overall message we heard was, “Stop. Let’s look at the unintended consequences of this bill. Let’s analyze the consequences of this bill, and let’s stop.” There are better ways to address our housing shortage than what this bill has planned.

I’m going to move into what I heard in committee, and I do want to start off by saying thank you to all the people that sent in written submissions; there were hundreds of you. Thank you to the people that signed up to speak. There were over a hundred people that signed up to speak. Not all of them got the chance to do so. We did call for additional days of hearings, so we could make sure this sweeping land use planning bill had the proper consultation that it deserves, and this government turned those motions to extend hearings down.

I do want to summarize some of the submissions that I heard in committee. The first one that I would like to share

is from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. They were very concerned by Bill 23. They used the word “radical.” I’ve never heard the Association of Municipalities of Ontario use the word “radical,” but they did in their submission, because they’re so concerned about this bill. They said, “The province has offered no evidence that the radical elements of the bill will improve housing affordability. It is more likely that the bill will enhance the profitability of the development industry at the expense of taxpayers and the natural environment.”

They went on and itemized the financial impact of Bill 23 on municipalities across Ontario, and the analysis is scary. Their preliminary analysis indicates that Bill 23, if enacted, would reduce the municipal resources available to service new development by more than \$5.1 billion over the next nine years. That is a huge amount of money, and that’s a huge amount of money at a time when we need to improve and expand upon our infrastructure so that we can have the services we need for current Ontarians and new Ontarians. We’re heading in the wrong direction.

They also talked about this bill’s impact on parks, and the reason why I bring up parkland dedication is that what Bill 23 is doing is it reduces the amount of space that a development needs to allocate to parks, or the funding that will be allocated to parks, by approximately half. As an individual who lives in a riding that is very dense—we have one of the densest ridings across Canada, along with Toronto Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Spadina–Fort York—the idea of having MPPs that do not represent Toronto decide how much park space is going to be allocated in Toronto is really quite shocking, especially at a time when more and more people are living in apartments, the size of apartments is shrinking and park space is that lifeline to get that break, to walk your dog, to play with your kids, to just relax. That’s being cut by this bill. It’s a shame, and they were very angry that they were not given the chance to speak to committee.

1530

Another submission: This is one of the first submissions and one of the most interesting submissions that we received. This is from Carolyn Whitzman. She has worked with the CMHC before. She’s an expert adviser to the Housing Assessment Resource Tools project. Like me, there were some things in Bill 23 that she likes. She was fairly balanced in her approach. She, like us, agrees that we need to build 1.5 million new homes to meet the needs of current and future Ontarians, but she recommends that we not just focus on homes as a target but have sub-targets so we can meet the actual needs of Ontarians who intend to live in the homes they buy or rent, raise children in these homes, have pets and retire, as opposed to seeing them as a place for profit. She is very focused on ensuring we build homes for Ontarians to live in.

She breaks it down about how this government needs to have sub-targets that focus on homes based on income and homes based on square footage, so we’re not just building those 600-square-foot condos, we’re not just building those 3,000-square-foot multi-million-dollar McMansions on farmland, but we’re really thinking about the kind of

homes that students need, that low-income people need, that people who want to downsize need, that families need. In her analysis she estimates that, based on need, we are short about 748,000 homes right now, and overwhelmingly, the people who need homes are people who are poor, people who are working poor, people who are homeless, people who are moderate income and people who are middle income.

When I look at Bill 23, I see a lot of talk about addressing the housing supply crisis. I see nothing about actually drilling into the details to build homes that meet the need based on income and size and who is actually going to live in them. I encourage you to look at Caroline Whitzman’s analysis because it is excellent.

This is another submission we received. This from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. The minute that Bill 23 came out they immediately sounded the alarm and said, “Oh, my goodness. Bill 23, by eliminating site plan control on buildings 10 units or less, guts green building standards because it means municipalities have very little control over green building standards.”

Green building standards are really important. That is the future for us. That is where our building stock should go. It enables us to build well-made, energy-efficient homes where our energy bills are cheaper, where we can control stormwater runoff, where we can encourage the growth of our tree canopy. It’s our future. But in order for these sustainable design standards, these green building standards, to be encouraged—this is the building industry asking for this. We shouldn’t gut the green building standards.

These are the municipalities that already have sustainable design standards. There’s Toronto, Ottawa, Brampton, Ajax, Whitby, Pickering and Markham. They are very concerned. They are very concerned.

Then there was a submission from the Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness. I found this to be a very good submission because it talks about something that this government never talks about—I never hear them talk about homelessness—when we are talking about Bill 23. A lot of this submission is very rational and factual, but what really struck me was their closing paragraph, where, taking away the statistics, I could see the desperation and the urgency of the person who wrote this.

I’m going to read it to you: “I’ll close by sharing that our member agencies include homeless shelters and outreach organizations that support people living in encampments.” The housing sector does not cater to these people. “It is dire out there. Shelters are appealing to the public for donations of tents to give out when their beds are full. They are seeing people who never dreamed they would one day lose their housing; people who have worked their whole life, recently evicted, terrified, being handed a tent and given advice on where to pitch it to avoid police and bylaw officers. The number of newly homeless people is alarming, and our shelter system is already completely overwhelmed as the inflow into homelessness greatly outnumbers our ability to move people from shelter into affordable housing. We must collectively work

diligently to create affordable housing options for all, including people living in our lowest-income households. Thank you.”

I was really struck by that paragraph because that is the reality of not just what’s happening in Ottawa but is happening in many cities all across Ontario. I don’t see that being addressed in Bill 23.

This was a statement from the Ontario Public Health Association. They also didn’t get the chance to speak, and their submission was quite comprehensive. They also talked about the impact of Bill 23 on green building standards and sustainable design for our building stock, which is up there with transportation and building that’s contributing to our greenhouse gas emissions.

They also talked about the impact of this government’s decision to gut the ability of conservation authorities to protect us in extreme weather events. They said:

“As noted in the Independent Review of the 2019 Flood Events in Ontario report commissioned by the government of Ontario, the first core component of emergency management is prevention, which includes ‘... actions taken to prevent flood-related emergencies or disasters from occurring, and includes land use planning and regulatory restrictions to keep development out of the floodplains and other hazardous areas.’”

That is exactly what conservation authorities and upper-tier municipalities do, and this government, in Bill 23, has decided to severely curtail their ability to do our job to protect us. It’s very concerning.

Next up, I have the FONTRA, the Federation of North Toronto Residents’ Associations. They also didn’t have the chance to speak—one of many that were not able to—and they were very concerned about it. They talked about the impact of climate change. They mentioned, and it’s good to mention this, that at the very same time Bill 23 is being debated, the UN Climate Change Conference is happening right now where the UN is sending out dire warnings, saying if we don’t turn the U-boat, we are in for a very difficult future. Green building standards are our future; protecting our natural environment in our greenbelt and our farmland, that is our future. And this bill threatens all of that.

Next, I have ABC Residents Association, which is an association that represents the Yorkville area, an area of huge development. For them, parks really matter because many of the buildings in their area are 20 to 40 storeys high. Most people live in condos. For them, parks are critically important, and the parks there are small, but they’re important. They’re very concerned about the elimination of park space and green space in our natural environment. They’re very concerned about it. They’re also concerned about the restrictions in development fees, which I’ll get to with other submissions.

Next, I have Friends of the Golden Horseshoe. This was another loose organization that was also not given the chance to speak in committee. They are very concerned, and what they said is—I’ll read it out:

“In fact, none of the following elements proposed in Bill 23 would do anything to increase housing supply in Ontario:

“—elimination of upper-tier planning

“—elimination of conservation authority participation in watershed planning

“—forced reductions in development charges

“—cutting developer parkland requirements in half

“—taking lands out of the greenbelt....”

The reason why I bring these up as examples of measures in this bill that have nothing to do with addressing housing supply is that your government’s own Housing Affordability Task Force essentially said the same thing. Conservation authorities are not the issue. The greenbelt is not the issue. Access to land is not the issue when it comes to addressing our housing affordability crisis and our housing supply crisis, and the Friends of the Golden Horseshoe area agree with that.

Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario: Douglas Kwan, one of the leaders at ACTO, came and spoke in committee. I was also struck by what he had to say. He raised an issue which is very important in my riding, which is the government’s decision in schedule 1 and schedule 4 to eliminate the rental replacement bylaw. Now, I heard a lot of talk from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that they’re just consulting. I don’t believe that for one second, because you just gutted Ottawa’s rental replacement bylaw. And it looks like you’re going to be gutting the city of Toronto’s rental replacement bylaw, Mississauga’s rental replacement bylaw, and you’re going to stop Hamilton and Ottawa and all municipalities across Ontario to protect renters as well.

1540

Douglas Kwan talked about what is happening in the rental market right now. He talked about how we are currently losing affordable rental units at a much higher rate than we are creating them. He goes on to explain that between 2016 and 2021, units renting for under \$1,000 have decreased by 36%. These are those affordable units—they’re usually not very well maintained, but these are more affordable units, almost always in buildings and purpose-built rentals. Yet, at the same time, in this five-year period, there has been an increase in luxury rentals renting for over \$3,000, and that segment of the market has increased by 87%.

