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Monday 13 September 2010

Lundi 13 septembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 13 September 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 13 septembre 2010

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

EVENTS IN ELGIN–MIDDLESEX– LONDON

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back. I think you may have noticed that instead of bringing the teacher an apple on the first day, I brought you a delicious Honeycrisp apple from Rokeby's farm in the riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. The Honeycrisp, in my opinion, is the best apple grown in Ontario today.

On the same topic of my riding, you'll notice that you also have a flyer for the International Plowing Match, which will be held in Elgin the week of September 21 to 25. I hope to see you all there. I can tell you that my community is very excited to welcome you all.

You will also notice, at the request of members, that you each have received Ontario road maps on your desk for when you and your colleagues are talking about communities from across Ontario; you can easily reference them from your seats. As well, it will help to guide you to the lovely riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London.

SERVICES FOR THE HEARING- IMPAIRED

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just like to note, in moving forward and in trying to be compliant with the disabilities act, we now have closed captioning available in the Speaker's gallery for members' guests and visitors who will be here requiring those services.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It's my pleasure today to introduce in the House an employee of my office: Christine Charette.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce Jacob Mantle. He's a Queen's University graduate who is starting at my constituency office as well as here at Queen's Park. Welcome, Jacob.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to introduce, in the members' west gallery, a number of guests. I'm not going to guess all the names because I'm going to get one wrong

and I'm probably going to forget two. I want to say, first of all, welcome, on behalf of NAN communities. They're here today in regards to Bill 191. We have with us, in no particular order, Grand Chief Stan Beardy of Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Grand Chief Stan Louttit, from Mushkegowuk Tribal Council; and Arthur Moore, who represents the Matawa folk. I'm going to skip all the other names because I know I'm going to get them wrong, but you're all welcome.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In the west members' gallery, we have three guests from York University: Stan Shapson, the vice-president of research; Barb Burrows; and Karen Kraft Sloan, who, members may remember, was a long-time member of Parliament for York North.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Marnie Niemi Hood, who is the newly appointed OPSEU legislative liaison. Welcome to the chamber.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome a delegation from China, representing the Minister of Finance. This delegation was organized by the Bond Centre for Leadership and Management. They've come to study finance in the province of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is for the Premier. Last week, Premier, you said, "It's not too soon for us to consider the choice we're going to have next October." I could not agree more. But where Dalton and I disagree is on what choice Ontario families will face in the next provincial election. Dalton McGuinty believes that families have an endless ability to pay for every idea he dreams up and passes down the bill.

The Ontario PCs will stand on the side of hard-working Ontario families who have to deal with the \$1,000 HST tax grab alone. Premier, you hit them with the HST, the eco tax, higher auto insurance and hydro rate hikes. How did you become so dramatically out of touch with the needs of Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's good to be back, Speaker, it's good to be back. It's good to hear from my honourable colleague, and I welcome all members back to the Legislature.

I want to remind my honourable colleague of just a little bit of his record in this Legislature. When we moved ahead with the personal income tax cut for Ontario fam-

ilies, which means that on average every mother and father will get a \$200 permanent annual tax cut, he voted against that. When we moved ahead with our new sales tax credit that could benefit a four-person family \$1,040 every year on a permanent basis, they voted against that. The northern Ontario energy credit, for example—\$200 for a family—again my honourable colleague voted against that. He says he's in favour of helping out families when it comes to dollars, but apparently he's not.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, quite frankly, I think that shows how dramatically out of touch—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order. Order, Minister of Economic Development and the member from Nepean—Carleton and the member from Simcoe North and the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker.

Frankly, Premier, that kind of answer just shows how dramatically out of touch you and the Ontario Liberal caucus have become with Ontario families.

Let's look at what happened to Ontario families this summer. Dalton McGuinty nailed them on the HST, and then he brought in an eco tax on 9,000 items that families use each and every day. Hydro bills are going through the roof, tuition is up, auto insurance is up. And then Dalton McGuinty throws out this \$50 tax credit on things that became more expensive because of his HST. Sir, that is no tax credit; that is an insult to hard-working Ontario families who got stuck with the bill.

Let me ask the Premier again: What kind of world do you live in where you believe it's okay for Ontario families to pay more and more and get less and less in return?

1040

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again my honourable colleague's words would have us conclude one thing, but his actions speak volumes and lead us in another direction entirely. He says that he's in favour of helping out families. Shortly we'll be introducing in this Legislature a provision to provide families with a children's activity tax credit.

My honourable colleague says he wants to help out families, but I'd have to make the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew and the member from Nepean—Carleton will please come to order, and the member from Simcoe—Grey as well, and the member from Halton and the member from Timmins—James Bay. Thank you for allowing me to refresh my memory with the riding names.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, it's a modest provision. It will provide some modest help to families, but we believe that families in fact welcome this additional support. I think that shortly we're going to learn where the official opposition stands on this particular matter. Are they going to support this government's continuing

efforts to help Ontario families or not? Will they support the new children's tax credit or not? Shortly we'll learn a bit more about that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, let's get this straight: You slapped down the HST on things like arenas that are driving up the cost of hockey registration, on baseball fields, on gas for parents to get to the games. You increased taxes like that to the tune of up to \$1,000 for your HST and then you have the nerve to throw back some cheap \$50 tax credit. It's an insult to Ontario families, Premier, and you know it.

After seven years it has become very clear: Premier McGuinty believes in his heart that Ontario families have an infinite capacity to pay for every idea that your team dreams up. They can't keep up with your hydro bills; they can't keep up with your HST increase; they can't keep up with your eco taxes. Families need a break today, and, Premier, why don't you get it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've provided a brief list—there's much more—with respect to new initiatives that support families when it comes to their taxes, but here's another measure that we've moved ahead with, which the official opposition continues to oppose: We cut the price of generic drugs in Ontario in half. That's a very important measure for Ontario families. This was a very good opportunity to learn whether they're on the side of big business or Ontario families. They've decided to stand up with big pharmacies against the interests of Ontario families. If Ontario families want to know whose side they're on, I'd ask them to cast their minds to the issue of drug costs in Ontario. We lowered them. They want to keep them up.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Let's look at Dalton McGuinty's so-called priorities for Ontario families. You began this spring with a sex ed curriculum that would start sex classes with six-year-olds at a time they would begin learning their ABCs and how to tie their shoes. Then you brought in the HST tax grab. By the way, since Dalton McGuinty nailed families with his HST tax grab, we have lost some 60,000 full-time private sector jobs in the last two months alone. You brought in an eco tax that put a tax on 9,000 items that families use each and every day like bath soap and bath toys for their kids, and a green energy experiment that has enormously increased the size of the bureaucracy and increased bills up and up and up. Premier, why don't you just call it off on all these tax grabs and give families a chance to catch a breath?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague has a particularly distorted view of families. He sees them as nothing more and nothing less than an economic enterprise concerned exclusively with revenues and expenditures. We understand that costs and family budgeting are

very important to our families, and that's why we've moved ahead with a number of tax cuts.

But I would argue, as well, that our families are very concerned about the education of their children. We're moving ahead with a brand new initiative, the first of its kind in North America: full-day kindergarten for our four- and five-year-olds. They oppose that. They call it a frill. They say it is big, shiny, unnecessary and too expensive.

We're going to continue to invest in the future of this province by investing in our children. That's something Ontario families should know: When it comes to their children and their schools, we're on their side.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let me try to bring the Premier back to the real world, because Dalton McGuinty simply does not understand the world that Ontario families live in any longer.

While Ontario families are working hard and playing by the rules, this summer saw Dalton McGuinty's hand-picked friends at the LHINs hold illegal meetings, collect bloated salaries, hand out sweetheart consulting deals and try to close down health services across this province. And instead of taking this on, the Premier defends his bloated LHIN bureaucracy. He won't stand up for patients who are now waiting 17 hours for ER care in places like London, Ontario. We'd close down those LHINs and put that money into front-line health care instead.

Premier, why don't you give up on all this waste out there, help invest in front-line services first, and give Ontario families the break and the high quality of services they work so hard for and need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What my honourable colleague is proposing is that he will shut down 14 LHINs. He wants to revive the extensive government bureaucracy that was there in the past: all the regional health offices, all the district health councils.

Let's understand what their record is when it comes to health care—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague, of late, has not been so front-and-centre with his plan, which remains very solid, which is to eliminate the Ontario health premium. That's \$3 billion.

I need people to understand that when they were in government they closed 28 hospitals. We're building 14 new hospitals; they closed 28 hospitals. They fired 6,200 nurses; we've hired over 10,000 nurses and over 2,300 doctors. So when this gentleman gets up and talks about health care, Ontario families better ask themselves what their secret agenda is when it comes to their health care and what's going to happen to their hospitals, their nurses and their doctors.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Ontario families know that this is an election year, and they've seen Dalton McGuinty's act before. This is a man who will promise anything, say anything, to try to maintain his power in the province of Ontario. But what Dalton McGuinty forgets is that Ontario families are the ones who have to pay for each and every one of the ideas he dreams up. He wants to talk about his pie-in-the-sky ideas, his out-of-touch priorities like the sex ed curriculum, while there is an immediate and pressing need for Ontario families today to get a break so they can catch up; so they can spend money in the local economy; so they can help create jobs again.

1050

Premier, this summer we saw what you're all about: the HST, an eco tax grab on 9,000 items that families use every day, hydro rates going through the roof, and paying more and getting less in auto insurance. Premier, you're out of touch. You've lost touch with families in our province. We need change in the province of Ontario because we can't afford—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Durham. Member from Lanark. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's nothing quite as invigorating as a spontaneous standing ovation, Speaker.

I read this summer—and I'll give my colleague an opportunity to speak to this at some point in time—that their plan ultimately is to cut taxes in Ontario by \$8 billion. I would ask Ontarians to understand the consequences of that kind of tax cut.

I want to revisit their record again. In order to do what they did before, they closed 28 hospitals. They closed 7,100 beds. They fired 6,200 nurses. Funding went down for our schools by \$1 billion in the first two years. We lost 26 million learning days. If my honourable colleague wants to talk about movies we've seen before, we have seen that one. Ontarians gave it a thumbs-down. There's no desire to revisit—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. During the Premier's summer of discontent, flip-flops were in abundance. He backed way from the eco fees that he had created. He embraced an online gambling scheme that he had earlier rejected.

In the meantime, I went out and listened to the people the Premier has been ignoring. You know what, Speaker? They told me that they're worried about jobs. They're worried about hospital cuts. But most of all, they're worried about being able to make ends meet. When will

the Premier start looking after their needs and make their lives a little bit more affordable?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I extend a welcome to my honourable colleague the leader of the NDP as well.

She now has an apparent interest in the economics of our families. So why did she stand up against all of those measures that we've put in place that would support our families? The NDP claim to have a real interest in lower-income Ontarians. Why did she vote against our Ontario child benefit? That's \$1,100 on an annual basis for every child in a lower-income family. That's real; it's meaningful. It's the first of its kind in Canada. We're very proud of that but, most importantly, families who receive that are very appreciative. Why would my honourable colleague not stand up today and say that she supports the Ontario child benefit for Ontario families?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier promised that his new 8% tax on everything from gas to home heating to haircuts was actually going to make life better for families. Instead, job growth has stagnated and incomes have flat-lined as the harmonized sales tax and skyrocketing energy costs put the squeeze on already stretched family budgets. Why does this Premier seem so intent on making life more expensive for Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would ask that my honourable colleague be a bit more fulsome in terms of the answer that she provides. That would be helpful. By that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier, withdraw the comment, please.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I withdraw that, Speaker.

I would ask my honourable colleague to consider that the fact of the matter—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew will withdraw the comment as well, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: There's a Johnny Cash concert coming up. I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'd ask my honourable colleague to acknowledge that the Ontario recovery is in fact under way. It is not as strong as any of us would like to see. We have regained some 85% of the jobs we lost during the course of the recession, but there is more work to be done.

An important dimension of that recovery is to be found in our Open Ontario plan. An important part of that plan is the modernization of our tax system, and part of that is the HST. That's just part of a plan which also sees personal income taxes going down, it sees transition benefits in place, it sees the creation of a new sales tax credit, it sees the creation of a new northern energy tax credit, and it sees the creation of new benefits for Ontario seniors.

If it's seen in a holistic way, a comprehensive way, it's actually an intelligent approach to helping get this economy moving and to ensuring that we're creating more jobs every single day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier often talks about what he can't do for families. He says his government can't afford to help families in uncertain times, but the Premier found billions of dollars for a sweetheart deal with Samsung, billions for a smart meter scheme that's really not that very smart and billions more for a corporate tax giveaway.

With all this money at the Premier's disposal, why does life keep getting more and more expensive for Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's the first time I hear it from the leader of the NDP, but I am surprised to hear that she's standing against the Green Energy Act in Ontario. I'm surprised that she's standing against an investment of some \$16 billion so far which translates into about 16,000 new Ontario jobs. Our target is 50,000 new jobs in clean energy. We made a decision some time ago to shut down coal-fired generation; it would be nice to have my colleague's support in that area.

What we're doing is actually finding a way to move ahead with strengthening this economy at the same time as protecting our environment, which means protecting the health and well-being of our families and especially our children. We think that's important; we think that's a priority that Ontario families share. Again, I would say to my honourable colleague, it would be great to have her support when it comes to shutting down coal-fired generation and harnessing power from the wind and the sun in the province of Ontario.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. If the Premier just stepped outside of his bubble, he'd hear stories like this one from Jennifer Donais of Windsor. She wrote, "I am a single mom with two teens. I live from paycheque to paycheque. When I opened my utility bill, it ... led to tears. I would have to remove money from each of the bills just so I could pay some ... and still have some money" left over "for groceries."

The cost of living is reducing women like Jennifer to tears. Does the Premier think it's acceptable that moms are forced to choose between putting food on the table for their kids and paying the hydro bill?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think Ontarians are coming to understand that what we inherited by way of an electricity system was old and unreliable, and that burning all that coal was just not helpful to our environment and to our health. So for seven years now we have been investing heavily in the rebuild of our electricity system. We're building something that is modern, reliable and clean. There are costs associated with that, and I know that my colleague understands that.

That's why we've gone ahead with a personal income tax cut: \$200 for that woman. If she finds herself in a low income bracket as a family, there's the Ontario child benefit, \$1,100 every year; a transition benefit for the

family, \$1,000 this year; and the new sales tax credit, \$260 per person for everybody in the family—that is permanent, every single year. Our new children's activity tax credit on top of that is \$50 per child, permanent every year and growing with the cost of living.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier often muses about what he can't do, but what's happening to families in this province is not inevitable; it's the result of the Premier's out-of-touch policies. Pam Carr from Kingston tells us how "our Hydro One bill doubled from June to July." Sergio Zholudev says that his hydro bill jumped more than \$100 to \$395 in August.

Families are increasingly overburdened. Does the Premier understand their plight at all, or does he just not care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to come back to our determined effort to modernize the tax system in Ontario. I want to take the opportunity again to thank all of the Conservative members of Parliament, Ontario senators and the Stephen Harper government for their unrelenting support in that regard.

I also want to remind my honourable colleague what the Centre for Policy Alternatives said. With respect to our package of reforms, they wrote, "The tax credits and tax cuts have the effect of offsetting the impact of the increased HST revenue for low-income and moderate-income families and of moderating the impact for other families." They called the report Not a Tax Grab After All. I think that says it all.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People see big, mind-boggling money spent on hydro—billions in sweetheart deals for companies like Samsung, millions in salaries for hydro bureaucrats, billions to start up a smart-meter system—yet real people are shocked by what they see when they open their bill. Ms. Sikora from Hamilton says this: "My hydro bill jumped from \$118.72 from the previous billing to \$216.36. That is almost \$100." When will the Premier come up with some relief for people like her?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to speak to my honourable colleague about the work that we continue to have under way with respect to hydro. I know she's not arguing that we don't need to rebuild our hydro system; I know that she's not arguing that there are no costs associated with that rebuild. We've already brought 8,000 megawatts of new generation online; 80% of that is new, clean electricity. That cost \$8 billion. We also rebuilt some 5,000 kilometres of transmission upgrades. That cost some \$4 billion. There are real costs associated with that.

We've worked really hard to offset those new costs, again, by reducing taxes for our families—the personal income tax cut, the transition benefit, the new sales tax credit, the children's activity tax credit, the northern Ontario energy credit and so many more.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Ontario families wonder how you can collect a health tax and still end up closing emergency rooms. People have waited for years to get their parents into long-term care and wonder why you boast about increasing health care spending by 45% while they get less service.

Dr. Jeff Turnbull, the new president of the Canadian Medical Association, appears to have answers. He is quoted as saying, "It's not a lack of resources.... It's a glaring failure of execution."

Was Dr. Turnbull talking about eHealth, local health integration networks, you and your health minister, or the hospitals the auditor looked at and is going to be reporting on in the days to come?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think an important question, really, that we need to address and my honourable colleagues need to come to grips with, in terms of explaining to Ontarians what it is that they would like to do, is, when they remove that \$3 billion annually from our health care budget, what will that translate into? Because last time it meant the closure of 28 hospitals. I juxtapose that against our building of 14 new hospitals in Ontario. They fired 6,200 nurses; we've hired over 10,000 nurses. We've also hired over 2,300 more doctors. When you take \$3 billion out of health care, I think we need to know what exactly will that mean to our health care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Ontario families certainly do have a choice: between Dalton McGuinty, who believes in his heart that they have an endless ability to pay, and Tim Hudak, who hears what the Canadian Medical Association says about waste.

Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs warned you about eHealth, but you did nothing about rich contracts to your Liberal friends until it was too late. We warned you about waste and secrecy at the LHINs, but you ignored us until the Ombudsman exposed the illegal meetings you let them hold. We warned you about the spending spree on Courtyard, Accenture and other Liberal-friendly consultants that continued at the hospitals.

Will the Premier show he has changed and reveal how many of the contracts to his friends at Courtyard and Accenture were sole-sourced before the auditor releases his report?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's one thing that I must say with respect to consultants: When we came into office, the use of consultants was a practice that was rampant in the government. We have a tremendous amount of faith in our public servants. They are capable, and we rely on them.

We have, in fact, reduced government-wide use of consultants by more than 54% since 2003. In just the last year alone, the use of consultants is down by 25%; travel expenses are down by 23%; government advertising spending is down 20%. Again, we're comparing that to

the previous Conservative government. Costs have gone up; notwithstanding that, consultants are down 25%, travel expenses are down 23%, government advertising is down 20%.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Premier: This government has once again caved in to the insurance lobby with deep cuts to benefits for auto accident victims. Rehab and medical benefits have been cut in half. The auto insurance industry is going to pocket millions of dollars in claim savings, while individuals are going to be left unprotected and vulnerable. Why does this government insist on favouring more profits for powerful financial interests at the expense of Canadians and Ontarians?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government wants to build on its record of bringing down premiums and keeping them lower for all Ontarians.

The member opposite conveniently ignores the facts. The facts are that for seven years auto insurance rates came down. We moved with 41 recommendations to end fraud and abuse in the system, to give consumers more choices, to build in security for consumers so that they could rest assured that they'd get better insurance at a reasonable cost.

Under the NDP government, premiums went up; under the Conservative government, they went up 53% in two years. Neither one of those parties gets it. This is about balance, it's about finding the right answer, and most of all it's about protecting consumers from fraud and abuse in the insurance system. We'll put our record up against yours, sir, any day of the week.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Let's see: Higher premiums, reduced benefits—that's not much of a choice for insured automobile drivers.

The reality is that accident victims are going to end up looking for treatment in the public health care system and then they're going to be amazed to find that services like chiropractic have been delisted by this same government. As a result, these victims are going to be forced to pay out of pocket, and all of this at a time of rising insurance premiums.

Why has this government once again caved in to the powerful auto insurance lobby and, in the course of doing so, betrayed innocent victims and Ontario's drivers?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Under that member's government, auto insurance premiums went up 20%. Under their plan, we would have had 23,000 new bureaucrats working in the public auto insurance sector.

Quite frankly, I watched that member some 22 years ago do a 36-hour—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think you should stop that stuff.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I watched him do a 36-hour filibuster in favour of public auto insurance. He stood

and he did it with great passion. And what did he do, when given the chance and that party came to office? They didn't do it. What did they do? They raised auto insurance premiums.

We are fighting fraud in the system, giving consumers more choice and building on the success we've had in keeping auto insurance premiums down. This government is all about protecting consumers with a wise and well-thought-out package of insurance reforms that will give them enhanced protection and less fraud in their system.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, full-day kindergarten has recently begun in schools across the province with 35,000 students in over 1,400 classes, and almost 600 schools across the province will offer full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.

The full-day kindergarten program has seen widespread support, but the member from Nepean–Carleton and her caucus colleagues showed opposition to the plan. The member said, “When I asked the minister if it was still possible for children to go half-day, I was told by Minister Dombrowsky that, ‘no,’ there wouldn't be choice....”

Can the minister tell this House about her plan, whether she is keeping the choice for families or has cancelled it?

1110

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to talk about our government's initiative that has 35,000 four- and five-year-olds in the province of Ontario attending full-day kindergarten this year. This is a great program.

I can say that with respect to parents' choice and the opportunities that they have, the law has not changed. It has always been the law in the province of Ontario that children are not required to be in school until they are the age of six. That has not changed. There continues to be a choice for parents and families.

When I was at the member's riding last week, I met a parent who had a child in the classroom. I asked about her child: Was she going to be attending? The mother said that because the child is a little younger, she will be attending on Fridays only for the first little while, until the youngster gets used to it. So I commend schools that are working with families—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you, Minister. My second question is looking at extended care. This government led the people of Ontario to believe that extended care was going to be available at all the schools that were offering full-day kindergarten. However, reports say that the take-up of extended care is lower than expected across the province. Would the minister tell us why the number is

lower and why the extended care is not being offered at all the schools that offer full-day learning?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: We know that there's a great deal of excitement about the wraparound programs that have been available in some schools and are now coming onstream in others. What we have said with our legislation is that it is enabling legislation. So in those communities where we have full-day kindergarten parents have the opportunity, and where there are sufficient numbers boards will be required to provide that service.

This is the first program of its kind anywhere in the world. We know that as more and more families are availing themselves of this service it will spread to communities right across our province. It is a wonderful initiative where we have an early childhood educator and a teacher with children for an entire day, from 7 in the morning until 6 at night. We are just beginning and we're very pleased with what parents have told us and how they—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I hope that wasn't for the injury.

My question is for the Premier. Not only was this the hottest summer on record, Premier, but it was Dalton McGuinty's sneakiest summer on record. You were the first leader to use one greedy tax grab as cover for another greedy tax grab when you tried to sneak in eco taxes on 9,000 new products on the same day as the HST came into effect. When you got caught in the eco tax fiasco you just shrugged and said you were still learning. Did you mean you're learning that Ontario families don't have an infinite ability to pay or learning how to sneak tax grabs past them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of the Environment. It's his first time up.

Hon. John Wilkinson: And I'm delighted to rise to answer the question as the Minister of the Environment.

I say to my colleague opposite that I've had an opportunity to talk to my constituents, and they tell me increasingly that they want to ensure that hazardous materials in their house never get into the landfill. That is our objective and I think we should all agree to that: that it is so important that we keep hazardous materials out of our landfills.

What the consumers have told us is that they want to have a program that's easy to understand so they can do the right thing. I'm convinced, as the Minister of the Environment, that people do want to do the right thing. That's why we're in the midst of a review, and I can assure the member opposite that I'll be sharing with the House the fruits of that review after I speak to my colleagues about it. But we will ensure that hazardous material stays out of our landfill, and I would hope that

you would join us in agreeing that that is the most important consideration.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Déjà vu from that minister if ever there was one.

Cabinet documents and leaks reveal that Dalton McGuinty has been working at being sneaky for some time. One leak revealed that it was Dalton McGuinty, not the hapless Minister Gerretsen, who was pushing eco taxes over the objections of the cabinet. Cabinet records reveal that Dalton McGuinty tried to slip the secret G20 law through the same meeting where everyone was pre-occupied with regulatory changes for the greedy HST tax grab. Soon Dalton McGuinty was on a roll, with the Ombudsman revealing that LHINs hold secret illegal meetings and the OPP revealing how busy they were raiding ministries and agencies.

Why is Dalton McGuinty so intent on tax grabs and experiments with tax dollars that he'd rather sneak them in than explain them to the hard-working Ontario families who have to pay for them?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a second, please. Order. On a number of occasions I allowed language that should be unparliamentary, and I would just ask our own member to withdraw the word that he used. I will not be allowing it to be used in the future. Please stand.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: This government will never stop protecting our environment—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Lanark. Thank you.

