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Lundi
24 avril 2023

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ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 April 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 avril 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REDUCING INEFFICIENCIES ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENTS), 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES INEFFICACITÉS (MODIFIANT
DES LOIS SUR LES INFRASTRUCTURES)

Miss Surma moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure / *Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les infrastructures.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate?

Hon. Kinga Surma: I am happy to rise for the third reading of Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act (Infrastructure Statute Law Amendments), 2023. Today, I am sharing my time with David Piccini, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

This bill, if passed and proclaimed into force, would make amendments to the Ministry of Infrastructure Act, 2011, complementary amendments to nine other acts and the Environmental Assessment Act.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a transformative plan to build Ontario now and for generations to come. It includes building roads, bridges and highways, connecting people to high-speed Internet, providing more transit options, ensuring our children have access to the education they deserve and providing quality of care for our seniors.

But our government knows that building Ontario for the future is much more than that. It also includes being fiscally prudent, transparent and responsible by making smarter and more effective decisions that will benefit Ontarians. This means respecting how tax dollars are being spent, modernizing outdated, burdensome regulations and cutting red tape by streamlining processes.

Mr. Speaker, the people across Ontario are expecting our government to build while also practising good governance. That's why I am proud to say that our government is taking action to deliver on those expectations by bringing forward the Reducing Inefficiencies Act (Infrastructure Statute Law Amendments), 2023. If passed, our

proposed measures would help enhance fiscal management, boost the economy, save taxpayer money and cut red tape.

This bill is just one of the many ways our government is continuing to take the necessary steps to unlock our province's economic potential, create better jobs and save taxpayer dollars. It's another meaningful step in our government's plan to build Ontario for the future.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to start by giving everyone an overview of what this bill entails. Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act (Infrastructure Statute Law Amendments), 2023, contains two initiatives. One of the proposed initiatives would streamline process to better maintain and manage real estate. The other initiative, if passed, would help bring much-needed efficiency to the Environmental Assessment Act, all while ensuring continued environmental oversight.

Today, I want to focus on our government's plan to better maintain and manage real estate. Real estate is one of our government's greatest resources, but currently, accountability for this portfolio is highly distributed among many entities and each of these entities have their own processes for decisions and transactions. Bill 69, if passed, would help our government make more strategic, holistic decisions that could have significant impacts in the long term for families and businesses across Ontario. If passed, the proposed measures in Bill 69 would establish a framework to remove or modify the real estate authority of 14 entities and provide the Minister of Infrastructure with control over real estate previously under the control of the prescribed entities.

Each of these 14 entities plays a critical role in the health, well-being and economic prosperity of our province. Their work impacts many different sectors that people in our province depend on daily, from education, economic development, finance, health care, the digital sector, human rights and equity, the skilled trades, arts, media, tourism, agriculture and fire safety. We know that these past few years have brought many different challenges to these industries, yet members within these 14 entities have shown great leadership by continuing to adapt to these challenges while ensuring that people of Ontario still have access to their work, programs and services.

These 14 entities include the Ontario Financing Authority; the Education Quality and Accountability Office; the Financial Services Regulatory Authority; the Ontario Financing Authority; the Ontario Securities Commission; the Human Rights Legal Support Centre; Intellectual Property Ontario; Skilled Trades Ontario; the Ontario Arts

Council; Ontario Creates; Destination Ontario; the Ontario Trillium Foundation; Agricorp; and the fire safety council.

The bill, if passed, would amend the Ministry of Infrastructure Act, 2011, and would include complementary amendments to the following nine other acts: the AgriCorp Act, 1996; the Arts Council Act; the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021; the Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993; the Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996; the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario Act, 2016; the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; the Human Rights Code; and the Securities Commission Act, 2021.

The legislative amendments that are being proposed today, if passed, would support the centralization of real estate, subject to any exceptions that would be determined through regulation.

Secondly, I also want to speak on the work at the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, where Bill 69 was studied by members of all sides of the House, with whom I had the pleasure to deputize and speak on the bill. One of the key topics of Bill 69 that members expressed interest in are the amendments on the Environmental Assessment Act, giving the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks the authority to waive or change the 30-day waiting period for infrastructure projects with routine and predictable effects, such as waste water or municipal roadworks.

Madam Speaker, I want to be clear, as I was in committee: This minor change to the Environmental Assessment Act will simply give the minister the discretion, should they feel it is necessary, to waive or amend the waiting period for minor infrastructure works that are important for municipalities. It does not in any way reduce or lower the standards of the environmental assessment process, but simply gives the minister the discretion to remove the 30-day waiting period, should the minister choose, when and if the class environmental standards have been met, there are no concerns from the community and the municipality wants to move forward with the project.

Projects that fall under this requirement are:

—the city of Brampton’s Clark Boulevard and Eastern Avenue project;

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—the municipality of Chatham-Kent’s Ridgetown Stormwater Master Plan project;

—the city of Mississauga’s Carolyn Creek erosion control along Barbertain Road;

—the Sarnia Jail administration trailer project; and

—the region of Peel’s Front Street Wastewater Pumping Station and Wastewater Diversion project.

These projects are important for municipalities to complete. This bill, if passed, would accelerate the construction process, which is especially essential given that Ontario has a seasonal construction window. I know the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is ready to have a more in-depth presentation after the conclusion of my remarks.

Committee members also asked about the realty portion of this bill, specifically on the Auditor General’s report on Infrastructure Ontario’s role in this bill. I want to reiterate that the CBREA amendment in this bill does not apply to the realty authority for these 14 entities. This amendment simply gives the Minister of Infrastructure centralized control to evaluate and manage the 14 entities’ real estate portfolios and office space. If this bill is passed, this simply gives the Ministry of Infrastructure a direct line of sight on realty decisions so the government of Ontario can evaluate, consolidate, optimize and modernize agency real-estate decisions.

I want to thank the members of the standing committee of heritage, infrastructure and culture for their work in studying Bill 69 and for the opportunity to speak on this important bill that will save taxpayer dollars, cut red tape, optimize office space and enhance fiscal management.

Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to share that since 2020, the Ministry of Infrastructure has consulted with key stakeholders, including the 14 entities and their eight oversight ministries. We heard that our proposed initiatives are aligned with their ongoing initiatives to increase office efficiencies and optimize office space. This comes as no surprise to our government, Madam Speaker. The people of Ontario want and deserve a more responsible, efficient government. Bill 69 is one of the ways in which we are doing that.

Madam Speaker, this is because our government is a government of action. We are constantly reviewing policies to see what can be updated and completed more efficiently. The benefits of a more centralized real estate model are clear. For example, the 2017 Auditor General’s annual report identified that the Ministry of Infrastructure’s general real estate portfolio could be operated more efficiently through a centralized authority and decision-making process. The report noted that this would help ensure properties in Ontario are well-managed and maintained in an efficient manner that would enhance economic benefits.

The 2018 Ernst and Young line-by-line review of government spending, titled “Managing Transformation: A Modernization Action Plan for Ontario,” found that a centralized approach to the management of real estate property and a more effective asset management process had numerous benefits. These benefits included reducing overall spending across government, improving the alignment of policies and enhancing decision-making capabilities. In addition, PricewaterhouseCoopers identified in 2018 that a strategic and holistic approach to the government’s real estate portfolio could foster greater levels of transparency while improving decision-making capabilities and reporting.

The feedback doesn’t end there, Madam Speaker. The benefits of a streamlined real estate model are also recognized nationally and internationally. For example, in an article published in the Journal of Property Management in 2018, titled “Doing More than the Math,” the authors analyzed various real estate management firms in an effort to maximize operating efficiencies. This report found that

firms that thoughtfully centralized and consolidated their real estate assets were in a better position to align real estate policies with their overall mandate, and as a result, they were able to hire staff with the necessary skills to fill knowledge gaps on the team.

Because organizations centralized real estate, they were able to gain insights into the entire workforce and better assess knowledge gaps; strategically plan ahead; produce better-quality work, resulting in happier clients; and increase efficiency through a more cohesive, holistic process.

In a recent article published just last year by J.P. Morgan, the authors found that decentralized real estate operations were more likely to experience issues like decreased visibility into financial operations and inefficiencies. This is because decentralized real estate models often have numerous players involved in real estate decision-making, resulting in an approach that is less aligned with overall goals.

Another study published by McKinsey and Co. found that centralized direction on real estate helped numerous companies navigate the uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This helped organizations make cohesive decisions to protect the health and safety of all employees, tenants and end-users of the space.

Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize this case. This report found that a centralized real estate model went beyond cost savings and efficiency. A centralized real estate model helped support health and safety. This is because a centralized real estate model can give organizations and governments a holistic view and, as a result, it can help inform highly targeted and important decisions.

The evidence is right in front of us. We've looked at the research. Numerous reports have found that organizations and jurisdictions that move to a centralized real estate model have increased efficiency, transparency and accountability. We've taken these recommendations and considered the research and that's why we've brought forward Bill 69.

If passed and proclaimed into force, Bill 69 has the potential to increase efficiency, cut red tape, enhance fiscal management and save taxpayer dollars. It would also help eliminate the duplication of responsibilities, ensure that real estate is used effectively and, as a result, could boost economic growth across Ontario.

If realty authority is centralized, it means that all real estate matters would be overseen by a single authority. This would reduce the need for multiple ministries and entities handling similar tasks and processes. Most importantly, it means that the 14 entities described earlier can focus on what matters most: protecting people in Ontario, providing important services and programs, and enriching the quality of life for Ontarians.

Madam Speaker, Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act (Infrastructure Statute Law Amendments), 2023, if passed, has the potential to provide more efficiency and transparency. Our government is confident that this bill, if passed, would boost economic development opportunities across the province through cost savings that could be used

for other purposes. This is all part of our government's plan to work harder, smarter and more efficiently to make life better and more affordable for the people of Ontario.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Ontario's plan and the progress we've already made to date. Our government has already unlocked thousands of cost savings for taxpayers and businesses across our province. This is clearly outlined in our 2023 budget, Building a Strong Ontario, released last month by our Minister of Finance. For example, at a time when the cost of living is rising, our government stepped up and continues to step up to support those in need. That's why we introduced legislation to extend the gas and fuel tax cuts by an additional 12 months to help families across the province with their household budgets. We eliminated licence plate renewal fees and licence plate stickers and refunded fees paid over a two-year period from March 2020 to March 2022 for eligible vehicles. We've also taken significant action to lower costs for businesses so Ontario can continue to attract investment and create more opportunities for the future.

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Our government knows infrastructure is the backbone of a strong and healthy economy. That's why our government is also delivering one of the most ambitious infrastructure plans, with an historic investment of \$184 billion over 10 years. This plan is getting shovels in the ground to build much-needed hospitals, schools, highways, bridges and other critical assets that will lay the foundation for a stronger and more productive Ontario.

And that's not all. We are investing nearly \$4 billion to support our government's bold plan to make high-speed Internet accessible in every community across the province by the end of 2025 because we know that access to high-speed Internet is essential in today's economy. It allows families and workers to learn, start a business, access vital services like health care, and connect with loved ones and friends.

These projects are just a few examples of how we are investing in infrastructure for the people of Ontario. And we will not stop there. Madam Speaker, our government has a strong mandate to build Ontario for today and for generations to come, and we want the people of Ontario to know that we are delivering, and we will continue to deliver. Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act (Infrastructure Statute Law Amendments), 2023, is the next step in our proposed plan.

I want to conclude with this: What improves the lives of Ontarians is when the government builds infrastructure. When the Ministry of Infrastructure helps to build a bridge or a hospital, it changes people's lives. That infrastructure will be there for many years, people will rely on it, it will save lives, and it will help Ontarians live better.

Bill 69 affects projects such as waste water projects and municipal roads, which are smaller but no less important. In places such as Scarborough, Sarnia, Windsor, and even in my riding in Etobicoke Centre, homes have been flooded and families impacted due to the lack of storm-water management and delays. Bill 69, if passed, will

accelerate the work on the stormwater and waste water projects for municipalities and could prevent a family's home from being flooded.

Madam Speaker, people in Ontario are depending on our government to introduce innovative ideas and new approaches to work more efficiently, improve fiscal management and reduce regulatory burden. This bill, with the changes that we are proposing, if passed, will deliver on those expectations. Bill 69, if passed, will continue to help our government make good on our promise to the people of Ontario, and that is to be fiscally prudent, respect taxpayer dollars, cut red tape and practise good governance.

I will now turn it over to the Minister of the Environment, David Piccini. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: It's an honour to rise in the House today for the third reading of Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act. I just want to start by acknowledging and thanking my colleague the Minister of Infrastructure for her remarks and for her leadership. I think it's important to note that when it comes to building a better Ontario, when it comes to building a stronger Ontario, this minister thinks outside the box, finding meaningful partnerships and investing.

She made an important comment when she spoke about waste water and stormwater infrastructure, smaller projects which she said are no less important, and I can start speaking for the good people of Northumberland—Peterborough South, who I represent. She's joined me on multiple occasions in my riding to see the important impact these investments are making in communities like mine to support a growing Ontario, because for years previous governments let this infrastructure crumble. That matters when it comes to building purpose-built rental units, when it comes to building affordable housing, when it comes to intensifying in existing urban centres, when it comes to expanding, building more homes so that people can get out of their parents' basements. All of this stuff matters, so we have to tie everything in this bill into the bigger picture.

As you know, Madam Speaker, some elements in this bill come from my Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. I'm happy to take a few minutes to paint a bigger and fuller picture as to what this means.

I'm going to start off with the obvious, a number: 50 years. I'm a big political junkie, and I recall a mayor in Brockville with a fantastic set of hair—perhaps not here today, but a fantastic set of hair. This was—

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm here, but not the hair.

Hon. David Piccini: Yes, he's here but not the hair. This was years after. He was barely 12 years old, and this environmental assessment hasn't been touched since. You fast-forward to today, to the homes this minister is building, to the affordable housing—I can't wait to have him in my riding to talk about Indigenous housing supports and about the Homelessness Prevention Program. That's going to be big.

But what has happened since then and now and these historic announcements he's going to be joining me on? Well, the EA process has not changed. It isn't touched. I don't have to think back much farther—Madam Speaker, yourself as well, I think—to a time in university; when I went to university, social media was barely a thing. I remember getting my first cell phone in university. Today, these things are a part of our daily lives. We use them. I think to eDNA and the important work eDNA is having within the environmental permissions process for endangered species. But yet, this process hasn't changed at all. Notwithstanding and despite the fact that technology has evolved incredibly to support the EA process, this process hasn't changed in 50 years. I'm very proud that this government is taking long-overdue steps to modernize and improve the environmental assessment process.

Everything has changed, and the environmental assessment process must change with it. Simply put, it's outdated, and Ontarians deserve better. Leaving Ontario with the ineffective and inefficient act that requires urgent updates our government is proposing—the foundations of the Environmental Assessment Act remain incredibly strong. This act does not fundamentally alter the act in any way.

The changes contained in this bill are not a revolution. We're doing a lot of things in this government that are a revolution, a lot of great things to build more homes, to build more critical infrastructure, to build new subway lines, to transform and modernize Ontario Place so that people can actually get back in and enjoy the space. We're doing a lot of things as a government, but I'll acknowledge that this slight change we're making through my ministry is not revolutionary, and it's not one of those things.

This, of course, requires—and I will encourage everyone in this Legislature to take time to truly understand what we're proposing here. It's a planning and decision-making process that evaluates potential environmental impacts. That's the environmental assessment process. The environmental assessment process identifies and mitigates potential environmental issues before a project is implemented. They consider the effect and inputs from groups like Indigenous communities, government agencies, the public.

The environmental assessment process: Let's discuss within that what we're actually changing. This is important as, quite frankly, listening to some in the debate on this so far, I do not believe that there is an in-depth—and I wonder whether there's a true appreciation of what is being proposed here. The proposed amendments to the Environmental Assessment Act are merely to provide the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks with the ability to waive or alter the 30-day review period, allowing projects to begin sooner. It's a 30-day review period. That's after the process is done. That's after all of the work has been done. We pause in time, just freeze and sit still. I think there are a number of instances; I think to waste water treatment plants, which are improving water quality for communities, where perhaps the minister would want to waive that waiting period to allow the

proponent to move forward faster to build this critical infrastructure.

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This doesn't change or alter the ability for community members to request a bump-up request to the minister for a full environmental assessment. It doesn't change any of the big the pieces within the act itself. It merely provides the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks with the ability to waive or alter the 30-day review period.

I think to where this started. As many good policies start, this started with a Bombardier project in Mississauga, where the mayor and where the community asked us and said, "This 30-day waiting period doesn't make sense," and where this project that was going to bring good-paying jobs and was going to bring investments into our aviation sector would have been kicked to another construction season. You think of the inflationary costs that that would have meant. This just enabled us to get shovels in the ground sooner. It didn't do anything to change permissions, permits to take water, endangered species. A number of these permissions were not there in this instance, but it bears repeating that it wouldn't change any of those permissions. Madam Speaker, I think this is the right thing to do.

As you can see, this arbitrary 30-day period here is delay. Usually we see this place in question period filled with youth, the next generation. I see our young member from Brampton, who is doing a fantastic job. I see some young people in the gallery today. What I hear is a generation who can't see beyond their parents' basements. That is what Ontario is for too many: their parents' basement.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Not me.

Hon. David Piccini: Not that member, but that's the reality for so many. I spoke to a young mother in my riding over the weekend who is so desperate for home ownership and wonders if she can ever move beyond trying to find affordable rental units in Cobourg.

The members opposite voted against when we waived development charges for purpose-built rental units. I spoke to Trinity Housing, a housing co-op in my riding, on what waiving development charges meant for them. It's that minor bit between making a project viable and making it not viable. Waiving development charges mattered for them. We codified what the town of Cobourg—and a shout-out to the town of Cobourg—is doing to ensure that we can get these purpose-built rental units built.

I know, for quite a few around here, it has been quite some time since quite a few around here lived in rental units. It's not so far for myself. I recall with my wife really saving for years to be able to put that down payment on a home, to be able to become a homeowner. For too many that's become a lost dream. We have to acknowledge that there are processes and there are realities that are a fundamental barrier, that are doing nothing to actually protect the environment, nothing to provide more affordable housing and nothing to make that dream of housing come sooner.

As I said, water and sewer mains, important infrastructure projects to bring cleaner water, to support waste water discharge for growing communities: These are all things that we're working on with the sector, working with industry, not taking the approach of previous Liberal governments of driving those manufacturing jobs out or, in the skilled trades with the ratios, of making sure that we don't have those workers. We had Happy Bucks at Rotary this past Friday, where Stadtke Plumbing acknowledged the number of youth they've been able to get into plumbing because of changes this government has made.

I'm going all over because I'm connecting the dots here. You need skilled tradesmen and tradeswomen to build the critical infrastructure we need to support a better environment, to support cleaner water discharge, cleaner water when you turn on the taps. Why do you need that? Because you need homes.

We know there are some in this Legislature who just don't want to build those homes, who just don't want to build rental units, who don't want to build subways. It's not surprising, given that when the previous government held the balance of power for 15 years, and when that balance of power was in a minority government, supported by the NDP, they didn't build the subways. They didn't build the purpose-built rental units. We have a record year in rental starts last year, thanks to this Minister of Housing.

And we're doing it, Madam Speaker. We're doing it while also launching one of Ontario's largest-ever freshwater initiatives, plastic-capture technology in Lake Ontario. These sea bins are all over, including in harbours like mine. We're building the vital water and waste water infrastructure we need to support a growing Ontario. This vital technology, this modern technology—when I visit a waste water treatment plant today, it's like going onto the bridge of the Enterprise. It's so modern. They're using technology, but members opposite would rather have us using the same infrastructure from decades gone by. I say no. We need to leverage the technology today. We need to build modern infrastructure to support growing communities.

They also didn't support the previous government in building any new public transit. You think about the Ontario Line, arguably one of the largest low-carbon public projects in North America today. That's done by this Premier, by this government. It's going to be incredible—hopping on that line, the crown jewel at the end, a modernized, revitalized Ontario Place. I remember my parents taking me to Ontario Place ages ago and enjoying Ontario Place with my nana, my papa, my mom, my dad. And since, what is it, 2012, the doors have been locked? You're lucky if I can get a dog walk in with my dog Max there. It's dilapidated. It's stale—stale like the attitudes of the previous government.

But we're building a stronger Ontario; a hopeful Ontario; an Ontario where a young boy or girl can receive an opportunity in the skilled trades, where they could become an entrepreneur or start their own business—a sense of fulfillment in building and completing projects that are going to support a growing Ontario, that are going

to protect our environment; an Ontario, a Canada that welcomes half a million immigrants, and the disproportionate number, over 250,000 or 300,000, of which choose Ontario. And where do the majority of those immigrants come? They come to the GTHA.

So again, we welcome that. I think to my own family experience, as do so many in the place. I think to stories of one of my grandfathers, who came off the boat from Italy with no money, who built a career in the steel sector—I've often referenced that before, but it bears repeating—building a future; my father, who was the first to go to university on that side of my family; and now his grandson, who is sitting in this place. That is the Canadian dream. That is the opportunity that this great province offers new Canadians. I think they would be happy.

I remember the member from Danforth, when we spoke a bit about clean steel. I think we can all acknowledge, and that member as well, that that steelworker today—those jobs have been protected and secured in this province, not through driving industry out like we saw in years gone by but through partnering with industry to build the cleanest steel on planet earth right here in Ontario, good union jobs right here in the province of Ontario.

I think to opportunities I've had to tour on what Stelco is doing. It is not the Stelco, for example, of my grandfather's yesteryear. It's not the Dofasco of generations gone by. They're doing incredible work—and a big shout-out to the men and women of Algoma, Dofasco and Stelco and work that they're doing. We're proud to have those industries here in Ontario, and we're securing jobs for generations to come. Clean steel; it's incredibly exciting.

And, Madam Speaker, I think to when this government was elected, the fact that building in the province was one of the records that I think was unfortunate. Usually, you want to hold records. But I'll contrast two records: The time it takes to get permits and to build in this province was one of the worst on planet earth. That's unacceptable when we have to build modern infrastructure not only to support a growing population but to protect our environment at the same time.

Now, today, we hold the very prestigious record. I think last year alone was one of the largest years for projected areas in Ontario's history. Don't take my word for it; our federal database that compiles protected areas that is released every March shows what Ontario has done for protected areas.

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You ask, "How do we do that?" You think to programs like the Greenlands Conservation Partnership program that has protected Vidal Bay, that has protected the Boreal Wildlands, the largest protection for boreal forests in Canadian history; the South Shore Joint Initiative for migratory birds, so that we can support a growing Ontario with active and passive opportunities for Ontarians to get out and enjoy and appreciate nature to better connect with the birds and the bees and the species that we're so blessed to live alongside.

Yes, we have to do more. We do have to do more for those species and for protected areas. That's why I was

proud that this year, in budget 2023, we saw another record: the largest single in-year investment for protected areas in Ontario's history; \$14 million, thanks to the Minister of Finance.

We've worked so closely together with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. I think to hikes I've taken in my own backyard with groups like the Willow Beach Field Naturalists.

I think to Hazel Bird Nature Reserve where I go with my dog Max all the time. We're out there in Hazel Bird Nature Reserve. That has increased by a third thanks in part to the Greenlands Conservation Partnership program.

I think to the South Shore Joint Initiative, the migratory bird corridor in Bay of Quinte.

I think to the land trusts and the environmentalist groups I've walked shoulder-to-shoulder with. We're protecting that area on the shores of Lake Ontario forever for generations to come.

I think to work we're doing all over this province, to Vidal Bay. I think to Alfred Bog, that we have now protected under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act forever. That is peat moss, carbon sequestration. It's important. We're doing that.

That largest in-year investment that this government has made has shown that you can support a growing population with growing numbers of protected areas. Interesting number: I was on Moore in the Morning this morning with John Moore, talking about the province's first urban provincial park. We announced that on Saturday, on Earth Day. That's going to be in the town of Uxbridge. Shout-out to Mayor Dave Barton, to regional chair John Henry, to John MacKenzie from the TRCA, Rob Baldwin from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and so many more who we're partnering with to make this historic announcement.

I'm very excited for that new provincial park. It's going to be a great opportunity to get outdoors. That is the first in 40 years, since before I was born; Madam Speaker, since before you were born; since so many—the first in 40 years. This is truly incredible.

I was on Moore in the Morning this morning, and I think a stat that bears repeating: Through programs like the Greenlands Conservation Partnership program, we've protected almost 400,000 acres in just the last few years. That is four times what the previous Liberal government protected between 2014 and 2018, a full mandate—four times, Madam Speaker.

I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done with partners like the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance.

Why I mention this, to tie it back to the changes we're making, is you can support growing protected areas. You can support the environmental assessment process—the EA process that we're modernizing not just for building homes, building public transit that we need, but yes, building parks.

When I was first a minister, they were saying it takes 10 years to build a park, 10 years to protect the environment, to add an area to actually protect it for trails.

That's wild. That's not acceptable. It's not acceptable because while I still have my best friend, my loyal friend, my four-legged Max, I want him to get out there and enjoy these trails with me. I'm not going to wait 10 years to protect those parks, to protect those areas.

When we look at that 50-year-old, dated process, that's one of the reasons—my “why.” Why did I get involved? Why did I seek office? Often, people have these carefully scripted stories. They bring all the comms experts and they bounce ideas and it becomes—sometimes, it exacerbates and embellishes a bit of the truth. My “why” was pretty simple, and I don't need 10 groups to soundboard it off. My “why” was, I'm a young man growing up in rural Ontario and I see manufacturing jobs fleeing. I saw a Kraft plant close. I saw buddies I played soccer with put out of a job. I saw the reckless federal and provincial policies of the Liberals driving out manufacturing jobs in Campbellford, in Brighton, in Port Hope and in Cobourg, and I just said, “You know what, there's got to be a better way.”

I didn't have all the answers. I still don't. I think in public office you've got to listen to the people you serve; you've got to form meaningful partnerships with industry to work in collaboration to find those answers. But my job is, I looked around the room, I looked at my predecessor and I looked at others—someone I have great respect for, my predecessor—but I said, “You know what? I'm going to do a better job. I'm going to bring these jobs back. I'm going to give it my best shot,” because there can be a stronger Ontario. There can be a better Ontario.

Fast-forward to today: CpK, Beneco Packaging, Mirmil, Jebco, Premier Tech in Brighton—all of which have benefited from \$8 billion in reduced costs of doing business, all of whom are expanding. When I called the plant manager at Jebco in Colborne and said we are stabilizing class A and B industrial electricity rates, after the disastrous energy policies of the previous government—none of whose members are here, in part because they were voted out; none of whose members are here because they have so few seats in this Legislature today, because Ontarians said that we have to do better.

What did that mean for Jebco? Jebco is now expanding their investments. They are hiring more men and women. They're saying, “Yes, David, it shouldn't take 10 years to expand our plant because of a 50-year-old EA process. It shouldn't mean the difference between new jobs and retreating and doing nothing, laying people off because of the reckless energy policies of the previous government.” Today they are expanding.

Today, Beneco Packaging is growing in Northumberland—Peterborough South. Today, we're benefiting from building small modular nuclear reactors, maintaining our competitive advantage of a 90%-plus clean energy advantage. There is no path to net zero without nuclear. We are building SMRs in my community in Darlington. We're building EVs. We're supporting automotive jobs with General Motors in my community, again, jobs that, in this place, public policy-makers seemed content to let flee and leave this province. They are coming back. Clean jobs, green jobs, jobs for the next generation are coming back to Ontario because this government and this Premier understand that when it comes to the environment, it is not

an “either/or,” it's an “and.” You can protect more, something we're doing to the tune of four times that of the previous government.

It is not an “either/or” when it comes to public transit. The groups of four, five people who frequent council every day, the group of NIMBYs who don't want to build public transit, the NIMBYs who say—it's BANANAs now: build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone. They don't want homes in their community, but when it comes to building a high-rise or intensifying with an apartment unit which will include purpose-built rentals in their own community, they say no to that as well.

I've got a message for those people: Your time ruling the roost is gone. We're building in the province of Ontario. We're building for the young boy or girl who wants a job in the trades, who wants to have a place to call home; for the young boy like my grandfather in fascist Italy, who looked to Canada for opportunity; for someone like Sayo, from Nigeria, whom I had the opportunity of meeting when our member for Ajax brought Computek to this community, who has taken advantage of the free PSW courses that this government is working on and has provided. Sayo has now got a job. He is working in no more honourable profession than in health care. He is now working, thanks to this Premier, this government and the investments we're making.

This stands in stark contrast to an Ontario where those jobs were fleeing in my own community. They're back today, 600,000 manufacturing jobs today, incredible opportunities in my community, where we are expanding public transit, bringing Metrolinx into Northumberland for the first time in Ontario's history. We're building the largest low-carbon public transit project, arguably, in North America with the Ontario Line. We're expanding two-way, all-day GO and electrifying the GO network.

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We're bringing back the Northlander to the people. My predecessor called the north “no-man's land.” That's just bananas—and that's an appropriate term of “bananas,” not “build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone.” It's actually bananas that he would call northern Ontario “no-man's land,” because we recognize that prosperity in the south depends on opportunity and unleashing the potential of the north. We get that, this government.

I've had the opportunity to see environmental reclamation projects that you couldn't imagine, with Mattagami First Nation in the north. I've had the opportunity to work with a number of partners in the north to see what this government is doing to unlock the opportunities, the critical minerals that are going to help us decarbonize, that are going to help us electrify, that are going to help us become less dependent on fossil fuels. I'm proud that that's done in Ontario. I'm proud that that's done working in partnership with Indigenous communities, working with men and women of the skilled trades, and not dependent on corrupt foreign regimes.