What we are seeing in our rental market today is a transfer of wealth from those who don’t have a lot to investors who already have a hell of a lot. It’s contributing significantly to income and wealth inequality, and it’s happening right here in our housing sector and the rental market. What I fear when we are talking about this rental replacement bylaw and eviscerating it is that that’s just going to speed up that process of making rent more unaffordable for more Ontarians, because it makes it very easy for a developer to look at a building, a purpose-built rental, in an area that’s already being zoned for height, and say, “I’m going to demolish that building and I’m going to convert it to luxury rentals or I’m going to convert it to a luxury condo.” Because that’s exactly what’s happening in my riding already. The only difference is that renters are given protection and they get their right of return guaranteed, so they can move into that larger building

once construction is complete. Some units are affordable, and then there are additional units which are sold off to ensure that the developer can make their profit. That's all going to change now. Developers just get to make their profit, renters get to lose their homes, and affordable rental units and rental affordability in general is going to decline. It's very concerning.

Conservation Ontario: This organization represents conservation authorities all across Ontario. In their submission—they're one of the people that came and spoke, I believe in either Markham or Brampton. They spoke about how the proposed changes in Bill 23 really will make it very difficult for conservation authorities to do their job. They are concerned that this bill places new responsibilities on municipalities for natural hazards and natural resources that may lead to inefficiencies, uncertainties and delays in the development review process—they're being polite. It weakens the ability of conservation authorities to protect people and property from natural hazards, and it reduces critical natural infrastructure, like wetlands and green spaces, that reduce flooding and protect waters in our lakes and rivers. Next time your basement floods, blame a Conservative. If Bill 23 passes, next time your basement floods because of an extreme weather event, blame a Conservative.

This was an interesting one: the city of Toronto. The city of Toronto is understandably very concerned about Bill 23, and they had some very alarming statistics in their report. This was one of the first reports that I saw, but I have found over the last few weeks that other municipalities have come out with similar reports where they've documented the impact of Bill 23 on their finances and their ability to provide infrastructure and their ability to provide services. I'm going to read out a few things that the city of Toronto identified:

It will reduce municipal revenues needed to fund growth-related infrastructure. Development fees partially pay, just partially pay, for the costs of providing infrastructure—the capital costs. They do not provide the operating costs; they provide the capital costs. When that is gone, that infrastructure is going to have to be paid for by someone else, which means there will either be tax hikes or service cuts.

They quote, "Without an offsetting funding source, the proposal would impact the city's ability to provide servicing such as new roads, transit, water services, community centres, libraries and parkland to support new population and create complete communities."

Once again, if your library is no longer open on a Friday, blame a Conservative. If there's a pothole on a main road that is not getting fixed week after week, blame a Conservative. If transit service in your area has been cut because they need to deal with this development fee shortfall, blame a Conservative, because all these roads will lead back to Bill 23. It is that radical and that drastic. And I'm sure you're hearing it from your municipalities as well. It can't just be the city of Toronto that's concerned and is complaining.

What the city of Toronto also was concerned about is the impact of Bill 23 on the city of Toronto's innovative

new inclusionary zoning laws. Now, the city of Toronto passed an inclusionary zoning law recently after years of consultation and talking to experts, doing studies, communicating with developers, working out if it's worthwhile, if it will impact development, what it could look like, how many affordable homes are required. It was a long, negotiated, careful process with extensive public consultation.

They came up with a proposal that was meant to go into force just a few months ago. And our inclusionary zoning law required developers that were building buildings of 100 units or more to have a percentage of homes in that building that were affordable for 99 years, so affordable for a long period of time. It's considered—it's a definition of permanent. They also created a definition of affordability that is based on income, which means a home is affordable based on the income of the individual who moves in, essentially. It's for the area.

What that means, for all practical purposes, is that a one-bedroom unit—an affordable-to-own one-bedroom unit—would be about \$190,000, which would mean a household earning \$58,000 per year could afford it. That's the "own" piece; there's also a "rental" piece. And it would be permanently. Well, this government has decided to upend the definition of affordability and say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, we're no longer going to base affordability on what the individual who is going to live there can pay; we're going to base affordability on the market," which is utterly unaffordable right now. It's one of the most unaffordable markets in the world.

So the city of Toronto crunched the numbers and said, "Okay, what is the government's new definition of affordability?" They explain it here: It's only for 25 years, not 99, so we're just kicking the can down to the next generation, and the definition of affordability for that one-bedroom unit—it's different levels depending on the size of the unit and if it's own or rent—is \$444,000 now for that one-bedroom condo, requiring a household annual income of at least \$130,000.

Now, the reason why I go into those details is to point out that Bill 23 is going to be giving a development fee exemption for homes to be built that are not affordable for even middle-income Ontarians. They are not affordable for middle-income Ontarians. And at the same time, you're drastically weakening Toronto's inclusionary zoning law that already required a much better definition of affordability and a much higher quota for how many homes in a big building needed to be affordable. You're just saying, "No, no, no. We are going to give development fee cuts to developers and we are going to build unaffordable homes." That's the essence of it and it's a shame. It's a shame.

The city of Toronto also expressed concern that the province can override decisions on official plan matters now, based on Bill 23, cutting the amount of parkland space available, threatening the city's ability to protect natural heritage—very concerning; all very concerning.

CELA, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, expressed similar concerns to what conservation

authorities raised. They're very concerned about the impact of this bill on farmland, on our natural environment. Their overall concern is that this is doubling down on very expensive and unsustainable suburban sprawl, and it's ignoring the kind of solutions that we really need, that we absolutely need, to address our housing crisis. It was very concerning.

1550

Next, I have the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights, an excellent group that does a lot of work helping tenants across Canada now; it's extremely important. They submitted and they also spoke in committee. They expressed great concern about the province's decision to gut the rental replacement bylaw, and they also pointed out the level of income and wealth that renters have compared to homeowners, which is also important to point out. Renters, as a whole, earn about half as much as homeowners do, so we are talking about people who are acutely affected by the inflationary crisis we have right now and the affordability crisis we have right now. Bill 23 is going to make their housing costs even worse. It's very concerning.

We had Hemson Consulting come in and do a deep dive into the impact of the development fee cuts. Thank you very much for that.

We had the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority come in and talk about the impact of the bill. They had similar things to say about the bill—similar to what Conservation Ontario had to say—and they proposed amendments, which I will go into shortly, to take out the worst parts of schedule 2. Stay tuned: The government rejected those amendments, but I'll get to them in a minute.

Then we had some recent articles and submissions that reminded the MPPs in committee about the reason why we established conservation authorities in the first place. I would like to read this to you: The conservation authorities, which you're gutting, "were actually created under a Progressive Conservative government, led by Premier George Drew, in 1946. At the time, habitat degradation by settlers was starting to take a toll. Much of it was due to deforestation...."

"Then came Hurricane Hazel in 1954, which washed away homes that had been built on flood plains and killed 81 Ontarians." As a result, "the province expanded conservation authorities' power, tasking them with monitoring waterways for potential floods...."

"Today, the province has 36 conservation authorities, and all but five are in heavily-developed" areas in "southern Ontario." Their job is to protect us from extreme weather events like Hurricane Hazel, and you're limiting their ability to do that—a Progressive Conservative government.

Now I'm going to talk about committee. There were a lot of amendments introduced in committee during clause-by-clause. We went through this on Monday night. There were amendments that were introduced by our side and by the independent MPP for Beaches–East York, as well as the government side, because I think they're very quickly realizing that there are a lot of flaws with Bill 23 and a lot

of unintended consequences. I'm going to go through those amendments now.

We introduced an amendment to improve the rental replacement bylaw so we can protect renters—lower-income, moderate-income people in our city, who run our city—not just from demolition and conversion, but also in situations where they're renovicted. We are in a situation today where there's been a sharp rise in illegal evictions. It's very concerning. People living in a home get a notice saying they have to move out—because of a renoviction. Maybe they contest it at the Landlord and Tenant Board, if they want to wait two years, or they give up and they move out because they assume they're going to lose.

The problem is that maybe they walk by, down that street, a year later, and they realize that the landlord had no intention of renovating that property; they just wanted to move that rent-controlled tenant out and move another tenant in. That's happening with increasing frequency, not just in Toronto. The housing crisis has spread, as we all know. It's happening in cities all over Ontario.

So we proposed a bylaw, a motion change, saying that tenants whose building is being demolished or converted or undergoing renovation deserve to have compensation, and they deserve to have their right to return to that unit at about the same rent enforced by municipalities. It would give them protection and make our city affordable. The government turned down that motion, but we will continue to fight for that change, because it's essential to keep our city affordable.

We also introduced amendments to maintain the green building standards in Toronto and other municipalities. The reason why we felt it was important to introduce amendments to protect the green building standards is because green building standards ensure that we get well-maintained and energy-efficient homes. It means our energy bills are lower. It means that we can protect our birds and our species. We can reduce waste. We can reduce stormwater run-off. We can reduce the heat island effect. It's very important. It is our future. Government rejected the independents' motions and our motions.