Hon. John Wilkinson: For greater emphasis, this government will never stop protecting our environment for our children and our grandchildren. I can't think of anything that our parents are more concerned about than ensuring that we have a safe environment. We want to leave a safer environment.

At our ministry, we protect the air, the land and our water each and every day. We will continue to build on a strong legacy. We inherited a system where clean water wasn't important, where clean air wasn't important and where people were dumping things in the landfills that should never have been there. We're going to continue to do our work and make sure that we are protecting the environment for our children and our grandchildren. Surely to God, all of us should be able to agree on that.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. Ontario parents are paying an indirect education tax of \$600 million in the form of fundraising and user fees. This tax is being used for items that include classroom supplies, library books, renovations and capital projects, and you have allowed this to go on for years.

When will the government issue a clear directive to school boards, that fundraising is not to be used for items that should be provided by the Ministry of Education?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I've made it very clear, and I've restated and reminded boards as recently as two weeks ago, when this item came into the media, that at no time should students in the province of Ontario be required to pay fees for any item, any article that relates to their program.

I think it is important as well to put some context on the number that was put out with respect to fundraising. We know in our schools that there are many reasons why they raise funds, and I think that it's inaccurate to suggest that the total aggregate number that the member cited in his question is driven back into the schools. In fact, much of it is charity; much of it is fundraising for school trips.

Mr. Paul Miller: Charity?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: And when I say charity, absolutely. I say that many children in our schools, for example, most recently—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, I just want you to know that People for Education did their study as we did. We came up with the same numbers. If you're saying that People for Education doesn't know what they're saying or doing, that's fine, but you might want to look at their study and you might want to ask us for ours.

You ought to know that individual schools are able to raise anything from zero dollars to \$200,000. Our calculations show the school boards raise on average about \$341 per student, with a range going from as low as \$169 to a high of \$744 per student. This dependence on fees and fundraising has created a system of haves and have-nots.

Minister, as you move towards an American-style education system and more and more schools become dependent on private money, what are you going to do for the have-not schools?

1120

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I would say to the honourable member that we have raised spending in education by 40% and that every student in the province of Ontario is funded with the same number of dollars, with the exception of those students in rural and northern communities. Where there are exceptions that need to be supported, we drive dollars to those issues.

With respect to fees and fundraising, we have developed draft guidelines, working with our partners. The draft guidelines for fees are on our website. The ones for fundraising will be out in the new year.

I can say, as well, that there are many school initiatives where funds are raised to support local community events and endeavours, where students raise funds for school trips. We want to look at how dollars are raised in our school communities and, yes, we do want to work with parents and ask them how and what they think is appropriate to support in our schools.

What I can say is that there has been unprecedented investment—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Mario Sergio: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Minister, with the recession that has so badly affected many Ontarians, a number of people are returning to school to increase their level of education or train for a new skilled trade. More and more Ontarians recognize that it is imperative that they have the skills and education to compete for the best jobs. Many reports suggest that seven out of 10 new jobs in the next decade will require post-secondary education or training.

In order to return to school, many students will need to take out student loans to pay for their education. Minister, students navigating loan programs spend more time figuring out how they will pay for their education and less time actually studying. They are the next generation who will support and contribute to our economy, and we'll be relying on them to keep Ontario strong and competitive.

Hon. John Milloy: I think it's very timely, at the start of the school year, that we talk about some of the changes that have taken place in post-secondary education across the province. Indeed, I've had an opportunity to meet with students across the province over the last few weeks to talk about these changes, particularly in the area of student assistance.

Not only has this government made significant financial changes to OSAP, we've also made some administrative changes to eliminate much of the red tape associated with the OSAP process. For example, there is the student access guarantee, which mandates colleges and universities to provide additional funding to high-needs students in programs that have additional costs. In the past, in many cases, students had to fill out separate application forms. It's now automatic under the OSAP system.

At the same time, two of our other programs, the Ontario access grant and distance grant, again, supplementary—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Mario Sergio: We need more than a streamlined OSAP application process to help these students with their studies. I had parents in my area contacting me and asking about the government's plans for making post-secondary education more affordable for their children, parents who want to give their children the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education.

Parents realize how important it is for the future prosperity of their children's lives to go on to college and university. York University, in my riding, is one of the largest universities in Ontario. I need to be able to say with pride, when students and parents come to speak to

me, that, yes, this government does care about Ontarians and their families. I need to reassure parents that their children will have the same opportunities they have had with post-secondary education.

Minister, can you please tell us—tell me, so I can tell these families when they ask how this government—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: We listened to the students of Ontario and made significant new investments in OSAP. In fact, the most recent budget contained \$81 million in additional funding for the OSAP program.

Among the changes that we made to make the program more generous, we are providing more assistance for tuition, living costs, books, supplies and equipment; allowing students to keep more of the money they earn from part-time jobs; providing a no-interest, no-payment period on student loans for six months after graduation; providing additional support for married students and students with children; introducing a new grant for part-time students; and also, perhaps most importantly, offering students a more flexible and income-sensitive repayment program. Under this new program, no borrower will be asked to pay more than 20% of their family income toward student loans, and after 15 years, or 10 years for borrowers with a permanent—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. This summer, the Premier said his government has been sloppy and messy, particularly with respect to his failed and greedy eco tax grab.

The Premier used to say, “‘Public hearings’; those two words go together nicely if you believe in true democracy.” But without listening to northern Ontario families, you are pushing ahead with Bill 191, which freezes development in all of northern Ontario.

Your apology for the eco tax fiasco made it appear that you had learned and that you were ready to make changes. Why, Premier, are you still pressing your own priorities rather than the priorities of northern Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I’m really pleased to answer this question.

I want to welcome all the chiefs who join us today. I’ve had an opportunity to visit many of their communities. This summer, I got to visit many communities, and I appreciate the hospitality and all the advice that they provided—particularly Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who provided a lot of recommendations that we will be looking at in clause-by-clause consideration today. His advice was invaluable in making sure that we provided guidance on how we would move forward with the Far North Act.

It’s a key commitment of our government, and it’s going to be part of our Open Ontario plan. It’s a particu-

larly historic piece of legislation, and I look forward to having those discussions later on this afternoon. It’s about working with First Nations communities, allowing them to direct land use planning in the north and having respect for the land that they call their home.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Premier: You’ve failed to offer any solutions for this failed and abject leadership that led to the cancellation of public hearings on the Far North Act. Now you intend to ram a bill through this House that cuts off 50% of northern Ontario from development.

The Ontario PC caucus is standing up for northern Ontario, and today we will call for unanimous consent for public hearings on Bill 191. I know Bill 191 is making your back bench nervous; just turn around and ask. Ontario’s First Nations are here in the House today asking for their voices to be heard.

Premier, will your government vote to hold public hearings and let those most hurt by your failed leadership have a say in the Far North?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: When it comes to developing the Far North, they just don’t get it. They don’t understand that this is about protecting the environment; this is about looking for a balance.

I have great confidence in this piece of legislation. I believe it is legislation that will provide the resources and the capacity for Far North communities to participate in land use planning. In fact, just last week, we announced \$10 million of additional funding that will go to capacity- and skills-based training, allowing the communities to participate in land use planning.

It’s the right thing to do. It’s about giving authority to First Nations communities to land use plan. They will have the authority. They will have the final approval on land use planning that they direct.

There are lots of communities in the Far North that need this. They have told me—the elders, the youth, the chiefs—that they are in favour of development. This gives them the tools to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the Minister of Natural Resources on the same issue: The Premier made a commitment last spring with NAN when they met at the Delta Chelsea hotel, and that was that this government would not go forward with amendments, or go forward in any way, shape or form, on Bill 191 without the consent of First Nations. It’s clear that there is not a First Nation in the Far North that wants your legislation. They’re here today, the grand chiefs and chiefs from various communities, to say, “No, put this on hold.”

Are you going to hold the commitment of the Premier and not go forward with this legislation, as promised by him to First Nations last year?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I have visited about eight Far North communities this summer, and I was disappointed when the standing committee wasn't able to visit the Far North, but it became an opportunity for me to visit those communities first-hand. I was able to spend whole days in communities and look at the land use planning that a lot of communities have already done. We have some communities that are far into the process and some that are just beginning that process.

We have a lot of youth who need skills-based training. They need the dollars; they need the capacity. We can put our head in the sand, or we can understand that there is development happening in the Far North today.

We have a chromite deposit that we've discovered in the Far North, and the world is watching what we do. We need to do land use planning in the north similar to the way we do it in the south. We need to give the Far North communities the resources to move forward so we can protect the environment and find a balance on land use planning in the north.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the only one with its head in the sand is the Liberal government when it comes to this issue. It is clear: Each and every community residing in the Far North, in the area that you're trying to affect by this act, has sent you resolutions by band council. They've had resolutions sent to your office and to the Premier's office, along with petitions, saying, "Stop this process." They want to ensure that, in the end, if an act does come forward, it is one that will meet with their consent.

I ask you again, will you do the right thing and stop this legislation in its tracks and allow the First Nations to do what needs to be done so that we can actually get it right?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I guess I want to convince everybody today, if I could, that this is just the beginning of the conversation. I think we've had conversations for the last two years about this legislation. We've met with communities that want to do land use planning. We continue to want to have that conversation, but it is a little disheartening—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. We have guests here who want to hear the answer.

Minister.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Bill 191 represents a change in the working relationship between First Nations and Ontario in the Far North. If passed, this bill will provide a new approach to land use planning, one of co-operation and joint responsibility. It's about community-land-based planning that is initiated by a First Nations community, and will have final approval, should it be approved.

That's historic in the way that we have approached this in the past. It's based on advice that we received from chiefs in the Far North. I was listening to them. We

continue to listen to them. This is a dialogue. This is not the end of the process; this is just the beginning.

CANADIAN CENSUS

RECENSEMENT CANADIEN

Mr. Bob Delaney: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, this summer, the federal government announced that they would eliminate the mandatory long-form census. The federal government's decision has resulted in a loud outcry from individuals in western Mississauga and across Ontario.

For years, community and social services groups have depended on the long census information to develop programs to serve their measurable population segments. Mississauga–Streetsville social service providers such as the Peel Multicultural Council have relied on the long-form census to identify high-needs immigrant communities that require services in such languages as Urdu, Punjabi, Dari, Bengali, Russian, Spanish and Romanian in a culturally appropriate manner.

Would the minister tell the House how the federal government's decision to end the long-form census will hurt Ontario's ability to serve our newcomers?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm very concerned that the federal government is proceeding to eliminate the long-form census, particularly without consulting with the Ontario government, Ontarians and the thousands of organizations that depend on the census data. By ending the long-form census, Ontario will no longer have information about newcomers' place of birth, their ethnicity, their education or their income levels. Without reliable, accurate information of this sort, captured only by the long-form census, Ontario will be less able to develop and deliver programs that help our newcomers succeed.

On behalf of all Ontarians, and particularly Ontario's newcomers, I once again urge the federal government to reconsider this ill-advised decision to end the long-form census. We need to count our newcomers so that they can count on us. When our newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M. Bob Delaney: La décision du gouvernement fédéral affecte toutes les communautés, les nouveaux arrivants comme les francophones. Dans ma circonscription, j'ai reçu plusieurs messages des francophones qui s'inquiètent et qui m'ont demandé la position de notre gouvernement sur cette question. Je sais que cette inquiétude est partagée par d'autres francophones partout en Ontario.

Quelle est la position de notre province et de notre gouvernement concernant l'annonce du gouvernement fédéral? Quel est le risque pour les résidents de Streetsville, Lisgar, Meadowvale et toutes les communautés partout en Ontario?

L'hon. Eric Hoskins: Je réfère la question à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Premièrement, je voudrais remercier le député de Mississauga–Streetsville

pour sa question. Je partage vraiment l'inquiétude de ses commettants. En plus, un article dans le *Globe and Mail* du 9 septembre confirmait que Statistique Canada pense qu'un recensement volontaire sera source d'erreurs. Je suis donc surprise et inquiète de la décision du gouvernement fédéral, moi aussi.

Par exemple, l'Ontario a adopté en 2009 une définition plus inclusive de « francophone » dans le but d'inclure les nouveaux arrivants dont le français est la langue d'intégration. Cette définition dépend des réponses au formulaire long du recensement. On ne pourra plus se fier aux résultats de cette enquête pour estimer précisément le nombre de francophones en Ontario. Or, ces statistiques permettent d'évaluer les besoins de—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Even before you sprung eco taxes and the HST on Ontario families on the same day, you had another trick up your sleeve: Your secret G20 law caught everyone by surprise, and of course we all know now that you made a major blunder. The regulation was used to arrest people who were walking on the sidewalk outside the security fence for the conference. It was passed while this House was still sitting, but you didn't make a peep about it. We still don't know why you tried to sneak it past us. What made you think that you can get away with this?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the member that I ruled on that word earlier. Please withdraw the comment.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I withdraw it.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would hope the member would recognize that, on that particular day—because I heard his leader talking about the police and being very supportive of what happened on that day. That was an initial reaction. They were confronted with a very, very difficult circumstance on that particular day. You will recall that—

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He doesn't want an answer.

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Several members are interjecting over there. I'm trying to answer my good friend's excellent question. He has good questions.

I want to say to the member that it was a very difficult day. Everyone recognizes what a difficult day it was. He would know that the Ombudsman is conducting an investigation into this matter, and we will await his results and the results of two other reviews of these circumstances that are taking place at the present time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to take the opportunity today to welcome to the chamber Sarah Cannon and Gaby Wess, from Parents for Children's Mental Health. Sarah was the first person to present to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It's her testimony, along with that of many others, that contributed to the final recommendations. They've joined us today to witness the tabling of the final report from the committee. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And a special welcome to my constituent Gaby as well.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to raise awareness of a private member's bill that we will be debating on Thursday. The bill would amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to include at least a metre-wide paved shoulder on designated provincial highways when they are repaved. This amendment will improve public safety and promote a healthier means of transportation and activity for the public.

In my press conference last week, Eleanor McMahon, founder of Share the Road Cycling Coalition, brought the tragic death of her husband to our attention. These types of accidents can be prevented. In Australia, where shoulders have been paved, such accidents have declined significantly.

Paved shoulders would have positive benefits on health, safety and the environment. The public will be encouraged to take active transportation without fear. Cyclists, runners and walkers will all enjoy greater safety, as will motorists. There are also cost savings related to road maintenance.

Since hosting a press conference last week, I've received tremendous public support and interest in my private member's bill. In addition, I have support and encouragement from Dr. Charles Gardner, chief medical officer of health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit; Carol Craig, of the nutrition and physical activity action team, Sudbury and District Health Unit; the Ontario Road Builders' Association; Kristi MacDonald, from the Bike Shop in Gravenhurst; Dan Andrews, from Trans Canada Trail Ontario; and Margaret Casey, on behalf of Muskoka Trails Council.

I ask all members to support my "pave the shoulders" private member's bill this Thursday.

ROSH HASHANAH

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm pleased today to extend my warmest wishes to all Ontarians observing Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, especially to the many

Jewish families and dear friends in my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence.

In Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah means “head of the year.” It is a time for both celebration and repentance, and marks one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar.

There are a number of customary traditions followed by those observing Rosh Hashanah. Observers listen for the shofar, or ram’s horn, which serves as a reminder of the importance of this holiday and marking the time for reflection.

The holiday includes traditional foods, such as apples and honey, to represent hope for a sweet new year. The circular shape of challah, bread baked into braids, symbolizes the continuation of life.

Ontario has been most fortunate to have had so many people of the Jewish faith live in our communities. Their contributions to all aspects of our life have enriched our province enormously.

Rosh Hashanah is a time to examine one’s life, repenting of any wrongs in the previous year, and for making amends. It is also a time to rejoice in the creation of the world and celebrate God’s compassion and mercy. For many, it is a time for renewal, of making peace and of making resolutions for the year ahead.

To all those observing Rosh Hashanah, L’Shana Tova. May you have a sweet new year filled with health, happiness and good fortune.

DAVID JOHNSTON

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to Canada’s next Governor General, David Johnston. This appointment is confirmation of his distinguished record of public service and his excellence in leadership.

As David leaves his position as president of the University of Waterloo after 11 years at the helm, I look back at those years with joy at all his successes but also sadness that he will no longer be involved in our university and community. We have been blessed by his presence, and he has given us countless reasons to celebrate. Tomorrow, we will celebrate and gather to thank him.

One of David’s most remarkable personal attributes is that he is an enthusiastic and energetic visionary who has successfully challenged all of us, whether at the university or in the region of Waterloo, to dream big, to raise our expectations of what is possible and to work in co-operation to achieve our goals. Under his leadership, the university experienced historic accomplishments, such as the establishment of the research and technology park, the school of pharmacy, the Institute for Quantum Computing and the health sciences centre.

In closing, on behalf of everyone in the region of Waterloo, I want to express my sincere appreciation to David. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for being our chief barn-raiser and cheerleader. Thank you for making Waterloo a better place to live and prosper.

Congratulations and warmest wishes to you and Sharon, your daughters and grandchildren as you embark on this new journey as our Governor General.

CAPITAL PRIDE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Welcome back, to all the members, to the Legislature.

It is my great honour today to recognize the 25th anniversary of the pride festival in our nation’s capital, Ottawa. From August 20 to 29 of this year, Capital Pride and the GLBTTQ community of Ottawa-Gatineau hosted a rainbow of events primarily located in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

Ottawa’s most colourful parade attracts more than 35,000 spectators and participants annually, and this year was no different. The parade runs down Wellington Street, past the Supreme Court and Parliament Hill, and ends at Ottawa city hall for the Capital Pride community fair.

For a parade which highlights equality and the diversity of our communities, it’s remarkable, when you pass by the Supreme Court and Parliament Hill, how blessed we are in the great country we live in, right here in Canada.

In Ottawa, the first gay pride celebration was organized in 1986 by GO, Gays of Ottawa. In 1989, the pride celebration became a week of activities, dances, exhibits, films, sporting events and receptions. Three hundred people attended the first parade and picnic. The then mayor of the city of Ottawa, Jim Durrell, proclaimed Equality Day.

In 1997 and 1998 respectively, Regional Chair Bob Chiarelli, now the Minister of Infrastructure, and then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien issued a proclamation supporting the festival. The year 2002’s parade events exceeded all expectations: 55,000 people attended the parade and the street party. The parade has been going since then.

Congratulations to all organizers for their hard work.

PEACE RANCH

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to congratulate Peace Ranch on their 20th anniversary.

Peace Ranch is a beautiful heritage farm on 26 acres in Caledon. Using social and recreational rehabilitation programs through horticultural and animal-assisted therapies, Peace Ranch is dedicated to providing residential and day programs for individuals struggling to manage a serious mental illness and co-occurring addiction challenges.

Peace Ranch embraces the principles of hope, empowerment, choice and responsibility. Residents and day-program participants work on the farm and in the gardens and, through this, regain strength and dignity in their lives. The farming program has recently been expanded with the launch of Eeyore’s Market Garden.

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I've visited Peace Ranch on many occasions and have seen first-hand the wonderful work they are doing to treat individuals with a mental illness. I want to take this opportunity to thank executive director Eric Tripp-McKay and his staff, the board of directors and the many other volunteers who make such an important contribution to improving the lives of those who live and participate in programs at Peace Ranch.

The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions gave us a unique opportunity to focus the Legislature's attention on mental health and addictions issues. I urge all members to support our recommendations so that we can improve the lives of Ontarians living with a mental illness.

Peace Ranch is a bright light in a very fractured mental health system. I offer my congratulations to Peace Ranch on their 20th anniversary and wish them many more years of success.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This summer, we've been witness to a variety of severe weather events around the world that speak to the changing climate. In Russia, an unprecedented heat wave and drought have led to the loss of almost a third of their wheat crop. Toxic air in Moscow led to the morgues overflowing. In Pakistan, almost 14 million people have been displaced by unprecedented rains and flooding. In China, flooding and landslides had impacts in the billions of dollars. Climate scientists say that it's very clear that these incidents are consistent with the kind of weather events you get in a warming world.

The McGuinty government's climate plan was weak to begin with. The clear failure to even meet its own weak targets is simply immoral. The McGuinty government, as all other governments, has a duty to act decisively and recognize the reality of what's going on in the world. There is no more pressing task facing the world and this province today.

EDUCATION

ÉDUCATION

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: It's good to be back and to see so many enthusiastic faces in this Legislature today. I think we share the excitement felt by students who have also started back to school. I'm sure that most of us have heard positive feedback from parents about the McGuinty government's full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds.

Durant les dernières années, nous avons investi davantage dans le domaine de l'éducation. Plusieurs études ont été menées afin d'identifier les stratégies qui visent à maximiser le plein potentiel de chaque élève.

Nous remarquons dans nos écoles ontariennes l'excellence en éducation. Selon une étude complétée par le D^r Pascal, le gouvernement McGuinty offre main-

tenant une éducation à plein temps dès l'âge de quatre ans dans plus de 600 écoles en Ontario. Cette initiative a pour objectif de développer des élèves autonomes et responsables dès leur arrivée en première année, et aussi devenir des citoyens engagés qui contribueront à l'économie de notre province.

As the grandfather of three young children, I am very encouraged by the positive steps our government is taking in education.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a fail-proof investment, and I assure you this investment is a sure thing.

First, some investment basics: Don't choose to invest in something; choose to invest for something. Invest for security, for returns, for growth.

Thanks to the McGuinty government's commitment to education, we have invested for security, returns, growth and more. We have invested for higher literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and citizenship. We have invested for smaller class sizes that maximize the positive impact made by our outstanding teachers and early childhood educators. We have invested for safer and more welcoming schools, healthier students and more engaged, worry-free parents. We have invested for student achievement through new and innovative programs, programs that give our students a head start and a leg up. We have invested for the skilled workforce Ontario needs, resulting in higher family incomes, improved health and reduced social services costs. We have invested for success—which our students are realizing each day in the classroom and taking with them to the workforce.

My riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock is home to more than 40 schools represented by five different school boards. In my riding, we're seeing security, returns, growth and more. So you can see that this investment is indeed a sure thing, and you can see how honoured I am to be part of a government that invests in a strong, publicly funded education system that is the foundation for Ontario's power and prosperity.

EDUCATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: Since my first election in 2003, I've had the privilege of visiting with students in western Mississauga in their schools. I'm proud of the improvements made in classrooms and in the lives of students in Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar.

Before our government was elected, it was common to see 35 kids in a grade 1 classroom. Strikes interrupted day-to-day learning and prevented students from participating in extracurricular activities that foster teamwork and build confidence in our kids. One in three students was not graduating from high school, and standardized test scores were too low to be competitive in the 21st century. That was then.

Today, seven years later, nearly all grade 1 classrooms in Meadowvale, Streetsville and Lisgar have 20 students or less; student achievement has improved; standardized test scores have been up every year; and I shake hands with more and more high school graduates every fall and every spring at commencement ceremonies.

Not a single school day has been lost to a strike in almost eight years. The full-day learning program started at Plowman's Park Public School in Meadowvale this fall, and our kids now get the best start possible.

Good schools are a commitment to our future, and Ontario's achievements in education represent a bright future for our province.

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment the following reports were tabled: on June 15, 2010, the 2009-10 annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario; on June 17, 2010, the 2009-10 annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner; on July 27, 2010, a special report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario entitled Getting it Right: Paying for the Management of Household Hazardous Wastes; on August 10, 2010, from the Ombudsman of Ontario, a report regarding the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator was pleased to assent to certain bills in his office on June 8, 2010.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): An Act to regulate retirement homes / Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

An Act to revive 962 Bloor Street West Limited.

An Act to revive the Durham Region Classic Mustang Club.

An Act to revive Deepa Gas Limited.

An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.

An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

M. Shafiq Qadri: Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la politique sociale et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption, and send it to you by way of page Henry.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.
1320

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 1, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Pursuant to the order of the House dated February 24, 2009, I beg leave to present the final report from the Select Committee on Mental Health

and Addictions entitled Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians. I move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Flynn presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you. I'm especially proud of this report and I think that all members of our committee are. The final report of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians, is the culmination of an intensive 18-month process. The committee was comprised of members from all three political parties, and I know all those members are especially proud of how they worked in a non-partisan way.

From February 2009 to August 2010, the committee heard the testimony of more than 230 individuals and organizations, received more than 300 written submissions and travelled across the province. We visited communities. We visited hospitals and mental health and addictions agencies. As a result of those visits, the committee concluded that a major transformation of Ontarians' mental health and addictions system is needed and has brought forward 23 recommendations to make this happen.