We've seen with the COVID-19 pandemic the destabilizing effect, the choppy waters that the Minister of Finance alluded to in his budget speech. Ontario is not an island. We're not immune to global supply chain disruption—the war in Ukraine, the unprovoked attack and

invasion of Ukraine. We're not immune to those choppy waters.

So why now must we invest in the north? Because there is no better time and because there is no time that is more important than today—and a recognition among Ontarians alike. It's partly the reason we're back in this place. It's partly the reason we're winning seats in the north that previous Progressive Conservatives felt we had no business ever winning. Well, we're winning them today because those Indigenous youth, those young men and women in the north know that they have an opportunity in the great province of Ontario under Premier Ford's leadership.

I value the feedback on our EA process, on improving that process so that we can get those critical minerals we need to decarbonize, so that we can support battery creation here in Ontario. There are areas of the world that have no regard; they don't even have an EA process when they're mining for these critical minerals. Madam Speaker, we're never going to follow that example. In Ontario, we're going to always work in close partnership with Indigenous communities, respecting environmental processes and permits. I'm proud of that.

But no one can tell me that a relic from 50 years ago shall never change, will never change, and that we can never leverage modern technology to improve it. I'm sorry. Nor that this 30-day pause, this random pause for 30 days—that the Minister of the Environment can't exercise the ability to get proponent-driven projects moving faster, like these decarbonization projects I'm alluding to in the north.

Another record historic first: the investment in boreal caribou that this government has made in the budget—a historic investment. I think to valuable relationships that I've had the opportunity to build with Chief Tangie from Michipicoten, with Chief Michano from Biigtigong. I'm going up there in the north this summer, and I value that learning relationship.

I'm going to draw an analogy here from what we're doing with this bill with the EA process to how our wildlife advisory committee said that you always have to sedate caribou in the process to move them. We're moving caribou and helping grow the population of caribou. They said that you always have to sedate it. Well, talk to Chief Michano, talk to Chief Tangie, and they'll tell you that there are practices—they told me about an incredible story, Chief Tangie did, about a youth in her community witnessing a caribou relocation project where they blind-fold, in a very humane manner, the caribou to move the caribou.

What does that have to do with this? I've drawn an analogy here. If our process of relocating caribou was so rigid, as is this 50-year-old EA process, that we would never listen and never change, we would never incorporate the perspectives of Chief Tangie, of Chief Duncan Michano from Biigtigong. It would remain rigid and a relic of the past. Well, no; today, we're listening. I'm hopeful that in the next few weeks, I'll be up north to sign an agreement with Michipicoten and Biigtigong for a

historic protection of Ontario's caribou. We're going to do it. I'm going out on a limb, but I'm going to say that we're going to do it, because our relationships have been meaningful, and we're going to do it.

I'll hark back to the EA process that we're talking about. If we're not flexible to listen, if we're not flexible to be amenable to new technology, new processes, then why are we here? Why are we serving? Why do we bother getting up in the morning? I could just stay in bed and never get up and never do anything. But I choose to get out of bed in the morning, to listen, to work in partnership with communities to improve our EA process for generations to come, and it's thanks to that that we're seeing record investments in public transit, actually getting shovels in the ground, actually taking cars off the road. It's thanks to that that we're seeing record investments in manufacturing which is making clean steel for generations to come, building EVs that are actually going to be made in Ontario, not just rebates for millionaires to buy EVs that are incorporating critical minerals that are mined in Africa and in other jurisdictions that have no regard to the EA process and to meaningful partnership with Indigenous communities. We're going to have those critical minerals here in Ontario.

I know worldwide, we have a commitment—I spent time at the United Nations—and we're working with other jurisdictions that I have aforementioned to improve processes, to incorporate an environmental assessment process, to incorporate meaningful treatment of workers. I see our Minister of Labour is here. We're making historic investments to provide dignity on the job site for workers. That's the constant work here.

And we disagree all the time. I see a member opposite moving their hands like, "Talk to the hand. We're not listening." At the end of the day, I value the role that they play. They challenge us to do better. They challenge us to do a better job. We can disagree, we can snicker, we can smile, but at the end of the day, everybody here serves from a good place. They get up every morning to advocate for their communities and to serve to build a better Ontario. We disagree from time to time on how to get there.

But I take this process, I take Ontario, I take Ontario's EA process, I take the challenges we're facing in Ontario, I take the meaningful conversation we're having on reconciliation over any other jurisdiction worldwide because I believe in this province. I believe in its people. I believe in the meaningful relationships we're building as a government to unlock the potential of a better, of a stronger Ontario; an Ontario that is building public transit, taking cars off the road; an Ontario that is modernizing the environmental assessment process so that we can support growing communities with the critical infrastructure to keep our waters clean—not just clean, but cleaner. My mom is an English teacher and I'm sure will challenge my grammar there.

When I chaired the Great Lakes Guardians' Council with Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe, we chaired that Great Lakes Guardians' Council, and we heard an update from officials in my ministry who have been there since

long before I have been here and will still be there long after I'm gone. Those officials have worked with research institutes. A number of reports show that the Great Lakes on many metrics—when it comes to PCBs, when it comes to phosphorous, when it comes to a number of metrics, things are getting better. When it comes to delisting areas of concern like Randle Reef, like a number of other areas, this government is making meaningful progress. Working with the federal government, working with partners at the upper and lower tier, conservation authorities, we're making progress on delisting those areas of concern. Because, again, you can modernize the EA process, you can improve the EA process that will lead to a better tomorrow—a stronger Ontario.

I'll close today by saying that that EA process, that strong EA process we have here—a strong, robust permissions process—means that we can protect the environment, but we can also get shovels in the ground on public transit to take cars off the road; to build the Ontario Line, the largest low-carbon public transit project, arguably, in North America. We can extract the critical minerals we need in the north to support electrification to decarbonize in the south. We can build homes—homes that are better built today using better environmental standards than at any point in the past—to support the young boy or girl who lives in their parents' basement, who has been destined there from poor policies of the past, who now wants the dignity of home ownership, who wants to have a home. Purpose-built rental units that can be built for tomorrow's generation: We're saying yes to that.

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We're saying yes to the non-sexy things that underpin that, like ensuring that when you turn your tap on, clean drinking water comes out of that tap, or when you flush the toilet, something is done to ensure that that discharge is cleaner. That's what's happening at Duffins in Pickering. That's what's happening in Newcastle, thanks to investments of this government to upgrade and improve the waste water treatment plant in Newcastle. That's what's happening in Cobourg; we're adding new water power thanks to investments from this government. That's what's happening in Brighton. It's happening all over Ontario. I've just illustrated this with a few examples in my own riding to show that when you modernize the EA process, you're actually strengthening it and improving it to get shovels in the ground on these vital infrastructure projects to support a growing Ontario, a better environment, a stronger tomorrow.

I am so proud to be part of a government making these meaningful investments and listening. Yes, we welcome being challenged by members opposite and others. But there's a recognition that you can't just take processes like the EA process that we're talking about today, throw it up on a shelf, wait 50 years, close our eyes and pretend like nothing is changing, because technology is changing and we can improve the EA process. We can better respond to the needs of Ontarians of tomorrow, to the people who have an eye to Canada to build a better future, who flee, in many cases, war-torn countries to build a better future.

You're going to have a home thanks to this government. You're going to have better public transit thanks to this government. You're going to have better waste water and water services thanks to this government. You're going to have a better job thanks to this government, because we're bringing back manufacturing. You're going to work in clean steel. You're going to work building EVs so we can drive EVs tomorrow. We're going to build batteries using the critical minerals of the north to support jobs for men and women of tomorrow's generation. We're going to work in partnership with Indigenous communities like Mattagami First Nation on environmental reclamation projects. You're going to do all of that for a stronger Ontario, and I'm proud to be part of a government getting it done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions? The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity.

To either of the ministers: The elimination of the 30-day waiting period in the process of the Environmental Assessment Act class environmental assessment is of concern. That period is put there so that the minister will actually take the time to consider public commentary. Without that 30-day period, clearly, people will make comments; at the end of the comment period, the minister will say, "Time is up; let's keep going."

Why is it that public comment on these matters is irrelevant to the government?

Hon. David Piccini: I have to set the record: Everyone here heard him say "elimination." That's not what's happening. It's the ability of the minister to waive that waiting period and if that member honestly can look himself in the mirror and think that, for the EA process, the minister closes his eyes and ears? The public comments start months before. It's a back-and-forth with ministry officials.

Please come to 777 Bay. Let me educate you on how the actual EA process is being done. We're not eliminating the 30-day waiting period. We're giving the minister the ability if, in his or her opinion, public comment has been responded to and there's been a robust process that warrants not sitting on our hands for 30 days—as he'd be content to do, given that he supported it when the previous government did it for 15 years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I come from a community that, as I've said before in this place, is simply tired of waiting. We're tired of waiting, whether that's at the hospital, whether that's waiting for a job or whether that's sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

I did a little bit of homework before, when this bill got tabled, and one of the environmental assessments that this would impact in my community is the extension of Clark Boulevard from Rutherford Road to Hansen Road. Getting around Brampton isn't as easy as it used to be; getting around the GTA isn't as easy as it used to be. We have a short construction season, and 30 days really means a lot

when it comes to getting shovels in the ground and getting these projects done.

Can the minister talk a little bit about some other projects, be it in Brampton or his community, around the province where the NDP would want to delay and dither and wait and this government is going to be getting it done?

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate that question from the member opposite, who is here because the people of Brampton recognize that sitting on hands is not a solution, that you've got to build hospitals, like this government is doing. You've got to support university and college expansion, like this government is doing with the first-ever medical school in Brampton and, yes, build those roads.

And on that project, I know that the public were engaged, that this was a long back-and-forth project, that engineers are involved, that that comment has been captured and that there was no willingness from the community, from the engineers or from anyone in this project to sit on our hands for 30 days and do nothing while the minister plays euchre or cards. This is outrageous, that we would sit when all metrics have been met, when it is the opinion of scientists and others in the ministry that permissions have been followed, that we can move—just give the ability to continue with the process and to get things moving. That's all this is doing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Infrastructure: This bill does nothing to address the actual problems cited by the Auditor General with respect to the Ministry of Infrastructure's poor oversight of real estate services in Ontario. The Auditor General indicated that Infrastructure Ontario was the problem, and this bill could make the problem worse by giving Infrastructure Ontario more properties to manage. Why is this bill making the problem worse instead of addressing the problems cited by the Auditor General?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much to the member opposite for the question. The Auditor General was clear in her findings and her report that she actually recommended a centralized manner in which to assess real estate authority for government and government agencies. We are accepting those recommendations. We are moving forward. We are presenting legislation in the House to address those. And what's also equally important, Madam Speaker: It will also give the Ministry of Infrastructure greater insight into decision-making when it comes to real estate for entities, which I think will be important when we look at a holistic view, holistic use, office optimization, office modernization. So I thank the member for that question because he just highlighted why it's so important that we move on this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Good morning, everyone. My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. I know in my riding of Simcoe–Grey, businesses are working very hard to rationalize their leases, to rationalize their plants as they move forward. It's an important part of making sure that

they are viable and sustainable moving forward. I'm wondering if the minister can please tell us how centralization of our real estate holdings for the province will help to be more efficient, will help to streamline our processes and to make this government more efficient and financially accountable?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much to the member for the question. In my remarks, I mentioned that real estate is one of the greatest assets that government has. What I think is also equally important and an expectation of the public is that we are always constantly reviewing processes to see where we can make improvements. I think that's what the people expect. But this real estate authority, should the legislation be approved in the House, will allow MOI to look at the existing leases, to look at when leases are expiring, to look at the office space that is being used to see whether or not consolidation is an option, whether or not office spaces need to be modernized to improve the working conditions for our very hard-working staff. And so, certainly, that will be our priority over the coming months, should the legislation be approved.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Good morning, Speaker. This question is to either one of the ministers. The government is proposing legislation that will waive the waiting period for the ministry after review of the environmental assessments and comments—comments from the public, that is. Now, that might not be a problem in some situations, but the record of this government on the environment makes me very worried. The 30-day waiver can be dangerous if it is used improperly, say, to fast-track through changes for less accountability. We have seen it before. How can the member opposite confirm to the residents of Ontario that these fast-tracking elements will not be given to friends or donors of the Conservative government?

Hon. David Piccini: Again, I really enjoyed the other night with that member when we had a really nice chat, and I'm hoping to extend an opportunity to come to 777 Bay to talk about the robust processes that are in the EA process, that are asking tough questions that engage the public, that work with engineers, and that work with proponents like municipalities in building roads and waste water treatment plants.

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This ability to waive that 30-day waiting period—they've said "waive and eliminate." All we're doing is giving the minister the ability, should conditions be met, to not sit on our hands for 30 days, a needless 30 days, which is the difference for vital waste water treatment plants that could get in ground today for cleaner water tomorrow and not waiting tomorrow to start those projects. I say, "Yes, let's start it today"—in her community, in my community, in the growing communities of Ontario.

I really hope she will take me up on that offer to come meet with some of our officials to talk a bit about that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Quick question?

Mr. John Vanthof: Can the Minister of the Environment lay out a guideline of what would be the parameters

when this 30 days would be waived or not? It's hard to have confidence when the government doesn't lay out parameters of what they constitute is worthy of a waiver.

Hon. David Piccini: Yes, that's a good question. I applaud the member. That's a very good question. A number of parameters: If there is outstanding public concern that is substantiated. We've had ERO postings—measures and permissions are still subject to our duty to post on the Environmental Registry of Ontario, and issue decisions.

Something I would add: This government has reduced the backlog from the previous government significantly—by 95%, in fact. That ability for massive projects still exists, and I think, again, public. If, in the opinion of officials—I don't want to presuppose what a deputy or what an ADM or director within my ministry may or may not say, but, on numerous occasions, they recommend or flag a number of challenges.

Again, I would go back to what is done within the EA process where it's a living piece, where they're back and forth with proponents. Once that's complete, on every process I've seen, all the conditions have been met—it's, again, just waiving the sitting on the hands. I think it is a very important piece, giving the minister the ability to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Given that it is almost 10:15 a.m., we will move on to members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Mr. Sherif Sabawy: These past few weeks have been a time of much celebration in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills. I was delighted to join my constituents on a number of occasions to observe Passover, Ramadan, Easter, Orthodox Easter, Vaisakhi and Eid al-Fitr celebrations. We have a diverse community in Mississauga with a variety of cultures and traditions. It is always a pleasure to join together for these wonderful occasions.

Something else to celebrate is our government's investment in homelessness prevention. The government has announced an additional \$202 million annually, beginning in 2023-24, under the Homelessness Prevention Program and Indigenous Supportive Housing Program.

On Friday, the MPPs of Peel region announced that Peel will be receiving \$42.3 million for the initiative. This money will help those affected by homelessness and support community partners delivering supportive housing.

We know there is a serious housing affordability crisis in Mississauga and throughout Ontario right now. This investment will help solve some of these problems, but while we continue to work hard tackling the housing crisis,

these investments will have a tangible short-term impact, helping some of our neighbours get back on their feet. For that, we all have reason to celebrate.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. John Vanthof: Englehart is a small town—it's my hometown, actually—in the district of Timiskaming–Cochrane. It's on Highway 11. The Associate Minister of Transportation knows exactly where it is because he was there for an announcement a couple of weeks ago.

On April 11, on a beautiful, clear day on a straight stretch of highway, there was a head-on collision between two transport trucks. Our thoughts go out to the families. It was obvious—two transport trucks, no one else involved.

On April 18, a tractor-trailer in Englehart forced a school bus with students on it off the road into the ditch. The school bus had the right-of-way. The tractor-trailer driver fled the scene.

On April 22, just south of Englehart, on the Earlton overpass, a tractor-trailer driver passed another tractor-trailer on the overpass, and the person coming with their dash cam was forced off the road.

That's three tractor-trailers, one tragic accident, two near misses in 11 days just outside one little town, and that's happening all over on the 11 and 17.

The government needs to step in, make sure all drivers are properly trained, properly licensed and that the laws are enforced now.

SIMCOE–GREY BUSINESSES

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My riding of Simcoe–Grey has a very diverse and dynamic economy and is home to many businesses that have made their mark on the national and international stage, companies such as Honda, Agnora, Reinhart Foods, MacLean Engineering, Blue Mountain Resort, MEDATech and Decast, just to name a few.

Today, I would like to highlight two impressive companies in Simcoe–Grey that are using innovation, science and technology to the benefit of the people of Ontario. The first company is Baxter Canada in Alliston, whose mission is to save and sustain lives. Operating since 1957, Baxter produces life-saving intravenous and dialysis solutions found throughout our hospitals and clinics in Ontario and around the world. Operating out of a state-of-the-art 180,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, Baxter Canada employs 430 people.

The second company I would like to highlight is Impossible Metals from Collingwood, Ontario. This is an exciting new start-up company that is led by Duntroon native Jason Gillham and his team of talented scientists and engineers. Impossible Metals builds underwater robotic vehicles to collect much-needed rare earth EV battery materials from the seabed without harming the environment. The metals they harvest from depths in excess of 5,000 metres are essential to help accelerate and enable

Ontario's and the world's transition to more sustainable energy.

These are just two examples of companies that are working in Simcoe–Grey to move us forward in a sustainable way.

INJURED WORKERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This Friday is the Day of Mourning for workers who have lost their lives through workplace accidents and workplace exposure to deadly chemicals. Unfortunately, this government, by distorting the function of the WSIB, has shown that it is not there for workers: claim suppression, refusing doctors' assessments, bribery to deny that accidents have taken place, illegal cuts to the cost-of-living allowance, cutting support payments on the basis of fictitious jobs, and the return of billions of dollars to business that should have been available to support the far too many workers forced to live on ODSP because WSIB has denied their claims.

Recently, this government failed to reduce allowable levels of diesel exposure to what scientists have long recommended. Parents beware: Young people are vulnerable to permanent brain damage due to currently allowed rates of diesel exposure, and once harmed, they will have to fight tooth and nail for compensation. It doesn't have to be this way.

This Friday, attend a Day of Mourning ceremony in your community, pay tribute to those who have died because of their jobs, and demand that the Ford government put the health and well-being of workers first. Nothing less is acceptable.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Each of us in this House and at every level of government must work to better protect women and girls escaping abusive relationships of intimate partner violence and coercive control.

This is why I was so pleased that, last fall, this House unanimously passed my motion for Ontario to consult about passing Keira's Law in our province. This would require continuing education seminars for judges and other legal professionals in our Family Courts so that they have the knowledge they need about IPV and coercive control. Last week, our federal counterparts moved forward as the Senate passed Keira's Law for federal judges.

1020

However, for women in Ontario this is not enough. We need to act in Ontario as well, as Family Courts reside in our hands, provincially—not federally. Intimate partner violence and coercive control are insidious forms of abuse that have devastating effects on victims and their families. From November 26, 2021, to November 25, 2022, 52 women in Ontario died as a result of femicide. We must do everything in our power to end this kind of violence and ensure that those who perpetrate it are held accountable by law. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of women and girls in Ontario.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

MPP Jamie West: This Friday, April 28, is the international Day of Mourning. It's a point of pride for my community because the Day of Mourning was started in Sudbury in 1983. It was Steelworkers and CUPE members who noticed that there was a procession for a firefighter who had died, and they wanted that recognition for every worker who has been killed, injured, or who has suffered occupational disease. They chose April 28 because that was the day in 1914 that the workers' compensation act received third reading.

Good ideas can't be contained—1983, in Sudbury; 1984, the Canadian Labour Congress; 1989, the AFL-CIO; and in 1991, Canada recognized the international Day of Mourning for the first time. A great idea that started in Sudbury, the Day of Mourning, or Workers' Memorial Day, is now celebrated in more than 100 countries around the world; we simply stopped counting after 100.

We recognize the Day of Mourning by wearing arm bands or pins with the canary in the coal mine or by holding flags at half-mast.

But most people remember the Day of Mourning because of the moment of silence. The moment of silence is reflective of the slogan of the Day of Mourning: "Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living."

I challenge all members of the House, when the moment of silence is finished, to never be silent again when it comes to health and safety for workers in the workplace.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to share that 10 organizations within the region of Durham recently received approximately \$908,000 from the Resilient Communities Fund through the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

In Whitby, the Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre received a substantive grant to help them continue to deliver their outstanding programs and services to hard-working families across the region and in outlying areas.

Nearby, in Oshawa, Catholic Family Services of Durham received \$141,000 to continue to provide help, hope and healing to individuals, couples and families.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation has invested \$200 million through the Resilient Communities Fund to support the delivery of community-based initiatives throughout the region of Durham. What's clear is that countless residents within the town of Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham rely on their services and programs every day.

Our government is lifting Durham residents up, providing them with a hand up through these investments, while building healthy and vibrant communities.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: This month has been one of celebration, remembrance and prayer in my riding of Brampton East and for Ontarians across the province. Over the last 30 days, members of the Hindu community

celebrated Hanuman Jayanti to commemorate the birth of the Hindu deity Hanuman. The Christian community celebrated Easter to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ through prayer and gatherings with their loved ones. The Jewish community observed Passover in remembrance and recognition of the community's strength, bravery and resilience. The Tamil communities celebrated Puthandu, the harvest festival which marks the beginning of the new year, as per the Tamil and Thai calendars. The Sikh community is celebrating Vaisakhi, marking the beginning of the harvest season in Punjab and the day the order of the Khalsa was created. And members of the Muslim community just celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Ontario is home to many individuals from diverse, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I am proud to celebrate our province's multiculturalism and diversity. We're lucky to live in such a cultural mosaic that brings people together in such a joyful and united manner. I look forward to continuing to celebrate and honour the diversity of our province as cultural events take place throughout the coming months and year.

HAGERSVILLE LIONS CHASE THE ACE RAFFLE

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Last week was National Volunteer Appreciation Week. Volunteers are the most important resource this province has, and our communities would grind to a halt without them. I want to give a huge shout-out to the Hagersville Lions Club, who recently wrapped up a fundraiser called Chase the Ace. Chase the Ace is a progressive raffle in which participants purchase a ticket for a chance to win in the weekly jackpot, but also a progressive jackpot. Every Thursday, people lined up at the Hagersville Legion to purchase tickets. Each week, the number of tickets sold grew along with the jackpot.

Speaker, 45 weeks of Catch the Ace in Hagersville; 45 weeks of a few dozen Lions Club members along with the Legion, members of the chamber of commerce and Hagersville Rocks gave up their time, not only on Thursdays, but for preparation ahead of time as well. Jackpot hopefuls came from as far as the United States, Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia. In week 45, an astounding 152,000 tickets were sold. In the end, it was 83-year-old Richard Marshall who caught the ace, a commercial fisherman his whole life who reeled in over \$2 million. The West Haldimand Hospital and Healthcare Foundation gets an infusion of \$1.4 million, the local food bank about \$1 million and the Lions will retain about \$550,000.

Lion Dan Matten said the 45 weeks was simply extraordinary and an entire community effort. For those missing the excitement of Catch the Ace, no worries. The Community Support Centre Haldimand Norfolk has already started a new round each Thursday at the Caledonia Legion. Best of luck to all.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's my pleasure to rise today to highlight some important health care investments our government is making in my riding of Perth-Wellington. Recently, I announced, on behalf of Minister Jones, that our government is supporting our doctors working after hours in our hospitals through the Hospital On-Call Coverage Program. Stratford General Hospital will be receiving more than \$2.3 million. Groves Memorial hospital will be receiving \$1.2 million under the program.

In December, I was pleased to announce that Palmerston and District Hospital was approved for new MRI operating funding which totals over \$1 million. Many in my rural communities currently travel to large urban centres for critical MRI services. This funding will ensure my constituents can access care closer to home in a more timely fashion.

There's more, Speaker. The Minister of Health has provided Perth County Paramedic Services with over \$187,000 to help provide wraparound supports through its mobile integrated health team. This funding is ensuring people in my riding are getting the right care in the right place.

There's still more, Speaker. Last spring, our government launched the Learn and Stay program. As members know, this program covers the cost of tuition, books and other educational expenses for nurses in exchange for them practising in rural and northern communities. I'm pleased to share this program has helped the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance recruit and retain 16 new nurses. This is great news.

There's more work to be done, but I am proud to be part of a government that is building a strong rural health care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements for this morning.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Ottawa-Vanier on a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 45(b)(iv), the time for debate on opposition day motion number 4 be apportioned as follows: 54 minutes to each of the recognized parties and 12 minutes to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Madame Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that notwithstanding standing order 45(b)(iv), the time for debate on opposition day motion number 4 be apportioned as follows: 54 minutes to each of the recognized parties and 12 minutes to the independent members as a group. Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Miss Monique Taylor: Once again, I'd like to welcome Michau van Speyk to the House. And up in the

gallery, I see the former mayor of Hamilton, Larry Di Ianni. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1030

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to warmly welcome members of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, located in my riding: chairman Alan Lam, president Angela Chan, and staff Simon Ip and Alice Qiao.

I have two more important people. Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to introduce Ganapathy Raveendran and his spouse, Ruby, from Yugam Radio. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'm very happy to introduce my good friends, Ganapathy Raveendran and his spouse, Ruby Yogadasan, president of Yugam Radio and Media Inc. They have promoted Tamil arts and culture for many, many years in our community. Also, Mr. Speaker, they celebrated a milestone birthday—70th birthday—last week. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I'm very excited to welcome students who are here from Liceo Giambattista Vico in Sulmona, Abruzzo, Italy. They are with us today. They just wrote a book, *Voci d'Abruzzo*. It helps to commemorate the story of Italian immigrants to this country and to the United States. Voices of Abruzzo honours their incredible legacy of sacrifice. Welcome to Queen's Park. Benvenuto.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Bonjour. Good morning, Speaker. Speaker, today we have members from Achēv who are visiting us today for their Queen's Park advocacy day. Achēv is a not-for-profit that began 30 years ago, and they have grown to become one of the largest providers of employment and newcomer, youth, language and women's services across the GTA. Joining us today in the gallery are CEO Tonie Chaltas; senior vice-presidents Moya MacKinnon and Karen McNeil; chair of the board Epsit Jajal; and head of government relations Kristen Neagle. They will be hosting a reception this evening in rooms 228 and 230, and I invite all members to join us for this wonderful event. Welcome.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce Noemi Khondo, who is campaigns officer in the political action and education division; Andrew Ruszczak, who is a negotiator; and Geoff Cain—all three of them are from OPSEU/SEFPO—who is the executive board member and chair of the blood services and diagnostics sector. I'd also like to introduce Kat Lanteigne, who is the executive director of BloodWatch Ontario. They're here to stop for-profit plasma collection. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Good morning, everyone. I am very proud to introduce some residents from the wonderful riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore: Cole, who is our page captain today; his proud parents, Allan Okrainec and Joelene Huber, who are here; his sister Madison and his grandmother Gabrielle; and some friends and neighbours, Alicia Markson and Julia Markson, who was a page in 2022. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm very pleased to welcome in the member's gallery today Lourdes David, who is my constituency assistant holding down the fort in Davenport, but also Delilah, a Western Technical-Commercial School co-

op student who has been helping us out at our constituency office. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm not sure if he's here yet, but I would like to welcome Tim Peterson, the former MPP for Mississauga South from 2003 to 2007, as well as his colleagues from Probus Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to introduce my constituent and friend Michau van Speyk.

Hon. Stan Cho: I'd like to welcome a good friend and school trustee for Willowdale, Dr. Pei, to the Legislature this morning.

Mr. Rob Flack: I'd like to recognize Mr. Robert—Bob—Stanley, in the gallery here, former executive director of the party and a great friend to everyone on this side of the House. Welcome, Bob.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll continue if there are no objections.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I too would like to welcome Mr. Alan Lam and Angela Chan from the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto. Welcome.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Ms. Marit Stiles: This morning, it was revealed that this government's sweetheart deal with the private Austrian luxury spa at Ontario Place will last for 95 years—a 95-year lease, Speaker, for an enormous swath of public parkland. This government is committing land in a public park, a park owned by the people of Ontario, to a private luxury spa until 2118. This government is signing parkland away from our kids and our kids' kids and their kids' kids. This government entered into this contract on behalf of the people of Ontario.

My question is to the Premier. When will they provide Ontarians with a copy of the contract that now involves more than a billion dollars?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond for the government, the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: I'd love the opportunity to be able to speak about the 43 acres of public park space that we will be creating at Ontario Place for families to finally enjoy. The government is entering into a long-term lease, but we cannot ignore the fact that they will be providing \$500 million worth of capital investment on the site, including 12 acres of land.

I would love to highlight some of the successes through the negotiations that Infrastructure Ontario has had with our tenants. For the first time, we will have our tenants contributing to the repair and ongoing maintenance of the public realm space so that we don't make the same mistake that previous governments have made and leave the site in disrepair. We will have wonderful tenants that will be

contributing to the annual maintenance of the site to make sure that it is clean, safe and beautiful for families.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's very interesting, because reps from the corporation called it "a standard multi-year commercial lease." Speaker, 95-year leases are more usual when it's public land being leased to a public institution, but this is parkland being leased to a for-profit international corporate conglomerate.

If it is a standard lease, then this government should have no problem providing details to the people of Ontario. We're talking \$650 million in public subsidies and a 95-year lease. Back to the Premier: What are the details of this contract?