And then, interestingly, they proposed their own. This took me a minute, because I'm like, "Oh my gosh. Is the government actually going to care about green building standards?" We read this. We sent it out to stakeholders. They had lawyers look at it, and they came back and they concluded that, no, the government's motions to allow municipalities to regulate green building standards do not go far enough to allow municipalities to do it. We have raised this issue with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

What these motions do is they will allow municipalities to manage green roofs—oversee green roofs—and it will allow municipalities to oversee landscaping. We are not sure yet whether it will allow municipalities to oversee bird-friendly design; we're hearing mixed reports on that. But what we know for certain is that green building standards in municipalities cannot proceed in their current form if Bill 23 passes as it is.

I am hopeful that the government will delay proclaiming some of these motions so that municipalities can

continue to oversee green building standards, and I'm looking forward to the government, hopefully, introducing a provincial green building standard in the future. I'm very much looking forward to that. Hopeful, I'm going to be hopeful.

We also introduced an amendment to bring in use-it-or-lose-it building policies. This came from municipalities who approached us and said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, we're getting a little sick and tired of being seen as sole culprit for why we're not moving housing supply quickly, so we would like to have the province introduce a build-it-or-lose-it policy," which means that if a developer is given a permit to build and they're given the green light to build, yet they sit on it instead of moving forward on it, through no fault but their own, then over a period of time, if they don't build, they should lose it. The reason why is because we want building permits, once they're given out, for homes to be built, and that's the purpose of the use-it-or-lose-it policy. The government rejected that. You should rethink that.

Then we also introduced amendments just to delay the proclamation of the rental replacement bylaw, because it is so bad. It is so bad. They didn't like that one either, which is a real pity.

Then we got to schedule 2, which is the conservation authorities piece. Oh my God, schedule 2 is so bad. So we introduced some measures to try to move from horrible to just bad. We introduced two key measures. One, we wanted conservation authorities to retain the right to work with municipalities to engage in land use planning and protect the natural environment, because right now, with Bill 23, conservation authorities are banned from taking a contract with a municipality to do this planning work for them. They're banned; they're explicitly banned from doing it, even though municipalities, we're hearing time and time again, don't have the expertise to do this work and conservation authorities do, and municipalities for many decades now have relied on conservation authorities to do this work. So we said, "Okay. Let's at least give municipalities the option to contract with conservation authorities if they want." You rejected that—very concerning.

Then we introduced some motions saying that, look, conservation authorities should not just have the right to look at a few pieces of land use planning—flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches—but they should also look at pollution and conservation of land, because if you get that holistic approach, then you can actually do your planning job well.

1600

It gets a little complicated, but this is what conservation authorities were asking for. We wrote it up in a motion. You folks looked at it and said, "No, thank you. Suburban sprawl, that's what we want to do. Flooded basements, that's the Conservative way. No, we're not doing that."

So now we introduced some more motions to bring in a real, strong definition of affordable housing. If we are looking at giving development fee reductions, then we need to make sure that those development fee reductions

are for houses that are truly affordable. And this is what many municipalities already do. The Open Door program at the city of Toronto already offers significant development fee reductions for homes that are affordable.

We introduced some amendments calling for affordable housing to be based on income, not just the market; an income-based definition, where the rent does not exceed 30% of gross annual household income, or where the mortgage, if you're doing a rent-to-own program, doesn't exceed 30% of gross household income. That's what we called for. We also called for the affordable housing definition to move from just being for 25 years to being permanent. The government rejected these, even though the provincial policy statement already has these affordable housing definitions. So all we're really asking you to do is just use the definitions that are already on the Ontario government's books—nope; didn't like that, not at all, which is a real pity.

Then we moved into development fees—huge issues with development fees. We introduced this motion calling on the Ontario government and saying, "Look, if you're going to cut development fees and put municipalities into a financial hole, then come up with a provincial program to fund the loss so that the municipalities can repair roads and make sure that we have transit service; make sure our schools aren't overcrowded; make sure we have parks nearby; make sure that we can deal with stormwater runoff, because our infrastructure system and our sewage system can handle it." Nope, nope, nope; they didn't like that one either. It's very interesting. No wonder you're getting tons and tons of emails and calls from councillors right now saying, "What are you doing?" It's very concerning. That was another one.

Then we introduced a motion saying, "Please, please, please delay proclamation. Give us some time to think about this bill; it's very concerning." They didn't like that, either.

Okay, I'm going to be a little positive for a minute. I'm going to talk about schedule 5. I kind of like schedule 5. Schedule 5 amends the HCRA, which is the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, and this is a regulatory authority that oversees builders and developers who are building new homes. If you're a first-time homebuyer or a homebuyer and you're buying that home, maybe in preconstruction—it's a new home—and you move in and everything is great, you're not even going to ever want to call the HCRA because you're going to be nice and happy living in your nice, good home. But if you've got some defects—maybe you've got mould or flooding or you've found out that you've actually got a second-hand furnace when you thought you were buying a new one—then it's the HCRA that you call to seek recourse and to make sure these shoddy builders are held to account.

It is good that the government has decided to increase fines for developers and builders that don't do the right thing. Good; I'm happy about that. But I also think that we can go further, and the reason why I think we can go further is because consumer advocates are telling us to go further. So we introduced some amendments calling on the government to go further.

We asked for the HCRA, the regulatory authority, to have some citizens on the board so the regulatory authority is not just a developer/builder-run board overseeing builders—you can see the conflict of interest there—but also it has some citizens' groups there who can look out for consumers. The government didn't like that. I'm hoping you're going to put that in another bill, because this is really good stuff.

We called for a ban on people who have a clear conflict of interest sitting on the HCRA board so this regulatory authority can do its job. They didn't like that one, either. That's a pity. I think that's really good.

Then we called for the HCRA to be overseen by the Ombudsman—standard practice for a good regulatory authority. We've got this place that people can complain to, the Ombudsman, if the regulatory authority is not doing its job. Nope, you didn't like that. I actually think this one is really good. It doesn't cost you money. It means first-time homebuyers—it's more likely they're going to get a well-built home; good.

And then we introduced an amendment, and I really like this one too, which is to have, essentially, a builder directory on the HCRA's website. So if an individual is going out there, looking for a home, they can go to the HCRA website and look to see that builder's record. If they're a builder that has a checkered history, they can maybe think twice about buying a home in pre-construction from that builder, and instead, they can buy a home from a builder that has a very good track record. That's a carrot-oriented approach which would ensure that we're more likely to get a well-built home. You didn't like this one either, but I actually think it's really good, and I do hope that you bring that in future government bills—because apparently you're going to bring out one a year.

I'm going to keep going on. Then we introduced some amendments calling on upper-tier municipalities to regain their right to plan. The reason why this is so important is because upper-tier municipalities see a much larger area. They've got all of these smaller municipalities in their area, and they make sure that there is regional coordination when there's planning. That means we're more likely to get sensible, well-planned infrastructure, because they can see the big picture, and we're more likely to get less sprawl. But instead, this government was like, "No, no, no. We're going to download responsibility for planning to all these little municipalities." When we do that, the problem is we're more likely to get expensive, poorly planned and environmentally destructive sprawl. I'm very concerned about that. You rejected that motion.

Then we introduced a motion taking some of the insight that Carolyn Whitzman had around housing targets. We said, "Okay, so we've got this 1.5-million-housing-starts goal. Let's make sure those homes are for Ontarians who want to raise children in them, retire in them—people who intend to live in them. Let's also add some sub-targets that really focus on building the kinds of homes that are affordable for different levels of income and building homes of different square footage size, so we're not just building big and we're not just building too tiny, but we're

building the missing middle, the 1,400-square-foot, the kinds of homes that were the starter homes in the 1950s and the 1960s that we don't build anymore." They're actually cheaper to build, and they're what we actually need for students, for people who want to downsize, for families, for affordable homes. Those are the real gaps in our housing sector right now. So we thought, "Let's put some evidence-based decision-making into those housing targets." You didn't like that one either.

We introduced the motion to expand inclusionary zoning, meaning developers do their part and play their fair share in addressing the housing affordability crisis. Right now, inclusionary zoning is only allowed in protected major transit station areas. The city of Toronto wanted it across the municipality. This government came in and said, "No, no, no. We're just going to shrink it right next to transit stations, because we're getting a lot of calls." The city would much prefer to have the authority to expand it so we'd get more affordable homes in big developments. So we introduced an amendment to do exactly that. The government rejected it. That's a pity.

We introduced amendments to increase parkland dedication to what they currently are. The government rejected that. It's a real pity.

And then we also identified and expressed great concern that this government is exempting major infrastructure projects from the environmental assessment process. That's a bit scary. The government is exempting the York region sewage waste plan that you have in this bill from the environmental assessment process—very worrying—and this government is also exempting the Lake Simcoe phosphorus project from the environmental assessment process as well. Why not do one? Don't you want to know so you can plan? It makes sense; it's there for a reason.

1610

I'm running out of time, sadly. I want to talk a little bit about the amendments the government introduced. They could also see that there were some flaws with Bill 23. I know you're getting a lot of calls and emails right now—and you've just extended the consultation process so you must be feeling some heat. These are the amendments that this government introduced. This one is really crappy. This one makes it so that the development fee cuts that you are imposing are retroactive. So developments that are already in the works can now go back and say, "We actually want that development fee exemption and the development fee cut as well"—very concerning.