The members of the select committee strongly encourage the Legislature to endorse the recommendations found therein and advocate for their implementation.

We're joined today by some of the staff members who assisted in this: Elaine Campbell, Carrie Hull and, of course, Susan Sourial.

It has been an exceptional experience, one that I'm especially proud to be part of. I hope it does make a difference for some of the people who have joined us today in the chamber, especially from the Parents for Children's Mental Health.

I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Flynn has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TAX CREDIT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR LES ACTIVITÉS DES ENFANTS

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit / Projet de loi 99, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour les activités des enfants.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

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

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Norm Miller: This bill will be debated this Thursday in private members' time. The bill amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act by requiring the Minister of Transportation to construct paved shoulders on prescribed highways. The paved shoulders must extend at least one metre from the roadway of the highway and the construction must occur when the highway or a portion it is significantly repaved or resurfaced.

I think this will be a benefit for cyclists; it will be safer for cyclists to ride. It will also be a benefit for automobile drivers to have that extra paved shoulder.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, Mr. Sorbara be removed from the order of precedence for private members' public business and ballot item 32 be assumed by Ms. Jaczek; and that Mr. Arthurs and Mr. Rinaldi exchange places in the order of precedence such that Mr. Rinaldi assumes ballot item 28 and Mr. Arthurs assumes ballot item 37; and that Mr. Chudleigh and Mr. Bailey exchange places in the order of precedence such that Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item 29 and Mr. Chudleigh assumes ballot item 34; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 28, 29, 34 and 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the House schedule.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 16, 2010, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, September 22, 2010.

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

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward another motion without notice regarding the House schedule.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, I think this is the one that you were expecting before.

I move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a)(i), the spring sessional period of 2011 shall commence on Tuesday, February 22, 2011.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Motions?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to rescind the government's time allocation motion on Bill 191 and allow for public consultations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Yakabuski seeks unanimous consent of the House. Agreed? I'm afraid I heard a no.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TAX CREDIT

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'm pleased to stand today in the House for the introduction of the Children's Activity Tax Credit Act, 2010. This proposed act contains amendments to the Taxation Act, 2007, to implement a new permanent tax credit for Ontario families.

We know that children benefit immensely from a diversity of experiences and opportunities. Our government wants to make it easier for parents to give their kids these opportunities by saving families money and helping with their budgets. The children's activity tax credit would help parents with the cost of enrolling their children in activities that encourage them to be healthy and active.

Under our proposed tax credit, parents and guardians would be able to claim up to \$500 in eligible expenses for a credit of \$50 per child under 16 years of age or \$100 for a child with a disability under age 18.

1330

The tax credit builds on the federal children's fitness tax credit but is different in two significant ways. First, our children's activity tax credit would be refundable, meaning that low-income parents who pay little or no income tax would also be able to benefit, unlike the federal tax benefit. All Ontario parents could claim the tax credit on their annual income tax returns, beginning with the 2010 tax year. Any eligible expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2010, would qualify.

Secondly, the Ontario tax credit would cover a wide range of activities, not just sports. These activities include music, dance and art classes, as well as activities with a substantial focus on wilderness and the natural environment. Other activities include language instruction, enrichment or tutoring in academic subjects, and activities with a focus on helping children develop and use intellectual or interpersonal skills.

The criteria for fitness activities would be the same as for the federal children's fitness tax credit. The activities would require a significant amount of physical activity that contributes to cardio-respiratory endurance and to one or more of the following: muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and balance.

To be eligible for the credit, both fitness and non-fitness activities would have to be supervised and suitable for children. Furthermore, unlike the federal credit, the maximum amounts that may be claimed for the credit would be indexed to rise annually with the cost of living.

This new permanent tax credit would put \$75 million each year back into the pockets of Ontario parents and would benefit more than 1.8 million children in about 1.1 million Ontario families.

This measure directly supports our Open Ontario plan by helping children stay healthy, active and productive so they can reach their full potential. This tax credit is the

right thing to do for our kids, our economy and Ontario. I ask the honourable members to support this legislation so we can move forward to help Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have a chance to respond to this new bill that was just introduced by the Minister of Finance, the Children's Activity Tax Credit Act, 2010. My response is that the government takes with one hand and then they give a little back with the other hand, but they've been doing a lot more taking than giving over the last number of years.

They're talking about a \$50 tax credit. Well, let's look at some of the costs that have increased for families in the province of Ontario—of course the big one, most recently, being the HST. They're going to be paying that 8% additional tax on the memberships, on hockey fees, on figure skating fees, soccer fees, on the gas used to drive to the soccer field or the hockey arena—and having had three kids who played hockey, I can tell you that we did an awful lot of driving around. I would suggest that that's going to be far more than the \$50 amount that the government is talking about now giving back.

You look at all the various ways this government has made things more expensive for Ontario families: the HST—I've mentioned that one—that's on your hydro bills and gas bill; most recently, the same day that came in, the eco fees; the big one a couple of years back, the health tax, which was a huge, huge tax increase for families; and recently, as of September 1, of course, the government made changes to auto insurance, so now you pay the same or more and get less coverage. These are all additional costs for Ontario families, and now we find for kids in sporting activities, they're going to be getting \$50 back.

This seems to be a favourite technique of the government. They recently had the northern Ontario energy credit, and they also had cheques going out in the mail with the HST rebate. With that one maybe it's part of their political strategy, because with the HST cheques there was also a nice letter from the Premier outlining all the supposed benefits of the policy. I recall that it listed off a whole bunch of things with the cheque mailed out to people. I would wonder, when this one is refundable and they're going to be getting a cheque, is there going to be another political letter going along with it, a message, with the upcoming election happening next year? I would be interested to know that.

When they passed the HST just last year, coming into effect July 1, why didn't they just exempt children's sporting activities? I know we had gyms coming around to the finance committee, asking if they could be exempt. They didn't exempt them, but then they exempted the under-\$4 purchases at Tim Horton's, probably because there was more political push-back on that one. They're exempting doughnuts and coffee but taxing sporting memberships under the HST.

Here we have this bill coming through. It's a similar pattern to others. There will probably be a cheque in the mail with a political message, as I mentioned to you.

That's what happened with the HST cheques, and in that message, they were talking about how they were going to create all kinds of jobs. Well, since the HST has come into effect, we have actually lost jobs in Ontario—private sector jobs. That message hasn't exactly been correct to this point.

It was just introduced now. We'll have a chance to look at it. I don't think there will be that much. It's a fairly specific bill. I think it's more about politics than anything else. Of course, families will look forward to getting any money they can back from this government because they have been paying so much more in so many different ways under the McGuinty government—as I say, there's a long list of different things they've had to pay more for—and now they will be getting a tiny bit back with a nice political message, I'm sure, saying all the wonderful things that the McGuinty government is doing for them.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's quite amazing to me. I'm surprised there isn't a brass band out front, that there aren't banners flying, that balloons have not been released that at last the millennium has been properly recognized. This is a pittance. This is an action by a finance minister who has taken money here, there and everywhere from the people of this province and, frankly, has decided to give them back a small, shiny rhinestone, something that gleams, something that you can go out and say, "We're doing something for kids," but in fact doesn't deliver, doesn't act on the big issues that parents and children are wrestling with every day.

My colleague Mr. Howard Hampton, just quickly looking at what he pays out now in expenses for his children to engage in hockey—the extra cost of the HST will more than eat up any of this refund. Parents who take their kids to soccer are going to look at HST increases in their costs. That will eat this up. A friend of mine teaches music in downtown Toronto in a school. In the school that she's teaching in, when an instrument breaks, that instrument gets moved out of the band because they can't get money to keep the instruments in shape. You're seeing, in fact, a decay in the arts in our schools, a decay that needs to be corrected, arrested, with actual investment. Instead, people who are in a position to put out \$500 can, miracle of miracles, get back \$50 next year.

I'm glad it's an income tax credit, because that means that people who aren't paying income tax, who don't have that much money, will actually get cash back in hand. But where are they going to get that \$500 to put down in the first place to wait until next year to get that refund? I don't see it.

This summer, I had the opportunity to go door to door and talk to my constituents. I came across a number of families who were dealing with the cost of daycare. I know that this government will say that it has introduced full-day early learning, but I want to say to you that there are many parents who aren't going to schools where that's being introduced in the next year or two or three, who are paying \$1,000 and more per child, who find that

the expense of child care is crippling their family budget. And yet, the announcement today is of this shiny little bauble, this up-to-\$50, don't-spend-it-all-in-one-toy-store event.

1340

When we talk to parents who need affordable daycare now, when we talk to parents who are going to get hit hard when they send their kids to hockey and pay the cost of the HST on that, when we talk to people who work with schools and look at the condition of the buildings—this morning I had an opportunity to talk to a friend of mine who is interested in renewable energy, solar panels on schools, and they're doing a survey of roofs. Roof after roof was leaking, had structural problems and wasn't fit, in the condition it was in, to actually have solar panels put on top of it. Where is the money that is supposed to make sure those schools are in excellent shape because that's where our children are?

This is a shell game: Under one large shell is an amount of money that is needed to actually deal with the needs of our children; under one very small shell is up to \$50 to go back to parents who can afford to spend up to \$500. Who is going to vote against giving parents and their children a small rebate? But let's not kid ourselves, and let's not kid anyone else. In terms of what this province needs and in terms of what the children and parents of this province need, this is totally inadequate.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the provincial Parliament.

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ... recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care in its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature should call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring these powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and

Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

DEVELOPMENT IN VILLAGES OF HEART LAKE

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm pleased to present a petition with over 6,000 names on it.

"Petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, voice our disapproval of the Ontario Municipal Board's decision of April 15, 2010, to build a development which includes six high-density, high-rise apartment buildings in the Villages of Heart Lake. This is a small tract in the centre of an area of single-family dwellings, and this proposed development simply does not belong in this area. Our officials unanimously rejected this proposal, yet the OMB, which is not an elected body and supplies no infrastructure support to the city, has ignored the wishes of both council and the residents by approving this development. We are upset and would like this stopped now."

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard Hampton: I have a petition from 188 members of Kingfisher Lake First Nation, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario proposes to pass Bill 191, the Far North Act, it violates the treaties and disrespects our jurisdiction. It is not a true partnership. It imposes a massive, interconnected protected area over Nishnawbe-Aski Nation ... homelands without any compensation. If Bill 191 passes, we will not recognize it;

"Whereas we, the people of Kingfisher Lake First Nation within Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, have not yet been consulted and accommodated;

"Whereas we, the people of Kingfisher Lake within Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, have not given free prior and informed consent to Bill 191, all development and protection decisions within Kingfisher Lake within NAN territory require the free, prior and informed consent of the people;

"Whereas we, the people of Kingfisher Lake within Nishnawbe-Aski Nation will make the final land use decisions, Ontario has an obligation to honour and respect Treaty number 9 and Treaty number 5 and First Nations' inherent jurisdiction. We will continue to work on local, community-driven land planning initiatives based on our jurisdiction; and

"Whereas we call on all interested parties, including environmental organizations and industry, to withdraw their support for Bill 191;

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

"To oppose third reading of Bill 191, the Far North Act, and call on Ontario to withdraw it;

"To engage in honourable consultation with the First Nations whose homelands and treaty and aboriginal rights are impacted by Bill 191; and

"To obtain the free, prior and informed consent of the First Nations whose homelands and treaty and aboriginal rights are impacted by Bill 191."

As I indicated, this has been signed by 188 members of Kingfisher Lake First Nation. I have affixed my signature, as well.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

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

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to ... providers in the developmental services sector."

I have affixed my signature.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition that I'd like to present to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ... recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature" should "call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services."

This has been signed by a number of my constituents. I want to thank Paulette Young for bringing this issue to my attention.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard Hampton: I have a petition from 119 members of North Spirit Lake First Nation. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we oppose Bill 191, the Far North Act, and call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to withdraw it;

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

"Bill 191 violates the treaties and disrespects our jurisdiction. It imposes a massive interconnected, protected area over our homelands without any compensation. It splits our northern First Nations from our southern First Nations.

1350

"Ontario has an obligation to honour and respect our treaties and our inherent jurisdiction. All development and protection decisions within NAN territory require the free, prior and informed consent of NAN First Nations.

"We call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately withdraw Bill 191 and, instead, initiate a respectful government-to-government dialogue with NAN First Nations."

As I said, this is signed by 119 members of the North Spirit Lake First Nation, and I have affixed my signature as well.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition signed by employees of Waterloo Region District School Board, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in the Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional long-term-care patients in our hospitals; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario;

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

“That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals, as has been done in other Canadian provinces.”

Pursuant to the rules, I affix my name thereto.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard Hampton: I have a number of petitions from Wunnumin Lake First Nation, and I would like to read them now. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario proposes to pass Bill 191, the Far North Act, [and] it violates the treaties and disrespects our jurisdiction. It is not a true partnership. It imposes a massive, interconnected, designated protected area over Nishnawbe-Aski Nation homelands without any compensation. If Bill 191 passes, we will not recognize it.

“Whereas we, the people of Wunnumin Lake First Nation within the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, have not been consulted and accommodated;

“Whereas we, the people of Wunnumin Lake First Nation within the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, have not given our free, prior and informed consent to Bill 191, [and] all development and protection decisions within Wunnumin Lake First Nation of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation require the free, prior and informed consent of the people;

“Whereas we, the people of Wunnumin Lake First Nation within the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, will make the final land use decisions. Ontario has an obligation to honour and respect Treaty number 9 and Treaty number 5 and First Nations’ inherent jurisdiction. We will continue to work on our local, community-driven land use planning initiatives based on our jurisdiction;

“Whereas we call on all interested parties, including environmental organizations and industry, to withdraw their support for Bill 191;

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

“To oppose the third reading of Bill 191, the Far North Act, and call on Ontario to withdraw it;

“To engage in honourable consultation with the First Nations whose homelands and treaty and aboriginal rights are impacted by Bill 191; and

“To obtain the free, prior and informed consent of the First Nations whose homelands and treaty and aboriginal rights are impacted by Bill 191.”

As I indicated, this petition has been signed by 293 members of Wunnumin Lake First Nation. I have attached my signature as well.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition regarding the HST.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010 with his new combined 13% GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as:”—and there’s a number of examples, including haircuts, dry cleaning, taxi fares, train fares;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government recognize Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under” certain “conditions...; and

“Whereas” since “October 2009, insured PET scans” are “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care” services “in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with Thomas.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WATER OPPORTUNITIES AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L’EAU ET LA CONSERVATION DE L’EAU

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Wilkinson, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters / Projet de loi 72, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur le développement des

technologies de l'eau et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'eau et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is my honour to rise today to begin second reading debate on the McGuinty government's proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act.

In this great province, we are blessed with vast quantities of fresh water. The very name "Ontario" has its roots in a number of aboriginal languages that describe "a beautiful lake."

From the Great Lakes, which contain close to one fifth of the planet's fresh surface water, to the thousands of rivers, lakes and streams that are a unique part of our geography, Ontario is fortunate to have water resources that are the envy of the world. At the same time, we need to understand that this resource is not limitless. We need to respect what we have and use it more responsibly.

Water has played a fundamental role throughout Ontario's history in building our prosperity and our quality of life. It enabled early trade and transportation. It was the foundation of our mill towns and essential to our farms, our fisheries and our factories. It adds immeasurably to our quality of life and enhances our enjoyment of our natural environment.

And water will help guide our future. Exporting our technology for clean water is a key part of the McGuinty government's Open Ontario plan, seeking to support and develop Ontario's existing strengths such as our banking system, centred in Toronto and envied around the globe, and one of the strongest post-secondary school systems in the world.

Protecting and conserving our water will be among the most important actions we can take to ensure the continuing success of our province for our economic vitality and environmental health.

Clean, safe water is in critical demand around the world. That demand is just going to continue to rise, spurred on by climate change, population growth and urbanization. In the next 20 years, experts predict a 40% gap between global supply and demand for water, a crisis in the making of extreme proportions. Some reports indicate that in 15 years' time, 1.8 billion people will live in regions of water scarcity.

Along with the growing demand for water comes the demand for technologies and processes that can make the most of this scarce and valuable resource—technologies that can treat water and make it safe, innovative approaches that can conserve water, and technologies that can make the most of the water that is available.

1400

The Conference Board of Canada estimates the market for clean water technology at \$400 billion and growing at a rate of 15% annually. Ontario cannot afford to be left behind. What we are proposing is to make Ontario a

North American leader in the water and waste water technology sector. Let me reiterate what Premier McGuinty has already clearly stated: We are not selling our water; we are capitalizing on our know-how and our leading-edge technology. This proposed legislation, if passed, would make Ontario a key jurisdiction in the water technology sector much in the way the Green Energy and Green Economy Act has moved Ontario to the forefront on renewable energy, with significant economic benefits for Ontarians and their families.

Our proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would, if passed, lay the groundwork for innovation in what is the fastest-growing segment in the environmental industry. It would help to support the growth and expansion of Ontario water tech businesses and create good jobs for Ontarians in an industry that already employs close to 22,000 people.

Let me outline again for my colleagues the three outcomes we want to achieve. The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, if passed, would, first, assist in making Ontario a North American leader in the development and sale of technologies for water treatment and water conservation; second, encourage sustainable infrastructure and conservation planning, including using innovative technologies to solve water, waste water and storm water infrastructure challenges; and third, encourage Ontarians to use water more wisely. I'd like to expand on each of these in turn, beginning with the first point: how we envision putting Ontario's know-how in water technology on the map.

One of the first steps would involve establishing a new water partnership called the Water Technology Acceleration Project—WaterTAP for short—a new non-crown corporation that would support research and development as well as the commercialization of new technologies and innovations in Ontario's water sector. This new corporation would bring together government, industry, academic and financial experts to support the creation and growth of globally competitive companies.

The Water Technology Acceleration Project is a key component of our strategy. It would provide a trusted source of information about the Ontario water sector and help build the made-in-Ontario brand through marketing and global outreach, and would, on the request of the Minister of Research and Innovation, provide advice on such matters as product labelling and technology verification. While some Ontario companies are already acknowledged leaders in certain areas of clean water technology such as ultraviolet disinfection, compact sewage treatment and plant design, the industry is composed of some 300 small firms. This project would bring all these companies, academics and government together, helping to create an economy of scale that benefits our environment and our economy. By connecting people from different companies and from different research and technology centres, we can identify areas for co-operation and collaboration.

If directed by the Minister of Research and Innovation, the corporation could coordinate and host an international conference on water, showcasing Ontario's

water tech companies and linking potential buyers from around the world with our products and services. It would also help identify demonstration and early adoption opportunities, as well as provide advice to government. This would help spur on great made-in-Ontario products and services and take our innovative and new water technologies from the drawing board to the marketplace.

Along with this new corporation, the act, if passed, would expand the mandate of the Ontario Clean Water Agency, which already has substantial expertise in water and waste water technology, thereby allowing the agency to play a leadership role in supporting innovation, facilitating the demonstration of Ontario-based technologies and supporting the water technology acceleration project outside Ontario.

The second outcome I spoke about earlier would allow for the creation of an integrated approach to municipal water infrastructure planning in order to achieve long-term sustainability. Water efficiency is the most cost-effective way to generate water and waste water capacity. In fact, the cost of conservation programs may be as little as a quarter of the cost of new infrastructure.

Some forward-looking municipalities in Ontario are already planning for long-term sustainability and have developed their own forward-thinking water conservation and efficiency plans. They understand that water conservation planning saves water and costs, both infrastructure costs and energy costs. For example, in 1999 the city of Guelph was faced with having to source new water supplies to meet the growing needs of residents. Instead, they chose to implement a water conservation and efficiency program, including incentives such as toilet rebate programs, rain barrel programs and public education. Investment in water conservation since 2006 has resulted in water savings worth up to \$7.3 million in the avoided cost of a new water supply.

Guelph was also faced with a decision in 2005 to build a new waste water treatment plant to meet its capacity needs, anticipated to cost \$30 million. By investing \$1.5 million to date in optimization of their current system instead, the city expects to avoid the need for a new plant.

The proposed act would help municipalities improve the efficiency of municipal water infrastructure and services by encouraging municipalities to look for innovative cost-effective solutions to solve water, waste water and storm water challenges, including water conservation; optimize systems and improve water conservation; identify opportunities to demonstrate and implement new and emerging Ontario water technologies and services; and move toward measures and targets to demonstrate progress.

Let me now turn to conservation on the part of individuals, the third outcome we wish to achieve. More than half of Ontarians believe that fresh water is our most important natural resource. At the same time, they may not be fully aware of the need to conserve and safeguard our water since we have always had such a good supply virtually at our fingertips. In fact, the average person in

our province uses around 267 litres of water every day. Compare that to the average in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and France, where people use about 150 litres per day. Moving towards a similar target in Ontario is attainable. One of the key ways to do that is to help people understand how they can do their part to conserve water.

The proposed act, if passed, would help encourage efforts to reduce Ontario's residential water use significantly. Using water efficiently is one of the most cost-effective ways to address water and waste water needs. Our proposed act, if passed, would help encourage efforts that significantly reduce residential water use. It would give the government the authority to require standardized information on water bills to help people understand how much water they use and allow them to track their progress as they reduce their use.

We are also proposing, for example, water efficiency standards for more consumer products, such as shower heads, to help people use less water and save money. As a complementary measure, we would also consider opportunities to bring water labelling to Ontario. That would make it easier for people to find and purchase high-performance water-efficient products, much the way the WaterSense program works in the United States.

The residential sector accounts for 40% of all energy used in Ontario, and heating water is typically the second-largest consumer of energy in buildings. Improved water efficiency will save not only water but also energy well into the future.

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A number of Ontario municipalities have identified water and waste water facilities as significant energy consumers, reportedly accounting for between 25% and 60% of their respective municipal electricity bills, so one of the key goals of our proposed act would be to encourage the use of innovative water technologies and services to reduce the use of water and energy.

Something many people don't realize is that much of the cost of providing clean water and treating waste water is the cost of energy associated with these activities. New technology is often much more efficient, using much less water to run the same systems, potentially providing cost savings to municipalities and ultimately to consumers.

It would enable the government to demonstrate leadership through considering water conservation in procurement and through water conservation planning by all public entities, such as universities, schools and hospitals.

The proposed act, if passed, would also amend the Building Code Act to ensure consideration of water conservation and expand the mandate of the Building Code Energy Advisory Council.

We are talking about moving Ontario forward in a way that will help us build a sustainable future, support leading clean tech innovations, and generate new good jobs well into the future.

When it comes to Ontario's water tech sector, we already have a number of successful and innovative

companies winning recognition for their products and services. We intend to take that to the next level.

Ontario innovations are already at work around the world, in Orange county, California, in northern Holland, and in places like Saudi Arabia. We want to build on any existing synergies among small, medium and large water tech businesses, academia, researchers and financial experts, to connect all the dots so our water tech companies can connect with the world. Under our government's visionary Open Ontario initiative, we are laying the foundation for the next generation of Ontario businesses and the next generation of clean tech jobs.

We have already had feedback and support from a number of different stakeholders. Derek Stack, the executive director of Great Lakes United, stated: "This legislation shows the Ontario government recognizes water conservation cuts pumping and heating expenses, quells greenhouse gases, and eliminates the costly expansion of delivery and treatment systems, saving the environment and Ontario taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars every year."

From Johann Manente, a manager at the regional municipality of Peel, we heard: "The McGuinty government has recognized a critical connection between energy efficiency and water efficiency. Taking action on eliminating water-wasting fixtures and appliances and specifically addressing water conservation in the building code will be a huge step. The opportunity to consider water efficiency labelling would also be a first in Canada."

David Henderson, managing director, XPV Capital Corp., stated: "With the right bold vision, commitment and action, Ontario has the opportunity to become a global leader in the clean water technology market, bringing new prosperity to the people of Ontario, including high-value jobs, economic growth and ensuring future Ontarians have access to the most precious resource on the planet."

Bill 72 was posted on the Environmental Registry for a 60-day period for public comment, and the resulting comments were extremely supportive. If the proposed act is passed, we would continue to consult widely with the public, municipalities and stakeholders in the development of regulations under the act.

Our government has made water a fundamental priority. The strong measures we have taken to protect and conserve our water have made us a North American leader. From the Clean Water Act, which has made our drinking water some of the best-protected and highest-quality in North America, to the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, focusing on watershed and ecosystem sustainability, to Ontario's Water Resources Act, which bans water diversions from the Great Lakes basin, we have worked hard to ensure that this valuable resource will continue to sustain and support the high quality of life we enjoy.