Hon. Kinga Surma: The member of the opposition said it herself: These are standard lease agreements. Unlike other waterfront destinations, we are not selling the land; the land will continue to be in ownership of the people of the province. This is a lease agreement.

But, Mr. Speaker, our tenants will be contributing \$500 million of injection to the site to bring it back to life and they will also be contributing to annual maintenance and repair costs, which has not happened before and which has led to the position that we are in today, where the site is in disrepair and in need of love and care.

Our government presented a vision to the people back in 2019 and again just last week. We will have 43 acres of beautiful public realm space. We will have three wonderful tenants, which include the science centre, and we will have lots for families to do on the site.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Public realm, Speaker? This is a private luxury spa. You have to ask, what are they hiding? What are they hiding?

This isn't just about Toronto. I've been travelling around the province and I've heard people from every corner of Ontario express concerns about this government's backroom deals and their lack of transparency. They're alarmed by this government spending as much as \$650 million on a subsidy for a private luxury spa and a massive parking lot. Now they're alarmed that this government is committing to a backroom 95-year lease with absolutely no details.

1040

This government has failed to show Ontarians what value this deal has for the people of this province. They've failed to produce the contracts. They've failed to provide the business case. Speaker, Ontarians deserve to know—I'm going to go back to the Premier again: When will this government come clean about this backroom deal?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the member of the official opposition. Mr. Speaker, I'd love to share what I hear from constituents across this great province, including constituents in Etobicoke, Scarborough and in Toronto. What they tell me is that they do not like the fact that this site is sitting there empty and not enjoyed by families like it was back in the 1970s and 1980s. They want to bring

their families there. They want to bring people who are visiting the city there. They want it to be a place of economic development, a wonderful place for families.

Mr. Speaker, beyond the 43 acres of free public realm space, we are also making sure that we have a modern marina for people to enjoy. We are making sure that there are boardwalks, food and beverage, piers and beaches. This site now, with the plans that we showed last week, will have something for everyone to enjoy.

HOUSING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Here is another thing that this government is trying to convince Ontarians of: They've put a lot of effort into trying to convince Ontarians that building luxury mansions on expensive sprawl is the solution to our housing crisis. They're even ordering municipalities to create more sprawl on prime farmland. They're risking regions' drinking water.

The truth is that no one out there is buying it. No one thinks that bulldozing species at risk or adding to municipal servicing costs and driving up property taxes is going to get a single affordable home built.

Speaker, my question is to the Premier. How will lower density and more sprawl make housing more affordable to Ontarians?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, the leader of the opposition provides a real head-scratching argument on housing. Every time the government brings forward a housing supply action plan, we know exactly what that leader and the NDP are going to do: They're going to vote against it. Then, they're going to rail against that there's not enough housing supply.

Again, when they use the word "sprawl," what does that mean? That means that a young couple who want to live in the community that they grew up in, that they work in, that they want to raise their family in can't have that opportunity.

They also believe that a farm family who wants to have an opportunity to maybe build a site for their workers on their property or maybe—and this is tough for the NDP to understand—sever a lot for their son or daughter to live on the family farm—that's the crux of what the NDP stands up against.

What do they also stand up against? They stand up to a \$700-million investment in homelessness—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

Supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Do you know what we are going to do, Speaker? We're going to vote against legislation that compromises farmland and clean water and doesn't build a single unit of affordable housing in this province.

As rents are reaching all-time highs and corporate landlords are turning record profits, you know who aren't affected? Those who live in co-operative housing. Co-op

residents don't have to worry about excessive rent increases because co-ops are non-profit. Co-ops are a key solution to solving the affordability crisis for low- and moderate-income households in this province, the people who are feeling the very real effects of this government's housing crisis. Yet this government's budget offers absolutely nothing to create more affordable co-op homes.

To the Premier, will he reverse course on his failing housing plan and start investing in co-operative housing to bring some relief to Ontarians who are truly struggling?

Hon. Steve Clark: I just can't for the life of me understand why this member and her party think that Ontarians are going to buy this load of malarkey. We continually stand up for homelessness prevention. We responded directly to municipalities who asked us to invest in supportive housing. The only party that stands up daily in this House to speak against supportive housing is the New Democrats. Every single time, they stand up against supportive housing. They vote against supportive housing. They vote against non-profit housing. They vote against co-op housing. Every single time we put in an initiative that builds our community housing system, Marit Stiles and the NDP say no.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Do I need to remind the House that we don't refer to each other by name? We refer to each other by our riding name or our ministerial name or, in this case, the Leader of the Opposition.

Start the clock. Final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, they're so out of touch. Once again—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I really don't care, Speaker, if they show me any respect; I just want them to respect the people of this province. I'm so tired of this. This is a government that's failing to take responsibility at every turn.

They do not seem to even understand history, Speaker. The last time a government made investments in co-op housing in this province, it was an NDP government. We helped build 14,000 co-op homes. And do you know what, Speaker? We readied 17,000 additional homes for construction, and, guess what, the Conservatives came in and they cancelled them all—17,000 affordable places to live, all gone.

But let's look at the here and the now. If this government still refuses to build more co-op housing, the least they could do is to bring back real rent control for the people of this province.

Speaker, back to the Premier: People need homes they can actually afford to live in. So will he take action by supporting the NDP's motion today to bring back real rent control?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, when it comes to housing policy, the NDP "Stiles" have no merit.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Given the fact that I just asked the House to stop doing that, and the very next response the minister did it again, I'm going to ask him to withdraw.

Hon. Steve Clark: Withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Restart the clock, and the minister can conclude his answer.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the NDP and the opposition want us to go back to a time where there were no purpose-built rentals built in Ontario.

So what have our policies done? They protected tenants who are under existing rent control, just like we promised in the 2018 budget.

But what's happened to new rental construction? We need more affordable rental supply. What's happened, Speaker? In 2021, a 30-year high in purpose-built rental construction; in 2022, the most rental construction starts in our province's history. And in 2023, our province is staying on track with over 5,000 purpose-built rental starts already this year, which is double last year's total. We want to build upon that success. We don't want to go back to the failed policies that that member and her party continue to talk about.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Nikki has lived in a rental home for two years. She pays \$1,995 for a 600-square-foot basement apartment. Earlier this month, her landlord slapped her with a \$200 rent increase, and now Nikki can no longer afford to pay the rent. This unaffordable rent increase is allowed because this government scrapped rent control on new units.

As more and more people in Ontario are struggling to pay the rent, what is this government's plan to make rent affordable now?

1050

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm going to again talk about the statistics that the NDP want to roll back: 2021, 30-year high rental construction; 2022, most rental starts in the history of our province; 2023, already we've seen 5,000 rental starts, double what they were last year. These are the stats that our government and our party are going to move forward.

The NIMBYism-defence parties are always going to stand against increasing housing supply.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the Premier: It is alarming to learn that Toronto's average rent price has passed the \$3,000-a-month barrier for the first time ever, approximately 13.8% up from the previous year. This is shocking. This massive rent spike is a clear distress signal that our housing affordability crisis is getting worse and the Conservatives' plan is not working.

The NDP is bringing forward a motion this afternoon to bring in real rent control on all homes to provide immediate financial relief to Ontarians, 1.5 million renter households. My question is to the Premier: Will this government support our motion?

Interjections.

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

To respond, the Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member opposite for her question. It's this government that stands shoulder to shoulder with our tenants across Ontario. We're the only government that has taken decisive measures to strengthen protections for renters, whilst also putting in place measures for more rental housing. We've heard about the record purpose-built rentals.

But I want to take us back a little bit, to the dark days of the early 1990s, when we remember when the people of Ontario entrusted the NDP for one term to run this government. They had a majority, and what did they do? Let's talk about rentals. The rental guideline in 1990 was 4.6%—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Nina Tangri: —although inflation was significantly lower; in 1991, 5.4%; and in 1992, when inflation was much lower than it is today, they had it at 6%—absolutely not acceptable. This government this year has a rent increase guideline of 2.5%. This is the government with this—

Interjections.

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

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rob Flack: My question, through you, sir, is to the Premier, but first I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs for coming to St. Thomas and making an historic announcement to better Ontario.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario's auto manufacturing sector was all but destroyed because of the reckless economic policies they implemented. As far back as 2015, the CEO of Fiat Chrysler warned everyone that the short-sighted and destructive policies of the Liberals and the NDP were hurting our auto industry, causing good-paying jobs to flee our province. Companies like Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover and Ford were raising concerns, so they opted to build assembly plants in the US and Mexico instead of Windsor and Essex.

With so much that Ontario has to offer businesses, we cannot miss opportunities that will create great jobs and contribute to our province's economic prosperity. Speaker, can the Premier please explain how our government is ensuring that Ontario is an auto manufacturing leader once again?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the great work of the MPP from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I always say he's one of the smartest business minds down at Queen's Park. Thank you.

It took about 16 ministries; it took a big chunk of the province right across the board to get this deal done, to make sure that we're competitive with the rest of the world, no matter if it's our US friends down south of the border, or Asia, or Europe, or South America. We're in a competitive market, but we made sure we rolled out the red carpet, creating 3,000 jobs.

The real amazing story about this is the spin-off jobs, 30,000 extra jobs. No matter if it's an additional school or hospital or roads or bridges or a Walmart or a Costco, these are the reciprocal jobs that are coming to St. Thomas. St. Thomas has seen some very tough times, when they lost 5,000 jobs. Now their town is going to be absolutely booming. That will have spin-off jobs in London and Elgin and the whole region.

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

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you to the Premier once again for this great, historic announcement. The investments in Elgin county by Volkswagen and in all our local communities in southwestern Ontario truly marks a new and generational era for all of us. St. Thomas suffered through the closing of Ford's Talbotville assembly plant in 2011—it was really tough—and Sterling Trucks assembly plant in 2009, resulting in thousands and thousands of jobs gone.

This investment made by Volkswagen is truly historic, and it sends a clear and definitive message that we are back in business in southwestern Ontario. I want to make the point that sustainable jobs matter to the people of Ontario, and it is the leadership and actions of government that make a difference by creating the environment for business to create jobs and succeed.

Speaker, can the Premier please elaborate on how our government is continuing to support our auto manufacturing sector in our great province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, I want to thank the MPP. Mr. Speaker, this is a historic investment of Volkswagen to build its first overseas facility—16 million square feet. That's 16 million square feet. It's going to be one of the largest facilities in North America, one of the largest in the entire world, because we created the environment and the conditions for them to come here, along with General Motors, Ford, Toyota, Stellantis and Honda. There's no jurisdiction in North America that has six auto manufacturers right there producing either the batteries or the vehicles.

Let's remind everyone of four and a half years ago, when the Liberals and the NDP chased 300,000 jobs out of the province. They were gone. GM was closing. Ford was leaving. Stellantis was leaving.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? We're an economic powerhouse. We're leading the EV revolution everywhere in the world right here in Ontario.

HOUSING

Mr. Jeff Burch: Through you, Speaker, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: There's a housing development in Port Colborne, a city in my riding, that was approved in the 1980s and they still haven't broken ground. As a matter of fact, the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, AMO and Ontario's Big City Mayors have all pointed out that there are 1.25 million homes in the approval pipeline that are not being built. Planners say if the province could incentivize developers to build what is already approved, they'd be 85% of the way to their goal. Will the minister agree to implement a reasonable time limit on developers and builders whose developments have already been approved, yes or no?

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm glad the member opposite talked about Port Colborne. I had a great meeting with the mayor and representatives from that municipality at the Ontario Good Roads meeting last week—fantastic. They're so aligned with our government's policies on getting shovels in the ground faster. I want to thank them for all of their ideas and suggestions that they gave the ministry during Good Roads.

But, Speaker, I have to take the opportunity with this member, because he and his party continue to vote against our measures which would incentivize the development community to get shovels in the ground faster. Exactly what our government has put forward would do what this member wants and he votes against it, so I'm not sure how he rationalizes that back home—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Supplementary question.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, this government has been blaming municipalities and the approval process for the housing crisis. According to AMO's calculations, they have taken away \$5 billion in infrastructure revenue while at the same time fining municipalities if they don't hire more planners to speed up the approval process. Meanwhile, the Premier's well-connected friends get to bank land and speculate all they want, driving up the price of housing and creating red tape.

Will this minister stop blaming municipalities, do what is fair and implement a sunset clause on approvals so that developers and builders must build housing in a reasonable period of time after they've been approved, yes or no?

Hon. Steve Clark: The member has got it wrong. I'm blaming the NDP for voting against every measure that this government puts forward to increase housing supply. This is the fundamental argument that we have with the NIMBYism-defence party over there. The fact is that we as a government have an idea that we need to get those input costs down. We need to lower the costs. Right now, fees and charges in the greater Golden Horseshoe put \$119,500 on the costs alone. We want to reduce those baseline costs to make housing more affordable.

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The NDP will always—and I mean this—stand up for more fees, more charges, more taxes on non-profit

housing, co-op housing, affordable housing, attainable housing. Every single time, you guys haven't seen a tax that you don't like.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll ask the members to make their comments through the Chair and not directly across the floor of the House.

The next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rob Flack: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. I want to start by thanking him for his tireless and dogged determination for getting the Volkswagen deal across the line. Well done, sir.

As we have heard many times in this House, before this government got elected, our auto and manufacturing sectors were in deep, deep trouble. Hundreds of thousands of auto and manufacturing jobs fled the province thanks to the previous government, leaving Ontario unprepared to lead the charge on the future of electric vehicles. That is why we are laser-focused on rebuilding the province's auto and manufacturing sectors by attracting investments, all the while creating good, long-term, sustainable jobs.

Last Friday, our government announced further details of the historic Volkswagen investment in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Will the minister provide an update on the Volkswagen deal?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It was a thrill to hear Volkswagen announce their \$7-billion investment for their first overseas EV battery manufacturing plant right here in Ontario. From our very first meeting in Toronto a year ago this month to the four meetings they had in Queen's Park with Premier Ford, we knew that Ontario had everything VW was looking for.

As we talked about our EV ecosystem, from critical minerals in the north to the manufacturing might in the south, you could see VW being drawn into the Ontario story: clean, green electricity; coal-free, green steel; one of the largest automakers in North America; the only jurisdiction with five auto plants; 700 parts companies; 300 connected-and-autonomous-vehicle companies; 500 tool-and-die and mould makers. But what they really saw was that we already have the talent to turn out world-class, award-winning production.

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

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It has been remarkable to see that the hard work of this government has paid off once again in the form of attracting the largest EV plant in the history of our province and, I dare say, the largest automotive investment in the history of this country called Canada.

These investments are building our strong economy and bolstering competitiveness, which is vital to our success. But beyond that, these investments demonstrate that our government continues to create good-paying, sustainable jobs now and in the future.

Speaker, will the minister please elaborate on what the Volkswagen investment means not only to the people of my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, but to all the people of this great province?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: What Volkswagen really saw in us was our people. They knew that we can do it here because we produce 65,000 STEM grads every year. We have 24 colleges and universities offering automotive programs. When we met them in Germany last October, we showed them Ontario understands cars and manufacturing, and we have for 100 years, and that by choosing us, they would be in the heart of the EV revolution.

We felt encouraged about where we were with the deal when Volkswagen effectively moved into our offices last January. And winning it, Speaker? There's just no better feeling than that, so thank you, Premier Ford. It was the culmination of a lot of work, a lot of shoe leather, and a lot of sweat equity by a lot of partners.

Ontario now has \$25 billion in new auto investment in two and a half years.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. A staff report went to the London city councillors last week warning that Bill 23 will cause a \$100-million revenue loss over the next five years, likely resulting in property tax increases. City staff cautioned that Bill 23 will reduce parks and green spaces, limit the city's ability to invest in low-income housing and cause needed infrastructure improvements to be deferred. It will make it challenging for London to deliver on its approved target of 47,000 new housing units.

Speaker, why is this government creating a huge revenue hole for cities like London and making it more difficult to increase housing supply?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: You know, Speaker, in London, they've got a great mayor in His Worship Mayor Josh Morgan. I had an awesome opportunity to chat with him on Thursday at the Big City Mayors meeting in Kitchener. Mayor Morgan and his council get it. They were one of the first municipalities in Ontario to sign on to our housing pledge—no problem in making that goal of 47,000 housing starts by 2031—and, again, want to build, provide very respectful comments.

The meeting with the Big City Mayors on Thursday was amazing because we asked for their input. We're looking for their suggestions and their guidance on some of the measures in our housing policy.

The only party that really sits on the sidelines are New Democrats, who always complain, never give any positive recommendations and, again, just vote against housing policy just for the sake.

We want to build upon the success that Mayor Morgan and his council have in London. We're going to continue to engage with them.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I don't know why the minister is so dismissive of the hard-working staff who work for the city of London. The staff report also warns that Bill 23 will destroy wetlands, woodlands and natural habitats, resulting in serious harm and putting species, conservation and our environment at risk.

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority states that Bill 23 will “open up significant holes in the delivery of our natural hazard roles, rendering them ineffective,” and “will negatively impact our ability to protect people and property from natural hazards.”

Speaker, why is this government gutting protections for the wetlands that protect cities like London from flooding risk?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: By no means. We're actually increasing the greenbelt. The greenbelt has grown under our administration.

Let me just talk about the economic development. Mr. Speaker, we have 445,000 people who landed in Ontario, the fastest-growing region anywhere in North America. We're seeing unprecedented growth. The reason we're seeing unprecedented growth: We've created that environment, the climate for companies to invest. Every single day, my Minister of Economic Development gives me a list three pages long of these massive companies coming here.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? We need homes for them to live in. It's very simple economics, folks, that the NDP don't understand. It's business sense. It's called supply and demand. When there's a greater demand and not the supply, prices go up.

We're going to create the supply. We're going to make sure we build the 1.5 million homes for newcomers and people who are here who need a home. That's what we're going to do.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. My question is for the Premier.

We are in a housing affordability crisis in this province. We all know that. Our major urban centres have an entire generation of young people and essential workers who are unable to find rental housing that they can afford.

Enter 8 Dawes Road, a plot of land in the centre of my beautiful riding of Beaches–East York. Originally a site owned by Metrolinx, it was recently sold to a housing developer. Great: more housing just steps from the Danforth GO train station and TTC subway at Main, exactly where new apartment buildings should be encouraged. And yet, that Metrolinx land deal contained zero requirements for delivering any on-site affordable housing units.

My question is, why doesn't this government require that Metrolinx include minimum affordable housing requirements in their property sales to private housing developers? And why wasn't this done for the Danforth GO station site at 8 Dawes Road?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the member for the question. I appreciate the member's question very much, because it was this government that led the way in terms of tying housing with transit construction. We are expanding the subway system by 50% in the city of Toronto and York region. We want to bring housing opportunities with it, which led to the creation of the Transit-Oriented Communities Program, which we are now very much focusing on the transit stations on the Ontario Line, on Yonge North. We will be providing housing opportunities but also affordable and attainable housing models as well, and we are working with local communities to learn from them what other community needs exist within that particular area.

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We are working very well with the city of Toronto. We are progressing on all of our stations and we will continue to work in partnership with Metrolinx.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much for that answer, but obviously 8 Dawes Road fell through the cracks because nothing happened there.

In front of me now I have the report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force. The task force is comprised of industry leaders and experts. They consulted with stakeholders, including municipalities and advocacy groups, to develop the report.

In appendix C, Government Surplus Land, the following point is made: "All future government land sales, whether commercial or residential, should have an affordable housing component of at least 20%"—in your own report.

My question to the Premier is, what is the point? What is the point of creating reports if you do not take the sound advice of experts? And will you take a bolder and gutsier approach to affordable housing by requiring 20% of newly built units to be affordable? And if you need a backbone, I'm happy to give you an injection.

Hon. Kinga Surma: I would like to ask the member opposite, who sat on city council for many years, why the city didn't lead the way in building a TOC program. It was this government that led the way in terms of tying housing to transit development opportunities across the city of Toronto and Yonge North.

Mr. Speaker, we are making great progress. We are building more housing, including attainable and affordable housing opportunities along our subway line, but we're not stopping there. We are doing a very thorough analysis of all of our GO stations within the greater Toronto and Hamilton area to see where other opportunities exist.

We announced East Harbour, for example, as well as Mimico. Mimico, actually, was a station that the former previous government spoke about but never got done.

Mr. Speaker, this was a government in action, and we will build housing and community benefits that come along with it.

HOUSING

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. Many communities across our province have too many individuals and families experiencing housing instability. The factors contributing to homelessness and poverty are complex and need to be addressed with comprehensive, innovative, long-term strategies that help our most vulnerable.

In my riding of Brantford–Brant, we have a number of incredible resources and supports for those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. I am incredibly proud of the work that these agencies undertake to deliver in providing help for individuals, families and Indigenous communities, but there is more that should be done, and can be done, for them.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government's investments into local programs will support housing and homelessness prevention services in my community of Brantford–Brant?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member from Brantford–Brant for the tireless work that he does, and for this important question.

Our government is committed to providing the resources they need to combat homelessness and poverty. We are investing an additional \$1.8 million into that community, bringing the total amount of provincial funding to almost \$7 million, a nearly 34% increase, Speaker. This money will be used to fund the Homelessness Prevention Program and the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program, which will provide substantial support to those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of being homeless.

Our government recognizes the critical relationship between housing supply and homelessness, and that's why we're working to ensure that all Ontarians have access to affordable housing and safe housing, no matter where they live.

We're working with the 29 largest and fastest-growing municipalities to increase housing density around major transit station areas and other priority growth areas like the downtown.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: The shortage of housing supply impacts all Ontarians, no matter their background or their budget.

Under the previous Liberal government, the shortage of affordable housing worsened and community supports were lacking. Communities like my riding were unfortunately overlooked by the previous Liberal government, and my constituents are rightly concerned about the impact that their inactions have had on this serious situation. Ontarians deserve a government that is focused on tackling the supply crisis and providing a comprehensive approach to increase the supply of supportive and affordable housing for the most vulnerable.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is continuing to make progress in supporting communities to ensure that resources are available for those who need it most?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you once again to the passionate member from Brantford–Brant for the question.

We're working hard to ensure that all residents have access to the resources they need and we're committed to providing municipalities with the tools that they require to do so. Since being appointed associate minister I've been meeting people in many communities, talking to our great members from this caucus from all of these regions. The consensus is clear: Unlike the previous Liberal government, who neglected communities like Brantford–Brant, we recognize that every community in Ontario deserves the same opportunity to grow and to prosper.

Under the leadership of this Premier and this minister, our government is investing billions of dollars into transit and infrastructure as we accelerate the construction of new homes in all parts of the province. And, Speaker, we're going to get it done.

EDUCATION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Since coming to power, this government has cut education funding in Ontario by \$1,200 per student in real terms. Thanks to this underfunding, school boards are currently scrambling to plan cuts. Teachers and education workers are burning out, and a growing number of classrooms have unqualified educators present. Kids are going without vital supports.

In the midst of this crisis, the Premier thinks that increasing funding for education by only 0.8% is sufficient when the government's own projection for inflation this year is 3.6%. Why does the Premier believe developers and highways should get billions, but kids should get cuts?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: On the contrary, we believe students should get back to basics, which is why we've brought forth a plan to strengthen foundational skills in reading, writing and math. We increased staffing by 2,000 additional focused educators, with respect to literacy promotion and math. We've hired 8,000 additional workers since we started in 2018. This year, like every year, we are increasing funding—over \$690 million, an increase in funding that's going to help kids get back on track.

This morning, we announced over \$20 million in additional funds to combat violence that's happening in and around our schools, a 37% increase in Focus on Youth to help school boards with respect to after-school mentorship, leadership and career-development programming and free camps for high-need communities.

We just launched an agreement with the Pinball Clemons Foundation. We launched another agreement with Respect Group—that's Sheldon Kennedy, a former NHL player. All of these funds are for the TDSB and school boards across Ontario to combat violence and keep children safe in schools across this province.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Perhaps the minister can get one of his new math coaches to teach him about inflation. It's really going to blow his mind.

The crisis in education is creating a downward spiral where impossible working conditions are burning out teachers and education workers, who are leaving the profession, making the working conditions even worse for those who remain. We now have 40,000 teachers in Ontario who are registered with the college but not teaching in one of our schools.

Meanwhile, the number of unqualified teachers in classrooms is growing. How does the Premier think this is going to help kids catch up?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We've brought forth legislation to accelerate the approval and certification of new educators in Ontario. Unfortunately, the members opposite have confirmed that they will oppose legislation to improve schools and better focus them on student achievement in Ontario classrooms.

We've also hired 8,000 more staff, opposed by the NDP. We just announced a \$560-million increase in funding, opposed by the NDP. We increased 2,000 front-line educators just last Sunday. That too was opposed by the NDP. The constant in this Legislature is opposition by the NDP for progress, for change and desperately needed reform to improve publicly funded schools.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. My constituents of Newmarket–Aurora, as well as many individuals and families across our province, hold a deep affection for Ontario's provincial parks. Despite the challenges of the past few years, Ontario parks have remained a cherished destination for Ontarians seeking to escape and unwind, surrounded by the natural beauty of our great province. Visitation rates to Ontario parks have reached unprecedented levels, and this trend shows no sign of slowing.

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Unfortunately for those living in more urban areas, it can be challenging for individuals and families to access these parks for a much-needed day in nature. Speaker, what measures is our government taking to expand recreational opportunities for all Ontarians?

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I appreciate her advocacy for increased recreational opportunities for Ontarians.

Speaker, I was proud to stand on Earth Day alongside the MPP for Pickering–Uxbridge, who has been a strong champion for the outdoors and the environment, to announce Ontario's first-ever urban provincial park. This is also the first provincial park the province of Ontario is announcing in over 40 years.

Ontarians in the GTHA, Speaker, we know, don't always have equal access to Ontario's green spaces, unlike those living in other areas of the province. That's why our government is working hard to bring more opportunities for all Ontarians to enjoy the great outdoors. As the trail

capital of Ontario, Uxbridge is an ideal location, and I thank the many partners, who I'll elaborate on in the supplementary, who joined us—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

The supplementary question?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the minister for that great answer and for your work, because I was so excited to see that on Saturday. The creation of the first urban provincial park in Uxbridge is a monumental achievement, particularly for those residing in the greater Toronto area.

With more and more individuals and families attending our provincial parks, it is necessary that our government respond and expand opportunities for access. Not only do Ontario parks serve a vital role in supporting scientific research and protecting our province's biodiversity, they also provide recreational activities, tourism and so much more.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on plans for this proposed park and how it will benefit Ontario?

Hon. David Piccini: Thanks again to the member for that question. It's yet another example of how we're building a stronger Ontario.

I want to thank all the partners who joined us on Earth Day for that announcement, who we've been working for years with to make Saturday possible. I'd like to thank Mayor Barton, first and foremost, from the town of Uxbridge; he has been a champion, working alongside our member. I'd like to thank regional chair John Henry. I'd like to thank John MacKenzie from the TRCA; Rob Baldwin from the Lake Simcoe conservation authority; the chair of our Protected Areas Working Group, Peter Kendall, who was there; the Nature Conservancy of Canada; the Schad Foundation; Earth Rangers; local high school students who were there. Speaker, this is what partnership looks like.

In closing, a special thank-you to John MacKenzie, whose legacy land donation helped make this possible. It's important to note that legacy land donors like John—we've enabled them to protect these areas for generations to come, thanks to the Greenlands Conservation Partnership, which this minister increased for a historic \$14 million in funding in the budget. It's one of the reasons we've protected four times that of the previous government since the last election, and we're going to continue protecting these crown jewels for generations to come.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. A constituent named Kathy contacted my office after she was placed in a stock closet while receiving cancer treatment at a hospital in Hamilton. Before this, she was in the hallway awaiting discharge, which didn't happen. Kathy does not blame the staff, because she knows they have no choice. She is upset because this has become a solution in Ontario under this government.

Speaker, why does the Premier find it acceptable to funnel money into the private sector while our public

health care system is under such strain that cancer patients are being treated in closets?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I hope the member opposite shared with Kathy the 50-plus investments that we are making through the Infrastructure Ontario ministry to either build, expand or renovate 50 different hospital builds, including in Niagara region.

We talk about the need for ensuring that health care services are available in community. How do we do that, Speaker? We make sure that we have facilities that are exceptional so that the services continue to be provided, and we make investments on the health human resources side, which of course we are also doing with historic investments working with the Minister of Colleges and Universities—the largest increase in nursing students and health human resources historically in Ontario.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the Premier: This Premier promised to end hallway medicine in 2018, but we're in 2023 and the crisis in our hospitals has gone from bad to worse. Kathy told me she received decent care, but the ward was extremely busy and staff told her they needed the bed. She spent more than 24 hours in a makeshift bed which she said was dark, unsanitary and had no call bell. This is not normal, and it is bizarre to watch this government applaud themselves while our health care system crumbles.

The solution isn't complicated, Speaker. Will this government prioritize funding of our public health care system, or will they continue to divert public dollars into personal profits?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We have and we will continue to, with the investments of over 50 different capital builds, including in the member's own riding in the redevelopment of the Hamilton Health Sciences; that is in planning now. These investments are going to make sure that, for generations to come, we have hospital facilities that are available, that are completely state-of-the-art, because we have incredible health care staff who have incredible opportunities to serve the people of their communities, and now we're making the investments on the capital side—over 50 new investments.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of Red Tape Reduction. Businesses across Ontario, including those in my community, are not immune to the effects of ongoing supply chain disruptions, inflation and increased interest rates. Because these global challenges have local impacts, our government must continue to take bold action to help support our businesses during this period of uncertainty. That means eliminating overregulation that imposes red tape barriers and burdens. Taking action to reduce red tape supports our small businesses through direct cost savings which, in turn, fuels job creation and growth.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to help businesses remain competitive?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora for her hard work on behalf of her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to remind Ontarians about the disastrous legacy of the previous Liberal government—supported by the NDP, of course—that helped drive over 300,000 jobs out of the province and businesses that were leaving. Thanks to the efforts this government, Mr. Speaker, we are changing all of that. It's our efforts—through 10 different pieces of legislation, we have helped reduce the cost for businesses to do business annually by about \$700 million.