When I think about the development fee cuts, one thing that bothers me the most about the development fee cuts is that the biggest cut, \$1,000 a unit, is the funding that goes to help municipalities provide affordable housing and supportive housing. That's where the bulk of the development fee cut is coming from—the city's Open Door program; the city's Housing Now program to build affordable housing on public land; funding that goes to shelters. That's the funding being cut from Bill 23. There's nothing about this that will make housing affordable for people who are low-income or moderate-income. I'm very

concerned about that. The government got the motion passed to make the development fee cuts retroactive for developers that have already been given the green light to build.

This government loves to talk about how they want to clear red tape. Well, this is like the red-tapiest government motion I have ever seen. What this motion does is, it eliminates the two-year timeout that exists when an official plan is approved. Let's say Ottawa, for example, creates an official plan on how they're going to build. Then, there's a two-year timeout, so that bylaw, that official plan can't be appealed for two years. It gives staff time to study the rules, enact the rules, know what they do and implement them. Now, you've made it so that once an official plan, a secondary plan or a bylaw goes through, immediately someone can appeal them—immediately. So that's going to create a massive backlog of appeals—crazy, crazy, crazy.

Then, the other thing you did is you changed the land tribunal process a little bit. In the original definition or understanding of Bill 23, you eliminated the ability for individuals, citizens to appeal to the land tribunal. It was only municipalities and developers that could appeal to the land tribunal and have a say over planning that everyday citizens, people who had some concerns about a gravel pit, people who were concerned about water pollution—they were banned from appealing to the land tribunal. Now you've changed it a bit. You're allowing a third-party appeal—MPP for Willowdale, I wonder if you had something to do with that—

Hon. Stan Cho: That's uncalled for, Jess—uncalled for.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, okay—but what you've done is, you've made it so that the adjudicator can award costs. What that means is, the losing party is likely to pay costs to the winning party. What that means, for all intents and purposes, is that well-off groups can use the land tribunal but citizens' groups cannot; they'll think twice, and that's very concerning. That passed, too, which is very unfortunate.

I have a request of this government. This is the government's vision for how we should address the housing crisis. This is not going to address our housing affordability crisis. It's going to harm democracy, public services, our farmland, municipal budgets and rental affordability. We do not need to sacrifice everything we hold dear to help developers and your wealthy developer donor friends.

There are other ways to address our housing affordability crisis. We can say yes to government investment in affordable homes. We certainly say yes to building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. We say yes to zoning reform so that we can build more townhomes, duplexes and triplexes in existing neighbourhoods. We say yes to increasing density near transit so we can build those walkable, transit-oriented neighbourhoods, those neighbourhoods people want to live in. We can build them too. We also say yes to building on public land so we can build affordable housing on public land, which is something this

government is not doing. We should say yes and we are saying yes to real rent controls to make housing affordable, and we're saying yes to addressing the homelessness crisis and the affordable housing crisis and the supportive housing crisis that exists in all our municipalities by saying yes to rent control and yes to building affordable housing and supportive housing.

Housing is a human right. We should be housing based on need. We should be building housing for Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Mike Harris: It is no small task to stand up in the Legislature and speak for that long, so, to the member from University–Rosedale, kudos to you for that. However, I do take issue with a few things that you did bring up. One of them—and we did talk about this a little bit earlier when we were debating this this morning—is development charges. There's a lot of that that always comes up. I've had municipalities at home say, "Oh, you know, we're going to have to raise taxes, we're going to have to do this." There are some municipalities in Waterloo region, if you total them all up, our seven municipalities, they're sitting on over \$200 million—\$200 million—of reserve funds from development charges that have already been collected.

The member opposite was talking about developers sitting on land or what have you. What about municipalities that are sitting on this money that aren't using it for the projects that they're supposed to be going towards? Why wouldn't she support incentives or discounts—I'm being very honest; I'm not trying to be overly political with this—that will spur on not-for-profit development and that will spur on purpose-built rentals? These are important. They're things that they talk about all the time. Will she support that part of the bill?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member opposite. There are a few things: When municipalities came to committee, they were unequivocal that the funding that was in reserve was already allocated to infrastructure that was needed to deal with current and future projected growth. In the case of the city of Toronto, a huge amount of money is needed to expand the Bloor-Yonge intersection so that we can deal with the increased ridership that's going to be coming from the Yonge North line. It's great, but, overwhelmingly, they told us there is no spare mountain of cash that is not allocated. It is all allocated. The city of Toronto was really emphatic about this. They said, "We are moving into a budgetary cycle where we are short \$815 million and we are seeing development fees cut by \$230 million." They pushed back so hard on that. They were very concerned.

When it comes to reducing and eliminating development fees for co-ops and non-market housing, that is a measure that we support and we are pleased to see that in the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mme France Gélinas: It was very interesting listening to the member from University–Rosedale. I was interested in the part about rent control that this government has

changed. What would real rent control that helps people afford the apartments they live in look like?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Nickel Belt. This government has made the decision to eliminate rent controls on all buildings built after 2018 as well as all new units created after 2018. That creates a very difficult situation where people move in and then they're faced with a very large rent increase and they're economically evicted. We are calling for rent control on all buildings and we're also calling for vacancy control so there is a cap on how much the rent can be raised if a tenant leaves. Manitoba has this style of rent control; Quebec has this style of rent control. It has been tried and tested. It does not impact the construction of purpose-built rental and it assures that renters have affordability and stability.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Dave Smith: The member from University–Rosedale made comments in the speech about not needing extra lands that we could do infill on. In Peterborough, in 2019, five single-family home building permits were issued. Six multi-unit buildings were put forward, and the NIMBYism blocked it. In fact, they've gone to the LTB. Three of those have already been heard and have been found to be in favour of the developer. The city didn't actually send anyone to defend their position.

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The argument that's being put forward by the NDP is that there is enough land already for infill, that we don't have to have any other land. Yet the example in my community is that there has been no development done, and the population has grown by more than 4,000 in the last four years. We have not had enough housing for 1,000 of them to actually be put in.

Why does the member think that status quo will work, when it is demonstrated over the last two decades that we're not able to develop enough housing for the people who are coming to Ontario? The 100,000 new starts last year are 50,000 short of what we actually need. Why does the member believe that we do not need more land, that infill will work?

Ms. Jessica Bell: The government's Housing Affordability Task Force was unequivocal that access to land is not the reason why we are having difficulty meeting our housing supply targets. Southern Ontario has more than enough land available to build the housing that we need for current and future Ontarians in land already zoned for development.

Environmental Defence has done a study looking at people's enthusiasm for increasing density, so building more townhomes, duplexes and triplexes in existing neighbourhoods, and mid-rise buildings across transit corridors, and their polling clearly shows that people are pretty in support of that. I also find that in my riding: People want their children to move out of their basement and live in the neighbourhood that they grew up in, and they understand that we have a housing affordability crisis.

When we're talking about building permits, in the city of Toronto, they approve about 30,000 building permits a

year, and about 15,000 are done, so there is a discrepancy there that I think needs to be addressed, at least in the riding that I represent.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I really want to applaud the member from University–Rosedale. I'm pretty sure that she knows the most about housing of anyone I've ever met in real life, and I appreciate her words on this. Some of the things that you heard at committee, we're hearing across—those of us having the conversations with our municipalities are hearing that the development charges issue is a real thing. That reserve—it's like this government is shaking everybody's piggy bank and saying, "Ooh, you've got money in there. We're going to spend your money, and make you spend it without asking what that reserve is for." For these regional municipalities that have a lot of lower-tier municipalities with big plans and projects in the pipeline, that money is earmarked for something.

So I guess I'd like to ask you some of the specifics that you heard, because the government isn't listening. The member opposite had asked his question. Can you please break it down for them again, so that they stop shaking and smashing other people's piggy banks, instead of spending the money they should and collecting the development charges, so that municipalities can make the best decisions?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The House will come to order.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Maybe you'll get the next question.

Thank you to the member for Oshawa—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The House will come to order. The government side will come to order. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'll pick up the submission from AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. They broke down the development fees and their impact on municipalities, and they are very clear: There is no magic pot of reserve-fund money that is not allocated to infrastructure, that hasn't already been earmarked to be built or run. In fact, they say, "Preliminary analysis indicates that Bill 23, if enacted, would reduce the municipal resources available to service new developments by more than \$5.1 billion over the next nine years." They're very concerned about it, so thank you for letting me read that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Mike Harris: Just to go back a little bit here, I had an interesting conversation with some members from the township of Woolwich, which is in my riding. They didn't even know they were sitting on \$6.5 million of DC charges. I can tell you for sure that in Waterloo region, not all charges are allocated and accounted for.

But I just want to go back to the member from Oshawa's comments that she just made. If it's okay to

have an organization—you can call it a “community builder;” you can call it a “developer;” you can call it whatever you want, but if they’re coming in and they actually want to make a difference in your community and they want to build purpose-built rentals or they want to build true affordable housing, it’s okay to take money from that project, but a municipality needs to be made whole. That’s the logic I’m hearing here. To me, that is anti-building-anything in this province. To me, it just doesn’t make sense.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for your comment. When I look at the city of Toronto, I see a situation where there is no magic pot of money. All the reserve fund money that is allocated has already been allocated to infrastructure. The city of Toronto approves over 30,000 building permits a year. There are many—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, that’s all the time we have right now for questions.