Today we advance our actions even further with the proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act.

The act, if passed, would be a landmark piece of legislation. It would open up the world for Ontario water

tech companies so they could expand and prosper. It would open Ontario to new ideas, growth and innovation. It would open up new opportunities for good jobs for our people. It would strengthen our communities by helping us conserve water and energy. As important as all these things are to our health and success, just as importantly it would help Ontarians provide solutions to some of the world's most critical environmental and human health issues.

This is the right step to take and this is the right time to take that step. I strongly urge all of the members of this House to support the proposed act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to offer a couple of comments in the time that's available. I guess what I was looking for was some response on the part of the government to talk about those sinkholes that Torontonians and the rest of us face during the wintertime, because that's the evidence that I think most people would be looking for in terms of any kind of undertaking by the government to improve the fundamentals of water and sewage.

When you have major streets like Finch and Sheppard and places like that out of commission for weeks and weeks at a time in a city that suffers from, I believe, a world reputation for gridlock, it would seem to me that would be one of the key features you would be looking for: a method of making sure that that is done in a timely and efficient manner.

It's interesting because much of what the parliamentary assistant included in her remarks had to do with efficiencies, and that would seem to me to be a number one priority: Clean up the sewage treatment facilities or transfer of sewage treatment throughout the city so we don't have sinkholes. The other is of course the leakage that takes place of clean water. Again, the parliamentary assistant talked about the importance—and we'd all agree—of access to clean water, but when that access is hampered by as much as perhaps a third of all the clean water that's transferred through pipes actually leaking out, I would think that would be a number one priority. I was disappointed not to hear that today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I must confess that when I first heard about this bill, it brought to mind all of the water-related problems and challenges that people face in Ontario, and I would have thought that the government in fact would be prepared in this bill to do something about that.

Let me give you an example. There are still a great number of communities in Ontario where from time to time—all too frequently—people have to boil their water. For many of these communities they would like to improve the water quality, but the issue is the very high cost of doing that. I would have liked to have seen something in this bill which would have said to those municipalities that the province is prepared to act to

ensure that all of those communities and all of those people will have access to safe, clean drinking water.

One of the other issues is that some communities in the past few years have been forced to update their water treatment systems and water supply systems, but now they find, because the bill comes directly to them, that the residents can't afford to pay the water bill. It seems to me that also is a serious problem.

Thirdly, we have untold numbers of First Nations citizens who cannot rely upon drinking water in their community, and this government is noticeably absent in meeting that challenge, in fact is very quick simply to point the finger at the federal government.

Finally, there's another challenge. Where I live, American states are looking very seriously at piping water out of our lakes and rivers and piping it to the US Midwest. I would have thought we would have heard something about that.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: This is the kind of bill that should be supported unanimously and passed through the House as quickly as possible. I listen to the comments of my colleagues, and I am amazed they don't get it. This is not about exporting Ontario's water resources; it is about exporting our water expertise.

I had the good fortune earlier this year to spend a little bit of time in India, and I visited with one of the states—some of their government ministers. The first thing that they all said they wanted to buy from Ontario is—they said, "You are acknowledged leaders in the management of clean water, and we need to have clean water." That particular state, the state of Gujarat, population of 55 million, is out in the middle of the desert.

They are not atypical all across the world. The whole world needs to know how to produce and manage fresh water. And we know, here in Ontario, how to manage the technology of keeping and using fresh water. That's what this bill is about. This bill is about managing fresh water. This bill is about exporting our expertise, not our resources, in managing fresh water.

What Ontario knows is what the rest of world is clamouring to have. We cannot fail when it comes to our expertise in fresh water and when it comes to creating the jobs of the future, the jobs that the kids are studying for in university and the future that they want for themselves with high value-added jobs. That comes in helping the rest of the world manage fresh water.

We have got to get this bill passed. This industry already employs 22,000 people, and it has nothing but potential in the future. I urge the passage of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm pleased to comment on the Water Opportunities Act, 2010. Like everything else, individuals who phone my office have opened up their hydro accounts, and all of a sudden, there is an enormous increase in hydro fees. They are paying, of course, the

health tax; there is a possibility of an eco tax. And the question they would ask me in this particular bill, the Water Opportunities Act, is exactly what this is going to cost them.

The difficulty with this government is they don't announce the tax. Everyone is in favour of clean water, there's no doubt about that, but at what cost? There's no costing given for this. How are they going to pay for this act?

In many small areas, for instance with septic tanks and wells—they required enormous costs. We have a campsite in our Cambridge area, and they almost put the campsite out of business. This government, through its regulation, almost put the campsite out of business simply because of the hidden costs that weren't revealed at the time they passed the legislation. That has been the history of the McGuinty government. They put forward a bill with a nice name that everybody can agree to, but when you ask at what cost, what is the hidden price tag that you are not telling us about—therein lies the difficulty with this bill, and we will be scrutinizing it very carefully.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Oak Ridges–Markham has up to two minutes to respond.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I would like to acknowledge the comments made by my colleagues from York–Simcoe, Kenora–Rainy River, Mississauga–Streetsville and Cambridge. I guess I am a little surprised about some of the comments that were made. I think this bill is an absolute model of clarity and a model of balance in terms of our proposals.

But in response to some of the comments made, I would like to remind the member for Kenora–Rainy River that in fact our government banned bulk water transfers in 2007 under the Water Resources Act. This is another step in the right direction. We are not selling our water; we are selling the wonderful expertise of many Ontario companies not only to the rest of the world, but we're bringing very much to the attention of municipalities and other water and waste water producers the expertise that exists in our province already.

Certainly, I was very pleased to hear from Bill Fisch, York regional chairman. He had some comments on this bill, and I'm going to quote him as the chairman of one of those very forward-looking municipalities:

"Our communities are committed to protecting the environment and our water resources. This is demonstrated through the success of York region's Water for Tomorrow program. Over the last 13 years, our initiatives have produced tremendous results; conservation and efficiency is providing enough water for an additional 90,000 people from our existing water supplies."

It's this kind of forward thinking that we believe can be shared—these new innovations across the province. We believe that our citizens and our municipalities are up to the challenge.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome the opportunity to be part of this debate on the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, Bill 72. For whatever reason, it was introduced about four months ago. It was introduced on May 18, very close to the 10th anniversary of Walkerton. At the time—and I assume this was the intention—the government was attempting to garner some green headlines. I know they sent out some green news releases. I sincerely hope there will be hearings with respect to this legislation. As with the Clean Water Act, perhaps the first place we can go when we travel—let's go back to Walkerton. That was what was done with the Clean Water Act hearings.

The legislation was introduced on May 18 last spring and nothing happened. There was no debate; there was no opportunity for debate. Here we are four months later. If this government is going to operate at such a glacial snail's pace, I think with some trepidation, what if Walkerton had happened on the watch of this government and they took four months to get their act together?

Another piece of legislation was introduced last spring, environmental legislation—the new Waste Diversion Act. It was promised on April 22. It was promised on or about Earth Day again. We were told by the minister of the day that this legislation would come forward in another four weeks or so. We haven't seen hide or hair of that legislation as well. Again, there were some green headlines at the time. It was supposed to arrive in May. Again, nothing.

We really haven't heard much from this government other than the July 1 advent of eco fees. I found out July 2. I was completely blindsided by that one, as was, it seems, just about everybody in the province. Perhaps government MPPs didn't know the eco fees were coming in on July 1 either. They certainly didn't tell anybody.

Mrs. Julia Munro: The minister didn't.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I just heard that perhaps the minister did not know that eco fees were coming in on July 1 of this past summer, but that's a whole other story, and we will have an opportunity this fall to discuss eco fees.

We have the McGuinty water bill, Bill 72. Four months of waiting, and it does raise some questions. I just heard this question a few minutes ago: How much will it cost? It's not the first time we've heard that this afternoon. In fact, we just heard that from the third party, who have a concern. I know that some of the environmental groups, let alone ratepayers and property taxpayers, are very concerned about the cost and whether this would reflect clearly on the intent of this legislation.

Again, over the summer residents in my area and across the province were suffering sticker shock as they started to look at their electricity bills. Are we going to expect the same kind of sticker shock with this water bill?

1430

How will the billions of dollars be raised to repair the infrastructure that this government has talked about? I'm not sure what they've done in the past seven years, but here we are seven years into this government's mandate and they're talking about fixing up infrastructure.

Another question: Why is this government creating yet another crown agency? We have OCWA now, the Ontario Clean Water Agency. We have the OPA, obviously—those who follow the electricity pricing. We have the LHINs. Those bodies are unelected and out of control. Again, why is this legislation bringing in yet another unelected, potentially out-of-control agency?

Where are the targets? This has been raised over the summer. Where are the targets to cut water leakage, as we've just heard? Where are the targets to ensure compliance?

One other point: I do recall last spring when Mr. McGuinty was in the media talking about the Water Opportunities Act. He talked about disallowing the bulk export of water. However, we've just heard from the parliamentary assistant; they're already taking credit for disallowing the bulk export of water. That's federal jurisdiction, as far as I understand. If they're going to take credit for disallowing the bulk export of water from Ontario, certainly the previous government could also take credit for disallowing the bulk export of water, because we had a situation that came up—export by boat out of Lake Superior, as I recall. I first heard about that on the Monday of the week, on the radio, and by Thursday or Friday our Minister of the Environment of the day made it very clear, at that time, that Ontario would not allow that ship to leave with water.

Provincial jurisdiction: This obviously has a big impact on municipal governments. When you talk about water exports or some of the serious infrastructure problems that we see in native communities, it involves three levels of government. Water legislation right across the country, really, is a bit of a patchwork of federal and provincial guidelines. I sincerely hope that this legislation is not another patch on that patchwork. I sincerely hope that somehow this legislation can be rejigged, can be amended, through hearings and further public input, to perhaps integrate water systems, perhaps to better enable us to integrate with municipal and federal guidelines. Because right now—I'm concerned that this particular bill is going to add to the problem—we have an issue with fragmentation, we have an issue with turf wars and an issue with passing the buck, especially when the question comes up of, where are the billions of dollars going to come from to essentially fulfill the objectives of some of this legislation?

Primary power lies with the provinces—in this case, with the province of Ontario. The federal government, as we know, focuses more on the territories, native communities and with certain transboundary issues like the export of water.

It goes without saying, and it has been said over the last few minutes, that there's no doubt that clean water is essential. It's essential to the health and success of this particular province, and it's the one element that's so basic yet so essential to individuals, to businesses and to industry that it does require continued protection. It requires promotion and information to better enable people to use water wisely. That can be done through the

media. That can be done through literature, inserts in the ever-increasing projected water bills. It doesn't necessarily require more laws to get the word out about the importance of, for example, conservation.

There's also little doubt that the international community and certain countries, as their per capita wealth increases, as they put more value on clean water and have more physical resources to dedicate towards clean water, there is that potential, obviously, to recognize the expertise that can be developed in Ontario. I know the parliamentary assistant just mentioned we can be a North American leader with respect to the development of water cleanup innovation. Now, that says something: a North American leader.

We're not going to catch up to countries like China, Australia or Korea. They've hit the ground running. They're way ahead of us. We're probably going to be importing the technology from large, multinational companies—probably Samsung. Who knows?

It was for these kinds of reasons that our former government—actually for decades, really—committed over the years to the continual enactment of water legislation, water regulation. We committed, obviously, to the recommendations of the O'Connor report. We made a commitment to the Centre of Excellence in Walkerton, for example. We put forward, amongst other legislation, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act; that was about eight years ago. We put forward the Safe Drinking Water Act.

What concerns me is the very fact that it took seven years for this government to finally come to the table with some sort of an approach to water conservation and related water infrastructure. It brings into question this government's commitment. There were probably seven opportunities—seven anniversaries of Walkerton—when this government could have announced this legislation to garner some green media and to shine on the 6 o'clock news. They didn't take it until this spring, and then, as I said, they didn't do anything with it. That was last May. We've been waiting since last May.

Also, this government couldn't seem to live up to its commitment to bring in, as I mentioned, the new Waste Diversion Act, which it promised to deliver something like five weeks before the end of the last session, or maybe earlier. It was April 22; it was around Earth Day. We've seen the eco fee debacle since then, and it's not surprising that the government mishandled that file. The concern is perhaps that they've gone back to the drawing board; perhaps the stakeholders have told them to take the Waste Diversion Act back and start that one over again.

So there are questions: What's happened over the past seven years? What happened to Bill 175? That was the one that I just mentioned, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. That came out, was passed and received royal assent back in 2002. This government did nothing with it—no regulation.

That was about eight years ago. We had the report. We had the plans. We introduced and entrenched the notion

of full-cost recovery for waste water and water services. It passed third and final reading. It received royal assent December 13, 2002. Again, the question, what has happened in the past seven years? More than seven years, really, I guess it would be going on eight years—would it be?—coming up this December. Obviously, not very much from this particular government.

As I recall, we did the heavy lifting on that one, and the government dropped the ball. They never really picked up the ball in the first place. If regulations were already in place—I put this out—perhaps municipalities now would have had a seven- or eight-year head start on improving water and sewer infrastructure, waste water, stormwater infrastructure, plugging the leaks and perhaps doing a better job at spurring on limited usage, less usage and conservation of water.

1440

It was pointed out by Joe Accardi, executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association, that the guts of Bill 175 were never enshrined in regulation—certainly not in the last seven years—leaving it in limbo. Mr. Accardi continues to advocate, and I quote, for “legislation and regulation to be in place at the provincial level to ensure dedicated reserve funding through a full-cost recovery model.” There is one group of stakeholders. They've been waiting on this government for seven years now to do something on that front.

Finally, today in the Ontario Legislature we do have a chance to address the government's Water Opportunities Act. For whatever reason, the presentation by the government was relatively brief. They had an hour to make their case; they didn't use that hour. They used maybe—I'm not sure—25% of their time. But we have the Water Opportunities Act before us.

It's an act, again, depending on who you listen to, that's aimed at everything from encouraging water conservation and updating municipal infrastructure to making Ontario a North American leader in clean water technology—not a world leader; a North American leader. We know, with the solar file; we know, with the wind power file; we know, with other issues of green technology that the world leaders are countries like Korea. We know of the multi-billion dollar deal that this government signed with the Samsung corporation, the third-largest corporation in the world as far as solar and wind technology go. The goal here that they've set their sights on is being the North American leader, because countries like Korea, China and Australia have outstripped us on this front.

For example, some of our own companies, like Zenon and Trojan, have been targeted by large multinationals. GE—General Electric—bought Zenon. They shut down their Burlington operation and moved the manufacturing to Hungary. If you wish to buy those certain kinds of threadlike filters from the Zenon corporation, an Ontario company, you're going to have them shipped in from Hungary.

The Water Opportunities Act, in my view, represents the second kick at the water can for the McGuinty

government in recent months, following MPP David Caplan's—this is a long title—act, his legislation. It's called the Sustainable Water and Waste Water Systems Improvement and Maintenance Act. I hope that's the long title. My fear is that was maybe the short title.

That bill too was designed to support municipal water infrastructure upgrades. What was a little scary was that Mr. Caplan pegged the cost to consumers at about \$600 a year. Everybody here, and anybody who's listening to this presentation, hang on to your wallet because here comes another bill by way of Mr. McGuinty.

The question does remain as to what would be the cost of what I see before us today, essentially an overarching tidal wave of a McGuinty water bill. There's no price tag on this legislation. There's no indication of where the money is going to come from.

Last spring I had an opportunity in the Legislature to question the Premier directly. I asked the question three times on the potential or plans for a new water tax. Also, I asked about rumours of a new carbon tax. As we in the House would understand, Mr. McGuinty refused to answer those questions. Perhaps some of those answers will come up as we go forward with this and with hearings.

This is worrisome. There is anxiety as far as electricity bills across the province of Ontario. The worrisome part for people in Ontario with this particular legislation is that they won't be able to afford the McGuinty water bill with its price hike or tax hike. Perhaps they can call it a fee or a stipend or give it some other name to try and smooth the way.

We know that the Green Energy Act, the HST and the approved rate hikes are pushing electricity up 20% over the coming months, and many are asking themselves how they can afford these kinds of electricity hikes. They should well be wary of this particular piece of legislation when we're not told how much it's going to cost.

I see in this bill a bit of a warning. It's a warning for residential users, property taxpayers or water ratepayers. It's a warning for industrial users. It's a warning for farmers, those involved in irrigation-based agriculture. You do require a permit to take water. How many new forms and how many reports are farmers, for example, now going to have to fill out as this legislation passes?

We also know that during these dire economic times this government has spent its way to the bottom of the barrel. Many of our residents are really struggling to maintain their livelihoods. I do question the timing of what could be very significant water rate increases on top of the other McGuinty tax increases.

Again, if we go back eight years and just recall the largest increase in income taxes in the history of Ontario, and seven years after that we saw the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Was that mentioned in their platform?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Good point.

Given the history of provincial governments of various stripes ensuring clean water and promoting clean

water technology, I do question the need for costly new legislation. I question whether existing water regulations and existing management initiatives couldn't be used to maintain these kinds of clean water goals.

I question whether the demonstration of technology requires legislation. We have research and innovation institutions. I think of the MaRS organization, which would be 300 yards behind the Speaker, essentially, over on College Street. A number of these organizations have been in place for years, and I question why they wouldn't be asked to continue to be involved in this kind of work.

But most of all, I question the cost of McGuinty's water bill. So far, we've seen nothing on the price that we'll pay. I can assure you, we will all be paying a price. So I repeat my warning: Hang on to your wallet.

In addressing this proposed legislation, Bill 72, I do recognize that certainly in my part of the province we are blessed with water. We oftentimes take water for granted. It's a cliché, but it's very simple now. Very simply, you just turn on the tap, and by the same token you just flush the toilet.

Through my previous employment—this was a number of years ago and this is something that has always stayed with me—I and another fellow drove a truck pretty well with the length of California. We started in San Diego, up to Los Angeles and San Francisco. We were selling films, of all things, in California. It's like taking coals to Newcastle. This was back in the late 1970s—1977, 1978. We were on the road for a number of weeks. It seemed that three times a day we were in a restaurant. In every single restaurant we walked into, there was a sign on the table telling you that you could not get a glass of water in that restaurant, because California was going through a very serious drought. Water was not available with your meal. I think in some of the restaurants, if you made an issue, if you approached management, you could get a glass of water. In the state of California everything else was in abundance: food, alcohol, gasoline—lots of beautiful cars everywhere we went. But you couldn't get a glass of water with your meal in the state of California in the late 1970s. We found that quite surprising.

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I had grown up on Lake Erie. We were working out of Toronto, based, obviously, on Lake Ontario. There was lots of water to drink. At that time people in Toronto couldn't swim in Lake Ontario—but they could drink it. I really had trouble squaring that one in my mind. This was before the little plastic water bottles. As I recall, this summer, off the beaches of Toronto—I think three of the beaches were closed, but we are drinking Toronto water today.

Just to go back to the state of California, they have a very significant water infrastructure. They have a tremendous agricultural empire based on water. Every year, the state of California moves 14 trillion gallons of water, mainly south, capturing it behind 1,200 dams on just about every river and stream in the state. That's 14 trillion gallons—the French translation would be 53 trillion litres—moving water under mountains, moving

water over mountains; a tremendous network of ditches, irrigation canals and pipes to provide the fuel, essentially, for this agricultural empire. Some 55% of North America's fruit, nuts and vegetables come from California. It's the sixth-largest agricultural exporter in the world, and it's based on water and irrigation-based agriculture: intensive farming in a region that by and large gets something like only 20 inches of rain a year. There's a cliché with respect to this: In California water runs uphill to money.

California gets droughts; so does Ontario. In the mid-1950s—I do recall the drought of the 1950s on our farm. We are clay loam. I was much smaller than I am now, and I recall that I could put my foot in the cracks in the fields on our farms. And then we had 40 years of rainfall; 40 years of almost too much water in Ontario, until the late 1990s, when we had several very tough years in the province of Ontario, very tough years for agriculture when the quantity was not there. I talk about quantity. The quality of water is also directly related to the quantity. So I just raise an example of a crisis, local and close to home.

There are a number of ways of coping with water crises—hopefully not here; presently water crises are occurring in many parts of our world. Number one, you can try to provide more water; either make it from sea water if you're on the coast or draw it from elsewhere through the engineering or the water diversions that we see in California. The second approach to a crisis: Use less of it. Use less of it through technological innovation, something this bill is addressing; pricing policy, something this bill can be addressing; good management; and conservation. There's a third way: You can use the same amount per person around the world, but that would require either stability or fewer people—and I mention that given the tremendous increase in the world's population, certainly in my lifetime.

There are other ways. You can steal water; you can steal it from someone else. The politics of violence kicks in in parts of the world. I doubt that we would see the kind of water wars that we hear mentioned on occasion.

A few years ago there was the tugboat solution—this one didn't go very far—this idea of towing icebergs to where the water is needed. Greenland, Alaska, Antarctica all have fresh water frozen in ice. Icebergs are breaking off and drifting out to sea. The idea was, why don't you capture them and tow them to where they belong? But it has been proven not to be economically feasible.

There were other ideas kicked around, such as—a little disconcerting—diverting water flowing into James Bay and turning it around and shipping it south to the Great Lakes. The notion of exporting Canadian water was mentioned by the parliamentary assistant—exporting water to Asia or to the United States. This has virtually no support at all amongst the general public, as far as I understand. I know Mr. McGuinty talked about this when he was doing media on this particular water legislation, but I don't think that by any stretch this legislation is addressing the export of water.

As far as lack of public support, a poll was done in 2004; 80% of Canadians do not want their water sold in bulk. And the federal government, through its constitutional authority over navigable waters—whether it's in lakes, rivers or streams—controls the export of bulk water. This is on their file. Bottled water is another issue; it's a tariff good. Bottled water, as I understand, is covered under NAFTA, but apparently the export of bulk water is not covered or dealt with by NAFTA. Again, if this export of water is so unpopular, it leads to the obvious question: Shouldn't the federal government be legislating an outright ban on the export of bulk water if they haven't done so?

Technology: Many jurisdictions do this now, getting fresh water from the sea, essentially making new fresh water through desalinating sea water. It's becoming increasingly cost-effective. That's the beauty of technology and advances in technology. Many people in certain parts of the world see this as an answer. Some 97% of the water on earth is in the oceans, and just over 96% of that sea water is actually fresh water. The problem is the other 3% or 3.5% comprising dissolved solids that make it unusable for human beings, for plants, for irrigation on farms. If you can get rid of those solids, you can drink it and you can irrigate crops with it. Again, this would only apply to Ontario's saltwater coast in the north and I really think at this point it's obviously not necessary in that part of the province, on James Bay or Hudson's Bay, as we're not irrigating potatoes up in Attawapiskat, as far as I know, or not yet, anyway.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: With global warming, you never know.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Not yet anyway. Who knows?

So if you can't get more water, well, use less of it. That's fairly simple. I think that principle has been inculcated in this legislation and rolled over yet again in this legislation. How do you use less of it? I think of basic economics kicking in: Reduce demand. This can be done a number of ways: by conservation. You can also reduce demand by pricing mechanisms—I think we see a direction coming out of this legislation on that one—or by making the existing consumption more efficient through a combination of management and the use of innovative technology. Again, so often the prophets of doom, with their talk of water wars, so often the people who raise these kinds of issues are proven wrong by some new invention that comes along. So technology is one answer to the challenge, but I also feel very clearly that technology on its own is not enough.

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Much of the current water wastefulness in much of the world—and, I think I would say, in Ontario—is political in its origins. Pricing and public policy and economics are critical to the discussion that we will be having over the next several months. I think one of the members opposite made reference to the fact that he wanted to rush this legislation through, and I think this issue is so important for the future that we have to take our time. We have to have debate. We have to have public

hearings. We have to have amendments to this legislation. We have to have third reading and make sure we get this one right.

As far as aging technology and infrastructure, there are emerging opportunities—I will use that word, which is captured in the title of this bill—for technologies that can retrofit, within the existing footprint of aging water and waste water treatment facilities, to increase capacity for these growing municipalities that have old infrastructure and either don't have additional room to expand their existing plants or don't have the capital—the money issue—to site new plants.