Mr. Speaker, it's no secret why over 85,000 new businesses were registered in the province of Ontario last year alone. Businesses are taking notice right around the world; they are making the investments in our province. We are creating the conditions for them to thrive, which ultimately helps our province and every single resident in the province thrive.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to thank the minister for visiting my riding of Newmarket–Aurora this past Friday where we had a very fruitful round table. During this recent visit with our local small business leaders, the Minister of Red Tape Reduction and I heard about the problems they are facing because of outdated, redundant and ineffective regulations. Their message to our government was very clear: Businesses expect our government to leave no stone unturned when it comes to cutting red tape and attracting new investments that will help to create more good-paying jobs and strengthen our economy. While our government continues to get it done, it is obvious that continuing to eliminate red tape and keeping costs low is crucial to maintaining Ontario's competitive advantage.

Can the minister please share how our government is making it easier for businesses to invest and grow in Ontario?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my honourable colleague for that important question once again, and I want to thank her for organizing a wonderful round table with her local businesses last Friday. I had an opportunity to hear first-hand about some of the challenges, and feedback in terms of how we can continue to make our province competitive.

One of the things that I really enjoy in my role as the minister responsible for red tape reduction is meeting with businesses, meeting with individuals, and hearing first-hand about the challenges that they're facing and how our government can continue to help them and help their business be competitive around the province. That's how we have informed our 10 different pieces of legislation that we have introduced to help the regulatory burden on Ontarians.

We recognize there's a lot more work to do, and we will continue to work hard each and every day to make sure that every Ontarian and every single business in the province has the opportunity to succeed and compete.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

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

As our provincial health care system continues to face severe staffing shortages and patients are seeing record wait times, whether in emergency rooms or for surgery, more than a dozen nurses are being laid off at Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Can the Minister of Health explain what led this hospital to have to lay off 13 nurses?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm going to put a couple of facts on the table before I answer that question in particular. First of all, in Canada, Ontario has the lowest wait times for surgeries. We lead Canada in Ontario. That is in no small part because of the excellent work that our clinicians and our hospitals have been able to do dealing with the pandemic backlog. We've done that.

We also understand that there is more work to do in terms of ensuring that we do even better for the people of Ontario, which is why, through Bill 60, we have allowed an expansion in the community and surgical area. The member opposite would know very well that there are hundreds of community surgical and diagnostic organizations that are already operating in the province of Ontario, and we are expanding that in Bill 60 because we understand people want access to care as close to their community as possible.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: While most health care settings are desperate to hire nurses, Stevenson Memorial Hospital is laying off nurses because they are facing a deficit because the government does not fund them enough. We all know where those nurses will end up. They will end up working for big for-profit corporations that will be receiving hundreds of millions of dollars from this Conservative government, directing money away from public health care to private for-profit.

Will this government allocate the funds to Stevenson Memorial Hospital so it can keep their nurses that the patients so need and deserve?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We've spoken many times about our government launching the largest health human resource recruiting and training initiatives in Ontario's history. Some of that, of course, is embedded in Bill 60 with an as-of-right proposal that will ensure that if you are a practising clinician—doctor, nurse—in other Canadian jurisdictions, you will be able to immediately come to Ontario and start practising without having to wait. It is truly an opportunity for people who wish to move their family or are already here in Ontario to start work immediately.

We, of course, also have, through the work of the Minister of Colleges and University, our Learn and Stay program, which has ensured the largest number of students applying for those nursing spots because they want the

opportunity to train, to live, to work in their community. That recruitment continues, and we will ensure that we train the appropriate health human resources. We're doing the capital investments. We're getting it done.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Graham McGregor: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board and emergency management. I want to talk a little bit about a community he knows well, the community of Brampton, Ontario. Now, we know that Brampton is a community that is simply tired of waiting. We're tired of waiting, whether it's in the hospital waiting room after 15 years of neglect where they closed hospitals under the previous Liberal government. We're tired of waiting in traffic where progressive politicians have continually voted against bypass highways for our city in favour of downtown Toronto environmental interests. But when this government got elected, the residents of Brampton have a reason to wait no longer. We have help on the way.

Can the President of the Treasury Board please tell the residents what we're doing to get it done for Brampton families?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Brampton North for all of his great work and advocacy for the city of Brampton. Let's look at this government's record under the leadership of Premier Ford for the city of Brampton. The members opposite voted against a new hospital for the city, the largest health care investment that the city of Brampton will be getting. The members opposite voted against a new medical school for the city of Brampton. The members opposite voted against a new highway, the Highway 413, that will be made for the residents of the city of Brampton and for Peel region, Mr. Speaker.

Every step of the way, this government has brought significant investments to the people of Brampton, to the city of Brampton. We've brought billions of dollars in economic development, a new Stellantis plant that is going to be built in Brampton. The members opposite voted against that.

We will continue to build Brampton into the great city it is, and we're truly grateful to have new members, from the member of Brampton North—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to inform the House that we have a special guest with us in the chamber: the former member for Mississauga South in the 38th Parliament, Tim Peterson. Welcome back, Tim.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's my honour to introduce Nathan and Sophie Skoufis, who are in the west members' gallery. They're the owners of Guelph Family Martial Arts. Nathan is a sixth-degree black belt. He's been a member of Team Canada's kickboxing team since 2007 and he's a 24-time world champion for Canada.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I think everyone in this House can agree that all of us are here because of our amazing volunteers. I'd like to welcome some volunteers from my riding today: Samantha Kesar, David Newbury, Saroj Gandhi, Keith Fleming—two of whom are now constituency staff in my office. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to take the opportunity today to welcome my constituency office manager, Mariana Ghobrial. She has been with us for three years. This is the first time she's visiting Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd just like to take this opportunity to wish a very happy birthday to somebody today, our deputy Premier.

DEFERRED VOTES

BETTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ÉCOLES ET DU RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES

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

Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

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

On April 18, 2023, Mr. Lecce moved second reading of Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care.

On April 20, 2023, 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	Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barnes, Patrice	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Sylvia	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Byers, Rick	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna

Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave	Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Coe, Lorne	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David	Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Graydon	Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Shamji, Adil
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura	Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Todd	Collard, Lucille	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Dave
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga	Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, David
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina	Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.	Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.	Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Smith, Todd
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy	Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Surma, Kinga
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.	Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Ghamari, Goldie	Piccini, David	Yakabuski, John	Flack, Rob	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gill, Parm	Pierre, Natalie		Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pirie, George		Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
			Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
			Ghamari, Goldie	Piccini, David	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

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Jama, Sarah	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 76; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Lecce has moved second reading of Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care.

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 will be another five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1149 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On April 18, 2023, Mr. Lecce moved second reading of Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gill, Parm	Pierre, Natalie
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pirie, George
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan
Barnes, Patrice	Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Blais, Stephen	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Romano, Ross
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane

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

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Jama, Sarah	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Vaugeois, Lise
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 81; the nays are 30.

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? I look to the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Standing Committee on Social Policy, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1154 to 1300.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. Graham McGregor: A matter has been recently drawn to my attention. I just want to congratulate my seat-mate and wish him a very happy birthday.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1105954 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2023

Mr. Saunderson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1105954 Ontario Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased to introduce this petition: "Protect the Greenbelt.

"Whereas the government has removed 7,400 acres of land from the greenbelt...;

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

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

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop all plans to remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland and sensitive wetlands."

I agree with this petition. I signed it and I give it to page Sanskrati for submission.

ONTARIO PLACE

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled "Save Ontario Place.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario Place has been a cherished public space for over 50 years, providing joy, recreation, and cultural experiences for Ontarians and tourists alike...;

"Whereas redevelopment that includes a private, profit-driven venture by an Austrian spa company, prioritizes commercial interests over the needs and desires of the people of Ontario and it is estimated that cost to prepare the grounds for redevelopment to build a 2,000-car underground garage will cost approximately \$650 million;

"Whereas there are concerns of cronyism by Mark Lawson, Therme Group Canada's vice president of comms and external relations who was previously Ford's deputy chief of staff;

"Whereas meaningful public consultations with diverse stakeholders have not been adequately conducted and the Ontario NDP has sent a letter of support for a public request to begin an investigation into a value-for-money and compliance audit with respect to proposed redevelopment of Ontario Place;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to halt any further development plans for Ontario Place, engage in meaningful and transparent public consultations to gather input and ideas for the future of Ontario Place, develop a comprehensive and sustainable plan for the revitalization of Ontario Place that prioritizes environmental sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity, and ensure that any future development of

Ontario Place is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, with proper oversight, public input, and adherence to democratic processes."

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the thousands of Londoners who attended Earthfest on the weekend and who lined up at my table to sign this petition to protect the greenbelt and repeal Bills 23 and 39.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government's latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing wealthy developers to profit over bulldozing over 7,000 acres of farmland;

"Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats, prevent flooding, and mitigate from future climate disasters with Ontario losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

"Whereas the government's Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt, showcasing that Bill 23 was never about housing but about making the rich richer;

"Whereas the power of conservation authorities will be taken away, weakening environmental protections, and preventing future development;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bills 23 and 39, 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."

I fully support this petition. I'll affix my name and send it to the table with page Senna.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies intimate partner violence as a major global public health concern, as it affects millions of people and can result in immediate and long-lasting health, social and economic consequences; and

"Whereas other Canadian provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have passed legislation on the disclosure of intimate-partner violence history, to protect citizens from domestic violence; and

"Whereas the disclosure mechanisms outlined in Clare's Law would be an additional tool for police services to prevent intimate partner violence; and

"Whereas over 43,786 people, as of April 19, 2023, have signed the petition 'Justice for Bobbi: Adopt Clare's Law in Ontario' on change.org; and

“Whereas people at risk of potential harm have the right to be informed of their intimate partner’s violent past—if the partner was a repeat offender of domestic violence;

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

“To urge the government of Ontario to adopt mechanisms for disclosure outlined in Clare’s Law—whereby information relating to intimate-partner-violence convictions can be used to assess risk of and prevent harm for intimate partner violence.”

I was proud to bring that motion forward, and I’m very proud to sign this petition.

MISSING PERSONS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition:

“Vulnerable Persons Alert.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a gap in our current emergency alert system that needs to be addressed;

“Whereas a vulnerable persons alert would help ensure the safety of our loved ones in a situation where time is critical;

“Whereas several municipal councils, including, Brighton, Midland, Bonfield township, Cobourg and Mississauga and several others, have passed resolutions calling for a new emergency alert to protect our loved ones;

“Whereas over 90,000 people have signed an online petition calling for a ‘Draven Alert’ and over 6,000 people have signed an online petition calling for ‘Love’s Law’, for vulnerable people who go missing;

“Whereas this new alert would be an additional tool in the tool box for police forces to use to locate missing, vulnerable people locally and regionally;

“Whereas this bill is a common-sense proposal and non-partisan in nature, to help missing vulnerable persons find their way safely home;

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

“Support and pass Bill 74, Missing Persons Amendment Act, 2023.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I’ll affix my name to it and give it to page Mackenzie to bring to the Clerk.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to introduce a petition. It’s titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.” I want to thank Professor Sally Palmer and also Tina Harrison from Dufferin-Peel secondary schools for providing me with these signatures.

“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;

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“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 increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at 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 agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and present it to page Lazo to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

HEALTH CARE

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled “Stop” the Premier’s “Health Care Privatization Plan.” As you know, we can’t say the Premier’s name, so I’ll edit on the fly.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas” the Premier and the health minister “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;

“—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 wholeheartedly support this petition. I want to thank Kim Gavan-Rousseau from Sudbury for starting the petition signatures going. I will sign it and give it to page Nicholas to provide to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: This afternoon, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas to address the current staffing shortages in the health care sector, the Ontario government has proposed an investment of \$200 million in 2023-24 to address immediate staffing shortages; and

“Whereas to grow the workforce for years to come, this” funding “includes:

—offering up to 6,000 health care students training opportunities to work in hospitals providing care and gaining practical experience as they continue their education through the Enhanced Extern Program. This program has offered these opportunities to over 5,000 health care students; and

—supporting up to 3,150 internationally educated nurses to become accredited nurses in Ontario through the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program; and

“Whereas more than 2,000 internationally educated nurses have enrolled in this program and over 1,300 of them are already fully registered and practising in Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario is continuing to hire more health care workers to ensure everyone” in this province “can see a trained professional when they need to; and

“Whereas key new investments in” the 2023-24 budget “to build the health care workforce include:

—\$22 million to hire up to 200 hospital preceptors to provide mentorship;

—\$15 million to keep 100 mid-to-late career nurses in the workforce; and

—\$4.3 million to help at least 50 internationally trained physicians get licensed in Ontario;

“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 Ontario budget bill, Bill 85, Building a Stronger Ontario” Act.

Speaker, I fully support this petition. I’ll be signing my signature to it as well, and I will be passing it to page Leonard to bring it to the table this afternoon.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The petition I’d like to read is entitled “Protect the Greenbelt and Repeal Bills 23 and 39.” It states:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government’s latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing wealthy developers to profit over bulldozing over 7,000 acres of farmland;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats, prevent flooding, and mitigate from future climate disasters with Ontario losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes

without destroying the greenbelt, showcasing that Bill 23 was never about housing but about making the rich richer;

“Whereas the power of conservation authorities will be taken away, weakening environmental protections, and preventing future development;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bills 23 and 39, 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.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Olivia to the Clerks.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: “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 will proudly affix my signature to this petition and send it back to the centre table with page Lazo.

OPPOSITION DAY

TENANT PROTECTION

PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move that, whereas there is a cost-of-living crisis in Ontario; and

Whereas the cost of rent has increased to more than 50% of the take-home income for many Ontario households; and

Whereas the removal of all rent control from homes first occupied after 2018 has exposed tenants to unaffordable double-digit rent increases; and

Whereas the ability to increase rent between tenancies accelerates the rising cost of rent and incentivizes illegal evictions; and

Whereas housing is a human right;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to implement rent control on all units, including between tenancies.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Ms. Stiles has moved opposition day number 4.

I recognize Ms. Stiles to lead off the debate.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci beaucoup.

I have been travelling around the province, and here's what I can tell you: In big cities, small towns, rural and urban communities all across this province, Ontarians are hurting from a historic cost-of-living increase.

En début de semaine, le Toronto Star a rapporté que les loyers dans la région du grand Toronto ont atteint 3 000 \$ pour la première fois au cours du premier trimestre de cette année. Il s'agit du sixième trimestre consécutif au cours duquel les loyers de la région de Toronto ont connu des augmentations à deux chiffres d'une année sur l'autre. Trois mille par mois, c'est plus qu'inabordable; c'est alarmant et anormal.

This is not just about Toronto or the GTA; it's happening all across this province. Pour de nombreux Ontariens, le loyer représente 50 % ou plus de leur revenu mensuel net—50% or more of their rent, and I can tell you in many cases it's far more. Telle est la réalité de la crise du logement de l'Ontario.

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Young working professionals, families and seniors are being pushed out of their communities—communities that have their support networks, their friends and families—and forced into smaller and smaller units, simply to be able to put a roof over their heads.

De plus en plus de personnes se retrouvent sans logement. La vérité est que la crise du logement en Ontario et la réalité à laquelle les Ontariens sont confrontés sont complètement ignorées par ce gouvernement. Ils sont déconnectés et n'ont aucune idée de ce à quoi la population de l'Ontario est confrontée.

The truth is that Ontario's housing crisis and the reality that regular Ontarians are facing is completely being ignored by this government. They are out of touch, and they have no idea what the people of this province are facing. When the Ford government took over in 2018, they made it easier to increase rent between tenancies, further incentivizing illegal evictions and accelerating the already rising cost of housing. They actually took away rent control for newer units.

The Ontario NDP has put forward and continues to put forward practical, proven solutions that will help Ontarians as the province faces this housing crisis. We've called for ending exclusionary zoning—it's an obvious one—investing in construction of affordable homes, and putting an end to speculation from rich or greedy developers taking advantage of the crisis that we are facing and that is making it impossible for Ontarians to find a safe place to live.

Nicole, a tenant in my community, pays almost two grand for a basement apartment, but it's in a community that she loves, close to her family and friends. But because of Ontario's lax rules when it comes to rent control, she and many of her fellow community members are seeing \$200-to-\$300 increases—an almost 10% increase. People are being forced out of their communities because of skyrocketing, out-of-control rent hikes.

Cette situation n'est pas viable. Ce gouvernement parle constamment de la croissance de la province et de la nécessité d'augmenter le nombre de logements. Pourtant, il ne s'attaque pas à certains des problèmes fondamentaux qui sont au coeur de cette crise de l'accessibilité au logement.

Instead, their failing housing policies only seek to line the pockets of wealthy developers and insiders. We see it again and again and again.

We are calling for a practical and achievable solution to start addressing the housing crisis in this province. Implementation rent control on all units, including between tenancies. It's one simple and practical but ultimately important solution to help make sure that no one else in Ontario is rendered homeless or in poverty as they struggle to afford a place to live. It's really not too much to ask. People in this province are struggling. This is a solution that would help so many out there.

We don't introduce these motions lightly. We know that what we are putting forward is doable. That's why we bring it forward. We expected—we hoped—the government would come forward in their budget with something like this, that would actually help people at a time when they're really struggling.

I can tell you, Speaker, everywhere I go in this province, as I said at the beginning, in every corner of this province, this is a crisis. I mentioned it before: I go to one small community and they say, "You think the housing crisis is bad over there? No, no, no, it's worse right here." I go to another community and they say, "They think they've got it bad? You should see what it's like here." From North Bay to Barrie, from Timmins to Welland to Brampton to Ottawa and everywhere in between, people in this province are struggling.

This is something tangible that this government could do right now to help so many people who are falling behind. Ontario does deserve a government that supports them when times get tough. They deserve for everyone in this chamber to be supporting this motion.

With that, I urge the government to support this motion and help so many Ontarians who are falling behind.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to support the motion that the Leader of the Opposition has brought forward today. It's not just about economics. That's a really important part of it, but there is an imbalance now that exists between landlords and tenants on a whole bunch of housing that has just been built. Take, for instance, Vista Local, which is in my riding of Ottawa South. There are hundreds and hundreds of residents there who saw between a 6% and 20% increase. How in any way is that fair?

Rent control was to establish a level playing field of balance of power between a landlord and a tenant so that—not that it was equal, but tenants knew they could remain in the place that they were and that the increases would be reasonable. It's the only fair thing to do.

Right now, with the shortage, landlords have all the power.

But here's the thing—this is another piece that's really disturbing about rent control here in Ontario, and that's the Landlord and Tenant Board. If you want to talk about power imbalances—this government has failed to put the resources necessary in that board to serve the people who need to be served. If you're a gigantic landlord, it's not a problem for you at all, because you've got lawyers on retainer. You don't have to worry. Most people might just give up at a certain point. But if you're a tenant and you have to wait months and months and months, that's pretty tough.

If you're a small landlord—they're really hurting. Small landlords who buy a property to make an investment—good people who don't take advantage of their tenants. But if they get a tenant who takes advantage of them, they're stuck. Why is that in any way okay? Why in any way is that acceptable?

Why does this government not put the resources in to the board that adjudicates disputes between tenants and landlords? Was it not important? Did you not want to do it? Was there a reason for doing that? Was it because you wanted it all backed up and for people to give up?

The only benefit that I can see that's derived from what's happening with landlord-tenant relations and that board is—it's okay for big landlords. It's really good for them. It doesn't hurt them at all.

Small landlords? Mom-and-pop shops? People who bought a property for their retirement? People who are depending on that income? They can't get justice. Tenants can't get justice.

I wholeheartedly support this motion.

But even more importantly, would the government just get its act together and make sure that board works for tenants and small landlords—because right now, to say it's not working would be kind.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm very pleased to have the chance to rise today and talk about this very important issue, and also to clarify for the House and for Ontarians the important work that our government is doing to make life more affordable for the 1.7 million Ontario households that rent.

We know that finding a place to rent at a price that's attainable can be challenging for Ontarians, particularly in these times of record inflation. But we also know that the issue that is at the very heart of this difficulty is a lack of supply. This, more than anything else, is the root of the problem facing Ontarians—that there simply is just not enough rental housing to go around.

This isn't a new problem. I'm sorry to report to the previous two speakers that previous governments simply didn't care enough about the issue of rental housing supply. For a decade and a half, the supply crisis has gotten worse and worse and ordinary, hard-working Ontarians were left to pick up the tab. Prices rose sky-high, and new purpose-built rental buildings just simply weren't being

built, and that was a huge problem. Instead, what we saw in Ontario was a stagnation of supply, and more and more renters were left struggling to make do.

From the very first day that our government was elected, we decided to take a different approach. Rather than sit on our hands and watch hard-working Ontarians get squeezed out of the rental market, we decided, as a government, to act. On day one, the very first question that I received in this House was about supply and the fact that the government needed to work collaboratively to increase the supply of housing. We went to the polls in June of last year. We made rental housing policy such a central part of that plan of building 1.5 million homes by 2031.

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In our third housing supply action plan, More Homes, Built Faster, we decided to make the cost of building purpose-built rentals cheaper. We know from the report of the Housing Affordability Task Force that one of the biggest factors that's driving up the cost of new homes is municipal fees. That's why we decided to reduce fees—and, in rental's case, up to 25% for purpose-built rentals, with the highest discounts in that bill were family-friendly units.

I've had the opportunity to hear about the impacts of the policy that the government made first-hand. I'm very pleased to let the members of the House know this afternoon what I've heard. Thanks to the measures that our government has put forward, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're getting shovels in the ground.

I'm just going to use one example. Today in the city of Toronto, there are more active cranes in the sky in this city than there are in New York, Chicago, LA, Washington, DC, Seattle, and San Francisco combined—fantastic news. Clearly, Ontario's economy and Ontario's future is a good bet for investment and for future growth.

I said this two or three times this morning in question period: In 2021, our province broke ground on a record number of housing starts. On the housing start side, there were 100,000 housing starts in only 12 months, which was the highest level that the government had seen since 1987. The next year, 2022, we maintained our success, where we saw the second-highest number of housing starts since 1988, which was 96,000 new home starts—again, this is 30% higher than the annual 65,000 home average that the province has received in the last 20 years.

I think it's really important for us to note this afternoon that many of those cranes in the sky in Toronto, as well as elsewhere in our province, are building exactly the type of housing we need most: more purpose-built rental.

Last year, rental housing starts reached the highest level in Ontario's history—despite the heckles from across the way—of nearly 15,000 starts.

According to data from March, rental housing starts are up 211% in Ontario compared to the same time last year. This is fantastic news for renters, because only dedicated action and perseverance is going to get us to a place where there are enough rental homes to go around.

The evidence is clear: Our plan is working. But we're not going to stop there, because we know more supply is

needed and because we know renters need that security and stability in their homes.

Our government's latest housing supply action plan, Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023, is geared towards further laying the foundation for growth, while expanding on protections for renters and for homebuyers. In it, we are proposing greater legal protection for tenants facing renovations. When evicting a tenant to renovate a unit, we are proposing that landlords would be required to provide a report from a qualified third party stating that the unit must be vacant for renovations to take place. In addition, we would require further updates on the status of renovations in writing. Landlords would be required to provide a 60-day grace period for the tenant to move back in once the renovations are complete—and we're proposing greater legal protection for tenants who face renovations. This is something that we've heard in the House and heard as part of our consultations.

When evicting a tenant to use the unit themselves or for their family, the landlord would have to move into the unit by a determined timeline. This is something that has been a bit ambiguous in the Residential Tenancies Act. By failing to move into the unit within the determined time frame, the landlord would be presumed to have acted in bad faith, and the application could be made, then, by the tenant to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The proposed changes that we're making would effectively double the maximum fines under the Residential Tenancies Act, increasing them to a maximum of \$100,000 for individuals, \$500,000 for corporations. This sends a very, very strong message to bad actors that violations of the Residential Tenancies Act will not be tolerated. It also builds on the bold action we took during the pandemic to protect tenants. Our government froze rents and evictions to provide security and stability to renters in an unprecedented situation. And since then, we've taken a balanced approach that puts the interest of renters front and centre. That's why, for instance, in times of record inflation, we capped rent increases for most rental units in the province at 2.5%, while ensuring that there is still enough opportunity to build new rental accommodation in the province.

My hope is that the parties opposite will recognize the historic opportunity our government has created here—an opportunity for us to stand up for renters—instead of opposing for the fourth time in a row a housing supply action plan that has been endorsed by the people of Ontario, that prioritizes the needs of renters. I hope that the opposition parties will recognize that they need to act productively and collaboratively.

Ontario is becoming the number one jurisdiction for businesses, for jobs, and for newcomers. Cranes are in the sky, shovels are in the ground, and our government is laser-focused on tackling the supply crisis and is hitting the ground running to build 1.5 million homes by 2031.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, with absolute certainty that we are not going to waver in our efforts to deliver the homes that Ontarians need. We know that the fundamental

factor driving rents out of reach for Ontarians is a lack of supply, and we will keep fighting to build those homes that Ontarians need.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for letting me kick off our government's response to the opposition day motion.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's always interesting hearing the minister opposite talk about protections for renters, when I hope he knows full well that if a tenant goes to the Landlord and Tenant Board to contest an illegal eviction, they never return to their home, and the number of landlords that are effectively fined at the Landlord and Tenant Board for illegally evicting a tenant is next to nothing—maybe 20, out of 1.4 million or 1.7 million households in Ontario. It doesn't happen. That's the reality of what it is today.

I'm proud to rise today to speak to the single most effective measure Ontario can take to make housing affordable and more affordable in Ontario today.

Let's also be clear: The Conservatives' track record on solving the housing crisis is not working. It has never been more expensive to rent or own a home in Ontario, ever. This government has been in power for nearly five years.

The legacy is yours, and the legacy is huge unaffordability.

1340

The Conservatives' move to eliminate rent control on new buildings and permit sprawl on the greenbelt has not solved our housing supply crisis. It has failed to make homes more affordable for Ontarians. In fact, the Conservatives have made life very hard for renters.

It was alarming to learn that Toronto's average rental price has passed the \$3,000-a-month barrier for purpose-built rentals, up approximately 13.8% from the previous year. That is shocking. You need to earn well over \$130,000 a year to afford a small apartment in Toronto today.

As the leader has mentioned, this is not just a Toronto issue; this has become a province-wide issue. All our members have many stories of constituents approaching them and saying, "I can't make it work anymore. I'm having difficulty feeding my family. I can't afford the bills. I'm being threatened with an illegal eviction. I'm having to move into a smaller unit, a basement apartment, because I can't make it work anymore. Now I am sleeping in the lounge room so that my children can have the only bedroom available."

We hear stories of constituents who have multiple families living in a two-bedroom apartment because they can't make it work in Toronto or Ontario anymore. How on earth can you afford an apartment, when the average rent is \$3,000 a month for a new apartment, if you're earning just above minimum wage? If you're working at the airport, or if you're working in a supermarket or if you're working in front-line retail, how on earth can you possibly make it work in this city, in this province today? The reality is, you can't. That's why our food bank lines are so big. That's why people are wondering if it's worth living in this province anymore.

Just like we look at Statistics Canada's data that comes out, we see that people are voting with their feet, and they're leaving this province. Net migration to other provinces is up because people come here and they realize they can't make it work, and they're taking their skills and their talents with them. They're moving to Alberta. They're moving to Manitoba. They're moving elsewhere because this province, under this government's leadership, is becoming too expensive.

I am proud today to support real rent control—including all homes, including homes built after 2018—and rent control that includes vacancy control, so that there is a cap on how much the rent can be raised after a tenant leaves. The reason why this is so important is because strong rent control will stabilize rent prices for Ontario's renters, and it will protect tenants from illegal eviction, because strong rent control reduces the financial incentive for landlords to evict. It provides renters with stability so that their home that they live in can continue to be their own at a stable price. That is extremely important.

I want to conclude by talking a little bit about the myth that this Conservative government likes to present: that rent control will limit the construction of new, affordable homes. What we have seen in Ontario today is that when there is rent control, such as in the 1970s and 1980s—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I'll ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'll withdraw.

We had the highest construction of purpose-built rentals that we have seen in this province to date.

When there has been no rent control on new buildings, such as what we had under the previous Liberal government and what we have here—we have seen a reduction in rent control.

What we also know is that there are very effective ways to stimulate purpose-built rental construction and more affordable homes in Ontario that don't involve holding up renters and saying, "You're going to be the sacrificial lamb for us to tackle the housing affordability crisis. You're the victims of the crisis. We're going to make you suffer for the solutions." That is not a good solution for Ontario today.

I urge you to look at better ways to address our housing supply crisis than making life even more expensive for renters, because they've had enough.

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

Hon. Nina Tangri: Honourable members of this House, it is my pleasure to rise today in response to the opposition motion concerning rent control and vacancy decontrol. The issue is of paramount importance to our government, as Ontarians are facing a housing supply shortage from decades of inaction by the previous government.

Last June, Ontarians gave our government a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget. In response, we've taken decisive action to get 1.5 million homes built by 2031.