Mr. Chris Glover: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As many of you know, if you’ve been paying attention at all on your computers, Canada just lost a heartbreaker to Belgium, 1-0, but they outshot the second-highest-ranked team in the world 22 to 9, which is really incredible.

I think, if you seek it, Madam Speaker, you will find that you have the unanimous consent of the House to give a huge round of applause to the Canadians for their effort today. Members of the Ontario Legislature will be cheering them in their game against Croatia on Sunday.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I have unanimous consent to cheer on a great team that just played incredibly well.

Applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That was a terrific point of order.

Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, it’s always a pleasure to rise in the House, especially today. We’re talking about something that our government is doing to make sure we are addressing a housing crisis.

As we know, from Windsor to Ottawa, from Toronto to Thunder Bay, no matter where you go in Ontario, we’ve seen the boom in Ontario, which means there’s Team Prosperity, working hard, coming together. But at the same time we see the issue, as more and more new Canadians are coming to Canada, as our kids are growing up and need housing. The need for the houses is increasing more than the houses we are building right now. Because of this, we are getting into a situation where we are having a housing crisis.

As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and shortage of homes, our government received a strong mandate to help Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and their budget. I can tell you, Madam Speaker—and you can ask any of our members in the House—when we talk about consultation, the best consultation they did was a month

before June 2, when all of us went door to door, asking Ontarians what matters most to them. Most of the Ontarians asked these candidates, irrespective of which party they belong to: “We are in a real crisis and we need to come together, work together, solve this crisis together.”

That is what we’re doing here. The government has listened to the most and the best consultation on the ground, which led to the result on June 2. With a huge mandate, they picked a government and the members who are going to stand up and make sure they’re going to work and solve this housing crisis by building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

That is exactly what Bill 23 is doing. The name itself says it: More Homes Built Faster. It will help Ontario to build the homes that the people need. Our goal is to build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years to meet the market demand and make sure that everyone in the province—those who are here, those who are growing up and those who are going to come to Canada and choose Ontario as their new home—will have reliable and appropriate housing.

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Madam Speaker, if passed, the proposal contained in the bill would help cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing that meets the needs of all Ontarians, from single-family homes to townhomes and mid-rise apartments.

I always talk about how a house is a place—it’s not just having a roof over you. It is a place where you come back, you work hard and build your life and give back to the community. I always believe, whenever I talk about the art of living—it’s how we live; and the art of giving is how we live life better. The art of giving includes whether it is giving your time, giving your love, giving your respect or giving and sharing your resources. But in order to do that, we have to make sure that we understand and learn and make sure we deliver what Ontarians need.

That is why, Madam Speaker, we’re preparing to build these homes faster than ever. And we are not alone in this; we’re not the only ones talking about it. I’ll give you an example. The president of the Canada India Foundation, Satish Thakkar, stated, “It was long overdue reforms required in the municipal affairs to address the need of housing shortage in Ontario.” He further said, “It will also pave the way for addressing the issue of longer approval processing time... We also need to streamline our supply chain”—and when you’re going to build these houses, you will need the labour—“and address labour’s shortage in construction industry.”

Madam Speaker, in its 15-year history, the Canada India Foundation, CIF, has been a champion for its community service in Ontario. They have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars with their charity golf tournament for the benefit of the families of fallen heroes. They have hosted series of industry-specific bilateral forums on infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, health care, mining, education, attended by many, many leaders from industry, public policy, government and domain experts.

Madam Speaker, we always talk about the Ontario spirit, by helping and supporting, by giving to the community. CIF founded a free meal distribution program named Thank You Meals, wherein they delivered meals to those working on the front line and fighting COVID-19. CIF is actively engaged in a strategy that involves aspects of business and economy, trade and investment, cultural and scientific exchanges and people-to-people interactions.

I just want to take a moment, Madam Speaker, and congratulate the leadership of CIF, with the chair, Satish Thakkar; national convenor, Ritesh Malik; and the past president Anil Shah; and all the other members for their commitment and passion for giving back to the public. You are a true example of Ontario spirit. Thank you for doing this.

Madam Speaker, everyone on this side agrees that we need to build these homes. We will need the hard work and dedication of the province's skilled tradespeople. It is these hard-working men and women that put in the work every day across many areas of work and that keep the lights on, the water running, keep us warm and help build the future of our province.

It has been mentioned many times in the past as well: The skilled trades have been neglected for years. As a result, unfortunately, we have a skilled trades shortage. If you want to build homes, they're not going to magically appear. They're not like—Lego?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Lego.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Lego blocks that you just put together and it's done. No, it's the hard work of those skilled trades workers. What we need today and in the next decade—Ontario will need 100,000 workers in construction alone to make sure that we can continue to keep up with the demand for new houses.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: And they need homes.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Yes. We talked about how we want to build homes. Well, to build homes, we need the people who can build the homes. But along with that, we've said that there's going to be 500,000 new immigrants coming to Canada, and about 60% are going to come and make Ontario their new home, like the way I did on January 15, 2000.

We want to make sure that by 2025, when we know that one in five new jobs in the province is going to be in the skilled trades—we have to be ready for it. By the way, these are exciting, in-demand careers with good pay that often come with benefits and a pension.

Madam Speaker, we often talk about doing good, giving back to the community. I can tell you, all of us, when we run for election, when we run for office, we want to give back to the community. So I want to share with everybody in this House: If you're looking for community service, what could be better community service than helping your residents?

You know that we have a need for—a growing population who need to go into the skilled trades. I often say there are people looking for jobs, and there are jobs looking for people. What we can do, together: We have a

champion in each and every riding—124 champions. We don't even need to cover the whole province; the province is already covered within this chamber. When we go back to the constituency office—I call it a community office—take a moment, and what we should do: We should go back and advocate for more skilled trades in this province of Ontario.

There are three programs which I can talk about and something which we can relate through, each one of us. As you know, our focus since day one has been to fix the skilled trades—a system that was neglected by the previous government—by focusing on attracting young people to the sector and making sure that the accreditation and the learning experience are comprehensive and easy to use.

Again, Madam Speaker, it's not me alone; it's the people around who are saying the same thing. For an example, James Hogarth, the president of Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, said, with the establishment of Skilled Trades Ontario, "We look forward to working with their leadership to promote and strengthen the construction trades, to ensure that Ontario leads the way with the best, safest, and most up-to-date training standards in Canada."

Madam Speaker, it's not a hidden secret; I actually have a strong youth population in my riding of Mississauga—Malton. As you all know, in my riding, we have about 24% of youth, 26% of youth, that are unemployed. I'm talking about the data before COVID. It is absolutely important and necessary: We have to help our youth, give them the tools so they can succeed. That's why what we did was—there's a program called Level Up! It's a skilled trades career fair which has launched under Skilled Trades Ontario, encouraging young people to pursue careers in the trades.

Our young people are the leaders of today and tomorrow. Even if you look around and if you talk about our staff, many of the young people who are on our staff—for an example, my OLIP interns, Esma, Adam, Antonio. You know, Madam Speaker, these are the people—they have a lot of energy. Because of them—they come up with these brilliant ideas—we're able to achieve many things within this House. So I just want to take a moment to thank each and every person who helps and supports us at the offices.

Talking about the program—I was talking about the career fair. For grade 7 to 12 students interested in attending the career fair, there's another program called the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. I encourage everyone in the House, the 124 of us, the champions of our ridings: Let's go back to our ridings and help promote the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. Through you, we can actually reach out to all the youths in Ontario. What we could do—sustainably building Ontario would include the homes that our province will need as our province's population continues to rise and housing supply continues to feel the pressure.

Along with helping our youth, what we're doing next: We're actually making sure that we're making real

investments—\$560 million to help the Skills Development Fund—and we're able to help, through 388 projects, 400,000 people around the province take the next step in their career. These 400,000 are the cheques being collected and making sure they're able to give back to the communities.

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Another thing that all of our champions here can do: We're going through the third round of the Skills Development Fund and we're accepting applications with an offering of \$130 million to applicable projects aiming to develop people's skills. I just want to say thank you to the President of the Treasury Board and his PAs for doing an incredible job. Thank you for giving us \$40 million so that we can invest back and make sure that we can help through the Skills Development Fund. So I will encourage again all of the members of this House to go back to your ridings and reach out to organizations and encourage them to apply to the Skills Development Fund.

Many of these projects are directly impacting our construction trades that play an essential role in our mission to build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years. Madam Speaker, you can see the approach is working and we are having a real impact on employers' ability to get the resources to train, so that we can work together to build these homes.

Another example of the fruit of this fund is a project led by the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario which will help thousands of young people prepare for well-paying jobs.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, we are making real progress in addressing the neglect that the previous government had left us with. We need to take dramatic action to address the housing crisis, and that is why I encourage everyone in the House to support Bill 23, More Homes Build Faster Act, that will allow the province to grow in a way that it hasn't done in the past. The bill will allow more homes to be built near transit. It will unlock innovative approaches to design and construction and get shovels in the ground faster.