Detection of leaks, remediation of poor-quality pipes, broken pipes, leaking pipes: These kinds of technologies will become critical to add years to existing infrastructure, and it's one way to keep the costs down. It's one way to defer the large capital-intensive infrastructure projects, the kind of projects that are winners. They come to the top when governments go down the route of stimulus funding, when they go down the route of borrowing money they don't have to tax and to spend and to shove it out the door—or, I should say, shovel it out the door. So there is technology to remediate and to work, to make do with what we have, instead of aspiring to have a totally brand new infrastructure.

However, as far as technology—and I made mention earlier—we've seen companies like Zenon and Trojan, Canada's technology companies, become targets of acquisition by large multinationals which are doing exactly what this legislation is trying to do: They want to be world leaders. These large corporations want to be global leaders, essentially, with respect to water, and they want to make money on it. I think of very large corporations like Veolia and Suez. They're in the business of treating water, treating waste water, dealing with stormwater.

Zenon, for example: There was one plant—this was just about the time that this Water Opportunities Act was mentioned in the throne speech, and at that time Zenon was moving out of Burlington, to Hungary. Zenon, an environmental incorporation, will cease operations by the end of this year, and you will be buying those filters overseas. It was purchased by GE. It's called GE Water and Process Technologies. It was acquired in 2006 by GE Canada. There goes the Burlington plant. They were manufacturing what was referred to as the ZeeWeed line. It's a spaghetti-like membrane that filters bacteria and other contaminants out of water and out of waste water. Again, this is an article in the March 10 Hamilton Spectator: "ZeeWeed operations" will "move to the company's plant in Oroszlany, Hungary, and bring all ZeeWeed manufacturing under one roof."

Then there's Trojan. I don't think Trojan has been bought out. A local company, it began in 1976. It's based in London, Ontario. I remember they came forward during the Walkerton crisis. Zenon was there as well. They were there to help out.

Very early on, Trojan commenced development on a commercially viable UV disinfection system for

municipal waste water treatment, and the company was rewarded with its first system installation in Tillsonburg, Ontario. I'm a former member for Tillsonburg. I used to represent Tillsonburg, and I wanted an opportunity to mention that town.

The company grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s. They pioneered many innovations and installed thousands of systems in over 25 countries. By 1993, Trojan had become the world leader in UV waste water disinfection, and they acquired other technology. They got access to a process called UV oxidation. It's an advanced water treatment method that eliminates harmful micro-organisms such as E. coli, cryptosporidium and giardia, as well as chemical contaminants, including pesticides and herbicides.

I don't think anybody has bought Trojan yet. I hope nobody does, but this is the world that we live in.

Really, our present water technology companies, our present industries, they can move on—this legislation could help; I don't know whether they need a law to do that or not—by really improving and building on what they already do well and things that they were doing well certainly way before the Walkerton crisis. They innovate. They innovate because they're in business, and they innovate to meet market demand.

We have these companies—they've been around for years—that truly lead by example: a large number of equipment companies, engineering and consulting firms as well as research and development facilities. We have associations and institutions that underpin our water industry. Canada is home to a number of companies that have been capitalizing on the opportunity, if you will, the water opportunity.

To my mind, you can't pass a law to make this stuff happen. The key is economics. As the argument goes, in many ways, cheap water does subsidize inefficiency: Why change? There is a way to bring supply and demand back into balance. Obviously, the way of doing that is pricing. That's what concerns me when we talk about pricing. Just how is that going to be reflected in the water bills in the future for people in Ontario? The answer, from what I see proposed in this legislation, proposed in Bill 72, is more of a demand-management approach rather than the supply-oriented system that we now have in use.

In other words, don't charge according to what people can pay, but charge according to what—and it would probably be a decision made by a bureaucrat—it's felt the water is worth, taking into account development costs, delivery systems and things like that. Water does have an economic value, and water pricing policy can achieve more sustainable patterns of water use and can go a long way to continue to generate the kind of technology that is necessary for the future.

1510

However, after seeing one year of debate on the HST, the advent of eco fees on July 1 and the electricity price hikes, the question really is, do people have the stomach for this? Do they have the stomach for the McGuinty

water bill increases and, very simply, do they have any money left to pay for it?

So technology has a role to play. Demand can be reduced through improved technology, such devices as low-flow faucets. I grew up in a farmhouse. We had very limited access to water. We had several wells. My father installed the spring-loaded faucets, the taps on the faucets; once you took your hand off the tap, it shut off, just like that. In many ways, I think he was 50 years ahead of his time. Now we have the electronic version: Once you move your hands away, automatically the water shuts off. My son just bought a toilet with two buttons on top; you get a large flush or a small flush. I think that's a great idea.

I've seen tremendous advances locally, ever since the droughts that I talked about in Ontario, over the last 10 years with respect to intensive farming. When I say intensive farming, in many ways I'm referring to irrigation-based agriculture, electronic timers, obviously irrigating at night rather than on those hot, sunny, windy days in July and August, and the use of drip irrigation. I'm very proud of the fact that when we were in government, we put forward a considerable amount of money, grants, to foster technology like that drip irrigation, for example.

Technology can be instrumental in any future success in achieving sustainability and better management. I mention desalination, micro-filtration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light. Some of the approaches can increasingly be deployed to attain a goal of sustainability in the face of droughts or changing climate, population growth, obviously, and the demands of either affluence or poverty. New technology can also facilitate the deployment of cost-effective, decentralized systems to supplement the gigantic, traditional large-scale water treatment works.

But I also feel that technology may not be a sufficient condition for successful water management in the future, given the additional importance of pricing and management. It's certainly a necessary condition. All of these conditions are necessary, really, with a growing economy, a growing population, growing affluence, and the advent of droughts and variability in our climate, all of which will continue to put pressure on a limited supply of potable water.

Not surprisingly, the market for membrane technologies in 2007 in the United States grew to be a \$2-billion industry, with an annual rate of growth of something like 8%.

I mentioned that I grew up in a climate of water scarcity. Our farm had two wells, one for the barn—that was a black sulphur well that had a Beatty water pump made in Fergus, Canada. We had a water well for the home down by the road and a cistern for runoff water from the roof. The water that came from that well by the road, our drinking water, was probably the most delicious water anywhere in the world, and guess what? With the wintertime salting of that road—and that's the Cockshutt Road that runs from Port Dover up to Brantford—it got in our well. We can no longer drink the water in that

well. If something like that were to happen in the Arabian Desert, I think somebody would be shot.

Our water for washing and laundry and dishes, washing eggs—I had a flock of laying hens—came from the roof, and that was scarce as well, especially in the summer and in the middle of the winter. That meant filling the bathtub with maybe three inches, maybe four inches of water. For that reason, we had those spring-loaded taps that I mentioned. Again, this is going back 50 years ago.

Of course we had to build and maintain our own septic bed. I have a similar system at my present home, which is on the farm right across the road from the home farm. Half the homes in my riding have their own septic system, have their own septic tank, and the others rely on wells—they've dug their own wells over the years—or, as I do, you truck water in from town. We have a system in Woodhouse township of water distribution, pretty well the same as a system I saw in Havana, Cuba: water trucks. My water bill went up \$5. I pay \$85 for a load now, and depending on whether my daughter is home or not, that's about once a month that we have to fill up our cistern.

So I personally consider water a valuable resource. I'm somewhat dismayed at the very brief amount of time the government has spent on this so far. It's a valuable resource, and much of it, in my view, relies on what I refer to as a more frugal usage of water based on access to the latest technology—although those old spring-loaded taps work pretty well.

I understand that most Canadians believe they live in one of the most water-rich nations on Earth, and I think many politicians and much of the media seem to perpetuate what could well be a myth. They repeat the notion that Canada has 20% of the world's fresh water. I've seen figures where it's closer to 7%; that's roughly equal to Canada's share of the world's land area, which is 7%. So an argument can be made that Canada's purported abundance in water is a myth.

The other thing: A very small part of our water is located close to where most of us live. Nearly half of Canadian water drains into the Arctic Ocean or into Hudson Bay. Some 12% of Canada is covered by lakes and rivers, but only 3% in inhabited regions where it can be effectively used. The Great Lakes, which were mentioned earlier, rank among the 15 largest lakes in the world, but the bulk of their volume is glacial stock left over from the melting of the continental glaciers, and the renewal of the Great Lakes is only about 1% a year.

In Canada we get rainfall, of course. We receive nearly 720 cubic miles of renewable fresh water every year; in metric, that's 3,000 cubic kilometres. So our rainfall, the water that we access in the Dominion of Canada, is about the same as in China or in Indonesia. We're dwarfed by what Russia receives. They receive 5,000 cubic kilometres and we receive 3,000 cubic kilometres. Brazil receives 8,000 cubic kilometres and the United States is not far behind Canada with respect to rainfall.

1520

One other aspect: When people talk about the crisis in the world's water and the coming crisis in water, it's not necessarily just about a crisis in supply of water to drink; it's also supply of water to grow food. By far the bulk of global water withdrawals are for agriculture—80% or more, in many nations. Again, it takes an awful lot of water to raise beef. It takes an awful lot of water to raise grain or dairy and produce milk.

I think we all understand that clean water is essential to the health of Ontario, to a prosperous Ontario. It's a very basic, essential element—there's no question—and all concerned agree that it's worthy of not only our protection but our promotion.

There's little doubt as well that the international community is beginning to put a much higher value on water. They're beginning in many ways to have a much better understanding of the importance of clean water.

A number of years ago I spent time in Kandahar. I remember buying some fruit from a roadside vendor; it was plums. I said, "I can't buy these. They're covered"—they were dirty and they had stains on them. The vendor said, "Well, that's no problem." He grabbed a handful of plums, dipped them under his table and held them in the open sewer—a black, open sewer. They came up bright and shiny, but it didn't convince me; I didn't buy them. I have not been back to Afghanistan since 1969, and I regret to—I feel that there really isn't much of a change with many of the people in that country in their knowledge of germs. I tried to explain to this guy about the concept of germs, but they were too small. He couldn't see them and I didn't get my message across.

We can help countries like this. Ontario can help; Australia can help. China will be helping or is helping. We can push our expertise beyond our boundaries and we can help out. We've learned so much since Walkerton.

Australia, for example, has had some very serious droughts, as we all know. They're on the cutting edge of sustainable water management in many, many ways. A historic drought, climate variability—it's really of Biblical proportions. It's no surprise, then, that the Australians excel at utility governance. They excel at asset management, sustainable cost recovery, water trading, efficiency and conservation, as well as technological and managerial innovation, all at a level far beyond anything found even in the west, the most arid parts of the United States—of North America, really. I think of—oh, so many. Death Valley, for example, is a desert I hitchhiked across. Much of Peru on the coast is desert.

For many of these reasons, and because of things that we're now seeing in Australia, I would put this in the foresight box: Our government made that commitment 10 years ago, and before 10 years ago, to enact better practices. We made that commitment to enact all the recommendations of the O'Connor report. We committed to the centre of excellence in Walkerton, planting the seeds for top-notch water education and top-notch training, the kind of training the Koebel brothers did not

receive in Walkerton. That said, it's important to recognize the significance of the events that surrounded the Walkerton tragedy, and the subsequent inquiry that we initiated, in focusing the province's efforts in an unprecedented vigilance towards water usage and clean water.

If I have time, I can talk a little bit of history here. This legislation was introduced on the 10th anniversary of Walkerton, for whatever reason. It was an obvious opportunity for publicity. It's something they tried to realize through this legislation. Just to go back to what happened then, it was in May 2000 when Walkerton's drinking water system became contaminated with bacteria, primarily *E. coli* 0157:H7. Seven people died, more than 2,300 became ill and the community was devastated.

There were obviously widespread feelings of frustration, anger and insecurity. Seven years previously, in 1993, 100 people died in Milwaukee because of cryptosporidium. There were problems—I'm not sure how long ago this was—in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. They suffered a tragedy with tainted water.

Just to wrap up, here are some World Health Organization figures: In 2003, they estimated that six million people died because of a lack of clean water and sanitation. So, I sincerely hope this legislation is up to the job. I'll hold my breath.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I had the opportunity to listen to my Conservative colleague, and I really want to ask him some questions that hopefully he can provide answers to.

This bill talks about exporting Ontario's water technology, but what I'm confronted with—and I see it in some communities in rural Ontario, I see it in a number of communities in northern Ontario, I see it in some of the older urban communities and I certainly see it in a great number of the First Nations—is that people in Ontario do not have access to clean, safe, reliable water. The technology exists, but the issue is one of cost.

I know of communities that have installed some of the latest water supply technology, and the complaint I hear from people in the community is, "My water bill has skyrocketed through the roof. We can't afford it. We're going to have to leave. We're going to have to move somewhere else."

First Nations know of the technology but do not have the money to be able to afford the technology. I can tell you that I've spoken with a number of municipal representatives who say, "Look, we recognize that our city is going to have to substantially improve and update our technology and our pipes, but our issue is, how do we pay for this?"

I read this legislation, which somehow seems to talk about a futuristic state of the world, but I think what people in Ontario want to know is, what is this government going to do to help us, help our communities, afford safe, clean drinking water?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I paid attention to the remarks of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, and it confirms what I said earlier: The Tories just don't get it.

We need, and we now have, an internationally competitive industry that sells our skills here in Ontario in water management. Other countries are not only willing to pay, but it is, in fact, their demand for our expertise here in Ontario that is causing Ontario companies to grow at extraordinary rates. Why are the members of the opposition opposed to the creation of high-value, high-tech jobs? Why are they opposed to expanding our tax base? Why are they opposed to building a better future for the kids who are in our universities learning exactly these skills?

Other countries are willing to buy some really important things from Ontario. Let me list just a few: water management where scarce fresh water doesn't exist; water recovery from either salt or brackish water or from contaminated areas; and irrigation technology to enable crops to grow without the type of wasteful use that, for example, drains the entire of the mighty Colorado River long before it reaches the gulf of Baja near Mexico.

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Waste water management to minimize water usage in sewage or in municipal uses: It is not true that China, Korea and Australia are way ahead of us, as incorrectly asserted by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. Indeed, in many areas, they are behind us and trying to play catch-up. This legislation and similar legislation have fostered right here in Ontario a world-class water management industry that Ontario Conservatives have paid no attention to. They just don't get it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to compliment and give credit to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, who has just spoken for an hour. He's our environment critic, and he provided the lead-off speech for our caucus on Bill 72, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. As usual, he gave a very thoughtful presentation and a detailed and constructive critique of this government's legislation in this respect.

I just want to echo a couple of his themes. He questioned where the financial analysis is. Of course, the government will have such a thing. I'm sure that there was a financial analysis provided to the Minister of the Environment of the day, John Gerretsen, when the bill was taken to cabinet initially. Unfortunately, the government has been unwilling or unable to produce that financial analysis. Surely, in these current economic times, given the state of the province's finances and of our relationship with our municipalities and so forth and the cost of living, you would anticipate and expect that the provincial government would be willing to share the facts on this so that we know how much this is going to cost. Then we can do, as we would be expected to do by the people of Ontario, a fair cost-benefit analysis of what they're proposing.

I heard one of the government members just now explain his perspective on the issue, but the fact is that if indeed Ontario companies have expertise and have an opportunity to export this expertise abroad and create jobs, I'm not sure that Bill 72 is going to enhance that. I certainly am interested in hearing more from the government as this debate unfolds, but I would also add an idea that the member for Haldimand–Norfolk expressed support for: There need to be public hearings on this bill. I think that those public hearings should be extensive. I would hope that the government is willing to allow the committee that will deal with this bill to travel so that people can have their say across the province. I'm sure there will be a lot of people who will want to come forward and ask these very questions: "What is this going to cost and to what extent is it going to represent an increase in my water bill?"

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the fact that the member from Haldimand–Norfolk ranged very widely in discussing this bill in his hour's time. He noticed something that I think is quite important which people should keep in mind: that, in fact, Ontario in the past has suffered from droughts. Those droughts can be severe—noticeable even to the member when he was a child. In fact, they would have a huge impact on our way of life, on our agricultural sector and on the food that we have available for ourselves. So when we're talking about water, we have to talk not simply about how we deal with water in our buildings, how we deal with water in our homes, but we have to be aware of the larger question of supply itself and the changing reality that we are faced with in this world, the changing reality that will mean that the interior of continents—and quite certainly we're at the interior in this place—are going to be much drier in the years to come.

When I look at this bill, I see a lack of the boldness that we really need to take on this issue. I see a failure to adequately and broadly look at the full context of the challenges that are before us and take hold of those challenges and deal with the issues that we're going to be facing environmentally and economically in the years to come.

Very shortly, I will be getting my chance to speak on this bill as well. But it is unfortunate that this act that's before us, for reasons that may become more apparent in the course of the debate, is so narrow, so vague and so unclear as to how it will be funded and how, in the end, it will be delivered.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I thank the members who responded.

The member for Toronto–Danforth will be doing a one-hour speech. His colleague, the member for Kenora–Rainy River, made mention of the concern about the cost. The member from Wellington–Halton Hills as well has a

concern. This has to square with economics. We have a bit of a pilot project. MPP David Caplan brought in a waste water sustainability bill, and he pegged the cost at \$600 a year. I can only imagine what this government's bill is going to cost us, but we do need to have the price tag on this one. At my office, certainly since the House last sat, I've been receiving calls from people. They did not want to pay that eco fee. They made that very clear.

We door-knocked this summer. I went around to 1,500 doors in June and July. People felt they could not afford that HST. They knew it had been debated for about a year. With the electricity bill, and then you add the McGuinty water bill to that, there are people out there who do not have that extra \$5 or \$10 or \$15 in their pocket, let alone, say, \$600 down the road to pay for a water bill.

There were comments from the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, who indicated that China and Australia had not surpassed Ontario as far as water technology. Perhaps the parliamentary assistant should have rewritten her speech to indicate that Ontario would be a world leader rather than a North American leader, but I know they limited that goal, that target, to North America for a reason.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's quite a shock to be back from a summer of door-knocking and now be here. It is a very different reality.

Today, for those who are joining us outside the chamber, we're debating the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. I want to talk briefly about what the bill claims to do, and then I want to talk about the context within which this bill has been presented, the context within which Ontario is grappling with questions of water and the performance of this government when it comes to environmental issues, and then talk about what the specific weaknesses and strengths of the bill are and what I believe is needed to make it truly useful to the people of this province.

This bill claims to stimulate Ontario-based clean water industries by creating municipal demand for clean water technology and by supporting clean water technology development. It aims to reduce water use in Ontario. It sets what are called aspirational targets for water conservation. It enables the minister to require municipalities and public agencies to develop water sustainability plans and prescribe changes to plans if targets are not met. It revises the building code to include water conservation. It enables prescription of water efficiency standards for appliances and products. Those are all the stated goals of the bill before us. Those are the claims that are made for what this bill will do for this society.

I use the term "claims" when I talk about this government's bill and when I talk about this government's efforts because, in fact, this Liberal government has not delivered environmentally the way that people in Ontario need to have environmental issues delivered on. According to the Environmental Commissioner's report

last December, the current actions of this government fall 30% short of achieving the greenhouse gas reductions that were promised for 2014 and 45% short of the greenhouse gas reductions promised by 2020. I had an opportunity earlier today, in statements, to talk briefly about that, but the simple reality is this: Climate change is going to substantially affect the availability of water in this province. It will cause drought, it will cause flooding, and it will change the water regime within which we operate. And if this government cannot even meet its own targets for dealing with an issue that it says is significant to the future society as a whole, what hope is there for it to actually deliver on a smaller bill, a bill far less critical to the well-being of the province as a whole?

1540

When the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario talked about this issue, it was very clear that further actions were needed to reduce emissions from transportation. He understood the consequences of not acting: the consequences in terms of impact on infrastructure in our daily lives, the impact on the price of food.

Anyone in this chamber who works in the agricultural sector knows that it's critical to have the right amount of water at the right time. Too much, and if you are talking about plowing and seeding, you can't. Too little, and it doesn't matter what you're growing, you are not going to get a crop.

The Environmental Commissioner noted that one of the areas where, in fact, action wasn't taking place, where this government was falling down, was in dealing with transportation. The government's response to not actually delivering the goods on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation was to cut \$4 billion from the Transit City project. That will lead to delay and cancellation of long-awaited transit lines in the GTA, truncating of a project that is badly needed to reduce congestion, smog, greenhouse gas emissions. This city and this province are poorer because of that decision.

This government is failing to stem urban sprawl. When I arrived here in this chamber in 2006, we were debating the greater Golden Horseshoe smart growth plan. The plan that had initially been introduced was very extensive and had the aim of increasing the density in urban areas, reducing sprawl, reducing the spillover of urban development into greenfields. The simple reality was that that bill—step by step, page by page, clause by clause—was pruned back until when it was finally introduced for third reading, commentators like the Pembina Institute and the Neptis Foundation, who had provided background information on the original bill, said simply that it was not clear that this bill would do any different than provide business-as-usual growth, business-as-usual sprawl, business-as-usual emissions and congestion.

This government did not take the advice of those who understood what had to be done to deal with sprawl. Instead, it continues with highway expansion plans, continues with measures to get around the whole Places

to Grow Act, the ministerial zoning order for Bradford West Gwillimbury. This government, understanding the consequences of inaction, having studied the issue to the point where it was able to present detailed legislation, still was not willing to act and do what was necessary.

That is an instructive piece of history when we look at the bill we're dealing with today. It isn't just a failure to act with regard to climate targets, with regard to urban sprawl, with regard to transportation. But let's not forget that this government, in the past, has trumpeted its ability to take on the recycling issue, the waste management issue. This summer, it became clear that the government's waste reduction programs, the imposition of new eco fees on the public, were not achieving the aims that were originally set out and in fact didn't do what people expect would happen: that industry responsible for creating hazardous waste would assume the cost and responsibility for dealing with those things.

In fact, as the Toronto Star reports, Ontario's high-profile electronic waste disposal program is failing to recycle millions of computers and televisions it promised to keep out of landfill. I think that's pretty instructive. That's a high-profile program. We deal with millions of electronic objects in this society. It is of consequence to us that we are able to acquire them, concentrate them, recycle them and make sure that we don't have toxic metals and toxic chemicals going into our landfill and our water table.

The Toronto Star reported that, "In its first year, the Ontario Electronic Stewardship—a private agency created by provincial regulation—gathered only a third of the 42,000 tonnes of toxin-laced equipment it was originally supposed to collect, according to reports obtained by the Star."

Then-Environment Minister John Gerretsen wanted to know why. "I have been disappointed that (OES) haven't been able to meet the targets," Gerretsen said in an interview. "I don't know what has gone wrong."

I can tell you that there are not great mysteries here. When private industry is allowed to regulate itself, then things are not going to go according to the rosy plan that was set out by the McGuinty government. Those industries will look after their own interests first, and secondarily deal with the public policy issue.

The spokesperson for the OES, the Ontario electronic recycling group, "blamed the problems on growing pains of a new program."

They said, in terms of how it's supposed to work: "Companies or non-profits are designated as 'collectors' to pick up used electronics homeowners toss out by the millions. OES pays collectors up to \$235 a tonne out of 'eco fees' contained in the cost of each new electronic gadget sold (from \$2 to \$26 each). The OES then divides the haul from the collectors among eight approved recyclers, which extract usable components and safely dispose of toxic materials, like mercury or beryllium."

I'm addressing this whole question of failure in recycling because in the end, the credibility of this bill is based on whether or not this government has a track

record of delivering the goods. In this area of recycling, of meeting its greenhouse gas emission targets, of dealing with transportation, it's not meeting its targets. It's not meeting the goals that it has set out.

"Canada," according to the Star, "bans the export of e-waste to developing countries, but Canadian companies are allowed to ship materials to brokers in the US," and the United States "has no rules against transporting materials offshore."

"The current electronic recycling program in Ontario is a failure," said one of the people familiar with this industry.

"It doesn't meet its targets for diversion and environmentally-sound recycling. And it provides no incentive for investment into green technology and jobs in the province."

"The problems came to a head in January when Waste Diversion Ontario filed a rare 'failure to comply' notice against the OES, whose board includes Sony, Hewlett Packard and Best Buy executives. It told OES it had to do a better job of collecting the material and selling consumers on the program."

Critics, including you, Madam Speaker, when you're not in that chair, and others who are concerned about the environment in this province, say that the Ontario electronic collections system "must be more accountable because the public is supporting the program financially." People put in tens of millions of dollars a year to make this program work, and yet, as I've said to you, the program failed miserably in not meeting its targets.

The head of the organization said, "It is just our first year." But when you look at other jurisdictions, you find that they do somewhat better. Saskatchewan, in its first year, "collected 1.7 kilograms of e-waste per capita, compared to an estimated 1.3 kilograms in Ontario, the largest consumer of electronics in the country."