I'm proud to say that our efforts have already generated historic results. In 2021, our province broke ground on a record number of new home starts, with almost 100,000 starts in only 12 months. In 2022, we maintained our success and saw the second-highest number of starts since 1988, with just over 96,000 new homes—this is 30% higher than the average of the past 20 years. The same year, we saw the highest number of rental housing starts on record, with nearly 15,000 purpose-built rentals, a 7.5% increase from 2021.

Key stakeholders are taking note. Tony Irwin, president and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario and member of our Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team, had this to say: "The recently introduced Bill 97 provides needed clarity for rental providers and creates a framework to increase protections for displaced residents in aging rental stock. FRPO members appreciate the balanced approach this government is taking in tackling the housing crisis, and this bill helps to further strike that right balance."

Speaker, there is still much to be done. Our province is booming with newcomers and job creators from around the world, and they're coming to Ontario, looking to call our province home. Our housing supply crisis is a problem that has been decades in the making. It will take both short-term strategies and long-term commitment from all levels of government, the private sector, and not-for-profits to ensure that Ontario remains the best place to live, work, raise a family and grow a business. That is why we continue to work with municipalities and our partners to update our housing supply action plans to help build more homes and make life more affordable for Ontarians.

Our latest plan, Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023, is geared towards further laying the foundation for growth, while expanding on protections for renters and for homebuyers.

Speaker, we are fixing the Landlord and Tenant Board—a need we very often hear about from both landlords and tenants in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. We're investing an additional \$6.5 million in funding to hire 40 new adjudicators and five full-time support staff, effectively doubling the total number of adjudicators on the Landlord and Tenant Board to provide critical support in addressing the COVID-19 backlog and ensuring that cases are heard in a timely manner.

That's not all. We are also proposing greater legal protection for tenants facing renovations and those facing landlord's-own-use evictions; as an example, imposing the strictest penalties in all of Canada on bad actors, with maximum fines for offences increasing to \$100,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for corporations.

It's this government that is standing up for everyday people by sending a strong message to bad actors that violations of the Residential Tenancies Act will not be tolerated.

Speaker, we're hard at work for all Ontarians to ensure that tenants and landlords are treated fairly and with dignity. That's why we're capping the rent increase guideline at 2.5%, based on Ontario's consumer price index; if

we hadn't, due to recent inflation, this would have resulted in a 2023 guideline of 5.3%. We're also proposing to strengthen tenant protections and remedies, including increasing compensation for bad faith evictions or reno-victions. We want to encourage a safe and fair system when renting a property, so that the tenant and landlord can benefit.

We also know that the root issue is supply, and to stimulate the construction of new rental housing, we introduced an exemption from rent control rules for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, and most new basement units occupied for the first time for residential purposes after November 15, 2018.

Speaker, let's take a minute to talk about how we got here. As we've heard, the NDP are so ideologically opposed to taking any meaningful action to increase the supply of housing that they once again plan to oppose tenant protections. They're opposed to a housing supply plan put forward by our government for the fourth time—the same Liberals and NDP who, when they had a chance to help renters, stood by as the cost of housing skyrocketed, leading to the rental supply crisis that we are now working to address.

1350

The Liberals talk about affordability, while they were in government for 15 years and failed to do anything about the rising cost of living except increase hydro rates and taxes.

Let's not forget that when the NDP were last in power, rents went up—sorry; the rental guides went up: 4.6% in 1990; 5.4% in 1991; and 6% in 1992—all when inflation was significantly lower than it is today.

We'll take no lessons from the NDP on making anything affordable for Ontarians. They said no to requiring landlords to make efforts to negotiate a repayment agreement with a tenant before the Landlord and Tenant Board can issue an eviction order. They said no to increased maximum fines for Residential Tenancies Act offences to \$50,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a corporation; no to requiring landlords to disclose to the board if they have previously filed for eviction to move into or renovate the unit; and no to increased tenant compensation for bad faith evictions.

Speaker, in stark contrast, this Premier, this minister, and this government are standing shoulder to shoulder with tenants across Ontario as we—

Interjections.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Yes—as we take decisive measures to strengthen tenant protections and remedies. That's why Ontario's rental housing starts so far this year are more than double the amount the same time last year.

That's why Ontario is becoming the number one jurisdiction for businesses, for jobs, and for newcomers, with more active cranes in the skies of Toronto right now than there are in New York, Chicago, LA, Washington, DC, Seattle, and San Francisco combined.

But the NDP and Liberals would rather drag us back to the past. They would rather table legislation adding more red tape to delay, obstruct and oppose our progress.

In closing, our government is committed to ensuring the well-being of the people of Ontario and making sure that tenants and landlords are treated fairly. We'll continue to look for ways to make homes more attainable for hard-working Ontarians, while making it easier to build more houses and rental units to address the ongoing supply crisis. This work is critical because we know that when communities and residents thrive, Ontario thrives.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to rise to this issue, and do you know why? Because the history of affordable housing in this country is the history of the New Democratic Party. Let me tell you why. In 1944, when people who fought for our freedom returned from a war overseas and veterans and their families were being gouged, who stood up for them? New Democrats, social democrats across this country. We linked arms with them, and we stood up for them, while the Liberals and the Conservatives did nothing as price gouging of veterans and their families happened in droves.

And then I'm proud to say that once that standard was set and when the business lobby, the big corporate lobby, counteracted and took away rent control when it was given in 1944—took it away in 1949—the NDP didn't give up. Did the NDP give up?

Interjections: No.

Mr. Joel Harden: The NDP didn't give up. We fought for rent control, which was established in this province in 1975 under the leadership of the great Stephen Lewis, who stood in this place and fought for rent control in this province in 1975. That's when it happened.

So I'm not going to take any lectures from these members opposite, certainly not when the great Evelyn Gigantes is my neighbour back home. Evelyn Gigantes stood in this place, was the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and under her leadership—not this government's leadership—non-market housing increased in Ontario by 60%.

Co-op housing, community housing—that's the NDP record on housing. And do you know why? Because when you go to any one of our fundraisers, you're not going to find the DeGasperis family. You're not going to find the Cortellucci family. You're not going to find the real estate investment trusts like Smart Living, which—in my community back home, Smart Living is throwing 121 tenants out of their homes, in the south end of our city, to create gentrified units of \$3,000 to \$3,500 a pop. And these are some of the last remaining affordable housing units in this area. Who fought for them to remain? Who stood by the tenants? The New Democratic Party stood by the tenants. ACORN stood by the tenants while these vultures from Smart Living swoop in, buy up housing stock that they know is dilapidated, refuse to fix it, and throw people out on the street.

The member for University–Rosedale mentioned that the average rent in this city of Toronto is 3K; it's 2K in Ottawa—that's up 11.5%.

Everything in our lives is becoming more expensive under a Conservative government—groceries, rent, gas. The way to get out of this mess, on this day when we are fighting for affordable housing, which is an NDP tradition, is to get rid of the Conservatives who serve the rich and powerful. You should have a government that works for you.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: I have been enjoying listening to all members of this House speak on the opposition day motion—

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I like to from hear everyone—to my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I'd like to highlight to the members opposite—they talk about the grocery prices and the bills. But, colleagues, one thing that can really help bring down the cost of groceries in Ontario and across Canada—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member for Waterloo will come to order.

Mr. Matthew Rae: —is the carbon tax and getting rid of it. I encourage the member from Ottawa Centre to call the federal NDP leader—who also sat in this place, so you may know him—and ask him to fight for the young families in my riding who have to pay more now for groceries we literally grow beside the grocery store because of the carbon tax.

However, we're here to talk about the opposition day motion, so I'll direct my comments to that now.

It's an honour to rise in this House to speak on a very important subject that is top of mind for many Ontarians: the affordability crisis that exists in today's housing market—I should emphasize, today's housing market, because while affordability is a concern for many Ontarians, I want to make it crystal clear that our government is making every effort to make sure we build affordable rental apartments across this province.

We've set an ambitious goal. I like to highlight to the opposition, who continue to heckle me, that they agreed to the 1.5 million new homes by 2031 in their own platform. I'm glad they agree with us on that. I wasn't in this place prior to the last election, but it's disappointing that every time we brought forward a piece of legislation to increase the number of houses built, to increase the number of rental properties built, they voted against it. They said they expected us to do more.

Well, on this side of the House and over there in the middle, we expect the opposition to support our housing supply action plans and to fight for Ontarians.

As the minister and the associate minister alluded to already, we've set records in our housing project starts: in 2021, just less than 100,000 new housing starts; in 2022 we maintained the success, building momentum with 96,000 housing starts.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing alluded to this morning in question period and in his remarks, the latest data show that Ontario has seen an 11%

increase in 2023, already, on new housing starts, up nearly 1,200 from last year. Rental starts are, so far, double already under this new year of construction, which is great to see.

I know the Minister of Economic Development has secured another great auto manufacturing investment in a region that I come from, with the Volkswagen plant. We will need places to live for people who work in that plant. I know across rural Ontario, as the opposition likes to talk about, the number one thing they need is more rental supply. They need more supply for those workers in auto manufacturing who will supply the new Volkswagens and the other investments that we're bringing to this province.

I think of my friends who want to get into the housing market and are currently renting. This government continues to fight for them to ensure that they can purchase an affordable and attainable house within their lifetime, to ensure that we have the dream of home ownership.

I know many of us in this place meet with many different home builders and also non-profits in their ridings when we're back in our ridings.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Habitat for Humanity from my local area on Friday when I was in my riding. It was a great meeting with Habitat for Humanity, and it was great to hear that some of the changes we have made as a government are helping them build more multi-use rental apartments. It was great to hear that our changes under this Minister of Municipal Affairs, our associate minister and, of course, our Premier are getting more rental construction started in my part of the province.

1400

Our government has been clear on our commitment to ensure affordability for homeowners and renters alike. That's why we're preserving rent control for existing units before 2018 and exempting rent control rules for new buildings, new additions to new buildings, and most basement units occupied after 2018. These actions protect tenants while stimulating construction of new rental housing—as I mentioned previously, it is vital in rural communities, where the stock currently does not exist to any extent.

At a time when families across the province are already struggling with the rising cost of living, the carbon tax and the shortage of housing options, it is crucial that we work in partnership with the private sector and the non-profits to grow our housing supply.

It has been alluded to already by the associate minister in her remarks, how, when the NDP held power and when they were in power, when I was a young, young man, rents went up by 4.6% and 6%. I don't think it's really a secret to anyone in this House why they haven't formed government since 1995. In contrast, our government capped increases for the vast majority of tenants in 2023 to 2.5%, well below current inflation rates.

Our government is committed to continuing to release a new housing supply action plan every four years of our mandate. I know when I was on the campaign trail, many appreciated the fact that the government would continue to come back to this Legislature, under this municipal

affairs and housing minister and this Premier, to always bring forward new additions, because we know we need to do more work. And right now, right in front of this House, is Bill 97, which protects tenants' rights.

I was speaking to a renter on Friday when I was in the riding, and this renter was very appreciative of the tenant protections we had in the bill. Their landlord is renovating, so they were very encouraged to hear that, under proposed Bill 97, if passed—and I hope my colleagues across the way choose to support these protections for tenants—the landlord would have to provide a 60-day grace period for them to move back in, and the landlord was to allow the tenant to move back in at a similar rent. This was very encouraging for my tenant, and they said that this was long overdue.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing alluded to, we're increasing the fines—almost doubling them—under the Residential Tenancies Act for any violation.

As the Associate Minister of Housing alluded to, we are, under the Attorney General, investing more in the Landlord and Tenant Board—additional investments on the investments we made in budget 2022. We are investing \$6.5 million extra to help alleviate the backlog at the Landlord and Tenant Board for both landlords and tenants—to clear that backlog to ensure that we can have the protections for those renters in Ontario.

Our government is sending a strong message to the actors that violate the Residential Tenancies Act with these changes to the fine structure.

I'm happy to see the NDP bring forward an opposition day motion to call on the stronger protections act. I know we'll have an opportunity to vote on it later—

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Yes. You will also have an opportunity to vote on Bill 97, which also protects it more, I would argue. I encourage you to vote with us, but I'm not going to hold my breath on that.

Given the importance of the pressing issue, I can appreciate what the NDP is trying to do, but it falls very short, as usual, which is unfortunate.

Our government will continue to work with landlords and tenants, while the opposition will focus on ideological fixes. We will continue to work with builders, the non-profit sector, and with our construction and our municipal colleagues to ensure we build more housing across all of Ontario, in every community.

They can talk all they want, but our government is taking action. I hope they'll join us in saying yes to real protections for tenants under Bill 97, but I know many of my fellow Ontarians fear they will just say no.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing actually say in his remarks that it was the last two governments that have caused this housing crisis; frankly, it was a Liberal government for 15 years, with a Conservative official opposition for that entire 15 years—before the Liberals, it was the Mike

Harris Conservatives. It seems like those of us on this side finally have something to agree with you on: It was indeed caused by both the Liberals and the Conservative governments.

Speaker, those of us on this side believe that housing is a human right. Studies have shown that when people have proper access to stable and safe housing, the risk of chronic homelessness vastly decreases and health and education outcomes increase positively.

Speaker, there are currently over 6,000 households waiting for housing in the city of Windsor alone. The Landlord and Tenant Board, which that this government talks about fixing—the backlogs are causing significant issues for my residents, and not just mine; all around the province. Landlords have applied for additional rent increases through the Landlord and Tenant Board, and because of the backlogs, decisions are being rendered years later. We have landlords that are coming to the tenants for back pay. One building in Windsor is charging tenants \$1,000 in back pay for a rent increase because they waited so long for a decision from the Landlord and Tenant Board.

I had a constituent, just last week, come into my office in tears because she went to the Landlord and Tenant Board, couldn't get an answer, was told to go to the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit, which has an automated message—they don't answer—telling them to go back to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

So this government can crow all they want about what they're doing at the Landlord and Tenant Board, but people can't actually access those supports.

Speaker, it's this Conservative government that has allowed the housing crisis to go from bad to worse.

I want to highlight some things. A recent report went to the city of Windsor council, reporting a significant increase in people experiencing homelessness in Windsor. The report shows that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Windsor has more than doubled compared to the report numbers in 2021—a Conservative government. The Conservatives have had a majority government for five years and, as I said, they were the official opposition for 15, and this is their record.

There's an increase of 61% of Windsor-Essex residents visiting food banks from 2019 to 2022.

According to Feed Ontario, food bank use remains at an all-time high. There has been an increase in food bank use of 42% over the last three years and a 47% increase in people with employment accessing food banks since the Conservatives formed government in 2018. One in four children live in poverty and have to rely on food banks under this Conservative government. Two out of three people who access food banks are social assistance recipients. People in my riding and all across Ontario are struggling to provide food for their families.

Speaker, a key step toward addressing the housing crisis, to addressing child poverty and the increase in food bank use is to actually have affordable housing, to bring in true rent control for all residential units across the province.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to participate in this debate because the housing affordability crisis is at a complete breaking point.

Last week, it was reported that in the first quarter of this year, average rents in the GTA for purpose-built apartments hit \$3,000 for the first time, the sixth straight double-digit, year-over-year increase in the Toronto area—and it's not just Toronto; it's literally cities all over the province. In my own riding, average rent for a one-bedroom apartment hit \$2,085 at the end of last year; that's up 22.4%.

It is heartbreaking to see so many Ontarians with jobs, like nurses, teachers, retail workers and so many others, struggling to be able to find an affordable place to live in the communities they want to live in, where they work in, being forced to spend well over 30% of their income just on housing—let alone minimum wage workers and people who are living in legislated poverty because this government refuses to raise social assistance rates.

Advocates on the front lines have been telling us for decades now that we have to invest in homes that people can actually afford. According to the Daily Bread Food Bank Who's Hungry Report, 87% of their clients are living in housing that is completely unaffordable; seven in 10 were paying half of their income—imagine that, Speaker—just on rent; and 18% were paying all of their income just on rent. Imagine how you afford sky-high food prices and so many other expenses in a day-to-day life.

1410

Let's be clear: The government's expensive sprawl agenda will not solve the housing affordability crisis. It's too expensive for municipalities, who simply can't afford the cost of servicing sprawl, and it's too expensive for people and families, who simply cannot afford the long, expensive, soul-crushing commutes this government is imposing on them.

That's why we actually have to invest in homes that people can afford. That's exactly why the Ontario Greens housing affordability plan, which some have called a master class plan in delivering the solutions we need—that's why we've introduced Bill 44 and Bill 45, to end exclusionary zoning and build the gentle density and missing middle housing supply in homes that people can actually afford, in communities they want to live in.

That's why we're working so hard to end speculation in the housing market—because homes should be for people, not speculators.

That's why I support this motion to bring in rent control, to bring back what this government took away—and not just rent control on units, but rent control between tenants, within units, so we have vacancy control, to get rid of the incentives for landlords to renovict and push their tenants out just so they can jack up rates even higher.

Speaker, we also need to have an honest conversation at all three levels of government. Up until 1995, in the 1970s and 1980s and early 1990s, 15,000 to 20,000 hous-

ing starts in this country every single year were government-supported non-profit and co-op housing that people could actually afford. So we're not going to solve this problem with supply alone—even though I've put forward numerous solutions to increase affordable supply within the communities that people want to live in. That alone, if we're going to be honest, is not going to solve the problem. We need both the federal government and the provincial government to come back to the table with the financial supports to help non-profit and co-op housing providers build the deeply affordable homes that people need to be able to survive month to month, to stabilize their lives.

Finally, we're going to need government to come up with more than \$202 million if we're actually going to build permanent supportive housing with wraparound mental health and addictions supports to support people in our communities, because we know that every \$10 invested in supportive housing saves government \$22 in services.

Those are the solutions we need. That's what we need to fight for for the people of this province.

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

Mr. Graham McGregor: It's an honour to rise in the House today to speak to one of our government's biggest priorities and, frankly, the top priority for new Canadians, millennials and senior citizens. Of course, I'm talking about the housing crisis. And it is this PC government that recognizes the severity of the housing crisis that we're facing.

I want to address some points from my colleague before I get into my prepared remarks about supporting non-profit and affordable housing—that's exactly why, in Bill 23 last year, we made sure that we aren't taxing these new builds. The average development charge in the GTA is \$116,000. That's a tax that hits the construction before a single shovel hits the ground, before any tenancy even takes place. I would remind that my colleague voted against Bill 23, which actually removes development charges from affordable non-profit housing, which seems to be contrary to his point.

The other thing that my colleague mentioned was around the \$202 million for homelessness prevention supports. We saw in the region of Peel—we got \$42 million for the region of Peel. We were just there on Friday to announce that. I was joined by colleagues from across Peel region, many of our PC colleagues in Peel region. Good gosh, Speaker, after that election, we've sure got a lot of Peel MPPs in the PC caucus, don't we? Well, we were all there and we were all very happy because that \$42 million that we invested is a 38% increase over the same program that was coming to the Peel region the year before. That's a 38% increase in more supportive housing supports to the region of Peel, which is going to help our most vulnerable citizens, our most vulnerable residents, get a roof over their head and get the wraparound supports that they need and deserve. I was proud to vote on a budget that put that money forward.

Like the member opposite, I want to make sure that we're investing more money in these things too, but we

can't do that, unless we have a growing economy, an economy that people work in.

We hear from members of the opposition; they talk about how they are the party of workers, but I question—what would workers do under an NDP government? They don't want to build any other houses. They want to sit with their heads in the sand and ignore that. They don't want to build transit, in case we ever damage a tree instead of building a subway, which takes cars off the roads, puts investment in our community, and creates good-paying union jobs. They don't want to invest in the auto manufacturing sector, where we're having clean, green electric vehicles, electric batteries being made. Volkswagen is coming with 3,000 jobs and 30,000 indirect jobs to St. Thomas. I heard there are a lot of NDP and Green Party candidates who are looking for a job after that last election; maybe they can go on to St. Thomas, where it's booming with opportunity. They can all work there.

Now I'll get to my prepared remarks, because I know we've got to cool it a little bit.

This PC government recognizes the extreme severity of the housing crisis. That recognition starts by acknowledging where we live. The province of Ontario is the greatest place in the world. It's no secret people want to live here; quite frankly, we need them to. All of those jobs that we're creating that the NDP continually vote against—we need people to come here and fill them. We need more people to come to Ontario from all over the world. We need more diversity, not less diversity. We've got a labour shortage of about 400,000 jobs, give or take, and our government is hard at work to find ways to get more people into the skilled trades to combat that shortage, be it newcomers from around the world bringing their families with them to benefit our province and begin to call it their home, or our children being taught that they can make a great future for themselves in the skilled trades.

But do you know what, Speaker? We can keep telling people that if they work hard, they can live the life they dreamed of—we can say that all we want, but until we get shovels in the ground and start building homes at the right pace, this is only lip service.

Every member of this House should be standing up and voting for Bill 97, Bill 23, Bill 39, to get shovels in the ground and homes built, to build the dream of home ownership for everybody in Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Graham McGregor: That is an aptly timed water break for your brand new Brampton North MPP.

For our economy, we need people to move here. But who would we be if we invited people to move to our home, to come to our province, if we sold people on the Canadian dream but we didn't provide them a place to live? Brampton North, my riding, was once a place people would move to in search of an affordable home outside of Toronto, but now, people of all ages are getting priced out of Brampton. The rising costs are simply unaffordable for the average Ontarian.

Last year, the federal government announced that Canada broke its record with over 430,000 permanent residents welcomed to the country in 2022; by 2025, they hope to see the number go to 500,000. That is welcome

news on our side, on the PC Party side of the House. We need to fight the labour shortage, and we need new Canadians to come to Ontario and call our province home, but we also need to welcome them with an opportunity to have a home that meets their needs.

As it stands today, our housing supply is not prepared to welcome the large and rapid influx of new Ontarians we are expecting. Of the 500,000 in 2025, we know that over 60% are going to come to Ontario; specifically, the GTA—and if history shows us anything, many, many, many coming to my community in Brampton. We welcome that, but we need to build the houses so that people have somewhere to live. We need to build the roads so that people have somewhere to drive on, to take their kids to school, to take their parents to the doctor, in order to get to work. We need to build opportunity and jobs for people to work at when they get here.

A recent study conducted by the Ontario Real Estate Association found that two thirds of Ontarians polled are spending well over one third of their budget on housing. We also know that on average, it takes millennials 20 years to save for a down payment. In Mississauga, development charges add approximately \$127,000 to the cost of a home. And across the GTA, before a single shovel hits the ground, the average homebuyer already faces an average of \$116,900 in municipal development charges and fees. Speaker, \$116,900 is more than the cost of a down payment for many homes—and over the course of a 20-year mortgage, it could add more than \$800 to a new home buyer's monthly payment.

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We do not believe non-profit and affordable housing providers should be charged huge, unsustainable fees when looking to build housing for vulnerable Ontarians. Through Bill 23, our government is eliminating development charges for affordable, attainable and not-for-profit housing, and purpose-built rentals will see reductions of up to 25%, with the biggest reductions coming for family-sized, family-friendly units. To be clear, this doesn't mean that municipalities won't get any revenue from a new home build. It means that home ownership will be a little bit closer in reach for Ontarians because of these increased fees being decreased, that add thousands to the price of a home.

We are committed to building Ontario. That's why this PC government, in partnership with municipalities across the province, has committed to building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. I look to the members of the opposition and tell them that this is what collaboration looks like.

In Brampton, in my community, which includes my wonderful riding of Brampton North, the city council endorsed the municipal housing pledge to help our province deliver 113,000 units by 2031. Brampton is not the only municipality to sign on to the housing pledge. The city of Toronto's housing action plan aims to increase the supply of housing to achieve or exceed the provincial housing target of 285,000 new Toronto homes by 2031. Ottawa has pledged 151,000 homes by 2031. We have Markham pledging 44,000 new homes by 2031. We have

21,000 in Milton, 23,000 in Barrie, and more across the province. Our government is showing the world that collaboration leads to results. The pledges that these cities have signed onto demonstrate their commitment to unlocking more housing, streamlining development approvals, removing the barriers, and accelerating planning in support of the province's housing target.

Last Friday, I was proud to stand with my PC caucus colleagues, along with three mayors representing the region of Peel: the mayors of Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon. We all announced over \$42 million to the regional municipality of Peel, through the province's Homelessness Prevention Program, to help those experiencing or at risk of homelessness and supporting community organizations delivering supportive housing. This is a year-over-year increase of 38%. Together we're getting it done for the people of Brampton, for the people of Peel and the people of Ontario, and this is just building on a track record that this PC government has been working on.

In 2019, we created the province's first-ever housing supply action plan to reduce red tape and get shovels in the ground and build the dream of home ownership. We built on that success by passing our More Homes for Everyone plan last spring and our new More Homes Built Faster plan last November. And we're already seeing historic results.

In 2021, our province broke ground on a record number of new home starts, with nearly 100,000 starts in only 12 months. That's the highest level of new housing starts in a year since 1987. In 2022, Ontario maintained its success and saw the second-highest number of starts since 1988, with just over 96,000 new homes. This is 30% higher than the annual 65,000 home average of the past 20 years.

Speaker, I will say it again for the opposition to hear, through you: This is about collaboration, working together—something the NDP chose to do with the previous Liberal government, backing them every step of the way, through every decision that set our province back. They supported the Liberal government while they closed down hospitals, like the one I was born in, Peel Memorial Hospital, where not only I was born in, but many people in my generation were born in—the same people in my generation in Brampton who want to live in the community that we were born in, who are priced out of the neighbourhood because housing prices have skyrocketed under 15 years of Liberal neglect, backed by the same NDP.

Now, how are we in this situation where we're asking them to collaborate with us to get shovels in the ground, to build opportunity, to get homes built, to get transit built, to create jobs—good, union, fighting-NDP jobs, union jobs? We're doing it all over the place. And what do they do? They vote against the measures every single time.

Interjections.

Mr. Graham McGregor: And they're uncomfortable; they're yelling about it, because they know that we're right. They vote against it every single time. Now they've put legislation saying they're on the side of the little guy. Golly, Speaker.

NIMBYism is one of the most dangerous forces in our politics today. It's one of the lowest forms of politicking that a prospective candidate can engage in. You promise a group of residents that they won't have to put up with any new neighbours, they can enjoy all the services themselves and keep the neighbourhood to themselves. We need to make this asinine ideology, this NIMBYism, these NIMBY ideas that the opposition continually ramp up, as politically inconvenient as possible.

It's not just the NIMBYs saying no to development in their own backyard; now they don't want homes to be built in anybody else's backyard. They don't want to expand settlement areas so that millennials or new Canadians could have a backyard one day. This simply won't do. As council after council is passing motions pledging to meet their municipal housing targets, working with our government to give families back the dream of home ownership, this PC government stands with them. We support them. We endorse it every step of the way.

Some members will talk about where I sit in this House. They say, "Oh, Graham, you're in the rump. You're on the back benches." Well, I think it's an honour to represent my community of Brampton North every single day in this House. I tell these opposition members that if they don't start standing up for their residents, I'll represent their residents as well. If they don't want to stand up for new Canadians who move into their neighbourhoods, this PC government will stand up for those new residents. We will get homes built. We will get shovels in the ground.

I expect them to get on board and vote for Bills 97, 23 and 39.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to say something really quick about our leader, who brought this forward. This issue isn't just about the GTA; let's be clear about that. It's happening in Niagara.

To the member over there who stood up and talked about rents—through the Speaker: Nobody in the province of Ontario should be charged \$3,003 to rent a place in Toronto. It's not affordable.

To this member over here—wherever he's from; I have no idea who he is or where he's from—he talked about closing hospitals. Let's be clear: It was a PC government, under Mike Harris, that closed 26 hospitals and laid off 6,000 nurses. I just want to clarify that because he brought up closing hospitals.

I want to talk about Niagara. In Niagara—and this should bring tears to our eyes—we have seniors who are being renovicted. They end up living in hotel rooms on Lundy's Lane, one-bedroom apartments, when they've given their entire life to this province—their entire life. The reason I have the quality of life I have is because of my parents and their parents and their grandparents. Yet what are we doing? We're forcing them to live in one-bedroom apartments on Lundy's Lane because they can't afford rent in the province of Ontario. They can't afford their groceries in the province of Ontario. They're choosing whether to pay rent or to have groceries, or to skip

breakfast or skip lunch. We're supposed to be proud of that. Well, I'm not proud of that—I absolutely am not.

I'm not proud of the guy who runs most of the grocery stores, who's making record profits instead of taking that and putting it back in to reduce the price of groceries.

Our country—whether it be Canada or the United States—was built on sharing the wealth, so when the rich got rich, they shared it in the form of better benefits and better wages so people can live and pay their rent.

I guarantee you, there aren't people in Toronto who can afford \$3,003 for an apartment.

In Niagara Falls, it's a 20-year wait-list for a one-bedroom apartment—20 years. In Fort Erie, which is part of my riding, do you know how long it is? It's 13 years for a one-bedroom apartment.

I said to you guys that it should bring tears to your eyes. We have my critic for veterans right beside me. You know that we have veterans in Niagara Falls today—although our Legions are doing an incredible job trying to take care of them, to make sure they're taken care of, they're dying in the streets of Niagara Falls because they're homeless and they can't afford their rents.

We talk about rent and rent control. It's what we need in the province of Ontario to take care of our seniors, our veterans, our young families, our new Canadians.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a pleasure to be able to rise today, on behalf of the good people of Niagara West, and speak to the opposition motion that has come before the floor this afternoon.

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I want to begin my remarks by expressing appreciation and gratitude for the hard work of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; his associate minister, Nina Tangri; and of course, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Perth–Wellington—for their work and continuing to work with 444 municipalities in every corner of this province to help build more homes and make life more affordable for Ontario's families.