This bill will also see the introduction of strengthened consumer protection measures for homebuyers and will use provincial land to build more attainable homes so that more Ontarians can realize the dreams of home ownership.

Madam Speaker, we have to put everything together, we are taking action to make sure that we build an additional 50,000 homes while leading an overall expansion of the greenbelt. As we all know, Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, with approximately 1.5 million of those new residents in the greater Golden Horseshoe. To accommodate that growth and support the building of more homes: That is what our government is doing. We're making sure we're putting tools in place, so that we can build more homes.

We've been clear that if these conditions are met, we know our municipalities will have tools so that we can reduce the time it takes to build or approve a home

construction. By reducing the cost, by reducing the duration to approve a house, we'll be able to build houses faster.

Again, it's no secret. Ontario's housing supply crisis is a problem which has been decades in the making. It will take both short-term strategies and long-term commitments from all levels of government, for the hard-working Ontarians and the non-profits to drive this change. That is why we will be releasing a new action plan every year over four years, starting with today's plan to help build more homes and make life more affordable for all Ontarians.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we will build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years and help get people into the skilled trades to build them. When we come together, we will be able to build a better and stronger Ontario. I encourage each and every one to read and know more about Bill 23. Let's all come together, work together and build 1.5 million homes—a commitment that we all gave to Ontarians, that we will solve the housing crisis. It is our time to take action and help solve that crisis.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's always good to hear my friend hold forth in this place.

Question: NIMBYism—I hear this a lot from my friends in government, but I want to recount a story and get the member's reaction. Back home there's a community association that is actually contesting a development. It's not for affordable rental housing or commercial development; it's five embassies that are going to be crammed into the Mechanicsville neighbourhood. They've contested the person leading the development, the National Capital Commission. They didn't want to be granted status, but they wanted to keep their green space; most of the community members here are low-income folks that live in big buildings.

I guess I want the member to reckon with what happens if we prevent the right of residents to rightfully contest development that's not in the community interest.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. I just want to say again: When we're talking about not-in-my-backyard policies or politics, often we talk about how this is going to help to reduce the NIMBYism.

What I want to talk about is that when we went to the people of Ontario and we did the broader consultation—the consultation that happened on June 2—when we spoke to the residents, they said, “We are in a housing crisis.” We need to take steps to make sure that we are able to solve this housing crisis, through this bill and many other bills that we are having. We are making sure that we take action to build houses—that we build it faster, that we build it cheaper—so that the people of Ontario, who are already here and who want to make this place their new home, have access to these homes. That is what we are doing in this bill, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for your comments. You talked about the skilled trades, recognizing that we're building 1.5 million homes as well as the infrastructure that we're committed to in this province, with highways, hospitals, schools. You also mentioned the skilled trades fairs. I was wondering if you could expand on that a little bit. I think it's very exciting. Anything that we can do to encourage young people to enter into the skilled trades, we need to do. I applaud your ministry for the work that you're doing to do this.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the minister for that wonderful question. Talking about the youth, over many, many years, over the last decades, what we've seen in this province of Ontario—well, I'll be honest with you, there's nothing wrong in telling your kids to go to university and become a lawyer, doctor or engineer. But at the same time, not everybody wants to be a doctor, lawyer or engineer. There are people who want to work with their hands, and we've seen that there are kids who love it.

What we are doing through this Level Up! career fair: We are making sure that children have access to real people doing the job, making sure that they actually explain to them what it is to be a tradesman. That is what those career fairs are doing. I encourage each one of you, please—we are going to have five career fairs—to take a look at our ministry website and reach out to the residents in your area and encourage them to visit those career fairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to ask a question. The member talked about consultation, and that the best consultation had been what happened leading up to the election. I assume he meant knocking on doors and talking to real, live humans, which I'm glad to hear that some of the government members are still doing.

My question is about—there was a woman; I knocked on her door, and it has kind of haunted me ever since. She and her husband, in their retirement years, bought a house—excuse me; they tried to buy a house, paid for a house, but that developer is not delivering, is not building the house. They're not getting the house. They've got their money back, though—no interest on that—years later. They've just been handed the money back: "Oh, sorry. We decided not to build it." And they're not only out the money, they can't get into the market now, how many years later, because they got in back then. Nobody protects them. Nobody cares about them—I do; it's haunted me.

We're not seeing protections in here. We're seeing carte blanche for developers, but some of those developers—maybe you play golf with them; maybe you don't—are not doing right by people who are buying their products. What would you say to those developers, and how would you help families in my broader community, like them?

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Mr. Deepak Anand: I want to ensure that the member opposite—we all have a common goal. We have all been

elected by our residents to make sure that—all those residents—we are able to help them. This government, Madam Speaker, doesn't take it lightly.

When it comes to strengthening consumer protections, we are making sure that we are strengthening the consumer protections for homebuyers by adding the strictest and the most comprehensive penalties for unethical developers in all of Canada. We are doing the most here. This plan will double the maximum penalties and fines for builders and vendors who will try to make extra money off the backs of hard-working Ontarians by illegally cancelling new home projects or purchasing agreements.

Madam Speaker, we are also creating a new attainable home ownership program to drive development of attainable housing on surplus provincial government lands. We want to ensure each and every Ontarian—we want to make sure that we all work together and get out of this housing—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm going to throw a little bit of a curveball at the member from Mississauga on this. I met yesterday with some members from the Ontario Real Estate Association, and they were very excited about Bill 23. They said they were actually very much in favour of it because it's going to make a massive difference for us.

But their concern, to me, was that we didn't have enough tradespeople. You addressed it somewhat in your speech when you talked about OYAP. Now, I know a great deal about OYAP, but what I've found is that a lot of times when we're here talking about things, we'll use acronyms and the average person who's watching doesn't understand what it is we're talking about. Could you elaborate a little bit on what OYAP is and why you believe that's going to help build homes?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Wonderful question, and I want to say thank you to the member from God's country. When it comes to helping the residents, especially the youth—we all have children, by the way. We're talking about the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. I will encourage each and every member to go back to your ridings, find out more about the OYAP program and print that literature. You all send the monthly newsletters, the printed newsletters; take a moment, write about the OYAP program and encourage our youth. More than our youth, Madam Speaker, we need to encourage our parents, we need to educate our parents that these are the jobs with pensions, these are the jobs with six-figure salaries—

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Benefits.

Mr. Deepak Anand: —and benefits, of course. Thank you to the member from Brampton West for reminding.

Each and all of us has a moral responsibility. When we are writing to our residents, please inform them about the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. For anyone between grades 7 and 12, reach out to your guidance counsellors. The students will get paid to do this apprenticeship program and will build our Ontario, where we can build 1.5 million—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: To the member from Mississauga–Malton: It's nice to ask you a question. We heard at committee from many people—although many people were denied the right to speak at committee, which is a whole other conversation. But we heard from the city of Toronto. We also heard from other mayors across Ontario, but especially the city of Toronto. They all had the same worry, and that is what they are going to do with the development charge problem.

Specifically for the city of Toronto, which, as we know, is the economic engine for Ontario, it's a \$230-million hole in their budget every year. How do you suppose that they fill that hole? What are your ideas?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I want to thank the member opposite for that extremely important question. She asked a wonderful question: how we can work together and ask our federal government to pay their fair share. You asked me what you can do. Reach out to your member of Parliament. Each one of us—we are a strong team of 124. Coast to coast, everywhere in Ontario, we have representation in this chamber. So we should—Team Prosperity, team Ontario—if each one of us, each one of these 124 MPPs, write to their MP counterparts and tell them—for the federal government to pay their fair share, and we'll take that fair share, and we'll build together and fill this gap.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, we have no time for further questions, but we do have time for further debate.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to have the opportunity to stand and offer a few comments on Bill 23, which is titled by this government the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022.

This is the second time that it has come before the House since it has been to and through committee and back. So for the folks at home who blinked—yes, things are moving that fast, and unfortunately, we aren't seeing the changes that we'd like to see with it having come back from committee. My colleague from University–Rosedale—for anyone who missed her speech and is very interested in knowing and understanding the housing file, they should check that out. I really appreciated the remarks, and I will let them stand for themselves and not go into what could have or should have happened at committee.

But I will talk about the concerns across our communities, what we're hearing from folks about this bill, which—the government wants everybody to wear the “We're Building Homes” T-shirt. And the fact of the matter is, we do need more homes. We do need affordable homes. We need to see a range in supply, absolutely. But the problem is this bill makes a mess of that landscape, so to speak.

The bill would download most land use planning and authority onto lower-tier municipalities while limiting the ability of municipalities to collect development charges for certain growth-related infrastructure costs. The bill

also allows the government to limit municipal protections for tenants facing displacement due to redevelopment and severely reduces the power of conservation authorities to protect wetlands, biodiversity and ecological health. That's sort of the banner. That's how we're breaking it down today.

I wanted to read something that puts it into people-speak—

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Sorry, I'm disciplining my colleagues. Back to you, Speaker—

Mr. Dave Smith: Your teacher look.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, I didn't mean to bring my teacher look today, but anyway, here we are.