That this is a first-year problem, I don't buy. This is a government that announces grand programs and does not follow through on delivery. It happens more frequently than not. It is of consequence to the people of this province, and it certainly is of consequence when it comes to our discussing this bill and whether in fact it will deliver water conservation, whether in fact it will deliver economic development and whether in fact it will address the changing challenges that we face environmentally and economically in Ontario.

1550

Just to finish up on electronic waste: When it got rolling a year ago, the Ontario Electronic Stewardship had a target of 42,000 tonnes of material to collect. Only 17,000 tonnes have been collected. That's a miserable failure—only slightly more than a third. The target was downgraded to 33,000 tonnes partway through last year, but they still fell short. That's a very substantial failure.

In the end, this is a government that naively trusts industry to run programs in the public interest rather than for their own benefit—not a reasonable assumption. The consequences are too frequently very clear and negative. When we look at the energy issue, this is a government

that is ramping up hydro rates for ratepayers with little to show in terms of reduced usage or emissions. It has no current energy plan, which is an astounding thing.

Again, when I came here in 2006 the electricity supply plan was introduced, and if you remember, Speaker, it was rushed through; there were no environmental hearings. Ultimately, under the next energy minister, Mr. Smitherman, it was found to be inadequate and wanting, and was set aside. We were told at the time that a new plan would come forward dealing with conservation targets and efficiency targets, and that didn't happen.

So right now this province continues to make commitments in the billions of dollars without any coherent plan for dealing with electricity use, electricity production or electricity transmission for decades to come. That's the record of this government when it deals with large-scale infrastructure and environmental issues.

Two years ago the government called for new conservation and green energy targets from the Ontario Power Authority. They still don't have them. We still await them. This past summer, the government cut its solar feed-in tariff at the last minute when hundreds of Ontarians had put together business plans and submitted proposals based on a particular rate for the electricity they would be providing. People who had made very substantial commitments found that they were in trouble.

This government, instead of giving people confidence that it could deliver, introduced a major bump in the road. My sense is that a lot of members of this provincial Parliament received phone calls and emails from people in rural and small-town Ontario who had made the decision to go forward and were finding themselves out on a limb.

Ultimately, the government backed off, but only because it was very clear that there was going to be an explosion in rural Ontario over what people saw as their being misled—I'm being generous, Speaker, and I know there are parliamentary language rules you would enforce. They saw themselves as being misled. They were profoundly angry. That kind of approach undermines any confidence that this bill will actually deliver what has to be delivered and will actually make the differences that Ontario needs to see made.

This government plunged ahead with a billion-dollar or more smart meter program that is well over budget and is hiking consumer hydro costs without showing any evidence of reducing consumption or shifting usage. You don't have to go very far with Google to see what the American experience was with smart meters: The value of the energy they saved was less than the cost of putting in the meters. Thus, those meters had to be subsidized by electricity companies, which is why consumer groups in the United States opposed them, because they could see they weren't actually delivering reductions in energy consumption; they were adding to people's electricity bills.

Conservation and efficiency is the cheapest thing you can do in terms of providing supply. Smart meters don't meet that test, and yet we've gone ahead with that.

Instead of putting billions into people's homes to allow them to cut their electricity bills and make their lives more affordable, we put in meters that will make their lives more difficult and that will, in the end, not deliver the efficiency and conservation that Ontario needs to make sure its electricity system works well.

This government, in this bill claiming to be so advanced environmentally, is still committed to substantial construction of nuclear power plants in Ontario—construction that we can't afford; construction that will divert funds away from conservation, renewable power and efficiency; construction that will undermine the competitiveness of this province in the decades to come. That's where this government is at in the whole area of efficiency in environment and in energy.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has said that this province, this Liberal government, doesn't even have a comprehensive plan for efficiency and conservation. He made a number of very instructive recommendations as to how Ontario should actually be dealing with efficiency and conservation in the electricity field. He recommended "that the secretary of cabinet direct the development of a comprehensive energy conservation strategy encompassing all major energy sources used in Ontario. The strategy should be developed with public input." Now, I think that's instructive for the bill we're dealing with today, because this bill talks about accelerating water conservation technology but doesn't put forward any targets for the amount of water consumption we'll be reducing. We haven't figured it out on the energy side of the equation; we are repeating the mistakes that were made on that side of the equation.

The Environmental Commissioner's recommendations are very practical. If we need a comprehensive energy conservation strategy, we certainly need a comprehensive water conservation strategy. Why has this government not learned from the mistakes it's made in the energy field? Or do they simply see that that isn't a mistake and that's the way they operate? That they want to make sure that things are vague and they want to make sure that things are narrow so that they don't have to deal either with having their performance assessed or coming into conflict with those interests that want to have a high level of consumption? That's not clear, but to have ignored what the Environmental Commissioner has said about energy when this bill was written is a huge error.

The Environmental Commissioner recommends further that we need to "stabilize electricity policy, and provide clarity and certainty to that policy." The Environmental Commissioner recommended "that the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure move quickly to clarify the role of the integrated power system plan and to finalize the key conservation regulations and directives under the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009." He's right. Frankly, we should be doing the same with water. There's no question that electricity is critical to the functioning of a society; so is water. Shut down electricity in this town and it shuts down very fast. Shut down water in this town and within hours you would

have very substantial disruptions; and I think that's a gross understatement. We don't have a comprehensive water plan for this province, and this bill isn't going to be introducing it.

The Environmental Commissioner, with regard to efficiency and conservation in the energy field, said that we needed to "examine the role of benchmarking and energy targets." The Environmental Commissioner recommends "that the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure establish targets to reduce provincial electricity consumption. These consumption targets will supplement the province's existing targets to reduce peak electricity demand and fulfill the government's commitment to build a culture of conservation." Well, yeah. With no offence to the Environmental Commissioner, you don't have to be a genius to make that recommendation. Yes, you need to set targets. They need to be clear. They need to give you a framework within which you're going to act.

1600

In the course of preparing to speak today, I came across a notation that California's target is to reduce water consumption by 20%. Well, there's no mention in this document or in any of the accompanying documentation as to how much we plan to reduce water consumption in Ontario, but certainly it would be helpful in assessing whether or not this bill was useful if we had a target that people could measure its viability against.

The McGuinty government should have learned from its experience with energy how, in fact, it needs to approach the water issue and incorporated that into the documentation before us.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, talking about energy, "recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure establish reportable benchmarking by sector. This would assist the government in deciding whether to establish targets to reduce the use of natural gas, oil, propane and transportation fuels, and would make the targets meaningful."

In fact, with a small amount of translation, that applies entirely to what we're talking about today because there are different sectors using different amounts of water in different ways. There's the industrial sector. There's the resource processing sector. There's the food processing sector. There's industrial/commercial. There's residential. There are different areas with different potentials and different levels of consumption.

Again, this bill and the documentation that comes with the bill do not address what those targets need to be and do not talk about the sectoral needs of this province, again reflecting the fact that this bill is vague and, at the same time, narrow. It only talks about a small part of water consumption, and even then, within that it's vague.

The Environmental Commissioner "recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure develop a reporting mechanism to track progress on directives which ensures accountability and transparency." It makes sense to me. It makes sense that people would be able to track whether or not this bill, if adopted, was actually

implemented along the lines that those who put it forward claimed it would perform. That would be really useful. I don't see that here. That's something, again, that should be taken from the energy sector—from the Environmental Commissioner's recommendations on the energy sector—and put in place so that people can actually judge whether or not the government is delivering on what it says it's going to deliver on. Right now it doesn't have to deliver much of anything other than trying to get the bill passed, to say in an election leaflet coming soon to a home near you, "We have a plan." That may be the full and total function of this particular bill.

I've talked about this government's record when it comes to climate change, when it comes to energy and when it comes to dealing with waste, and in all of those areas there are substantial failings and the nature of those failings says to us that it is legitimate to have real concerns about whether or not this bill will deliver what needs to be delivered.

But I want to talk about water itself for a moment—and my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River did that earlier today—and that's that this government has also failed to protect the quality of water. The *Toronto Star* reported in 2008 that the Canadian Medical Association Journal noted that Ontario had 679 "boil water" alerts between 2006 and 2008—the most in any province. So, I think the simple reality is that from time to time water systems will fail, and if people are alert, monitoring and taking action to ensure that the public is protected, we shouldn't be totally surprised. But for us to have more "boil water" alerts than any other province is noteworthy.

What the *Star* went on to report: "Hundreds of 'boil water' advisories have been issued in Ontario in the past two years, placing communities on high alert for tainted drinking water, the Canadian Medical Association Journal reports.

"In a story published yesterday, the CMAJ reported that since 2006—in 2006, Dalton McGuinty was Premier, just so that it's on the record—"Ontario had 679 such alerts—warnings by public health departments telling residents they cannot ensure the safety of their drinking water without boiling it first.

"But outside experts say there are many reasons why such advisories are issued, ranging from the bureaucratic, such as incomplete water sampling, to the systemic, such as problems in the water treatment plant process, to active health risks, such as toxic contamination.

"Without an analysis of the reasons for each advisory, it is not clear that water is putting people at risk, said University of Toronto professor Ron Hofmann, who specializes in drinking-water engineering....

"The CMAJ reported nationwide figures for boil-water advisories, with Ontario, the most populous province, in the lead with 679 since 2006, followed by British Columbia with 530 and Newfoundland with 228. The CMAJ reported there were 1,766 boil-water advisories in place as of March 31, 2008."

Now, "boil water" advisories are not in place everywhere. They tend to be focused on the most disad-

vantaged communities in this province. First Nations communities are the hardest hit. Eight of 21 First Nations communities listed on Health Canada as having high-risk drinking water systems and drinking water advisories in effect are in Ontario. That's substantial for a province that went through Walkerton, understands the consequences of failing to deal with contaminated water, has made very visible and public commentary about the need to deal with it, and still, eight of 21 of the First Nations communities listed as having high-risk drinking water systems are here in Ontario.

Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen says that First Nations issues were among his concerns" when drafting this Water Opportunities Act: "It would not be right for Ontario to export our tremendous [water treatment] technology without first making sure that our people, including First Nations, have the best protection when it comes to the quality of their water."

I think he's right. I think it's going to be hard to sell technology abroad when people know that there are ongoing problems with water in communities in this province such that people have to boil water before they can drink it.

Chief Bryan LaForme of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, in April: "Walkerton had an effect in mainstream Ontario, but not in First Nations." Twenty-five per cent of his southern Ontario community does not have access to clean drinking water. "We're still underfunded. We're still under capacity. All my staff have to multitask."

Slow implementation of the Clean Water Act, passed in 2006: That act passed in 2006, but the source water protection plans for watersheds have only started to be developed and won't be completed until August 2012, six years; it's four years now. Those source water protection plans which we were told, and rightly, were so urgent to put together in 2006 still await that putting together, still are not complete. There are years to go before that act—part of that act—will be in effect.

What does that mean in terms of this water conservation bill that's before us today? What it says to me is that, potentially, that act before was passed in the lead-up to an election because there had to be something on an election flyer that said we were taking action on water. This may well be our 2011 election flyer water act. We will see.

This government has failed to address a number of other issues when it comes to threats to water. It continues to spread sewage sludge on farm fields, something that is a huge issue in parts of rural Ontario and a concern with regard to health and the environment. It continues to undervalue water in Ontario, creating a huge backlog of repairs and upgrades to municipal water and sewage systems.

1610

We're also a province where we have failed to address the whole issue of water bottling companies that pump out millions of litres of water from watersheds, paying virtually nothing, one cent per 3,000 litres—an amazing bargain. I'm not sure about you, Madam Speaker, but I

have had complaints from people, emails from rural communities, saying that their water tables have been affected because water bottling plants have taken so much out of their area. There's a lack of a holistic water conservation element in our school curriculums, and just in terms of the operation of the province itself, the provincial government, there's the continued sale of bottled water in schools, hospitals and government facilities.

So this is a government that has not done well on the environmental file, has had some blow-ups, particularly with the eco fees this summer; that has not delivered on efficiency and conservation in the energy file, which is a dominant file in Ontario, a dominant issue in Ontario; and one that has had substantial weaknesses when it comes to the protection of water itself. That's one context, the performance of this government, when it comes forward with a bill saying that it's going to do something about water conservation.

There is the larger environmental context; I alluded to that earlier. Climate change is shifting rain patterns so that areas that have been dry may well become much drier or, in the alternative, may have to deal with flooding. We saw the impact this summer in Russia, we saw it in China and we saw it in Pakistan. Those changes in the availability of water, the volume that is dumped on any given area at any one time, those changes are going to make it much more difficult for us to run systems well and safely, and are going to make it much more urgent to conserve our water and use it as efficiently as possible. That has to shape the way this government looks at a water conservation bill.

But there's another aspect, and that's the whole question of new industry. I gather, in many ways, that's the way those who drafted this bill felt it would be dealt with, that in fact we had to use water efficiency legislation to drive the development of water efficiency technology. But as I said right at the beginning, this bill is so narrow in its focus that I worry—and I think it's a reasonable worry—that we will only address a very small part of the market and that we have a very good chance of being left behind.

Other countries understand the need to develop new technologies. I was reading an article in the New York Times just last week. China now has one million people working in its renewable energy sector. Three years ago Germany, with 300,000 or 350,000, was the world's leader in terms of people working in that sector. But a million people in China work in that sector now—renewable energy. In five years, they have vaulted ahead. They now make more than half the world's solar panels. They, this year, will be making more than 50% of the world's wind turbines. They understand the potential for green technology to reshape industry in the decades to come. They know where the jobs are going to be; they know what the world markets are going to be; and they've decided to be very bold, very energetic, very audacious with their approach. We haven't been. We've been very narrow, and that is a huge problem for us, a huge problem for us economically and a huge problem

for us in terms of our ability to make sure that we generate the wealth in this society to allow to us live good lives.

I'll use one example. Korea, along with Japan and China, have seen renewable energy and green technology as huge growth areas. That's part of the reason that when a consortium was put together to accelerate the Green Energy Act, it wasn't headed by Ontario Power Generation and pulled together with a group of Ontario companies; it was headed by the Korea Electric Power Corporation, with their private partner Samsung, who came into Ontario.

We aren't the leader in putting together that sort of industrial consortium; the Koreans are. That's of consequence to the long-term viability of our economy and our long-term standard of living. This bill needs to avoid that timid approach that has put us in a situation where others are surging ahead while we're running to try to catch up. Some elements of the bill have the potential to be useful if the bill is amended and if the regulations that go with the bill are written in a way that understands what has to happen in Ontario.

The goal of conservation alone is important. We use too much water. If we reduce our water use, we can reduce the burden on our water infrastructure and reduce the cost of building new infrastructure. That's a simple one right there. If you're going to actually make Ontario an affordable and competitive place that's attractive for investment, having an ability to contain your infrastructure costs is of consequence to us. So, I can't argue with pushing forward on conservation. I've already made my remarks about whether what is before us is adequate, but the general idea is one that should be in place.

It makes sense to foster, in Ontario, a culture where people understand the need to conserve, where they don't see it as exotic or a problem of deprivation but as an opportunity to build their economy and protect their environment. And obviously, it's an opportunity to develop our expertise in growing markets of water conservation and efficiency.

But there are some real questions we have to ask about this bill, and that this government needs to answer about this bill, as we go forward. Will the bill, as written, keep water affordable for Ontarians? That matters a lot. Affordability is not a frill. Affordability is not just a question of trying to sound popular. Affordability has an impact in terms of jobs created and companies coming here or not coming here, but also in terms of public health.

In the 1990s, with the privatization of water supply companies in the UK under Thatcher, one of the realities there was a growth in intestinal diseases because in order to save money, people washed less—not everybody, but people who didn't have much money in first place. And so, what was a question of 10 or 20 pence that people had to put out for water—a relatively small amount of money—became an expense for those families because they had to deal with illness, and for the national health because people were getting sick.

So, water has to be affordable. People have to be able to buy water and not have to spend a lot of time thinking about whether they can wash and keep their homes and premises clean. Affordability is a key issue. This government needs to explain how this bill will be structured so that people will not be in a position where the affordability of water is going to be threatened.

Will this bill ensure that all Ontarians, including First Nations, have access to clean water? Well, the bill, as written now, doesn't seem to address that issue. My hope is that in the course of debate and hearings, the government will address that shortfall: again, an issue raised by my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River and one that has to be on our minds.

Will this bill primarily benefit corporations seeking to make a profit? There was a conference that was held in the spring by a number of companies that were looking at this Clean Water Act. A friend of mine attended that conference and reported the enthusiasm that private companies had about the restructuring they saw as potentially happening from this bill, making municipal water companies more open to privatization—acquisition by those private companies. Now, whether they were engaged in pipe dreams—I'm sorry for the pun—or whether they were engaged in a simple process of marketing a conference to some companies and made something up, I don't know, but that question needs to be addressed in the course of debate and amendment.

1620

How much will this bill help the environment? In fact, until we know what sort of targets are envisioned, what sort of real reductions in water consumption are envisioned, until we know how broad the reach of technology is going to be, we can't say. How many jobs will be created in Ontario? A similar question. Those things have to be addressed.

The bill has been commented on by a variety of people. The Ontario Water Conservation Alliance raises the question of the importance of affordability. Again, for similar reasons—for competitiveness, for health—water has to be affordable in this province. They have a concern, and I do as well, about a lack of commitment to funding to deal with the needs of small and medium-sized municipalities that may not, in fact, be in a position to make the investments that this bill may require. Some municipalities—well, all municipalities—are financially stressed at this point. Some may be stressed to the point where they can't actually deliver, period. That issue needs to be addressed.

The Ontario alliance that is pushing the idea of a conservation bill feels that there needs to be a low-income water protection program in Ontario. It would be interesting to me to hear the details of how they approach that, but I certainly think that that should be kept in mind when we're looking at affordability and the cost of investing in new infrastructure.

The environmental groups that are interested in expanding green alternatives, in expanding conservation, also want to make sure that we look at lower-cost green

alternatives. Their brief on this reads: The proposed act “should keep water affordable by promoting more efficient use of our water infrastructure investments and reduce our infrastructure deficit which will continue to grow if we rely on expanding traditional forms of water infrastructure. Integrated water systems, innovatively redesigned, can rein in infrastructure costs, save taxpayer money and ... ensure water needs are kept within the carrying capacity of watersheds.” They suggest reducing costs through green infrastructure: managed or constructed natural elements which manage water flows in the same way as grey concrete infrastructure.

I’ll give you an example, and you will be familiar with this if you have ever walked down a tree-lined street as a rainstorm has started. Those trees will catch and hold large volumes of water so that you can walk relatively dryly under those trees for the first half hour or hour of a rainstorm. That investment in what’s called leafy green infrastructure pays multiple benefits. If in fact there’s an investment to line the streets of Ontario with trees so they can capture that water, there’s less of a stormwater surge at the beginning of a rainstorm. If you have that kind of investment, you reduce the temperature on the streets, reducing demand for air conditioning in people’s homes. And frankly, because it’s a lot more pleasant to walk under a shady tree on a hot day, you increase the chances that people will walk rather than drive. So there are multiple benefits to that kind of infrastructure, and that kind of infrastructure should be included in this bill. It’s cheaper than putting in new concrete pipes, it’s cheaper than expanding that capacity underground and it provides us with multiple benefits. That sort of thinking has to be incorporated into this act to make it useful.

I have a general concern around the lack of clarity regarding purpose in the way the act will be implemented, because normally in the NDP we’d applaud initiatives to improve water conservation, but we have to start asking questions when conservation goals are combined within an act that’s aimed largely at promoting industry. Although I think it makes a lot of sense to promote industry and use environmental initiatives to do so, let’s make sure that there’s no confusion about what has to come first. There seems to be a blurring of responsibilities—of the environment minister’s to protect water resources and that of the Ontario government to promote industry.

It would be useful for us to know what actual technologies are being talked about, and my hope is that the minister will clarify that in the weeks to come. We think that it makes sense to set standards for conservation, but as I referred to earlier, given the financial condition of most municipalities, it makes sense to us as well that the whole question of affordability for municipalities is addressed in the course of bringing the bill forward.

We want to make sure that the technologies that are provided or promoted by the bill are ones that are appropriate and actually deliver savings. We do not want the water equivalent of smart meters to be imposed on

municipalities across Ontario, which will burden them with higher costs and will not lead to actual conservation or efficient use of water. One of the questions the government is going to have to answer in the course of this debate is whether or not it will be providing funding to help municipalities deal with the new initiatives that they’re going to bring forward and any requirements that are going to be there to upgrade infrastructure.

It’s not clear how this act will be used to promote local green jobs in the face of competition in the area of clean water technologies from foreign corporations. Are we going to have a requirement that with these new technologies there will be a domestic content clause that will increase the chances that the jobs generated by the act are actually jobs that are kept here in Ontario? Will funding that’s made available actually be provided to people in Ontario for local green products?

There are concerns that this act addresses household consumption of water but not industrial consumption of water. Given that household consumption represents only about 5% to 10% of water consumption in Ontario, it says both that we are ignoring the greatest part of water consumption, if we’re concerned about reducing water consumption, and also that we are ignoring the overwhelming bulk of the market for development of new water technologies. If in this bill we’re only going to be addressing 5% to 10% of water consumption, then one has to ask how big an impact it’s going to have and how useful it’s going to be.

This bill, if written properly, could have huge beneficial impacts. If it took in the full range of water consumption, if it considered the full range of efficiency and conservation technologies, if it was given the financial support that is going to actually be needed to implement the changes that will be needed at the municipal level, this bill has the potential to be useful. But it is entirely unclear to me and, I think, other members of this Legislature as to whether or not those particular questions are going to be addressed.

We know that municipalities, which are going to be central to actually delivering the goods, are cash-strapped and pulled in a variety of directions to provide infrastructure for transportation, for waste management, and for bridges and roads. There’s a lot of competition for those dollars, and whatever this bill does, it has to make sure that that question is settled so that the actual efficiency and protection of water is delivered and not simply set aside or dealt with in a way that doesn’t place an unbearable burden on the backs of municipalities in Ontario.

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The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, says that for municipalities to meet the requirements of this act, expanded funding will be needed to be put in place.

The environmental groups that support the thrust of this bill call on the government to renew and continue small-systems water operating funds and take note of the special needs of small, remote and northern communities in applications to the capital water infrastructure finan-

cing program. Small, remote and northern communities may need specific financial support to prepare municipal water sustainability plans and obtain expertise to apply opportunities for greater sustainability in the plans.

Conservation may reduce costs in the long run and may do it in the short run, but in either case there are upfront capital costs, and those upfront capital costs are going to require assistance from the province to make sure they're affordable at the municipal level. We want to make sure that we don't have a system in Ontario of one tier of municipalities that has good, safe, abundant water that's affordable and another tier that doesn't have the water that it needs, can't afford water that it needs and can't be certain about the safety of that water.

One of the things I want to emphasize as we come to the end of this period is that municipal water services have to remain public. Environmental groups that support this conservation initiative say that they strongly encourage government to reinforce the principle that ownership and decision-making remain public for drinking water and waste water systems. This bill requires language addressing the protection of public ownership. There's no discussion in this bill about public-to-public partnerships between municipalities and First Nations for the provision of water. The bill doesn't talk about what happens if the water conservation plans of municipalities aren't adequate. It needs to address that. We need to know if this bill is going to be effective in blocking privatization models that include the outsourcing of water utility plant operations and maintenance, design/build operation contracts and sale of government-owned assets to private water companies.

In the end, this bill needs strong targets, it needs funding, and it needs a commitment from the government to make sure that the jobs that flow from these investments are jobs that are provided to Ontarians.

I look forward to further debate on this. It's my hope that this bill will be amended to the point where it will actually deliver the necessities that the people of this province have made very clear they need.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a pleasure to rise and comment on the remarks of my colleague from Toronto–Danforth. Certainly it was a very wide-ranging discussion that covered many areas that actually are not included in the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, but I would like to address one of his issues in relation to cost for municipalities, and also to just remind him of what our government has been doing over the last few years.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has committed almost \$1.8 billion for municipal water and waste water infrastructure through grant programs. In addition to that, some \$1.5 billion in affordable low-interest loans have been extended to municipalities through Infrastructure Ontario. Even very recently, on August 16, 2010, our government announced the launch of the third phase of the Ontario small waterworks assistance program to provide some \$50 million in capital funding over four

years so small communities can improve water conservation and efficiency in their water and waste water systems. So we are certainly committed to helping municipalities in their endeavours.