We know that, fundamentally, we need to ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing stock on the market in order to address the needs of a growing population. It would be one thing if Ontario was the only place in the world that had challenges that it faced in terms of housing stock and in terms of ensuring there's enough rental stock as well, but we know that we exist in a multi-faceted economy, where people are able to move around, people are able to look at other housing markets. We've seen that in places where there is enough supply, where there are many new units coming onto the market consistently, year after year, where we see a rapid growth in the amount of housing stock that keeps pace with the amount of people who need new rental properties or who need to purchase a home or are able to purchase a home—we can see a pricing equilibrium.

In fact, if you look at some other places across North America and even in Canada, we don't see some of the challenges that we have here in Ontario. Why is that? It's

for a number of reasons, one of which is very, very good. Many people are coming to our great province because they recognize that the investments that have been made in our economic prosperity here in the province of Ontario, under this government, are leading to better hope for the future and opportunities for the future. But that's creating an immense pressure. It creates pressure not just on those who are looking to get into the housing market in terms of purchasing their first home, but also on those who are interested in renting and those who are looking to be able to have a place that they can call home in a rental home.

We live in a prosperous and growing province. It's one of the best places, I believe, in the world to call home. Yet for too many Ontarians, finding that right home is all too challenging. It's because, for decades, we saw governments in this province that, frankly, didn't do enough when it came to building the supply of housing that was needed to meet the demand of a growing population. I'm very pleased that that is now changing, that our government recognizes the importance of housing affordability and affordable housing and ensuring that there is more and more supply coming onto the market. But I believe that, ultimately, we need to all play a role in that solution. We need to work as partners, in all parties in this Legislature and with all of our partners at various levels of government.

We know that for young people eager to raise a family in the community of their choosing, for newcomers ready to put down roots and start a new life, and for seniors looking to downsize but wanting to stay near their family and loved ones, there is a crisis. It's not just a big-city crisis, as we heard. It's a housing supply shortage crisis that affects all Ontarians—rural, urban, suburban, north and south, young and old.

The problem is clear. There are different aspects to how the problem manifests itself in different parts of this province, and there are different, local variables that play a role. But overwhelmingly, we know there simply aren't enough homes being built. The issue is clear, and the solution is equally clear: We need to get more homes built faster to restore that housing equilibrium and ensure that people are able to get into the rental market and into the housing market.

Speaker, we know that all parties in this chamber are committed to building 1.5 million homes, yet our government is the only registered party in this chamber that has a plan to get those 1.5 million homes built. Through our housing supply action plan, we're already seeing historic results.

In 2021, our province broke ground on a record number of new housing starts, with nearly 100,000 starts in only 12 months. That's the highest level of new housing starts in a year since 1987.

In 2022, Ontario maintained its success and saw the second-highest number of starts since 1988, with over 96,000 new homes. This is 30% higher than the annual 65,000 home average of the past 20 years, when, again, governments neglected their responsibility in ensuring that

they were incentivizing new home building here in the province.

Even more exciting when it comes to the motion at hand and the motion that we're discussing this afternoon is that in 2022, Ontario had the highest number of rental housing starts on record: nearly 15,000 new purpose-built rentals, a 7.5% increase from 2021—substantial numbers. That's 15,000 units for people to be able to call that place home so that those who are on the wait-list for rental housing, those who are looking for rental housing—15,000 more of those units become available to families here in Ontario.

But we know there's more to be done. Our province is booming. Newcomers and job creators from around the world are flocking to Ontario, looking to call this province their home. Ontario's population reached a historic 15 million last year, and it's expected to continue growing by over two million people by 2031, with approximately 1.5 million new residents living in the greater Golden Horseshoe region alone, including in Niagara.

Our housing supply crisis is a problem that has been decades in the making, and it's going to take both short-term strategies and long-term commitment from all levels of government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector to ensure that Ontario remains the best place to live, work, raise a family, grow your business, grow your community, and grow your opportunity for a better life. It's why we continue to release a new housing supply action plan every year—to build more homes and make life more affordable for Ontario's families.

Speaker, I have to have a brief interlude, if you will indulge me. I have a number of friends who are, I will say, not Conservative, are not necessarily philosophically or ideologically aligned with our government on a couple of different areas or with myself personally. We have a lot of good discussions about that. It's a beautiful thing to be able to have the conversation. As I speak with a number of my friends, some of whom have voted for the NDP and a number of whom have voted for the federal Liberals, one of the things I consistently hear from them is shock and dismay, and frankly, bewilderment at the fact that we've seen the left abandon the need to build more housing. They say, "Sam, I'm someone who doesn't consider myself Conservative, but your government is the only government, you're the only political party, that's really talking about getting housing built."

For me, for a young person who wants to be able to see my friends, my neighbours, my community succeed—I hear from those young people who until recently were having to say, "Well, perhaps I'm not going to be able to stay in this province if we don't see that housing built." And these are people who are, more and more, looking at their opportunity for the future and recognizing that it's the Progressive Conservative government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, that is talking about housing affordability and recognizing the core root of the issue: the lack of supply in every corner of this province, which is driving up the price of rental, which is driving up the price of new homes and is making it difficult for people to be

able to save up for other things that they want to be able to achieve in life.

So to those people I have spoken with who may not identify as PCs, who may not identify as any political stripe but want to be able to see that opportunity and that future: Know that our government is listening. And we are doing more than listening; we are taking action.

In fact, in our most recent housing supply action plan, Bill 97, we have built on the strong foundation of previous pieces of legislation. We're providing a strong foundation for growth while also expanding protections for renters and homebuyers.

We're fixing the Landlord and Tenant Board—a need we have heard often about from both landlords and tenants alike. We're investing funding to hire 40 new adjudicators and five full-time staff, which will more than double the total number of adjudicators on the Landlord and Tenant Board. This will provide critical support in addressing the COVID-19-related backlog and also ensure that cases are being heard in a timely fashion.

We're proposing greater legal protections for tenants facing renovations and ensuring that when evicting a tenant to renovate a unit—we're proposing that landlords would be required to provide a report from a qualified third party stating that the unit must be vacant for renovations to take place. In addition, landlords would be required to provide updates on the status of those renovations in writing. Landlords would also be required to provide a 60-day grace period to move back in once the renovations are complete.

We're also proposing greater legal protections for tenants facing landlord's-own-use evictions. When evicting a tenant to use the unit themselves or for their family, the landlord or their family members would have to move into the unit by a determined deadline. By failing to move into the unit within the determined time frame, the landlord would be presumed to have acted in bad faith, if an application is made by the tenant to the Landlord and Tenant Board for a remedy.

We're proposing to impose the strictest penalties in all of Canada on bad actors. Proposed changes would double the maximum fines for offences under the Residential Tenancies Act, and we would see that maximum fines for offences under the act would increase from \$100,000 for individuals to \$500,000 for corporations. This sends a strong message: Our government will not tolerate violations of the Residential Tenancies Act.

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We see, unfortunately, that members on the opposite side of the House are so ideologically opposed to taking any meaningful action on the housing file that they appear willing to even vote against these types of protections. They're willing to once again, for the fourth time now, vote against the housing supply action plan brought forward by our government without introducing their own plan in opposition.

Our government is committed to ensuring the well-being of the people of Ontario and ensuring that tenants and landlords are being treated fairly. As Ontario's

families face the rising cost of living, our government has provided stability and predictability to the vast majority of tenants by capping the rent increase guideline well below inflation, at 2.5%.

We know that it is important to be able to respond to the needs of the people in our communities, and one of the most fundamental needs that all of our constituents rely upon is the need for housing. But to put matters into perspective, when we have almost 400,000 people moving to this province each and every year, with that number only rising—when we have a city, essentially, the size of London, Ontario, coming to this province each and every year, and we're trying to fit all of those people into the amount of housing stock that exists in a city the size of St. Catharines, the numbers just don't add up. At its core, it is about supply and demand. When you don't have enough housing units available, people are going to bid on those units and drive up the prices. That's why we need to ensure that we're addressing that supply equilibrium.

I appreciate that for once, after such a long time, we've seen the members of the opposition and the Leader of the Opposition come forward—late to the game, I might add—and try to at least present a motion that they would argue is in the interests of people who are looking for housing. Yet, we've seen so little action when it comes to their ability to actually stand on their feet and vote for tangible actions that would protect the people of this province by building that supply and ensuring that we meet that housing equilibrium.

Speaker, on behalf of the people of Niagara West, I'm thankful that all members in this House are speaking about housing. But I would encourage the members opposite, when they look at this motion, to think about going beyond this motion and bringing forward meaningful solutions, instead of rallying against anything that comes forward from this government to solve the supply issue and ensure that we're building more—

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very proud to rise in support of the NDP motion to implement rent control on all units.

Speaker, this government's decision to remove rent control from units built after 2018 and to stand by as tenants are pressured to move out of their units so that landlords can jack up rents by any amount they want is making life difficult for many in London West, but especially for those on fixed incomes, like seniors and people on social assistance.

Patricia Jones is a senior who called my office because her anxiety about rent increases is keeping her up at night. She currently pays over \$1,400 per month for her apartment, which is unaffordable on her fixed income. She has looked for cheaper alternatives, but with the average one-bedroom rent in London almost \$1,800 per month, she cannot find any rentals in decent condition to move to. Without real rent control, Patricia says she will not be able to afford more rent increases, and she doesn't know where she will live.

Another senior, Dave Clark, contacted my office to say that seniors do not get pay increases: "I have not received a raise on my company pension since I retired in 2011.... It's very unfair to have some buildings under rent control and not the latest-built units." Dave has done everything he can to reduce his housing costs, including selling his house and moving to a newer apartment, but the lack of rent control on that unit means that his budget is uncomfortably tight every month.

London West constituent Anita Zahn has a son on ODSP who pays 98% of his monthly budget on housing. She says, "There is no money for food, bills, medications, clothing, transportation. Nothing. He is always 25 cents away from being homeless."

Speaker, rentals.ca just reported that rent for a one-bedroom apartment in London has increased 27% year over year. It's the second-biggest jump in the province. How can Londoners living on fixed incomes be expected to absorb that increase? The reality is that they can't, which is a big part of the reason that London has found itself in a very deep and serious affordable housing crisis. There is a real lack of housing options that meet the needs of seniors like Patricia and Dave, and others living on fixed incomes, like Anita's son.

Speaker, housing is a human right. Londoners need housing they can afford. They need real rent control so they don't have to live in fear of losing their home when the next rent increase comes.

I call on all members of this House to support our motion today.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Listening to the debate this afternoon, I am astounded by the arrogance and the hubris of some of these speeches, because it demonstrates such a stark and painful disconnect that this government has with the people of this province.

In Q1 of 2023, rents are now at \$3,002 for a one-bedroom apartment in the city of Toronto. The only rent that hasn't really gone past \$2,000 are micro-units, which is 350 square feet. Most of our offices are bigger than micro-units at \$2,000 month.

Just a few headlines: "A 'Landlord Market' Is Keeping Rents High in Waterloo Region, Says Realtor." One person came forward, and her rent has gone from \$1,750 to \$2,750. An increase of \$1,000 per month is this government's legacy.

Another headline: "Landlord Doubles Rent for Syrian Refugees Using Exemption that Allows for Unlimited Increases." This is an example—and I hope the minister is listening. The lack of rent control in the province of Ontario is hitting our most vulnerable people. This family are refugees from Syria. Imagine going through hell and then coming to Canada, and then to the province of Ontario, to be renovicted from your townhome. This landlord is increasing the rent from \$2,000 a month to \$4,000 a month. The family, whose income is only \$4,000—so their entire income now must go to rent.

Another headline: "Tenants at Kitchener Complex Told to Move by End of April, But They're Fighting to Stay."

The renoviction loophole is real, and this government has known it for five years. These are 14 tenants who are paying market value for their units. But of course, greed rules in the province of Ontario. They make a point—and this is a direct quote from the article: “If it’s up to tenants to enforce these punishments, then the landlords will keep getting away with it because tenants are already exhausted, especially if they’re going through renoviction. And to file” cases “with the Landlord and Tenant Board is an exhausting and stressful process.” Also, it’s a two-year wait to get justice at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Finally, the Waterloo region is seeing a lack of rent control on vacant units, which creates a financial incentive for landlords to evict long-term tenants, many of whom pay below market rates. These are predominantly, in Waterloo region, senior women.

I do want to say: The government has talked about affordability, has ruled out real rent control in Ontario, and they keep raising the carbon tax. Well, the reason we have the carbon tax in the province of Ontario is because this Premier cancelled cap-and-trade. He repealed cap-and-trade in 2018. Because this province has no plan around pricing pollution, we ended up with a carbon tax, so on this side of the House we just think of it as the Ford carbon tax.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It’s always an honour to rise to speak on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre.

I want to invite all the members of this House to go for a 20-minute walk with me. If you go for a 20-minute walk, you’re actually going to land right in the middle of St. James Town. It’s one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in all of Canada. Its density is 18 times that of any neighbourhood in Toronto. There are over 14,000 people who call St. James Town home, and the average household income is just \$20,000. What we don’t have over there is a lot of money, but we have a lot of heart. Over 64% of people who live in St. James Town are newcomers. Neighbours know each other, kids play across the hallway with other children, and seniors will often take care of each other to break social isolation. This is a true neighbourhood.

It’s also an amazing place to live because of—make no mistake about it—rent control. Most of those buildings in St. James Town—the majority of them, until recently—have been under rent control.

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The Conservative ideological opposition to real rent control and their slavish devotion to serving big landlords has actually created a condition now in St. James Town that is leading to much further harm. We’re seeing older buildings that are rent-controlled being demolished and replaced with new buildings without rent control, and what we’re now seeing is a lot of residents who are calling my office because they’re scared.

Most recently, a constituent whose name is Angela called my office to tell me that her rent under this government is going up 20%—20%. She’s getting a rent

hike of \$400. She and her fiancée are now struggling with the decision of whether or not they stay or they go. This is an untenable situation that is about to hit all the residents in that same building, and they are literally scared. They have no place to go without help from this government, which includes the implementation and the support of this motion of real rent control.

Paving over the greenbelt is not going to increase affordability of housing in Ontario, and neither is the government’s housing plan. They have failed to be able to address the housing crisis in Ontario. Things are getting more expensive and much worse for all Ontarians. Speaker, \$3,000 for a one-bedroom apartment is untenable. I’ve lived in Toronto for all of my life in Canada. It is the worst that it has ever been, and this government is in charge of all of that.

This is a party, on this side of the House, where we are putting forward some real solutions; we’ve asked the government to come forward with their own. Their policies have failed; we have others. You can say yes to ending exclusionary zoning. You can say yes to investing in affordable housing, such as public, co-op and supportive housing. You can say yes to clamping down on greedy speculators. And yes, you can say yes to rent control—rent control that is desperately needed right now, right here for your tenants, for your constituents, and for mine.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I’m pleased to rise today to speak to this motion put forward by the leader of His Majesty’s loyal opposition calling for real rent control in the province of Ontario. This reflects a real need and concern that I hear about all the time in Ottawa West–Nepean.

The truth is, life just keeps getting more and more unaffordable in Ontario, and housing is a very big part of it. This government, instead of doing anything about that, keeps coming out with new sweetheart deals for developers.

What people in Ottawa West–Nepean and across Ontario need is real action and real solutions. They need action that brings down the cost of rent and protects them against unscrupulous landlords.

When you’re only hanging out in the backrooms, like this government is, it’s very easy to forget that we are talking about deeply stressful, challenging and heart-breaking situations.

Michele is an Ottawa resident who reached out to me after getting no response from her Conservative MPP. Michele lived with her son and granddaughter, but they were evicted because her son’s addiction issues led to him falling behind on rent. Now Michele and her granddaughter are homeless, and this is despite the fact that Michele gets OAS, CPP, and works a part-time job. Her granddaughter, who is in high school, has two part-time jobs. But they still can’t find a place that they can afford. They are on the wait-list for affordable housing in Ottawa, but that wait-list is over five years long. Michele wrote to

me: “I have just rented a storage unit to store my life in and we are able to sleep in my friend’s basement for the next month but I am very concerned about what we will do after that.” It is devastating that after a lifetime of contributing to our community, a senior is in the position of putting her life in a storage unit and sleeping in a friend’s basement. But the truly maddening thing is that Michele is far from alone.

There are so many people in Ottawa and across Ontario who are being put in this position. Rents in Ottawa are 15% higher this April than they were last April, according to rentals.ca, and the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Ottawa is now \$1,925. That’s more than double what someone on Ontario Works gets, it’s way above what someone on ODSP receives, and it is 80% of the monthly earnings of someone working full-time, earning minimum wage.

It doesn’t need to be this way. We can actually make life more affordable here in Ontario, implement real rent control and make sure new tenants pay what the last tenant paid so that your landlord isn’t trying to squeeze you out.

I urge the government to vote in favour of this motion and provide real relief and support to people like Michele.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: In St. Catharines, we have watched residents within whole apartment buildings being displaced in the pursuit of profit—regular tenants, good community members, often seniors, bullied out of their homes. Why is that? This is because if a tenant is removed, the price of the unit can be raised up to any amount. As a result, seniors who have been living in affordable units for long periods of time—typically, due to their long tenure, they have lower-than-market rents—are being displaced.

Now what happens? Time and time again, out-of-region speculators and investors see these buildings with seniors as targets to double their profit. These seniors are seen as only numbers on a spreadsheet—that is it. These companies know that if they remove a senior out of their home, they can double their profits overnight. They are incentivized to do what they can to displace current tenants. This market only exists because we have no rent control in Ontario that protects these tenants, that protects seniors.

I am reminded of a story of a local senior who was being renovicted from 137 Church Street in St. Catharines, a building owned by Bedford Properties. His name was Kenneth Gogo. He had terminal cancer, with less than six months to live. This corporation was attempting to renovict Ken. When he pleaded with them and told them, “I have cancer, and I just want to stay in my own home,” they ignored his pleas. They ignored it until I brought his issue forward in this chamber. The actions that were taken got Kenneth results. They decided to withdraw their crass tactics when exposed to public scrutiny. This is what it took to save one senior in St. Catharines. It took pointing out the incredibly immoral tactics of this company on Ontario’s biggest stage. Kenneth Gogo is no longer with us. However, he became a symbol of the harassment that we are allowing in Ontario. Kenneth won that day, but his

neighbours and friends lost their fight. He watched as the building had their older tenants displaced and replaced.

I’m proud to be part of this caucus, with a plan to make life more affordable by bringing back real rent control so young families can save for their first home, and to prevent seniors from being bullied out of their last.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of countless families and individuals throughout the province. The solution is real, simple and practical. Ontario needs real rent control.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I want to start by thanking the leader of the official opposition for bringing this motion forward, because housing affordability has been an increasingly pressing issue in my own riding of Ottawa, like it is in the rest of the province, frankly. The government has been bringing forward various housing bills, but none with solutions to address unjustified and abusive rent increases. In my riding, more and more people are contacting my office, either because they are struggling to find affordable rental housing or because they are victims of abusive landlords.

Colin Nielson told me, “I am a single man and I work a decent job. I try my best to save and I live an extremely frugal lifestyle. I just received notice from my landlord, a multi-million dollar company, that my rent in June was increasing by a full 7%.”

“I am seriously concerned about my ability to support myself going forward due to these increases. This time it was only 7%, next time what will it be?”

David-Michel Sarrazin told me, “Realstar corporation ... has started to charge an extra fee over and above the 2.5% allowable rent increase by the provincial government. Some are seeing an extra increase of up to 5% on their newly increased rents for 2023. Realstar is calling” it “an update and maintenance fee.

“Is this some new law giving landlords the legal rights to raise rent by 7.5%?”

Madeleine Brownrigg said, “I am a concerned citizen with a family member who cannot find affordable housing in this region. This crisis started with the abolishment of rent control for buildings that were built after 2018, among other things. It would be nice if this law was reversed so that people don’t need to go to the food bank to eat, or live where it does not suit their requirements, or are left having to work two jobs....”

1500

These stories demonstrate just how unaffordable rental prices are becoming for people in Ottawa–Vanier, and I am sure many members on both sides of this House have heard similar stories from their own ridings. Ontarians are finding it increasingly difficult to find a rental unit that they can afford even when making a decent income.

Rent control is one measure that the government has as its disposal to help relieve some of the pressure on renters and give them some certainty for the coming years.

This government has focused a lot on the supply side of the equation, but because housing is a necessity, Ontarians are forced to make difficult choices when the rent market becomes too expensive. They may make other choices on

budget items, like giving up on children's recreational activities or food. We've seen this play out in recent years, with the demand for food banks skyrocketing and a greater proportion of families cutting down on their grocery bills in order to pay their rent.

The fact that housing is a necessity, coupled with the lack of rental housing supply, puts landlords in the driver's seat. It allows them to raise rents without losing their renters, because tenants don't have any other option. This, of course, is an unacceptable situation.

Renters need support, and rent control can be part of the solution, particularly in the short term.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to discuss real rent control and the motion that our party has brought forward today.

As you will know, Speaker, rent in Hamilton is completely unaffordable. For a measly one-bedroom apartment, we're over \$1,800; for a two-bedroom unit, we're over \$2,200, and the cost of living continues to rise. Minimum wage has not been able to keep up with that, nor could a person on minimum wage afford to be able to rent a very small unit.

Like many we've heard from already, I have constituents who have reached out to me with issues of not being able to get back into units where their landlord has told them that there are going to be renovations.

I have a couple who has been in a hotel room for almost a year, continuing to pay the bills in the previous unit—paying the hydro, paying all of the bills, the utilities, to keep it up—in the thoughts that they're going back to that unit. And yet the renovations have not even started, and the landlord has told them that they don't believe that it's going to be able to happen and that they're going to be able to return to their unit. This puts that couple in a position where they will have to take it to the Landlord and Tenant Board to be able to fight this decision of the landlord, but it's very costly and time-consuming to be able to do that, and there's certainly no help in our community to help tenants be able to fight at the Landlord and Tenant Board. This government has cut the funding to the community legal clinics, which does not allow those community legal clinics to be able to represent people in the Landlord and Tenant Board any longer, which is a huge barrier for so many folks.

We've heard the minister talk about the doubling of people at the Landlord and Tenant Board to be able to hear those hearings, but yet many of those are virtual, when there's a major barrier for so many folks to be able to have access to the computers to be able to attend virtually, and then not having the representation to be able to help them is very overwhelming for so many folks. I've heard from those people who just feel that they do not have access to justice when it comes to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

So we need to be able to get these rents under control, give people the ability to live in a suitable environment, and currently, that environment just is out of reach for so many people across this province.

I hope that the government members will take heed to this, hear our plea today to be able to control the rents, and vote in favour of this motion.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Earlier in this debate, I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and—unaffordable—Housing boast about the Conservatives' housing plan. He said, "Our plan is working." We just found out recently that the average rent has surpassed \$3,000 a month. We've had five years of a majority Conservative government, and the average rent has just passed \$3,000 a month. I'm wondering what the minister was talking about when he said, "Our housing plan is working"—and then I realized he forgot to put in "for the developers." That's what's really happening here.

The Conservatives' solution to unaffordable housing is to pave over the Greenbelt, to give developers a \$5-billion taxpayer-funded subsidy, and to strip Ontarians in Toronto, Peel, York and Niagara of their right to democratic, majority vote municipal governance. And they cancelled rent control for anyone living in a building that's newer than 2018. This is hitting people across this province.

In my own riding, Sam and her partner are a young couple. They pay \$3,200 a month rent for their one-bedroom apartment, which is more than 50% of their combined income. Their lease expires in May 2024, and other units in that building are now renting for \$3,600 a month. So they're worried that if the Conservatives do not pass the NDP motion today to provide rent control for all units, they could face a \$400-a-month rent increase.

Megan, another resident of Spadina-Fort York, faced a rent increase, from \$2,100 a month to \$2,900 a month. That's an \$800, 38% increase. She was able to negotiate that down to just a \$400, 19% increase—still incredibly unaffordable and incredibly unfair to her.

Marcy, another resident in Spadina-Fort York, makes the median income in her neighbourhood, and she says that it's just not enough to afford rent. She has a full-time job and a part-time job. She is debating whether to move out of the province. She is a young widow, and she feels incredibly unstable at this stage of her life. She said, "It can happen to anybody and it's happening to so many people. I don't want to leave" Ontario.

This affordability crisis is impacting people across this province, and the government's solution is not working. But the NDP—we are offering solutions. We are saying that the Conservatives should acknowledge their mistake in stripping Ontarians of rent control protections and reinstate rent control on all units. We're saying that you should be building not-for-profit housing, including co-ops, social and supportive housing. And you have to stop subsidizing developers with that \$5-billion tax subsidy.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Ontarians are struggling to afford the rising cost of living in this province, including the extreme high cost of rent. Rent has now skyrocketed to over \$3,000 a month in Toronto for a one-bedroom. That is \$36,000 a year—unaffordable for the majority of

tenants, including the 58% of people in my riding who rent their homes. That \$36,000 is far more than anyone on OW, ODSP or who earns minimum wage can afford, all of whom, by the way, have their income level set by this government.

In 2018, the Conservative government amended the Residential Tenancies Act to exempt any unit built after November 15, 2018, from rent control. So in 2020, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corp. reviewed this regime of rent control exemption and they found that this regime specifically increases rent.

As well, we know that without rent control between tenants, people across the province will continue to experience unlawful evictions, including renovictions, all so that rents can increase without limit. Beyond making rents unaffordable, the removal of rent control has historically not increased the supply of rental housing in Ontario, despite what the Conservative government claims. We also know that supply alone won't address the housing crisis, especially if fewer and fewer working-class and low-income Ontarians can afford to rent.

Any new rental supply must come with rental protections. Tenants need affordable rents and predictable, limited rent increases that they can plan for without fear of being priced out of their homes. They need stability in their lives, and housing stability is a key component of that.

Right now, people cannot afford their housing. Toronto alone has 10,000 people who are homeless and more than 30,000 households that are in rental arrears. Immediate action must be taken to address this.

Speaker, housing is a human right, and that means real rent control for tenants. Without it, the dual crisis of unaffordability and housing will continue to spiral out of control.

1510

The NDP's motion today addresses that. It restores rent control for all units, including in between tenancies, and thereby protects every Ontarian's human right to housing by keeping rents affordable.

This Conservative government can and must do better. Ontarians need real rent control now.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Everyone in Ontario deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, but the cost of rent in Ontario is not affordable. In fact, in Toronto, the average cost of rent is approaching \$3,000 a month. The cost of rent has increased to more than 50% of take-home income for many Ontario households.

When businesses upcharge people for essential items, we call that gouging. What's happening to tenants in Ontario right now is no different. Housing is a human right.

To pay their rent, many individuals and families are being forced to take on a second or third job. To pay their rent, people are having to cut back on groceries and all other spending. Still others are being forced to move farther and farther away from their families, their jobs, their children's schools.

This is making the affordability crisis even worse. People are barely treading water. Many are drowning. But

when we, the NDP, raise these concerns here, the government responds with insults and jokes.

The government knows this problem isn't just about supply and demand; it's much more than that. They know it. They know that there's more that can be done to help tenants right now, more that can be done today.

I want to remind the minister that Toronto has led North America in construction cranes for years before they took office. After five years of Conservative government, rent has never been so high.

Families don't have years to wait for a market adjustment. Many don't even have months. They need relief now. The status quo is destroying families and leading some landlords into bad-faith evictions to charge even more. There are families out there right now who don't have time to wait. They need us. They need you to act right now, and that means implementing real rent control.

Again, under this government, rents are by far the highest they've ever been, with no immediate relief on the horizon. You can't just sit on your hands. Do the right thing. Support this NDP motion to bring in rent control and give tenants across this province the relief they need, the relief they deserve. They are counting on all of us to help them, so do it. Support this motion.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to rise today in support of our opposition day motion to re-establish rent control within the province of Ontario. Hearing debate today, it's clearer than ever how out of touch Conservatives have become.

The NDP is the party of housing. We built the most affordable and supportive housing of any government before. It's clear that the Conservative-Liberal consortium can't build themselves. They're content to incentivize eviction, renoviction, demoviction, and they disrespect renters as well as seniors.

London was hit by the biggest average annual increase in Canada of rental costs: 33% in one year. Last year, it was a 27% increase.

Huntington Towers is a 10-storey building where tenants were asked to pay a rental increase to cover the cost of a new parking garage.

Tenants at One Richmond Row were hit with a 7% rent hike because they were not informed that they were inhabiting a building that this government had removed rent control from.

You see, Conservatives carved a loophole in tenants' rights with no rental protections for buildings that were first occupied after November 2018. People were already having a tough time paying the bills, yet this government saw fit to remove rights from them. They drilled a hole in their already sinking ship.

Conservative cognitive dissonance is at an all-time high with this government. We've heard members across pat themselves on the back for the creation of all these new rental buildings, but they don't realize that they have enabled a system of exploitation because they've removed protections from people who can least afford it.

Tenants call my office regularly about legal and illegal rental hikes. But when they've fought back against their landlord, then their unit will stop receiving basic maintenance. It's time for this Ontario government to actually lead from the front, stand up and make sure that they're taking a strong public role in the building, the funding, the delivery and the acquisition and protection of rental housing.

You can start today. You can start supporting renters by supporting our opposition day motion.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank, first of all, my colleagues in the official opposition for their impassioned speeches this afternoon and their support of this really important motion. I think you heard here today so many stories, so many stories—the voices, really, of Ontarians brought here into the chamber over and over again—the stories of real Ontarians, regular people struggling to keep their homes, making choices between whether or not they can make rent or put food on the table for their families. And this is a choice that more and more families are making today, Speaker.