Back to the bill: This can get confusing for people, and I'm not trying to condescend. There are a lot of moving parts in this bill. And when the government says, “We need homes, we need homes,” and everybody does the nod of, “Yes, of course, we need homes”—but I'm going to highlight some challenges in this bill that are going to make things, I will say, more problematic and will not streamline the process the way that the government has said that they will, whether that's just a mistake on their part—although we heard it at committee; there are ways that this government could have improved—well, not just this legislation. This legislation is a bag of malarkey, but there are things that could help us to have the homes and the responsible planning that needs to happen.

Here is an article from the Pointer: “Bill 23 Is ‘Ecological Insanity,’ Implodes Sustainable Urban Planning in Unhinged Give Over to Sprawl Developers”—

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Okay. I'm going to invite everybody to not interrupt me, because, as per the standing orders—enough.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Would every one please come to order?

Continue.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm quoting here: “The PC government has proposed unprecedented changes to how land use planning is done across Ontario. In an omnibus piece of legislation introduced last week,” the Premier “is providing his largest gift to the development lobby that helped him land his job in the first place.

“Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, creates an open season on critical ecosystems and habitats in Ontario, a fundamental shift in land use policy that will lead to the destruction of wetlands, woodlots and other critical habitat and effectively sets fire to the province's carbon reduction targets.

“The legislation mirrors what subdivision developers have been aggressively lobbying for—a bill that paves the way, literally, for more land gobbling sprawl across southern Ontario.”

One of the quotes from the article, from Tim Gray, who is the executive director of Environmental Defence: “It's pretty much a catastrophic attack on planning that looks to blow up the system ... And that, of course, is gonna have

devastating impacts on the environment, but also on the livability and sustainability of our city.”

1700

I’m going to read from my regional chair. Chair Henry put out a statement on Bill 23, the province’s most recent housing supply bill, and some of the pieces of his statement are:

“While we welcome potential changes to help streamline processes ... there are concerns with provincial Bill 23....

“It has proposed numerous changes to the Planning Act and Development Charges Act that, if passed, will significantly impact how municipal governments plan for, and recover the costs associated with growth. It has unintended consequences and widespread implications that impact all Ontarians economically, socially and environmentally.”

He goes on to say, “Successful urban planning also requires a vision—a bigger picture. It’s about shaping communities that balance growth, services and protecting our environment for our residents. We need to protect our wetlands to mitigate flooding; and to take care of the woodlands that support the air we breathe. Ensuring a safe, prosperous and healthy future is what we have been elected to do.”

He goes on to say, “And we believe that growth should pay for growth. Development charges have traditionally been collected to fund large infrastructure projects required for new builds. Without them, municipalities are forced to cover the costs through increased property taxes and water and sewer rates—a burden on existing residents and businesses....

“We encourage the province to engage in further dialogue with municipalities and residents to help ensure the environment—and the health and safety of all Ontarians—remains at the forefront.”

We did talk about what happened at committee. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario—normally this government tends to stand up and read their comments in debate, but interestingly, they haven’t for this one. But part of their submission on Bill 23 is this:

“AMO shares the concerns expressed by Conservation Ontario that the changes proposed in Bill 23 will not meet the goals for increasing housing supply and will instead increase the risks to life and property for Ontario residents. The diminished role of CAs could also lead to more development being located in natural hazards, higher costs as a result of property damage due to flooding or other climate change events, increased burden on municipal partners, and the decline of the ecosystem approach currently applied through the established integrated watershed management lens.

“Municipalities have successfully relied on the benefits of a long-standing conservation authority partnership which has used local watershed science to guide decision-making. Bill 23 places new responsibilities on municipalities related to natural hazards and natural resources that they are unprepared for and under-resourced to take on.”

It’s a long submission. I would encourage the government members to read it.

Connected to that is what I will share from my local conservation authority. In my area, it’s the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority—yes, famously known for purple woods and their phenomenal maple syrup. I had kind of—not a funny joke, but had said to them that once the government has finished with all the conservation authorities, the only thing they will be allowed to do is make maple syrup, but considering that that’s one of the fees and that they may have to freeze their fees, they may actually—who knows?

I don’t mean to make light of it, but the conservation authorities—so this bill makes some changes, and I’m just going to put this into kind of everyday language and then I’ll read what they have said, which is probably a little bit more helpful, but what I’m going to explain is what I want folks at home to understand.

This bill has made changes so that they can’t enter in any agreement about planning. They can still enter into agreements with a municipality, like maybe a tree-planting agreement kind of thing but not about planning. They’re literally not allowed to offer input. So if a municipality, as happens all the time, goes to a conservation authority and their expertise and says, “Hey, I have a developer who has got a suggested subdivision here. Can you put eyes on this and flag any problems,” the conservation authority would do that with their experts and planners and provide that feedback, and the municipality doesn’t have to do anything with that. They can ignore it. The council can override any input—the conservation authorities actually can’t get in the way of, okay? They were allowed to offer input, and then the municipality could decide what to do with permitting and what information to give to the developer, like, “Hey, here’s a wetland. You don’t want your houses to sink,” or what have you.

Now, the municipalities are still required by their rules and whatnot to ensure that they meet the requirements under the Planning Act and their environmental requirements, but they’re not allowed to talk to the conservation authorities. That’s now not allowed. You’ve got community leaders who have to still have the environmental lens put on it, but they’re not allowed to talk to the experts, so now they’re going to have to figure out how to build that capacity in their own planning departments. Maybe it’s hire someone or use a planner they currently have and have them suddenly develop the expertise or whatnot. I don’t know how that makes the process faster, and I maybe oversimplified that, but that’s the gist.

Now they are forbidden from getting their input, recognizing that a CA, a conservation authority, could provide that input when asked, and it didn’t even have to be heeded. Tell me how this makes it faster. I’m willing to bet you can’t, because it won’t. But it was on the wish list of—I don’t know. Was this on Silvio’s wish list? I don’t know.

The Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has said basically what I said: “This amendment would prohibit conservation authorities from offering our expertise on ecology, natural heritage, wetlands, and biodiversity for proposals under prescribed acts such as the

Planning Act. We are concerned that the proposed amendment will have unintended consequences that will lead to slower and more costly approvals and environmental degradation.”

And the thing is, the conservation authorities have been building relationships with municipalities. Through the years, we've known that there have been challenges to be overcome, but for the most part, they have worked out through the years a relationship that works. To just punch that relationship in the face and say, “You're not allowed to talk anymore,” is so weird and problematic.

As they have said:

“We have well-established practices and locally supported agreements with our municipalities that provides effective and timeline-compliant advice. Without the ability to comment on development applications, there would be information gaps resulting in slower development approvals and added costs to developers to fill these information gaps. Municipalities would need to establish alternative capacity for environmental review that would be less cost-effective than the service conservation authorities currently provide.... Without conservation authority review of development applications, there would be an increased risk of environmental impacts.

“The proposed amendments will deprive our multiple municipal partners of the locally grown expertise they want and need—and rely on daily—to understand and implement environmental planning considerations; it will lead to fewer homes built slower and thereby directly undermine the objectives of the government's housing plans....

“Also of concern are proposed changes that could negatively impact our ability to protect people and property from flooding and erosion.... This will result in longer response times, increased costs and an increased risk to people and property from natural hazards. Municipalities will also assume sole liability for the impact of development on natural hazards within municipal boundaries and on neighbouring upstream and downstream communities....”

What they have said is, succinctly, “We respectfully recommend that development authorized under the Planning Act not be exempted from a requirement for the permit under the” Conservation Authorities Act “and that all current conservation authority hazard-related responsibilities remain unchanged.”

Guys, this letter wasn't just written by tree huggers, okay? Because I know every time we talk about the environment, you roll your eyes or you have that look of, “Ugh, you guys are in the way of progress.” But the people who signed onto this letter are the folks on the board. Just like at every conservation authority, they're elected members of our community who have a finger on the pulse of what is needed and what is challenging our municipalities, whether that's councillors, mayors—in this case, the mayor of Clarington, the mayor of Whitby, the mayor of Oshawa and the chair of the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Bob Chapman. These are folks who actually know what they're talking about. I would

also argue that so do tree huggers—just saying, but moving on.

1710

Phil Pothen, Ontario environment program manager from Environmental Defence, went on to also say, to break it down about planning, “This bill's attack on regional planning is counterproductive for housing affordability—as well as being environmentally disastrous:

“—devolving planning decisions to lower-tier municipalities would produce development that is more scattered and thus much more environmentally harmful, but also more uncoordinated and expensive.”

So what he is saying is, “This is precisely the opposite of what's needed at a time when we need to preserve every acre of farmland and habitat, and use scarce construction materials, construction labour, equipment and supporting infrastructure to maximize the number of well-designed and low-cost homes, and transform existing post-WWII subdivisions into public transit-supporting complete communities.”

So the harm that this bill does to that coordinated regional approach doesn't make sense to me, and I would ask that the government explain that. Because the idea of coordinated strategies across regions—doesn't that make sense in terms of resources, in terms of initiatives and the outcomes, better planning? In this case, it says, “No. We're just going to give it to the lower tier.” So as I said, it may be scattered, but disparate, right? How does that improve things?