We feel that clearly, this is a good step forward. We have had major consultations already with stakeholders—I attended many of those myself—and bringing together industry, academia, municipalities and NGOs involved in environmental issues has been extremely instructive. Overall, we took their advice, and what you see in this bill is really a consensus view of the way we should go forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I want to commend the member from Toronto–Danforth for taking this legislation seriously. He spoke for an hour, and I thought he did a very good comparison of the approach in this legislation with the approach with respect to electricity and the Green Energy Act.

This bill could well become a pocketbook issue. That's a concern. We recognize that people are anxious about the cost of electricity. I am very concerned that if we're debating a piece of legislation now, a year or two down the road we're going to find people very anxious about the cost of their water bill. I know the member from Toronto–Danforth asked if this was affordable and he made mention of submissions he received with respect to the value of green infrastructure and better enabling us to be more efficient and more cost-effective—and in a sense, to lower the cost while bringing in improvements. I know this may have been the group the member was referring to. I was very pleased to receive the Environmental Bill of Rights registry from Ecojustice. They talked about their concerns with affordability and brought forward their suggestions for green infrastructure.

There was one thing I tried to do 25 years ago when I built my house. I'm out in the country. I wanted to run my grey water through cattails, but the zoning, the municipality, would not allow that kind of an approach, where I could essentially clean up the grey water right on my own farm. That didn't fit with the infrastructure model in place at the time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to commend my colleague from Toronto–Danforth for raising a number of issues which need to be answered with respect to this bill. I especially want to commend him for raising once again what I think is a fundamental issue in Ontario. We have literally thousands of Ontario citizens who, on a daily basis, do not have access to safe, clean, reliable drinking water. I'm talking about the great number of people who live in First Nations communities in this province. We have a government that's talking about exporting technology outside of the province but doesn't seem to have an answer for those very people who live in the province. I can tell you that there are a number of people in the province who are a bit nonplussed by this.

It would seem to me that one of the first things, one of the fundamental things, we need to do is to ensure that people who live here in our own province, who contribute whatever they can to the daily life of the province, have access to safe, clean drinking water and the technology that allows that to happen.

Yes, affordability is a very big part of the equation. In many cases, people who live in these communities simply do not have, on their own, the economic wherewithal, and yet I have not heard anything—I don't see anything in the legislation. We've had a number of people from the government stand up and speak two-minute speeches, and we heard the parliamentary assistant, but I didn't hear anyone address this issue. It seems to me that's fundamental to this. It's fine to talk about these things, but the issue of affordability for people who live in Ontario is a fundamental question that needs to be answered.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes.

Mr. Rick Johnson: And Brock.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): And Brock.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Thank you, Speaker. It's a long name.

It's a pleasure to speak today, and I appreciate the comments that were made by the members from Toronto–Danforth, Oak Ridges–Markham, Haldimand–Norfolk, and Kenora–Rainy River, particularly Kenora–Rainy River. My mother was born in Fort Frances, and I am very aware—I grew up in that area as well and spent many summers there—that water is such an important component of that riding as well.

Clean water is vital to our well-being in this province. We need to protect and conserve our water resources for us, our children and our grandchildren. Our proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act is a key part of our Open Ontario plan to make Ontario a water technology leader. It's all about exporting our water expertise and not our water resources, and there are many companies in Ontario that are already leading the way.

My colleague from the NDP who spoke said that some communities may throw up their hands and say that this act could be a burden upon them, and I would just like to relate a story from my riding, where they're viewing this as an opportunity. We've been working with a group, the representatives from the city of Peterborough, the city of Kawartha Lakes, MPs, MPPs—my colleague Jeff Leal has been involved in these conversations—where we're working with the college on trying to develop a centre of excellence for water technologies. There's great expertise that exists currently at Fleming College. Dr. Brent Wootton is working extensively on programs, and I've found him a very inspirational person to deal with on all this. We're working on that because the water in my riding has such an impact. We have the lakes of

Haliburton, which fill and sustain the Trent River system or Trent Canal system, so I really think that taking advantage of this will be a great opportunity for my community.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Toronto–Danforth has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the members from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Kenora–Rainy River, Haldimand–Norfolk, and Oak Ridges–Markham, I appreciate the time you took to comment on my speech.

I want to speak most to the remarks made by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. There's no question that becoming a leader in water efficiency and water conservation technology could have huge benefits for us on so many levels, and there's no question that Fleming College is a place that has done some very sophisticated and useful things when it comes to efficiency and conservation. But I say to him, and I say to all the other members here, that just because you call something efficient, just because you refer to a technology as one that can provide conservation, doesn't mean that in fact you've done something that is cost-effective. And I have to say that the smart meters investment on the energy side is an example of where you can go dreadfully wrong and make an investment that doesn't deliver the goods for efficiency and conservation but does provide an economic burden that will be a problem for us for many, many years to come.

So when we look at this bill, it isn't just a question of saying we're going to develop technologies; it's a question of saying, "What is actually cost-effective, what is actually going to deliver what needs to be delivered, and how do we make that happen?"

This bill continues to suffer from a failure to define targets. There's a reference to aspirational targets. Aspirational targets are when you are eating a chocolate cake and deciding you're not going to eat the whole cake; you're just going to eat half of it. That's aspiration. What we need are real targets that will have an impact on economic development here.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important bill. I want to welcome back all the members in the House. I hope everyone had a productive summer, as I did. It allowed us the opportunity to reconnect with our constituents and partake in beautiful things happening in our ridings just like mine in Ottawa Centre. It was a busy summer, with festivals, community meetings and barbecues and picnics, but all worth every single minute, just being out with friends and neighbours and members of our families.

This is a very important issue, the issue around water, the issue around conservation of water, maintaining a clean, safe supply of water, and I'll share with you as to why it is important to me. I think members in the House have heard me speak many a time about where I was born and the country I lived in before. As many know, I

was born in Pakistan, which is a developing country, a country which is in the news a lot and which is, I think, kind of related to this particular topic—and I'll come to it in a second—a country where clean water was not available—pure and simple, period.

I remember growing up in Pakistan in a very large city, Karachi, which I believe now has close to 16 million people, where there was no clean water, where you could not just open your tap and drink a glass of water because you may be actually, in many ways, signing your death warrant by doing so, and if not, if it may not kill you, it may definitely make you extremely ill, sick. You've got hospitals just full with people who have some significant concerns or sicknesses or illness because of the water. The way you and I think of drinking water, which is by opening a tap and just filling a glass of water and drinking—that luxury does not exist.

I remember what my mother used to do before we drank. Again, not everybody can afford to buy bottled water. It's something that's not that accessible and something that we know is not good for the environment either. So what was the routine in my household when we lived in Pakistan? The water used to get boiled in a big pot every day or a couple of times a day. This is a hot country, so you have to drink a lot of water and keep yourself hydrated. You will boil the water. You bring it to 100 degrees, to the boiling point; let it boil for a while as an extra precaution to kill anything that might be in there and then you let it cool for a bit. Interestingly, after the cooling you can still see a layer of dirt just sort of filtering on top. You try to scoop that off and then you used to fill bottles to refrigerate this water. But you don't just fill it; you used to use a filter. My mother used to use cloth as a filter to then put that water in bottles so it could be put in the fridge and cooled, and then we could drink it. You have to go through that process a couple of times in order to have access to clean water.

You can imagine the great delight and surprise I had when we immigrated to Canada a good 21 years ago, where you can even take a glass and open a tap or a faucet in your bathroom and drink that water. That's number one.

Number two, in countries like Pakistan, water is not in abundant supply either. There are a couple of reasons for it. Probably one is, obviously, bad infrastructure, so there's probably a lot of wastage of water.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I'd ask the Clerk to determine whether or not a quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): A quorum not being present, call in the members.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is now present.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm trying to recollect my thought as to where I was. I think I had filled the water in the bottles by now and I was now moving on to the supply of water.

Interjections.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: That's it. Thank you very much. Members in the rump are very helpful in that regard. This is what happens when you're off for the summer and not practising your speaking skills. You kind of get a little—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Speaking skills.

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Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Speaking skills. Thank you, member from Etobicoke North.

What I was talking about is that the next big issue in many countries, especially in developing countries, besides not having clean water and not having the technology to have clean water rapidly available, is the shortage of drinkable water. A country like Pakistan, again, has a huge ocean. The Arabian Sea is right there, but you can't just drink that water. Of course, there are desalination technologies that exist, which could be used to make that water drinkable for human consumption, but the other challenge, which I remember growing up, is around the shortage of water. My parents belonged to the middle class, so obviously they had some disposable income. We had to buy water. We had to purchase water in order to be able to consume it. That thought is a bit foreign to us.

We're talking about water for basic necessities. We buy water bottled water here, because we want cleaner water or, essentially, water on the go, and we're obviously trying to dissuade each other from that because we can use tap water or another form of transporting water. But there, you buy water for basic necessities: to drink, to use in your bathrooms, to maybe water your plants etc., which is a huge challenge and, again, a luxury that is not available to every single person. That was the other thing that obviously resulted in your behaviour as to how much water you were going to use and how you used it.

Because of that—and I'm very grateful; these are the kinds of habits you develop growing up—I am still very cognizant of the fact when I use water. So when I am brushing my teeth, the water doesn't keep flowing; I actually turn it off. It's a habit I have not been able to get rid of, and I think it's a good habit that I want to maintain. The same thing when I'm taking a shower: I frequently turn off the shower head. I don't keep it running as I'm taking my shower, because I think it's pure waste. So there is an element of conservation, because you kind of get into that habit, you get into that mode that in many ways we take for granted in our country and in our province because we have access to so much clean, fresh water delivered to us in a way that is easy to use.

The last point I would make about a country like Pakistan: What we are seeing right now with the floods that are taking place, which have impacted about 20

million people or so—and I want to congratulate our government and Ontarians for making significant donations to ensure that we help the victims of the flood in that country—really highlights that that country doesn't have a shortage of water. These monsoon rains were no doubt extraordinary, but they were not that out of the norm as well. If they had the right set of technologies and the right infrastructure, they would be able to harness so much of that water for irrigation purposes and for personal use that it could last for a few years to come. It's unfortunate to see that good water being wasted.

Why is this legislation, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, so important? Well, for a couple of reasons. One is the issue around conservation. I think you and I and Ontarians have to do our part to ensure that we conserve water: the same thinking that we apply when it comes to the use of energy. We, as a society and as a province, have come a long way in the manner in which we use energy. I think we have become far more aware of our use of energy. We talk to our kids about it. In fact, more and more, when I go into schools and talk to children, I learn that the children are the ones who are speaking with their parents and grandparents about not wasting energy. We still have to do a lot of work on the energy side, but that type of thinking and that type of behavioural change has not crystallized 100% when it comes to the use of water. We still need to do more to ensure that we conserve water, that we monitor the way you and I use water. We need to amend our behaviour in that way. I think that's why government has a big role to play: to ensure that that behavioural change takes place. This legislation will help in setting those targets which are important, be they aspirational in nature, be they for municipal services or other public services—that the water is not being wasted and is being used in a productive fashion. That's a very important aspect of this legislation which I'm really keen about, because I think that's something we really need to pursue.

The other big aspect which has often been spoken about is that we in Ontario, given the kind of economy we have and the kind of companies that exist in this province, have access to a very large, burgeoning clean tech sector that exists in the province. There are a lot of companies which are investing and doing a lot of research and development in water cleaning technologies, and we need to make sure that we support these companies and that these companies are able to take their technology and export to other parts of the world. I was giving you the example of Pakistan, a country which has ample supply of water but not the right set of technologies that could be used to support its population.

By the creation of a water technology acceleration project, a water TAP, I think this legislation will allow our government to become a leader, to become a champion of water cleaning technologies that could be exported around the world. Not only will it result in economic good for the province, as we are trying to redevelop, re-create, re-engineer an economy for the 21st

century, but it also has a very strong element of moral good, which is something we should also be proud of, because we are helping developing countries, ensuring that they have access to good, clean, drinkable water. We know that will help them have better agriculture and a healthier population.

So there is an economic aspect to it, but there is also a moral/social aspect to it, from an international point of view, which is extremely important and needs to be highlighted.

I can tell you that we in Ottawa have a very large clean tech sector. It is burgeoning. There's a lot of research that is going on. I've met with a few companies since this legislation was introduced, talking to me about their technology and how this legislation could help them not only to meet their goals but be able to export that technology around the world.

So it's really exciting that we are moving forward from energy in other areas but putting a very significant focus, through this particular legislation, into technologies that will allow for cleaner water to come.

Of course, these technologies have a use for us in Ontario as well. Other members were talking about water advisories and other issues. Of course, we have our challenges as well. Just because we live in Ontario, we live in Canada—yes, we are one of the best countries in the world to live, but we have challenges which we need to continue to address. So these technologies have a big use at home as well.

I can speak to one of the bigger challenges we are dealing with in the city of Ottawa. It's around the municipal sewer waste getting dumped in the Ottawa River, which is a serious concern. One of the biggest reasons why it happened is because some of the technologies that were being used in terms of monitoring the gates etc., the segregation of stormwater from raw sewage, were outdated. It needed updating in terms of both infrastructure and technology used, and I'm very happy to say that all three levels of government are working together, and our government is putting in its share—one-third share—of roughly \$30 million to \$40 million in upgrading that infrastructure in the city of Ottawa.

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This summer, I had the opportunity to join both the federal government and our city government, the municipal government, in visiting some of the infrastructure projects that are going on where changes are being made to make sure that dirty, raw sewage water is not being dumped into the Ottawa River. Protecting that water source is extremely important for us. So there is that work, which is extremely important, that is going on and will continue to do so.

There are many aspects to this particular legislation. It is something that not only speaks to a broader horizon as to the kind of economy we're trying to build in the province of Ontario, but it also speaks to what's important to us—that is, to not take the water we have available to us for granted, to be able to use that water

wisely and to be sure that we are constantly teaching our children and our adults alike about conservation, because this is something that has a profound impact on our environment and on our quest to live in a sustainable fashion. We need to make sure that we have legislation like this particular one in place to ensure that we are buying things like toilet tanks etc. to ensure that we're not wasting water but that we are using it in a proper sense.

I think I have exhausted the points I wanted to make in the last 17 or so minutes. I look forward to hearing from other members and their points of view. I very much support this legislation. I look forward to the passage of this bill, because this will allow me to continue to speak with some of the companies in my riding of Ottawa Centre and in the city of Ottawa which are working on different technologies, and it will ensure that we are able to not only create jobs locally in Ottawa, but are also able to export these technologies to other parts of the world, especially to developing countries, countries like where I was born—Pakistan—so that we can help more people to ensure that there's more clean water available in those countries for use, which I think bodes well for all of us, both globally and locally.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This government is bringing in this water bill. Everybody's in favour of fresh, clean water. It's one of the essentials of life, of course, and the government has talked about that. But in all the debate that the government has had, almost an hour and 20 minutes now, they haven't mentioned what the costs of this bill are going to be to the people of Ontario. Can we afford this?

The track record of this government isn't particularly good when it comes to cost controls. When we look at the cost of electricity, the cost of hydro, and what has happened under this government, the real cost of electricity that's delivered to the house is somewhere, if you add up all the fees and the additional costs before the electricity gets to the home, around 12 cents a kilowatt hour now. Before this government was elected, the cost was somewhere around 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. That's a huge increase. And it's not enough that they're going to increase the cost of electricity—it's going to increase even more over the next few months—but now they're going to take on water.

They tell us that water needs to be protected, that we need to become experts in water. Whenever this government touches anything, it's going to increase the costs. This government does not have a good track record in managing costs. The cost of water is going to go up. Not only have taxes and hydro costs gone up, now water is going to go up.

This government hasn't talked about what those costs are going to be and how high those costs are going to be. They haven't talked about whether water coming out of

the ground is going to be taxed or whether the wells on rural properties will be taxed. They haven't talked about that.

Given the track record of this government, I think that you can almost assume that anything that moves will be taxed. If it's still moving, they'll raise the taxes higher. Eventually, they'll kill it with a tax if they can possibly find one to do it with. The track record of this government is just not good.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I've listened to two government spokespersons speak at length and I've listened to a number of other government spokespersons speak briefly. Everyone talks about water the same way you talk about apple pie and ice cream. Everybody likes it, everybody thinks it's important, but one is given to ask, "Where is the meat in the sandwich?"

For all kinds of communities in this province—some aboriginal, some non-aboriginal—safe, clean, reliable drinking water is not a reality. For those communities, there is a very big, fundamental question: How do they afford the technology? How do they pay for the technology? I think at some point somebody from this government needs to stand up and answer that equation. Talking about apple pie and ice cream without mentioning how you get the apples, how you bake the pie and who pays for the ice cream doesn't get us very far.

I would hope that at some point the government members will get off the "I like apple pie and ice cream" line and answer some of these fundamental questions. How do communities in this province that do not have access to safe, reliable drinking water now afford the technology? Simply imposing exorbitant water rates on people is not the answer. Simply saying to municipalities, "It's your responsibility," is not the answer. We already have municipalities that have purchased new water supply technology in the last few years that know in the longer term they can't pay for it, and they're still asking this government, "How do we pay for this technology?" I hope that somebody from this government would answer that question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I certainly welcome everybody back for the fall session. I think my colleague from Ottawa Centre made some very important comments on Bill 72. As a former municipal politician in Peterborough—we are always very wise and very prudent. For at least three decades, we have set up a system of a sewer surcharge to build reserves, and then we were able to take advantage, when there were federal and provincial programs, in order to reline sewers, expand our waste water treatment plant and expand other water processing infrastructure in the Peterborough area.

I note that particularly this summer—certainly post-June 15, 2004, when we had our flood—the amount of activity. I think every street in Peterborough was torn up, doing a lot of sewer relines and putting in new sewer

pipes, bearing in mind that we had reports after our flood in 2004 regarding the infiltration of drinking water that got into the sewer system. Now we're embarking upon ways to correct that.

The other thing I think I'd note is that Siemens has a large manufacturing plant in Peterborough. I would invite everybody to join me this Friday. We are making a major announcement for an expansion of that operation. What is unique about that company in Peterborough is they're into water and waste water management equipment. They are the North American supplier for Siemens to move forward. They also have a training system at that operation in Peterborough where they train municipal employees to use their particular technology in the management of water and waste water treatment systems. So if anybody asks the question about whether this equipment will be manufactured in Ontario, Siemens in Peterborough is a great example of someone that will take advantage of Bill 72.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It is good to be back here for the fall session and to have an opportunity to raise a number of issues that have arisen over the summer that I think all of our constituents would like answers to from this government and to discuss important legislation that's coming before us, including the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, 2010.

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I note that this bill is proposed "(a) to foster innovative water, waste water and storm water technologies and services in the private and public sectors;

"(b) to create opportunities for economic development and clean-technology jobs in Ontario; and

"(c) to conserve and sustain water resources for present and future generations."

As the member from Kenora–Rainy River indicated, this is like a motherhood-and-apple-pie statement. Who wouldn't want that? But the question is, do we have to do it in this way? This is a time of tremendous economic uncertainty. We really need to look at how we're doing things in order to make the best possible use of our resources. Do we need to do this through another bureaucracy that we're going to set up for this? How much is that bureaucracy going to cost? What are they going to do with that, working within our present structures, that we couldn't already do?

I'm not sure that that has been explored already by this government, nor has it examined how much all of this is actually going to cost. As we all know, there is no such thing as a free lunch. It all comes back down to the taxpayer, and I think taxpayers are frankly fed up with being hit with taxes and charges on all sides. We've seen that as a result of the Green Energy Act. People are starting to see their hydro bills skyrocket. They can expect that they're going to significantly increase within the next year. If they think they're high now, they haven't seen anything yet. So I think it's incumbent on us to stop, take a look and reflect to see if this is the way we

really should be doing this or if we can do it in a more cost-effective way that's actually going to achieve the proposed resolution and outcomes proposed by this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Ottawa Centre has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to extend my gratitude to the members from Halton, Kenora–Rainy River, Peterborough and Whitby–Oshawa for their comments on my 20 minutes.

This is my perspective on this particular legislation. We all agree, and I think we have spoken about this at length in previous sessions in the last year, that the global economic order has changed. What we are still living through in terms of the recession which hit Ontario, Canada and globally is significant in nature. We're seeing that impact of globalization which we have been talking about for some time as to how interconnected our economies are.

In order for us to grow in that economy, we cannot continue to do things the way we did in the past. That's just a no-go. I think we all know that. We have to accept that, and we need to make sure that we come up with policies, with ideas that will help promote and grow Ontario in the 21st-century economy. We do live in a very competitive marketplace, and here is a sector where Ontario can make a remarkable difference, locally in terms of economic growth, because we have huge opportunities to be able to promote our technologies that are being researched and developed right here in the province, but by also ensuring that we take advantage of the great education system we've got and the human skills we've got and also the moral good I was speaking about by exporting these technologies and helping other countries around the world to have access to clean water.

I believe this is a win-win situation not only for Ontario and its future economic growth but also the kind of impact that our province can make globally in terms of having access to clean water. I really hope that all members will support this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: This has been an interesting debate this afternoon on second reading of Bill 72, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, which was introduced in this Legislature last May.

I was again very impressed with the presentation that was brought forward in this House this afternoon by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, who is our party's environment critic. The member some time ago had informed his constituents by way of his column—which is excellent; I would commend to it all members of the Legislature. The way that he informs his constituents of the happenings here is really commendable. The title of his column was, "How Much Will We Pay for the New Water Bill?" He outlined, I thought in a very fair and quite non-partisan way, the objectives of the bill, to try and give the government's argument an opportunity to be

aired, but at the same time asked a very valid question: “Who is paying for this bill? How much is it going to cost?”

Unfortunately, the government has not yet responded today to that very legitimate, very simple and very direct question during the course of debate on Bill 72, which again forces us to question how much it’s going to cost and continue to ask that question but also to call for public hearings on this Bill 72. Assuming that the government is fully intending on passing it at second reading, and certainly they have the votes to do so, we in the opposition would urge them to consider extensive public hearings so that there is an opportunity for people who have an interest in this issue and an interest in, as we all should, the cost of their water bill.

I want to put on the record a concern from my constituency. This is an article which appeared in the summertime in the Wellington Advertiser, on July 16. It highlights a need in Centre Wellington township, where the municipal council of the township of Centre Wellington is forced to seek support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for infrastructure projects that need to be undertaken in our community. In fact, they are seeking a grant of \$1 million from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and a loan of \$10 million to build a new Elora sewage treatment plant, which they anticipate will cost \$16.5 million.

Now, this is a project that the provincial government is well aware of. In fact, the municipality has on a number of occasions—at least twice—made application in the last seven or eight years for assistance from the upper-tier governments. Unfortunately, this McGuinty government has been unwilling or unable or seen unfit to support our project in this way. It’s most regrettable. It’s something that I’ve certainly supported in every way I can, and I’ve tried to underline the need. There have been grant programs that have been opportunities for municipalities to make application, but unfortunately, this government has not supported this project in spite of the fact that the municipality is under order by the Ministry of the Environment to do this work. So the municipality would rightly argue that the Ministry of the Environment is telling them they have to do it, but unfortunately it won’t support them, and it’s a significant cost, of course: \$16 million. They don’t have the money in their reserves, and yet they need to do this.

So I would again draw attention to the need. I think it’s germane during the course of this debate to highlight that particular need because, of course, the government would have us believe that the passage of Bill 72 will provide a funding stream to enable municipalities to undertake this sort of work, although the details are very, very vague.

Again, to acknowledge the government’s arguments in respect to this bill, they say that it’s intended to “foster innovative water, waste water and storm water technologies and services in the private and public sectors.” They say that it’s intended to “create opportunities for economic development and clean technology jobs in

Ontario and to conserve and sustain water resources for present and future generations.” Of course, I would suggest that all members of this House would support greater efforts to conserve and sustain water resources for present and future generations, in principle. That’s something that all of us would unite behind. I know that.

I also would make reference to some of the comments from the government members with respect to the economic opportunities that may be out there worldwide in terms of selling whatever technology we have that’s cutting edge to other jurisdictions. As we know, that has already taken place. I’m not sure how this bill will enhance the existing opportunities that are out there, but let’s hope that it will.

Again, going back to their first proposal, it really is to foster innovative water, waste water and storm water technologies and services. Again, in principle, I don’t think there’s any member of this House who would speak against that objective.

Further, the bill intends to establish a corporation without share capital titled the Water Technology Acceleration Project.

The bill will require municipalities and other public agencies to submit to the minister water sustainability plans directed at attaining minister-established performance indicators and targets.