Rent is skyrocketing in this province. It's the highest it has ever been, and the increases we're seeing—you know, we heard today of 27%, 40%, 30% increases. Who can afford that? Who can afford that? We heard, also, about employers who are saying—we speak to the chambers, Speaker—that this is destroying our communities, our economy, because workers simply can't afford to live in our communities anymore. They can't get by. People are leaving this province.

All of those people that leave Ontario, that leave our communities? Those are our future. And they're gone. They're going. What's really astonishing is the lack of other options, right? It's the lack of other options. If there were other, more affordable options, maybe this wouldn't be a conversation we would be having today. If Conservative governments of past days gone by hadn't cancelled 17,000 co-op units that were supposed to be built in this province, maybe we might not be in quite the situation we're in. But we can't go back and rewrite history.

I think what I find the most concerning is that this government wants people to think that there's no way out. That their backroom deals with developers are going to solve the problem. And that is—

Mr. Graham McGregor: The backroom is where you elect your leaders.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Boy, you know—that is very disrespectful, sir, I would say. Listen to what we're trying to say to you, because we are speaking on behalf of the people of this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, their backroom deals with developers that we see over and over again are not going to solve anything. And people in this province know that. They know that what this government is telling them, that

this is how it has to be, is not true—that this is not normal. And it's not normal, Speaker.

There is another way. The government can join us, we can bring back real rent control in this province and we can stop the through-the-roof rent increases that are causing people in this province to lose their homes. We can create an Ontario where people can live a safe and secure life, not worrying about whether or not they're going to be able to afford to keep the roof over their head.

I want to ask the members opposite: I know that they're feeling pressure from the people in their communities, and that's why they get grumpy like that, because they're feeling the pressure, too. If we're hearing about it, so are you. It's time to do the right thing. This is one measure among many that we need to take to address the housing crisis in this province, but it's a really important one.

Join us. Join us in bringing back real rent control in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 4.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1519 to 1529.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 4. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Jama, Sarah	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Holland, Kevin	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Trevor	Riddell, Brian
Barnes, Patrice	Jordan, John	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Khanjin, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Leardi, Anthony	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, David

Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Smith, Laura
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gill, Parm	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pierre, Natalie	Yakubski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Pirie, George	
Harris, Mike	Quinn, Nolan	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The eyes are 33; the nays are 67.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REDUCING INEFFICIENCIES ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENTS), 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES INEFFICACITÉS (MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR LES INFRASTRUCTURES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les infrastructures.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to once again rise in this fine Legislature and debate Bill 69.

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Speaker, I'm sorry, I've been distracted. I was reassured that the mass exodus is not because I have taken my place in this Legislature.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Stop the clock. Could we exit the chamber quietly, please? One of the members is resuming debate. Thank you very much.

Start the clock. Back to the member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to again take my place in this fine House to speak about Bill 69, which is An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, but entitled by this government the Reducing Inefficiencies Act.

This is my second opportunity to stand as the critic for the Ontario NDP, for the official opposition. I am the critic for infrastructure, transportation and highways. Seeing as how this is an infrastructure bill, I get to speak for another hour. I have done a one-hour speech on this bill. It has been to and through committee, back out the other side and has come back to this Legislature, and I hope everyone is looking forward to a full hour about this bill today.

I will reassure the Speaker and the folks listening at home and in this room that it will not actually be the identical speech that I gave before, because we have new information. We have many new voices to share in this House from those who came to committee from across the province.

This is a bill that is just two schedules: one which is focused on infrastructure; one with a focus on environmental conservation—or, in this case, a lack thereof. I'm going to mix it up today, so rather than going in order—schedule 1, and then 2—I'm going to go with schedule 2 and then schedule 1, because I want, as the critic for infrastructure, to highlight a few things that have come to light since our last discussion.

Schedule 2 of this bill is about putting a number of government agencies underneath the Infrastructure Ontario umbrella. It is not something I'm particularly clear on the why of, and that was not something that the minister—although I appreciate the minister came to committee and answered questions, and we're always glad when ministers come to committee. But I'm still not clear on how transferring control of these particular properties to the Minister of Infrastructure is going to make things better. I have heard about land use and whatnot, and bringing these different entities under that Infrastructure Ontario umbrella, but I don't know how it's going to make everything better. And so, we are all watching and waiting. There are actually 34 agencies that could be considered, but in this case I believe it is 14 of the 34 that the government has chosen to pull in.

Speaker, Infrastructure Ontario, as we have seen from the Auditor General report in 2017, leaves something to be desired when it comes to property management. We're not entirely sure what the problem is that this government is planning to solve with this amendment, this schedule, because Infrastructure Ontario doesn't do such a great job in managing its properties, and so pulling more in—I would ask that they prove the thinking there, and that hasn't happened yet.

This is a government that is passing a law empowering it to force agencies like the Ontario Securities Commission, EQAO or FSRA to give up control over their real estate interests, and Infrastructure Ontario, like I said, doesn't have a great track record, so I'm going to share a little bit from the Auditor General's report for real estate services and Infrastructure Ontario. They were really criticized for their poor management of government properties. This is from that report, to frame it for folks:

“The Ontario Realty Corporation was merged with Infrastructure Ontario—a crown agency then predominantly responsible for managing alternative financing and procurement (AFP) arrangements ... and municipal lending. The entities merged to form the Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation,” affectionately known as Infrastructure Ontario. “Under the act, Infrastructure Ontario is now also responsible for managing the province's general real estate portfolio (government properties).”

It's quite a report to read. I'm going to try not to be as in the weeds as I was a few weeks ago, because I think it's easier to just hit on the high points here for understanding. But this is a direct quote from this report:

"While most land and buildings owned by ministries and their agencies are overseen by Infrastructure Ontario, 58 agencies have title and authority to manage their own property, such as the land and buildings owned by Metro-linx and the Royal Ontario Museum." There's an appendix here; one of those, by the way, is the Ontario Science Centre. Perhaps folks have been hearing about that lately, and I'm happy to share a little bit about that.

"Capital projects are funded in two ways: Ministries either request capital projects to be completed using their own funding, or Infrastructure Ontario identifies projects to be completed based on an assessment of need using capital funding from base rent and the ministry...."

"Infrastructure Ontario allocates funding to external project managers at the beginning of the fiscal year, first to ongoing projects started in past years and then for new projects."

1540

However, "Infrastructure Ontario has outsourced the management of capital projects between \$100,000 and \$10 million to external project managers, but will manage some projects of less than \$10 million itself at its discretion. It directly manages those that are between \$10 million and \$100 million."

Why am I sharing all of these specifics? I'm getting there, Speaker.

Again, from the report, in terms of deferred capital maintenance: "Ideally, all required repair and maintenance work should be performed when the need is identified." To me, that would just be good practice. "In some cases, repair and maintenance work is deferred due to a lack of funding."

"The Facilities Conditions Index ... is an industry standard used to measure the relative condition of a building." So think of a building in the portfolio. I don't know; the Ontario Science Centre could be an example, or the Royal Ontario Museum could be an example. Think of a big building and think of the state of things.

"The Facilities Conditions Index," as I just read, "is an industry standard used to measure the relative condition of a building."

However, "Infrastructure Ontario calculates the index differently than the industry because it uses the Ontario government's standard. This standard divides the cost of repairs required in the current and the next two years by the cost to replace the building." So how we decide the condition of a building is different than the industry standard, "we" for illustrative purposes being Infrastructure Ontario.

According to the standard—oh, okay, no, that's something else. Actually, what I was going to read is what the minister has been talking about in terms of how the size of an office should not exceed 180 rentable square feet. This is actually about the square footage, the number of people who work there and trying to keep it so we don't have a

whole bunch of vacant space, that we are actually maximizing use of our buildings and facilities. That is a recommendation from this report, and I will say that the Minister of Infrastructure has raised that as part of the impetus for this. But as we have asked, show us how these changes in this bill before us are going to fix the issues raised by the Auditor General. That is still not clear to me nor was it made clear during the course of debate or committee work.

So that's a bit of the background and specifics about Infrastructure Ontario, but we, as Infrastructure Ontario, are responsible for capital maintenance and for looking after and keeping things in a good state of repair. However, the index is actually measured differently than the industry standard. That's because it uses the Ontario government's standard. I'm not playing fast and loose, but I'm trying to keep this at a level that is—well, that I can talk about for an hour, frankly.

Speaker, the Ontario Science Centre is an interesting example and is illustrative of what this bill is talking about, I think. Let me set this up: In this bill, in schedule 2, it is taking some government agencies and it is transferring control of these properties to the Minister of Infrastructure, which then basically, we're to understand, will be looked after by Infrastructure Ontario. So why is this a good idea? How is this going to make things better when you have what is in effect a scathing report by the Auditor General about how poorly things are managed, whether it's snow removal or capital repairs, by Infrastructure Ontario?

Then we have the Ontario Science Centre. We've been talking a lot about it and its state of repair, the condition that it exists in. People have talked about their memories or taking the bridge, the pedestrian footpath, and now they can't. It's not safe. It hasn't been maintained etc. But what we haven't been talking about is that it's my understanding that Infrastructure Ontario is responsible for most of the Ontario Science Centre's repairs, and not the science centre itself.

In fact, according to the 2022-23 business plan, it turns out that Infrastructure Ontario is technically the Ontario Science Centre's landlord. So that plan also describes building conditions as being possibly a risk that ranks as medium-high. Ministry capital funding would be the solution, by the way, and that hasn't happened. But it's certainly not the tear-down that we've been hearing about from the minister.

Also, the government has talked about replacement costs, and so I would love if a government member—and maybe today is not the day, but I would love clarification if that \$175-million replacement cost that's mentioned in the Ontario Science Centre's business plan, is that an insurance term? Is that based on what it would cost to replace it if it burned to the ground? The government is painting a picture, but I'd like to be clear on the numbers and I'd like to be clear on responsibility.

Because here we are debating a bill to take 14 of the 34 agencies and put them under Infrastructure Ontario. And yet we're all looking at the science centre with interest

these days, but we haven't been acknowledging that Infrastructure Ontario is, in effect, its landlord. So the capital repairs that have not been done, the funding that has not been injected, the maintenance that has been lacking, I would say that that falls at the feet of Infrastructure Ontario. And here we are, in schedule 2, transferring control of more properties to the Minister of Infrastructure and, by extension, Infrastructure Ontario. So if I am mistaken, if I am presenting something that the government wants to challenge, I'm inviting that, because I believe that Ontarians should be very, very clear about their public spaces.

Speaker, that 2019-20 report talks about the 10-year deferred maintenance needs of the Ontario Science Centre: \$147.5 million, and I think that's what it would cost to upgrade everything to appropriate standards. I believe this would be the relevant comparator with respect to whether it would be cheaper to build something new at Ontario Place or renovate the existing building. These are big numbers, but they're things that we should all be talking about. The huge estimated cost of the parking garage at Ontario Place—I'm sure that with that number, compared to the \$147.5 million, building an entirely new Science Centre is going to be pretty expensive.

Something else of particular interest in the report says that their landlord, Infrastructure Ontario, and its private contractor, CBRE—which is responsible for facility management, and not the Ontario Science Centre itself—are responsible for the most worrisome aspects of the centre's repair backlog. The risk assessment note in the 2019-20 business plan says that the science centre can capably manage the repairs that it controls—they can look after their own stuff—but that bigger issues include “the degree to which the centre is able to influence decisions related to building improvements,” suggesting that the landlord, Infrastructure Ontario, and its private contractor have been slacking in terms of repairs. This matters.

This bill, in schedule 2, is not moving the science centre. It's not specific to the science centre, but it is specific to the management, the transferring of control of properties to Infrastructure Ontario, which is doing such a bang-up job when it comes to managing the contractors and overseeing the contractors who are supposed to be doing the repairs. That's a chapter to this story that has been left out by the minister. Because I think when folks are thinking about the science centre, and they're like, “Yes, it is in pretty rough shape”—why? Why has it been allowed to get there? It's not like all of these repair needs suddenly popped up overnight. This has been an ongoing story of, in effect, landlord neglect.

Trace that back to, again, Infrastructure Ontario, and trace that back to a pattern completely and totally documented and laid out in the Real Estate Services report of the Auditor General back in 2017.

1550

I remember sitting at committee, listening to the Auditor General and having the discussion with, at the time, those government members and others to talk about the challenges. This is a report that has specifics in it,

testimony of folks who are supposed to be looked after by the contractors, who are supposed to be looked after by Infrastructure Ontario. They question the cleaning. Here's a quote from the client ministry's written comments on operating and maintenance services:

“[Our Ministry] questioned the cleaning services being provided to another building. [Our Ministry] was initially told by” Infrastructure Ontario “that certain services were not part of the cleaning contract, and [we] acquired a third-party vendor to perform those services.” Then, “It was recently discovered, after much persistence on [our] part for” Infrastructure Ontario “to verify the contract, that those services were in fact included in the original contract. [Our Ministry] has been paying twice and we are now in the process of rectifying this issue and hoping to be reimbursed for the error. We have estimated that we paid approximately \$16,000 unnecessarily over the last five years.”

There are comments from client ministries about interior cleaning, about snow removal cleaning. I'm in the weeds, Speaker, but considering I get to speak for an hour, that's fine. I think it's worth painting a clearer picture, because when you listen to question period or when you listen to the minister, when you even watch the news right now, it's kind of this top-line, “Oh, the Science Centre is in bad shape. We're going to do something magical over here.” Why couldn't you have done something magical all the way along and repair things? Look at their business plan.

Infrastructure Ontario is not directly responsible for shovelling the snow or fixing the foot path or what have you, but the facilities management contracts are managed by Infrastructure Ontario. Infrastructure Ontario is, it would seem, a neglectful landlord, and its privatized real estate management is bad, as clearly laid out by the Auditor General, sometimes oriented toward interests that are other than the public interest, as laid out in this very comprehensive Real Estate Services report.

Here we have a sad situation demonstrated by the Ontario Science Centre situation. Something interesting to think about, and I am sure that we will continue to delve into that. Because pointing at the Science Centre and just, “Oh no, it has fallen behind and it's in a sad state of repair”—well, that is because the contractors responsible for facilities management and doing those repairs have been allowed to not do those repairs. And that's Infrastructure Ontario's responsibility.

Again, I am inviting challenge by the government. I am inviting the government to pay attention to this situation and actually find out. Because as they're sitting there, I wonder if they're thinking, “Is she right? We haven't heard this.” Yes, well, is she right? Why haven't you heard this?

We have a government that wants to tell one story, and of course, with the science centre, that is an unfolding story. The current lease, negotiated back in 1965, is on a 99-year term. It only allows for the construction of structures “for purposes of operating as a science centre.” So the saga continues, Speaker, but that is for another day.

But I'm glad to incorporate it into the discussion in this House on schedule 2 of this bill. We're giving more properties to Infrastructure Ontario, and I would like to know, really, for what? And, really, why will that make things better? And it might; there might be some benefit, but I'm not clear, and considering this is the second time this bill has come through after committee, those are questions that I would have hoped to already have the answers to.

But, Speaker, I will move on to schedule 1. So, schedule 1 of this bill is about changing the 30-day waiting period without taking time to consider public input when it comes to class EAs. The government has been adamant that they're not changing the public consultation process, they're still inviting public consult, all of that—okay, okay. What comes after that is a 30-day waiting period, and that is meant to be the time for sober second thought or the consideration by the minister of expert input.

I have questions for the minister. If waiving that 30-day waiting period without taking time to consider public input is going to signal to the public that their input doesn't matter, how would the minister like people to understand this? Because when they weigh in and they give input during the public consultation process, and then the minister doesn't even consider it—and there's literally no time; that 30 days is gone—does that tell the public that their input doesn't matter? It's one thing to waive the waiting period if there is no public input. If the public has not brought forward anything, it's one thing for the minister to say, "In this case, there's nothing. We can waive it, because there is no information to consider." But this is a blanket "let's get rid of it" thing; this is not case by case. If all public input indicates that had the EA is adequate, okay. But if the public is indicating flaws or inadequacies with the class environmental assessment, shouldn't the minister take the time to consider the input before making a decision? And should the minister be obliged to provide a reason for waiving that statutory 30-day requirement?

If the reason makes sense—and I will say, as I said in my first debate, I had had a conversation with the minister about this, and he gave me an example that was a local example—not necessarily local to him, but a community example—of when the whole community was maybe going to lose out on jobs and investment in the community because of this environmental assessment, this class EA, and the 30-day period. And in that example, he said he went to cabinet and tried to move it through faster, but the cabinet process and what have you—it took too long, so here is a solution in legislation so there is no dancing around, unknowns, that kind of thing.

Okay, but doesn't the public deserve to know that? And wouldn't it even behoove the government to share that? If there's a good-news community investment story, wouldn't that be something worth sharing with the public? The reason to rush this process, because of some good-news community story, or the government is taking responsibility to ensure that they don't miss out on investment or jobs or what have you—there are different ways of approaching this. If the reason makes sense, wouldn't this improve confidence in the ministry's decision and the adequacy of

the environmental assessment? Why have statutory requirements if the minister can arbitrarily waive them without providing reason? I guess I feel differently about responsibility; I think it should be in everything that we do.

Speaker, I have a whole pile of things to share when it comes to schedule 1. And again, the purpose of a 30-day waiting period is to ensure that the minister takes adequate time to consider public comments that were received. Nobody over here is saying that it's blocking the public from providing those comments, but the fact that there is now no requirement for the minister to consider them is kind of a slap in the face. I would say, the government already—well, how they approach the principle of public consultation leaves something to be desired.

1600

Speaker, twice, Ontario courts have found that this government has violated the Environmental Bill of Rights. That is from the Auditor General's report on such, and I had shared that in the last debate; I'll revisit it a bit. I know my colleague from University–Rosedale had written to the Auditor General highlighting public consultations on provisions of Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, that were posted on the Environmental Registry for public comment. She had asked the Auditor General whether the government has violated the Environmental Bill of Rights again. As the Auditor General said in this letter, "Based on our preliminary review, we have concerns as to whether all comments received on proposals related to Bill 23 have been meaningfully considered before the decisions were made, consistent with the purposes of the EBR. For the public's comments to inform a final decision, a ministry must have an opportunity to fully consider all received comments before a bill is ordered for third reading, up to when it is still possible for a minister to propose amendments to a bill before a decision is made."

Those were her thoughts on that, which basically, saving everybody here reading the Operation of the Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993, December 2022 Auditor General's report, I can summarize—and I'm going to be loose here with my summary—that the government is required and is expected to consider the public input. For it to be meaningful, they have to be able to meaningfully consider, not just collectively. I know that many of us and I know that the now-government members—I'm looking at some of the members who served on the opposition benches—who have done committee work through the years have been frustrated when the time is so fast at committee that we have these thoughtful presenters, experts who come before a committee, who weigh in, who might flag something that the government should be aware of to strengthen legislation or make it better, and there is no time for the government to consider it because all of a sudden it's back before the House and voted on and the law of the land, and hopefully those tripwires that were identified by thoughtful experts in the community don't trip up the best intentions of the legislation, right?

But there's a good way to bring forward legislation and I would think that it is in the spirit of wanting it to be good and being willing to listen to criticism to strengthen it. Isn't that what you would want? Anyway, certainly when

it comes to the Environmental Bill of Rights, there is a responsibility of the government to meaningfully consider things.

From that report, the Auditor General's 2022 report, I'll just read some of the headings here: "Ministries Again Chose Not to Follow EBR Act Requirements to Consult Ontarians about Several Environmentally Significant Proposals." And they go on: "Our office found in 2019, 2020 and 2021 that some ministries deliberately did not consult Ontarians about major environmentally significant decisions. Again in 2022, we found that three ministries—Municipal Affairs, Energy, and Environment—did not notify and consult Ontarians in accordance with EBR Act requirements before making several significant decisions." So the track record is already that the government has skipped those steps; the ministries purposefully chose not to consult—"deliberately did not consult Ontarians about major environmentally significant decisions"—four years running.

Another heading: "Municipal Affairs Ministry Did Not Meaningfully Consult Ontarians before Implementing Environmentally Significant Changes to the Planning Act." This is not good. I'll read a little bit from that report. It says, "Bill 109 would make environmentally significant changes to the Planning Act. In particular"—well, okay, I don't need to take us back in time about the specifics there, but it outlines what the proposed amendments could do and would do. It says, "stating that they were open for public comment for 30 days, ending April 29, 2022. However, on April 14"—that's days before April 29—"Bill 109 received third reading and royal assent—two weeks before the end of the public comment period on the proposal." Before the public comment period was even closed, it had already come back through the House, passed and received royal assent. So how meaningful is that public input? How much does the government care about hearing from the public?

The ministry, in response to this, didn't do their part, didn't use the formal update banner and that kind of thing. It says, "The ministry gave the false impression that there was still an opportunity to inform decision-making around Bill 109. Indeed, some Ontarians continued to submit comments on the proposed amendments through the registry up until April 25 ... 10 days after the decision was made." That doesn't help. That doesn't foster trust at all.

Another thing here: It says, "The ministry's description of the effect of public comments on the decision was"—well, can I quote from this? "The ministry's description of the effect of public comments on the decision was misleading. Only eight of the 32 comments submitted in response to the registry notice were submitted before Bill 109 passed." This is from the Auditor General, who had said the government said, "In developing and finalizing the legislation, consideration was given to all comments received," but it was the Auditor General who said, actually, that is not what happened. Eight of the 32 comments submitted were submitted before the bill passed. It says:

"In making the decision, the ministry could not have considered the remaining" 75% of "comments submitted after Bill 109 passed.

"Clearly the ministry did not consult Ontarians about this proposal for the statutory minimum 30 days.... Several municipalities expressed concern that the 30-day comment period was insufficient to provide an informed response."

And then, when the Auditor General asked the ministry for information about any steps that it was taking to ensure the public received notice of the Planning Act changes, the ministry responded, "While the ministry posted Bill 109 on the [Environmental Registry] the day it was introduced for a 30-day consultation period, the passage of all bills, including Bill 109, is determined by the will of the Legislature, not the ministry or the minister." I don't know; I see that as snarky.

We would like to think that public opinion and thoughtful public care, voice and expertise matter. The government talks about it mattering, but then we look at a report like this that time after time after time, example after example after example, says they're not listening. They're inviting consultation and then shutting down the process before even the end date, in the case of Bill 109. All of this is schedule 1 of this bill, which says that it's waiving the 30-day waiting period.

I'm going to put this into plain speak, but it's not going to be my words. We heard from folks at committee on this bill, and I want to make sure that their voices are heard in this room because there wasn't really time to even consider it, because what they brought forward to committee—I mean, this is a truncated process, right? It certainly wasn't going to be considered in this bill or others, really.

Before I do that, though, one more thing from the Auditor General:

"For Ontarians to be able to meaningfully comment on an environmentally significant proposal, they need sufficient information about what the ministry is proposing, including the answers to questions like these. Generally, a proposal notice should include" a clear explanation of what's being proposed, potential environmental implications, related proposals or decisions, geographic location to which the proposal would apply—all of that sort of stuff. And it says, "When ministries do not provide sufficient information in a proposal notice, there is a risk that Ontarians will not be able to meaningfully participate in the government's environmental decision-making as intended by the EBR Act. In turn, the government misses out on the benefits of public participation, including improved environmental decisions and outcomes."

I'm going to read that last line again, because there's a spirit of this section that I think matters: "The government misses out on the benefits of public participation, including improved environmental decisions and outcomes." I do think that better and improved environmental decisions and outcomes should be the goal, not strictly the economic benefit or not strictly a bucket of favours that one might

owe. It should be about making the world a better place, right? No? Anyway, I think so.

1610

Speaker, there's lots and lots from the Auditor General's report. When you have free time, pick it up and give it a read. It is enlightening.

However, I am happy to share voices from those who came to committee to speak to Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act. Everyone who came to committee spoke specifically to schedule 1, the Environmental Assessment Act, and the amendments to that. Also, the folks who wrote in and shared written submissions also were quite interested in schedule 1, the Environmental Assessment Act.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in Ontario and they represent more than 38,000 farm family members, and I'm pleased to share their voice in this House. They had made a written submission. They said:

"We would like to take this opportunity to express our concerns with schedule 1: Environmental Assessment Act under Bill 69: Reducing Inefficiencies Act.

"We are opposed to these proposed amendments that would provide the ability to eliminate, waive or alter the 30-day waiting period following the comment period of a class environmental assessment. It is essential that there is time for a proponent to review and appropriately consider the submitted comments. Allowing a proponent to proceed as soon as a comment period closes amounts to an insult to the public who work within the system to provide comments of their very real concerns regarding a project, often along with some very ingenious potential solutions. It is often through public consultation that proponents are made aware of negative unintended consequences of their projects. The 30-day waiting period provides the time for the proponent to further investigate and mitigate concerns and unintended consequences that they may have overlooked."

They go on to say, "Public participation is a critical component of environmental decision-making. Failure to allow for meaningful participation can lead to resentment, animosity or ambivalence. The system must allow for meaningful participation to empower all those involved, from the concerned citizen to the corporate proponent to the government (at all jurisdictions) representatives. The ability to eliminate this 30-day waiting period effectively negates any public participation in this process.

"We trust our opinions and recommendations will be given due consideration during your deliberations."

That is signed by the president Peggy Brekveld.

I regret to inform you, Ms. Brekveld, that your opinions and recommendations were not given due consideration during these deliberations. That's from the OFA, who says, "Don't do this."

Also, a written submission from the Mississaugas of Scugog Island. This is a letter that has been signed by Chief Kelly LaRocca of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, and this is their written submission to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and

Cultural Policy regarding Bill 69. They have written, "From time immemorial, the Mississaugas of the Scugog Island First Nation ... have lived on the shores of Lake Scugog, north of what is now Port Perry. MSIFN is widely considered a model of a successful First Nation government in Canada. In part due to its exceptional financial management and foresight. MSIFN has provided their community with thousands of jobs, and charitable donations to organizations throughout the region."

The request is, "We urge the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to preserve the 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects.

"The 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects helps mitigate the pressure of short-term and monetary incentives from impacting decisions with long-term consequences for the greater good."

They go on to discuss the value of a 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects by saying, "Elected officials and public servants in our government institutions have the challenging task of always acting in the interest of the public while considering the greater good. In MSIFN's view, doing this successfully requires decisions to be made based on a thorough evaluation of their impact and consequences. In both the short and long term, the quality of the decision-making process is directly related to the quality of the decision itself....

"Among many things, this process must reduce the influence of incentives that are not in the public's best interest, for example, only viewing a decision through an economic lens or other short-term incentives, as they can result in even the most level-headed human to act in ways that can harm the greater good by not considering a wider set of arguments and perspectives."

They fully discuss a 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects as being "the prudent way to provide the decision-makers with time and space to carry out thorough evaluations of all angles relevant to policy proposals."

So some of the reasons that they cite for why a 30-day waiting period is important: "It exposes principal decision-makers to unnecessary scrutiny and pressure as they become solely and personally responsible for consequential decisions that are made with little information and no clear process"—oh, I'm sorry; back up. No, no, no. Stripping the 30-day waiting period causes these problems. I misspoke.

Stripping this 30-day period "exposes principal decision-makers to unnecessary scrutiny and pressure as they become solely and personally responsible for consequential decisions that are made with little information and no clear processes."

Stripping this 30-day waiting period "increases the vulnerability for public servants to be pressured and influenced from stakeholders that may not be incentivized to find solutions that are in the public interest."

And stripping this 30-day waiting period "opens the door to allegations of one-sided decision-making which

solely benefits one person, company or group. Collectively—even though individually, as well—these aspects can severely threaten public trust in democratic institutions and processes and, as a result, the stability of our democracy.”

They've used a wetland as an example here. It says, “Amending the decision-making process in the manner proposed by the province is particularly concerning in the context of the environment, as mistakes in how we treat it cannot be reversed.” If we think about wetlands—and as somebody from near Duffins Creek and all of that ugly, ugly mess, in part on the part of this government and the corporate entities in that area, that continues to sting in our community. “Once a wetland, to use an example that is scientifically indisputable as it relates to its significance for the health of the environment and life of any form, makes room for a construction project, it is gone forever.

“This is significant because the disappearance of a wetland or any other part of the ecosystem can lead to devastating consequences such as loss of a carbon sink, ecosystem, and biodiversity. The further these developments progress the more severe they will get as consequences in this area do not add, but compound as time progresses, exposing future generations to immeasurable harm and danger.”

They say, “Decisions that impact the environment must transcend political interests more than any other policy area. In the interest of the public good, these decisions must be protected from the influence of third parties, for example, developers that are monetarily incentivized to achieve an outcome that does not consider long-term consequences. The 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects is the minimal safeguard that protects government decisions from short-sighted interests and influences and, as a consequence, strengthens politicians and our democracy as a whole.”

The chief and council have offered to provide additional input in these areas, because their conclusion is, “For reasons outlined above, MSIFN strongly urges the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to keep the 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects. It is in the interest of the environment, the public and our democracy to do so.”

1620

Again, I am disappointed that such a thoughtful submission did not factor into this government's decision, because they're going ahead and certainly have not consulted with them on this.