I realize it was probably also on the wish list, right? Like, folks who are self-serving don't want to serve others, you know? So I think when you've got interests that are profit-driven, they want to earn profit, they want to not have to answer to environmental voices or regional plans. But that doesn't mean that they should, right?

Anyway, the letter is a seven-page document signed by more than 125 organizations and almost 100 individuals. This is a media statement about a letter that came out on November 21: “Massive Coalition of Groups Unite to Condemn” the “Government's Secret Sprawl Plans

“Today a rare coalition of farmers, housing advocates, urban planners, environmentalists, labour unions, health care workers and community groups from across Ontario united and released a damning statement of the province's recently proposed recipe for sprawl: Bill 23 and the proposal to remove precious farmland and natural areas from the protected greenbelt.”

David Crombie, former mayor of Toronto and former chair of the provincial Greenbelt Council, had said, “I am profoundly disturbed by the government's proposed actions.... They won't solve the housing crisis but they will make it harder to fix our existing neighbourhoods, towns and cities as well as protect the farmland and natural areas that sustain them. If the Premier doesn't put the brakes on these ill-considered plans, we'll have more sprawl and much less local food and protection against flooding and the climate crisis.”

Anyways, a seven-page letter, and they've outlined that this bill, “Taken together, the changes would:

“—do little or nothing to address the shortage of truly affordable housing;

“—facilitate expensive urban sprawl and inappropriate high-rises at the expense of more diverse housing types designed for all stages of life and ranges of income;

“—divert limited construction materials and labour away from building mixed and affordable housing and direct them instead towards sprawl development...;

“—remove from the greenbelt thousands of acres of valuable natural areas and agricultural land and turn them into sprawl development;

“—undermine the protection of wetlands, woodlands, rivers, streams and wildlife habitat across Ontario;

“—destroy key land use planning processes that Ontario municipalities, conservation authorities and residents need in order to protect, manage and plan for climate-resilient ecosystems and communities;

“—create an ecologically vulnerable ‘Swiss cheese’ greenbelt by allowing land speculators to develop the lands that the government would have removed from greenbelt protection.”

Speaker, I’m running out of time here, and I have letters from the community. For those of us who have staff and community offices—I’m looking at some of the government members—you would know, if you check your email, that our inboxes are filled with people concerned and protesting this on the environmental side, on the planning side. Because it’s all one and the same; we want livable, healthful communities. We want our municipal governments that we elect to be able to make decisions based on the growth plans, on responsible development—factoring in green space, yes, but factoring in floods, the potential for that mess that a property owner could be faced with when a developer doesn’t have anybody watching over them and just puts a house on a swamp. Are we allowed to call them swamps? We’re not allowed to call this wetlands anymore because this bill changes all of the designations, but it comes to the same. We need healthy communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I appreciate the comments of the member from Oshawa. Do you know what? I know we’ve often heard some very heartbreaking stories about our constituents, Ontarians who’ve been priced out of the housing market, unable to find a home that would meet their needs.

For the last eight years, I was a town councillor in the town of Tecumseh, and I received a number of them on my own for infill developments. The Baillargeon family is one case. They wanted to build a shed for their growing family to help store and add a bedroom within. They were refused because of a lack of clarity as a result of the Gilmor decision, which gave some uncertainty about when a conservation authority could issue a permit. There were cases on James Crescent, Dillon Drive and Chene Street in my former ward where, for over two years, permits could not be issued by the conservation authority.

Speaker, will the opposition let us know why this status quo, which prolongs approval delays and passes these

excessive construction costs on to hard-working Ontarians, young families, students and seniors, is the better option ahead of us?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you. I appreciate the question, but I also appreciate hearing some of our backstories in this room. For example, I didn’t know his background in terms of municipal politics.

We are hearing from real people who want a safe place to live, but who want something that they can afford. Whether that is about affordable rent or whether that is a distinct house with a backyard and a porch, people want to be able to afford a place to live.

But he raised permits. One of the things in our neck of the woods and across the province are permits that are just sitting there. The municipality issues permits, and then the developer just holds them and doesn’t develop. There may be reasons why, but when there aren’t, except for greed, how come we don’t see anything in this bill that would keep that from happening or protect the folks who are waiting and waiting and waiting?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member for her excellent comments on this legislation. One of the number one reasons I’m getting emails from people right now who are deeply concerned about this legislation, from all across the province, is that they’re asking and they’re desperate—how can we stop this? What can we do? I wondered if the member would care to comment a little bit on what the average Ontarian can do right now to get this government to change direction on this really harmful legislation.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oh, man, I don’t like that question. I don’t want to ever kind of characterize them as a juggernaut, right, because that would make you feel like they can’t be stopped—Dougernaut, juggernaut, whatever.

But I don’t know, because in Oshawa and Durham region, we had a heck of a fight on our hands with this government and other players to save Duffins Creek, and we did. We were so excited. Amazon threw us the bone and we saved it, and then the developers—I think they said it was rogue farmers; I don’t know. Some pirate farmer came and tilled 90% of that protected land in the middle of the night because they gonna do what they gonna do. It was just heartbreaking and wrong, but it’s what happens.

1720

This is a wish list to folks who asked for it through the years of this Premier and this government. So I don’t know. Maybe if they pool their resources and they’ve got more money than the developers, maybe—like, I would say call their MPPs, but I’m hearing, with all the rallies at their offices, some of them don’t even have staff, so I don’t know what they should do. Try.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for her comments, although I didn’t appreciate all of the things that I think were imputing motive against the government and probably were not parliamentary.

One of the things that I'm very excited about in this legislation is the fact that it will make affordable housing much more likely because of the development charge provisions. I just wanted to quote from Reena, which is a great organization that I've had some experience with. Bryan Keshen, the CEO, said, "Reena is looking forward to working with the minister on the implementation of this transformative legislation, ensuring that deeply affordable housing will be a reality. By creating waivers of development charges fees, charges and levies on non-profit affordable housing projects, Ontario is setting the stage for more affordable housing."

Doesn't the member think that this is a great initiative to ensure we have more affordable housing, which I know everyone has been asking for?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Nothing in this legislation deals with affordable housing. Nothing in this legislation deals with affordable housing or ensures affordable housing. And you can clear the land, and you can clear the path, and you can rename—not you, sorry; through the Speaker: This government can rename a wetland to "land formerly known as wet" or "damp land" or "moist meadow." You can rename it, and then that land becomes worth so much more on paper, that developer is laughing all the way to the bank and is not on the hook to build anything. None of them have to build—some of them will. Hopefully, they build affordable houses, affordable homes. Maybe they just all wake up tomorrow and say, "I'm going to make the world a better place." But you haven't put the assurances in there. The use-it-or-lose-it was a really smart option in terms of permits to ensure that once they get the permits, they actually do build. No. Where's that?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: To the member from Oshawa, thank you for your very informative, passionate speech.

There's so much in this bill: heritage, development charges, parkland levies, rental replacement, Toronto Green Standard, the poor conservation authorities. Where do you start? Where do you begin?

What troubles you the most? What are you hearing from your residents and, quite frankly, residents across Ontario—because that's who we're hearing from. What is the worst part about this bill?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: There's so much to choose from. But do you know what? I'll read to you one of the letters that I received from a constituent, Ron, who said: "I am appealing to you to reconsider your position regarding Bill 23 and the proposal to allow the construction of

houses on the currently protected areas of greenbelt." I'm going to pause and say this is to the Minister of Finance; he's not appealing to my position.

He goes on to say, "I feel that this proposal will not only set a precedent that in future may be challenged in court to allow further sensitive greenbelt land to be purchased and developed for commercial and housing purposes. Two previous Progressive Conservative governments took action to preserve one, the Niagara escarpment and secondly the Oak Ridges moraine. This is part of the legacy of the PC Party..." He hopes that this "government has the foresight not to tarnish that legacy."

He goes on to say, "The only winners are the land speculators and developers who stand to reap millions of dollars in profits at the expense of every single person in Ontario, for the foreseeable future." That's how it's perceived by the outside world.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one further question.

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: Thank you to my colleague for the presentation. They asked you about affordable housing, and I want to ask you the same thing. I didn't see anything in the bill—or even about supportive housing. In my riding, there is no affordable, there is no supportive housing left. The list goes on. The time to be able to qualify for them—it takes years. Families are moving away to try to find supportive housing. They put their names throughout Ontario to find it. They move away from their families or they end up either in long-term care or they end up in hospitals. So I ask you, is there anything in this bill for affordable housing but particularly for supportive housing?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, sorry, there is nothing in this bill for supportive housing—and anybody who is laughing or suggesting otherwise, walk across and show us where, because there's nothing in this bill for supportive housing.

This is not a bill for the average Ontarian. This is a bill that, I think, answers that wish list for developers. If the member opposite was going to take exception that I'm imputing motive, I haven't. But it's really hard to talk about one without the other when there's so much money being made now as a result of these changes.

I guess it remains to be seen whether or not these houses are ultimately built and how many Ontarians get the housing that they need and deserve. This is not the province that we deserve, though. I'll say that much. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's our time for questions.

Report continues in volume B.

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Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	