The bill is intended to create a power to bring in regulations to establish and permit water efficiency standards—again, set through regulation—prohibiting the sale of products not meeting the standard and requiring labelling to confirm compliance.

I know our party’s critic, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, has raised the idea that perhaps if we looked at the existing legislation and regulations with respect to clean water and put a greater emphasis on trying to make them work, we might in fact achieve many of the objectives that supposedly Bill 72 is intended to accomplish. In the course of the debate I think I’ve heard some of the members of the NDP who have pointed out that it appears that the government is giving considerable regard to the upcoming election year that we’re about to embark on and probably wants to have some talking point during the course of its campaign for re-election, that they’re doing something with respect to clean water; that’s one of the political imperatives that is resulting in the introduction of the Water Opportunities Act.

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I would have to question how much this is going to cost municipalities. Any new downloading is not going to be greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm. Many of us were at the AMO conference in Windsor in August. Of course, our caucus had a meeting in association with that particular important stakeholder group, the municipalities of the province of Ontario. I think that they are going to be very concerned about what this is going to cost, and I know that some of the municipalities are already well aware of this bill and are starting to write us letters.

Of course, as we know, the municipal councils of Ontario are now in a period where they’re seeking re-

election in many cases, and new candidates are coming forward to serve on municipal council. I commend all of those individuals for their willingness to serve their community in elected public office at the local level. Those are very important positions, and certainly I've always felt that my relationship with the municipal councils in my riding, the riding that I'm privileged to represent, is certainly one of the most important relationships that I have, and so I always seek to improve it. Again, I would suggest to you that the municipal councillors and the candidates that are seeking election in the October 25 municipal election, many of them will be very concerned about this, which represents, I would argue, another example of the McGuinty government's downloading agenda on municipalities.

In terms of our position on this bill, I think it has been clearly articulated by the member for Haldimand-Norfolk and others from our side during the course of questions and comments. We do support clean water and the promotion of clean water technology, but we believe that this bill has a hidden price tag that the government refuses to admit and acknowledge.

I know from our time in government, when we were privileged to serve on that side of the House between 1995 and 2003. For a period of time I served on two of the cabinet committees. When cabinet submissions were brought for consideration to the cabinet committees and, in turn, the full cabinet, in every submission there was a costing done on the initiative. Members of the Legislature who were privileged to serve on these committees were informed of the best estimate of what these things cost.

The government, I believe, has an estimate of what this will cost the municipalities of the province of Ontario; they will have an estimate of what it will cost the water users, the ratepayers of the province of Ontario, as a result of their plans with respect to Bill 72. But unfortunately, they're unwilling to divulge that. We're going to continue to ask for it, and I think the people of Ontario are going to continue to ask for it until the government does come clean with what this is going to cost and who's going to have to pay for the costs of Bill 72.

Our caucus also believes that the bill, in spite of the rhetoric, does very little to promote conservation and technology beyond existing regulations and government initiatives. As we know, many of the provisions of Bill 72 are not laid out in the bill itself but left to regulation at a later date, and under this particular government we would certainly question whether or not they are sincere with the objectives that they've stated and what the regulations are actually going to turn into when they're finally decided upon. Our caucus has also observed that this bill sets up yet another government-created and government-funded agency, in this case to do little more than facilitate and promote.

When we look at our party's record in office and since we've been in opposition in recent years, our party has always spoken to this issue with a great deal of interest

and commitment. When we were in government, we were committed to enacting all the recommendations of the O'Connor report, and we did establish a Centre of Excellence in Walkerton.

As well, in government we passed our own legislation with respect to this issue, called the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act, which I believe was passed into law in 2002 in the latter months of the Eves government. Unfortunately, this government, when it took office a few months later, didn't proclaim it into law and no regulations have been brought in to implement that particular bill. So even though it was passed by the Legislature—I believe it received royal assent—it was never proclaimed, which means it has never come into force. And after seven years of virtually no record on this issue, the current government is now trying to reintroduce this bill in a different way, but it's a more costly version, and that's what we see here with Bill 72.

We've heard rhetoric from the government side during the course of this debate that this bill will create jobs, and as has been the case in the past, the government seems to pull a number out of the air and then repeat it a thousand times as if to suggest that it will come true if they continue to repeat it. I don't know if they have a specific number in mind with respect to Bill 72—I haven't heard it this afternoon—but at the same time, we would challenge them on it. What we do know is that this bill, if passed, would lead to higher water rates, without question. We also question the costs that will be associated with the bill's supposed direction towards conservation.

We're told that Ontarians use twice the volume of water as many Europeans do, but beyond requesting municipal water use plans, this bill actually does little to address the main source of water loss. Apparently, we're told by experts in the field that we actually lose 25% of our water that is in the water systems due to leakage; due to aging infrastructure. If you can imagine our water systems—of course, underground pipes under the ground, out of sight, out of mind—many of the water pipes in the province of Ontario and the infrastructure are 50, 60, 70 years old. In some cases in the city of Toronto, I think it's close to 100 years old. Unfortunately, these underground pipes, as they age, tend to crack. There's deterioration. And if you can imagine the water flowing through the pipes, if there are cracks in the pipes, it leaks out into the ground around the pipes. As a result of this, of course, we have to pump more water just to keep the pipes full and keep the pressure up, and this results in a great wastage of water. I know the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association, which has been very active here at Queen's Park in recent years with informing us of these issues and these needs, would tell us that we need to spend more on infrastructure to ensure that our infrastructure is kept up to date.

The plans that this government is expecting municipalities to undertake with respect to this bill are, of course, another big issue that I've mentioned earlier but would continue to highlight. I suspect that in some municipalities it will require the hiring of additional staff,

maybe one or two new employees, just to do this work. Perhaps it will be done by consultants, but without question, a significant new cost for municipalities. It'll be especially difficult for some of the smaller municipalities in rural Ontario and some of the northern municipalities. I know that the member for Kenora–Rainy River has mentioned the needs in our most remote rural communities and our First Nation communities, which in many cases have a completely unacceptable level of public infrastructure, a level which requires a great deal of provincial assistance, which has not been forthcoming under this particular government.

Now, the minister again pretends that there will be no price tag associated with this bill, but the Premier has been unwilling to answer direct questions about the cost and, of course, this again makes us wonder. There is clearly a domino effect which the government is refusing to publicly acknowledge. It would appear that Bill 72, as I said, requires these water sustainability plans, that the implementation of the water sustainability plans will require massive upgrades in infrastructure, and we know that massive upgrades in infrastructure mean major costs to someone, ultimately, most likely, the taxpayer or the end user. We do ourselves a disservice if we run blindly into a piece of legislation that will cause massive costs to Ontarians without first being told where the funding is coming from.

As we know, the former Minister of Health and the former Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, David Caplan, introduced a private member's bill which addressed this issue some time ago. I remember it received very prominent coverage in the *Toronto Star*, and it appeared that Mr. Caplan was trying to draw attention to his work: He had a number of interesting private member's initiatives all at once. I hope that the Premier's office noticed, and I hope that that will help him in his future career opportunities. But the fact is, we were of the belief that his bill would have cost the end consumer something like \$600 a year. So it would appear that perhaps that's a number we should keep in mind as we're questioning how much this particular Bill 72 will cost.

1730

The environment minister has also said that the province is poised to do the same thing with clean water as it has done in bringing in the Green Energy Act. Again, that should set off alarm bells in terms of cost and also possibly the taking away of local autonomy, as was done in the Green Energy Act and the removal of some of the decision-making authority that municipalities have had in the past.

Given the fact that there was a sweetheart deal for foreign conglomerates and the trampling of municipal powers for the oversight that the Green Energy Act set in motion, we see the minister's statement as a warning of sorts as what may come.

We would have to again say that this is the late attempt for this government to reap the green headlines and then walk away from its obligations, leaving Ontario

businesses to spend time and money picking up the tab. Again, we would argue that there is a significant number of regulations and legislation on the books already with respect to this, and if they'd taken the effort of looking at the existing water regulations and water management initiatives, that might have been a better approach to achieve our clean energy goals.

While Bill 72 holds that the government would create a Water Technology Acceleration Project as an arm's-length corporation aimed at promoting Ontario's waste water sectors and assisting in the development and testing of products, the minister's staff already admit that the development and testing will come through the Ontario Clean Water Agency.

So, again, we would question if we really need a \$5-million-over-three-years think tank facilitation organization when we already have the Ontario Clean Water Agency and MaRS, of course, and other existing public agencies and bodies that might very well be able to do this.

How much will this new corporate body cost us? Section 22 states, "The minister may provide grants to the corporation for the purpose of defraying its operating costs...." Again, no clear answer to the question of, how much will this cost?

If we assume that this bill passes and we assume that the government proceeds and we assume that this will provide upward pressure on the water bills of the residents of the province of Ontario, once again we see a government that seems to be totally out of touch with the reality of many, many thousands of Ontario families who can't afford to pay for this. They can't afford, in many cases, their hydro bills. They can't afford the HST. They can't afford the eco fees that the government plans to probably reintroduce in some revised form this fall. They are just struggling day to day, week to week, month to month, to pay their bills.

I started to hear this in response to my newsletter that I sent out in the spring. The vast majority of respondents indicated to me a great deal of economic anxiety and in many cases were struggling just to get through to the end of the month to pay their bills. Many of these bills that they have to pay, they believe government should be finding a way to control or regulate. Certainly we're here to speak on behalf of those people, and we're here to stand up for them in spite of this government's continued efforts to raise taxes—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to take this time to again emphasize the issue that my colleague from the Conservative Party has raised, and that issue the government again refuses to speak to. There are all kinds of people in Ontario today who have real trouble paying their utility bills. Putting the HST on top of the utility bill has made it even less affordable for people. So one is given to ask, how do people pay to access new technology? How do they pay to set up some of the things that are called for in this legislation? The government refuses to answer. I think this is a question

that must be answered, because if the response is simply, "People will pay for it on their water bill; they'll pay for it by increasing the utility bill," that is clearly not an answer that is going to fly in a great number of communities across this province. It's not going to fly for individual people and households and it's not going to fly for those municipalities because many of them are already hard pressed. Yet, no one who has gotten up to speak for the government has addressed these issues, so I want to thank my Conservative colleague for raising these questions again.

You can have the most wonderful ideas in the world, but if you do not have a plan to pay for them and a plan to realistically implement them, then they really don't amount to anything. If you don't have a way of getting from the idea stage to the reality stage for people, then you're simply offering up political propaganda. Maybe that's what this bill really is. It is aspirational legislation as the government prepares to head into an election. Well, who is going to pay for the aspirations?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Again, it's a pleasure to rise to make a few comments in relation to the remarks of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. During the consultation on this bill we heard about a lot of very interesting ideas for cost savings. I think one that particularly impressed me was one that in fact has been implemented in the head office of the Ministry of the Environment—the building on St. Clair Avenue.

This was an innovative idea in relation to the cooling tower. Probably most members know that cooling towers are often the largest users of both energy and water in a building. Also, cooling towers add large amounts of chemicals to the water involved. So an Ontario-based company, EnviroTower, offered a non-chemical solution to replace the traditional chemical water treatment in cooling towers. It is now installed at the Ministry of the Environment building and it has been shown that it offers an average of 15% lower energy costs and an average of 18% less water consumption. It has also eliminated toxic chemicals. It has extended the equipment life because corrosion has slowed and it has simplified maintenance.

This is just a small example but it's a demonstration project of what can be done. There are many more of these types of ideas coming from Ontario-based companies that are in fact using this technology all over the world in areas where they are much more aware of the issue of water conservation. We intend that Ontario makes sure that all municipalities are aware of these technologies, and we're confident they will introduce them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member from Wellington-Halton Hills in his presentation raised a very important question: How much will this cost? In fact, he raised that question at the beginning of his presentation and he raised that question at the end of his presentation. I raised

that question with the Premier last spring. I was told I was being short-sighted to talk about things like that. I think it's short-sighted to introduce legislation with no indication at all of the structure—where the billions of dollars will come from to move this stuff forward.

One thing that we were told was, "There will be cost savings with changes in infrastructure and fixing leaks and things like that, and that will more than pay for the cost." I don't buy into that completely. Who puts up the money upfront? The municipalities, as we know, come forward to the Ontario government for assistance. They can't be told, "Well, you go ahead and do it and then over time you'll get your money back with the savings in water usage."

If municipalities come forward to the province of Ontario with these plans, if they present the plans, there was a suggestion, "Then you get the money if you come forward with a plan." But again, that money has to come from somewhere. Is this being budgeted? Is there any indication in this Legislature of how that kind of funding mechanism would work? Is it a new mechanism or is it just basically the same old mechanism? The indication is that with conservation and people using less water, there would be savings. Well, this particular legislation really, to me, does not indicate that it would have any impact as far as conservation. So the question remains.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's always a pleasure to follow the comments of my colleague and my friend from Wellington-Halton Hills, but I'm a little disappointed. This is very typical status quo, do-nothing thinking. This is not yesterday. This is not the last century. This is the 21st century and, in part, that's why Ontarians put those people in opposition and the Liberals in government.

If this was high-tech or if this was film, all of the members here who are grumbling and wringing their hands over it would instead be fawning all over this particular act. Let me just give you some idea of the sheer scale and scope of it. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the global market for water technology is more than—wait for it—\$400 billion, with an annual growth of up to 15%. Why do these people not want us to have a piece of that? On this side of the House we know that Ontario is a world leader. We want more of it.

Over the next 15 years, some \$37 billion is needed in investment in Ontario's water system, and our annual investment gap is about \$1.5 billion. Why don't they want to get on with it? We want to get on with it.

The member never asks the fundamental question, which is: How much will it cost to do nothing? We can now see how much it costs to do nothing through nearly 12 lost years of NDP and Conservative rule in something like electricity. We're not going to let this happen in fresh water. We're not going to see an industry that is employing some of Ontario's best and brightest dissipate.

I cannot accept the arguments put forth by the party of the Avro Arrow.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have to admit it was my fault, the Avro Arrow's cancellation. I'll have to assume responsibility for that. But the fact is that the member opposite talks about or suggests that our position is to do nothing, and in fact that is a complete mischaracterization of what our party has been suggesting.

Again, I would call the member's attention to the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act, which we passed in 2002 and which, I believe and I understand, would have been a more cost-effective way of approaching this issue. The government could have proclaimed it, but they chose, probably for political reasons, because it was our bill—they wanted to suggest that it was a bad bill because it was a Conservative initiative and that they would come up with something better. Well, it's taken them eight years and, in fact, I don't think that this bill is superior to our legislation that could have been brought into effect. Instead we have this Bill 72. It's going to be more costly.

I want to conclude by thanking my colleagues who have responded to my comments this afternoon on Bill 72. Again, I think this is a very interesting debate. It's the first day back, and I certainly extend my best wishes to all members of the House for the coming sitting of the Legislature. I think it's going to be very interesting.

I also believe that the people of Ontario, by and large, do not want to see the provincial election campaign starting now. I think that the vast majority of the people of Ontario would want the Legislature to continue to work towards the resolution of important issues and the problems that we have in our communities today. I would put that on the record. I realize there's a heightened political anticipation in the coming year and that we will be into an election year shortly, but we have a lot of work to do. I would hope that we can look at our responsibilities from that perspective and, if possible, work together towards resolution of those issues.

Once again, thank you for listening to me today and I look forward to the continued debate on Bill 72.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make a few comments about this bill. As I said earlier, the government wants everyone to believe that this bill is apple pie and ice cream and hopes that no one will look too carefully at the fact that there is not a lot here. There is a lot of, shall we say, aspirational thinking, a government that aspires to do something, but there is not a lot here that in fact will do something.

Let me give you an idea of some of the things—it's our job in opposition to dot the i's and cross the t's and ask, "Where's the beef? Where's the meat in the sandwich?" That's what I intend to do today.

The reality today is that municipalities spend about \$1.5 billion a year on water and waste water. That's a figure that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario provides to us. About \$1.5 billion a year is what municipalities are paying. What we're also told, though, is that there is a gap of \$1.2 billion a year of work that needs to be done on water systems: things like repairing leaky pipes, replacing leaky pipes and the general upkeep of the water infrastructure. That's \$1.2 billion that needs to be spent every year just to replace and refurbish and keep the existing system operating.

Now, I would have hoped or I would have thought that one of the things we would have seen in this bill is exactly how this government would go about that. When I say \$1.2 billion, I'm not talking about adding anything new into the system, I'm not talking about finding new technologies, I'm not talking about creating a new entity or a new bureaucracy; I'm just talking about the additional work that needs to be done to sustain the water systems that we have now. An additional \$1.2 billion a year needs to be found. And yet when I look at the legislation, I look for a framework: nothing. I've listened intently to everyone who has gotten up to speak on behalf of the government today. I've asked the question several times: "Where does this money come from? Where is the financing framework? Who pays? What are the annual costs?" Nothing.

I know that in my own constituency, and everywhere else I go in the province, individual homeowners and apartment renters are already hard-pressed. People have seen a major increase in their utility bills over the past year; it doesn't matter if it is the hydro bill, the heating bill or the water bill. Then when you add in this government's HST, the utility bills have increased even more. And so people are saying, "Look, you know, speaking about our household, speaking about our apartment, speaking about our family situation, we can't afford to pay more." When I talk with municipal leaders, they're looking for where they can cut because they know their budgets are not sustainable. They're looking within their municipal budgets, "Where can we reduce expenditures? Where can we save some money?" not where can they afford to pay more. So I think any responsible government, if it's going to bring forward legislation like this, has to answer the question, "How is this going to be paid for? Who is going to pay and how much is it going to cost them?"

But we've heard none of that. Nothing. All we've heard are repetitive statements of apple pie and ice cream. "Don't you like apple pie and ice cream? I like apple pie and ice cream. I'm sure these folks over here like apple pie and ice cream." But no discussion about who pays for the apples, who bakes the pie and who buys the ice cream. And so it is almost, on this first day of debate, starting to sound like a bit of a charade. The government wants to talk about, "Oh, isn't apple pie and ice cream wonderful? Isn't apple pie and ice cream just about the most wonderful thing you've heard of? Doesn't just about everybody want apple pie and ice cream?" But

as soon as you get beyond that, this is a government with no answers—none. That has to be addressed.

1750

The government says that this is going to be a growth sector of the economy. I might be prepared to accept that, but within Ontario I want to ask: Where does the money come from to pay for the technology to grow the sector? If someone doesn't have the money to pay, if someone doesn't have the money to put into the technology, if someone doesn't have the money to make the additional capital outlays, how does all this get started? I've listened to some government members who say that there's a tremendous foreign need for water technology. That's true. There's a tremendous need among First Nations in Ontario for water technology, except they don't have the money to pay for it. They just don't have the money to pay for it.

If it's this government's position that they want to provide tax credits and they want to provide research and development money to develop the technology, and then they want to export the technology, all the while saying to First Nations in Ontario, "But not for you; you can't afford it," that's going to be a very interesting scenario to watch.

There are even some questions on the so-called export side that need to be answered. Haiti needs water technology. Anyone who turns on the news at night can easily come to that conclusion. There is an ongoing public health disaster in Haiti. Haiti needs water technology so that people can access clean, safe, reliable drinking water and people will not get sick and will not die. But there's a problem: Haiti doesn't have the money to pay for the technology.

Most Central American countries—every once in a while I'll get a circular from a non-government group that says, "If you'd send us \$25 today, we'd be able to provide a well for this village so that the 50 or 100 people who live in this village would be able to access safe, clean drinking water." Non-government organizations are very clear. If you look at Central American countries that have problems in terms of accessing safe, clean drinking water, they know about the technology. They just don't have the money to pay for it.

The problem in Africa of safe, clean drinking water, of adequate supply of water, is growing on an almost geometric basis every year. Anyone who reads about climate change will know that one of the areas that is supposed to be the hardest hit in terms of water shortages will be much of sub-Saharan Africa, and it's already happening. But the trouble is, most of these countries don't have the money to buy even today's water technology, not even thinking about the aspirational water technology that is becoming another one of those Liberal buzz words.

I heard some speaker speak earlier about the situation in Asia. China already has a huge problem in terms of safe, clean drinking water, but the question becomes, in a nation that still battles rural poverty among hundreds of millions of people, where do they find the money for safe, clean drinking water when they have all of these other issues to address as well?

Where I live, in the far southwestern corner of this province, right along the Minnesota border, there are a number of US states that have severe challenges in terms of access to water: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming—you can literally cut a swath through much of the Midwestern United States and they will tell you that they're facing more and more serious water problems. But their issue, again, isn't technology. Their issue is, how are they going to build the pipelines to pipe water out of the Rocky Mountains? How are they going to build the pipelines to pipe water out of the Lake of the Woods? How are they going to build the pipelines to pipe water out of the lake that I live on and get it to where it's needed? It's not a question of whether they know how to do it. It is a question of who is going to pay the multi-billion-dollar bill to do this.

Australia: Much of the interior of Australia and much of southern Australia face severe shortages of water. Does the McGuinty government want to argue that Australia doesn't have water technology? That seems to be what's being offered up here in the apple pie and ice cream, that somehow a nation like Australia, which has been challenged by water shortages, water scarcities and a maldistribution of water resources, somehow doesn't have technology. I venture to say Australia already has a lot of the technology themselves. The problem is, who is going to pay the multi-billion-dollar costs of doing this? How do you move water from areas in northern Australia into central Australia or southern Australia, where the water is not available?

Or let's look at even some of the Arab states. Let's look at some of the states that are blessed with oil wells everywhere but don't seem to have any water wells; there are not enough of them. Again, the issue isn't technology. There are Arab states already that operate huge, huge desalinization plants, taking water out of the sea, running it through desalinization plants and producing fresh water. The technology's there. Again, though, the question is, on an ongoing basis, who is going to pay the multi-billion-dollar cost to do this?

I would have thought we'd have heard a government spokesman get up today and talk about, well, how is this going to be done? Nothing. Not a peep, which says to me this legislation really isn't legislation that, at the end of the day, has some plan of formulation, some plan of implementation. This is election campaign material. That's what it is. It doesn't have a plan for how it's going to be implemented in Ontario. It doesn't have a plan for how it's going to be implemented in terms of desperate First Nations in this province, where literally hundreds of kids may get sick every week from drinking water that is not safe, not clean, not reliable. It doesn't have a plan for how it's going to export to nations that, yes, need technology but don't have money. It doesn't have a plan for how it's going to compete with other nations, once again, that have technology but the issue is money: Who's going to pay the multi-billion-dollar bill?

I get a bit nonplussed by these situations, because the reality out there right now for hundreds of thousands of

Ontario families is that they themselves don't know how they're going to make ends meet at the end of the month. They don't know how they're going to pay the food bill, the rent bill and the hydro bill. They don't know how they're going to pay the food bill, the rent bill, the hydro bill and the water bill. Those are the practical realities that our people are facing and that people desperately want an answer to, that they hopefully want an answer to.

Yet when you look at this legislation—and I can hear the trumpets sounding and the drums beating, and I can already see Liberal members going around, beating their chests, saying, “Oh, we have the most wonderful aspirational water legislation in the world.” Well, aspirations won't put food on the table. Aspirations won't pay the water bill. Aspirations won't keep the heating on in the winter. Aspirations won't ensure that kids don't get sick from drinking water that's not safe, not clean, not reliable, which happens, as I say, virtually every day in a First Nations community in this province. If that's all this bill is, aspirational McGuinty Liberal thinking, then I think people are going to be terribly let down.

I've seen some of this aspirational thinking before. I remember a few years ago when Liberal members of this Legislature said that smart meters—they called them smart meters, although it's now clear they're not so smart—were going to lead us into a culture of conservation in electricity. Well, these meters have been implemented and put in place, and people are paying the

bills now in many communities across this province, and they aren't working. They are not so smart at all. They're very expensive—very, very expensive, to the tune of over \$1 billion to put them in place—but they don't deliver the results that we want. There's a good reason for that. Human beings are not nocturnal animals. You're not going to send your kids to school at midnight. The doctor's office isn't going to open at 1 a.m. so you can have an appointment and not use the electricity during the daytime. We are not raccoons and rattlesnakes. Most of our social, personal life is carried on during the day, and that is when we need energy. Putting in place an aspirational new technology gadget like a not-so-smart meter isn't going to change those realities of humanity, those realities of being people.

I say to the government that if that's all this is, aspirational propaganda for an election campaign, I think people in this province are going to have a lot to say about that, because people have some really practical problems right now, some really serious practical problems that they'd like to get some answers from their government on, and they're sure not getting it from you guys.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It being 6 of the clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1802.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
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la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
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