I have here another committee submission from the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods; in this case, this is a letter submitted. Geoff Kettel is the president of the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods. He said, “Class EA sets out a standardized planning process for groups or classes of activities, such as municipal and provincial roads, provincial transportation facilities, and waterpower projects. Depending on the information gathered during a class EA, a project may be referred to undertake a more substantive process. So the 30 day period is the time when the minister (and the public) are able to consider the results

of the consultation process. Therefore the legislation is setting up a situation where, without considering the comments received through the class EA, the government can make the decision for the project to go ahead.”

They outlined their concerns and said at the end, “We are concerned that the Ontario government in its efforts to ‘reduce inefficiencies’ is increasing the potential for environmental mistakes, while at the same time reducing its accountability to the people of Ontario.”

Speaker, there's more. The committee also received a submission to the Legislative Assembly by the Escarpment Corridor Alliance. This is an organization I had not heard of before, so I'll give a little bit of intro. It said, “The Escarpment Corridor Alliance (ECA) is a group of community members who are alarmed by plans to turn some of the area's most popular outdoor destinations into mega-developments.

“The Escarpment Corridor Alliance was created to protect the Niagara Escarpment's celebrated landscapes and globally unique natural features and forests.”

Their request—and I always find it interesting when organizations are formed at the grassroots—literally, grass; these are environmental folks. And as I've been working with—sorry; I digress, because I don't know the specific membership of this group.

But I do know that as I've been meeting with people across the province, more and more, it's Conservatives in their, maybe, retirement or next chapters—some of them have become avid birders. But they are environmental enthusiasts, and they're very distraught about what is befalling the greenbelt, what is happening to the province. They are very concerned about the government's lack of care and concern for the environment in a number of different examples. They feel so betrayed by the Conservatives, because they are Conservatives. They grew up Conservative. They've been long-time donors and voices in the Conservative movement. Maybe it's their quieter next chapter, but some of them are feeling quite abandoned or betrayed. So I hope that the government is feeling really uncomfortable when some of their friends and folks and donors are calling them.

Anyway, I've extrapolated my experience onto this group, and that is not fair. Let me back up. I do not know this group, but I am pleased to share their voice in this space.

The Escarpment Corridor Alliance, as I said, created to protect the Niagara Escarpment's celebrated landscapes and globally unique natural features and forests, said, “We urge the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to preserve the 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects.

“The 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects is essential because it prevents short-term and monetary incentives from impacting decisions which may result in long-term negative consequences....

“As citizens, we expect that governments, their institutions, and employees operate in a way that benefits the greater good of our society. Most people will appreciate that this can be a difficult undertaking—especially in a

jurisdiction as diverse as Ontario.... The best way to ensure that government decisions are as beneficial as possible to as many people as possible, both in the present and future, is to follow a sound and thorough decision-making process.... By preserving this process, governments can ensure that responsible, sustainable, and good policy decisions are being made. It will also protect the decision-makers from external influences that can impact policy development in an unfair, one-sided manner which does not consider all arguments and the needs of the community and other stakeholders in a balanced manner.

“A 30-day waiting period for class environmental assessment projects is a prudent tool to protect the integrity of policy decisions, as it increases the likelihood that all angles and perspectives are being evaluated thoroughly.... The 30-day waiting period is essential in order to give the minister the opportunity to consider factors that may be unique to a particular region. The government’s proposal to eliminate this waiting period, therefore, is a threat to sound decision-making in the best interest of society as a whole—which can ultimately damage democracy in severe ways.”

A lot of folks are saying they’re getting to a similar place—that they are fearful of what this will mean and how it might undermine democracy, but also the health and wellness of their communities and the environment.

Speaker, we did have presenters come before committee. We heard from Jessica Murray, who was presenting on behalf of Sierra Club Canada as a board director. She said, “Sierra Club is a grassroots organization that empowers its members to protect, restore and seek climate solutions.” And some of the things that she shared—okay, well that explains the end to the 30 days; I’ll skip that, because we’ve talked about that. But Ms. Murray said, “As a realtor, I am professionally aware of the challenges we face in affordable housing, for which supply is absolutely a piece of the puzzle.... Ontario has hundreds of square kilometres of land within urban boundaries that are underdeveloped and zoned exclusively for low density. Rezoning for medium to high density within the large urban boundaries of the greater Golden Horseshoe and Ottawa would be more than adequate in meeting the metrics put out by the province, as well as CMHC. It’s also highly recommended as an affordable housing strategy by organizations like CMHC and the Toronto Region Board of Trade. If the Premier directed his energy in this way, might we find a more efficient solution with far less red tape to cut and less environmental damage into green spaces?”

“Our green spaces matter on a very real level, and yet our current Premier has deregulated and disempowered conservation authorities tasked to protect our historic watersheds directly linked to plant and animal survival, and so, human health. He has asked conservation authorities to give up their land for development....

“Our Premier has also issued numerous permits to companies to build on endangered species habitat through his ‘pay to slay’ scheme whereby developers develop on protected habitats in exchange for a fee.

“Our greenbelt is not merely at risk but already under attack and in peril of being irreparably damaged....

“Class EAs are a fast track for projects deemed to have minimal environmental impact.”

She went on and, at the end, she said, “To this standing committee and any MPP who might hear this: From the bottom of my heart, as a mother who had twins in a pandemic and who continues to question what future my boys will face, on behalf of the concerned public, if there is anything in your power to create laws, policies and processes that can protect the environment in any meaningful way, please do something.”

That was from Ms. Murray, and we appreciate that she came before the committee.

Mr. Phil Pothen is counsel and Ontario environment program manager with Environmental Defence. Many of us have had a chance to either meet Mr. Pothen or hear from him at different opportunities, as this government has brought forward various environmental initiatives and bills, and he has been a voice on behalf of Environmental Defence. This is some of what he said: “Public communications regarding the so-called ‘Reducing Inefficiencies Act’ present this as the mere removal of a waiting period. However, what it really, substantively permits is for the minister to rush ahead without ever even reviewing the expert comments that are received as the actual outcome of the class environmental assessment process....

“This process is designed ... to let a proponent that has commissioned its own hired consultants to produce class environmental assessment reports to proceed by default without any actual approval by the minister—and this is the key point—unless the results of the initial comment period and the assessment itself warrant imposing a full part two environmental assessment or imposing extra conditions in addition to the conditions of the relevant class EA.”

The key point, as he outlines—“Because the class EA reports are prepared by the proponent’s own consultants, the comment period and the consideration of those comments are a vital part of the process....

“The vital period, which the government describes as a ‘waiting period,’ is really the ‘making a considered and informed decision period.’ It is the ‘making a nonarbitrary decision period.’ This is the period where the minister is supposed to be undecided going into the room with no predilection toward whether the project will be bumped up or not and is supposed to receive that information and decide based on the information before the minister whether to let it go ahead or whether to bump it up. That can’t happen if the minister is allowed on day one simply to skip that process.”

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He went on to say, “The government’s proposed amendments would allow the minister to quickly rubber-stamp a project without even considering what the assessment process revealed and without any opportunity for concerned citizens and for independent experts who are not on the proponent’s payroll to review and organize

around these results to pressure the minister to require a full environmental assessment.

“This change shouldn’t happen.”

Speaker, I have spent the better part of an hour discussing two schedules. This is a bill that has two parts: the class environmental assessment and the 30-day waiting period in schedule 1, so changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, and then schedule 2, which deals with the Ministry of Infrastructure Act. In almost an hour, I have shared a whole bunch from the Auditor General’s reports. And the thing is, it seems that this government would rather those reports just stay on a shelf somewhere. But they’re still relevant.

The 2017 Auditor General’s report about the realty portfolio, about the responsibilities of Infrastructure Ontario and just how many challenges the client ministries have, and how many challenges are being faced because Infrastructure Ontario is not managing their contractors and is not dealing with repairs, not dealing with snow removal, not dealing with footpaths to the Ontario Science Centre—that is still relevant, even though it was 2017 when all of those recommendations and all those criticisms came forward. This government took one piece of that report, ostensibly, and said that they’re addressing it. I haven’t actually been able to make the link between the one recommendation that they have cited and what we see here. I’m not sure how it’s actually going to make it better. I’ve asked for that—how transferring control to the Ministry of Infrastructure is going to solve those problems. So I’m looking forward to the rest of this debate, because hopefully after—we’ve been doing this now for a few weeks. Hopefully, we’ll find that out.

Also, as I raised today, the Ontario Science Centre is a perfect example of a public space that is under that Infrastructure Ontario umbrella. The capital repairs have been neglected, the work has not been done, and it’s Infrastructure Ontario that is their landlord. This government is pulling more under that Infrastructure Ontario umbrella. I’d like to know why. We’ve talked about environmental changes—and, again, this is not the right direction for the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It’s now time for questions.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Oshawa for her hour-long presentation. I appreciate the work she put into it.

The member opposite touched on the environmental assessment, and in Bill 69, we’re helping it be predictable for infrastructure projects, letting us build them faster. As everyone in this place knows, we need to build more infrastructure. More people are moving to Ontario. We need to build subways, highways, other transportation as well, and I know these changes will help us do that more effectively.

My question to the member opposite simply is, why are members on that side of the House against building infrastructure the people of Ontario need and deserve quickly?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I don’t understand what he’s talking about. This is not a government that is building

infrastructure quickly. This is not a government that even knows what that would look like. We have black holes of money and time. When my colleague the member who is the critic for transit—I have every faith that he could talk about the lack of infrastructure and transit infrastructure being built and the mess that it’s in.

Again, this is a two-schedule bill. This is not about building infrastructure faster—that’s nowhere in this. This is about pulling 13 existing agencies underneath Infrastructure Ontario, because of what? It’s not about building anything faster. So maybe he can ask it again and clear it up for me.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for giving us a very detailed debate on this bill.

You talked about the general report at length and said that Infrastructure Ontario’s reputation or performance wasn’t that positive.

In 2020, Michael Lindsay, who was assigned to CEO of Infrastructure Ontario, previously served as head of the strategic partnership and government for the Investment Management Corp. of Ontario. Did he present at the committee about how he’s going to make these changes to Infrastructure Ontario and make it better?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: And why not?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I don’t know. I can’t speak to why anybody did or didn’t come.

I know that the folks who made written submissions were very concerned about the government’s changes by getting rid of this 30-day waiting period. So it was a focus on environmental concern—the people who came before the committee or made submissions.

Putting more in the Infrastructure Ontario bucket, maybe it’s not that problematic, but we’re not—we know that Infrastructure Ontario is not really good at property management, and there’s a whole report on just that. So maybe work on some of those things. The government should address those.

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would be more than happy to talk to Mr. Lindsay. It has been a little while, so maybe I’ll give him a call and I will ask him directly.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I’m actually kind of excited about this bill. Bill 69 is about good governance. It’s about cutting red tape and streamlining oversight. And maybe these are things—through you, Speaker—that the NDP just don’t comprehend, because after 15 years of a disastrous Liberal government, hydro rates skyrocketed, taxes soared and, more important, our taxpayers’ dollars were mismanaged.

One of the reasons I put my name on a ballot was because of the mismanaging of taxpayers’ dollars—absolutely unfair to those people who are trying to get by.

So my question to the opposition, if they care to listen, is, why does the NDP want to add more red tape and slow down government?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It's such a fascinating interpretation of what's happening.

Schedule 2 of this bill has nothing to do—if it has anything to do with streamlining, then I think that the minister and the government should make it clear on how. It's not just a bumper sticker—“We're making things better.” How? Which part of the report are you fixing?

Here is something from the real estate services, on the Ministry of Infrastructure: “Infrastructure Ontario's management of government properties was impacted in part by weaknesses in the ... agreement between Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Infrastructure. The agreement does not set out any mandatory, minimum standard of performance for managing the costs of capital projects. It also does not set out timelines for meeting the accommodation standard for office space designed to ensure that existing government properties are used efficiently, and timelines for maintaining the state of government-owned properties to the agreement's standard.” That's from page 1. Basically, it's a mess. That's between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario.

The Ontario Science Centre is a beautiful example of what happens when nobody looks after—

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member for her excellent presentation.

Infrastructure Ontario is, obviously, by way of this motion from the government, being offered more responsibilities and more authority. And they're consolidating a number of different real estate assets under the ministry. I would say that when one gets more responsibility, it should be because one has done a very good job—better outcomes, better timelines, better management of facilities, better management of dollars—but we're not seeing that. Instead, we're seeing a ministry that's rather secretive.

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My question to you is, why would the government offer Infrastructure Ontario more responsibility when they seem to be struggling with the responsibilities that they have now?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: That is such a good question.

The government has said that they are looking at the recommendations from this particular Auditor General's report, but certainly not most, certainly not all—arguably one that I could figure out, in terms of the use of office space.

There are so many recommendations—“Better oversight of external project managers' procurement methods for capital projects is needed.... Infrastructure Ontario is using preliminary estimates to prioritize which capital projects to do.” They highlighted why that's a problem. It is so thorough, and it's very clear that the government could support Infrastructure Ontario with its existing properties. They could fund things using the industry

standard, as I have raised, rather than using the government standard.

So why is the government putting more on their plate? I don't know how much more work they're putting on their plate. I don't know exactly what they're making Infrastructure Ontario responsible for, because again, it's not clear.

Great question.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciated hearing from the member opposite in what was a good hour in which she participated in debate this afternoon. I know that sometimes on a Monday afternoon an hour-long leadoff on third reading of a bill can go down a lot of different ways, but she was able to keep it definitely focused on the legislation at hand, which I appreciated.

I'm wondering if she could speak a little bit about how important it is to get infrastructure built in the province of Ontario and why she believes there might be some merits to this bill after all.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I was frantically searching for that submission from the folks in your neck of the woods who are concerned about the environment in Niagara. When I find it, I will walk it across and share it with you.

In terms of the importance of building infrastructure—it's not just building infrastructure; it's building well-planned, needed infrastructure, and it's meeting the needs of growing communities and meeting the needs that the government can actually prove exist. It can't just be what Frank asked for, and it can't just be what you promised somebody else. It has to be what the experts and planners have outlined as what is needed, and it has to be transparent. We've got black holes of funding and time, when it comes to these absurd P3 messes. So the government should probably be pulling some of that public—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one final question.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'll just be succinct and ask my colleague from Oshawa, given that this bill is supposed to be about making things more efficient, could she take a stab as to why the cost of subway construction under this government has tripled in the last five years?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Well, yes. It doesn't have any public control. It's consortiums, and it's financiers. Those are not construction gurus. Those are people who want to make money. So when we give a contract over and say, “We trust you. Just give it back when it's done,” and they say, “Oh, it's going to take longer and more,” and we don't have reasons for that because we're not allowed to involve or investigate, that's a problem. P3s are problematic.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act, 2023. As the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks outlined this morning, this bill, if passed and proclaimed into force,

would create a framework to improve the management of real estate, and it would bring efficiency changes to the Environmental Assessment Act.

Madam Speaker, our government has a bold, transformative plan to build Ontario. That is why we're continuously looking at new and innovative ways to improve efficiencies, save taxpayers money and improve quality of life across our province. Bill 69, Reducing Inefficiencies Act, 2023, is an important next step in our plan. If passed, it would support long-term economic growth. Our proposed measures have the potential to allow for faster deployment of critical projects. It would support timely decision-making. It would help reduce duplication and burden. And by making minor changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, we are helping to ensure that some critical construction projects can move faster, without compromising environmental safety.

Bill 69, if passed, would help cut red tape and streamline processes so we can continue to practise good governance on behalf of the people of Ontario. This is all a part of our plan to enhance fiscal management and save taxpayers' dollars.

As part of this plan, I would like to take a few moments to highlight and echo the Minister of Infrastructure on the work we have been doing over the past few years to support our communities and Ontario's economy.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Infrastructure plays a critical role in the quality of life enjoyed by people across our province. Infrastructure is the backbone of a strong and healthy economy, and it supports our communities, both today and in the future. When a new road, highway, transit line or bridge is built, we are helping hard-working people get home to their families safer and faster. When new infrastructure is installed to improve access to high-speed Internet, we provide families with the opportunity to work, educate their children from home and connect with loved ones. And when we build hospitals and long-term-care homes, we're ensuring our most vulnerable members are provided the care they deserve. That is why our government is building Ontario like never before, laying the foundation for a stronger and more productive province.

Madam Speaker, we've dedicated over \$184 billion over the next decade to support priority projects such as transit, highways, schools, hospitals and long-term care. This is the province's most ambitious plan in its history, and it includes so many projects that will help build a stronger, more resilient Ontario.

It also includes more than \$27.9 billion over 10 years to support the planning and construction of highway expansion and rehabilitation projects across the province, projects like Highway 413, the QEW Garden City Skyway rehabilitation project, the widening of Highway 17 from Arnprior to Renfrew, and the Timmins connecting link. These are just a few of the highway expansion and rehabilitation projects in our province that will improve the movement of people and goods in Ontario.

It also includes \$70.5 billion over the next 10 years for public transit projects to get people to where they need to

go, safely, efficiently and on time. Projects like the GO expansion will transform the GO rail network into a comprehensive two-way, all-day rapid transit network. We have already made progress on our government's bold transit plan for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, including the Ontario Line, the three-stop Scarborough subway extension, the Yonge North subway extension, the Eglinton Crosstown West extension and the 14-kilometre Hamilton LRT, delivering on our promise to provide better access to fast, affordable and more reliable transit.

Our plan also includes more than \$48 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure. These investments will build new health care facilities and renew existing hospitals and community health centres. This includes more than 50 major hospital projects that would add 3,000 new beds over 10 years. I'm proud to say that we have also made progress on construction of four new long-term-care homes through the accelerated build pilot, a new and innovative approach for infrastructure delivery established with the support of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario.

In fact, one of these projects, Lakeridge Gardens, a state-of-the-art, 320-bed long-term-care home located next to Lakeridge Health's Ajax Pickering Hospital, opened in the spring of 2022—that, we delivered it in only 13 months.

This pilot program leverages hospital-owned land and accelerated construction techniques to deliver urgently needed long-term-care homes more quickly in urban areas, where costs are high and availability of land is in short supply.

Madam Speaker, the pandemic has reinforced that now more than ever, everyone in Ontario needs access to reliable high-speed Internet. In response to this incredible need, we made a historic investment of nearly \$4 billion to bring high-speed Internet access to every community across the province by the end of 2025.

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Madam Speaker, this is basic infrastructure, having high-speed Internet. Imagine: We live in the 21st century, and people are still without high-speed Internet. So our government is making historic investments to ensure that every household, every business in the province will have access to high-speed by 2025.

We're doing everything we can to support the idea that no matter where you live, you'll be able to participate in the online world, and I'm proud to say that we have already made a commitment to supporting high-speed Internet access in hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in communities across the province to close the digital divide.

We also recognize that there's a need to provide municipalities with stable funding to support critical local infrastructure projects. That is why our government is also investing \$400 million this year in critical infrastructure for 425 small, rural and northern communities through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.

As many of you know, building Ontario is a team effort. All levels of government, our partners and communities

work together to support critical infrastructure projects across the province. This level of partnership makes programs like the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, also known as ICIP, possible. This program represents up to \$30 billion in combined federal, provincial and partner funding over 10 years for local infrastructure projects, which includes \$10.2 billion in provincial investments. These include transit, green, community, culture and recreation, and rural and northern infrastructure projects.

We have also continued to build Ontario by delivering major infrastructure using a spectrum of delivery models and strategic approaches that continue to evolve to reflect changing market conditions. The delivery models used by the province range from a traditional, direct approach, which is used by a number of ministries, to dynamic approaches such as working with the private sector through a range of public-private partnership models. P3s are often used to deliver major projects like bridges, highways, hospitals, subways and correctional facilities through partnering with the private sector.

In 2019, under Premier Ford's leadership, the government and Infrastructure Ontario announced the biggest project pipeline in Ontario's history. Since then, we have been relentless in bringing those projects to market and refreshing that pipeline with additional new government priorities.

As you have heard, there are so many infrastructure projects to look forward to in 2023 and beyond. These are some of the many initiatives that we are working on. Despite the many challenges we have faced, including labour shortages, inflation, ongoing supply chain disruptions and a global pandemic, our government stepped up to the plate. We expedited our efforts and forged ahead on our capital plan to build Ontario. We continued to do what was necessary to protect lives and support families and businesses, all while prioritizing long-term economic growth for generations to come.

The benefits of these meaningful, high-quality infrastructure projects cannot be ignored. We are building vibrant, strong communities, improving health and safety, creating meaningful jobs and stimulating our economy.

By introducing Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act, 2023, we are taking the next step in our bold and transformative plan. If passed, this bill would reduce red tape, save taxpayer dollars, enhance fiscal management and boost the economy. It would help our government continue to make strategic decisions and investments that people across this province need and deserve.

As the Minister of Infrastructure mentioned, the bill contains two initiatives that are part of this plan. One of the proposed initiatives would establish a framework to remove or modify the real estate authority of 14 entities and provide the Minister of Infrastructure with the ability to oversee and manage this real estate. The other initiative within this act would help reduce delays with changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, while ensuring continued environmental oversight to class environmental assessment projects.

I would like to reiterate some of the benefits that this bill, if passed, would bring to Ontario's economy and future. Ontario's real estate portfolio is one of the largest in Canada, and while real estate is one of our government's greatest resources, a holistic approach to decision-making and real estate management is needed. Provincial oversight is distributed through existing legislation amongst five ministries and 54 entities that operate under individual processes and protocols relating to real estate decisions and transactions, which means that real estate decisions are being made without a strategic or holistic approach.

Our government is taking initiative to help improve the governance and management of our real estate portfolio. If passed, our proposed measures would establish a framework to remove or modify the real estate authority of 14 entities and provide the Minister of Infrastructure with the ability to oversee and manage the real estate previously under the control of those entities. By creating this framework to centralize the real estate authority of these organizations, our government would help reduce red tape and create a more efficient process so that these entities can focus on the important work they do for the people of Ontario. This is the first step in allowing our government to increase operating efficiency while supporting our objective to act more as one holistic organization when it comes to overseeing and managing the real estate portfolio of entities.

Madam Speaker, our proactive and innovative approaches through this proposed bill, if passed, would allow us to:

- implement a more structured, holistic framework to manage our real estate;
- promote government-wide decision-making;
- reduce red tape and regulatory burden by consolidating the real estate authority of prescribed entities and enabling some projects to proceed without the 30-day waiting period following completion of a class environmental assessment process; and
- save time and money through increased efficiency measures and enhanced planning abilities.

This bill is about allowing our government to increase operational and fiscal efficiencies. But most importantly, this is about good governance, which people in Ontario expect from us. This is a step forward in our promise to continue doing everything to be open and transparent with the people of Ontario about what we have done and what we will do. We'll keep pushing forward by coming up with new, innovative plans to support our growing province, and we'll continue to invest in infrastructure projects that support communities, create good jobs and contribute to Ontario's economic goals. By building, upgrading and modernizing our infrastructure, we'll ensure that our communities continue to thrive now and well into the future.

Madam Speaker, our plan and proposed measures would not only protect the progress we have made. It looks beyond to the stronger Ontario we want to build for today and for generations to come, and it demonstrates our commitment to supporting jobs, economic growth, and health and safety. This legislation, with the changes that

we are proposing, is important to Ontario's future prosperity. Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with all of you to build a stronger, more prosperous Ontario today and for generations to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for questions.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a question to the member opposite that was similar to a question my colleague from Ottawa Centre had posed to my colleague from Oshawa, and it was around P3s. So we're talking about reducing red tape or eliminating red tape, but what we have consistently seen with this Conservative government is transit projects, especially those here in Toronto, are way over schedule and way, way, way over budget. So I'm wondering where in this bill and where in government policy is the accountability? Where is the accountability to the taxpayers to ensure that when you hand over a P3 project—no surprise, we don't support those over here, and for good reason, because they go over time and over budget with absolutely no recourse and no accountability.

So I'm wondering where in this bill does it bring back that accountability to the people of the province of Ontario who are actually paying for these contracts that are costing them even more through their taxes. Where is that accountability in this bill, or when will you be bringing a bill forward that does that?

1700

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. As I highlighted in my speech, our government is making unprecedented investments in infrastructure. We're investing \$184 billion in the next 10 years to build new hospitals, new schools, new highways, new long-term-care homes. We're not leaving any stone unturned when it comes to investing in infrastructure.

The P3 model that the member opposite is speaking about has been a world-class model of building major infrastructure projects in Ontario and around the world. The majority of the projects in P3s are completed on time and within the budget. Ontario has been leading the way in staying the course and delivering infrastructure projects, Madam Speaker. We're working with our partners, our stakeholders to ensure that we have the world-class infrastructure for the people of Ontario that they deserve. We will get it done.

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

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank my colleague from Brampton West for his comments today on this important piece of legislation. Two aspects he spoke of in his presentation today were partnerships and investments. In my riding of Simcoe–Grey, we're seeing significant investments by this government in critical infrastructure as my riding continues to grow, with the growth pressures we're under. We have hospital redevelopment projects in Alliston at Stevenson Memorial and in Collingwood at Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. The town of Blue Mountains has a 160-bed licence to develop a long-term-care facility. And Collingwood recently received over \$2 million to repair and rehabilitate a section of

Highway 26, which is a critical piece of infrastructure for my area.

My question to member is, how does he see this legislation bettering the lives of Ontarians across the province?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to thank my friend from Simcoe–Grey for such a wonderful question. As I said, our government is investing \$184 billion over the next 10 years. People expect our government to practise good governance. We were re-elected with the promise to work for the people. This legislation cuts red tape by streamlining oversight of 14 agencies' real estate and reducing the waiting period in an EA process. Through this legislation, it will save taxpayer dollars and reduce inefficiencies that the people expect us to deliver.

The rationale behind this bill is to be fiscally prudent, cut red tape, save taxpayer dollars and practise good governance. This bill is another step toward modernizing government process and oversight, and we are also looking at how we can reduce administrative burden on standard infrastructure priorities while maintaining our strong environmental and consultative processes.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to give the member an example. Peterborough built a brand new hospital. It cost \$364 million. St. Catharines, which was a P3 hospital 10 years ago, cost a million dollars—\$700,000 more, almost the exact same hospital. That was under the PC model.

Now you listen to my colleague from Ottawa talk about the LRT. And you made a statement which I thought was very interesting. You said the reason why you like P3s is because they're delivered on time. Well, my understanding is that the LRT is 430 days late. They've had three derailments.

So my question to you is, why are we wasting billions of dollars more of taxpayers' money with P3s when you can invest that money back into hospitals, schools, roads, infrastructure?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Ontario is not unique with inflation. We have seen that worldwide: supply chain disruptions, costs of supplies have gone up and, definitely, project costs have gone up. But our government is committed to building infrastructure that works for all Ontarians. As I said, we're not leaving any stone unturned when it comes to investing in infrastructure.

Not only are we building schools, but we're building hospitals, we're building highways. Most importantly, we are connecting every Ontarian with high-speed Internet. That was neglected by the previous government for far too long, Madam Speaker. No government took action on high-speed Internet. This is the basic infrastructure that every Ontarian deserves, and we are making the largest single investment by any province in the history of Canada to ensure that every—

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

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'd like to thank the member from Brampton West for the amazing work that they are doing, not only for his constituents but for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, my question for the member: The last Auditor General's report that came out, the conversation of centralizing decision-making and moving things forward in a more progressive manner—there's a lot of things that the Auditor General identified. I know that the member and his team are working hard to deliver those changes and deliver good things for the people of Ontario. My question for him is, how will the centralization of real estate under these agencies help the government achieve its priorities?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: That's another great question from the hard-working member from Brampton East. Madam Speaker, centralizing the real estate oversight of 14 different agencies will help the government optimize office space and reduce red tape. Ontario has one of the largest and most complex real estate portfolios in Canada and has been working towards establishing a more holistic approach to managing its real estate. This legislation, if passed, would help to remove or modify the real estate authority of 14 entities and provide the Minister of Infrastructure with the ability to oversee and manage real property previously under the control of the entities. These changes will help reduce red tape, improve economic growth, optimize office space and save taxpayers' money. This proposed legislation, if passed, will address the 2017 Auditor General's report and other third-party reports that have identified opportunities for the province to deliver its real estate portfolio more efficiently through initiatives that centralize authority and decision-making.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: With respect to the Auditor General's report—which was quite scathing, talking about

the mismanagement of Ontario real estate assets by Infrastructure Ontario—being able to cause such a rift in the Auditor General's report, and now the government is actually suggesting that this ministry be given more responsibility when they've mismanaged the assets so poorly.

I've heard repeatedly now this government talk about the Ontario Science Centre falling apart and how Ontario Place is being mismanaged, but all of that happened under their watch. How can the member across justify more responsibilities now consolidated in the hands of Infrastructure Ontario when they've done such a poor job with the responsibilities they have?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Madam Speaker, the Auditor General was very clear in her findings and her report that she actually recommended a centralized manner in which to assess real estate authority for government and government agencies. We are accepting those recommendations, and we're moving forward. Minister Surma highlighted this morning that we will be presenting the legislation in this House to address that.

Also, we're trying to be more fiscally prudent in this House, to have a holistic view and a central place where decisions are being made. The Auditor General was very clear in her recommendations in terms of finding efficiencies and optimizing office space, and I think it's very difficult to do that when there are many, many different agencies making various different real estate decisions.

Madam Speaker, I'm glad the member highlighted Ontario Place. Our government made a decision, and we're very clear with the people of Ontario that we'll be doing a comprehensive redevelopment of Ontario Place and we'll bring it back to life. Because this is our heritage, and we are protecting our heritage by doing the comprehensive redevelopment.

Report continues in volume B.

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Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
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 (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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	
Lecca, 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)	Kiwiwinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	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
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	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	
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	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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	Kanata—Carleton	